

Ziggy Marley on His 2010 World Cup Song, Soccer, and Jamaica's Future

Besides a good spliff, among the things that Jamaican reggae star Bob Marley loved best in life were 1) music 2) Africa and 3) soccer. Ziggy Marley, his eldest son, has brought all three of those things together in a new song, "Africa Land," that he's released to celebrate the 2010 FIFA World Cup and the fact that the competition is being held in South Africa.

Marley says the song is also meant to promote unity. That's something that they could also use in Marley's homeland of Jamaica, which has been racked with street violence in recent weeks. The new song, which features Ziggy's brother Stephen and Beninose singer-songwriter Angélique Kidjo, is being issued free of charge. Marley plans to come out with a series of "wild and free" singles, which he'll release one at a time between albums. Speakeasy interviewed Marley today via email about soccer, his new track, and the ongoing turmoil in Jamaica.

The Wall Street Journal: You love soccer. Your father Bob loved soccer. What do you love about the game? Ziggy Marley: We grew up seeing, loving and playing football. It's a sport that flows well with the rhythm of our music and our lifestyle. We love it cause it truly brings out the spirit of unity and it makes you fit like no other sport can. Why is it important to you that the World Cup is being held in South Africa? For one it is about time. But even more important it gives Africa and the world the opportunity to see Africa in a positive light and maybe to use this chance in my opinion to further Africa's full potential for the future. This is a new beginning. My hope is that this will be a catalyst for further positive development on the continent of Africa. Your new song is about global unity. How do you feel about the violence taking place in Kingston recently? The new song for me is really about African unity which the global community is connected to. So in a way African unity will affect global unity. The violence in Kingston is unfortunate and it shows that Jamaica is in desperate need of true leadership. Leadership that is respected, trusted and loved by the people of Jamaica, leadership with wisdom. This goes for both sides. The politics in Jamaica needs to evolve beyond its past now. The old way cannot be the new way and that is [why] you need leaders that have the ability to inspire the people. Jamaica is in darkness; we need light.