

So much trouble in Jamaica

The dark prelude to making the *Exodus* album



Bob Marley ... hip, happy, cool, gifted and the undisputed Poet Laureate of Reggae

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The international big-hit album by Bob Marley and the Wailers, *Exodus*, and its subsequent three studio albums may never have been made. Thanks to amateurish marksmanship, Marley, his manager, Don Taylor, his former wife, Rita, and others were saved from death when masked gunmen burst into the Marley home at 56 Hope Road in Kingston 6 on the night of December 3 1976 and sprayed bullets at and around them – none of which was fatal. The group then left Jamaica and went into prolonged exile in Babylon, during which time they recorded their *Exodus* album and most of the material for its follow-up, 1978's *Kaya* album.

A major turning point in Bob Marley's comparatively short, but highly influential international music career occurred in 1972 when he and the Wailers were signed to Chris Blackwell's hip and growing Island Records label, which by now was expanding beyond rock and folk-rock (eg, Sandy Denny, Nick Drake, Free, Jade Warrior, Spooky Tooth and Traffic) to embrace the emerging sounds of reggae, ska and associated musical idioms of Jamaica and the wider West Indies.

Under Blackwell's inspired leadership, Island Records went on to sign Aswad, Burning Spear, Buju Banton, Inner Circle, Jah Lion, Steel Pulse, Third World and Bunny Wailer, among other big-name and mostly successful reggae artists. Nevertheless, none of these artists would outshine Marley and the Wailers, although some produced stunningly good reggae albums (eg, Burning Spear with *Marcus Garvey* in 1976).

Backed by Island's adroit marketing know-how and excellent media relations, Blackwell was able to bring the music and messages of Bob Marley and the Wailers to a far broader audience, most notably listeners in Europe – especially in Britain, as well as North America, Australasia, Southern Africa and other music-mad Anglophone countries that were interested in exploring a broader spectrum of rock, pop, folk and allied musical idioms.

Their musical inquisitiveness embraced the emergent sounds of reggae and ska, and, in particular, the then fresh and arousing messages of freedom from oppression and spiritual darkness Marley had to share with a music-loving world that had previously seemed largely blasé about issues of Third World oppression, poverty and isolation.

Between 1973 and 1976, Marley and the Wailers recorded and released four studio albums and one live album for Island. During this time, Marley and his band not only established a growing following at home and internationally. They were also starting to amass impressive wealth, especially by the standards of a largely underdeveloped and often over-exploited Caribbean region. Contrary to popular belief, however, living on the seemingly idyllic West Indies island of Jamaica with a stash of dollars in the bank was far from being utopian in the mid-1970s.

Jamming in a divided state

For Marley, not only was there “so much trouble in the world”, as he would later sing so eloquently on 1979’s *Survival* album, but also dissent, despair and disillusionment at home. In the few years building up to the time of the Wailers writing and recording *Exodus*, the small, 10,990-km² country in the heart of the West Indies was divided politically and dispirited by seething unrest.

The capital of Kingston had been in turmoil for several months, mainly because of the mounting tensions between the country’s two dominant political parties, the more leftist, pro-revolutionary ruling People’s National Party (PNP), led by Michael Manley, and the more rightist, Western-aligned Jamaican Labour Party (JLP), led by Edward Seaga (nicknamed CIAga).

Politically motivated uprisings had caused about 200 deaths – not to forget the scores of gang rapes, brutal beatings and fire bombings that hurt hundreds of other people. Jamaica was in a state of emergency, with the police and armed forces establishing scores of security checkpoints as part of a clampdown on political dissidents and protestors. Armed factions sympathetic to the dominant parties were fighting on the streets, where the menacing sight of tanks and overhead helicopters with searchlights was commonplace. Behind the scenes, Jamaica’s frail and greatly underdeveloped economy was deteriorating, a plight that was exacerbated by the slump in tourism.

These bitter scenes of uprising in 1976 were echoed elsewhere in the world, notably in greater Johannesburg, where the diabolical Soweto Uprising occurred in June, and in London, where race riots erupted in and around the streets of Brixton.

The initial phase of post-independence calm and euphoria of the 1960s (Britain granted Jamaica sovereign independence in 1962), succumbed to

depression, violence and draconian state oppression in the 1970s, to which a young, agile-minded Marley could not remain ignorant or indifferent. Kingston, in particular, was in chaos. By the mid-1970s, Marley had already amassed a notable fortune, thanks to increasing record sales, and was living at 56 Hope Road in a calmer, more affluent neighbourhood of the Jamaican capital, Kingston 6, close to the prime minister’s official residence.

Despite his growing fame and fortune, however, Marley remained true to his roots as a humble Rastafari – and was known to be “a man of the people”, hosting scores of visitors and showering his legendary generosity on family and friends. His famous “yard” at Hope Road, in particular, was a popular and regular meeting place – and at all times the good man reached out his hand in friendship and his heart in tolerance. If anything, Bob wanted peace and brotherhood, preferring to stay unaligned to party politics, while hoping and praying for a peaceful outcome to the Jamaican crisis.

There is some irony to all of this because, in 1972, Marley – as with many of his Rastafari brethren – voted for Manley’s PNP, partly because of the PNP’s avowed tolerance for Rastas and, specifically, because Manley had undertaken to legalise their sacred cannabis, *ganja*, and help many of them to “repatriate” to their beloved holy land of Ethiopia. These assurances were never delivered.

Unsurprisingly, the Rastafari and reggae communities coined the word “politricks”, which Marley and other reggae singers used in their songs and interviews.



Place of hope, brotherhood and jamming ...

The former home of Bob Marley at 56 Hope Road in the upmarket district of Kingston 6, where an attempt was made on his life in December 1976. Formerly the home of the Wailers Tuff Gong record label, it is now the Bob Marley Museum, a favourite tourist destination.

Marley’s darkest hour

Towards the end of 1976, with Kingston overcome by mayhem and dissent, Marley and the local reggae community planned an upbeat music concert

intended to resuscitate local morale and encourage their fellow Kingstonians to start afresh in a spirit of tolerance, peace and brotherhood. The Smile Jamaica concert was set for December 5 1976.

The sanguine mood suddenly turned sombre, almost macabre, on the night of December 3 when three (some accounts say more) masked gunmen broke into the Marley compound at Hope Road and sprayed automatic fire at and around Marley and a few of his companions, including his wife, Rita, in an attempt to kill them.

Rita Marley was shot in the head; manager Don Taylor was shot in the thigh and dangerously close to his spine; friend Lewis Simpson was shot in the stomach; and Marley sustained a severe cut across his right bicep after a bullet had grazed his chest. Fortunately, all four survived the attack, but the subsequent cloud of gloom would hover over his Hope Road home for a long time. More than 30 years later, the real motives for the planned killings, along with the identities of the gunmen, remain a mystery.

After Marley's wounds were treated, he was whisked away to a safe haven overlooking Kingston, Chris Blackwell's mansion on Strawberry Hill up on the town's famous Blue Mountains. Despite being bandaged and in severe discomfort, Marley delivered, as promised, his 90-minute Smile Jamaica performance with the Wailers on December 5 in front of an estimated 50,000 music fans. After the show, a dejected Marley – along with the Wailers and the I-Threes vocal group – was flown in Blackwell's private aircraft to enjoy peace and quiet at Nassau in Bahamas. In the first week of January 1977, Blackwell had arranged for their passage to, and safe haven in, London.

During the first four months of 1977, Marley and the five-piece Wailers – along with his wife, Rita, and the two other singers who formed the I-Threes backing singers – would devote themselves to recording the *Exodus* album, along with most of the material that would comprise the *Kaya* album of 1978. For the remainder of that productive year, they would remain in exile, dedicating much of their time to touring and promoting what would become their biggest-selling and, some say, best album, *Exodus*. ■



The Making of *Exodus*

Exile in Babylon



Jamming in Babylon ... Bob Marley performing at Zurich, Switzerland in 1980

Feeling relaxed, creative and safe in London, yet also cold, foreign and homesick, Bob Marley and the Wailers – with the faithful I-Threes – devoted the first four months of 1977 to recording and mixing their *Exodus* album, as well as material for *Kaya*. *Exodus* would become the group's biggest-selling album of the 1970s.

The times in London, musically, were right for Marley and his five-piece band during the first four months of 1977. Ten years before, it was Swinging London, marked by the peaking of The Beatles and The Rolling Stones, along with the rapid rise of Pink Floyd and the short-lived but heady British psychedelic underground.

Now, in 1976 and 1977, London was "cool" again and resounding to new musical grooves with the advent of British punk, ska, two-tone, dub and their associated genres. These years would be characterised by the foray of new music – much of it defined as agitpop – from the likes of The Clash, The Jam, The Sex Pistols, The Damned, Ian Drury and the Blockheads, Siouxsie and the Banshees and scores of other new bands – not to forget Aswad, Steel Pulse and a few other popular Jamaican-English reggae bands of the time.

As had been the case for much of the latter half of the twentieth century, London was an ideal melting pot for fashion, art, music and style – and the time had arrived for Marley and the Wailers to make their mark on the world beyond the comparative confines of Jamaica, musically, politically and otherwise. Marley and the Wailers found in London a fresh sense of spontaneity, ease and freedom, qualities that would shape much of the sweet, seductive and imploring sounds of *Exodus* – the one great Wailers album that did not receive the full critical accolades it deserved 30 years ago.

To my mind, Marley and the Wailers were at their most sanguine, cool, confident and spontaneously creative on *Exodus*, even if the production was blemished in places and Marley's impassioned voice had lost some of its characteristic urgency and poignancy in some of the music.

The world was ready for new music

By now, prog rock – typified by the likes of Emerson, Lake and Palmer and Genesis – had largely become overblown, overindulgent and self-parodying, while much of mainstream rock and pop – including glam rock and disco – had become prosaic and formulaic, with little new to offer in the way of fresh tunes, alluring messages and novel sounds. The mainstream rock world in Britain, Europe, North America and elsewhere was ready for the onslaught of punk, two-tone, ska, dub and reggae. A new counterculture revolution was gaining critical mass.

In the aftermath of the burnt-out Beat-counterculture dream of the 1960s, a new generation of young listeners was encountering more intense and far more sombre forms of political, social and environmental awakening. The urgent sound of politicised music from the Third World – notably the Wailers, Peter Tosh and Burning Spear brand of hard, outspoken Jamaican reggae – was now far more relevant and arousing than the mainstream pop artists of the day, such as Donna Summers, Elton John, Earth, Wind and Fire, Mott the Hoople, Slade, David Bowie and The Bee Gees.



Lions of Babylon – not Zion ... A view of London's famous Trafalgar Square in the heart of the City of Westminster, with the Houses of Parliament in the background. It was here, in these controversial houses, that successive British governments would mastermind strategies and policies to dominate large portions of the planet, including Jamaican and much of the West Indies.

Going further, the British capital had long enjoyed a special status as one of the world's most liberal, open, tolerant and inquisitive cities – and the people of greater London must have had some form of sympathetic and encouraging affect on Marley and Wailers during their short, but highly productive English sojourn.

All the splendour of *Exodus* and its slightly less spectacular successor, *Kaya*, however, may not have reached such lustrous heights had it not been for that shocking event that rocked not only Kingston, but many parts of the world: the failed attempt to kill Marley and his wife, Rita, at their home in Kingston on December 3 1976.

London, by default, gave the Wailers all the time and sympathetic energies they needed to indulge themselves in their many recording and mixing sessions at The Fallout Shelter and the Basing Street Studios, and to lay down as much music as they could conceive on the 24-track tapes available to them.

Marley, it is said, arrived in London with about 30 new songs, most of which he had finished writing. He committed 20 or so of these new songs to the London record sessions that would culminate in the release of *Exodus* in May 1977 and *Kaya* in March 1978.

Keeping it tight in Chelsea

Blackwell and Island Records arranged for the men of the wider Wailers family to live in a spacious, four-storey terrace house on Oakley Street in the upmarket suburb of Chelsea not far from the River Thames. The group's American-trained graphics man, artist, photographer and art director Neville Garrick, and Carly Barrett did the cooking in the earlier days

to ensure the band could uphold their strict Rastafari diet. Later, a Londoner, Lucky Gordon, was brought in to be the band's chef-in-residence. The I-Threes – the backing singers of Rita Marley, Marcia Griffiths and Judy Mowatt – stayed a few blocks away in a rented apartment in Earl's Court.

Marley and the Wailers found time to indulge in the local music and street culture, including London's thriving, music-mad Jamaican-West Indies community. Marley, too, had a chance to meet fellow members of the Rastafari organisation to which he belonged, the Twelve Tribes, and obtain considerable amounts of ganja given that he was being hosted by one of the world's freest cities.

Renowned as a passionate soccer player and fan, Marley and the band also found time during their London sojourn to indulge in recreational soccer in nearby parks during their free afternoons. They devoted their evenings, usually working until the early hours of the morning, to making the *Exodus* and *Kaya* albums.

Through a series of mostly buoyant, hard-working and disciplined sessions, Bob Marley and the Wailers recorded and mixed the *Exodus* album (and most of the material for the *Kaya* album) with Chris Blackwell as executive producer in two West London recording studios between January and April 1977.

The first studio, the 24-track, brown-carpeted Fallout Shelter – developed inside a former Victorian basement laundry behind Island Records' headquarters on St Peter's Square in Chiswick – was used for recording in January and February. The second studio, Basing Street Studios – previously a church on Basing Street in Notting Hill – was used for mixing and sequencing the final tracks.

Sound engineer Karl Pitterson managed the recording desk with assistance from Terry Barham and Guy Bidmead. The Wailers' rock-steady bassist, Aston Barrett, Blackwell and Pitterson mixed the final tapes, based on Blackwell's recommended final track listing, which Marley and Aston Barrett approved.

Ironic for Marley and the Wailers, in the aftermath of Bob's home-shooting ordeal and the political tensions back home in Kingston, the daily trek to the Basing Street Studios took them through an area of London that had only recently witnessed furious race riots between young black and white Londoners.



Brotherhood of Rasta cool ... Bob Marley and the Wailers photographed by Adrian Boot for the 1980 album, *Uprising*, the last album to be released by the band while Marley was alive. The album's highlights include *Redemption Song* and *Forever Loving Jah*. By now, the band had been expanded since the *Exodus* sessions to feature another guitarist, Al Anderson, and a second keyboard player, Earl Lindo.

Opting for a more accessible sound

Not only did Marley bring to the world a suite of gorgeous, mostly infectious melodies and some of his most poignant and memorable lyrics, but also new directions in musical structure, rhythm, arrangement and nuance. He explored new sonic possibilities with guitar, aided by the arrival of the Wailers' deft, new lead guitarist, Julian "Junior" Marvin. Marley also introduced seductive horns, arousing keyboard motifs and generous sprinklings of percussion.

Interestingly, too, although Marley produced fewer political songs, he was not losing his political drive, but rather (it seemed) expanding on his themes of love, whether in a brotherly or spiritual sense, or in a romantic-sexual one. He found freedom in London to be himself and to expand his vision, tastes and interests, musically and otherwise.

It has also been said that Marley was a passionate lover and had several romantic partners at the time, one of whom had been crowned Miss World, Cindy Breakspere. It is thought that songs like *Waiting in Vain* were written expressly for her.

Chris Blackwell, who co-produced most of the albums by Bob Marley and the Wailers between 1972 and 1980, set the initiative when the recording sessions were completed by sequencing the songs for *Exodus*, with the deliberate intention of placing the more thought-provoking social and political songs on side one of the original vinyl album (eg, *Guiltiness*, *So Much Things to Say* and *The Heathen*), thereby promoting "Marley the revolutionary and rebel", while placing the sweeter, more dance-orientated or mellower love songs on side two (eg, *Jamming*, *Waiting in Vain* and *One Love*), thereby showcasing "Marley the romantic and rootsy lover".

Embracing Marley as a rock star

By 1977, a thriving Island Records opted to shift up its promotional gears and unveiled, by reggae standards, a lavish promotional campaign for the *Exodus* album.

Now, it was time for Marley and the Wailers to be treated like first-rate rock stars – and the large *Exodus* promotional posters pasted all over London's Underground stations and on those distinctive red double-decker buses encapsulated Island's convictions that this album would be a "winner".

A few weeks after completing the *Exodus* and *Kaya* sessions, Marley and the Wailers commenced a successful, big-budget European tour, which, in turn, further elevated their prestige and album sales. By prevailing reggae conventions, The Wailers were spoilt, finding themselves working on massive stages, using excellent sound equipment and enjoying comfortable buses and hotels.

The *Exodus* European tour opened in Paris, France on May 10 1977 – a week after the album's release. The tour went on to feature a further 13 concerts in six other countries: Belgium (Brussels), the Netherlands (The Hague), Germany (Munich, Heidelberg, Hamburg and Berlin), Sweden (Gothenburg and Stockholm), Denmark (Copenhagen) and Britain (London).

After enjoying a week's rest in London after their Scandinavian leg of their tour, the Wailers closed their *Exodus* European tour with four shows at the Rainbow Theatre (formerly the Finsbury Park Astoria) between June 1 and 4.

To add a distinctive non-rock, Rasta feel to their tour, the band's long-serving art director, Neville Garrick, designed and painted a series of splendid, Rastafari-themed stage backdrops, all of which strengthened the band's evocative reggae sounds and revolutionary messages.

The backdrops featured a giant portrait of Emperor Haile Selassie – the Ras Tafari himself – along with an Ethiopian flag, Rastafari-styled lions – the symbolic Conquering Lion of Judah – and scenes supposedly depicting life in Kingston's squalid Trenchtown ghetto where Marley grew up.

Garrick's much-admired *Exodus* tour backdrop is now housed at Marley's former home on Hope Road, Kingston, which now serves as the Bob Marley Museum.

Marley and the Wailers were at an all-time high that was beyond the scope of the best sacred herb – materially, at least. Riding their high, the band was preparing to cross the Atlantic for their mighty foray into an eagerly awaiting and, by now, much bigger US market. Sadly, events suddenly soured when Marley suffered a terrible injury to his one big toe and the American tour was cancelled.

Just rewards

After enduring cold conditions of their London exile and playing 14 high-energy concerts to zealous European crowds, the global success of *Exodus* brought just rewards to Marley and the Wailers. The album stayed in the UK album charts for 56 weeks and spawned four major UK hit singles: *Exodus*, *Waiting in Vain*, *Jamming* and *One Love/People Get Ready*, the latter part of which was written by the late American soul musician, Curtis Mayfield (June 3 1942 - December 26 1999).

As time passes, *Exodus* seems to grow with a subtle majesty and a wonderful sense of inner spiritual luminosity and joy that make it, for many fans (this writer included), the most accessible, enjoyable, multifaceted and enduring album by Bob Marley and the Wailers. Thirty years later, *Exodus* merits a fresh, explorative reappraisal, which follows – in the form of a short review, starting on this page, and a longer critical appraisal in edition 12 of October 1 2007. ■



Jamming in exile

The 1,000-word *Exodus* review



Strange Brew rating: ★★☆☆

The sweet sounds of protest and polemics

Does the *Exodus* album merit so much fuss and attention? While not deserving *Time* magazine's overly generous award of "music album of the twentieth century", this flawed, but inspired and, at times, celebratory and innovative collection of 10 songs does deserve a slot in a list of Top 500 music albums, writes Johnny Neophyte.

At the start of the northern-hemisphere "summer of punk", in May 1977, Bob Marley and the Wailers wowed the world with their eighth studio album – the sweetly seductive, genre-crossing *Exodus*, which went on to outsell each of its admirable predecessors and generate several radio hits.

Thirty years later, *Exodus* remains an excellent album worthy of a four-star rating, but, sadly, it has a few too many niggling flaws to make it the classic, genre-defining five-star album in the sense of Bob Dylan, The Beatles, Marvin Gaye, Jimi Hendrix, Led Zeppelin, Pink Floyd, The Clash and U2 at their creative peaks.

While the album glows with cheerful hues and features some of Marley's best-written songs, melodically and lyrically, the overall rendering of the songs at times approaches the tedium of meandering jams. The production is patchy at times. One feels the Wailers and their engineering team could have attained a richer, better-balanced and better-enunciated sound.

The guitar work, while at times enchanting and inventive – particularly some of the free-spirited background atmospheric and upfront decorative lead motifs by Julian "Junior" Marvin, could have been stretched out to be more adventurous, emotionally charged and more sympathetic to Marley's shifting themes and earnest visions.

Similarly, Marley at times lacks depth of passion and conviction in his singing – and one feels he could have been more dramatic, urgent and therefore more compelling, especially on some of those more morally and politically charged songs like *Guiltiness*.

On the upside, *Exodus* is a largely fluid, uncontrived and honest suite of 10 songs that flows with an overall sanguine mood, even though many of the messages and themes are dark and, at times, menacingly melancholic and even downright harsh in their reflections on political dominance, moral

complacency, economic injustice and spiritual recalcitrance.

Having been a keen radio listener and by now a seasoned world traveller, Marley – along with the Wailers – had soaked up strains of other musical idioms to expand their soundscapes and make their music – as we imagine Island Records' bosses wanted – more accessible to a growing international audience.

The Jamaican six-piece added elements of funk, soul, R&B, rock, dub and even a dash of disco. If you listen to one of Junior Marvin's better guitar pieces, the main treatment guitar overlays on *The Heathen*, you hear a hint of the tender blues call-and-response sensibility of a notably affable B B King.

Shifting from political to romantic concerns

The metaphysically flavoured *Natural Mystic* – with its precise, snappy "blip-blip" guitar rhythm – is an apt, even if slightly restrained, album opener. Marley sounds happy to go with the flow in a sublime state of surrender and assurance. The muted trumpets add to the mood of the song, which, although outwardly more sanguine, carries a more troubled undercurrent when one explores the lyrics.

So Much to Say sounds muddled, cloudy and uncertain, and the confused arrangement and inferior production exacerbate matters. But, Marley did have a lot on his mind and it seems as if he is not going to manage to address many of these in one supposedly simple song. The lyric, however, about the denigration and ostracism of spiritually charged revolutionary leaders – Jesus Christ, Marcus Garvey and Paul Bogle – is one of his best on the album.



***Sun is shining* ... Bob Marley was one of the most gifted and popular singers and songwriters to have emerged during the latter half of the twentieth century. Unlike many of his peers from the 1970s, his music remains popular today, including the *Exodus* album.**

On the visceral, fluid and hypnotic *Guiltiness*, the Wailers move up a gear with the piquant horn openings and a more profuse vocal interplay with the I-Threes. Marley seems to commit his heart and soul more to this karmically themed song and the guitar work realises a more sympathetic sound to what is a barbed and uncompromising lyric about the world's political and economic misanthropes.

Marley keeps the critique sharp and well directed on *The Heathen*, one of the album's stronger songs – not only because of the comparative strength of the lyric, but, more so, because Marley gives more of himself as a singer, while keyboardist Tyrone Downie and guitarist Marvin each render one of their most explorative and evocative performances.

On the magnificently incessant and urging title track, an extended and meditative jam, the guitar assumes a distinctive funk lyricism to add to the urgency of the "movement of Jah people", which is Marley's expression of his long-cherished dream that many of the Jamaican Rastafari community would one day be able to "repatriate" to their promised holy land of Ethiopia.

Driven by the urgency of the bass line and a more generous-than-usual splashing of cross-rhythms, as well as short, sharp stabs of exigent horns, this song closed the original first side of the vinyl album and made way for the mellower, more accessible songs, mostly focused on love, whether romantic and sexual, or spiritual and brotherly.

The mellower, dub-flavoured *Jamming* lightens the dominant mood created by the first five songs and allows the Wailers to indulge in a happier, more languid assertion of defiance, while also celebrating the cathartic effects of music, sex and spiritual insight in a tantric-like tradition.

Seldom has Marley sounded so sincere and compelling about love matters as on the tender and universally enjoyed *Waiting in Vain*. In this engaging, softer arrangement, Marvin ensures a few fluid licks of soul-tinged, sweet-talking guitar work will woo even the most stubborn or distant of lovers. Marley sustains the mellower, tenderer mood with another love song, *Turn Your Lights Down Low*, but this time revealing more of his impassioned and assertive side.

On the enchantingly melodic and optimistic *Three Little Birds*, Marley has rarely sounded so upbeat, relaxed and spontaneous, creating one of the most unpretentiously poppified songs of his career. The cheerful mood of celebration brings the album full-circle with Marley's *One Love/People Get Ready*, the latter part of which was written by the late American soul singer, Curtis Mayfield.

Moving from themes of hate and injustice and on to personal love, Marley brings *Exodus* to a convincing finale with a spirited celebration of God, life and universal love with a heart that is more optimistic than the one he shares with us on the first half of the album.

Through *Exodus*, Bob Marley and the Wailers created a much wider and more appreciative audience for reggae, while also helping to inspire a new generation of post-Beat protestation and polemics in popular music. Despite some of its niggling flaws, *Exodus* is irresistible, memorable and worth having in a definitive collection of twentieth-century popular music. ■

Other views on *Exodus*

Colin Larkin in the third edition of *All-Time Top 1,000 Albums* (2000): "The singles, *One Love* and *Jamming*, will be familiar to anyone with even a passing acquaintance of Jamaican music, but just as vital are the touchingly vulnerable love song, *Waiting in Vain*, the magnificent title track and the splendid *Guiltiness*."

Uncredited writer in *Rolling Stone's 500 Greatest Albums of All Time* (2005): "As the title suggests, this album wasn't recorded in Jamaica; after Marley took a bullet in a 1976 assassination attempt, he relocated the Wailers to London. But tracks such as *Jamming* are still diffused with the deep essence of reggae and life at home. *Three Little Birds*, for example, had been written on the back step of Marley's home in Kingston, where he would sit and smoke herb. Each time Marley rolled a spliff, he would discard the seeds – and the birds of the song's title would pick them up. 'The music have a purpose,' Marley said, and his spiritual intent was never clearer than on the anthem *One Love*, with its message of redemption and revolution."

Uncredited writer in *Guinness Rockopedia*® (1998): "Recordings in London in February 1977 resulted in the acclaimed *Exodus*, including the mesmeric, rootsy title track, the classic *Natural Mystic* and the hits *Jamming*, *Waiting in Vain*, *Three Little Birds* and *One Love/People Get Ready*. He was at his peak."

Michael Woodsworth in the book, *1,001 Albums You Must Hear Before You Die* (2005): "The album shows Marley exploring contemporary musical movements such as funk, dub and rock, particularly on the heavily political side one, with fades in with the powerful religious groove of *Natural Mystic* and issues an epic trumpet call for audiences to 'listen carefully'. What follows is it worth it: *The Heathen* – a hypnotic battle cry with a substantial sprinkling of psychedelic guitar riffs – and the rousing title track, a call for repatriation marching to a driving dub/disco beat.

"Side two, by contrast, is a lush love-fest, featuring the beautifully crafted smash hit *Jamming*, a groovy ode to dancing; the sublime *Waiting in Vain*, a tender ballad about unrequited love; and the simple, yet irrepressible *One Love* and *Three Little Birds*, which ostensibly wrote the recipe for the upbeat reggae anthem – ganga-thick bass, palm-tree chords and a positive chorus – that musicians worldwide have worked in vain trying to improve upon ever since."

The editors of *Time*, in acknowledging *Exodus* as their magazine's album of the twentieth century in 2000: "Every song is a classic, from the message of love to the anthem of revolution ... but more than that, the album is a political and cultural nexus, drawing inspiration from the Third World and then giving it voice the world over."

Greil Marcus, in edition 243 of *Rolling Stone* (July 14 1977): "It is very hard to make any sort of more than superficial judgement on a Wailers album until one knows who it is made for – Jamaicans? American whites? Jamaicans in England? whites in England? Africans? – I don't know. What bothers me is that I have the feeling Marley, likely pressed by his label [Island] to continue the search for an American breakthrough without losing his original base in Jamaica and England, does not know either. The complete lack of extremes on *Exodus* – of deep emotion, intensely drawn situations or memorable arrangements and melodies – does not mean Marley is laying safe, but it does seem to imply some sort of paralysis that must be broken before he can again strike with real power." ■



Album fact-file

Release date: May 3 1977

Record label: Island Records (Vinyl LP: ILPS/ICT 9498. CD: first issued in March 1987 – CID 9498; reissued by Tuff Gong in November 1990 – RRCD 6; remastered CD with two bonus tracks released by Tuff Gong and Island Records in November 2001 – 548898-2; and deluxe two-CD, 25-track version issued by Tuff Gong and Island Records in 2001 – catalogue number unknown)

Recording studios and dates: The Fallout Shelter, London (recording over Jan-Feb 1977) and Basing Street Studios, London (mixing over Mar-Apr 1977)

Principal songwriter: Bob Marley

Producers: Bob Marley and the Wailers

Engineers: Karl Pitterson assisted by Terry Barham and Guy Bidmead

Sound mixing: Aston Barrett, Chris Blackwell and Karl Pitterson

Track sequencing: Chris Blackwell with approval from Bob Marley and Aston Barrett

Original length: Almost 37.5 minutes

The musicians

The Wailers

Bob Marley – vocals, guitar and percussion
Julian "Junior" Marvin – lead guitar
Tyrone Downie – keyboards, percussion and backing vocals
Aston "Family Man" Barrett – bass guitar, guitar and percussion
Carlton Barrett – drums and percussion
Alvin "Seeco" Patterson – percussion

I-Threes singers

Marcia Griffith
Rita Marley
Judy Mowatt

Guest horn players

Glen DaCosta – saxophone
Vin Gordon – trombone
David Madden – trumpet

The songs

- 01 *Natural Mystic*
- 02 *So Much Things to Say*
- 03 *Guiltiness*
- 04 *The Heathen*
- 05 *Exodus*
- 06 *Jamming*
- 07 *Waiting in Vain*
- 08 *Turn Your Lights Down Low*
- 09 *Three Little Birds*
- 10 *One Love/People Get Ready*
(Bob Marley/Curtis Mayfield)

All songs written by Bob Marley, except for 10b, by the late Curtis Mayfield (1942-1999).

Art direction and cover design: Neville Garrick

US chart position: 20

UK chart position: 8

Estimated world sales: unknown

Awards: *Time* magazine's album of the 20th century

The book of *Exodus*

A celebration of defining music and times in print

In the aftermath of several good to excellent books being published on Bob Marley and the Wailers (notably the Timothy White book, *Catch a Fire*), a new one runs the risk of being another "so what" experience. The latest book on Marley, *Exodus: Exile 1977*, however, is worth reading if you are a fan of Marley and his popular 1977 album.

Bob Marley devotees, reggae enthusiasts, passionate historians of the music of the 1970s and anti-Babylon activists should be among those who have welcomed – or will embrace – the recent release in South Africa of a lovingly compiled book that celebrates the

thirtieth anniversary of making and releasing Bob Marley and the Wailers' eighth studio album, *Exodus*.

This well-researched, written and illustrated book, *Exodus: Exile 1977*, briefly explores the prelude to the making of *Exodus*, the making of the album, the subsequent European tour of mid-1977 and the Wailers' eventual return to their troubled Kingston a year or so later.

Featuring 144 pages of rich visual and literary insights into a unique talent and an unusual period, this lavishly and lovingly produced memoir and celebration is devoted mostly to a photographic archive of the times (1976-1978) and a series of short essays and accounts of Marley, his music and lyrics, his hometown and his London sojourn of 1977.

Island Records founder Chris Blackwell's short, inspirational introduction sets the mood. This is an easy book to read in one or two sittings.

Veritable choice of contributors

The contributing writers include Adrian Boot, Lloyd Bradley, Robert Christgau, Vivien Goldman and Linton Kwesi Johnson. Most of the wonderful photographic images (mainly in black-and-white) come from a devoted and sharp-eyed Kate Simon, one of the few Babylonian photographers who ever got to work closely with Marley and the Wailers.

Between them, these contributors have not only created a warm, inviting and honest account of Marley and the Wailers during their wider *Exodus* period, but have also provided some useful insight into the political malaise and social mood of Jamaica. Also featured are a few accounts of the vibrant, new London music and cultural scene of 1977 – the year that British punk and ska began their onslaught in earnest.

At little more than R400 a copy, some fans may feel the book is a little expensive, but this hardcover edition is beautifully conceived, designed and printed. As a bonus, you get a remastered version of the album featuring the original 10 songs and two bonus songs – the extended version of *Jamming* and the long version of the single, *Punky Reggae Party*.

In a nutshell, this book – although slice-of-life and sometimes divergent in its approach to the great man, his music and his time – brings one a lot closer to appreciating Bob Marley and his musical legacy.

When I last looked, the book was available at some of the branches of Estoril Books and Exclusive Books in greater Johannesburg.

Here are the publishing details should you want to order this book on impulse: Williams, Richard (editor). *Exodus: Exile 1977*. London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 2007. ISBN-13: 978-0-297-85322-0. ■

Exodus quotable quotes

Music producer and founder of Island Records, **Chris Blackwell**: "When an artist is really hot, they're surrounded by a special kind of energy. And that kind of energy was all around Bob Marley when he arrived in London [in January 1977] with the tracks that would become *Exodus*. It was his time."

British music writer, **Lloyd Bradley**: "The *Exodus* album could only have happened in London in 1977. While it may be filed under 'reggae' in music stores, as an album it owes more to Kensington than it does to Kingston and is so much a product of the year it was made that the *Time* magazine accolade of album of the century becomes even more remarkable."

British music writer and former Island Records publicist, **Vivien Goldman**: "The broad arc of *Exodus* is an archetypal survival narrative so powerful that it seemed as if the album had sprung full-grown from Marley's head as a strategic, spiritual self-help manual on surviving conflict and betrayal and attaining happiness. Yet when these tracks were cut, there was no idea of the running order later selected from a cornucopia of material by Chris Blackwell and instantly approved by Bob and Family Man [Aston Barrett]."

British poet and singer, **Linton Kwesi Johnson**: "Marley's 'lyrical genius' [borrowed from Kwame Dawes] lies in his ability to translate the personal into the political, the private into the public, the particular into the universal with a seeming simplicity that guarantees accessibility. The lyrics of the songs from *Exodus* are ample evidence of this." ■

Classic reggae albums

Horace Andy: *Skylarking* (date unknown)
Beenie Man: *Three Against War* (date unknown)
Big Youth: *Screaming Target* (1973)
Big Youth: *Dreadlocks Dread* (1976)
Black Uhuru: *Red* (1981)
Black Uhuru: *Brutal* (1986)
Born Jamaicans: *Yardcore* (date unknown)
Bounty Killer: *Jamaica's Most Wanted* (date unknown)
Buju Banton: *Mr Mention* (date unknown)
Buju Banton: *Inna Heights* (date unknown)
Burning Spear: *Marcus Garvey* (1975)
Burning Spear: *Garvey's Ghost* (1976)
Burning Spear: *Man in the Hills* (1976)
Burning Spear: *Harder Than the Rest* (1979)
Burning Spear: *Social Living* (1980)
Burning Spear: *Hail HIM* (1980)
Keith Hudson: *Flesh of My Skin, Blood of My Blood*
I Roy: *Presenting* (1973)
I Roy: *Many Moods of I Roy* (1975)
I Roy: *Crisus Time* (1979)
I Roy: *Whap 'n Bap 'n* (1980)
Gregory Isaacs: *Cool Ruler* (1978)
Gregory Isaacs: *Soon Forward* (1979)
Gregory Isaacs: *Lonely Lover* (1980)
Israel Vibration: *The Same Song* (1979)
Israel Vibration: *Unconquered People* (1980)
Linton Kwesi Johnson: *Dread, Beat and Blood* (1979)

Linton Kwesi Johnson: *Forces of Victory* (1979)
 Linton Kwesi Johnson: *Bass Culture* (1980)
 Linton Kwesi Johnson: *Making History* (1984)
 Linton Kwesi Johnson: *Tings an' Times* (1991)
 Diana King: *Think Like a Girl* (date unknown)
 The Mighty Diamonds: *Right Time* (1976)
 The Mighty Diamonds: *Deeper Roots* (1979)
 Augustus Pablo: *King Tubby Meets Rockers Uptown* (1976)
 Augustus Pablo:
King Tubby Meets Rockers in a Fire House (1980)
 Augustus Pablo: *East of the River Nile* (1981)
 Lee Perry: *Super Ape* (1976)
 Prince Jazzbo: *Choice of Version* (date unknown)
 Shaggy: *Midnite Lover* (date unknown)
 Sizzla: *Black Woman and Child* (date unknown)
 Toots and the Maytalls: *From the Roots* (1973)
 Toots and the Maytalls: *Reggae Got Soul* (1976)
 Peter Tosh: *Legalize It* (1976)
 Peter Tosh: *Equal Rights* (1977)
 Peter Tosh: *Bush Doctor* (1978)
 Peter Tosh: *Wanted Dread or Alive* (1981)
 UB40: *UB44* (1982)
 UB40: *Labour of Love* (1983)
 UB40: *Geffery Morgan* (1984)
 UB40: *Baggariddim* (1985)
 UB40: *UB40* (1988)
 The Upsetters: *Scratch and Co* (1980)
 The Upsetters: *Blackboard Jungle Dub* (1981)
 U-Roy: *U-Roy* (1974)
 U-Roy: *Dread In-a Babylon* (1976)
 U-Roy: *Jah Son of Africa* (1979)
 U-Roy: *Version Galore* (date unknown)
 Bunny Wailer: *Blackheart Man* (1976)
 Bunny Wailer: *Bunny Wailer Sings the Wailers* (1980)
 Bunny Wailer: *Time Will Tell: A Tribute to Bob Marley* (1981)
 Bunny Wailer: *Rock 'n' Groove* (1981)
 Bunny Wailer: *Roots Radics Rockers Reggae* (1983)
 Bunny Wailer: *Rootsman Skanking* (1987)
 The Wailers: *Wailing Wailers* (date unknown)
 Yellowman: *Operation Radication* (date unknown)

This list is not definitive, but is intended to provide a rough guide for anyone who may want to expand their reggae listening – or at least make an adventurous start in exploring this alluring genre. Avoid wannabe and quasi-reggae bands like Inner Circle and Third World. ■

Harare concert, April 1980



Natty dread it

in-a Zimbabwe

The people of Zimbabwe's free concert by Bob Marley and the Wailers – sponsored by the then new Government of Zimbabwe – on the outskirts of Harare on April 18 1980 remains one of the best music concerts I have attended over the last 30 years, even though it was enshrouded in a surreal air and marred by the lethargy and bewilderment of a largely indifferent local crowd.

During 1979, as this landlocked Southern African state was undergoing its negotiated political metamorphosis from the white, rightist, Ian Smith-led Rhodesia to the black, leftist, Robert Mugabe-led Zimbabwe, Bob Marley and the Wailers released one of their strongest and most politically charged albums, *Survival* – THAT memorable one emblazoned with 90 postcolonial-era African flags.

Amid its 10 aural gems, featuring pan-African cries for unity and the emancipation of people still held hostage by colonial powers, one striking song – *Zimbabwe* – wooed the hearts and minds of the politburo that would form the heart of Zimbabwe's first postcolonial government.

So impressed were the ZANU-PF politburo members with Marley's new album and, particularly, the arousing *Zimbabwe* anthem, they invited Marley and the Wailers to perform a one-off independence celebration concert for the people of Zimbabwe.

Marley and his merry Wailers first flew from Jamaica to London, where they hired the big-concert sound gear they would need to entertain residents of Harare for what was then the city's biggest concert to date, having been subjected to 15 years of international political, cultural and economic sanctions and ostracism.

I remember making the long trek from the northernmost outskirts of Harare to the southernmost ones, with a girlfriend of the day, and waiting expectantly for the giant, solid-steel security gates of the Rufaro football stadium to be opened. When these ominous-looking black gates were eventually flung open by bewildered-looking security guards, the unexpected stampede of the frenzied crowd got me panicking that I was about to be crushed to death – probably every hardcore concertgoers worst nightmare.

Ironically, the opening act – a tepid and amateurish local mbaqanga-styled band called Job's Workshop – got the capacity crowd warmed up, with hundreds of people getting up to dance with gleeful abandon in one of those immaculate, cool April nights that make Harare one of the sweetest places to be on Earth during that time of the year.

An unfamiliar sound

Besides a handful of cool and streetwise local fans who seemed to know a little about reggae and the Wailers, most of the hushed and dazed crowd barely responded to the music of Marley and the Wailers.

Outwardly, at least, it seemed that their revolutionary roots music was far too exotic – just a mesmerising drone of unfamiliar sounds roaming in the gloaming. I even remember some members of the crowd asking me to explain Jamaica’s location because they had not heard of this country. I also remember trying to explain the significance of Marley, his music and the Rastafari movement. It all seemed so bizarre and surreal.

Nevertheless, Marley, the I-Threes and the rest of the band stormed their way through a veritable Best of the Wailers Songbook, with much of the emphasis being on the harder-edged political songs like *Get Up, Stand Up*, *Exodus*, *Africa Unite* and, inevitably, the new African liberation anthem, *Zimbabwe*. Throughout the concert, Marley barely eased his high-energy antics, taking his front-man role to the limits, dancing, singing, strumming, chanting and, for the most part, keeping those seemingly electrified dreadlocks dancing into the night.

That night, despite his modest stature as man of five feet and four inches, Marley was a giant among his fellow humans. Although it was not articulated in any palpable way, it seemed that Marley – at long last – was enunciating his childlike ecstasy to be dancing two metres or so above African soil, bringing some of his most powerful messages to an audience that mattered deeply to him.

The I-Threes, including Marley’s former wife, Rita, were in peak form, keeping their voices keen, impassioned and imploring as though there would be no tomorrow. Best of all, though, especially if you had a backstage media pass, was the opportunity to stand in the wings and watch, little more than three metres away, the Wailers’ rhythm section blast their way through all those majestically sung, politically charged songs with a remarkable amount of cohesion, confidence and clarity, keeping the music flowing in what some of us hoped would be an endless night of rootsy reggae celebrations.

I remember watching in amazement as drummer Carlton Barrett and percussionist Seeco Patterson wove their magical rhythms with shamanic abandon, if not transcendence – and trying to figure out in my rhythm-challenged cranium how they sustained those distinctive reggae beats. I gave up after a few songs – and decided it was better just to flow with their celebratory and impassioned grooves with Zen-like surrender.

Rasta smoke machine

In a country that had been fiercely rightwing, provincial, reactionary and largely uptight, Zimbabwe long boasted having a strong anti-drug culture and a virtual intolerance for any free and florid expressions of counterculture behaviour. This was a country

where an innocent teenager would get a criminal record for life for being found in possession of one marijuana seed – even if it had been “planted” surreptitiously by a plain-clothed member of the country’s notorious police drug squad.

Against this backdrop, then, it was amazing to see all three sides of the main stage facing the audience at Rufaro Stadium being heavily stonewalled by a grim-looking group of local policemen armed with batons. While they stood in their uncool, funereal fashion, one of the Wailers’ nimble-fingered roadies devoted much of his concert-time to rolling the largest spliffs I have ever seen.

Ceremoniously, these were lit and passed from one energised Wailer to the other, while the cops supposedly turned a blind eye. It was, however, impossible to turn a blocked nose! The sweet smell of sacred herb was far too pungent to be ignored.

By the time the band was halfway through its enchanting set, there was massive cyanose, almost cumulus-like, pall of ganga smoke hovering over the stage. It looked as if Queen or some other big-name, 1970s pomp-rock band had brought their smoke machine to town with a trainee operator who failed to memorise the location of the all-important OFF switch.

That night some of us managed to get stoned without having a hit – and it all seemed like an integral part of the ritual of having Bob Marley and the Wailers in town.

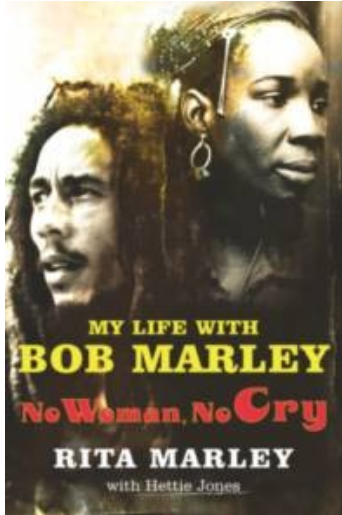
Every time I catch a whiff of ganga drifting somewhere in the streets of Johannesburg, a part of me inevitably floats back to that memorable April night in Harare and, to this day, I still see the luminous ghost of Bob Marley dancing like an ecstatic shaman while he burns down Babylon and another mother of all spliffs. ■

Marley books to investigate

Digging deeper into the man and his music

- Booker, Cedella Marley. **Bob Marley, My Son**. Taylor Trade Publishing, 2003.
- Davis, Stephen. **Bob Marley**. Schenkman Books, 1983.
- Dawes, Kwame. **Bob Marley: Lyrical Genius**. Sanctuary, 2002.
- Farley, Christopher John. **Before the Legend: The Rise of Bob Marley**. Amistad, 2006.
- Goldman, Vivien. **The Book of Exodus**. Aurum Press, 2006.
- Lazell, Barry. **Bob Marley: The Illustrated Legend, 1945-1981**. Hamlyn, 1994.
- Marley, Cedella. **The Boy from Nine Miles: The Early Life of Bob Marley**. Hampton Roads, 2002.
- Marley, Rita, with Adrian Boot and Chris Salewicz. **Bob Marley: Songs of Freedom**. Viking Studio Books, 1992.
- Marley, Rita, with Hettie Jones. **No Woman, No Cry: My Life with Bob Marley**. Hyperion, 2004.

McCann, Ian: **Bob Marley: In His Own Words**. Omnibus Press, 1993.
 McCann, Ian, and Harry Hawke. **Bob Marley: The Complete Guide to His Music**. Omnibus Press, 2004.
 Taylor, Don. **Marley and Me: The Real Bob Marley Story**. Barricade Books, 1995.
 White, Timothy. **Catch a Fire: The Life of Bob Marley**. Owl Books, 1983.
 Whitney, Malika Lee, and Dermott Hussey. **Bob Marley: Reggae King of the World**. Pomegranate Artbooks, 1984.
 Williams, Richard (editor). **Exodus: Exile 1977 (Bob Marley and the Wailers)**. Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 2007.
 Wint, Eleanor, and Carolyn Cooper. **Bob Marley: The Man and His Music**. Arawak Publications, 2003.



Sharing intimate moments ... Bob Marley's former wife, Rita Marley, was born Alpharita Constantia Anderson on July 26 1946 at Santiago de Cuba and bore Marley three (of his 12 or 13) children, including son David – nicknamed Ziggy – who would also pursue a successful career in music. She married Marley in Kingston on February 10 1966. Rita Marley was an integral part of Marley's music as a member of the I-Threes vocal group and, after the singer's death, she served as a custodian of his estate and legacy. Today – according to the Wikipedia online encyclopaedia – she lives in the village of Konkonduru near the town of Aburi in Ghana.

Key albums of 1977

Punk goes mainstream

- Asleep at the Wheel: *The Wheel*
- The Band: *Islands*
- Blue Oyster Cult: *Spectres*
- Boston: *Boston*
- David Bowie: *Low*
- David Bowie: *Heroes*
- Jackson Browne: *Running on Empty*
- Cheap Trick: *In Color*
- Eric Clapton: *Slowhand*
- The Clash: *The Clash*
- Elvis Costello: *My Aim Is True*
- The Damned: *Damned Damned Damned*
- Rick Danko: *Rick Danko*
- Ian Drury: *New Boots and Panties!!*
- Electric Light Orchestra: *Out of the Blue*
- Brian Eno: *Before and After Science*
- Fleetwood Mac: *Rumours*
- Peter Gabriel: *Peter Gabriel (I)*
- Al Green: *The Belle Album*
- Richard Hell and the Voidoids: *Blank Generation*
- Levon Helm: *Levon Helm and the RCO All Stars*
- Jethro Tull: *Songs from the Wood*
- Bill Joel: *The Stranger*
- Kraftwerk: *Trans-Europe Express*
- Little Feat: *Time Loves a Hero*
- Lynyrd Skynyrd: *Street Survivors*
- John Martyn: *One World*
- Meat Loaf: *Bat out of Hell*
- Randy Newman: *Little Criminals*
- Ted Nugent: *Cat Scratch Fever*
- Graham Parker: *Stick to Me*
- Parliament: *Funkentelechy vs the Placebo Syndrome*
- Teddy Pendergrass: *Teddy Pendergrass*
- The Persuasions: *Chirpin'*
- Pink Floyd: *Animals*
- Iggy Pop: *Lust for Life*
- The Ramones: *Leave Home*
- The Ramones: *Rocket to Russia*
- Santana: *Moonflower*
- Gil Scot-Heron: *Bridges*
- Sea Level: *Sea Level*
- Bob Seger: *Night Moves*
- Sex Pistols: *Never Mind the Bollocks, Here's the Sex Pistols*
- Southside Johnny and the Asbury Jukes: *This Time It's for Real*
- Steely Dan: *Aja*
- The Stranglers: *Rattus Norvegicus*
- Suicide: *Suicide*
- Supertramp: *Even in the Quietest Moments*
- Talking Heads: *Talking Heads: 77*
- James Taylor: *JT*
- Television: *Marquee Moon*
- The Temptations: *Anthology*
- Throbbing Gristle: *Second Annual Report*
- Johnny Thunders and the Heartbreakers: *LAMF*

- Pete Townshend: *Rough Mix*
- Tom Waits: *Small Change*
- Muddy Waters: *Hard Again*
- Weather Report: *Heavy Weather*
- Dennis Wilson: *Pacific Ocean Blue*
- Johnny Winter: *Nothin' but the Blues*
- Wire: *Pink Flag*
- Steve Winwood: *Steve Winwood*
- Stevie Wonder: *Looking Back* (compilation)

Removing the vex from vexillology



Powerful leonine symbol ... The distinctive flag used as one of the most popular symbols of the Rastafari faith with its distinctive pan-Africanist bands of green, yellowish-gold and red – inspired by Marcus Garvey's return-to-Africa ideals – with the crowned and flag-bearing lion.

This latter symbol is the biblical Lion of Judah, an emblem of the Tribe of Judah, a lineage to which Emperor Haile Selassie is said to have belonged. The flag he bears is the Ethiopian national flag, while the crown represents the one borne by Selassie, whom the faith's devotees celebrated and worshipped as Christ Incarnate or the Second Christ, as prophesied in the *Bible's* Book of Revelations.

The Rastafari faith has an estimated one-million adherents worldwide, most of whom live in Africa and the West Indies. The faith stemmed from the African Orthodox Church founded by Jamaican revolutionary and political activist Marcus Garvey in the 1930s.



Flying the Afrocentric colours ... The pan-African tricolour – also known as the Black Liberation flag, the Afro-American flag and the UNIA flag – was adopted in August 1920 as the official flag and emblem of the Universal Negro Improvement Association (UNIA) and the African Communities League. ■



Beloved Jah ... A notably dignified portrait of His Imperial Majesty, Emperor Haile Selassie I (1892-1975), a former head of state of Ethiopia (1930-1974) who was revered as an emissary or messiah of God and even higher spiritual titles, and known as Ras Tafari and Jah. Extensive information on Selassie, Ethiopia, the Rastafari faith and related topics is available from the Internet using a popular search engine such as Google or Yahoo.

Must-have albums

Great eight

***Catch a Fire* (1973)**
***Burnin'* (1973)**
***Natty Dread* (1975)**
***Rastaman Vibration* (1976)**
***Exodus* (1977)**
***Kaya* (1978)**
***Survival* (1979)**
***Uprising* (1980)**



Michael Waddacor

Independent writer and editor Michael Waddacor has been writing on rock music since 1979, with his review of Bob Marley and the Wailers' *Survival* being one of his first published album reviews. Among other highlights of a largely chequered career, he is a former music editor and critic of the *Rand Daily Mail* newspaper, a former editor of *Top 40* magazine and a former researcher and co-host (with Charlotte Lavigne) of 5FM's Saturday lunchtime radio show, *Vintage Vinyl*. He also wrote liner notes for three of the South African rock albums released in 2000 and 2001 as part of Fresh Music's *RetroFresh* series of 1980s album reissues.

The Zimbabwe Government's eleventh-hour draconian interjection to prohibit him – on the grounds of being “white” and, therefore by default, “a right-wing reactionary” – from interviewing Bob Marley, for *The Herald* newspaper of Zimbabwe in April 1980, after high-level arrangements had been made with Island Records' PR staff in London, remains one of the biggest disappointments of his almost 30 years of writing on music. ■



In memory of Bob Marley – songwriter, poet, musician, revolutionary and mystic

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Thank you, Brian Currin, of S A Rock Digest

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