



Bob's legacy is reaching out over the decades. It has achieved a true value through hard work and Bob's dedication. He's still serving the people.

I first met Bob in 1965, when he was still living in a ghetto. He was a young man and he was so softly spoken I thought at first he was a little snobbish. When I got to know him, however, I quickly discovered there was a consciousness about Bob that made him stand out.

I was a nurse then, though I wanted to be a singer. I loved it so much. Bob and his friends, Peter Tosh and Bunny Wailer, were living on the street and they used to wander past my house every day. I used to see Peter and tell him I could sing.

Eventually Peter and Bunny would come my side of the fence and talk but Bob stayed aloof, keeping to the street. One day Bunny gave me a letter from Bob - he was too shy to tell me in person how much he liked me. That was how we came to know each other.

Through the years I came to know that Bob was someone God had sent for a purpose. Knowing him, this man, I wish that we will all see him again.

Bob was a special person. Whatever he did in his lifetime will never have been in vain. He never took himself to be as important as others see him yet we all know he had the ability to shake the world.

Rita Marley





Bob Marley gave the world brilliant and evocative music; his work stretched across nearly two decades and yet still remains timeless and universal. Bob Marley & The Wailers worked their way into the very fabric of our lives.

"He's taken his place alongside James Brown and Sly Stone as a pervasive influence on r&b," says the American critic Timothy White, author of the acclaimed Bob Marley biography *'Catch A Fire'*. "His music was pure rock, in the sense that it was a public expression of a private truth."

It is important to consider the roots of this legend; the first superstar from the Third World. Bob Marley was one of the most charismatic and challenging performers of our time and his music could have been created from only one source: the street culture of Jamaica.

The days of slavery are a recent folk memory on the island. They have permeated the very essence of Jamaica's culture, from the plantations of the mid-nineteenth century to the popular music of our own times. Although slavery was abolished in 1834, the Africans and their descendants developed their own culture with half-remembered African traditions mingled with the customs of the British.

This hybrid culture, of course, had parallels with the emerging black society in America. Jamaica, however, remained a rural community which, without the industrialisation of its northern neighbour, was more closely rooted to its African legacy.

By the start of the twentieth century that African heritage was given political expression by Marcus Garvey, a shrewd Jamaican preacher and entrepreneur who founded the Universal Negro Improvement Association (UNIA). The organisation advocated the creation of a new black state in Africa, free from white domination. As the first step in this dream, Garvey founded the Black Star Line, a steamship company which, in popular imagination at least, was to take the black population from America and the Caribbean back to their homeland of Africa.

A few years later, in 1930, Ras Tafari Makonnen was crowned Emperor of Ethiopia and took a new name, Haile Selassie. The Emperor claimed to be the 225th ruler in a line that stretched back to Menelik, the son of Solomon and Sheba.

The Marcus Garvey followers in Jamaica, consulting their New Testaments for a sign, believed Haile Selassie was the black king whom Garvey had prophesied would deliver the Negro race. It was the start of a new religion called Rastafari.

Fifteen years later, in Rhoden Hall to the north of Jamaica, Bob Marley was born. His mother was an eighteen-year-old black girl called Cedella Booker while his father was Captain Norval Marley, a 50-year-old white quartermaster attached to the British West Indian Regiment.

The couple married in 1944 and Robert Nesta Marley was born on February 6, 1945. Norval Marley's family, however, applied constant pressure and, although he provided financial support, the Captain seldom saw his son who grew up in the rural surroundings of St. Ann to the north





For country people in Jamaica, the capital Kingston was the city of their dreams, the land of opportunity. The reality was that Kingston had little work to offer, yet through the Fifties and Sixties, people flooded to the city. The newcomers, despite their rapid disillusion with the capital, seldom returned to the rural parishes. Instead, they squatted in the shanty towns that grew up in western Kingston, the most notorious of which was Trench Town (so named because it was built over a ditch that drained the sewage of old Kingston).

Bob Marley, barely into his teens, moved to Kingston in the late Fifties. Like many before them, Marley and his mother eventually settled in Trench Town. His friends were other street youths, also impatient with their place in Jamaican society. One friend in particular was Neville O'Riley Livingston, known as Bunny, with whom Bob took his first hesitant musical steps.

The two youths were fascinated by the extraordinary music they could pick up from American radio stations. In particular there was one New Orleans station broadcasting the latest tunes by such artists as Ray Charles, Fats Domino, Curtis Mayfield and Brook Benton. Bob and Bunny also paid close attention to the black vocal groups, such as the Drifters, who were extremely popular in Jamaica.

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a welding shop, Bob spent all his free time with Bunny, perfecting their vocal abilities. They were helped by one of Trench Town's famous residents, the singer Joe Higgs who held informal lessons for aspiring vocalists in the tenement yards. It was at one of those sessions that Bob and Bunny met Peter McIntosh, another youth with big musical ambitions.

In 1962 Bob Marley auditioned for a local music entrepreneur called Leslie Kong. Impressed by the quality of Bob's vocals, Kong took the young singer into the studio to cut some tracks, the first of which, called "Judge Not", was released on the Beverley's label. It was Marley's first record.

The other tunes - including "Terror" and "One Cup Of Coffee" - received no airplay and attracted little attention. At the very least, however, they confirmed Marley's ambition to be a singer. By the following year Bob had decided the way forward was with a group. He linked up with Bunny and Peter to form The Wailing Wailers.

The new group had a mentor, a Rastafarian hand drummer called Alvin Patterson, who introduced the youths to Clement Dodd, a record producer in Kingston. In the summer of 1963 Dodd auditioned The Wailing Wailers and, pleased with the results, agreed to record the group.

It was the time of ska music, the hot new dancefloor music with a pronounced back-beat. Its origins incorporated influences from Jamaica's African traditions but, more immediately, from the heady beats of New Orleans' rhythm & blues disseminated from American radio stations and the burgeoning sound systems on the streets of Kingston. Clement - Sir Coxson - Dodd was one of the city's finest sound system men.



The Wailing Wailers released their first single, "Simmer Down", on the Coxson label during the last weeks of 1963. By the following January it was number one in the Jamaican charts, a position it held for the next two months. The group - Bob, Bunny and Peter together with Junior Braithwaite and two back-up singers, Beverly Kelso and Cherry Smith - were big news.

"Simmer Down" caused a sensation in Jamaica and The Wailers began recording regularly for Coxson's Studio One company. The group's music also found new themes, identifying with the Rude Boy street rebels in the Kingston slums. Jamaican music had found a tough, urban stance.

Over the next few years The Wailing Wailers put out some thirty sides that properly established the group.

Despite their popularity, the economics of keeping the group together proved too much and the three other members - Junior Braithwaite, Beverly Kelso and Cherry Smith - quit. Bob's mother, Cedella, had remarried and moved to Delaware in the United States where she had saved sufficient money to send her son an airticket. The intention was for Bob to start a new life. But before he moved to America, Bob met a young girl called Rita Anderson and, on February 10, 1966, they were married.

Marley's stay in America was short-lived. He worked just enough to finance his real ambition: music. In October 1966 Bob Marley, after eight months in America, returned to Jamaica. It was a formative period in his life. The Emperor Haile Selassie had made a state visit to Jamaica in April that year. By the time Bob re-settled in Kingston the Rastafarian movement had gained new credence.

Marley was increasingly drawn towards Rastafari. In 1967 Bob's music reflected his new beliefs. Gone were the Rude Boy anthems; in their place was a growing commitment to spiritual and social issues, the cornerstone of his real legacy.

Marley joined up with Bunny and Peter to re-form the group, now known as The Wailers. Rita, too, had started a singing career, having a big hit with "Pied Piper", a cover of an English pop song. Jamaican music, however, was changing. The bouncy ska beat had been replaced by a slower, more sensual rhythm called rock steady.

The Wailers' new commitment to Rastafarianism brought them into conflict with Coxson Dodd and, determined to control their own destiny, the group formed their own record label, 'N' Soul. Despite a few early successes, however, The Wailers' business naivete proved too much and the label folded in late 1967.

The group survived, however, initially as songwriters for a company associated with the American singer Johnny Nash who, the following decade, was to have an international smash with Marley's "Stir It Up". The Wailers also met up with Lee Perry, whose production genius had transformed recording studio techniques into an artform.



His Imperial Majesty
Haile Selassie

The Perry / Wailers combination resulted in some of the finest music the band ever made. Such tracks as "Soul Rebel", "Duppy Conqueror", "400 Years" and "Small Axe" were not only classics, but they defined the future direction of reggae.

In 1970 Aston 'Family Man' Barrett and his brother Carlton (bass and drums respectively) joined The Wailers. They had been the rhythm nucleus of Perry's studio band, working with The Wailers on those ground-breaking sessions. They were also unchallenged as Jamaica's hardest rhythm section, a status that was to remain undiminished during the following decade. The band's reputation was, at the start of the Seventies, an extraordinary one throughout the Caribbean. But internationally The Wailers were still unknown.

In the summer of 1971 Bob accepted an invitation from Johnny Nash to accompany him to Sweden where the American singer had taken a film score commission. While in Europe Bob secured a recording contract with CBS which was also, of course, Nash's company. By the spring of 1972 the entire Wailers were in London, ostensibly promoting their CBS single "Reggae On Broadway". Instead they found themselves stranded in Britain.

As a last throw of the dice Bob Marley walked into the Basing Street Studios of Island Records and asked to see its founder Chris Blackwell. The company, of course, had been one of the prime movers behind the rise of Jamaican music in Britain; indeed Blackwell had launched Island in Jamaica during the late fifties.

By 1962, however, Blackwell had realised that, by re-locating Island to London, he could represent all his Jamaican rivals in Britain. The company was re-born in May, 1962, selling initially to Britain's Jamaican population centred mostly in London and Birmingham.

The hot ska rhythm, however, quickly became established as a burgeoning dancefloor beat with the then growing Mod culture and, in 1964, Blackwell produced a worldwide smash with "My Boy Lollipop", a popska tune by the young Jamaican singer Millie.

Through the Sixties Island had grown to become a major source of Jamaican music, from ska and rocksteady to reggae. The company had also embraced white rock music, with such bands and artists as Traffic, Jethro Tull, King Crimson, Cat Stevens, Free and Fairport Convention so, when Bob Marley made his first moves with Island in 1971, he was connecting with the hottest independent in the world at that time.



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Blackwell knew of Marley's Jamaican reputation. The group was offered a deal unique in Jamaican terms. The Wailers were advanced £4000 to make an album and, for the first time, a reggae band had access to the best recording facilities and were treated in much the same way as, say, their rock group contemporaries. Before this deal, it was considered that reggae sold only on singles and cheap compilation albums. The Wailers' first album "Catch A Fire" broke all the rules: it was beautifully packaged and heavily promoted. It was the start of a long climb to international fame and recognition.

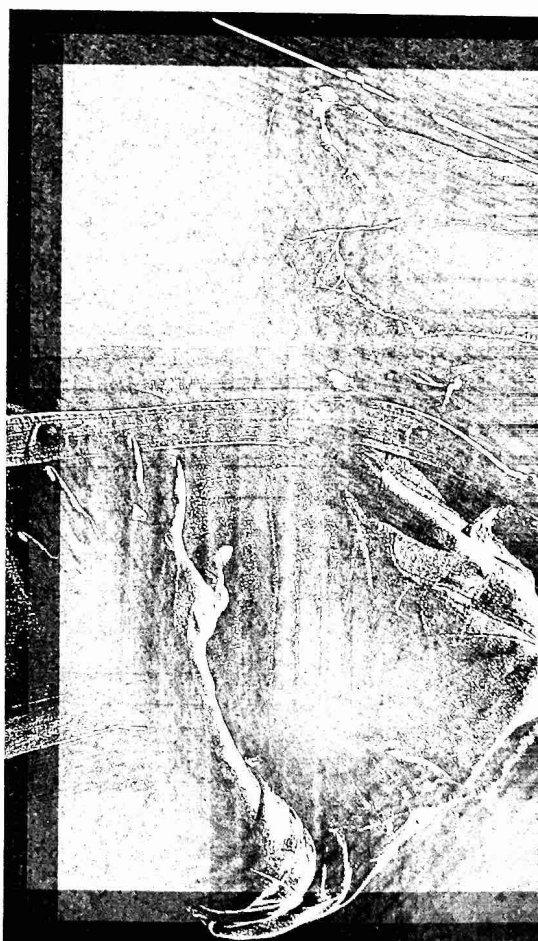
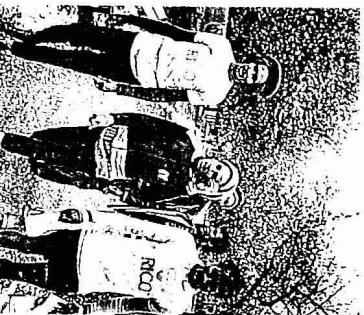
Years later the acclaimed reggae dub poet Linton Kwesi Johnson, commenting on "Catch A Fire", wrote: "A whole new style of Jamaican music has come into being. It has a different character, a different sound ... what I can only describe as International Reggae. It incorporates elements from popular music internationally: rock and soul, blues and funk. These elements facilitated a breakthrough on the international market."

Although "Catch A Fire" was not an immediate hit, it made a considerable impact on the media. Marley's hard dance rhythms, allied to his militant lyrical stance, came in complete contrast to the excesses of mainstream rock. Island also decided The Wailers should tour both Britain and America; again a complete novelty for a reggae band.

Marley and the band came to London in April 1973, embarking on a club tour which hardened The Wailers as a live group. After three months, however, the band returned to Jamaica and Bunny, disenchanted by life on the road, refused to play the American tour. His place was taken by Joe Higgs, The Wailers' original singing teacher.

The American tour drew packed houses and even included a weekend engagement playing support to the young Bruce Springsteen. Such was the demand that an autumn tour was also arranged with seventeen dates as support to Sly & The Family Stone, then the number one band in black American music.

Four shows into the tour, however, The Wailers were taken off the bill. It seems they had been too good; support bands should not detract from the main attraction. The Wailers nevertheless made their way to San Francisco where they broadcast a live concert for the pioneering rock radio station, KSAN.



The bulk of that session was finally made available in February 1991, when Island released the commemorative album, "Talkin' Blues".

In 1973 The Wailers also released their second Island album, "Burnin'", an LP that included new versions of some of the band's older songs: "Duppy Conqueror", for instance, "Small Axe" and "Put It On" - together with such tracks as "Get Up Stand Up" and "I Shot The Sheriff". The latter, of course, was a massive worldwide hit for Eric Clapton the following year, even reaching number one in the U.S. singles' chart.

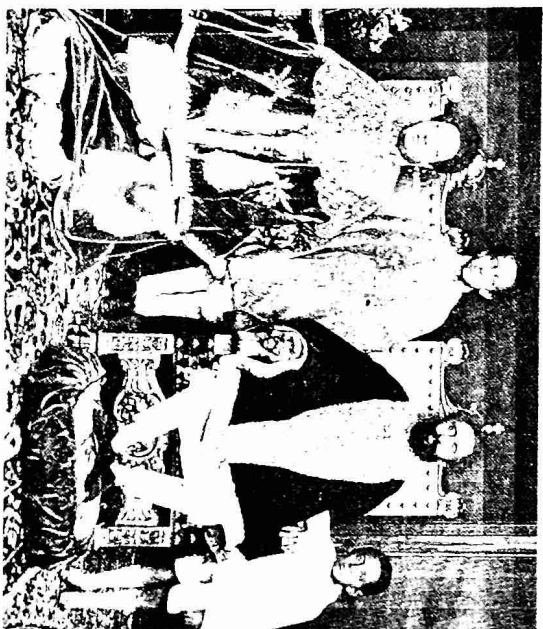
In 1974 Marley spent much of his time in the studio working on the sessions that eventually provided "Natty Dread", an album that included such fiercely committed songs as "Talkin' Blues", "No Woman No Cry", "So Jah Seh", "Revolution", "Them Bely Full (But We Hungry)" and "Rebel Music (3 o'clock Roadblock)". By the start of the next year, however, Bunny and Peter had quit the group; they were later to embark on solo careers (as Bunny Wailer and Peter Tosh) while the band was re-named Bob Marley & The Wailers.

"Natty Dread" was released in February 1975 and, by the summer, the band was on the road again. Bunny and Peter's missing harmonies were replaced by the I-Threes, the female trio comprising Bob's wife Rita together with Marcia Griffiths and Judy Mowatt. Among the concerts were two shows at the Lyceum Ballroom in London which, even now, are remembered as highlights of the decade.

The shows were recorded and the subsequent live album, together with the single "No Woman No Cry", both made the charts. Bob Marley & The Wailers were taking reggae into the mainstream. By November, when The Wailers returned to Jamaica to play a benefit concert with Stevie Wonder, they were obviously the country's greatest superstars.

"Rastaman Vibration", the follow-up album in 1976, cracked the American charts. It was, for many, the clearest exposition yet of Marley's music and beliefs, including such tracks as "Crazy Baldhead", "Johnny Was", "Who The Cap Fit" and, perhaps most significantly of all, "War", the lyrics of which were taken from a speech by Emperor Haile Selassie.

Top: an official family portrait of H.I.M. Haile Selassie, his wife and two sons, below: Marcus Garvey and his wife



Its international success cemented Marley's growing political importance in Jamaica, where his firm Rastafarian stance had found a strong resonance with the ghetto youth. By way of thanking the people of Jamaica, Marley decided on a free concert, to be held at Kingston's National Heroes Park on December 5, 1976. The idea was to emphasise the need for peace in the slums of the city, where warring factions had brought turmoil and murder.

Just after the concert was announced, the government called an election for December 20. The campaign was a signal for renewed ghetto war and, on the eve of the concert, gunmen broke into Marley's house and shot him.

In the confusion the would-be assassins only wounded Marley, who was hastily taken to a safe haven in the hills surrounding Kingston. For a day he deliberated playing the concert and then, on December 5, he came on stage and played a brief set in defiance of the gunmen.

It was to be Marley's last appearance in Jamaica for nearly eighteen months. Immediately after the show he left the country and, during early 1977, lived in London where he recorded his next album, "Exodus".

Released in the summer of that year, "Exodus" properly established the band's international status. The album remained on the UK charts for 56 straight weeks, and its three singles - "Exodus", "Waiting In Vain" and "Jammin'" - were all massive sellers. The band also played a week of concerts at London's Rainbow Theatre; their last dates in the city during the seventies.



In 1978 the band capitalised on their chart success with "Kaya", an album which hit number four in the UK the week after release. That album saw Marley in a different mood; a collection of love songs and, of course, homages to the power of ganja. The album also provided two chart singles, "Satisfy My Soul" and the beautiful "Is This Love".

There were three more events in 1978, all of which were of extraordinary significance to Marley. In April he returned to Jamaica to play the One Love Peace Concert in front of the Prime Minister Michael Manley and the Leader of the Opposition Edward Seaga.

He was then invited to the United Nations in New York to receive the organisation's Medal of Peace. At the end of the year Bob also visited Africa for the first time, going initially to Kenya and then on to Ethiopia, spiritual home of Rastafari.

The band had earlier toured Europe and America, a series of shows that provided a second live album, "Babylon By Bus". The Wailers also broke new ground by playing in Australia, Japan and New Zealand: truly international style reggae.

"Survival", Bob

Marley's ninth album for Island Records, was released in the summer of 1979. It included "Zimbabwe", a stirring anthem for the soon-to-be liberated Rhodesia, together with "So Much Trouble In The World", "Ambush In The Night" and "Africa Unite"; as the sleeve design, comprising the flags of the independent nations, indicated, "Survival" was an album of pan-African solidarity.

At the start of the following year - a new decade - Bob Marley & The Wailers flew to Gabon where they were to make their African debut. It was not an auspicious occasion, however, when the band discovered they were playing in front of the country's young elite. The group, nevertheless, was to make a quick return to Africa, this time at the official invitation of the government of liberated Zimbabwe to play at the country's Independence Ceremony in April, 1980. It was the greatest honour ever afforded the band, and one which underlined The Wailers' importance in the Third World.

The band's next album, "Uprising", was released in May 1980. It was an instant hit, with the single "Could You Be Loved" a massive worldwide seller. "Uprising" also featured "Coming In From the Cold", "Work" and the extraordinary closing track, "Redemption Song".



The Waiters embarked on a major European tour, breaking festival records throughout the continent. The schedule included a 100,000-capacity crowd in Milan, the biggest show in the band's history. Bob Marley & The Waiters, quite simply, were the most important band on the road that year and the new "Uprising" album hit every chart in Europe. It was a period of maximum optimism and plans were being made for an American tour, in company with Stevie Wonder, that winter.

At the end of the European tour Marley and the band went to America. Bob played two shows at Madison Square Garden but, immediately afterwards, was taken seriously ill.

Three years earlier, in London, Bob hurt a toe while playing football. The wound had become cancerous and was belatedly treated in Miami, yet it continued to fester. By 1980 the cancer, in its most virulent form, had begun to spread through Marley's body.

He fought the disease for eight months, taking treatment at the clinic of Dr. Joseph Issels in Bavaria. Issels' treatment was controversial and non-toxic and, for a time anyway, Bob's condition seemed to stabilise. Eventually, however, the battle proved too much. At the start of May Bob Marley left Germany for his Jamaican home, a journey he did not complete. He died in a Miami hospital on Monday May 11, 1981.

The previous month, Marley had been awarded Jamaica's Order Of Merit, the nation's third highest honour, in recognition of his outstanding contribution to the country's culture.

On Thursday May 21, 1981, the Hon. Robert Nesta Marley O.M. was given an official funeral by the people of Jamaica. Following the service - attended by both the Prime Minister and the Leader of the Opposition - Marley's body was taken to his birthplace at Nine Mile, on the north of the island, where it now rests in a mausoleum. Bob Marley was 36-years-old. His legend, however, has conquered the years.

Rob Partridge

Rob Partridge was director of press for Island Records Ltd. from 1977 to 1990.





9 Slave Driver

The song that spawned the "Catch A Fire" album title.

10 No More Trouble

Again, recorded for "Catch A Fire".

11 Concrete Jungle

Because of this song, written about the government-built low-rise housing projects, a part of Trenchtown became known as Concrete Jungle. This song was part of the "Catch A Fire" sessions. The Wailers were stranded in London. Chris Blackwell gave them £4,000 with which to make an album, even though he was advised he would never see a penny of the money back.

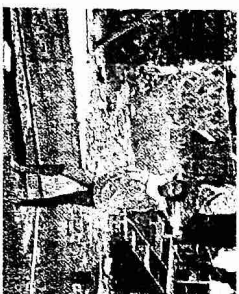
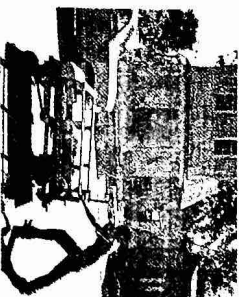
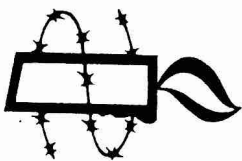
When he went down to Harry J's studio in Kingston to check on the progress of The Wailers, he found precisely the opposite to be the case: "You can hear every penny went into this music." The Wailers were given another £4,000 when they delivered the finished LP.

12 Get Up, Stand Up

Amnesty International use this song, on which Peter Tosh takes much of the lead vocal, as their anthem.

13 Rastaman Chant

As a devout Rastafarian Bob involved himself in many chanting sessions, but only a couple evolved into Wailers recordings - "Babylon System" on "Survival" is another. This is a traditional Rastafarian chant, known to every adherent of the faith.



The Wailers' line-up that recorded "Catch A Fire" and "Burnin'": left to right: Earl "Wine" Lindo, Aston "Family Man" Barrett, Bob Marley, Peter Tosh, Carlton Barrett, Bunny Livingston



From Ska to Scandinavia: Bob Goes To Stockholm

As if by magic, Bob arrived at our house in Sweden in the summer of 1971. He came to write songs with and for Johnny Nash and to help in the recording of the soundtrack for a film in which Johnny was starring with Christina Scholvin. Bob and I were brought in as songwriters since Johnny had the music rights to the film. We also published everything we turned out, whether it was used or not. We lucked out and wrote the film theme song. Sadly, nobody has ever heard it, or seen the film. We had the big premiere in Stockholm, and the next night the film closed.

I had never heard of Bob or reggae before, so obviously I thought, "What the hell is this?" I have often eaten those very words since then. One minute Bob wasn't there, and the next minute Bob was there. We all worked hard and played hard.

Bob was shy of, or didn't like, the Swedish musicians Johnny had hired, and he usually stayed away from them. When they did approach him he mumbled and stared at them with a far distant glare. Then he would coyly move away to escape from them, grumbling something that sounded a lot like "Rass-Claaf", or "Blood-Claaf", or something that I'm sure nobody could quite make out.

In the studio and at home Bob taught me how to follow him with a reggae feel that I never knew existed. He would play the "Chink-A" rhythm on the guitar, then yell out to me, "Hey, Rab mon. On de organ you play dis mon; Chu wah ka cha ka cha ka Chu wah ka cha ka cha ka."

At our house in Sweden we each had a bedroom where we would do our own songwriting and generally live out our egos. It was like a songwriting factory. As you walked through the house you would hear a conglomeration of different types of music all fighting for the same ear space.

Out of Johnny's room came soft, sweet, dulcet vocal tones working on a ballad, often with a hint of a reggae feel, probably because it was usually one of Bob's tunes. "Stir It Up" (dreamily) or "Comma comma comma come back here, my lady" (romance was oozing, and so were the girls).

Out of Bob's room came the rawest guitar and vocal sounds my ears have ever heard. We rarely ever saw each other when shut away in our own rooms writing and playing to heaven and earth, and occasionally hell. Although Bob was such a tremendous songwriter, singer, performer, and artist, I did occasionally wonder if he was ever going to tune his guitar, or just leave it like it was, because with all the harmonics flying around the house, maybe he thought I was out of tune, or Johnny. Well, now, never Johnny. That boy can sing his "rass" off, no problem!