



READINGS FOR REASONING

by Justine Ketola

No Woman No Cry, My Life with Bob Marley

By Rita Marley with Hettie Jones (Hyperion, 2004)

In this era of confrontational “tell all” talk shows, Mrs. Bob Marley works all the angles to reveal her truths about life as wife of the late King of Reggae, her job as a mother and as one of the I-Threes. This is her story as told first person, as Mrs. Marley. The tale begins with childhood coming up in the Kingston working class. It lingers sentimentally over her first encounters at age 19 with “Bobby,” for whom she felt a sisterly love from the outset. She would bring him food and blankets when he was sleeping in the back of Studio One on the floor. Rita was the one in their relationship who was the first to reveal her Rasta beliefs after Selassie’s visit. Over time she also revealed her strong business acumen and through her work with the band as a singer, she also handled business matters from the early stages of touring.



With all due respect to Brother Bob, his philandering caused her to make some realistic choices. She explains that even while in Kingston, he “never spent the night in the same place twice.” She remained focused, saving the money she made as member of harmony trio, the I-Threes, and bought her first property in Bull Bay on the outskirts of Kingston, to provide a better environment for the children to live and grow in.

Despite being fodder for tabloid journalism due to the sensitive boundaries that are crossed in the narrative with regard to her relations with Bob, the book is, at its essence, a compelling tale of life and love from the perspective of an African woman of the Diaspora.

Every Little Thing Gonna Be Alright, The Bob Marley Reader

Edited by Hank Bordowitz (Da Capo Press, 2004)

A collection of inspired writings on the legend and meaning of an international figure of freedom, this anthology

brings together a diverse group of voices, including a preface by reggae historian, Roger Steffens, and contributions by Jamaican Prime Minister Michael Manley, author Alice Walker and legendary rock critic Lester Bangs.

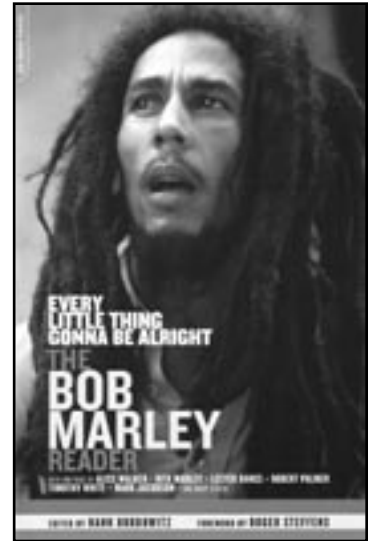
“Each one, teach one” as the saying goes, and some great pieces include Vivian Goldman’s account of life on the road, in the studio and at home in Jamaica with the Wailers’ entourage, and is packed with juicy behind-the-scenes details from a unique and respectful intimacy with Marley. Bob lets his dreads down, offering philosophical explanations behind his songwriting, advice on the effects of ingesting Irish Moss, intriguing details about band dynamics and day-to-day life during that crucial period during his rise to stardom.

There is a 1979 article from *Essence* magazine that chronicles the trip to a dream concert held in Jamaica when Bob Marley and the Wailers shared the bill with Stevie Wonder. There are also pieces on the original Wailers, Peter Tosh, Bunny Wailer, band members Earl “Wiya” Lindo, Aston “Family Man” Barrett, Al Anderson and Island Records founder, Chris Blackwell.

Articles after his untimely death abound as well as reports on the settling of his estate. The legacy he left with his melody-making family is also addressed, as well as other legal disputes.

The spiritual message that Marley’s legacy leaves us with is part of this collection of articles and on the fanciful side, an eight-page excerpt from the Marvel Comics book *Marley: The Tale of Tuff Gong* is also printed in these pages.

For any news junkie and lover of reggae, this is a must-read. There are pieces from publications ranging from *Newsweek* to *High Times*, from *Rolling Stone* to the *People’s National Party Newspaper*, showcasing the expansive reach of Bob Marley – the musician and the man.

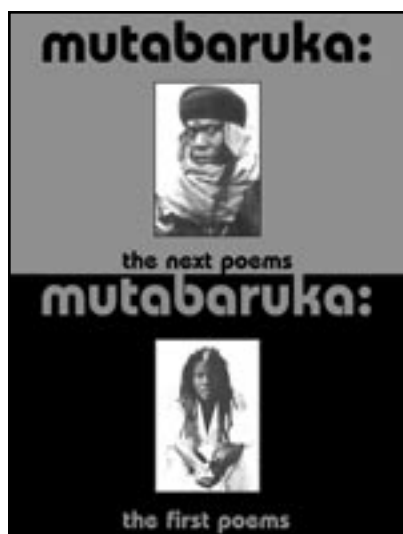


Mutabaruka: The Next Poems/The First Poems

By Mutabaruka (Paul Issa Publications, 2005)

This innovative dub poet picks up where his book *The First Poems* left off in the '70s by creating a combination of the two. The design of the book's jacket and printed pages allows for two separate sections oriented in opposite vertical directions so that you can turn the book around to read the "next" poems which were written beginning in the 1980s and flow up to the present day.

The tradition of spoken word poetry is a significant part of radical political expression. It forces the listener to take pause, receive the cadence of the words, absorb the measured constructs and rich imagery with rooted awareness. Some topics are more effectively conveyed to the massive in this form. Muta performs these poems live, either with the Sagittarius band or on the book tour/lecture circuit and the result is a wonderful portal for the mind to absorb the phrasing and the soul to feel the intense power of his rhythmic radical ciphers. The message is at times personal and for the most part an observance of political



and social experiences globally and at home in Jamaica. Struggle for liberation of oppressed people, causal effects of slavery and colonialism and the culprits of these problems worldwide are vividly portrayed through poignant observations.

In the latter years, Muta explores spiritual redemption, the inner strength of women and the ravages of war and suffering. The theme of the individual and a

place in the universe echoes the metaphysics of "I and I" and the essence of true identity is boiled down and delivered as a tonic of healing and understanding.

Just as the name for the weekly talk show he hosts on Irie FM in Jamaica implies, Mutabaruka has been on the "cutting edge" of poetry and lyrical expression for over 30 years.

Bob Marley Rebel Music

Photographs by Kate Simon (Genesis Publications, 2004)

As we celebrate the 60th birthday of Robert Nesta Marley, we find that there are new books and re-mastered original recordings available which allow us to get to the truly majestic essence of this individual's recordings and live performances.

This collection of photographs is truly the mother of all Marley tribute books as it contains not just never-before released photographs but those of artists like Lee Scratch

Perry, Trinity, Jacob Miller, Burning Spear and others. Also significant are the heartfelt comments and personal accounts from the photographer Kate Simon, and many other luminaries such as the late Junior Delgado, Aston "Family Man" Barrett and Neville Garrick.

It is written in a chronological timeline, organized with photos from the mid-'70s to the mid-'80s. At the back, a timeline section covers events from the start of the Wailers' record shop in 1967 and a discography from those years up to his passing in 1981.

There are rare nuggets such as Bob giving a soul brother handshake to Joseph Hill of Culture with a lit spliff dangling from his lip and a shot of a billboard in Kingston for the release of Bunny Wailers' epic *Blackheart Man*.

One quote from Marley himself teaches how his mission for liberation began with the practices in his own life. "I don't have time to fight. If I fight I hurt myself. I leave the judgment to God."

This is a limited edition, oversized (10"x14½") book. 2,000 numbered copies signed by Kate Simon. There are 350 deluxe copies bound in full leather, signed by Eric Clapton who had an international hit with Marley's song "I Shot the Sheriff." The book retails for \$400 and comes in a wooden, printed box. It is well worth the investment for the reggae lover and for those seeking to explore the impressions from members of the music industry.

Bob Marley and the Wailers: The Definitive Discography

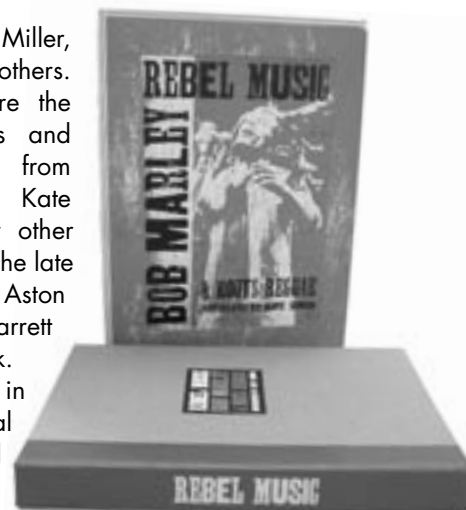
By Roger Steffens and Leroy Pierson (Rounder, Fall 2005)

What this book defines is the code of recordings and versions of songs and the entire catalog of what is known as the Wailers. It represents the same level of detail that books on John Coltrane or Miles Davis have as discography. Roger Steffens, esteemed reggae archivist, completed this incredible 15-year journey and he offered us an exclusive, sneak preview of the book's pages as emails in PDF format for *Reggae Festival Guide*.

Steffens credits the genesis of this monumental project to Leroy Pierson who started it in the 1980s. Pierson was a major collector of first pressings in reggae and blues. He served as mentor as an archivist and was in effect "my Roger Steffens," Roger explained.

In 1999, Roger was asked by Bunny Wailer to co-write the yet-to-be-published autobiography of Bunny's life. Leroy

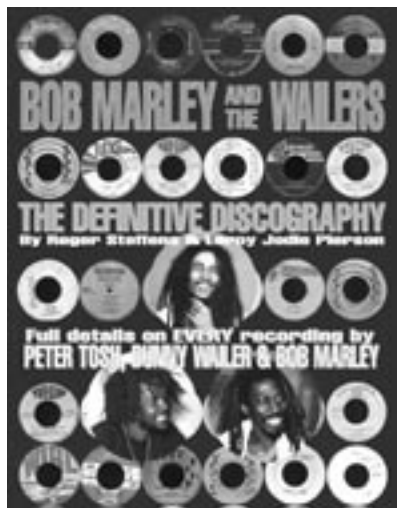
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and Roger started out by spending three weeks in Kingston playing every song the Wailers had ever made. This became half of the first draft of the discography.



Using the same template that academic discographies of major jazz figures use, song by song the template documents the singers, the players, what instruments were played, the engineer, studio, label name, the number of tracks on the master tape and the producer.

Devising what is in effect, the “bible” of the Wailers’ song archive, the duo could often tie in recording session

details to the period of time when the song first appeared on the charts in the *Jamaican Gleaner Newspaper*.

They used the matrix numbers found etched in the vinyl, then linked those to the label number for the item number in Jamaica, the United States and the United Kingdom. They began to unlock the matrix, literally. They could track the first take that may have had a different lyric or chorus.

In addition to these facts, are extensive notes on each song that give Bunny Wailer’s first-hand accounts of the releases. Notes are given on the rare pre-released “blank” labeled singles out on the title, different versions of the vinyl labels used, and even colors of plastic used during pressings of the song. Photographs of the first pressings of labels as well as rare red, gold and green-colored versions are all included in the discography.

The book has a section on Roger Steffens that serves as

his autobiography. It is geared towards records and what they have meant in his life. And as for the outcome of his lifelong project with Leroy Pearson. Roger says it is, “everything we have always wanted it to be and everything it could be.”

There are beautiful pictures from photographer Kate Simons’ collection including a gorgeous black and white of a smiling, radiant Peter Tosh.

Rastafari? Rasta for You: Rastafarianism Explained

By Kellyana Junique (Athena Press, 2004)

Written in the format of a field-research pamphlet, this 55-page book covers topics in a rootsy, matter-of-fact style. Topics range from the historical roots of the Rastafarian movement to the beliefs, rituals and symbols of Rasta. Definitions of particular words used in Rasta speech like backbiters, skylarkers, balheads and gargamels are explained, as well as the practical use of terms like “give thanks” and “jam down.”

The author breaks down social issues involved in work, family and cultural interactions with the greater society. Lifestyle choices are presented as observances and general practices, such as the wearing of the colors black, red, gold and green and the use of the lion as a symbol of protection and strength. ♡

Justine Ketola is a music business veteran in sales, marketing, booking, public relations, freelance writing and concert production. Her “day job” includes being Director of Marketing for the healing and world music label Etherean Music, and the Evolution catalog of 4th Way Fulfillment. She is Marketing Director for Reggae Festival Guide and has worked as an ad sales representative for the past four years. She volunteers as the assistant producer to host Chuck Foster on Reggae Central KPFK 90.7 FM in Los Angeles. Her writing has also appeared in The Beat, Jahworks.org, Carib Press and Ujama News.

