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## Heavyweight Dub Champion: Rise of the Champion Nation

Publisher: **MVD Entertainment Group**

Any discussion about Dub music starts with *King Tubby*, the Jamaican genius that arguably created the type of mixed-down musical sound that we just take for granted today. Manipulating levels in the studio the way *King Tubby* did changed more than the inflection of a musical track, it amounted to a full-blown musical arrangement. Arrangers in the classic sense were people that reworked existing musical themes in new, and hopefully interesting, ways. Think of swing bands covering a show tune or jazz standard, and you get the idea.



**Heavyweight Dub Champion** is nodding to *King Tubby* as much as any mod group, but they also have some special elements that put them above the fray. Collaborators like *KRS One* and *Killah Priest* doesn't just raise Hip Hop eyebrows, instant respect. These two aren't out looking for work, you know... If they choose to collaborate with **Heavyweight Dub Champion**, you know there's something different and good about the group. Bringing the Dub from Colorado is an interesting twist, for starters. The creative force behind the group's formation is Grant Chambers, styling himself as *Resurrecto*. He's the one who's all about on this record, with names you may not recognize if you don't closely follow the Reggae scene. The great news is that you can approach **Rise of the Champion Nation** from many different angles and still take something away.

There are plenty of ties to Hip Hop and pop culture here, with *KRS One* going off at the mic "like Neo in the park with a pole." There are also bridges between the group and Bill Laswell, a seriously massive talent whose engineer Oz Fritz gives **Rise of the Champion Nation** the kind of bowel-massaging bass treatment that filled every Laswell /Axis of Anxiety record without losing that crisp high end and tweeter-pleasing effect. Finally, there are some social and political statements being made on tunes like "Babylon Beast," when you hear the lyrics say, "...jobs not jails when the stock market fails," and the great positive vocal riff "Divination Three" that recalls the empowering (and powerful) style of *Umar Bin Ali* from *The Last Poets*.

The mythology behind **Rise of the Champion Nation** and the narrative about the "Rise of the Champion Nation" that slips through most of the songs is a love it/hate it type of thing. It's tolerable, but these guys don't need a metaphor to make their point. Straight talking is what they're doing, and the days of lyrics about eagles and bears being novel are far behind us. I'm happy if the next **Heavyweight Dub Champion** dropped any pretense and just got on with it. This is music you can dance to, this is a band with the power to shape some positive change. Hoping that **Rise of the Champion Nation** actually mobilizes its fan base to go out and do good on some of the cosmic potential that **Heavyweight Dub Champion** is tapping into.

-Fridtjof, GameVortex Communications AKA M