

Bob Marley – Natty Dread (1974)

Written by bluelover

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1. *Lively up Yourself* 2. *No Woman No Cry* 3. *Them Belly Full (But We Hungry)* 4. *Rebel Music (3 O'Clock Road Block)* 5. *So Jah Seh* 6. *Natty Dread* 7. *Bend Down Low* 8. *Talkin' Blues* 9. *Revolution* 10. *Am-a-Do* Bob Marley - lead vocals, rhythm guitar Aston Barrett - bass guitar Carlton Barrett - drums, percussion Bernard "Touter" Harvey - piano, organ Jean Rousel - Hammond Organ, Keyboards Al Anderson - lead guitar The I-Threes (Rita Marley, Judy Mowatt, Marcia Griffiths) - backing vocals

Natty Dread is Bob Marley's finest album, the ultimate reggae recording of all time. This was Marley's first album without former bandmates Peter Tosh and Bunny Livingston, and the first released as Bob Marley & the Wailers. The Wailers' rhythm section of bassist Aston "Family Man" Barrett and drummer Carlton "Carlie" Barrett remained in place and even contributed to the songwriting, while Marley added a female vocal trio, the I-Threes (which included his wife Rita Marley), and additional instrumentation to flesh out the sound. The material presented here defines what reggae was originally all about, with political and social commentary mixed with religious paeans to Jah. The celebratory "Lively Up Yourself" falls in the same vein as "Get Up, Stand Up" from *Burnin'*. "No Woman, No Cry" is one of the band's best-known ballads. "Them Belly Full (But We Hungry)" is a powerful warning that "a hungry mob is an angry mob." "Rebel Music (3 O'Clock Road Block)" and "Revolution" continue in that spirit, as Marley assumes the mantle of prophet abandoned by '60s forebears like Bob Dylan. In addition to the lyrical strengths, the music itself is full of emotion and playfulness, with the players locked into a solid groove on each number. Considering that popular rock music was entering the somnambulant disco era as *Natty Dread* was released, the lyrical and musical potency is especially striking. Marley was taking on discrimination, greed, poverty, and hopelessness while simultaneously rallying the troops as no other musical performer was attempting to do in the mid-'70s. ---Jim Newsom, Rovi

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