



Marley in NZ photos by Murray Cammick

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Jimmy Cliff

Now 37 years old, Cliff has been singing since he was in short pants. Got his break in 1964 when he visited New York as a singer/dancer with Byron Lee's band. It was there he met Chris Blackwell, who signed him to Island the following year. Cliff's career has been chequered by personal and musical hassles, as well as trouble with the police at home. Best known for his starring role in *The Harder They Come*, the soundtrack of which is still available here. The movie occasionally re-emerges on cult circuits, and is a must-see, containing work of several other notable JA artists. Other titles available: *Struggling Man* (Cliff's toughest work) and a worthwhile *Best Of* collection.

Bob Marley and the Wailers

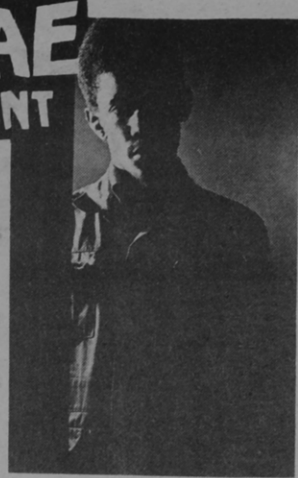
What more can we say? Every collection should have at least one album, with *Natty Dread*, *Survival* and *Exodus* heading the list. Other titles available: *Catch A Fire*, *Live* (highly recommended), *Rastaman Vibrations*, *Kaya*, *Uprising*, *Babylon By Bus* and *Burnin'*.

The Heptones

The original trio, formed in 1965, consisted of Leroy Sibbles, Earl Morgan and Barry Llewellyn. They were coached by the Pioneers and first recorded for Studio One/Coxsone in 1966. Had several hit singles and in the 1970's recorded three albums for Island. Two of these, *Night Food* and *Party Time*, are available here. Sweet rude boy harmonies are a constant delight. It's thought the original trio no longer exists, though the name still crops up in the British reggae charts.

Third World

Six-piece group formed in 1973, two of its members used to be with Inner Circle. The first album, self-titled, is a sombre, rootsy work and features a different vocalist from the present Rugs Clarke. The subsequent releases have been lighter in texture, culminating in a 1978 disco hit, 'Now That We Found Love'. The more commercial side of reggae, for those who find heavy riddims a mite overpowering. Titles available: *Third World*, *96 Degrees In The Shade*, *Journey To Addis*, *The Story's Been Told*, *Prisoner In The Street* (live movie soundtrack). Another album is on the way.



Linton Kwesi Johnson

Socialist son of Brixton, an intellectual conscience, champion of the oppressed, rocker against racism, the voice of Britain's militant black youth. Writes dark, angry poetry, recited in rock-steady cadence over musical backing, provided by the likes of Denis 'Blackbeard' Bovel. Johnson's first album, *Dread Beat And Blood*, was recorded under the name Poet And The Roots. Switched to Island under his own name, recording the equally-strong *Bass Culture* and *Forces Of Victory* (both of which are available here) and a dub album, *LKJ In Dub*, not released here yet.

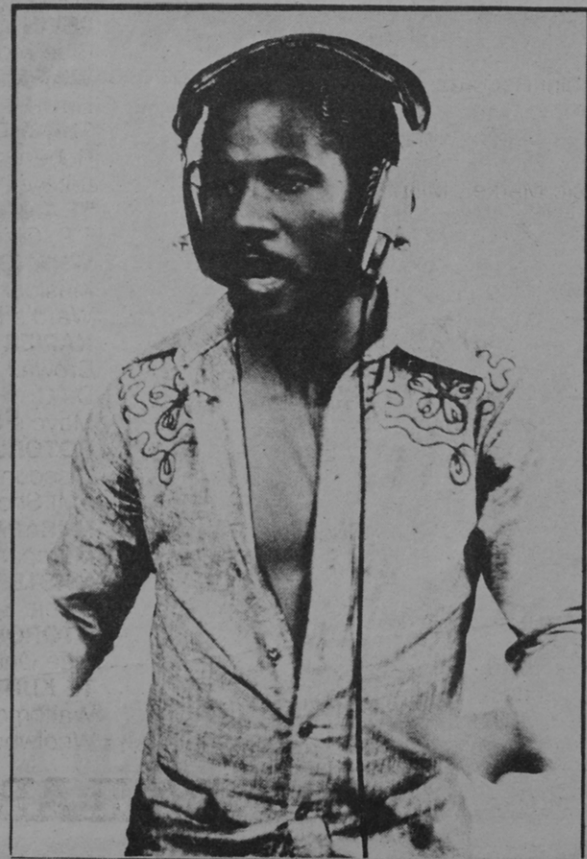


Bunny Wailer

Real name Bunny Livingstone, he was one third of the original Wailers trio, splitting in 1974 due to his dislike of touring and live performances. A truly fine singer, whose songs have a reflective, mystical quality. Maintains a low personal profile through fears of violence. Titles available: *Blackheart Man*, *Protest*. A new album, *Bunny Wailer Sings The Wailers*, is due for release.

Toots and the Maytals

Frederick 'Toots' Hibbert is a by-word in Jamaican music, transcending ska and roots, a master. The trio of Toots, Raleigh Gordon and Jerry Matthias has been singing since 1962, another act given a start by Clement Dodd, and later also produced by the legendary Prince Buster. Except for a brief period in the late 70's, Toots has never been out of the lime-light. His advancing years have not diminished his talent and stature, or the warmth of that wonderful voice. The latest album, *Live*, is proof positive. Other titles available: *Funky Kingston* (essential), *Reggae Got Soul*, *In The Dark*, *Pass The Pipe*, *Just Like That*. CONTINUED ON PAGE 14. Toots is pictured below.



"Yeah, the people who survive will live, 'cos the only thing that can make you survive is to know the truth, and the truth is that God seh Him give man everlasting life, which means everliving life. Me seh my life here, dis flesh, me have fe live. Me never seh there was no fear of death, but me no deal with death, me no have time to risk this flesh too much, cos it's this me have to do it in."

The words of Bob Marley, speaking in 1979 on the chance of eternal life for those who survive The Day Of Judgement. Even though armed with an unshakeable faith, he was ever aware of the mortality of man, himself included.

So my brethren, my sisthren
Which way will we choose
We better hurry, oh hurry woe now
'Cause we got no time to lose. (*Survival*)

Marley was born in the village of Rhoden Hall in the parish of St Ann, the same parish as political visionary Marcus Garvey and Burning Spear (Winston Rodney). Marley's mother was Jamaican, his father is said to have been a British Army captain. No details are known, and Marley claimed once he'd never met his father.

At the age of nine, he moved with his mother, two brothers and a sister, first to the Waltham Park slum area of Kingston, and later to Trenchtown. It was here he spent most of his teenage and adult life. The stark poverty and the violence were to leave lasting impressions.

At 16, Marley was apprenticed to a welder, working alongside Desmond Dekker. Dekker was already making a reputation as a singer, and encouraged Marley in the same direction. Jimmy Cliff introduced Marley to the late Lesley Kong. It was Kong who produced Marley's first recordings for Beverly's Records. These included his own composition, 'Judge Not', and Brook Benton's 'One Cup Coffee'.

His one-year contract with Beverly's gave him an outlet of sorts for his growing talent, but it was another three years before Marley got another break. He teamed up with Trenchtown acquaintances Peter Tosh and Bunny Livingstone, intent on forming a vocal trio similar to the Impressions. At first they called themselves the Wailing Rudeboys, then the Wailing Wailers, finally shortening it to just the Wailers.

In 1964, they auditioned for Clement Dodd's Coxsone/Studio One label. Among their songs was one called 'Simmer Down' which, although uncompleted at the time, impressed Dodd so much he insisted on recording it. The song was an instant smash.

The association with Dodd was to last another three years, producing a string of classic singles, some of which can be found on the *Birth Of A Legend* LP. Marley sued when Dodd issued the album in 1977, claiming umpteen dollars in unpaid royalties. Dodd may have screwed the Wailers financially, but he gave Marley carte blanche with his own material, and in helping choose songs for other people. But in 1966 Marley left Jamaica for the United States, where he worked on a Delaware car assembly line. In his absence, Tosh and Livingstone continued to work in Dodd's studio until the following year when they had a violent quarrel with the producer over money. Dodd is said to have pulled a gun on the two musicians before finally getting the police to boot them out.

Marley returned to Jamaica soon afterwards, having lost his job. He was also on the run from the American Draft Board. In 1968, with Tosh, Livingstone, and his common-law wife, Rita, Marley formed the short-lived Wailin' Soul label. It folded because of financial problems and difficulty in getting radio play. The second attempt at forming a label was more successful, and Tuff Gong endures to this day. 'Gong' means 'The Boss', and was Marley's name to his close friends.

The Wailers continued to struggle, sometimes selling up to 15,000 copies of a single but achieving little outside of JA because of their rebel image. A collaboration with the legendary Lee 'Scratch' Perry in 1969 brought some

stunning results, including the all-time great 'Small Axe', later to emerge on *Burnin'*. By this time, they'd also been joined by brothers Aston 'Family Man' and Carlton Barrett, who'd been doing sessions for Perry. A union of souls that was to be a lasting one.

Since 1968 the Wailers had been signed as songwriters for Johnny Nash and his business partner, Danny Simms. It was an unhappy relationship, again because of money, but it finally brought the Wailers to Britain.

They went in 1972 to score a film Nash was starring in. The film was never released, and the Wailers spent most of their time rehearsing with a view to touring, and putting down backing tracks for Nash's *I Can See Clearly Now* LP. Marley met a young Trinidadian promoter, Brent Clarke, at a club in Peckham. Marley expressed his frustrations to Clarke who took samples of Marley's work to Chris Blackwell of Island Records. Clarke negotiated their contract, and Island paid their return fares to Jamaica, where they began to record *Catch A Fire*. The basic tracks were later overdubbed in London, using the likes of Wayne Perkins and John 'Rabbit' Bundrick. And the Wailers were on their way.

They toured the United States and Europe in 1973, but rifts were now appearing. Tosh and Livingstone felt Island was more interested in Marley solo than in the Wailers as a group. The English tour was abandoned because Tosh and Livingstone couldn't stand the cold, and nor were they prepared to follow Marley as a group leader. At this point, only Livingstone was wearing locks, and he disapproved of Marley and Tosh partying and womanising. Marley didn't start wearing a dread till 1974, and by then the original trio had split.

1975 was Marley's watershed year. Eric Clapton picked up 'I Shot The Sheriff' from *Burnin'*, and Marley released *Natty Dread*, the album that broke roots reggae and the JA culture onto the white-dominated international market.

What an album it is! This is not to underrate the earlier work, by any means. *Catch A Fire* and *Burnin'* are filled with sublime music, bona fide classics like 'Concrete Jungle', 'Duppy Conqueror' and 'Small Axe', but they sound primitive by comparison with *Natty Dread*. The sound is harder, less meditative, owing a large debt to Motown and Stax, with Al Anderson's searing guitar breaks and the gospel backup vocals of the I-Threes.

I still remember the first time I played it. The whoop of pure joy that opens 'Lively Up Yourself' brought up the goose flesh. The beat was irresistible, the rhythm guitar jabbing like a knife at the feet, knees and hips. I played it non-stop for weeks afterwards, and couldn't wipe this silly grin off my face.

On reflection, *Natty Dread* was the album Marley had to make. It was an attention-getter. Grab the feet and the head and heart will follow. Nothing Marley recorded afterwards matched it for sheer danceability. His mind was on other things, and he had a message to deliver.

The follow-up, *Rastaman Vibration*, was initially greeted with disappointment. By comparison it was subdued and thoughtful, delving into the heart of Rasta philosophy. But its excellence emerged with repeated listening, especially the wistful 'Johnny Was'.

Exodus saw a merging of the physical and mental aspects of the music. The title track's complex, pulsing bass-riff jumped out at the listener, 'The Heathen' was filled with righteous menace, while in 'Waiting In Vain', Marley produced one of his most touching love songs. The man always knew how to pull the heartstrings.

Kaya was a lightweight effort, mainly devoted to personal relationships. The exception was 'Running Away', where Marley spoke of his fear of death by violent means. The song denied that he was retreating out of fear, the lines spoken as much to himself as to his audience.

Babylon By Bus was a live stopgap, coming nowhere CONTINUED ON PAGE 14