

● Release of new single, 'Buffalo Soldier' will highlight...

Free concert to mark Marley's birthday

TODAY IS THE BIRTHDAY of the late reggae super star Bob Marley. Born on February 6, 1945 Bob passed away on May 11, 1981 at the age of 36.

Single-handedly this son of Trench Town took our music to the the forefront of the international stage, earning for himself fame and wealth along the way and making the path much easier for those behind to trod.

His music has been copied with overwhelming success by both local and foreign performers, most potent of this music being his lyrics which from time to time have taken on the poetic level of sophistication.

He has been called a prophet and a genius among other things but the mystery and conviction of this dedicated son of Jamaica only deepens with the passing of time.

His widow, Rita, has now been hailed as the 'queen of reggae' and his children who are known as the Melody Makers on the entertainment scene have just been voted along with the British group Musical Youth as the top young reggae acts around.

His eldest son, Ziggy, is the essence of his father on stage and his live performances have been the topic of many discussions both here and abroad. Bob's company, Tuff Gong, continues to be one of the leading recording companies in the country.

In honour of the anniversary of his birthday, Rita Marley and her family will

be staging a birthday party at Rhoden Hall, St. Ann, today at 5 p.m.

Admission to the concert is free and entertainment will be provided by members of the Tuff Gong recording family. The highlight of the day promises to be the release of a new 45 called "Buffalo Soldier" taken from a new Bob Marley album, "Confrontation", slated to be released soon.

Bob left behind on tape a multitude of songs enough for quite a few albums. Commemorative articles such as T-shirts, stickers, pens, cups etc. continue to be sold in large quantities.

Just before his death he was awarded the Order of Merit by the Government of Jamaica, thus entitling him to be called Hon. The year of his death the Gleaner conducted a Bob Marley song competition that was to be the most successful in the company's history, pulling in some 80,000 entries from as far as England. Such was the pulling power of Bob.

His funeral was second only to that of the late hero Sir Alexander Bustamante with scores of people spilling outside the National Arena. Though he lost his battle with cancer his struggle to make Jamaica's music respected has been successful and is something that all local entertainers should be thankful for.

—Howard McGowan



MARLEY ...message to stop,listen,learn

Don't let Bob's dream die

says
WINSTON BARNES

Over 30 years ago, Robert Nesta Marley was born at Nine Miles in the garden parish of St. Ann. Today, Sunday, February 6, there is a great big birthday party-cum-concert, just steps away from the mausoleum which houses Bob's body.

Bob's statue to be mounted at Jamaica Park, Roosevelt Ave and Arthur Wint Drive in Kingston is now being cast in bronze in New York. The sculptor, Christopher Gonzales, in working on the statue has said he has been drawn closer to Jamaican music. It has also helped him to better understand Rastafari and its influence on our culture. In a "Gleaner" story published on February 1 Gonzales said: "It has also made me spiritually conscious..." Herein lies one of Marley's contribution to us as a people. The message of our home grown prophet has reached a least some of us.

There are some who have said that what Bob has achieved in passing was not possible while he was alive. This seems to be at least partly true. For once we have forced to listen to his music on its own merit after he has been removed from us physically, to better understand his contribution to our cultural history—not by seeing Bob by scrutinizing his art.

A sharing of his gift

His absence has forcefully demonstrated the fact that there are so few truly creative talents in the midst of our music today. And there is nothing any detractor, anywhere in the universe is going to say that will change the fact of the reality of Bob's gift to us. A sharing really, with us, of the gift of his Creator!

This past Tuesday evening I had the privilege of listening to the final mix of Bob's new single, "Buffalo Soldier". Apart from the fact that the music is clearly international hitmaking material, it also possesses a freshness that implies that it was recorded last week. Bob could easily have been upstairs while we listened. It is this spirit that Bob has left us—something far more real than simply a sound on tape—that has made Robert Marley more than special.

Stars too soon

One single glance at the music business in Jamaica today indicates Bob Marley's vast and crucial contribution to the business. The pace he has set has not and probably will never be equalled for a long time for the single fact that too many of our performers become superstars a bit too early in their careers. They never learn to be professionals by paying any real dues. Hard times, maybe, but no true learning experiences. Some may argue that this is laziness on the part of many of our music creators and practitioners today and it would at least be partly true. So few of our superstars understand anything about self-discipline, to be capable of artistic discipline.

Bob Marley is very special because he has taught us so much about ourselves. A little less than two years ago he taught us, at his passing, about the hypocrisy which is so much a part of our people...same lesson in the song "Hypocrite"! You simply need to remember how many people you know who even now will tell you without any apparent

equivocation that they really don't like reggae music but SOME of Bob Marley songs "are nice"! And yet we packed the National Arena for his funeral service in May 1981! There is much in our make-up that needs very serious examination and Bob's message can help us start along that road.

A challenge

I would like to challenge all Jamaica in general and the people at 56 Hope Rd in particular, not to let Bob's dream die. Soon after his passing there were rumours about goings on at Hope Rd many of which were not pleasant to contemplate. People's true colours began to show and there were partings of ways. Even today there are some people who are still convinced that the organization still lacks direction and drive. The bickering and selfishness that mar our personal as well as national life needs to be examined so we can move forward!

Bob's newest single should be in the streets any day now, a present to us for his birthday—full of excitement and joy mixed with a message for us to stop, listen, and learn. And we can give him something in return. We can take time out to listen, really listen to his music. If you don't have his music on record or on tape, the next time you hear one of his songs on radio really listen to it. If you learn anything good or bad about life or living; if you learn anything about yourself pleasant or otherwise; if the message helps you to see your brother differently, stop and give thanks. It could probably mean that the labours of Bob Nesta Marley were not in vain. And one day you will probably be glad you were alive at this junction in our history.