



With friends like Slightly Stoopid and G. Love, you know you're going to dig The Expendables – the laid back crew from Santa Cruz, California: Geoff Weers (Guitars and Vocals), Adam Patterson (Drums and Vocals), Raul Bianchi (Lead Guitar) and Ryan DeMars (Bass). Their surf, skate, party, music lifestyle is reflected passionately through the band's surf rock styling – metal with some sand and waves.

The band has been around for a while, first releasing “No Time to Worry” in 2000. With some records in between, The Expendables now bring you “Prove It”, a dedicated collection built with the years of stage experience the band has under their belts. Bianchi says to expect “A real album. We spent real money, used a real studio, and spent a lot of time writing this album. Our songwriting is much more technically advanced than anything we've ever written... Our sound

is a pretty eclectic mix rock, reggae, punk, metal, surf, blues, ska and whatever else we are currently listening to. We have musical A.D.D. and will move from instrumental metal, to slow reggae or ska, and pick it right back up with a surf punk or reggae rock hybrid song.” It’s a new side of The Expendables you probably haven’t



heard before, making “Prove It” a must-listen-to record.

You should probably catch a show too – they’re opening for Slightly Stoopid and Steel Pulse during the summer and they’re good at what they do (with damn near 200 shows played each year). There’s so much more below, so keep reading for the answers to the XXQ’s.

PEV: How would you describe your sound and what do you feel makes you stand out over the others in your genre?



Raul Bianchi (RB): Our sound is a pretty eclectic mix rock, reggae, punk, metal, surf, blues, ska and whatever else we are currently listening to. We don't take ourselves too seriously, but we are very serious about becoming better musicians, and that growth can be seen from our first album to our newest release "Prove It." I think being weird and completely random makes us stand out in our genre. We have musical A.D.D. and will move from instrumental

metal, to slow reggae or ska, and pick it right back up with a surf punk or reggae rock hybrid song. Our dedication to becoming better songwriters and musicians has improved our ability to integrate all styles.

PEV: What kind of music where the members of the band into growing up? Do you remember your first concert?

RB: Everyone in the band has pretty diverse musical tastes. Growing up, when I started playing guitar, I was listening to the

Beatles, Hendrix, Cream, The Doors, Pink Floyd, Clapton, Pantera, Metallica, The Police, AC/DC, Marley, Tosh, Steel Pulse, Burning Spear, Eek-A-Mouse, Led Zeppelin, Van Halen, SRV, Guns 'n' Roses, Pennywise, and NOFX. My parents had always been into classical and jazz, which I've always had an appreciation for, but never seemed to incorporate much into my playing. The first concert I remember going to was probably B.B. King, Robert Cray, and Jimmy Vaughan at The Shoreline Amphitheater in Mountain View. It was a great show.

PEV: Calling Santa Cruz, California your home, tell us your take on the music scene there and what was it like trying to break into it?

RB: We were very fortunate to start the band when we did. In the late 90's early 00's there were lots of small bars and clubs all over town that were open to having live music. Even the biggest local venue, The Catalyst, was offering a Thursday night showcase to allow fledgling bands to try and sell tickets and get exposure. There was always a place to play. There weren't many bands like us at the time. Mostly metal, hard rock, and punk acts, but we felt like we were diverse enough to play with anyone. We stuck with it, and eventually started headlining The Catalyst by ourselves, which pretty much was the beginning of our career.

PEV: With that, what can fans expect from a live show from The Expendables?

RB: We've always prided ourselves on being a great live band. That's what we do the most, and it's what we do best. We generally play close to 200 shows a year, and it's where we are the most comfortable. Expect a high energy, and entertaining set.

PEV: What is the first thing that comes to mind when you step on stage?

RB: I wish I had a more profound or spiritual answer to this question. Unfortunately, the first thing that comes to my mind when I get on stage is , "is my fly is down?" I always get the nervous pees before I go onstage, so I sometimes need to check if I forgot to zip up. I shouldn't have said that, now people are gonna look for it.

PEV: Having worked with other musicians each before how is playing with The Expendables different then those other works?

RB: I really enjoy working with other musicians and playing different styles of music because its an entirely different thought process. I feel and play like a different guitarist. But playing with The Expendables always feels right. It feels comfortable. When you play with musicians long enough, you start to think about music in similar ways that can allow you to improvise together and create great jams, and songs. You feed off each other's energy and can feel when an member wants to push or pull in another direction. We play together so much, that I feel like I have a little bit of a safety net when I improvise.



**PEV: What was the underlining inspiration for your music?
Where do get your best ideas for songs?**

RB: We've never had a set way of writing, and I think it needs to stay that way. Some of my favorite songs that we've written have come out of jams. Others are complete songs that individuals have written, or a shell of a song that we turn into a complete piece. Others are a mixture of partial songs and jams. That way our songwriting process never becomes stale. And the inspiration for a song never becomes forced. I think most of us as songwriters, write a song when the inspiration hits us. Music can be joyous and also cathartic, but sometimes accidental. Each one of us as individuals takes our inspiration from our personal lives, good or bad.

PEV: Thinking back to when you first started out, do you ever look back at your career and think about your earlier days and how you've arrived where you are today?

RB: It's hard to believe how much we've accomplished looking back at the garage band in high school, who's first gig was a backyard party for a bunch drunk parents. Trying to make a career out of being a musician is much more stressful, time consuming, and physically draining than I ever thought back when I was 19. But I love playing music more than anything else, and I can't imagine having a different job.

PEV: What's one thing we'd be surprised to hear about the members of The Expendables?

RB: That your grandmother is probably better at playing our song "Sacrifice" on Guitar Hero than we are.

PEV: Was there a certain point in your life when you knew that music was going to be a career for you?

RB: It went from playing music for fun, to playing music and working part time. To what the hell happened, I'm almost 30 and we're kind of making a career out of it. It was all kind of a blur.

PEV: Tell us about your new full length album, "Prove It". What can fans expect from this?

RB: A real album. We spent real money, used a real studio, and spent a lot of time writing this album. Our songwriting is much more technically advanced than anything we've ever written.

PEV: Tell us about the creative process behind making this album. What were the days like in the studio and writing it?

RB: Pretty much after we recorded our self titled album we spent some time touring, and then started writing what would become "Prove It." We spent all of our down time off tour writing and rehearsing the album at our practice space in Santa Cruz. We've been together so long, that it was easy to start playing the songs, but we'd spend months on each individual song tweaking every aspect of it until we felt it was right. We experimented with different keys, different tempos, different arrangements. It was time consuming, and sometimes frustrating, but we felt like we got the results we wanted.

PEV: During the making of this album did all the band members agree on the arrangement or were their debates about how to put the album together?

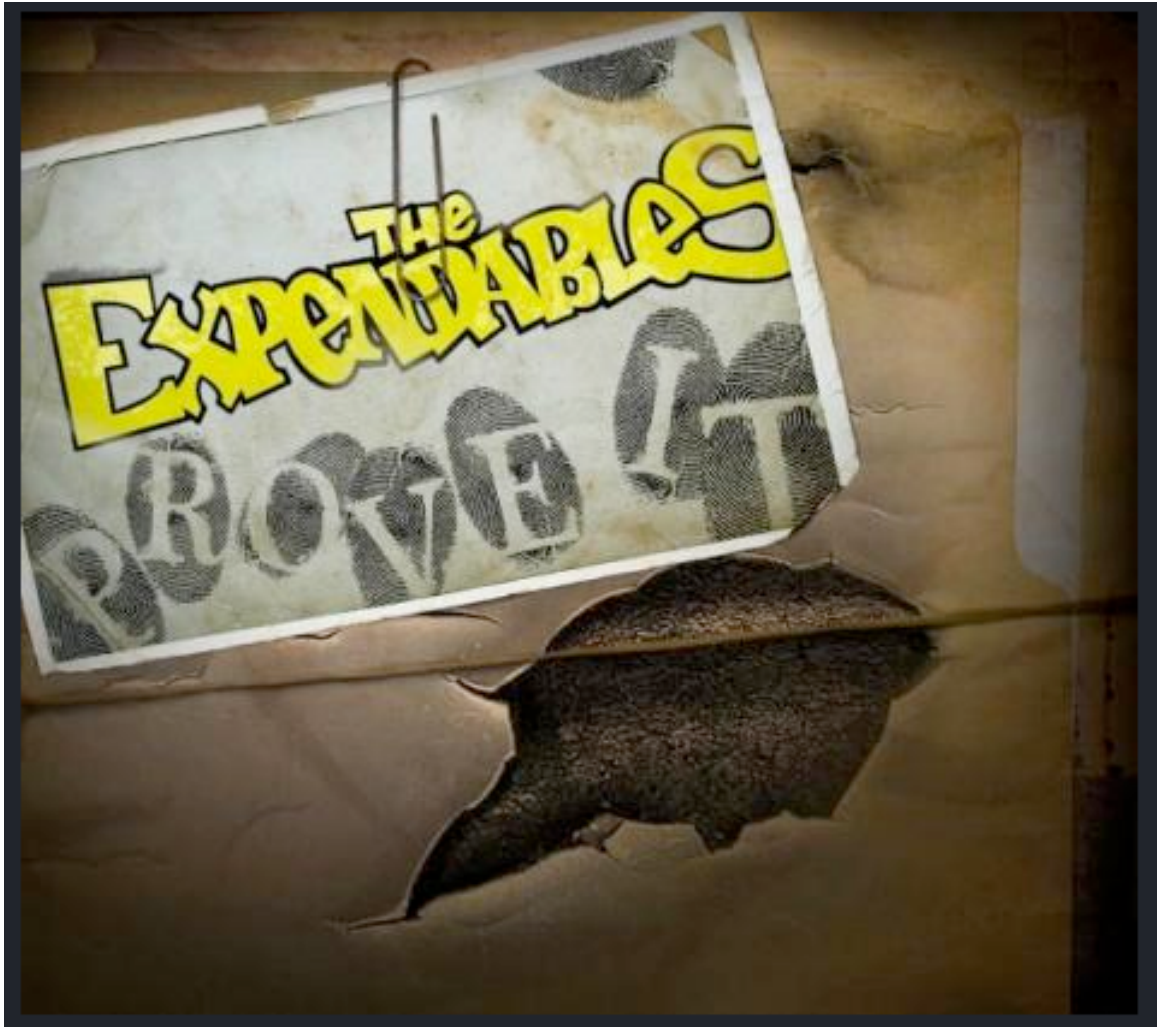
RB: There's always little disagreements here and there. And when you have four people pouring their lives into the music, there's going to be disappointment and frustration if things don't come out the way you envisioned. But the way we work is majority rules, and eventually we all settle on what we feel is best for the song. In this business, you have to be able to handle criticism or you will not last.

PEV: How is life on the road for you in the music world? Best and worst parts?

RB: Playing in front of a crowd that loves your music, big or small, is an amazing feeling. I love the energy that the crowd shows us, and hopefully we can return that same intensity and energy. Touring definitely takes its toll on your body. I don't eat well, smell good, or sleep well. But we do get to see the country, and sometimes the world and experience things that are different from home.

PEV: How have all your friends and family reacted to your career? What's it like when you get to play at your hometown?

RB: My parents were both educators. To them going to school and getting an education was the most important thing for me to do. They resisted at first, especially since the success rate for bands in the music industry is almost on par with professional sports. After a while they saw that this was what I was determined to do, and they became more supportive. They just tell me to not do heroin and save my money. My friends could care less for the most part, unless they need tickets. Hometown shows are always fun, but people come out of the woodwork to try to get into shows for free or that want a favor.



PEV: What can we find each of you doing in your spare time, aside from playing/writing music?

RB: Anything from playing in a softball league, to surfing, reading, exercising, bbq's, the beach, camping. We usually don't have a lot of time at home, so we squeeze in as much relaxation as possible.

PEV: Name one present and past artist or group that would be your dream collaboration? Why?

RB: Led Zeppelin or The Beatles, just because their albums are so timeless, the musicianship is amazing, and when they were at their

best they didn't write any bad songs. I would just have liked to be a fly on the wall at their recording sessions.

PEV: Is there an up and coming band or artist you think we should all be looking out for now?

All of our openers on our recent Winter Blackout Tour. Pour Habit, Passafire, and Iration... All amazing bands.

PEV: If you weren't playing music now what do you think each of you would be your career?

RB: If I never started playing music, I'd probably be an accountant or something. If my music career ended tomorrow, I'd try to get on the industry side of things and look into management or booking. I have a lot of experience to offer younger bands that have potential.

PEV: So, what is next for The Expendables?

RB: Tour relentlessly to support our new album "Prove It." We are opening up for Slightly Stoopid and Steel Pulse on part of their summer tour, then we are going to take a break for most of the summer which we will use to write music and relax. A big fall headlining tour and then who knows? We'd love to get to Europe and Japan. Also for years we have been wanting to do an acoustic album, and a live CD.

<http://www.penseyevew.com/content/expendables>