

The Wailers stage an 'Exodus' on the island

Posted by jvrabel
Monday, May 18th, 2009

There are still a few recession-proof jobs out there these days: grocery store worker, tax lawyer and, apparently, membership in legendary reggae band the Wailers.

“I really did not think that all our shows would be sold out,” lead singer Elan Atias said about the band’s current tour by phone from Los Angeles this week. “I can count on one hand (the ones) that didn’t.”

The most recent tour by the Wailers — which still contains some of the original members who served as backing band to Bob Marley and other reggae kings — has traveled, as is customary, throughout American and Europe. Atias thinks that’s because even in a recession, people turn to reggae music to escape their worries.



The Wailers, performing the album “Exodus,” Passafire

When: 8 p.m. Tuesday

Where: Shoreline Ballroom, Ocean Center, 40 Folly Field Road, Hilton Head Island

Tickets: \$20 in advance, \$23 day of show

Information: 843-842-0358, www.shorelineballroom.com

“The message in the music is to stand up for your rights, to be the voice for the oppressed,” Atias said. “All the wars, all the environmental problems, all the economic problems, it’s so much. It’s so much more than in the ’70s.”

What his band provides, he said, is escape. “We are the out. People still need their entertainment. People still need to have that getaway from the worries and problems and dealings of every day.”

The Wailers, frequent visitors to the area, will make another stop on Hilton Head Island on Tuesday for a show at the Shoreline Ballroom. Marley’s music is played year-round on the island, of course, but this concert will feature some of the actual hands that helped craft it, namely Aston “Family Man” Barrett, one of the original Wailers. Other members signed on the

band as the group went on to other projects before and after Marley's 1981 death, including playing with Peter Tosh, Bunny Wailer and Burning Spear.

Atias was recruited to join the band 10 years ago while still a young Wailers fan. Since joining, he said, he's brought his own style to the words of Marley. But his strained, raspy voice is so close to Marley's that fans tell him they can close their eyes and still see Marley on stage.

"I'm not trying to be him," Atias said. "I'm trying to do the music justice, to have people hear it the way I would have wanted to hear it. I'm a fan, first and foremost. I'm not trying to fill his shoes, I am myself. I think that's what people respect."

Original URL:

<http://blogs.islandpacket.com/36986>