



Rebelution's Sophomore Release

I.V. Reggae Rockers Unveil *Bright Side of Life*

Tuesday, August 4, 2009

by **ALY COMINGORE (CONTACT)**

In college, playing in a band is practically a rite of passage, and in a town as densely packed with undergrads as Isla Vista, it's also kind of cliché. But don't tell that to Rebelution. Since forming in 2004, this reggae rock fourpiece have gone from a casual blip on the I.V. party circuit to one of the best-selling reggae acts in the nation, even earning a nod from iTunes for Best Reggae Album for their 2007 debut, *Courage to Grow*. This past Tuesday, August 4, bandmates Eric Rachmany (vocals), Rory Carey (keys), Wes Finley (drums), and Marley D. Williams (bass) unveiled their much-anticipated sophomore effort to the world. In many ways, the aptly titled *Bright Side of Life* picks up right where *Courage* left off, packed with groovy guitar hooks, crisp drumbeats, and uplifting lyrics. But unlike its predecessor, *Life* seems to find that perfect balance between rock,

jazz, and dub that has garnered the band so many non-reggae fans. The resulting record is something that truly feels like Santa Barbara, drawing on the bandmates' I.V. roots without sounding silly or self-indulgent.

"I think Isla Vista influenced us a lot and helped us get our basic sound, but I think there's definitely an improvement [on this record]," explained Williams. "Us all being the same age and being good friends, the lyrics Eric writes kind of represent us and a lot of people around us. I think it all started from that college environment, but it's also representing growth in the lyrics and musically." In discussion, one can gather that these guys are a lot more self-aware than their I.V. party roots let on. They even maintain that the many pressures of their oftentimes raucous college surroundings did little to distract from their musical goals.

"One thing that I saw in everybody and that I try to do myself is just hold yourself accountable," said Williams of the band's I.V. beginnings. "As long as everybody does that, you really can move forward and make strides through the Isla Vista chaos and all the stuff that can sidetrack you in that environment." "It was really fun, too," added Rachmany. "We got out of class and it wasn't like, 'Oh, we gotta practice.' It was like, 'Let's go jam!' because that's what we love to do. That musical release can get you through life and the day. I wouldn't even say it was ever hard work or difficult to get stuff done; it was just a natural progression of what we like to do."



Today, that strong work ethic and positivity undoubtedly have paid off in some very big ways. Along with the completion of *Bright Side of Life*, they recently founded a label, 87 Music. The move officially aligns Rebelution under the Silverback Music collective (Slightly Stoopid, Pepper), which is known for its support of artists' rights and creative freedom.

"Bottom line, we want control of our music," Rachmany explained of the Silverback union. "As far as the major labels, we had a couple offers and stuff and we saw how they take advantage firsthand, and it's why we don't want to go that route. If we had all creative control and they said they wanted to show it to the world, then it would be okay, but we're perfectly happy where we are. We've done everything ourselves from the beginning."

It's a DIY mentality ushered in by the likes of GarageBand and Pro Tools, and championed by bands like Slightly Stoopid, who currently are selling out amphitheaters nationwide without so much as an umbrella label to back them. And for bands like Rebelution, it's also the very real future of their life within the music industry.



Santa Barbara reggae rockers Rebelution (from left: Eric Rachmany, Rory Carey, Wes Finley, and Marley D. Williams) will unleash their sophomore album, *Bright Side of Life*, this Tuesday.

“That’s the whole mentality that we’ve worked with this whole time; do it ourselves and we feel like we’re capable of putting out a record ourselves,” Rachmany said. “That’s not to say we don’t take advice from our managers and our people around us. We’ve gotten to this point with a lot of help from people. We definitely take a lot of pride in the stuff that we create, and we don’t want anybody else to tell us what to do.”

And with the new album in the bag, all that’s really left to do is sit back and wait for what will likely be a big-time boost in Rebelution’s still-growing career. “I’ve been anxious since we started recording,” said Rachmany of the new album. “I’m just ready to put it out there.” And based on the iTunes meter, fans are ready to hear it. At press time, the online presale for *Bright Side of Life* was the site’s second best-selling reggae album, falling behind only Bob Marley’s

Legend, and just a few notches above the band’s now two-year-old debut.

“We’ve always felt like our sound is reggae, but it’s really a mixture,” Williams said of the new album. “I think it’s really something new for people to get down with. I think a lot of people who don’t even like reggae like Rebelution.”

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Rebelution’s *Bright Side of Life* is now available online and in stores. Visit myspace.com/rebelution for song samples and band info.

<http://www.independent.com/news/2009/aug/04/rebelution-unveil-sophomore-release/>