

Good example of essay on review of bob marleys catch a fire

[Art & Culture](#), [Music](#)



Bob Marley's music has had a tremendous influence on all who have had the honor of discovering it. The man, himself, was a trailblazer for the reggae genre and deserves a place amongst fellow musical trailblazers of the past, such as Elvis, the Beatles, and Chuck Berry in their own respective genres. But why is music so important to us, why are we not satisfied with visual, more tangible forms of art? What is it about the sound of music that has such an intoxicating effect on our psyches? Art itself can be understood as an expression of one's experience on this temporary plane of existence, reflecting upon anything from love, spirituality, and family to fear, nightmares, and even as a way of shattering conventional perception and thought. Human beings exhibit a vast amount of intelligence, and yet we do not understand what makes us who we are by any conventional means. To address the issue of what makes us human, we either develop religious beliefs as a way of establishing a sense of order to the way we view the universe, or we look to art (sometimes both). Bob Marley would be an example of someone who not only looked to both spirituality and art as a way of expressing himself, but tied the two together, creating music through the lens of the Rastafari worldview (Moskowitz, 2007).

One might surmise that art is essentially the answer to what it is that makes us human. When one considers this idea, one can see and feel the soul of the creator behind every work of art, just as long as one is in tune with what the work of art is meant to embody. In the case of Bob Marley and the Wailer's 1973 album, *Catch a Fire*, one can gain a more intimate understanding of the mood and tone of the city of Kingston, Jamaica at the time, more than any history lesson or raw text can convey. While writing and images may be

useful in their own right, they cannot create a complete image of a time and place one has never been without the sound to accompany it. The fantastic thing about music is that it encompasses both sound and writing, making it more than one dimension of art. More than that, it is an expression of one's cultural identity. In this case, the album *Catch a Fire* seems to capture the spirit of Jamaica and of its people. In the songs *Concrete Jungle* and *Slave Driver*, Marley seems to be drawing from Jamaica's history through several allusions to the past; including a line in *Slave Driver* where he essentially refers to the atrocities of slavery and how people in Jamaica to this day remain in poverty, even generations after the abolishment of the Atlantic slave trade: "every time I hear the crack of a whip, my blood runs cold", "Today they say that we are free, only to be chained in poverty" (Marley, 1973). The running theme in *Concrete Jungle* is the loss of tradition and the "old ways", having been replaced by urbanization, which in turn is hinted at as a side-effect of colonialism. The lyrics of both songs tell stories or convey feelings relating to the modern world in the Jamaican context, but the tempo and rhythm feel relaxed and upbeat, conveying an underlying message of hope looking into the future.

As an advocate for peace, mutual understanding, and with a desire for a world united, Bob Marley establishes himself very well in the song *No More Trouble*, where he lays out his views and feelings regarding international politics quite well, all while never mentioning anyone by name or referring to any specific events. One of the ways in which he accomplishes this is through the ever-famous line "make love, not war" (Marley, 1973), which he utters in one of the earlier verses of the song. This theme could be tied to

world events on a global, or international scale, but it can also be applied to small-scale, person to person conflict, promoting the idea of making just as much effort to understand one another (especially the proverbial “other”), as you would have in engaging in conflict. This message resonates between people on the street as well as between lovers. In every human relationship, there is inevitably going to be disagreements and conflict. But such issues can either be handled through compromise, or they can be made worse depending on the actions one takes.

On that note, the concept of love and romance is conveyed very well in the song *Stir it Up*, which can be understood as a tribute to courtship in romance. With lines like “since I got you on my mind, now you are herethere’s so much we could do..”, “I’ll push the wood, blaze the fire, then I’ll satisfy your heart’s desire” (Marley, 1973), it would be difficult to see this song as anything else. Since the possibilities concerning the meaning behind this song exist within the sphere of romance, one can determine whether *Stir it Up* is about courtship or sex at their own discretion, as it conveys familiar feelings and even a familiar human story, but with open-ended symbolism. With such themes as history, culture, love, family, upbringing, and spirituality, Bob Marley’s music can be enjoyed by all. *Catch a Fire*, is his first great success in defining the Reggae genre; a love letter to the world that goes beyond our typical understanding of it. If one can listen to this album and relate to it in some way, then that alone is evidence of the relatable nature of the human spirit; the ability to relate to a Jamaican musician’s words and feelings despite having (in some cases) never been to Jamaica, nor lived in the 1970’s, the sensation remains the same. This is

because the abilities of the human spirit extend beyond the simple sense of context and time-period and bring us together on an emotional level. This, is what makes us all human.

Sources:

Moskowitz, D. V. (2007). *The Words and Music of Bob Marley*. Westport, Connecticut.

Marley, B. (1973). *Catch a Fire* [Vinyl Record]. Kingston, Jamaica: Island Studios (1972).