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# The BOOMBBOX

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## ZIGGY MARLEY SAYS MARIJUANA IS 'NUTRITIOUS,' TOUR IS 'BEST EVER'



KII ARENS

*Most of today's younger generations have only really experienced Bob Marley through music or sparse interviews. However, the spirit of the legend undoubtedly lives on through his eldest son, **Ziggy Marley**. Ziggy's career in music began in the late '70s, alongside his father and siblings on the track, 'Children Playing in the Streets.' His reign as bandleader of the Melody Makers showed the family journeying into pop-friendly reggae music, picking up where their father left off. His solo career has consistently displayed a natural talent, whose music translates fluently through live performances. Three decades later, Ziggy is on his sixth solo album, 'Wild and Free,' and in the midst of his Forward to Love tour.*

*The iconic Marley is an admitted naturalist, and after all of this time, he still builds his music based upon a vibe. That vibe has carried him through all corners of the globe, currently in the US, where his live shows*

*have moved fans to send personal messages to Ziggy online. His new foray into social networking -- find him on Facebook and Twitter -- has afforded him the opportunity to hear these stories firsthand and inspires him to continue. While the music is still moving, he's working with famed artist Jim Mahfood on a graphic novel series titled 'Marijuana Man.' Ziggy also hopes to go into acting and pursue other creative projects outside of music.*

*In speaking with The BoomBox, the big brother Marley talks about the important uses of the marijuana plant -- he says it's nutritious -- what he hopes for his children, the direction of his music and his new weed-inspired comic book.*

**You've been in the industry making music for decades. What still keeps you going?**

Keeps me going? Well, the inspiration. I'm inspired to do music. I really can't stop unless I stop being inspired. The continual need for ideas, consciousness, messages for the world, for people. I feel we provide through music. It's the inspiration that causes us to say the words we're saying. So that's why I cannot stop unless the inspiration stops.

**Over the years as your tours have progressed, what have you done differently live?**

I think this tour [Forward to Love] is so far going to be the best tour I've ever done. I just kind of been touring so much I understand the audience, I understand people, understand the musicians. I think the connection is much more stronger now because over the years I've been learning and picking up things as I've gone on the road.

**Watch Ziggy Marley & the Melody Makers' Tumblin' Down'**



**Ziggy Marley And The Melody Makers - Tumblin' Down**



**Your brother Damian, Jr. Gong has worked with Nas and released a whole project, 'Distant Relatives.' Would you ever collaborate with a hip-hop artist or another genre artist on an entire collaborative project?**

I would say, no, or only if it comes naturally. Only if it is inspired. I wouldn't do it for marketing reasons or any other reasons. That's just something that naturally has to happen. For example, on this record I had Woody Harrelson singing with me on the title track.

**How did that even happen?**

It wasn't planned. It was something we talked about. He came by my house one day and I was working on a song and it just happened. That's the way I like to do things. I don't like to do things for any other reason than it happens spontaneously or there's something that makes it happen naturally. I don't like putting down too many plans and trying to do a strategy to get a certain response or a certain effect.

**Are you beginning to see the music build in your children or nieces and nephews?**

Music is always a part of children's lives. All of us are from music, really. From the ABC's to right down to everything else. My family, music is a part of their lives. Naturally, they have a tendency to do music but I don't think I can definitely define them by that at this stage. They still have a long way to go. They could still

choose to do something else.

**That's really great since many musical families consider music a rite of passage for their kids.**

I'm someone that tries to keep things naturally. If it comes that way, fine, I won't force it because of what I do. I want it to be natural.

**Did you have a particular message you wanted to convey with 'Wild and Free'?**

First, I'd say it was actually life, being in concert. I wanted to make this album have music that easily translated from life, stage and to the people. I think we've been successful with it. We've traveled to Europe twice, I've been to Japan with it. I'm in the States, so that does come across very well. That was a definite success for me. There's one thing I was trying to articulate with this album and that was the use of the cannabis plant. The use of it and all of its aspects. Not just marijuana smoking, but the industrial use of the plant. I had that main idea and that's why the album is called 'Wild and Free.' That was really on my mind a lot and it's something I believe in. If we're in this green revolution and environmental state of mind, this plant is like the perfect plant for this issue. I think it's hypocrisy that we're not using this plant more widely and taking advantage of it.



Fabrice Coffrini, AFP

**Do you feel people have preconceived notion about the cannabis plant?**

I think it's a lack of knowledge because what is portrayed in the outlets that people get information from is one aspect of it or stereotypical view of it or lies about it. So the general public don't get the full picture. The smoking of marijuana is one aspect of it that you have to be careful of because these days the plant is so much more potent because of what people have done to it. Again, I'm a naturalist, I don't like that type of stuff. I like it natural, how it came from the earth without anybody touching. That's how I prefer the use of the plant to me. But people have done all types of things to the plant to make it more potent, which can be dangerous. So you have to be careful with that, ya know? But then the other uses for the plant: fire, fuel, nutrition -- the seeds are nutritious. This is an environmental plant. It's good for the soil, it's easily grown, it doesn't use a lot of space. It's a green plant. This is the plant. This plant has to be used.

**Are you working on a new album yet?**

In my mind I am. In actuality, I'm not yet. I'm being inspired continuously so I'm trying to figure something out. This album came out a few months ago so I'm still on that ship. I might be on it for another year or so. Doing the live concerts, it's really connecting with the people, and that's a good thing for me.

**What is one of your favorite tour stories?**

Well, for example, ya know, I'm on Facebook. Since I've been doing the touring, I've been communicating with the friends and the fans through Facebook and so forth. We talk and I was looking at Facebook today. We did a show last night in Agoura Hills in California, and I was checking my Facebook page, and this one lady wrote and said she'd seen my show for the first time and how it made her cry and how she missed her son and it helped heal her broken heart. It's very cool. This is the second time on this tour where someone has said they've cried or felt it. What we're doing is touching people, that is what we're supposed to be doing as well.

**Have people been respectful of your privacy now that you communicate with them on Facebook?**

Oh yeah, people are cool. We're cool. It's family. We're family. People treat you according to your energy or what you put out there so what I put out there is very open. I'm not paranoid or scared, I'm open. That's how I treat people, with respect and speak truthfully.

**If there was anything you could pursue outside of music at this point, what would it be?**

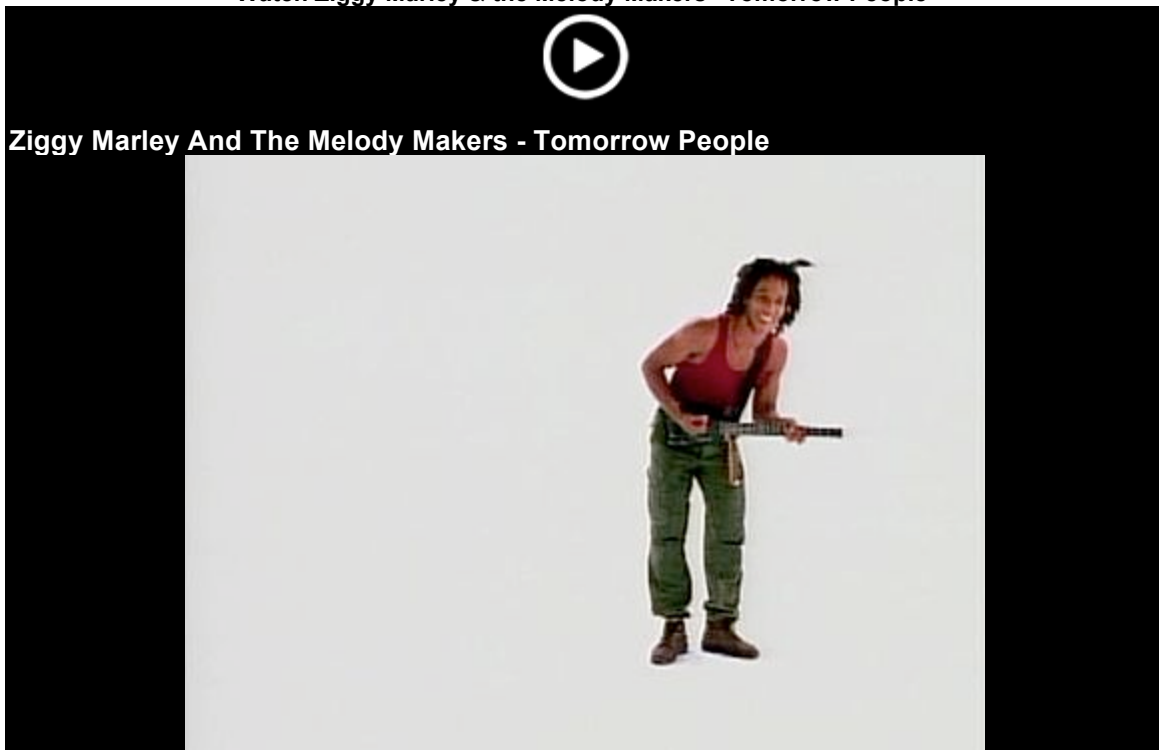
There are a few things I'm actually pursuing already. We just did a graphic novel, which is a comic book called 'Marijuana Man.' He's a superhero from another planet. Thing is, he doesn't smoke up. He's not what

you think. He himself doesn't smoke, so you've gotta check that out. We didn't want to do the stereotypical thing so he gets his powers from the plant, but he doesn't actually smoke it. This has been a secret dream of mine since I was younger. I was always into comics. I used to doodle in my schoolbook. I think what I'm trying to do is find other avenues to express my creativity and that's one of them. Movies might be one of them. Different ways to express myself outside of music and I'm just trying to find whatever works from the outside of music. So far I've done the graphic novel thing, which has been cool.

**So in a way it still keeps to your message about the usefulness of the cannabis plant?**

Yes, the whole story in the graphic novel is about a community that uses the plant for all of its livelihood. It's a community that he meets when he lands on the planet earth and they're up against this pharmaceutical evil doer that creates this mechanical villain to wipe out all of the marijuana plants so that they could make an artificial version of it. It's a superhero story, like Superman or any one of those things. You have to check it out.

**Watch Ziggy Marley & the Melody Makers' 'Tomorrow People'**



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