



# Bob Marley & The Wailers

## EXODUS 40: THE MOVEMENT CONTINUES

ISLAND RECORDS

As the Crown Jewels of Island Records, Bob Marley's back catalogue has been given the bells-and-whistles Deluxe edition treatment on numerous occasions. *Exodus* has been reissued several times before, but Island have pulled out all the stops as Marley's most-loved long-player reaches the Big 4-0. Released alongside various CD incarnations, the vinyl boxset comprises the original album, a 'restatement' of the LP by Ziggy Marley using newly uncovered vocal takes from Bob, plus some new backing tracks and a live disc recorded at London's Rainbow Theatre between 1-4 June 1977. A 12" of *Punky Reggae Party* and *Keep On Moving*, plus two further 7" singles, complete the package. Due to the reverence with which Marley's output has been treated (and the consideration, of course, of its huge earning potential), the remastering programme for the 'Tuff Gong' is up there with Apple's reworking of The Beatles.

*Exodus* was a landmark for Marley, both professionally and personally. In 1976, he survived an assassination

attempt that resulted in a self-imposed exile in London. Partly recorded in Island's studio there, the hi-tech setup means that *Exodus* perches at the summit of his studio work, in terms of high-fidelity production.

The album itself is a two-part affair. Side One deals with political and religious themes, while Side Two sees Marley at his most sensual and relaxed. Stylistically, it also incorporates blues, soul, classic rock and funk but, with The Wailers having such a strong musical identity, it remains instantly identifiable. There's a beautiful instrumental separation throughout the mix – Aston 'Family Man' Barrett's bass throbs superbly on opener *Natural Mystic* and drummer Carlton Barrett's ticking hi-hats really come alive. Deeper cuts such as *So Much Things To Say*, *Guiltiness* and *The Heathen* will be a revelation to occasional fans, but the six classics that follow earn this LP its 'legend' status (pun intended).

The propulsive groove of the title track is wonderful – its seven-and-a-half minutes fly by. The more lightweight *Jamming* is a pleasing change of tone,

while *Turn Your Lights Down Low* and *Three Little Birds* find Marley in cheery mode. Once again, the bass sound is pleasingly fat on *One Love* as the album ends on a positive note.

You'll be playing 'spot the difference' for the most part when listening to Ziggy's 'restatement' version. Although this could have been an intriguing reboot, there are few major differences on show. Discerning ears will catch the odd phrasing and melody tweak, but a sense of déjà vu is the overwhelming reaction: however, the live disc backs up The Wailers' reputation as one of the 70s' great gigging bands. This all adds up to a nice package, but at more than £100, you'll need to consider whether the extras here are really worth the cash, or whether a previous remaster would suffice. *Steve Harnell*

VERDICT

8/10

