

Fourth posthumous release

'Talkin' Blues' one of Marley's best LPs

By Carter Van Pelt
Staff Reporter

At the time of his death almost 10 years ago, Bob Marley had achieved the status of uncontested champion of reggae music, as well as being one of the most popular recording artists in the world.

The passage of time has elevated him to the immortal status achieved only by legends such as Jimi Hendrix, Elvis Presley and Robert Johnson. "Talkin' Blues," the fourth posthumous release of Bob Marley and The Wailers material, serves to reinforce the importance of his life's work.

"Talkin' Blues" is a collection of rarities recorded from 1973-1975, a period when reggae music first vaulted to international recognition.

The album's 21 tracks are composed of a live session from The Wailers' first American tour in 1973 recorded by San Francisco's KSAN radio, three previously unused tracks from the 1974 "Natty Dread" sessions, a track from the 1975 shows at London's Lyceum Ballroom which produced the Marley album "Live" and nine minutes of interview recorded on JBC radio in Jamaica in 1975.

The interview tracks are divided into 10 segments, which are heard between the album's 11 music tracks. These pieces provide interesting perspectives on the breakup of the original Wailers, Marley's music and the Rastafarian religion. Unfortunately,



Bob Marley and The Wailers
"Talkin' Blues"
Tuff Gong/Island Records
Rating: 4

Ratings are 1 (bad) to 5 (excellent).

Marley's thick Jamaican accent makes some passages almost unintelligible to the untrained ear.

The bulk of the album's musical content is taken from the magical KSAN session. The KSAN tracks, taken from the only existing recording of the Wailers' first U.S. tour, are among the most powerful Wailers' material available.

The set is kicked off with a powerful version of "Burnin' and Lootin'," which rages about the loss of Africa to the white man.

Next, the Wailers move to a lighter tune called "Kinky Reggae" from "Catch A Fire" and then into the timeless "Get Up, Stand Up" in which Marley tells the oppressed to "Stand up for your rights" and "Don't give up the fight." The song warns oppressors of the faith and conviction of the Rastafarian, while reminding the listener of the presence of guitarist Peter

Tosh.

Tosh left the band after the "Catch A Fire" album to pursue a solo career. His beautiful baritone vocals and rock steady staccato rhythm guitar are in full force on this track and on his own "You Can't Blame the Youth," in which he takes lead vocal responsibilities to comment on the white man's version of history.

The other standout song from the KSAN set is the soulful "Slave Driver" in which Marley sings of the scars left from slavery and complains that "they say we are free, only to be chained in poverty." The other songs in the set are the rare "Walk the Proud Land" and deeply religious "Rastaman Chant." Notably absent in this set are original Wailer member Bunny Livingston (a.k.a. Bunny Wailer) who had quit the band before the tour and Bob Marley's backup singers, the I-Threes, who were not yet part of the band when the set was recorded.

The remainder of the musical tracks on "Talkin' Blues" are not as moving as the songs from the KSAN set, but are nonetheless classic Marley. From the "Natty Dread" album recording session are alternate versions of "Talkin' Blues," "Bend Down Low," and the never-before-released love song "Am-A-Do."

The final song on the album is a seven-minute version of the classic "I Shot the Sheriff" (later covered by Eric Clapton), recorded on the first of the two nights Marley played at



Courtesy of Island Records

London's Lyceum Ballroom in 1975. The song is an excellent example of the soul and feeling of Marley's famous mid-'70s concert performances.

Despite the overall quality of this collection, it would have been enhanced by including all the songs recorded at the KSAN session and

leaving the other four songs to be included on a future compilation of unreleased tracks and alternate takes.

However, the album as presented is the best reggae album released in some years and definitely stacks up as one of the best among Marley releases.

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Muses

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1989, without the refinement of vocals. Hersh's raw vocalization work with the effects and distortion of guitars to define the voice and sound of the Throwing Muses.

"Him Dancing," "Honeychain" and the fine "Two Step" all resound with the influence of the Muses' Boston-based 4AD label-mate, the Pixies. Guitarist/vocalist Tanya Donnelly's work last year with Pixies' bassist Kim Deal in their splinter band, the Breeders, shines brightly with influence.

Zyd

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Toups, who is admired as much for his dark, rough and tumble Springsteen looks as his music, has softened his style slightly since his "Blast" album.

While his style hasn't achieved

the more blended flowing quality of some Zydeco artists like Buckwheat Zydeco, at least competition with his backup crew doesn't take precedence any longer.

Unfortunately, in "One Heart Beating," Toups has taken advantage of the adaptability of Zydeco's rhythm, moving too far left with the addition of his rock guitar runs. Better to stay

of their daughter, Emma; we see Melissa and Russell guide each other through their respective love affairs and Elliot and Nancy try to save their marriage. An especially memorable script deals with the miscarriage of the always perfect, unflappable Hope.

Each script is introduced by its writer; each person explains why they wrote the script the way it was written. Most go into what they thought of the actors' performances, as well. It's interesting to see the snappy lines expressed in the script, and remember the interpretations and subtle shading the actors brought to the episodes.

reference being the offensive words he chooses to sing along with the music.

The big pile of bad songs is led by the hateful, sophomoric "Christina," a song that viciously attacks a former lover of Gerardo's who apparently cheated on him. This nasty song ought to further

convince her that she did the right thing by leaving him.

"Mo' Ritmo" is by no means a good album, and in several ways it is just plain awful. Some fans of dance music might find him innovative and enjoyable but most people will gladly avoid his rotten debut.

stars would have trouble approaching.

"New Jack City" is a tense, frightening movie that manages to make its point too well. Hopefully, Van Peebles will continue to make his movies from behind the camera where his talent is obviously superior.

"New Jack City" is playing at the Cinema 1 & 2, 201 N. 13th Street.

thirtysomething

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As Zwick and Herskovitz say in their prologue, "the only thing less fun than writing is writing about writing." Instead of writing a book about their characters, they give thumbnail sketches of the characters and then present the scripts. The only scripts the two men comment on are their own — the pilot episode, "thirtysomething," and "The Mike Van Dyke Show," which deals with Michael's crisis of faith.

In episodes by other writers, we see Gary and Susannah help each other through the labor and delivery

Gerardo

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As much as Gerardo seems to be trying to be diverse, most of his songs are identical. The same rhythms and patterns appear in most of the songs with the only real dif-

City

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out from the screen all over the audience. Most of the movie makes it clear that this is an anti-drug statement, but Van Peebles seems to think the audience won't get it unless he beats his point to a bloody, mashy pulp.

It's strange to read the scripts from this show. While the scripts and script notations emphasize that these people are fictional, "thirtysomething" is a show so true-to-life that it's often easy to forget that it isn't "real life."

The scripts are augmented by black-and-white photos of cast members on and off the screen.

The writers involved in the book, as well as MGM/UA Television, are donating their advance for the book to AmFAR, the American Foundation for AIDS research. Any "thirtysomething" fan will want a copy of this slick paperback for permanent enshrinement.