

BIG D & THE KIDS TABLE biog

A Music Business professor once told the members of Big D & the Kids Table that in order to put out a successful album, one must front at least \$25,000 to properly record, mix, master and promote it. They took his advice and dropped \$700 on their first release, “Shot By Lammi” (1997). Now over 12,000 copies have been sold without any money, advertisement, promotion, or most significantly, any label support. This is a theme. . .

. . . With strong themes and biting lyrics fans can relate to, and a powerful rhythm section with uniquely memorable horn playing, this Boston-based punk-ska band’s live show is their specialty. Singer Dave has been injured frequently taking dives and falls into the crowds (see below), bassist Steve has broken a stage in almost every state, and guitarist Sean will fly off of anything that he can climb up onto—no more than a single story so far, though. It is amazing that the entire band isn’t bloodied from all of their thrashing around on stage, but there usually aren’t more than a few bumps, bruises, cuts, or concussions after. . .

. . . After a tour with The Allstonians, Big D followed up the success of their first release with their second release, “Good Luck” (1999). It was again put out by the boys in the band on Dave and Steve’s own Fork In Hand Records, without any label support, money, promotion, etc. That quickly earned them the 1999 Boston Music Award for ‘Outstanding Ska Band’. That, in turn, caught Mike Park’s attention and he re-released it on his label, Asian Man Records. “Good Luck” has now sold over 15,000 copies and continues to do well on Interpunk.com and Amazon with the minimal advertising that Asian Man puts out there. Of course, shortly after the re-release of “Good Luck” the BMA’s discontinued the ‘Outstanding Ska Band’ category. Maybe because of the enthusiastic mosh pit that broke out on the acceptance stage, or maybe because the pop music industry declared, “Ska is dead”. . .

. . . “Ska is Dead, and You’re Next” Tour (Feb. 2004) featured Catch 22, Mustard Plug, and Montreal-based The Planet Smashers. The tour consisted of almost exclusively sold-out shows all along the East Coast, with Big D bettering their usual average of \$4/head in merchandise sales. The bands visited the Midwest and Canada on the second leg of the tour in April with even greater success than the first leg. It also featured Dave jumping off the stage into the crowd and opening a gash in his head that bled on most of the front row. He continued the show without realizing that the whole audience and his band mates were staring at him with some concern, because half of his face was covered in blood that ran down his shirt and was dripping off his hand. He finished the last song of the night and apologized that they could play no more because he was having trouble focusing. Even the doctor that put the six staples in his head commented that it was a very nice split. . .

. . . 7” split vinyl that Fork in Hand put out with Japanese noise-core innovators Melt Banana in 2003 followed the 2002 release of the “Gipsy Hill EP”—7000 sold, including 2000 in Europe. And the “Giant Rock N Roll Swindle” (2003) compilation put out by Fork In Hand in collaboration with the OBEY Giant creator, Shepherd Fairy. So far it has sold more than 5000 copies in Japan alone with 3000 more selling in North America. Spin magazine says, “. . . this comp’s big heart is with punk punters the Bouncing Souls, Big D & the Kids Table, and the Suicide Machines, all of which contribute rousing odes to navigating life on the path of most resistance.” AND they were on the Springman Records release of “The Rocky Horror Punk Rock Show” (16,000 copies):

“...Big D & the Kids Table’s dub reggae take on ‘Once In a While’ is a well-timed stylistic diversion to an unabashedly fun disc...”

-Alternative Press magazine

AND there were the 23 dates on the Warped Tour, AND the Grind Tour across Canada with Bigwig, The Planet Smashers, and Belvedere, AND headlining the second stage at Ska Summit in Las Vegas with 11,000 people in attendance. Dave mangled his hand and passed out in a fast food joint from the pain at that one, while saxist Bush spent the night in the hospital getting CAT scans and x-rays done because he couldn’t breathe. AND the WBCN-sponsored show at the Hatch Shell in Boston (see picture) with Less Than Jake and over 5,000 people in attendance, putting \$7500 worth of merch sales in their pockets. All of that touring totaled more than 150 shows in 2003 and a huge jump in their already strong following. Probably the most surprising thing about the band is their ability to draw in markets outside of Boston, with just them on their side, no help, no advertising, just good music and a crazy live show.

Big D & The Kids Table have done extensive, successful tours in the States, Canada, and Europe (see below). In Canada, their video for “The Difference” (Gypsy Hill EP) is in regular rotation on “1, 2, 3, Punk”, Music Plus’s punk-ska show which Big D hosted in 2003. Also in Canada, they got stopped at the border on their way to a show and told the border police they were “recording”, which had worked before. But this time they searched the band’s van and trailer and found they had a show in Montreal, how much they were getting paid and how much merch they were carrying. Trumpeter Dan got put in Canada-jail for “lying to a customs official” and the rest of the guys had to drive home leaving a sold-out venue waiting for them. The entire band got banned from Canada for a year, and Dan couldn’t go back for five years.

Immediately following the “Ska is Dead” Tour (see above), Big D finished up the final 10 days of the “Silence Equals Your Death” Tour with headliners The Suicide Machines, as well as Against All Authority and The Code. The Reel Big Fish then took the band out for part of their “Coast to Coast Roast” Tour with Rx Bandits, Lucky Boys Confusion, and of course, Catch 22. AND the “Broke As Hell” Tour with Streetlight Manifesto for July and August, with a week-long stint on the Vans’ Warped Tour thrown in. AND a September tour with Rx Bandits. All of which was preceded by the “Ska Brawl” Tour, with Big D as headline support to The Toasters, making 2004 a very busy year for this hardworking band with over 200 shows planned before the New Year. Also on tap for 2004-2005: U.S. and European tours, a West Coast version of “Ska Is Dead”, and headlining tours in Europe, Canada and the States.

Big D & The Kids Table’s fan base and fan loyalty are stronger than a lot of bands with label support. You can see their fans’ devotion on their guestbook at bigdandthekidstable.com. “I don’t like ska, but I like you guys,” is an oft-heard compliment at their shows. Their new album “How It Goes” on Springman Records and Moon Ska Europe will solidify them as one of the top punk-ska bands in the world because this time they have some help, some promotion, and finally some well-deserved label support.