



# DARE TO BE DIFFERENT

## AFTER MORE THAN A DECADE OF BLENDING PUNK, METAL AND DUB, WHAT DO THE EXPENDABLES HAVE LEFT TO PROVE?

WORDS ANTHONY GIANNOTTI

To call The Expendables a reggae rock band is an understatement. They have been playing their own unique blend of music for nearly 15 years. Growing up in Santa Cruz, Calif., instilled many different musical influences in them—everything from reggae, punk rock, surf and '80s metal. I guarantee you have never heard a reggae song with blast beats and an Iron Maiden-style shred solo in the middle of it. According to The Expendables, "We surf, skate, party and play music." This laid-back attitude has taken them from playing frat parties to their own nationwide headlining tours, and to amphitheaters in support of international acts such as 311 and G. Love & Special Sauce. The Santa Cruz locals have also had the privilege of sharing the stage with such bands as Slightly Stoopid, Pepper, NOFX, Pennywise, Fishbone, Ziggy Marley and Kottonmouth Kings. *Guitar Hero* World Tour even used their song "Sacrifice," off the *Gettin' Filthy* album, as a playable song. You'd think after four records and countless tours, the four-piece would be ready to take it easy, but no, "idle time is not an option." March 2010 saw the announcement of their fifth album, *Prove It*, along with a nearly two-month summer support tour.

Paul Leary of Butthole Surfers and El Hefe of NOFX grabbed the reins as producers on the new record, "bringing a vibe to the studio as only two punk rock guitar legends could...they dug our weirdness." And for anyone out there who thinks The Expendables have lost their originality, they have this to say: "We are bringing something new to the table, while still staying true to the sounds that make us who we are." I recently had a chance to chat with Adam Patterson, who plays the role of the backbone of any good band, the drummer.

Hey how's it going?

Pretty good, we had a night off last night, I partied pretty hard. I am extremely hungover but stoked to do this interview.

[Laughs] I understand. So The Expendables have been together since 1997...

Yeah, we were just 16-year-old kids from Santa Cruz messing around with different types of weird music. We didn't get serious until around 2000 when we recorded our first record.

Santa Cruz is known as being one of the surf and skate capitals of the world. What was it like being a 16-year-old kid coming up in that music scene? Oh man it was a lot of fun. There were always shows going on and plenty of good local bands to play with. It was really a great time to be a band. There was always a big band coming through: NOFX, Strung Out, Less Than Jake or 311. We actually became friends with some of those bands and have been lucky enough to tour with them. Not to mention people in Santa Cruz are super respectful to all styles of music. It was really a good time.

Speaking of 311, I see you guys got to do an amphitheater tour with them last summer. How crazy was that?

It was wonderful; they showed us an entirely different side of touring we had never seen before. The level of professionalism is crazy. They basically set up a musician's city every day. The amount of preparation they do every day just to put on a good show is amazing. It's a lot different doing our own headlining tour this summer. [Laughs] We try to carry the same professionalism but much smaller venues.

How did you guys fit recording an album into your busy tour schedule?

Actually the first part of last year [2009] and the last part of the year before [2008] were incredibly busy, but we got to take the last six months of 2009 off to record the album and get ready to do some heavy support tours. We aren't used to having time off. It was kind of hard to stay focused. Since we had been writing the new record over the last three years, we only had to take a few months off to finish it and really focus on doing the best job we could. Which is why we brought in the producers we did. And I think we accomplished that. It's my favorite album to date. I think it's our best representation of the band and what we are capable of.

I was reading the album credits and saw you had Paul Leary of Butthole Surfers and El Hefe of NOFX produce the album.

We met Paul through Pepper; he came to a show in Austin, Texas, a few years back, and we spent the next two years talking with him. When it came time to actually get a producer, he was all in. He likes our weirdness. El Hefe had contacted our label, Stoopid Records, looking to work with one of the bands, and we are huge NOFX fans so we jumped on that as quick as possible. We

got along well and wrote a song together, "Donkey Show." It turned out really good. The album also features some of our friends from Slightly Stoopid as well as G. Love.

The new album, *Prove It* sounds slightly more general rock than your previous releases.

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did a six-minute metal song, a few punk songs, a 17-minute dub song and pretty much everything in between. We're a weird band. We like to play every type of music.

Pick up your copy of *Prove It* at The Expendables' live show May 30 at The Boardwalk or June 1 at Freeborn Hall on the UC Davis campus.