

British court battle begins for Bob Marley music rights

The trial over the ownership of a number of songs by the late Jamaican Reggae icon, Bob Marley, begins on Tuesday in the Chancery Division of the High Court.

The songs in dispute are Crazy Baldhead; Johnny Was; Natty Dread; No Woman No Cry; Positive Vibration; Rastaman Vibration; Rat Race; Rebel Music (Road Block); So Jah Seh; Them Belly Full; Want More; War; Who The Cap Fit. The website, music-news.com said that the trial before Queen Counsel Richard Meade "is over a number of important titles, the most significant of which is "No Woman, No Cry", Bob Marley's most famous song". The plaintiff, Cayman Music is suing Chris Blackwell's Blue Mountain Music for misattribution and diversion of income, amongst other things, in an attempt to retrieve "No Woman, No Cry" and other songs. Cayman Music team includes Mark St John, a longstanding and successful adviser in the retrieval of rights, and Ben and Brian Scholfield, owners of the publishing company. It is being represented by Briffa's, a small firm of solicitors that has retained Hugo Cuddigan as advocate. Cuddigan is credited with retrieving the rights to "A Whiter Shade of Pale" for Matthew Fisher. Chris Blackwell's company is represented by Messrs Russells, a very successful UK music firm that has retained the eminent music barrister Sir Ian Mill QC. Cayman are the original, long-standing publishers of Bob Marley, the most successful black artist of all time. They represented his catalogue from 1967 to late 1976. The Defendants are the then publishing arm of Island Records and sometime publisher of various Bob Marley titles, from the mid 1970s to later in his career. Both publishers retain some of Bob Marley's work to the present day. Bob Marley returned to ex-manager Danny Sims (who owned Cayman) prior to his death, the website reported.