

Music Preview: Vans Warped Tour, The Expendables and Go Radio

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By David Burger • for In This Week

The 17th annual Warped Tour festival has given exposure to up-and-coming indie talent as well as showcasing major established artists since 1995. While Warped bills initially featured punk bands, now the tour bill features an eclectic array of artists, including metal, rock, hip-hop, rap, electronica, reggae and pop. (Katy Perry performed on the 2008 Warped Tour.)

One of the new features this year is the John Lennon Educational Tour Bus, which will have local students on board recording and producing their own music.

While well-known bands such as Less Than Jake and Relient K are appearing on the tour, we interviewed musicians from two talented, yet lesser-known bands. We asked Alex Reed, from Go Radio (and a Tallahassee, Fla.-based rock band formed by former Mayday Parade frontman Jason Lancaster), Geoff Weers and Adam Patterson, of The Expendables (a veteran ska-rock band from Santa Cruz, Calif.) about playing Warped Tour this year.

The John Lennon Educational Tour Bus is touring with the Vans Warped Tour. Are you a fan of John Lennon?

Geoff Weers • I know John Lennon's contribution to music is huge, and I am a fan of that.

Adam Reed • Absolutely! I feel like even if you aren't a fan of the music he created — which is ridiculous — you still have to have a great amount of respect for what he did for the industry. He truly was the epitome of a rock 'n' roll icon that became something even greater over the years.

With numerous bands playing at any given time, who should Utah music fans make a point to see?

Weers • Go see our show because you can dance, mosh and smoke weed all during our ripping 30-minute set. What more can you ask for?

Reed • Well, first of all, our stage is usually in a shaded amphitheater and on Warped Tour finding shade and a place to sit down can really be a day-changer. We take our craft very seriously though — not to say other bands don't — but we leave it all out there on the stage and give it 110 percent every day, whether it's 113 degrees or raining. I think that really shows. There are also a lot of heavier bands on the tour this year and I think we bring something a little different to the table — kind of refreshing, in my opinion.

Patterson • Because we play good-time party music, and there isn't a whole lot of that on the tour. We'll make you dance, mosh and smile. Why wouldn't you want to do all that? Plus our guitar player Raul [Bianchi] has been working out all summer and looks real, real good.

Did you go to the Warped Tour when you were younger?

Weers • I went to Warped in '98 or '99 and took a Vicodin just before AFI's set. I was in the pit when the Vicodin kicked in and turned my stomach upside down. I frantically ran to the bathroom and puked my guts out. Not a very sweet story, but I learned to eat before I pop pills.

Reed • Yes, definitely. It's really kinda crazy to think back to that excitement and eagerness to see all your favorite bands. I see that in a lot of these kids, and it's really a dream come true to be standing on that stage every day. I remember being rebellious and telling my mother that I didn't need to wear sunscreen. To this day I remember exactly what I was wearing, because I burned so severely that I had those tan lines for like six months.

Patterson • I went a bunch of times when I was a wee lad. I saw Long Beach Dub Allstars, NOFX, Green Day, 311. Lagwagon, so many awesome bands. I had a band about 12 years ago that played the Battle of the Bands in Fresno. We got sneaky and got ahold of backstage passes. I remember being on the side of the main stage standing next to Billy Joe from Green Day and El Hefe of NOFX and saying, "Yeah, this is what I want to be doing for the rest of my life." I was 18, and it is my best Warped Tour memory by far.

Is the Warped Tour still relevant?

Weers • Warped is still one of the largest tours out there, and I think that is what has made it so special throughout the years. Sure, the music styles on the tour have changed but I feel it is still the same at its core. [It is] a bunch of kick-ass bands getting together and exposing their music to fans [who] wouldn't normally go see their show outside the Tour.

Reed • I would say it absolutely is, and I think it's super important for it to stay relevant. It's a place where kids can escape and hear all their favorite bands. It's so cool because you get exposed to a lot of new music as well, which in my opinion is what it is all about. Warped Tour is my youth and it's incredible to say that it is now a part of my career.

Patterson • I'm guessing it is because there are a bunch of kids coming out to the shows. If it wasn't, why would they come stand in the heat?

You Should Go: Vans Warped tour '11

When • Saturday, Aug. 6, at 11:30 a.m.

Where • Utah State Fairpark, 155 N. 1000 West

Tickets • \$28.03 in advance, \$35 day of, at SmithsTix

Bands Include • Against Me!, Black Veil Brides, Dance Gavin Dance, Family Force Five, Go Radio, The Expendables, Gym Class Heroes, Less Than Jake, Passafire, Relient K, The Acacia Strain, The Aggrolites, The Devil Wears Prada, The Ready Set.