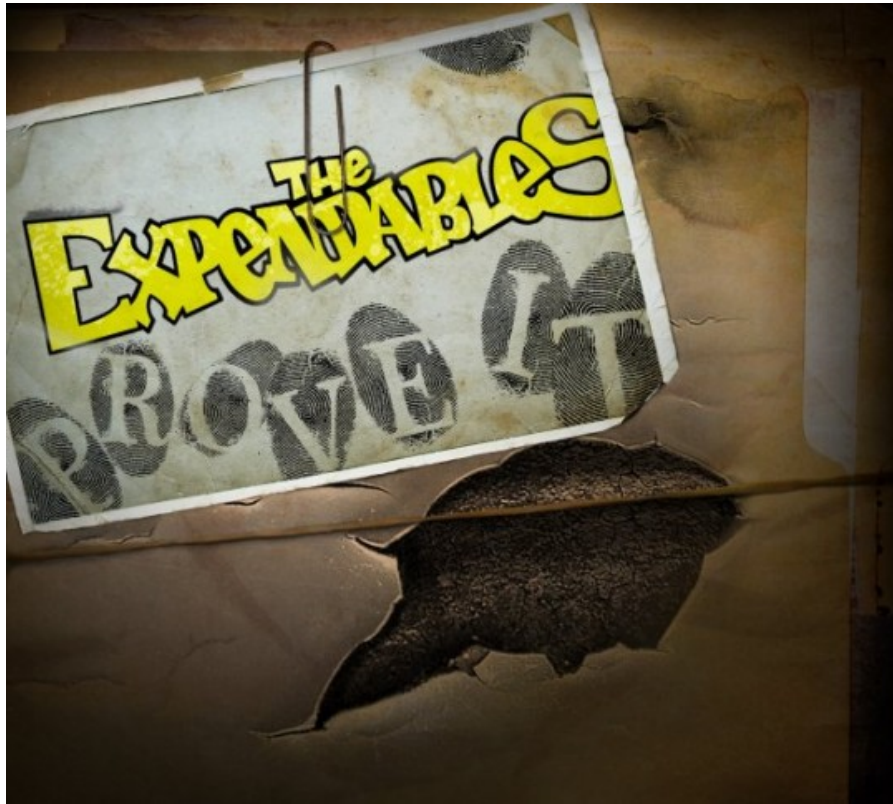




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The Expendables' new album, *Prove It*, raises the bar yet again for reggae-rock

Posted on 12 May 2010 by Cheese Sandwich



It's been a great year for reggae rock. Excellent new albums by **Passafire**, **Iration**, and **Rebelution**, as well as the sudden new success of the **Dirty Heads** have proved that the genre is going strong. Eager to leave their mark on things, **The Expendables**, the reggae/rock/surf/fun band out of Santa Cruz, released their fifth album, *Prove It*, this week. I've been a fan of the band for a while, as their eclectic brand of reggae music with tinges of hard rock and metal is a lot of fun, as are their live shows.

Prove It, released on **Slightly Stoopid**'s appropriately named label Stoopid Records, is, dare I say it, the band's most cohesive album to date. I hate phrases like "the band really matured on this record" but that's honestly what they've done with the new album.

When I first heard *Prove It*'s opening track, *How Many Times*, I was confused. Lead singer/guitarist **Geoff Weers** has always had a unique vocal style, a bit quirky and different but one that suits the music very well. I've gotten used to his voice, and expect it to sound a certain way. The opening track almost sounded at first that someone else was singing, as Weers' voice is in a lower register and delivered in a different manner than he usually sings. I was surprised, and hoped that this wouldn't be the way the rest of the album sounded.

The next track, *Get What I Need*, assuaged any concerns I had, as it has all the best elements of a great Expendables song – summery reggae beat, Weers' voice as I'm used to hearing it, and noodly guitars courtesy of axeman **Raul Bianchi**. It's a laid back tune with echo-y vocals and a dancehall-ish percussive tone during part of the verse, which is great.

Of course, every Expendables album needs a song about a certain leafy green substance, and this time around that song is *Come Get*

High. The new song isn't as one-dimensional as *Bowl for Two* (from *Getting' Filthy*), instead being a bit more substantive, with upbeat lyrics and a nice mix of laid back grooves and hard driving guitar riffs.

Trying to Focus is an impressive mix of chugging guitar chords and rich melodies, set to a hard driving beat, with Weers singing about being "run over by the hangover truck". There's a sick dual guitar shredfest toward the end, before slowing things down to a more reggae-ish outro. Niiiiiice.

Night Mission is another exercise in aggressive guitars, morphing into a mosh-friendly brofest about halfway through. The song's in-your-face energy is one of the album's strongest moments.



Their take on the Brady Bunch?

The best part of *Prove It* is the album's middle sequence. *Brother's* slick, mesmerizing rhythm and thick, delicious melody make it easily one of my favorite songs from the set. The album also comes with an alternate version of the song, and that version is even better; instead of being guitar-driven the alternate version relies on heavy keyboards and a slower pace, and the result is even more powerful than the album version. I'm glad they included both.

Donkey Show starts out with acoustic guitars that build to an all-out metal assault, before finally taking off to a fast-paced punkish tune that, much to my excitement, also includes **Mighty Morphin' Power Rangers**-esque power chord shredding toward the end of the song. Hell yes.

I Ain't Ready comes next and immediately slows things down to an easy pace, complete with some smooth horns (provided by DeLa of Slightly Stoopid) accentuating the feel-good vibe. It's another one of *Prove It's* gems.

D.C.B. starts off like a **Metallica** song, with dark synth and acoustic guitar plucking that builds and builds into another instrumental mosh pit anthem, as always led by the guitar blitz provided by Weers and Bianchi. The lead guitar is on display here, frequently taking charge in the form of bombastic solos and riffs. The song builds at the end, leading right into *Mind Control*, creating one of the best transitions I've heard in a while. The song is also one of the strongest on the album, with all the Expendables' talents on full display yet again.

Atmospheric guitar tones, aggressive bass work by **Ryan DeMars** and pounding drums by **Adam Patterson** give the song a full, crunchy sound that make its under-three-minutes length seem like too short of a time for such a fun ride.

Wells, featuring **G. Love** on vocals and harmonica, is another high point on the album. Starting out with Weers and an acoustic guitar, the song has an irresistibly happy feeling to it, partly due to the great guitar work and the overall upbeat feeling. The song has changed a bit from its early version as a stripped-down acoustic song for Weers, but the studio version on *Prove It* was definitely a good idea.

The album ends with a seventeen-minute dub reggae jam called *2 Inch Dub*. I didn't expect this to be one of my favorite moments on the album, but it really is. The instrumentation is just amazing, as the combination of guitars, synth, bass, drums, and occasional horns is layered and stunning. At times even sounding proggy, with **Pink Floyd**-ish keys and an overall absolutely mesmerizing quality to it, *2 Inch Dub* is just flat-out awesome. I didn't know the band was capable of something like this.

That sentiment is really true for the whole album. *Prove It* truly is the most complete work the Expendables have accomplished thus far in their career. Every quality of their music is on display to the highest degree, and it shows that they are easily one of the best bands of this genre. That they're able to speed things up and show that they'd make a great metal band is just more of a testament to their strengths as a band. While some of the other bands in the new reggae rock movement tend to be one or two-dimensional, the Expendables are in a league all their own.

Check out *Prove It* if you like any of the other bands of this genre. If you don't like this genre, pick up *Prove It* anyway. It might change your

mind. It's a very solid album by a band that finds new ways to impress me with each release.

Well done, dudes.