

creative loafing

THE DAILY LOAF

Music Music
Review

CD review: The Expendables, *Prove It* (with video)

May 26, 2010 at 11:16 am by Amber McDonald



On *Prove It* — the fifth installment of *The Expendables* album stash — the punk rocking Santa Cruz outfit continues to prove their ability to blend distinctly different sounds: emphatic, mosh-ready metal and smooth, message-ridden reggae. From the first chord played on the album's opening track "How Many Times," the reggae metalheads jam out their fist-pumping, head

banging brand of party tunes. Songs like "Corporate Cafeteria" sticks it to the man with lyrics like "I try and try to fast all day / The media serves such a hot, hot plate / Of fabricated lies / Celebrity teeny-bop punch / The corporate cafeteria is serving lunch" delivered in a more assertive tone by singer Geoff Weers and set against aggressive metal riffage and thrashing drums. "D.C.B." is a five-minute instrumental that begins with melodic guitar

and shimmering symbols before transitioning into a metal shred-fest carried by the heavy basslines of Ryan DeMars and the rhythm bursting drums of Adam Patterson, all before slowing down again and cycling through another aggressive guitar duel between Weers and Raul Bianchi, then speeding up and taking listeners into the next metal-rock track — “Mind Control” — without skipping a beat. Weers reveals his vocal versatility as he switches from a vigorous punk sneer to a softer, unique ocean-flowing tone with reggae melodies that rise and fall like waves. The laid back tracks often take on serious world issues, like a personal favorite, “Mr. Sun,” which is a rocksteady environmentalist ode to that ball of hot energy in the sky that we Floridians take for granted, Momma (earth) berating people for their preoccupation with oil and war instead of taking care of the planet. “Positive Mind” starts with thick drum and bass like the funk-punk of Red Hot Chili Peppers, and slides into a melodic and harmonic decree on the importance of being positive to make the world a sweeter place to live. The tracks aren’t all so serious, however. Another favorite, “Trying to Focus,” with its garage rock feel, humorously discusses the trials and tribulations of extensive touring in the name of rock, with lyrics like, “I’ve been smoking sticks from a ditch / That Midwest farmer’s daughter / Is the one that’s making me itch In places / I’d never want an itch to be.”



On “Come Get High With Me,” Patterson takes over lead vocals, his softer harmonic voice carrying the hippy dance reggae groove, which touches on marijuana and attraction to the opposite sex in the same way “Bowl For Two” did on 2004’s *Getting Filthy* — the guys clearly appealing to the hearts and ears of

party-girl listeners. “Dance Girl Dance” is another track that offers

lyrical bait to reel in the female fan – Weers’ crooning voice singing, “Sexy tattoos that wind around her body / They cover up scars from long ago / But it’s still her heart that keep everyone going / As she gets ready for the show.”

Prove It never takes me anywhere I haven’t been on previous Expendables’ albums and even though it includes several replayable tracks, it’s not my favorite Expendables creation. However, one of my favorite songs by this band comes off this album: “Wells.” I first heard it at [their Ritz performance this winter](#), where it was delivered solo by Weers as part of the encore. The song was co-written with G. Love and features the bluesy singer-songwriter on the *Prove It* track. If you like [G. Love](#) (and I do), you will enjoy his contributions of guest rapping and harmonica playing in combination with a more subdued version of Weers’ soulfully wavering vocals, all set against much harmonizing, drumming, guitar solos, and a cranking socket wrench every now and again.

With all the added instrumentals and harmonizing, the song comes off as a bit too radio-friendly for my taste. I think a version featuring Weers and his unique voice solely in all its glory would have been the wiser choice, maybe performed solo and acoustic (video below). “Wells” is a perfect song for his unmatched vocal style to shine and instead, it just kind of blends into the added background harmonies of the track.

Bringing G.Love aboard was like trying to improve something that was already awesome the way it started. As the second to last track on *Prove It*, the updated version of “Wells” contrasts the vibe I get from the whole album — that The Expendables are comfortable in their ability to rock the metal and reggae sounds they do so well, and aren’t really trying to improve or change anything about their music so much as hone it and prove their awesome range within the metal and reggae genres.

With Paul Leary in tow as producer as well as Aaron “El Hefe” Abeyta (NOFX), the album is a valuable addition to any punk-rock music junkie’s collection, with material ideal for spreading the Expendables metal-reggae vibe, one that’s only surpassed in their

live performances. With all the reggae rock surfing around in the musical tides – [Rebelution](#), [Slightly Stoopid](#), [Pepper](#), [Iration](#), [Passafire](#), [SOJA](#), [The Dirty Heads](#), [Sublime](#) regrouped – The Expendables prove they can hold their own with a cohesive and rockin’ album. The Expendables rock and so does *Prove It*. [Check out the album on Myspace](#).

<http://blogs.creativeloafing.com/dailyloaf/2010/05/26/cd-review-the-expendables-prove-it-with-video/>