

MORE MUSIC STUFF

ISLAND RELEASES A WAILERS GEM; RAS BABA EATS IT UP!

Record Review by Luis Cardoso *Talkin' Blues*, Bob Marley and the Wailers; Tuff Gong/Island

Island records has just released a collection of music by Bob Marley and the Wailers which rivals any album, studio or live, previously released by the band. Interspersed with the music, most of which was recorded live in a Sausalito, California studio for San Francisco radio station KSAN-FM, are bits and pieces of a rare radio interview with Bob Marley. This is a gem of a collection, and an absolute must for fans of Bob Marley and the Wailers.

In October 1973 Bob Marley and the Wailers embarked on their first North American tour in support of Sly and the Family Stone, the premiere black group in America at the time. The Wailers had been signed to play seventeen shows, but after only four found themselves kicked off the tour: it seems they were the favourites of the audiences, who were unimpressed with Sly Stone's uneven, drug-fueled performances. The audiences, once past their initial shock (remember that Rastafarians were unknown in America at the time, and dreadlocks were a frightening phenomenon) were enthralled by the wild syncopated rhythms performed by crazy, stoned Jamaican dreads.

The band's spirits quickly sunk into the gutter as they were left stranded in Las Vegas with no money and little prospects. Fortunately they had a two night engagement at the Matrix club in San Francisco, and with their record company's help, travelled west to California.

The Wailers were encouraged when they discovered that San Francisco radio station KSAN-FM had been giving prime time airplay to their recently released debut lp *Catch a Fire*. With little advance publicity they sold out the two shows, playing to ecstatic crowds both nights. The Matrix quickly signed them to two more performances the following week. With seven days to kill, the Wailers agreed to go into the Record Plant in Sausalito to record a number of tracks for broadcast on KSAN.

Three of the tracks on *Talkin' Blues* are previously unreleased studio versions ("Talkin' Blues", "Am-A-Do", "Bend Down Low"), one of which ("Am-A-Do") has never been released. The original versions of "Talkin' Blues" and "Bend Down Low" appear on *Natty Dread*, the Wailers' third album. "I Shot the Sheriff" was recorded live during the Wailers' much publicized performance at the Lyceum in London in 1975, the concert featured on their 1975 *Bob Marley and the Wailers Live!* lp.

The CD opens with the title track, "Talkin' Blues," which rivals the studio version found on 1974's *Natty Dread*. This version is not only longer but ends with an entire new section Marley obviously decided to drop for the album release. The other studio track which predates a *Natty Dread* release is a funkier version of "Bend Down Low". The inclusion of "Am-A-Do" in the collection is obviously a move to satisfy the Wailer enthusiast who thirsts for studio out-takes and odd bits of unreleased recording tape laying

about the studio. It certainly is not strong enough to have been released on any of Bob Marley's studio records. An interesting distinction between these three tracks and the Record Plant sessions: the three were recorded in 1974 after Peter Tosh and Bunny Wailer had left the Wailers (and the Wailers became Bob Marley and the Wailers), and the backing vocals are those of the I-Three's, while Peter Tosh does the bulk of the back-ups on the live tracks.

Perhaps the most interesting feature of this collection are the fragments of a rare radio interview with Bob Marley that appear between the songs. The interview was conducted by Dermot Hussey in 1975 and broadcast on Jamaican radio that same year. The featured fragments are matched thematically to the tracks they introduce, which makes this wonderful collection all the more fascinating.

"Burnin' and Lootin'" is the first of the Record Plant tracks, and like the others, it surpasses the studio versions Wailers enthusiasts have come to know and love. It contains an energy not found on the *Burnin'* lp, and Bob Marley's vocal stylings are inspired in a way not always captured in the studio. Drummer Carlton "Carly" Barrett is busier than I've ever heard him, and his lightning-quick timbale rolls, and snare shots fuel the band's impassioned performance. The mix highlights the

treble chicken-scratch rhythm guitar, and the organ fills and syncopations are electrifying. "Kinky Reggae" and "Get Up Stand Up", the only tracks featured back-to-back without an interview fragment, feature the same frenetic pace of performance by the Wailers. Marley and Tosh share the lead vocal on the second of these tracks, and the vocal interplay between them is brilliant.

"Slave Driver," the next track, is the gem of the collection. While the Wailers are doing nothing new on this particular piece, they're doing it better. The organs are let loose in a syncopating-frenzy, and the rhythm guitar, bass and drums are unrelenting. Marley's vocal improvisations are at their best, and his recitation of the lyric ("I remember on the slave ships/ You used to brutalize my very soul!") is blood-curdling.

"Walk the Proud Land," an early Wailer classic not found on any of

the Island releases, is a welcome addition to the collection; the only version previously available was that found on the very early Wailers' Jamaican albums (ya know, when the Wailers was Bob, Peter, Bunny, and Beverley Kelso) the sound quality of which can be politely described as lacking. "You Can't Blame the Youth" is a Tosh composition, and the only track featuring him exclusively on lead vocal. "Rastaman Chant", another inspired performance, features more instrumentation than was eventually used on the *Burnin'* lp, and like "Talkin' Blues" features a musical section later dropped for the album. "I Shot the Sheriff" closes the collection, and it is culled from the live 1975 Lyceum performances in London.

Talkin' Blues is a fascinating collection for both the music and the interview with Bob Marley. Although Wailers fans will wear out the CD in no time, this collection holds a broader appeal. Bob Marley introduced his music to North American audiences in a way no other reggae figure was able to, mainly a result of the blend of soul and rock he stirred into his reggae.



GET CLASSICAL

best thing, since there are no lyrics to distract them.

This means they're not listening to the music!

Classical music is so much more distracting than pop, for me, that I can't imagine using it as study music.

Some of my friends don't like classical, and sometimes I play it when they're around, causing chagrin. After a few times putting up with it (they're good enough friends that they still come to visit

me...) some of them start to like it, believe it or not, and even ask to hear a piece or wonder what the title is so they can pick it up (of course I usually have to look at the case to tell them). The best way to hear classical is to go to a concert. It's almost impossible to reproduce it completely on the average stereo, so live is to be preferred. Also, going to a concert makes it

impossible to turn it off if you get tired of it (unless you leave, which is rude). So there you have it. My views on classical music, its strong points and its weak points, and the fact that it is worth listening to, even if only in small quantities. Give it a try!

Thanks Chris. And as I mentioned in my last week's column, and Chris infers in this, don't give up too easily. Surely something which has given so many people so much pleasure for so many years might give you pleasure too. Or are you really so different? At any rate, have a good March Break, and treat yourself well this week. When you come back, I will be welcoming the Saint John String Quartet for a program of Mozart and others to my Wednesday Series. Wed, Mar 13, 12:30 Noon, at Mem Hall. Do come and hear this fine and dynamic young quartet: you'll enjoy them.

Captain Film Society

The Captain Film Society announced this week that it is incorporating as many of the cancelled films of the Sunday Cinema program as it can. The Sunday Cinema Program with the help of the Linda Joy Busby Media Arts Foundation, Telefilm Canada, and the Canada Council has been running at the Plaza Cinemas on Smythe Street. Beginning March 3, the screenings will be at Le Centre Communautaire, 715 Priestman. The new films are now available to all members of the Capital Film Society at the usual admission price of \$3.00 and to the general public as follows; seniors and students \$5.00; regular \$7.00. Half-year membership in the society are still available: \$15.00 regular; \$10.00 seniors and students. Further information can be obtained from the Capital Film Society: 455-2344.

Here is a complete schedule of all the films offered by the Capital Film Society:

Sun. March 3	2:00 p.m.	Cruising Bar
Mon. March 4	8:00 p.m.	The Unbelievable Truth
Sun. March 10	2:00 p.m.	Company of Strangers
Mon. March 11	8:00 p.m.	Interrogation
Mon. March 18	8:00 p.m.	Une Histoire Inventee
Mon. March 25	8:00 p.m.	Tango Bar
Sun. March 31	2:00 p.m.	To Sleep with Anger
Mon. April 1	2:00 p.m.	Kurosawa's Dreams
Mon. April 8	28:00 p.m.	Nasty Girl
Sun. April 14	8:00 p.m.	Tune in Tomorrow (note time change)
Mon. April 15	2:00 p.m.	Vincent and Theo
Sun. April 21	2:00 p.m.	Life is a Long Quiet River
Mon. April 22	8:00 p.m.	Moody Beach
Mon. April 29	8:00 p.m.	Hot Spot
Mon. May 6	8:00 p.m.	Paper Wedding
Mon. May 13	8:00 p.m.	Le Party
Contact: Barry Cameron, 455-2344		