

A Warped experience

THE EXPENDABLES MAKE THEIR WAY TO THE TOYOTA PAVILION AT MONTAGE WITH THE VANS WARPED TOUR



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By **Randy Shemanski**

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When the Vans Warped Tour debuted in 1995, it didn't take long to gain a reputation as a slightly chaotic all-day event featuring music in the punk, metal, ska and similar genres. Now in its 13th year - there were a few breaks along the way - Warped Tour is much more organized, but still features more music than even the heartiest fan could possibly consume in one day.

That's a good thing, if you ask us. The quality of the tour and the bands that perform has increased while the quantity of music has remained nearly overwhelming. And the range of genres has increased to include pop and alt and indie rock.

This year's Warped Tour comes to the Toyota Pavilion at Montage Mountain on Thursday, July 14, with 66 acts performing with gates opening at 11 a.m. Some of this year's top acts include Paramore, Less Than Jake, The Expendables, The Devil Wears Prada and Relient K. We caught up with The Expendables' drummer Adam Patterson last week as the band drove from a tour stop in Ventura, Calif., to the next stop in Kansas City.

It's been a little more than a year since you guys released *Prove It*. How has the music changed now that you're playing it live regularly?

We spent a lot of time on this album trying to get it as perfect as we could. So it's pretty much the same as it is on the album, whereas other songs from our older albums, we just weren't musically there yet, so we've fit them into our styles as we grew into musicians. The older stuff has changed because we can do a lot cooler stuff than we used to.

Last year was 10 years since your first album, *No Time to Worry*. How has the band changed in those 10 years?

Experience is huge. We've just been playing together for so long and playing our instruments for so much longer that we're just better musicians and we're better at writing and vibing off each other live and in the studio.

Do you think you've learned more playing live or in the studio?

Well, we're not in the studio as much as we play live, so I would say live because we do it all the time, whether it's practice or in front of an audience or even soundcheck. We're just constantly playing. In the studio, we're learning more every time we go in there, leaps and bounds actually, every time. But on the whole, we learn more live for sure.

You guys play a lot of different styles - reggae, rock, ska, punk. Was that difficult at first for you guys to jump from style to style?

It's difficult in a sense that if I was just a reggae drummer, I probably could've learned to play reggae better. But when I started playing I did punk and reggae and a little metal and blues - all kinds of stuff - and I just kind of learned every type of music because that's just what we all listen to. I think it made us more diverse, at least, as musicians.

Do you think that diversity helps you guys attract more fans, especially on Warped Tour where there are so many different kinds of bands?

We definitely stand out. There's not a whole lot of reggae on this tour and not a whole lot of punk, at least the punk that we grew up on. So we're definitely different in that sense. The people in the audience can identify with something, hopefully, in our set. We do throw in the hard metal stuff for a second and we will throw in a little bit of ska and reggae and punk and even straight up rock. So hopefully we can grab the attention of someone just walking by who maybe likes a part of our music.

Is it tough to get into a groove when you only get 30 minutes on stage?

It's a little strange because we're used to doing an hour and a half or if we're opening for somebody, like 45 minutes. So it is, but basically we just warm up a lot longer and earlier. And we try to really vibe off the crowd. Warped Tour crowds are crazy. The kids are absolutely nuts and they're hyped to see you, so even though it's hot and sweaty, they're just so stoked to be out there. It's easy to get energized from a crowd like that.

What's the Warped Tour experience like for you guys? Is it a grind?

It's a grind, for sure, more for our crew than anything. They're up at 7 or 6:30 (a.m.) every day doing stuff, and they're putting stuff away as late as 8 at night. For bands, we play a half hour and we do an hour and a half meet and greet and interviews, so it's not too bad. But it's definitely a grind as far as it's hot. Other than that, it's a pretty easy tour.

What's the craziest thing you've seen in the crowd during a Warped Tour show?

The other day in Ventura, these kids were throwing each other so high, it looked like they were on a trampoline. That's the only way I can explain it; it was crazy. It was like popcorn popping in the crowd. It was really cool to see that.

What goes through your mind when you see that? Is it a distraction?

We perform every day and we're tight at it, so we can watch the people and play a good set, so it's not too much a distraction. If someone gets hurt or I feel like someone's about to get hurt, that's when I get worried and I might even get our tour manager to watch them. That's when it becomes a distraction. But they weren't hurting anybody. They were all having fun doing it. It was just a funny thing I've never seen before at our show.

- randy shemanski

Tickets to the Vans Warped Tour at the Toyota Pavilion at Montage Mountain are \$33. For advance purchases or more information, visit www.livenation.com or vanswarpedtour.com.

