Bob Marley And The Whalers Essay, Research Paper

bob marley was found and died in the same place. he now has over 200 fan websites and his latest son ziggy marley is writing in his throneReggae singer, guitarist, and composer. Born Robert Nesta Marley, on February 6, 1945, in Nine Miles, Saint Ann, Jamaica. Raised mostly in Trenchtown, a poor section of Kingston, Jamaica?s capital, Marley began singing with his friends Bunny Livingston and Peter Mackintosh (later shortened to Tosh) when he was a teenager. Marley?s first single, ?Judge Not,? was released in 1963, but made little impact commercially. In 1964, the trio became the nucleus of a band known as the Wailing Wailers. The group experimented with slowing down the quick dance rhythms of Jamaican ?ska? music and scored hits with ?Simmer Down? and ?Love and Affection.? Despite its early success, the group disbanded in 1966. Shortly thereafter, Marley lived briefly in the United States, where his mother, Cedella Marley Booker, had moved in 1963. While in the U.S., Marley worked at a series of jobs, including a stint as a forklift driver, a lab assistant, and an assembly line worker at the Chrysler plant in Wilmington, Delaware. He returned to Jamaica later that same year and rejoined his new wife, Rita Anderson, as well as Livingston and Tosh, with whom he formed a new trio called simply the Wailers.

By the late 1960s, the Wailers began recording with prominent reggae producer Lee ?Scratch? Perry and had gained a great measure of prominence in Jamaica. Moving from ska to the somewhat slower, so-called ?rude boy? music to an innovative brand of reggae, the group had a number of hits, including ?Soul Rebel,? ?400 Years,? and ?Small Axe.? In 1970, bassist Aston Barrett and his brother Carlton, a drummer, joined the band, which further deepened the Wailers? thumping rhythms. From the mid-1960s, Marley and his fellow Wailers devoted themselves to a faith in Rastafarianism, a religious sect centered around the belief that Ethiopian Emperor Haile Selassie I (now deceased) was a divine being who would lead oppressed blacks to an African homeland. A crucial part of the Rastafarian faith was the use of marijuana, or ?ganja,? as a kind of holy herb that would bring enlightenment. The Wailers? music was imbued with this faith, which represented a spiritual alternative to the frequent violence of ghetto life for many poor Jamaicans.

In 1972, the Wailers signed a recording contract with a London-based record label, Island Records, founded by the half-Irish, half-Jamaican music entrepreneur Chris Blackwell. Catch a Fire, their first album to be marketed outside Jamaica, brought the band?s artless lyricism and infectious rhythms to a wider audience and included such future reggae classics as ?Stir it Up? and ?Stop That Train.? The Wailers embarked on their first overseas tour in 1974. The band gained even more international recognition in 1974, when the popular singer-guitarist Eric Clapton covered ?I Shot the Sheriff??a song from their second Island album, Burnin? (1973)?and scored a No. 1 pop hit in 1974.

That same year, Tosh and Livingston (who later had his last name legally changed to ?Wailer?) left the group to pursue solo careers. With their departure, the band became known as Bob Marley and the Wailers, reflecting Marley?s undeniable prominence in both songwriting and performing. Marley soon released an album, Natty Dread with backing vocals provided by the I-Threes, a female trio that included his wife, Rita. Natty Dread was a critical and popular success, and featured songs such as ?Lively Up Yourself? and ?No Woman No Cry.?

Rastaman Vibration, released in 1976, was an even bigger international hit. In addition to increasing his already formidable reputation in the music world, the album?s politically charged message catapulted Marley into the forefront of a steadily worsening political situation in Jamaica. Marley?s iconic status in his native country had reached astonishing heights?one reporter commented in Time magazine that he ?rivals the government as a political force.? On December 3, 1976, Marley was injured in an attack on his home by several gunmen, suspected to be linked with Jamaica?s right-wing Labor Party. The attack was allegedly carried out in order to prevent Marley from performing at a concert rally for then-Prime Minister Michael Manley, the leader of the socialist People?s National Party. Marley still performed in the scheduled concert (which was attended by 80,000 people) but subsequently left Jamaica for a long period of self-imposed exile.

During the late 1970s, Marley toured extensively in the U.S., Europe, and Africa and recorded another sensational album, Exodus (1977). The album remained on the British charts for 56 consecutive weeks, and contained several huge commercial hits, including the title track, ?Waiting in Vain,? and ?Jamming.? With the 1978 release of Kaya, Marley and the Wailers favored a somewhat gentler sound and found an equal measure of success, especially with hit songs like ?Is This Love,? and ?Satisfy My Soul.? The band?s packed touring schedule in 1978 included a sold-out show at New York City?s Madison Square Garden, which was recorded and released as the highly acclaimed live album Babylon By Bus. Another album, entitled Survivor, was released in 1979.

While Marley was being treated for a foot injury in 1977, doctors discovered cancerous cells in his toe. Refusing to have surgery because of his Rasta beliefs, Marley continued to tour throughout the next several years. In 1980, Marley collapsed while jogging in New York?s Central Park. By that time, the cancer had spread throughout his lungs and brain. Over the next eight months, he underwent radiation therapy and holistic treatments, but his health continued to deteriorate. In April 1981, an ailing Marley was awarded the prestigious Order of Merit by the Jamaican government. Marley died in a Miami hospital, on May 11, 1981, at the age of 36. Ten days later, he was given a state funeral in Jamaica, attended by more than 100,000 people, and his body was taken to his hometown of Nine Miles and placed in a mausoleum.

In the years following Marley?s death, controversy raged over his estate, which was worth an estimated $30 million at the time of his death. As Marley had not left a will, by Jamaican law half of his estate was given to his widow while the remainder was to be divided equally among his children. After a 10-year battle with the court-appointed executor of her husband?s estate, Rita Marley finally won control for herself and her four children with Marley, as well as Marley?s seven other legally recognized children from liaisons with other women. As Marley recorded such a volume of work, previously unreleased material continued to appear on the market years after his death. In 1992, a 78-song album set entitled Songs of Freedom was released, featuring a retrospective of his work from his first single to his final concert performance in 1980. By a little more than a decade after his death, the annual royalty income for Marley?s music had increased to an estimated $2.5 million, ranking him among the largest-selling recording artists of all time. In 1994, he was inducted into the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame.

In addition to the large volume of recordings of his work, Marley?s extraordinary musical legacy lives on in The Melody Makers, a popular modern reggae band formed by Marley himself years ago; the band is now led by his eldest son, Ziggy, and features several more of his children. Rita Marley continues to live in Jamaica, running the family?s record label, Tuff Gong.