

ARTS

The legend of Bob Marley

by Mike "the hammer" Raycraft

Bob Marley
Talkin' Blues
Tuff Gong

Simply, a legend lives on.

May 11th will represent the 10th anniversary of Bob Marley's passing, truly reggae's first superstar.

Fans of the Buffalo Soldier can look forward to a series of events marking this occasion.

The first of these has been the release of *Talkin' Blues*, a full length lp, cassette or disc issued on Marley's own Tuff Gong label.

Timely available as of Feb. 6th, Marley's birthday, *Talkin' Blues* is rich with alternative versions of Wailers classics, previously unreleased in any form. Included also is one new song dubbed "Am A Do".

Interspersed with the music are short excerpts from a lengthy interview between Marley and the dean of Jamaican reggae commentators, Demot Hussey. Each bit is labelled "Talkin," hence the lp's title.

What makes *Talkin' Blues* so desirable is the fact that the bulk of material was recorded at a time when reggae was more than poised to enter the mainstream of popular music. Seven of the 11 songs capture that moment.

"Burnin' and Lootin'", "Kinky Reggae", "Get Up Stand Up", "Slave Driver", "Rastaman Chant", "Walk the Proud Land", and "Can't Blame the Youth" are all from a magical set the original Wailers performed as part of a closed, but live studio broadcast for San Francisco's KSAN-FM back in 1973.

Particularly strong are "Kinky Reggae", "Get Up Stand Up" and "Can't Blame the Youth".

The title track, "Talkin' Blues", "Bend Down Low" and "Am A Do" are studio out-takes from the sessions that led to the 1974 release of *Natty Dread*.

"Am A Do" is a partially finished work missing several instrumental

tracks and cut short near the end. Yet, in the words of Charles Comer, Marley's former publicist; "It was a work in progress, but what was recorded was of such good quality we thought it definitely should be on the album."

The final track, "I Shot the Sheriff" is perhaps the most important recorded work of Marley's career. Taken from the first of two shows at London's Lyceum ballroom in 1975, of which these gigs were to become the highly acclaimed *Live!* lp, this version of "Sheriff" is every bit an equal, maybe better, than the one delivered on *Live!*.

The interview with Hussey, given in Sept. 1975, comes barely a month after the recording of *Live!* and the death of Emperor Haile Selassie of Ethiopia, whom Marley and thousands of fellow Rastafarians revered as a living god.

The brief extracts are openly candid allowing Marley to freely discuss Selassie, the break-up of the original Wailers, his music and his personal struggles. These excerpts are a powerful adjunct to the musical tracks put forth on *Talkin' Blues*.

Compiled and produced by Island Records founder Chris Blackwell, Hooman Majd and Rita Marley, *Talkin' Blues* is an in-depth look into the earlier moments of Marley's career, when his music and voice were beginning to fall on an international ear.

By the late 70s Marley had earned confirmation as one of music's most talented, respected and entertaining artists, a status that still holds true today. *Talkin' Blues* traces the very roots of that voyage.

Simply, a legend lives on.

Talkin' Blues



The Cure is not *Mixed Up*

By "Switch"

The Cure
Mixed Up
Wea/Elektra Records

The Cure's latest release follows the trend to release compilation albums and single collections.

First off I hate re-mixes so as for an album of re-mixes from a band

I've known and loved for years... slash and burn was my intent before I even got to hear a note. But I can't melt this vinyl, with a clear conscience.

Robert Smith in an interview I read in some free U.S. record store magazine, explained his purpose for releasing *Mixed Up*. It is not intended

as a follow-up to the Prayer tour, or *Disintegration* but rather it's purpose is to fulfill a need of The Cure's fans. Apparently fans have been having difficulty finding Cure 12" and so as a result they asked to have them rereleased. *Mixed Up* is The Cure's response to this plea.

I can't consider *Mixed Up* an album, it is a release. The 12"s are mostly similar to the originals with a few songs (because the master tapes had been lost) totally re-done. My best advise to you as they die-hard Cure fan is to, if you are going to listen to the release skip track 6 "The Forest" which is one of the re-mastered songs. I was so upset when I heard it I almost cried. Smith took one of his most beautiful pieces of audio art and smeared Manchester keyboards across it obliterating the essence of the sound. He did improve some songs in my opinion, I really liked the mix of "Hot Hot Hot" and the "Inbetween Days" mix. "Never Enough" pretty well sums up the Cure's mystique, if you like Smith's drone and whine you can never have enough.

About the only other notable factor of this release is that Smith's favourite track is the Dance on the Sand mix of "Close to Me", which I thought he ruined but I guess his tastes have changed since *The Head On the Door* album. Buy it if you have to but it's not a necessity for a comprehensive Cure library unless you desire to own a copy of the new single "Never Enough" enough. Personally, I'm just waiting patiently for the next ALBUM.



The newest release from the Cure is *Mixed Up*, a singles compilation which focusses on remixes of old material. There is one new song "Never Enough." It's not a necessity but worthwhile for Cure fans.



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