



**LISTEN TO  
BOB MARLEY**

**THE MAN  
THE MUSIC  
THE REVOLUTION**

WORDS FROM  
**BOB MARLEY**  
SELECTED BY  
**CEDELLA MARLEY**



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# Listen to Bob Marley

## The Man, the Music, the Revolution

Words from Bob Marley selected by Cedella Marley



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# Introduction by Cedella Marley

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This book was originally published as two volumes, created on the anniversaries of my dad's fifty-sixth and sixtieth Earthdays. In each volume, I selected some of my father's most prophetic poems and meditations, insights and conversational messages. I chose sayings that resonated with me and that were personally important to my dad as well. Within these books is a side of my father most people didn't get to see in his lifetime.

My dad's thoughts and meditations were not circulated as widely as his music. He understood the power of music, but would be surprised to learn that the written word would soon be available in so many ways, and could be combined with music so meaningfully. In this ebook re-release, I had the opportunity to expand the existing material, adding video interviews, links to my father's music, and new photographs. Fans of Bob Marley will enjoy reading his words, hearing his music, and learning about his life in a way that they never could have experienced before digital books existed. They will see he was not only a musician, but also a revolutionary.

My father was always an explorer, an innovator, and a philosopher. He said, "Blessed reggae is reggae when you deal with reality. You get more music, more anything." He always let his words and his music act as his messengers. He believed in unity and he expressed this philosophy in his music. He used his lyrics to connect people, to ask all of us to work together and trust one another. "We should all come together and create music and love," he said. If he had an opportunity to expand his message of freedom, religion, and social change, he embraced it. I have no doubt that, if he were alive, he would have found a way to see how digital books would have helped him reach a wider audience around the world. Since his words and songs are really one and the same—messages for social change—how pleased he would be that in this project, they all come together.

My father still is truly an inspiration to so many. My family is livicated to making sure that his spirit thrives, along with the vibrancy of his music. We want his writings, his sense of the universe, his devotion to healing the world, and his endless charity to live on. My father passed quite young, and we did not get to spend the time with him that we wished—but from his music and his writings, we understand what he believed and we try to promote those teachings and philosophies. Today, his music and his legacy are still vital, so it is important to my family and me to keep his words alive in every way possible, in every format available.

My dad said, "My music will go on forever. Maybe it's a fool to say that, but when we know facts we say facts. My music go on forever." He speaks the truth as always. . . .



# The Man

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Since his passing thirty years ago Bob Marley's legend looms larger than ever, his life and music are unparalleled in their global popularity and depth of influence. Bob Marley was posthumously inducted into the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame in 1994; in December 1999 his 1977 album "Exodus" was named Album of the Century by Time Magazine and his song "One Love" was designated Song of the Millennium by the BBC. Marley's "Legend" compilation has annually sold over 250,000 copies since its release in 1984, according to Nielsen Sound Scan, and it is only the 17th album to exceed sales of 10 million copies since SoundScan began its tabulations in 1991. These formidable achievements are all the more remarkable considering Bob's humble beginnings and the numerous challenges he endured trying to gain a foothold in Jamaica's chaotic music industry while skillfully navigating the politically partisan violence that abounded in Kingston, Jamaica throughout the 1970s.

One of the 20<sup>th</sup> century's most charismatic and challenging performers Marley's renown not only transcends the role of reggae luminary: he is regarded as a cultural icon who implored his people to know their history "coming from the root of King David, through the line of Solomon," as he sang on "Blackman Redemption". Urging his listeners to check out the "Real Situation" and to rebel against the vampiric "Babylon System", Marley's lyrics continue to be mentally as well as physically liberating forces for Africans throughout the Diaspora and for oppressed peoples everywhere. "Bob had a rebel type of approach but his rebelliousness had a clearly defined purpose to it," acknowledged Chris Blackwell, the founder of Island Records, who played a pivotal role in introducing Marley and the Wailers to an international audience. "It wasn't just mindless rebelliousness, he was rebelling against the circumstances in which he and so many people found themselves."





## Early Years

Born Nesta Robert Marley on February 6, 1945, to 50-year old white quartermaster Captain Norval Marley, who was affiliated with the British West Indian Regiment and an eighteen-year old black Jamaican woman, Cedella Malcolm Booker, Bob spent his early years in the rural community of Nine Miles. Located in the verdant parish of St. Ann, the residents of Nine Miles' have kept alive many traditions tied to their African ancestry.

Norval and Cedella married in 1945 but Marley's family strongly disapproved of their union, although the Captain provided financial support, he seldom saw his son. The last time Nesta saw her father was when he took him to Kingston, supposedly to enroll him in school. Eighteen months later Cedella learned that Nesta wasn't attending school and was living with an elderly couple. Alarmed, she went to Kingston, searched, found Nesta and took him home to St. Ann.

In the late 1950s Bob, barely into his teens, left St. Ann with his mother and returned to Jamaica's capital. They eventually settled in a vicinity of western Kingston called Trench Town, so named because it was built over a sewage trench. A low-income, disenfranchised community comprised of government yards and squatter settlements Trench Town was nonetheless abundant.

blessed with musical talent; Bob would later immortalize the area in his songs “No Woman No Cry” (1974), “Trench Town Rock” (1975) and “Trench Town” (released posthumously in 1983).

By the early 1960s the island’s music industry was beginning to take shape and its development gave birth to an indigenous popular Jamaican music: ska. A local interpretation of American soul and R&B, with an irresistible accent on the offbeat, ska exerted a widespread influence on Jamaican youth. Music offered an escape from their otherwise harsh realities and the elusive lure of stardom was now a tangible goal within the burgeoning Jamaican music industry.

About this time, 16-year-old Bob Marley decided to embark on his dream of becoming a musician. While working as a welder Bob met aspiring singer Desmond Dekker, who would top the UK charts in a few years with his single “Israelites”. Dekker introduced Marley to another young singer Jimmy Cliff the future star of the immortal Jamaican film “The Harder They Come”. By age 14, Cliff had already recorded a couple of hit songs. In 1962 Cliff introduced Marley to producer Leslie Kong for whom he cut his first singles “Judge Not”, “Terror” and “One More Cup of Coffee”, a cover of the million selling country hit by Claude Gray. When these songs failed to connect with the public, Kong refused to pay Bob, an exploitative practice that was widespread during the infancy of Jamaica’s music business.



## **Early Wailers**

In 1964 Bob met Neville Livingston a.k.a. Bunny Wailer; together they began attending singing classes held by Trench Town resident Joe Higgs. There they met Peter (Macintosh) Tosh. The trio quickly became good friends and formed a vocal group The Wailing Wailers, with additional members Junior Braithwaite, Beverly Kelso, and Cherry Smith. Higgs assisted in the group formation and gave them direction.

After just a couple recording sessions Smith and Braithwaite left the group and Kelso departed shortly thereafter. Bob, Bunny and Peter pressed on as a trio. They were introduced to Clement S. Coxsone Dodd, founder of the seminal Jamaican label Studio One. The Wailers recorded several hits for Studio One including “Simmer Down”, with Bob cautioning ghetto youths to control their temper or “the battle would be harder”. They attained a sizeable local following with their soulful harmonies influenced primarily by American vocal group Curtis Mayfield and the Impressions, and lyrics that echoed the struggles facing poor Jamaican youths.

By the mid 60s the jaunty ska beat had metamorphosed into the slower paced rocksteady sound which eventually gave way to Jamaica’s signature reggae rhythm around 1968. Dodd had not made

corresponding shift in his label's releases nor did he embrace the Rastafarian imbued lyrics that came to the forefront as reggae developed. Declining sales of the Wailers' Studio One singles compounded by a lack of proper financial compensation from Dodd prompted their departure from Studio One.

Bob's mother relocated to the US state of Delaware and he spent a few months there in 1966. Upon his return to Jamaica, Bob and the Wailers established the Wail'N Soul'M label/record shop in front of his aunt's Trench Town home. The label's name identified its primary acts: The Wailers and The Soulettes, featuring Bob's wife Rita. A few successful singles were released including "Be Down Low" b/w "Mellow Mood" but due to lack of resources, the Wailers were forced to dissolve Wail'N Soul'M in 1968.

As the 1970s arrived, soaring unemployment, rationed food supplies, pervasive political violence and the IMF's stranglehold on the Jamaican economy due to various structural adjustment policies heavily influenced the social consciousness that came to define Bob's lyrics.

In 1970 the Wailers forged a crucial musical relationship with Jamaican producer Lee "Scratch" Perry, a pioneer in the development of dub. Perry wisely paired the vocalists with the nucleus of his studio band The Upsetters, brothers Aston "Family Man" and Carlton Barrett, playing bass and drums respectively. Collectively they forged a revolutionary sonic identity, as heard on tracks like "Duppy Conqueror", "400 Years" and "Soul Rebel", establishing an enduring paradigm for roots reggae. The Wailers' collaborations with Perry were featured on the albums "Soul Rebels" (1970) and "Soul Revolution" (1971).

Bob went to Sweden in 1971 to work with American singer Johnny Nash on a film score. He secured a contract with Nash's label CBS Records and by early 1972 The Wailers were in London promoting their single "Reggae On Broadway". When CBS abruptly abandoned the group they, Marley paid a chance visit to the offices of Island Records. The result was a meeting with label founder Chris Blackwell. Aware of the Wailers' formidable musical reputation, Blackwell advanced them £4,000 to record their next album, an unheard of sum to be given to a Jamaican act.

The Wailers' debut for Island Records "Catch A Fire" arrived in April 1973, and it garnered a great deal of (international) media fanfare. Tours of Britain and the US were quickly arranged. Bunny Wailer refused to participate in the US leg of the "Catch A Fire" tour and the Wailers' mentor Joe Higgs served as his replacement. Their US gigs included an opening slot for a then relatively unknown Bruce Springsteen in New York City and touring with Sly and the Family Stone, who were at the peak in the early 70s. The Wailers were removed from the Sly Stone tour after four dates because their riveting performances reportedly upstaged the headliner.

A second album for Island followed in October 1973; "Burnin'" featured the timeless anthem of insurgency "Get Up Stand Up" and "I Shot The Sheriff", which Eric Clapton covered and took to the top of the Billboard Hot 100 in 1974, the same year that Peter Tosh and Bunny Wailer exited the group.



### **Bob Marley and the Wailers**

Bob's third Island Records release "Natty Dread" was credited to Bob Marley and The Wailers. Peter and Bunny's harmonizing was replaced with the soulfulness of the I-Threes (Rita Marley, Marcia Griffiths and Judy Mowatt). The Wailers band now included Family Man and Carly Barrett, Junior Marvin and Al Anderson on lead guitar, Tyron Downie and Earl "Wya" Lindo on keyboards and Alvin "Seeco" Patterson playing percussion. "Natty Dread" cracked the top 100 in the US and the UK. It featured the poignant "No Woman No Cry", and the defining title track, which played a significant role in introducing Rastafarian culture and philosophies to the world.

"Bob Marley and the Wailers Live" followed, capturing a thrilling performance at London's Lyceum Ballroom during the "Natty Dread" tour. That album's melancholy version of "No Woman No Cry" reached the UK top 40.

Bob catapulted to international stardom in 1976 with the release of "Rastaman Vibration", which peaked at number 8 on the Billboard Top 200. With songs like "Crazy Baldhead" and the stirring title track "Rastaman Vibration" presented a clearer understanding of Rastafari teachings to the mainstream audience that was now attentively listening to Bob. Also included was "War", its lyrics

taken from an impassioned speech to the United Nations General Assembly in 1963 delivered by Ethiopian Emperor and Rastafarian Deity Haile Selassie. Thirty-five years later “War” remains an unassailable anthem of equality, its empowering spirit embraced by dispossessed people everywhere.

As 1976 drew to a close Bob was now a global ambassador for Rastafari, a distinction that fostered an immense sense of pride among many Jamaicans, especially the ghetto dwellers for whom his messages carried the greatest significance. But Bob’s pervasive influence was also a point of contention for others within a country bitterly and too often bloodily divided by politics. In early December 1976 Bob was scheduled to headline Smile Jamaica, a free concert held in Kingston with the aim of suppressing the simmering political tensions between Jamaica’s rival People’s National Party (PNP) and the Jamaica Labour Party (JLP). The day before, an unsuccessful murder attempt was made on his life at his Kingston home. Bob and Rita were left with minor gun shot wounds while manager Don Taylor and friend Lewis Griffith were seriously injured. Bob defiantly performed Smile Jamaica but within minutes of leaving the concert, he was on a plane en route to the UK.

Bob lived in London for the next 18 months where he recorded the albums “Exodus” (1977) and “Kaya” (1978). Exodus remained on the UK charts for a staggering 56 consecutive weeks. It spawned three popular singles “Exodus” “Waiting In Vain” and Bob’s first British top 10 hit “Jammin”. In a more romantic vein, the “Kaya” album hit number 4 on the British charts, propelled by the popularity of the singles “Satisfy My Soul” and “Is This Love?”

In April 1978 Bob returned to Jamaica to perform at the One Love Peace Concert, another attempt at curtailing the rampant violence stemming from the senseless PNP and the JLP rivalries. In a daring, dramatic gesture, Bob summoned JLP leader Edward Seaga and Prime Minister Michael Manley onstage. As the Wailers pumped out the rhythm to “Jammin”, Bob urged the politicians to shake hands; clasping his left hand over theirs, he raised their arms aloft and chanted “Jah Rastafari”. In recognition of his courageous attempt to bridge Jamaica’s brutal, cavernous political divide, Bob traveled to the United Nations in New York on June 6, 1978 where he received the organization’s Nobel Medal of Peace.

At the end of 1978 Bob made his first trip to Africa, visiting Kenya and then Ethiopia, the spiritual home of Rastafari. Earlier Wailers’ tours of Europe and America were featured on the second live album “Babylon By Bus”. That same year Bob and The Wailers toured Japan, Australia and New Zealand, where the indigenous Maori people greeted them with a traditional welcoming ceremony typically reserved for visiting dignitaries.

Bob released his ninth album for Island, “Survival” in the summer of 1979. An inspiring and politically progressive work championing pan-African solidarity, “Survival” included “Africa Unite” and “Zimbabwe”. The latter was an anthem for the soon to be liberated colony of Rhodesia. In April 1980 Bob and the Wailers performed at Zimbabwe’s official Independence Ceremony at the invitation of the country’s newly elected president Robert Mugabe. This profound honor was further

confirmation of Bob Marley and the Wailers' importance throughout the African Diaspora and reggae's significance as a unifying and liberating force.

"Uprising" the final album to be released in Bob's lifetime helped to fulfill another career objective. Bob had openly courted an African American listenership throughout his career and had made a profound connection with that demographic through the danceable single "Could You Be Loved", which has become a mainstay on urban radio formats. "Uprising" also included the acoustic "Redemption Song" a declaration of enduring truths and profoundly personal reflections; Angelique Kidjo, the Clash's Joe Strummer, Sinéad O'Connor and Rihanna are but four of the dozens of artists who have recorded versions "Redemption Song".

Bob Marley and The Wailers embarked on a major European tour in the spring of 1980, breaking attendance records in several countries. In Milan, Italy, they performed before 100,000 people, the largest audience of their career. The US leg of the "Uprising" tour commenced in Boston on September 16 at the JB Hynes Auditorium. On September 19 Bob and the Wailers rolled into New York City for two consecutive sold out nights at Madison Square Garden as part of a bill featuring New York based rapper Kurtis Blow and Lionel Richie and the Commodores. The tour went onto the Stanley Theater in Pittsburgh, Pa. where Bob delivered the final set of his illustrious career, on September 23, 1980.

The Pittsburgh show took place just two days after Marley learned that the cancer that had taken root in his big toe in 1977, following a football injury, had metastasized and spread throughout his body. Bob courageously fought the disease for eight months, even traveling to Germany to undergo treatment at the clinic of Dr. Josef Issels. At the beginning of May 1981, Bob left Germany to return to Jamaica but he did not complete that journey, succumbing to his cancer in a Miami hospital in Miami on May 11, 1981.

In April 1981 Bob Marley was awarded Jamaica's third highest honor, the Order of Merit, for his outstanding contribution to his country's culture. Ten days after he passed away, the Honorable Robert Nesta Marley O.M. was given a state funeral by the Jamaican government, attended by Prime Minister Edward Seaga and the Opposition Party Leader Michael Manley. Hundreds of thousands of spectators lined the streets to observe the procession of cars that wound its way from Kingston to Bob's final resting place, a mausoleum in his birthplace of Nine Miles. Thirty years on, Bob Marley's music remains as vital as ever in its celebration of life and embodiment of struggle.



## **Marley's Global Legacy**

As the most important singer/songwriter of the 20<sup>th</sup> century Bob Marley has exerted an unparalleled influence among disparate populations throughout the world. New Zealand's indigenous Maori people, for example, greeted Bob with a traditional song and dance ceremony reserved for visiting dignitaries when he arrived in their country for a concert at Auckland's Western Springs Stadium on April 6, 1979. Marley's former manager, the late Don Taylor, referred to the Maori welcoming ritual as "one of my most treasured memories of the impact of Bob and reggae music on the world". On April 18, 1980 when the former British colony Rhodesia was officially renamed Zimbabwe and the Union Jack replaced with the red, gold, green and black Zimbabwean flag, it is said that the first words officially spoken in the new nation were "ladies and gentlemen, Bob Marley and the Wailers". Zimbabwean freedom fighters in their ongoing struggle to end minority rule were strengthened by Marley's empowering lyrics. Marley had penned a tribute to their efforts, "Zimbabwe", which was included on the most overtly political album of his career, 1979's "Survival" and he was invited to headline the official liberation celebrations. Zimbabwean police used teargas to control the crowds that surged through the gates of Harare's Rufaro Stadium to get a glimpse of Marley onstage. As several members of his entourage fled for cover, Marley, returned to the stage to perform "Zimbabwe", the power of his words ringing with a greater urgency amidst the ensuing chaos: *"to divide and rule could only tear us apart, in everyman chest, mm - there beats a heart/so soon we'll find out who is the real"*



*revolutionaries and I don't want my people to be tricked by mercenaries.* “There was smog everywhere, our eyes filled with tears so we ran off,” recalls Marcia Griffiths, who sang back up for Bob Marley, alongside his wife Rita Marley and Judy Mowatt, as the I-Threes. “When Bob saw us the next day he smiled and said now we know who are the real revolutionaries.”

A generation later a group of political refugees from Sierra Leone living in Guinean concentration camps, traumatized by years of bloody warfare in their country, found strength through Marley’s music, which inspired them to form a band and write/record their own songs. The Refugee All Stars won international acclaim for their 2006 debut “Living Like A Refugee” and their 2011 album “Rise and Shine”, each utilizing an amalgam of reggae, Sierra Leone’s Islamic rooted *bulbul* music and West African *goombay*.

On October 13, 2010, Victor Zamora, one of 33 Chilean miners rescued after being trapped in the San Jose mine for 69 days, asked to hear Marley’s “Buffalo Soldier” upon his release. Recorded in 1980 and released in 1983 “Buffalo Soldier” recounts the atrocities of the slave trade and like so many of Marley’s songs, it highlights the importance of relating past occurrences to present-day identities. “*if you know your history then you will know where you are coming from, then you wouldn't have to ask me, who the hell do I think I am?*”



## **Bob and Rastafari**

Marley's own multifaceted identity represents progressive political ideologies, a revered pan-African consciousness and deep spiritual convictions, each derived from his firmly rooted commitment to the Rastafarian way of life. "The combination of his own inquisitiveness and the profound depth and influence of the Rastafari movement helped to lift Bob Marley from being just another entertainer and made him into a transformative artist that reshaped not only reggae music but also the course of world history," says Carlyle McKetty, President of the Brooklyn, NY based Coalition to Preserve Reggae Music. "The intricate relationship between reggae and Rasta is seminal to understanding and preserving the reggae form and Bob Marley's keen understanding and internalization of the tenets of the Rastafari movement have yet to be adequately explored."

The Rastafari movement has been referenced in Jamaican popular music since the early 60s and by the late 70s its principles had come to define roots reggae's lyrical content. It was Marley who introduced Rastafari to an international audience through his 1970s' Island Record releases including "Catch A Fire" and "Burnin'" (both recorded with Tosh and Wailer and released in 1973) and subsequent albums with the Wailers band featuring brothers Aston and Carlton Barrett, on bass and

drums respectively. "Natty Dread" (1974) was the first Marley album to chart in the US; "Rastaman Vibration" Marley's highest US charting album (at no. 8) rightfully proclaimed Rasta as offering "*a new time, a new day*" on its title track. Released in 1976, "Rastaman Vibration" also included "War" a stirring equality anthem, its lyrics taken from an address to the United Nations' General Assembly in 1963 by Ethiopian Emperor His Imperial Majesty Haile Selassie I, who is considered a living God among Rastafarians. "War's" globally pertinent lyrics ("*until the color of a man's skin is of no more significance than the color of his eyes...until the ignoble and unhappy regime that holds our brothers in Angola, in Mozambique, in South Africa, in subhuman bondage, have been toppled and utterly destroyed everywhere is war*") and the reverence with which Marley regarded His Majesty's words transformed his performances of the song into spellbinding displays, as seen at concerts in Milan, Italy, where he performed before a crowd of 100,000, the largest audience of his career, to New York City's prestigious Madison Square Garden, which he sold out for two consecutive nights, to the Stanley Theater, in Pittsburgh, Pa, where he delivered the final set of his illustrious career, on September 23, 1980. The Pittsburgh show took place just two days after Marley learned that the cancer that had taken root in his big toe in 1977 had now spread throughout his body. A committed revolutionary, Marley delivered a career defining set in Pittsburgh, which included a haunting acoustic rendition of "Redemption Song", from "Uprising" (1980), the final album released during his lifetime.



# The Music \*

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## LIVICATION

Let the words of our mouth and the meditation of our hearts be acceptable in thy sight, O Far I.

—Cedella



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