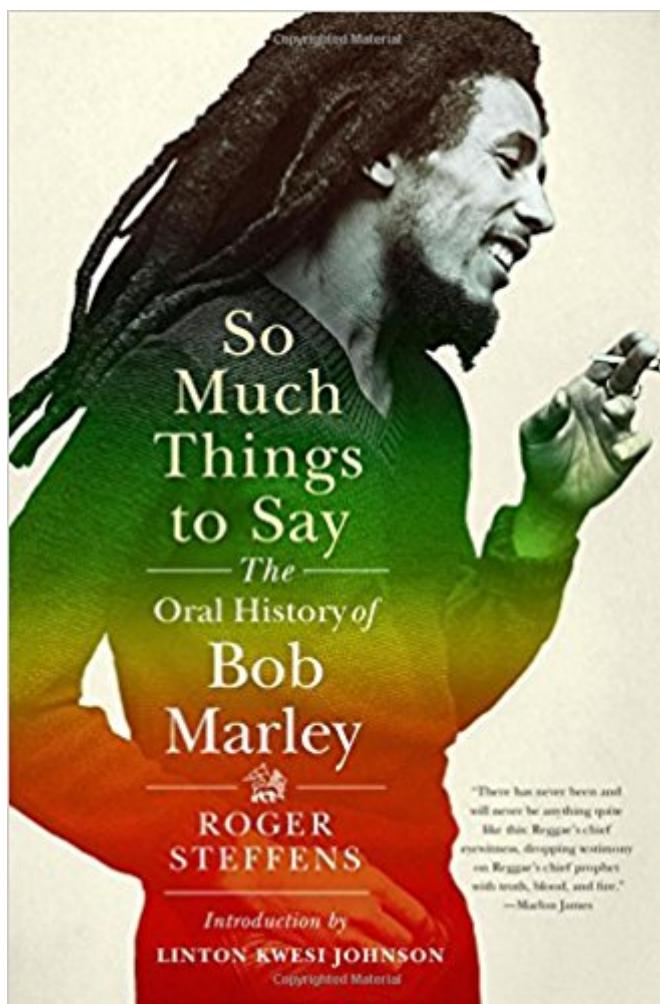


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# So Much Things To Say: The Oral History Of Bob Marley



## Synopsis

A revelatory, myth-shattering history of one of the most influential musicians of all time, told in the words of those who knew him best. Roger Steffens is one of the world's leading Bob Marley experts. He toured with the Wailers in the 1970s and was closely acquainted with Bunny Wailer, Peter Tosh and the rest of the band members. Over several decades he has interviewed more than seventy-five friends, business managers, relatives and confidants—many speaking publicly for the first time. Forty years in the making, *So Much Things to Say* weaves this rich testimony into a definitive telling of the life of the reggae king—the full, inside account of how a boy from the slums of Kingston, Jamaica, became a cultural icon and inspiration to millions around the world. The intimacy of the voices and the frankness of their revelations will astonish even longtime Marley fans. Readers see the intense bonds of teenage friendship among Peter, Bunny and Bob, the vibrant early sessions with the original Wailers (as witnessed by members Junior Braithwaite, Beverley Kelso and Cherry Green) and the tumultuous relationships with Rita Marley and Cindy Breakspeare. With unprecedeted candor, these interviews tell dramatic, little-known stories, from the writing of some of Marley's most beloved songs to the Wailers' violent confrontation involving producer Lee "Scratch" Perry, Bob's intensive musical training with star singer Johnny Nash and the harrowing assassination attempt at 56 Hope Road in Kingston, which led to Marley's defiant performance two nights later with a bullet lodged in his arm. Readers witness Marley's rise to international fame in London, his triumphant visit to Zimbabwe to sing for freedom fighters inspired by his anthems and the devastating moment of his collapse while jogging in New York's Central Park. Steffens masterfully conducts the story of Marley's last months, as Marley poignantly sings "Another One Bites the Dust" during the sound check before his final concert in Pittsburgh, followed by his tragic death at the age of thirty-six. *So Much Things to Say* explores major controversies, examining who actually ordered the shooting attack on Hope Road, scrutinizing claims of CIA involvement and investigating why Marley's fatal cancer wasn't diagnosed sooner. Featuring Steffens's own candid photographs of Marley and his circle, this magisterial work preserves an invaluable, transformative slice of music history: the life of the legendary performer who brought reggae to the international stage. 40 photographs

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

“There has never been and will never be anything quite like this: Reggae’s chief eyewitness, dropping testimony on Reggae’s chief prophet with truth, blood, and fire.” - Marlon James, Man Booker Prize-winning author of *A Brief History of Seven Killings* “[So Much Things to Say] narrates the life of Marley from cradle to grave.” Steffens has been on the Marley case for decades, and he’s a crucial voice in this epic chorus. Illuminating. - Tourf, *New York Times* “What emerges [from *So Much Things to Say*] isn’t a different Marley so much as one who feels a bit more human.” - Hua Hsu, *The New Yorker* “If Bob Marley is Jesus in these times, Roger Steffens is Peter.” - Carlos Santana “*So Much Things to Say* is by far the most important and definitive book written about Bob Marley, therefore in my opinion the best book about Jamaican music. It ranks with Mezz Mezzrow’s *Really the Blues* masterpiece, Mike Gerber’s *Jazz Jews* and Keith Richards’ *Life*. It’s beyond a book about music, it’s a major ethnology study. Just like the best Mandela or Gandhi or Lennon biographies, it’s about mankind on an anthropologic level. It’s about identity, culture, pride, spirituality - it helps us understand who we really are. That’s what Bob Marley was all about, and as such his brilliant works stand unparalleled in the music business.” - Bruno Blum, musician, music historian, writer, artist and lecturer based in Paris “Eyewitness to history, Roger Steffens braids his voice with all the other major players from the Bob Marley story in *So Much Things to Say* for a gripping, detailed, and penetrating look at one of the 20th century’s greatest musicians. Jah lives.” - Joel Selvin, journalist and author of *Altamont: The Rolling Stones, The Hells Angels, and the Inside Story of Rock* “Darkest Day” “All true gospels are shaped by the accounts of eyewitnesses. Roger Steffens has collected these accounts and has given us a book of truths complicated by the bending of memory, motive and mystery. The

effect is a fresh and renewed affirmation of Marley’s genius, humanity and mystique. This book is a triumph of the storytelling virtuosity of Jamaican people and a testament to the care and glorious obsessions of Roger Steffens. - Kwame Dawes, author of *City of Bones: A Testament and Bob Marley: Lyrical Genius* “Roger Steffens was embedded on the road with Bob Marley and the Wailers in 1979, interviewing, photographing, witnessing as Bob morphed from a third world superstar to an international champion of human worth and dignity. *So Much Things to Say* is Steffens’ must-read/can’t-stop-reading account of Bob Marley’s historic career and his indelible achievements. - Stephen Davis, author of *Bob Marley and Reggae Bloodlines* “*So Much Things to Say* . . . is a fitting tribute to the tumultuous life and complex character of the country’s favorite son. - Neil Spencer, *The Guardian* “A truly definitive interpretation of the life of Bob Marley. Roger Steffens’ immense knowledge and great love for his subject shines out of every page. “Who feels it knows it, ” sang Marley. Reading *So Much Things to Say*, you feel no one knows it more than Roger Steffens. A magnificent achievement. - Chris Salewicz, author *Bob Marley: The Untold Story* “Roger Steffens uncorks with remarkable clarity many lifetimes of close personal memories on the evolution of reggae’s biggest ambassador. Amazingly, there are few Rashomon-like differing points of view. *So Much Things To Say* perfectly ferrets out his inherent humanity and complexity while revealing much important information previous biographies were unaware of. Marley’s parents bridged two worlds. Steffens’ brilliant and concise magnum opus, interjected with his crucial contextualizing, does more than any other book on Bob Marley to showcase the intimate and confounding detail of that tough and troubled tightrope dance. Essential reading for all. - Doug Wendt, broadcaster, artist and Ralph J. Gleason honoree “Indispensable! A captivating and unfiltered narrative of the man, his music and his world! [and] a trove for even the most dedicated aficionado. Absolutely crucial reading! - Dr. Matthew J. Smith, University of the West Indies “Jamaican oral history is never simple. Testimony goes from re-collection to re-collective, which brings us as close to the original as nuance will allow. Roger Steffens has expertly navigated this diversity to bring us the journey of the incredible spirit of Bob Marley. - Dermot Hussey, Sirius/XM host and Dean of Jamaican Broadcasters “If there’s such thing as a good addiction, this book is it. For anyone who has taken the time to dig even a little bit deeper into the meaning of Bob’s music and life, to get beyond the surface level and often times inaccurate and watered down portrayal of him by the mainstream today, these firsthand accounts will twist your head into a whole new landscape of understanding. Artfully guided by Roger Steffens’ expertise and insight,

you will come away with a vision of Bob that is REAL, with all the earthly complexities, contradictions, struggle and transcendent truths that complete the multifaceted prism that was Marley's life. For any musical artist, this book will reignite the inspiration and challenge that Marley left us with: to dig deep and recommit to who you are and where you stand in the struggle.

Matt Jenson, Associate Professor of Piano and creator of The Music and Life of Bob Marley performance studies course at Berklee College of Music

"Majestic." So Much Things to Say offers a riveting portrait drawn from four decades of interviews with friends, family, and fellow musicians of the Jamaican music legend.

Lisa Shea, Elle, Best Books of the Summer "A complete portrait"

So Much Things to Say calls on many voices to recall the one iconic voice Marley's.

Agatha French, Los Angeles Times "I thought I'd read all there was to know about Bob Marley, but So Much Things To Say offers fresh insights into his life and times. Steffens allows the voices often surprising, contentious, provocative to speak for themselves. Riveting."

Jeremy Marre, award-winning director of Roots Rock Reggae and Bob Marley: Rebel Music "Marley is not a demigod here, but an unwanted boy who fell upon the gift of brightening the world"

So Much Things to Say reveals a Marley of flesh and blood.

Jason Rhode, Paste Magazine "Compulsively readable, exquisitely researched."

John Timpane, Philadelphia Inquirer "So Much Things to Say is a major work that helps us better understand Marley's tragic yet inspirational tale."

David Katz, Mojo "A landmark of reggae literature that's been 15 years in the making. This book, together with his collection of photographs called Family Acid is [Steffens] defining masterpiece, and the jewel in his crown."

Echoes Magazine "Crucial to the understanding of [Marley] the artist and the man"

If you think you know the story of Bob Marley's life and career from existing biographies, you'll be amazed at how much you learn reading this book.

Highly recommended!

Chuck Foster, Reggae Festival Guide "Kaleidoscopic"

[So Much Things to Say] delves deeply into Marley's music and influences, including his politics and spirituality.

The National Book Review "An illuminating portrait of an extraordinary life."

Kirkus "Page-turning" [a] thoroughly engaging history

highly entertaining and informative.

Publishers Weekly, starred review

Archivist and historian Roger Steffens is the founding chairman of the Reggae Grammy Committee. He co-hosted the award-winning radio program Reggae Beat and co-founded The Beat magazine.

He has lectured worldwide on Bob Marley at hundreds of venues including the Smithsonian and the Rock & Roll Hall of Fame. He lives in Los Angeles, California.

If you don't know a lot about Bob Marley, most of this book will be over your head. This is a truly wonderful book that fills in the details of events as told by those who were there. Oral history books do not spoon feed you with an overview of the stories they tell. You need to have an appreciation of who is telling the stories and how the information enriches what you already know. I love Jamaica, its history, its music, and all thing Marley. I have read many books on Marley, listened to all the music of Marley- and those before, with, and after him. The Marley videos and a trip to Kingston are required for the true fan. I am devouring every word of this book. Thanks for creating a wonderful source of information for us true fans of Bob Marley

I began going to Jamaica during Easter break in 1972 and was introduced to the Wailers and Bob by a man I came to know who had a stand up in the hills overlooking MoBay. Many subsequent hours and trips to Jamdown I spent with Junior in his hill top yard, chalice in hand, listening to the Wailers and Bob as their music matured and roots culture spread globally. My first trip to Nine Mile after Bob passed was a milestone. This book brings back so many lasting memories it's just wonderful.

This is the best Bob Marley book you will ever read! It is told to you by the real people who were there every step of the way! Buy it now!

Best ever

A must own book for Bob Marley fans seeking a better understand of myths and the reality of this Jamaican country boy who forever changed our world. Roger Steffens has put together some amazing interviews by friends, family, musicians and filmmakers and put them side to side so you can see how for some the story has changed over time to build the "Legend" and others offer views that may open some people's eyes. If there is one person who has given me a better picture its Roger. I grew up listening to his reggae show back in the 80's on KCRW, become a fan of the "Reggae Beat" magazine and his passion for the Wailers has truly given me the "reggaemylitis" that he caught back in 1973. I have spent many hours in his house marveling at his collection and hearing him tell some of these stories- so I knew I had to buy this book to hear some I had not. I had

to put the book down once or twice because sometimes the truth is bitter to hear and as I finished it- I feel I have a wider perspective on who Bob was and what a life lived in 36 years. For years I waited to read Roger's book with Bunny Wailer which sadly was never released called "old firesticks. I have read more than a few books on Bob and this is one to grab for yourself or as a gift. The half that's never been told.Big Jim Snidow Reggae DJ KUCI KMEC KLLG since 1997

There is no one better to offer a retrospective of the life of Nesta Robert Marley than Mr. Roger Steffens. For years he has been archiving everything he can find related to an artist the world has come to love and appreciate almost as much as Roger does. It is that respect and love that comes across in the pages of this book as he reveals a more complete picture of Bob Marley's life than we have ever had before. This is not a book about celebrating Bob's greatness - it is a book about really getting to know the guy. Roger talks with most every important person in Bob's life to find out their impressions of Bob. Mr Steffens paints a vivid and shimmering picture for us of how this country youth from Jamaica who apparently was not much of a singer or musician in his early years would grow to become one of the best known and loved musical and cultural personalities on the planet. The fact that Roger Steffens is a Brooklyn born, middle class white American just adds to the significance of the story he tells. This story really has little to do with race or separateness - it is about the triumph of One Love Inity. I believe Robert Marley captivated Mr. Steffens for the same reason he continues to attract the attention of the world - Marley's mission was not about fame and fortune in the music industry - it was about freedom and human dignity and hope. I have not yet finished the book and I really don't want it to end too soon. It is a fascinating read and it does so much more than chronicle a man's life - it captures the Spirit of his mission to just be Bob and be a force of love, hope and redemption in the world for all time. Thank you Bob and Roger for being such strong voices adding love, joy and hope to our world.

For an average white boy from the suburbs, reggae grabbed me hard and has never let go. Roger Steffens and I had stumbled on this sublime musical form in much the same way while living in the Bay Area in 1973. Over the years he has become the leading Bob Marley authority, and like me came to value reggae as not just a wonderful musical genre but a very special way to see the world. Oral histories can be messy, but that is why they can be far more illuminating than straight nonfiction prose. In the case of *So Much Things To Say*, this format and the sometimes contradictory memories of Bob render a humanness to a man who has been endlessly mythologized.

I've always wondered while reading some of the great Bob Marley biographies over the years if I was getting the true essence of Bob Marley or just an author's interpretation of this complex man. Thank you Roger Steffens for giving us an understanding of the life of Bob Marley from those who knew him best. I loved, loved, loved this book and appreciated the chronological sequence of events and interviews. Buy this book!

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