



Move and Groove

YOU MAY HAVE SEEN THEM JAMMING ON STAGE, LISTENED TO THEIR MUSIC OVER THE RADIO, OR CAME ACROSS THEIR NAME WHILE CHECKING OUT THE TOP MUSIC CHARTS. THEY'RE **THE JOHN DANK SHOW, THE HOMEGROWN ALTERNATIVE/REGGAE BAND. IT'S TIME WE GET TO KNOW THEM BETTER.** WORDS BY AMANDA FRANCEL BLAS PHOTO BY LOREM IPSUM 

IT'S BEEN A big year for The John Dank Show. What started out as a couple of friends getting together to write music has turned into one of the island's biggest music sensations. The band's unique sound has even garnered them international attention. Thanks to their new EP, *The John Dank Show* hit #11 on the world reggae charts and peaked at #4 on iTunes's reggae charts. *Uno* had fun sitting down with the band, whose members were just as entertaining as their music.

So, how did **The John Dank Show** come about?

Danton: Frankie and I were in the band Rockbottom, and in between sets we would go up and jam out whatever we wanted to because we didn't have a DJ (*or an iPod, according to Frankie*). Frankie's dad actually started calling us "The Dank Show" for Danton and Frankie. (*To make it clear, it has nothing to do with weed, the members agreed.*) We were doing that, and we wanted to start doing our own stuff and writing so we picked up John, and we thought why don't we call it "The John Dank." And then Paolo came in because we needed a drummer, and we call him "the show." So, that's how we got "The John Dank Show."

What was the first place you gigged at?

Frankie: Java Junction's open mic night. We love Java Junction; we even shot our video there. Our official first gig with full band and drums was at a Sunday Showcase at Livehouse in July 2014, and we've been gigging there since. But we were writing music for like two years before we actually started gigging.

You guys have come a long way. Did you ever think you'd be recording and making your way into music charts like **Billboard's** and **iTunes's**?

John: Recording, yes. Billboard? Hell no.

Frankie: Billboard I think was the culmination of it all. It exceeded every expectation. So now everything that comes is just cherries on top of cherries. It's just cool. It's like a wave. We knew we wanted to record when we started writing all these songs. It kind of just fell into place with Ryan Shook. He had some time, Matala was kind of just taking a break, and he was like, "Let's just do it."

Any musical inspiration?

Frankie: Six60 is our newest thing. They're having a huge influence on our music. They're a little more pop than what we're used to, but their vocals and their hooks, I think, are what make them a new inspiration.

How will you describe your music?

John: No matter how many interviews we do, we still can't answer this with one reply. It always changes. The better question is, you guys are our listeners: How would you classify our music? Seriously, it's a big question mark for us too. **Frankie:** It's a hard question. The easiest answer is reggae-rock. Or progressive rock-reggae because we're not just reggae-rock, we fuse the two. Alternative reggae? Funk? Progressive island music? I think the fact that we can't "genre-rize" ourselves makes us happy to play the kind of music we play because we're not conforming to any typical sound.

Well said! Let's talk a little about your EP.

Frankie: This whole album was a passion project. People wanted to be a part of it. There were so many people who gave their time and energy into it: JR Tamayo did all of our photography, Ryan Shook took on a full producer role for our EP, Josh Agerstrand did our cover art, and John Bermudes put the album layout together and played sax for our album. I think that's the biggest thing about the people who support us. They really believe in us and our music and what it can do.

How will you describe the EP?

Frankie: Honest. The reason I say honest is because everything in that album came from us. It wasn't superficial. I think the fact that we don't bullshit on our songs is something to be proud of. If we feel heartbroken, we'll talk about it in a song. If we feel proud, we'll write about it. If we're feeling on cloud nine, we'll write about it, too. It's truly ours.

John: I guess I'd say it's fulfilling up to this point. I've wanted to be a part of something like this for myself.

Danton: Like Frankie said, it's true. It's purely ours.

Paolo: It's our identity.

Can we expect a full album anytime soon?

Frankie: Spring of 2016, for sure.

Any planned tour to go with that?

Frankie: Next summer is what we're looking at. We're trying to release the album locally first, that's the goal. If we do tour next summer, we're looking at about a month, possibly touring in California and the West Coast. 

THE BAND

Danton "Baby Dao" Cruz
(Bass)

Francis "Frankie" McJohn
(Rhythm guitar, vocals)

Paolo "The Show/Hair" Cruz
(Drums, cajon, harmonica)

John "Muthaeffn T." Tyquilengco
(Guitar)