

# Expendables keep up with the pace on “Prove it”

The band's says their biggest influence is Slightly Stoopid

BY ALAN SCULLEY - SPECIAL TO THE STATESMAN

Published: 12/03/10



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## ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

**THE EXPENDABLES:** Opening: John Brown's Body, C-Money and The Players. 8 p.m. Dec. 6, Knitting Factory, 416 S. 9th St., Boise. \$14. Ticketfly. \$15 day of show.

When the fun-loving Expendables' fifth album, "Prove It," was released in May, frontman Geoff Weers had some serious goals for it.

"I hope this album gives us a little bit more respect from you guys, the critics," Weers said. "We kind of get hounded on for being just another ska, weed-toking, reggae-punk band. But I feel like we have a little bit more substance than that, and I hope this album kind of proves it."

Like a pair of other ska-influenced groups that have made waves in recent years — Slightly Stoopid and Pepper — the Expendables' career has been a do-it-yourself undertaking. It started humbly in 1997 in Santa Cruz, Calif.

"From the beginning we've always been a party band," Weers said. "That's kind of how we started doing stuff back in the day. We'd tour, well not really tour, but we'd take weekends and play college towns that were near Santa Cruz. We'd go and play Santa Barbara, San Diego, San Luis Obispo, Chico, and it was pretty much backyard parties. That was pretty much how we developed our live show."

Even if the group in its early years was strictly a weekend endeavor, Weers and his bandmates — guitarist Raul Bianchi, drummer Adam Patterson and bassist Ryan DeMars (who replaced the original bassist in 2001) — showed that they weren't simply aiming to be a bar band by getting into songwriting and album making early on.

By 2004, the group was starting to show small but real, signs of progress. That year saw the release of the CD, "Gettin' Filthy," which included several songs that have been staples of the band's live set. The group also landed its first legitimate tour, opening for reggae artist Eek-a-Mouse on a tour of the western states.

It was around this time that the Expendables made a pivotal connection with Slightly Stoopid. The group took the Expendables out on tour and eventually signed the group to its record label Stoopid Records.

"They've definitely been a huge influence and mentors, almost like big brothers to us," Weers said of Slightly Stoopid.

In fact, Weers credits Slightly Stoopid with inspiring the Expendables' blend of ska and heavy metal.

"Actually for me personally, I think the real eye-opener and mix of the music was (from) Slightly Stoopid's 'Longest Barrel Ride' album," Weers said. "There's a song on there — I can't remember what it's called — but it goes from reggae to a metal thing. I was like 'Wow, that's amazing.' They never really did it much after that album, but I think we took that and then just created song after song after song that has that kind of flow in between mellow to metal. I'm just a big fan of mixing that stuff in a seamless way, where it can be listenable, but still take you from edge of the spectrum to the other and back, comfortably."