

Kansas State Collegian

Project Playlist: Reggae artists, songs you should check out

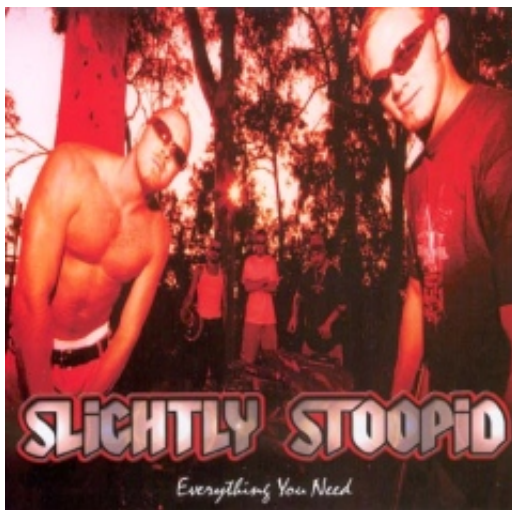
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With those lazy summer nights still a little ways out of reach, this week we look at several reggae and surf artists from around the coasts. Don't worry, freedom is just a play button away.

New School Dropouts – "Tragic Dub"

If there is one band you check out from this column, make it the New School Dropouts. As a rising force in South Florida's beach culture, NSD first found exposure through pure fan demand on an Orlando rock station. Utilizing everything from turntables to violins, this extremely talented band energetically blends reggae and ska, a dash of 311 and everything in between. Tragically, at the height of their success, trombone player Jack Hoffpauir was killed at an unmarked train crossing in Louisiana. Like the brothers they always were, the rest of the band held a spirited and emotional surf session, beach barbeque and bonfire with close friends in tribute of Hoffpauir. Check out the band's MySpace.com page for "Tragic Dub" and other stellar tracks.

Expendables – "Burning Up / Full Version"

For a song that so innocently starts out as a simple surf rhythm, one would never expect the rabid energy of the finale. It will remain impossible to forget the darkening house lights as I stood in the Crystal Ballroom in Portland, Ore; the mob-like crowd was entranced, screaming and cheering as the dual guitar

shredding began. The strobe lights kicked on, only revealing snapshots of sweat and flying bodies. I turned to my friend after it was all over and his mouth was still hanging open. I don't think I have experienced that magical of a moment since. The Expendables hail from Santa Cruz, Calif., and have played with just about anyone you can think of in the genre. Self described as "punk, reggae and a touch of butt rock," the Expendables have remained my favorite band for several years.

Easy Star All-Stars – "Dub Side of the Moon"

A definite niche carved out in the wide spectrum of bands, the Easy Star All-Stars have transformed classic albums into reggae remakes from artists like the Beatles, Radiohead and Pink Floyd. Featured here is the entire remake of "Dark Side of the Moon," sending you on a hazy journey composed of new samples and beats; it's an admirable effort that has earned the band 85,000 album sales to date.

Slightly Stoopid – "This Joint"

One of the first bands handpicked by Brad Nowell from Sublime to join the Skunk Records label, Slightly Stoopid continues that nu-reggae tradition. Recently tightening up its percussion section with former members of So-Cal's world music heavyweights, The B Side Players, a live Slightly Stoopid experience is something distinctly heavenly, easily witnessed on the 2006 live DVD release. I chose to feature this song because of its impressive dubs and flawless lyrical flow, a song Sublime fans need to check out.