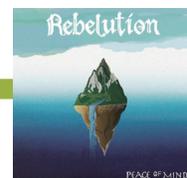


INDIE SCENE

Wesley Finley, Eric Rachmany,
Marley D. Williams and Rory Carey

REBELUTION

The sky's the limit for this sunny California quartet's brand of uplifting reggae rock



IT'S NO WONDER THAT SANTA Barbara, Calif., is often referred to as the American Riviera. The sun seems to shine incessantly and the beach always beckons. No wonder, then, that reggae-rock band Rebellion found its sound in the small seaside town of Isla Vista, one of Santa Barbara's more carefree enclaves, making music teeming with spectacularly sunny vibes. Formed in 2004 by recent graduates from the University of California, Santa Barbara—vocalist and guitarist Eric Rachmany, drummer Wesley Finley, keyboardist Rory Carey and bassist Marley D. Williams—Rebellion found common ground in their love of island grooves. (Founding guitarist Matt Velasquez left in 2007.) "It was serendipitous," Finley recalls. "We met through various classes and the college reggae scene, and we happened to have our own instruments. Our vision early on was just to have fun playing cover songs on weekends at house parties."

Eight years later they're celebrating their third and most ambitious effort yet, *Peace of Mind*. Released through their own indie imprint, 87 Music, it's a triple-disc set that includes a dozen new songs, plus acoustic and dub versions of all 12 tracks. "The fact that it hadn't really been

attempted yet is basis alone for trying," Finley says. "We had a good amount of experience doing acoustic performances, and our fans have taken well to the videos available on YouTube. We also figured that doing versions where dub was the focus would provide another alternative take people might enjoy, especially the roots and dub reggae listeners. So for us, releasing a project on this scale made a statement."

The band opted to bring in outside producers for the first time, including roots and reggae veterans Michael Goldwasser, Amp Live, Yeti Beats, Keith Armstrong and Errol Brown. "We had such a variety of songs that we knew it would be beneficial to get opinions from producers who are more experienced with what we wanted for each particular track," Finley explains. "We were pretty set on what we wanted to do, but it was great to have their advice and the benefit of their special touches." Written mainly on the road, *Peace of Mind* incorporates edgier guitars and even strings. "We've further expanded our sound by incorporating music we listen to on our own," Finley says. "Yet with our busy tour schedule, we've had less time at home to hash out ideas. So we try them out on the bus and during soundchecks."

The album has proven an instant hit, landing in the Top 15 of Billboard's Top 200 and topping the Reggae and Independent charts. "We have a strong, attentive fan base, and a management and PR team that worked hard to promote the heck out of it," Finley says. "The chart success is proof that we have relevance and that people are eager and willing to spend their hard-earned money on something they could probably download for free." The success builds on the grassroots popularity that began with 2007's *Courage to Grow*, which garnered Rebellion an iTunes Editor's Choice pick for Best Reggae Album of 2007 and subsequently climbed into the Top 10 on iTunes Reggae album chart. The 2009 follow-up, *Bright Side of Life*, topped Billboard's Reggae chart.

That album was also their first for 87 Music and its exclusive distribution partner, Controlled Substance Sound Labs. "Our label is still in its infancy," Finley says. "The name 87 Music comes from the address where we all lived as college students during our time at UCSB. Once our label develops and takes on other artists, I'm sure we'll have our hands full. As one of our songs says, the sky is the limit."

—Lee Zimmerman