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THEATRE GROUP

Press Contacts:

Rebecca Brighenti, (413) 448-8084 x11
becky@berkshiretheatregroup.org
www.BerkshireTheatreGroup.org

Christina Riley, (413) 448-8084 x15
christina@berkshiretheatregroup.org
www.BerkshireTheatreGroup.org

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Berkshire Theatre Group presents Legendary Band The Wailers at The Colonial Theatre

Pittsfield, MA— Berkshire Theatre Group presents legendary band The Wailers at the Colonial Theatre on Wednesday, December 3 at 7:30pm. On the 30th anniversary of its release in 1984, The Wailers will be touring the US in 2014, performing the iconic album *Legend* in its entirety. Named by *Time Magazine* as the "Best Album of the 20th Century" and #46 on *Rolling Stone Magazine's* 500 Greatest Albums of All Time, *Legend* is also the best-selling reggae album of all-time, with over 30 million copies sold worldwide. Together with Bob Marley, The Wailers have sold over 250 million albums and have played to an estimated 24 million people across the globe. The anchor of the band is Aston "Family Man" Barrett, who was co-producer on many of Bob Marley's records and was responsible for almost all of the bass lines on Marley's hits.

Tickets to The Wailers are on sale now for \$50-\$30. Contact the Colonial Ticket Office at 111 South Street, Pittsfield by calling 413-997-4444. Tickets can also be bought online at www.berkshiretheatregroup.org. The Ticket Office is open Monday-Friday 10am-5pm, Saturdays 10am-2pm or on any performance day from 10am until curtain.

There is no more legendary band in Jamaican music history than The Wailers. Formed in 1969, the band continues its worldwide campaign of promoting peace, love and equality through the message of reggae and Rastafari.

History with Bob Marley

In 1970, Bob, Bunny and Peter joined forces with the Barrett Brothers in the studio of famed producer Lee "Scratch" Perry, the Upsetter, who recorded the first versions of "Kaya," "Duppy Conqueror" and "Trench Town Rock." When they parted company with Perry, the Barrett brothers decided to leave with them. "They were the best vocal group," recalls Family Man, "and we were the best rhythm section, so we just decided to come together and mosh up the world." That they did in a way that none of them could ever have predicted.

To date, The Wailers have sold over a quarter of a billion albums, including seven top-ten entries on the British pop charts. Widely hailed appearances at major festivals include Lollapalooza, Glastonbury and Rothbury, along with superstars such as Carlos Santana, Stevie Wonder, Sting, the Fugees and Alpha Blondy. More than 24 million fans have seen them performing live. In 2012 alone they played an impressive 180 concerts.

Signed to Island Records in 1972 by Island Records' chief, Chris Blackwell, they released two albums, *Catch A Fire* and *Burnin'*, that fused rock licks with the sound of modern roots reggae, startling critics and breaking through onto the airwaves of the UK and the U.S. Like the Beatles, each of the three Wailers vocalists was capable of composing and singing lead, and by the end of 1973, the singers split apart to pursue successful solo careers. Carlton and Family Man decided to stay with Bob and the group now became known as Bob Marley and the Wailers.

Their first album with Bob as the sole front man was its breakthrough, particularly in England, *Natty Dread*. A debut performance in 1975 at London's Lyceum was captured on the thrilling *Live LP*, and produced a huge hit with "No Woman No Cry." It also contained Bob's own version of the song he composed, "I Shot the Sheriff," which was then an enormous international smash in a cover version by Eric Clapton. By 1976, Marley and the Wailers were in the top ten of the U.S. charts with their *Rastaman Vibration* album. They would continue on the hit parade throughout the remainder of Marley's life. Marley's largest audience came in June of 1980 when 110,000 people filled Milan's San Siro stadium. Two months earlier they were the headliners at Zimbabwe's Independence celebrations.

At the millennium, The Wailers' 1977 masterpiece, *Exodus*, was chosen by Time magazine as the best album of the 20th century. It contained Bob's anthem, "One Love," called the "Song of the Millennium" by the BBC, which played it every hour for 24 hours during its globe-spanning coverage of the turn of the century. *The New York Times* called Marley the most influential musician of the 20th century, and placed a copy of the video of his performance at London's Rainbow Theater in a time capsule to be opened in the year 3000, calling it among the most significant musical performances of our times. The Grammys bestowed upon him a posthumous "Lifetime Achievement Award" and he received a star on Hollywood Boulevard. During his lifetime he was given Jamaica's highest civilian award, "The Order of Merit" and in 1978 he received the United Nations "Medal of Peace" on behalf of 500 million Africans.

Marley passed away from melanoma cancer at the age of 36 in 1981, instructing the band to carry on his mission. Family Man, the rock hard foundation of The Wailers' sound, has led the band through various incarnations ever since. Because he was the arranger and co-creator of Marley's finest works throughout the 1970s, hearing him play the Wailers' songs today is the closest one can come to experiencing the excitement of those immortal performances during Bob's lifetime.

Post Marley

Carlton Barrett was murdered in 1987, leaving his brother as the main beneficiary of The Wailers' mantle. Subsequent lineups have revolved around Family Man, who was recently honored by *Bass Player* magazine with his own "Lifetime Achievement Award" as one of the world's greatest bassists. With Fams at the helm, The Wailers are heralded as one of the last great reggae institutions, history in the flesh, continuing to tour and breathe new life into their universally loved catalog of reggae's greatest hits.

The current lineup includes the veteran keyboardist Keith Sterling, a veteran of '70s studio greats, the Soul Syndicate, as well as Peter Tosh's Word Sound and Power band. He is so respected by his colleagues in The Wailers that they call him "Coach." Fams' young son, Aston Jr., a multi-talented musician, plays organ and is the heir apparent, helping bring the music forward to a new generation. Filling the role of lead singer is a highly disciplined young Jamaican star on the rise, Dwayne Anglin, known as Danglin. Of particular note, he is a Navy veteran who already holds a masters degree in criminology and is actively pursuing a Ph.D. in that field, while nightly bringing audiences to their feet in loud acclaim for his vocal prowess. "Drummie Zeb" excels on percussion. He is a founding member of Chicago's Awareness Art Ensemble, and has toured with Kenny Chesney. Lead and rhythm guitar and backing vocals are handled expertly by Audley "Chizzy" Chisholm. Backing vocals are also supplied by the elegant Trinidadian Cegee Victory. A recent highlight for the band was being asked to join The Stone Roses' reunion concerts last year in Manchester, England. Acknowledging the influence of Family Man's inventiveness on the bass, the Roses were eager to pay homage to him and The Wailers in concerts that drew 90,000 people.

Their tight and historically sensitive blend was never more apparent than at the beginning of 2013 during The Wailers' "Survival Revival" tour of North America, on which the band reproduced what many critics consider Marley's most profound statement of his personal philosophy, 1979's "Survival" album. This follows other recent critically praised tours on which they have played the "Exodus" and "Uprising" albums in their entirety.

Never ones to be pigeonholed in the past, The Wailers reaffirmed their continuing relevance and versatility in modern music with a guest spot on country superstar Kenny Chesney's hit single, "Everyone Wants to Go to Heaven," and also appeared in a video for the song which was shot in Jamaica. They have just rejoined him for a new single called "Spread the Love," released in June of 2013. Nor have they forgotten their social

consciousness, currently spearheading the I Went Hungry charity, designed to use funds designated for touring bands' lavish "riders" to benefit the World Food Program (WFP) in conjunction with the United Nations, feeding thousands of starving children around the globe.

Now well into their fifth decade, The Wailers truly are living legends who embody the nobility, conviction and progressiveness of Bob Marley and his music. Their journey is far from over as the world awaits The Wailers' next move in their "One Love" revolution. "Our music is the magic," says Fams "the oxygen of the people. It's the message of roots, culture and reality, meant to spread peace and love to all."

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About Berkshire Theatre Group

The Colonial Theatre, founded in 1903, and Berkshire Theatre Festival, founded in 1928, are two of the oldest cultural organizations in the Berkshires. Having united in November of 2010 under the leadership of Artistic Director and CEO Kate Maguire, these two institutions are providing the Berkshires and beyond with the finest in live theatre, music, dance and the visual arts on five stages in Stockbridge, MA and Pittsfield, MA. The Fitzpatrick Main Stage (400 seats), cataloged by the National Register of Historic Places, was originally designed and built by Stanford White as the Stockbridge Casino in 1888. The intimate Unicorn Theatre (122 seats) is a home for emerging artists and new theatrical ideas. The Colonial in Pittsfield (780 seats) re-opened in August of 2006, following a \$21 million restoration, and boasts pristine acoustics, classic gilded age architecture and state-of-the-art technical systems. BTG also performs at the outdoor Neil Ellenoff stage, located on the grounds of BTF in Stockbridge, and at The Garage, a music venue located in the lobby of The Colonial. BTG serves over 100,000 patrons per year and reaches over 17,000 students through its educational and outreach programs. For more information on BTG call (413) 448-8084. To purchase tickets, call (413) 997-4444 or go online to www.BerkshireTheatreGroup.org.