

## Music that recalls the history of slavery

A number of Jamaican roots reggae artists commented on the slave trade, the experience of enslaved black people and the struggle for freedom and justice, often linked to a return to Africa. Bob Marley's Redemption Song is the most famous but there are other songs, some of them equally moving and powerful.

The list below offers a list of tunes by various reggae artists that are available on CD or available to download via sites such as [www.itunes.co.uk](http://www.itunes.co.uk).

| Artist          | Title                      | Comments  |
|-----------------|----------------------------|---|
| Burning Spear   | Slavery Days               | Burning Spear sings with great emotional intensity & cries out through the song "Do you remember the days of slavery?" The responses to the question include: 'They work us so hard & they use us'. 'History can recall the days of slavery'. 'Some of us survive showing that we are still alive'. Available cheaply on the CD 'Garvey's Ghost' or 'Reggae Legends – Burning Spear'. A reggae classic. |
| The Abyssinians | Declaration of Rights      | This tune powerfully & evocatively sets out the demands of displaced Black peoples taken from Africa. Another reggae classic; available on 'The Best of Studio 1' on Heartbeat Records.   |
| Bob Marley      | Slave Driver               | This tune inspired The Wailers' first album 'Catch a Fire'. The lyrics tell the slave driver that the tables are now turned. "Catch a fire you're gonna get burned". It also questions the notion of freedom today. "Today they say that we are free, only to be chained in poverty".   |
| Dennis Brown    | Equal Rights               | A plea for the right to be free irrespective of race, class or creed. Available on Dennis Brown 'Money in my Pocket – the Definitive Collection', Trojan Records.   |
| Junior Delgado  | Sons of Slaves             | "Are we not the children of slaves?" asked Junior Delgado. "They took us away from Africa land and put us down here in Babylon". On the compilation 'Punky Reggae Party' from Trojan.   |
| Easy B          | Black History              | A tune on the compilation 'Reggae Hits 30'. The question is asked "Where is the black man's history? Its page has been torn from history".  |
| Judy Mowatt     | Slave Queen                | Judy Mowatt was one of the I-Threes, Bob Marley's backing singers. This tune from the CD 'Black Woman' refers to the legacy of the slave mentality and asks for any 'Slave Queen' to move the shackle from her mind'.   |
| Culture         | Black Star Liner Must Come | This tune on the reggae classic 'Two Sevens Clash' is optimistic. "They take us away from our homeland" but "the Black Star Liner shall come" (a reference to Marcus Garvey's liners that were to take black people back to Africa).  |