

The Music and Life of

Bob Marley



Berklee College of Music. Course ID: PS-180. 2 credits

Instructor: **Matt Jenson** Email: mjenson@berklee.edu

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- **Final grade** will be determined by quality of class participation, a 'reaction paper' to two movies, your Overstanding Pages class presentation.

FINAL CONCERTS

1) CAF show (Date TBA) 2) Public performances (Dates TBA)

Topical Outline:

- 1) SEPTEMBER 6: Auditions
- 2) SEPTEMBER 13: Introductions and introductory remarks. (*homework: Watch the MOVIE "The Harder they Come." Read the analysis PDF by Julienne Burton. DVD 524 in Berklee library.*)
- 3) SEPTEMBER 20: Marley early years in Nine Mile and first trips to Kingston. Conditions of extreme poverty
Slide show: MJ's trip to Trenchtown Culture Yard
Formation and split up of original Wailers. Early producers, *Simmer Down*, *Trenchtown Rock*
- 4) SEPTEMBER 27: ALL REHEARSE
- 5) OCTOBER 4: Chris Blackwell and early Island Records years. *Catch a Fire* and *Burnin*.
Intro to Jamaican history: A rebellious culture, Morant Bay Rebellion. READ #1
(*Harder They Come* reaction paper due by midnight.)
- 6) OCTOBER 11: Guest speaker Victor Wallace on Capitalism and Socialism
- 7) OCTOBER 18: TEAM TEACHING UNIT #1. Jamaican political background/history as it relates to international circumstances. How Bob Marley fits into Jamaican and International political background/history
- 8) OCTOBER 25: TEAM TEACHING UNIT #2. Marcus Garvey, Haile Selassie. READ #12. #7
- 9) NOVEMBER 1: TEAM TEACHING UNIT #3. Rastafari . READ #2, #11, #8
- 10) NOVEMBER 8: ALL REHEARSE
- 11) NOVEMBER 15: TEAM TEACHING UNIT #4. READ #3, #4
Smile Jamaica concert. Assassination attempt. One Love Peace Concert
(*Life & Debt* reaction paper due by midnight.)
- 12) NOVEMBER 22: THANKSGIVING (no class)
- 13) NOVEMBER 19: Matt's reflections on Smile JA, Assassination & One Love .
Marley's Foot injury and cancer diagnosis. *Exodus*. Mid-Career highlights
- 14) DECEMBER 6: Bob Marley passes away, May 11, 1981. Reflections on Bob's life.
- 15) DECEMBER 13: Overstanding Pages in-class presentations

CELL PHONES?

Unless you're using your cell phone to take notes, please free yourself from it during class so you can fully concentrate on the course material. Be fully present!

REPERTOIRE:

Rat Race (*Rastaman Vibration*) *sol*
Them Belly Full (*Natty Dread*)
Babylon System (*Survival*)
Want More (*Rastaman Vibration*)
Turn Your Lights Down Low (*Exodus*) *sol*
Jamming (*Exodus*)
So Much Things to Say (*Exodus*)
Get Up Stand Up (*Burnin'*)
Lively Up Yourself (*Natty Dread*) *sol*
So Much Trouble in the World (*Survival*)

Ongoing Homework Assignment: Even though charts have been written for the arrangements of this music, there are a great many subtleties have NOT transcribed, especially with the guitar and keyboard parts. You will be expected to learn these on your own thorough study of Marley's recordings. Also, learn the arrangements: there are many differences between Marley's versions and the arrangements for the class.

GRADING:

40% - Class participation, attitude, attendance and preparedness
 20% - The Harder they Come and Life & Debt movie reaction paper
 40% - Overstanding Pages in-class presentation

SOME DESCRIPTIVE TERMINOLOGY FOR PLAYING REGGAE

* See "Reggae Performance Notes" in the "Reading Materials" PDF files on the ol.berklee.edu site.

Chop, Skank, Strum, Bang – the aggressive rhythmic attack played on the 2nd and 4th beats of the measure, mainly by the guitar and keyboards.

One Drop – the rhythmic pattern played by the drum kit characterized by crisp high hat work off set by the kick drum "dropping" on the third beat of the measure. (There are many sub-styles within the one drop riddim.)

Steppers – the rhythmic pattern played by the drum kit characterized by crisp high hat work off set by the kick drum playing on all four beats of the measure (example: Exodus)

Bubble – the rhythmic pattern played mainly on the organ that incorporates the skank (on beats 2 and 4) and adds a subtle attack on all of the up beats of each measure.

Dead Picking / Stuck line – the muted, (plucked) staccato technique of playing guitar, often times used to double the bass line.

Nayabinghi – the "heart beat" drumming style that is used in Rastafarian religious ceremony (called a Groundation). The three drums used are called, 1) Thunder (bass), 2) Funde (middle drum that plays the 'heartbeat', 3) Akete or Repeater, (the high pitched lead drum). (The term Nayabinghi will often times be shortened to "Binghi.")

Official Live Show Policy

Any live shows that come up during the semester following the one in which you are taking the class will be for your ensemble. In other words if you are in the Fall class, you will play all gigs that come up for the Spring semester. If you are in the Spring class, you will play all gigs during the Summer and Fall semesters. If you cannot make the gig please let Matt know immediately so your replacement (most likely from a Marley class "grad") can be arranged for. It is a college policy that to be eligible for special off campus performances you must maintain a GPA of 3.0 or higher. Payment for shows: Any performances are considered to be part of the educational experience and are not professionally paid. For shows that require travel, a per diem will be given to each musician.



My life is only important if me can help plenty of people. If my life is only about my own security, then me don't want it. My life is for people.

-BOB MARLEY

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IN-CLASS PRESENTATION PROJECT (for the final)

Metaphor: *A figure of speech or an image in which is used to refer to something that it does not literally denote in order to define a much deeper description or understanding.*



Part 1) **Overstanding Pages** During the first class you will be asked to describe, through the use of metaphor, what your impressions were of what you thought this class was going to be about and what you might learn from it. You'll write down your ideas/images/poems/drawings etc., on your "Overstanding Pages" and share them with the class. As the class develops you'll be asked to continue writing down such metaphors, ideas and moments of discovery and inspiration on the same sheets of paper as used in the first class.

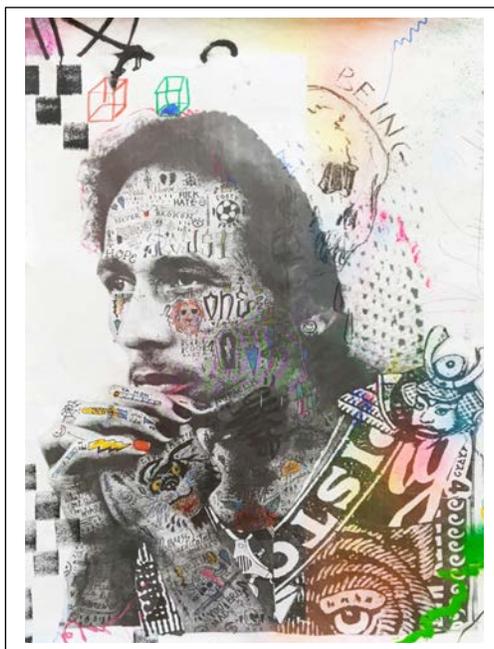
Part 2) **In-Class Presentation:** During the last two classes of the semester each one of you will be given 10-15 minutes to deliver an inspiring presentation to the class starting first with reminding of us of your original class expectation metaphor and then taking us on your journey of discovery through the class as you have recorded on your "Overstanding Pages." You are encouraged to be creative and may use audio/visual aids or you may simply describe your experience. **The one requirement you have is that you must incorporate into your presentation some concrete material that you took directly from class.**

OVERSTANDING PAGES

("Overstanding" is the Rasta reinterpretation of the word 'understanding,' implying a deeper level of impact.)

Bring them with you to every class and have them ready to be written on at any time.

Absolutely anything goes! Often times simply writing down the very first thing that comes to mind after hearing a point made in a lecture, a video watched, a particular poignant moment in rehearsal, a discussion with a classmate, etc., will reveal surprising depth and clarity. Other times you might have to struggle with something that you're trying to understand or express. Don't forget to experiment with thinking in metaphor. Expressions made on these pages are all about freeing and opening your minds, to really think out of the box and don't necessarily have to be words. Sometimes a drawing captures better anything that you might be feeling.



- Interpretive sketch of Bob by pro artist Stikki Peaches

MOVIE REACTION PAPERS PROJECT

You are required to watch two movies this semester and to write a one page (or more), single-spaced, 'reaction' paper summarizing your thoughts.

Do not plagiarize! Cutting and pasting from various internet sources or copying other scholarly work is not permitted. You can certainly gain insights from such research but your reaction must ultimately be your own.

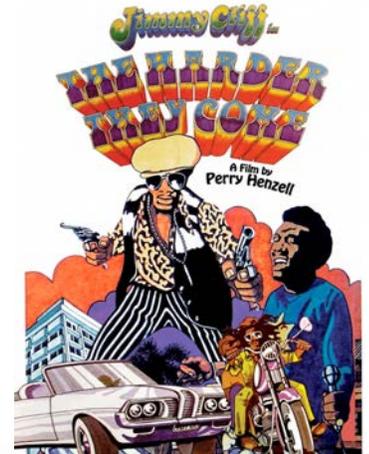
MOVIE 1

THE HARDER THEY COME.

No less than 1, single-spaced page

Be SURE to read the analysis PDF by Julienne Burton BEFORE you watch the movie.

This is not to be a retelling of the story. (Your teacher knows the story well!) What is your reaction to the story? Is Ivan simply a lawless criminal or a symbol for rebellion against an oppressive system? Do you see any similarities between the socio-economic system in the movie and how things are being run in our society today? Are there any parallels between the music industry today and back then? What does this movie say about freedom, is there such a thing at all?



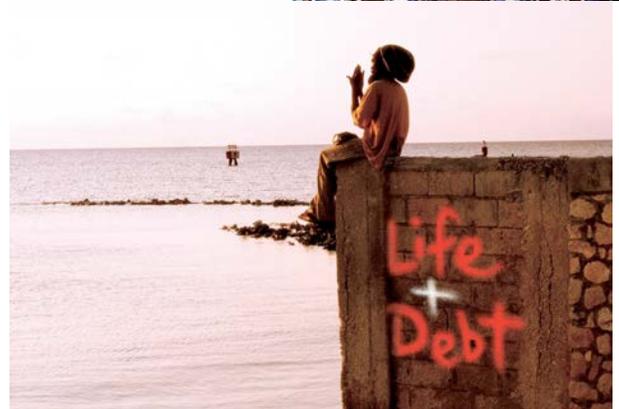
MOVIE 2

LIFE AND DEBT.

No less than 1, single-spaced page

Life and Debt is a feature-length documentary, which addresses the impact of the International Monetary Fund, the World Bank, the Inter-American Development Bank and current globalization policies on a developing country such as Jamaica.

www.lifeanddebt.org (You can't watch the movie from this link, but you can get information about the production and other useful information.)



MOVIE 3

WHO SHOT THE SHERIFF.

There is no reaction paper assigned for this movie.

Just watch it! (Netflix only)

A recently produced documentary that takes a deeper look at the circumstances around the assassination attempt on Bob's and the Wailers lives.

