

# Redemption Song

Words and music by Bob Marley, from *Uprising*



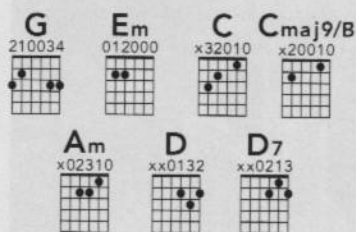
Written nearly 30 years ago, "Redemption Song" remains a true acoustic folk classic, penned by the great reggae missionary, Bob Marley. The most familiar recording of "Redemption Song" is the closing track on *Uprising*, the last studio album Marley would live to release, and features Marley accompanying himself on an acoustic guitar.

The tune begins with the sparse riff below, with no other accompaniment. The hammer-on grace notes are so quick they're barely played, so try to fret your destination note just after you pluck the string to achieve the desired result. A simple chord structure and haunting political message illuminate the centuries-old

struggles of Africans and their descendants around the globe, but Marley extends his invitation to any who will listen: "Won't you help to sing these songs of freedom?" The final D7 chord wants badly to resolve back to G, and yet the song still ends with that overhanging tension, possibly indicating harmonically the unsettled nature of so many social issues.

—DAN APCZYNSKI

## Chords



## Intro Riff

Intro Riff notation showing chords G, C, D, G, C, D above a treble clef staff. Below the staff are guitar-specific fretting instructions: 3-0-2-3, 2-3-0-2-0-2, 3-0-0-2-0-2, 2-3-2-0-3.

1. **G** **Em**  
Old pirates, yes, they rob I  
**C** **Cmaj9/B** **Am**  
Sold I to the merchant ships  
**G** **Em**  
Minutes after they took I  
**C** **Cmaj9/B** **Am**  
From the bottomless pit  
**G** **Em**  
But my hand was made strong  
**C** **Cmaj9/B** **Am**  
By the hand of the almighty  
**G** **Em**  
We forward in this generation  
**C** **D**  
Triumphantly

### Chorus

**G**  
Won't you help to sing  
**C** **D** **G**  
These songs of freedom?  
**C** **D** **Em**  
'Cause all I ever have  
**C** **D** **G**  
Redemption songs  
**C** **D** **G**  
Redemption songs

2. **G** **Em**  
Emancipate yourselves from mental slavery  
**C** **Cmaj9/B** **Am**  
None but ourselves can free our minds  
**G** **Em**  
Have no fear for atomic energy  
**C** **Cmaj9/B** **D**  
'Cause none of them can stop the time  
**G** **Em**  
How long shall they kill our prophets  
**C** **Cmaj9/B** **Am**  
While we stand aside and look? Ooh!  
**G** **Em**  
Some say it's just a part of it  
**C** **Cmaj9/B** **D**  
We've got to fulfill de book

### Repeat Chorus

### Bridge - Em C D x 4

### Repeat Second Verse and Chorus

**C** **D** **Em** **C** **D** **Em**  
All I ever had, redemption songs  
**C** **D** **G** **C**  
These songs of freedom  
**D** **G** **C** **Cmaj9/B** **Am** **D7**  
Songs of freedom

PHOTO: BOB MARLEY & THE WAILERS; ILLUSTRATION: BOB MARLEY & THE WAILERS; GUITAR: BOB MARLEY & THE WAILERS