



YOUR MUSIC MAGAZINE

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In Memory of Pat Mason



The Central Coast Movement

YOUR MUSIC



OLYMPICS

PEPPER & THE EXPENDABLES

By: Mike Romans
Photos by: Chris Pollard

It was a night filled with Reggae and Dub-Rock on December 10th at the Catalyst. The Expendables, aptly called the hometown heroes of Santa Cruz, and Pepper, the trio from the islands of Hawaii, played in front of a sold out crowd of people looking for smooth rhythms and groovin' beats. That is exactly what they got.

The Expendables, a four-piece band, has had the pleasure of playing with bands such as Slightly Stoopid, Eek-A-Mouse, and of course Pepper, as well as playing the Vans Warped Tour. The guys are currently headlining their own Winter West Coast Tour. They opened the show and easily got the crowd moving and swaying to their beats. In this genre it is easy to tell that the Expendables are going to go far and remain on top.

Pepper, a trio that hails from Kailua Kona, Hawaii, broke onto the scene with their hit "Give It Up" off their album *Kona Town* in 2005. With that, Pepper kicked things into high gear, touring extensively and starting their own record label, Law Records. Their newest full length *No Shame* released in 2006, spawned the single "No Control" that hit number 19 on the U.S. Modern Rock charts.

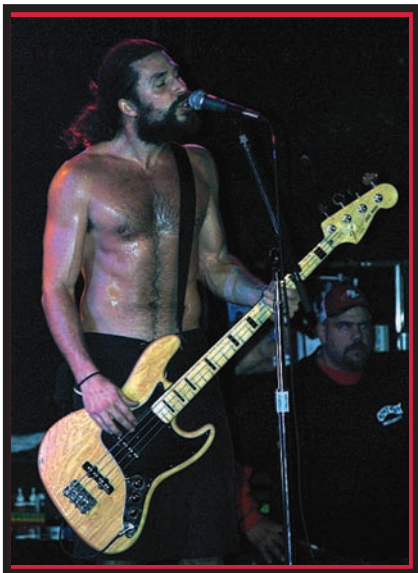
Pepper hit the stage and provided an energetic performance with great music and humorous antics, which they have become known for. With this style of concert it's difficult to imagine a high energy, yet positive and mellow vibe at the same time, but all bands pulled it off. I'm looking forward to being able to experience one of their shows again, and I recommend that everyone gets their tickets early, cause these bands will continue to sell out shows. I had the pleasure of talking to Bret Bollinger, bassist and vocalist for Pepper before the show, and here's what he had to say.

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Mike: How's the tour been going so far?

Bret: The tour has been really kind of special because it's our 3rd National Tour in 8 months, so we've been going around the block. So yeah, 3 times around in 8 months and I don't know if you can imagine that, but it's been pretty brutal. But to close it off this way, with the Expendables,

whom we've known for a while, it just keeps getting better and better. They've been doing a great job on the road and they're always fun to be around as far as a band, and they make really good music and they put on a great show. The other band we brought is Passafire from Savannah, Georgia. We just signed them to our Law Records label; they're our newest addition to it and they've been doing great. Their new album called *Submersible* just released about



a month ago. It's been number 18 on iTunes for the past month. It's just a great way to close off the tour.

Mike: For Your Album, *In With the Old*, you recorded at Hive Studios, which is completely analog. How was that experience?

Bret: It is just like it sounds. It was actually the second time we recorded there. We actually borrowed 311's favorite producer, who is Ron St. Germain. They would pop in and out and offer some ideas, and show some shit on drum sounds. It was really very supportive. If you know those guys, 311, they're one of the biggest bands in America and they're one of the coolest bands in America. You don't come across that hardly at all; usually it's a hyped ego and an ok show and then, like, dickheads, you know what I mean. It was super-fun, excellent equipment, all analog, which takes a little longer, but that shit was a blast man.

Mike: In 2006, you released *No Shame*, which had the hit "No Control" which reached number 19 on the US Modern Rock Charts, the album was produced by Nick Hexum from 311, Tony Kanal from No Doubt, and Paul Leary. What was it like to work with all of them?

Bret: All those guys, we just lucked out, cause all those guys are in the producer game, not because they're bored, not touring and don't feel like writing songs for themselves any more. They're producers because they like music and they want to see music they're interested in go to the next level.

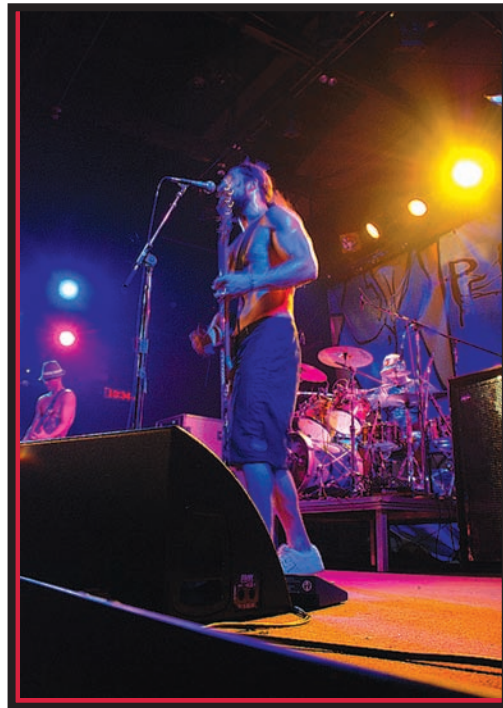
Mike: A couple years back you started Law records, and I was just wondering, do you find difficulty touring, writing, and running a label?

Bret: It's funny, cause it's one of those things that as you keep doing it, it gets easier. It gets more productive for some reason. You get used to managing your time on tour, within a year or two ago we got the Law Records offices and we have people there at all times. Before it was more like a project where it was just like, 'Ok, we're just going to find some bands that we really like.'

And it's like you said, you're finding bands, listening to demos, and touring, but now we have more people, which is really nice. And now we're out here touring, which is the best place to find people; bands that are actually working, and getting their demos together. And that's why it is easier when we are on the road, cause anyone can make a demo, but to actually see what a band is like live, working and struggling for it, that's where it's at.

Mike: What's next for Pepper?

Bret: ALONG fucking vacation, a long vacation. We're flying home right after this tour ends on Friday, we're going home and playing the Kona Town Music Festival. Every year, that's our one time every year we get to go home and we bring back all kinds of great music. You name it, we've brought them back: Mad Caddies, Bad Religion, Pennywise, Flogging Molly, Pato Banton, anyone you can think of that's like interesting, we bring them back to Kona, because believe it or not, there really is no music scene there.



Photos by: Chris Pollard



The EXPENDABLES



Due to technical difficulties we are not able to bring you the Expendables interview. Please stay tuned for a future interview.

