

BOB MARLEY

National Library of Jamaica

EXCLUSIVE!

On May 7, Plexus are publishing **BOB MARLEY: REGGAE KING OF THE WORLD**, a copiously illustrated large-format biography written by Jamaican journalists Malika Lee Whitney and Dermott Hussey (paperback £6.95).

In the following *exclusive* pre-publication extract, an edited portion of an interview given to New York-based photographer and writer Fikisha Cumbo in 1975, Marley talks about reggae's impact on the music business — and the impact that business can have on the unwary musician ...

FC: Do you have a recording contract?

BM: I have a recording agreement.

FC: What's the difference?

BM: (Laughter) One is an agreement and one is a contract.

FC: Both of them have to be signed, right?

BM: Yeah, some things you agree to, some things you are contracted to (laughter). Those you contracted to is those that you personally agree to, now the other one is where the guy agree to it, but because of the situation you (are obliged to) go with it. Dig it! So one is agreement and one is a contract (laughter).

FC: How did you go about getting it?

BM: Well, I recorded in Jamaica, you know, and it leak out from Jamaica and go into England. And I go to England and meet up with this guy Chris Blackwell and got it together and do an album, but I find it get weird some time ...

FC: Do you have a choice of your own arranger or producer?

BM: No! No! We do our own music. The guy can't really do our music. The guy don't know it, we know it.

FC: Is it pressed and released soon afterwards?

BM: Yeah!

FC: I heard that 'Natty Dread' was done a year ago in England?

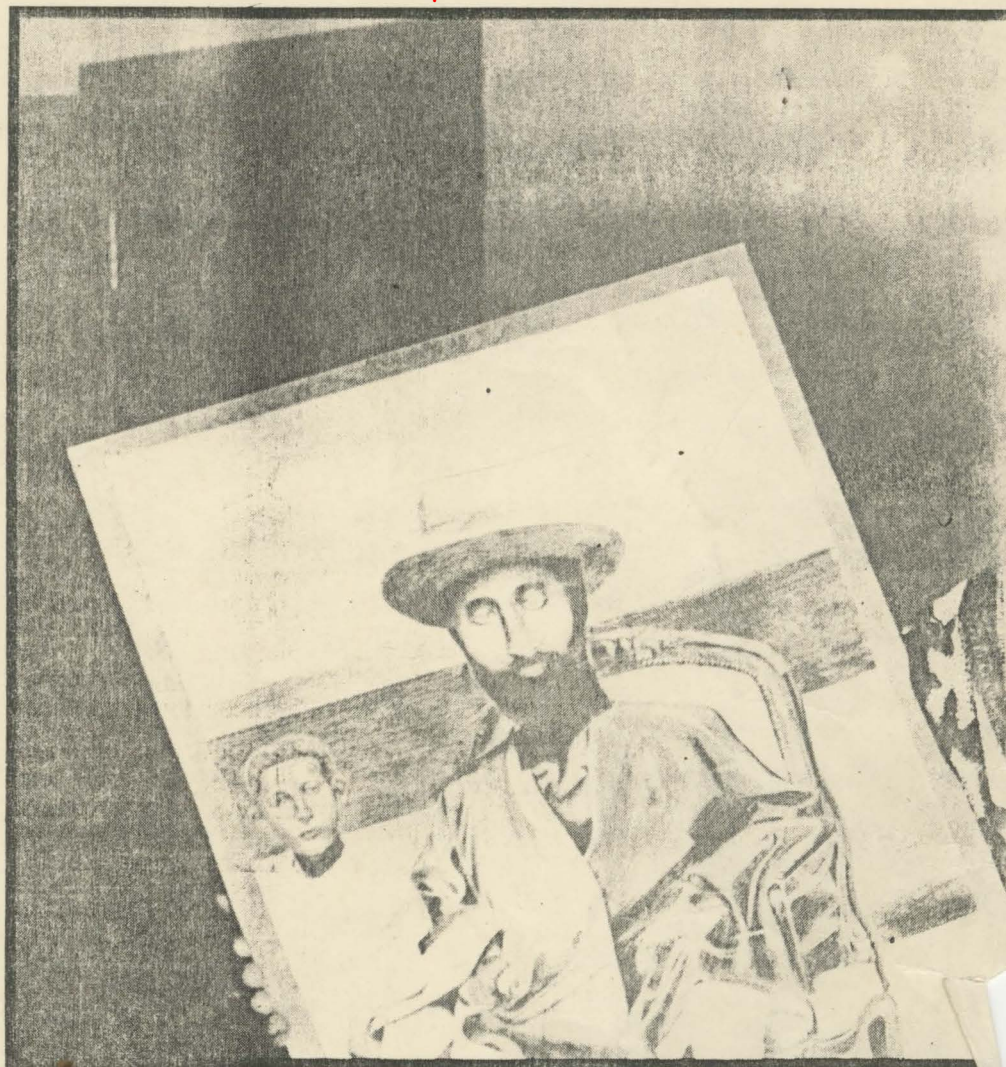
BM: Was it that long? No, I don't think so. About six months ago. Release date in England first, then come out in America, then Jamaica.

FC: Why do they do it like that? Why Jamaica last?

BM: We control it in Jamaica.

FC: Ahh!

BM: Because you see, we have to try to trick the guy who have the pirate mind, you know what I mean. Sometimes you release it in Jamaica, right, but you come



DREADLOCKS INNA BABYLON

to New York, hear the record selling here. Yet nobody have any permission to sell it here. So we have to just get a big company release it. That mean, (if a) big company catch a guy press it, (they) can destroy it, you know. Otherwise he go on and press it in him basement and keep it under cover and you still in Jamaica and never know about it. All you can do is when you come into town, you get your gun and go down there and you blast away.

FC: (Laughter) Bang! Bang!

BM: You know what I mean?

FC: Yeah!

BM: Good! So to skip that you deal with a big record company. Stop you from committing murder. That is how my record deal really come too, like, Island, you know. You dig it!

FC: I've seen the reggae influence in all music, from Stevie's "Boogie On Reggae Woman" to Grover Washington's "Mister Magic".

BM: Reggae music is one of the greatest musics, you know. But the only thing about reggae now is because the people in America don't really get to know how to dance it. But you see, if them can dance (to) it, then what can I tell you?



You know, because *no dance* look pretty as reggae dance! Me know that, 'cause you can dance the whole night and it keep you in a mood. You know what I mean. You love yourself when you dance reggae music. You proud of yourself, that you come like you *born again!* A feeling come in the music like you baptised. Yeah, you can leave from that! (*He gets up and dances*) Leave from that spiritually. Music, you know, music is great. Music can carry you to heaven, to Zion. Carry you all about to some places where you don't know. Art music, you know. Why reggae music so nice is because it's a proud music. It can be a very, very proud music.

FC: And Rastafari are very proud people.

BM: Yeah, complete. (Reggae) is what you call international music, complete music. Any music you want play inside of reggae, you can put it here. But it's the rhythm now, *that is* reggae, you know. Proud rhythm, man, them rhythm can't end. There is nothing on earth like music that can't go out. It have a different touch. Yeah, the music is a great music, man. This type of rhythm, it's earth

rhythm, roots! So you find it can't go out, it's like from the beginning of time, creation. Pocomania type of music, Rasta, the whole thing, together. And all of them people in Jamaica play it.

Reggae music, man, is a raasclaat music where you have to be proud, you have to know what creation is. When you get up in the morning, you have to be proud. You know what I mean. You have to be a sufferer who say to yourself, "Feeling all right." So you have a feeling now. So you come out and you reach for a chalice (*takes a deep breath*). You don't wanna hear no rock music, because you can't do that right now. 'Cause rock music really calls for neon lights, plenty lights. See, a good reggae music now, you can be anywhere. You can be in the hills, you know what I mean.

FC: About the music world, are you satisfied with things as they exist now, in the whole industry situation?

BM: You see, the whole thing is in music. Now you must realise you have guys out there, you have plenty guys who play. The only thing is, in music, man, you see, the hustling type of music, me can't deal

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with it. Like people who hustle music, you know what I mean?

FC: When you say hustle, what do you mean?

BM: A type of musician who go out and just sing other people's music. That mean me don't really have nothing to say for myself. Me just learn a thing me can copy then me can deal with it. Them guys suffer plenty sometimes. But, the music business man, you know, you don't question the how, because you can't know the guy who own the music. Who the guy is? You can't be caring, you know what I mean. You have to do what you have to do. Do your own thing if you want. Some people get trapped, you know.

FC: What do you feel about the economic situation of black musicians?

BM: What it is, man, is that we get a raw deal from people and even sometimes it is the black guy (ripping us off) because him don't really get ahead. If your mind don't sharp . . . because dig this, the thing don't just happen in the air . . . it happen in reality. One day you start think about . . . *the business*, and see all them big guys sit on all them desk (there). Just parked out the parkin' lot like a car. Pure big guys control the record business. You know what I mean? You must get rip off. So the business go. The only way you don't get rip off is when you don't do it. But you see, once you start, you get rip off. The only one who don't get rip off is the one who don't start (*laughter*). I tell you that. It's like me say, people know good music, you know. You can't have a good sound and let the music go all over. Hey! You know how plenty music get lost? In mixing. You know what I mean. You can't rate music with popularity. You have a guy who can play so much good music and him don't even go in the studio. Good music is the thing, any good music. Now, what good music mean is you can have fast good music and slow good music. But you know, medium music is what me call good music, everyone can move to, like reggae.

Bob Marley: *Reggae King Of The World* will be reviewed next month.