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## Heavyweight Dub Champion :: Rise of the Champion Nation :: [Champion Nation Recordings](#)

as reviewed by Steve 'Flash' Juon

Heavyweight Dub Champion may have the most elaborate and extravagant press kit to cross the desk of RapReviews.com in quite some time. In fact (nerd alert) one usually doesn't find anything this elaborate unless it's a limited edition anime box set. Opening their package revealed an envelope **WITHIN** an envelope, a jet black sleeve with the label's logo stamped on in a silvery yellow ink. The seal on the envelope popped so easily it didn't even rip, and the contents inside compelled me to save said envelope. Four oversized art cards on heavy paper stock were found inside, each one featuring it's own post-modern graffiti style artwork. The first simply says "Heavyweight Dub Champion" on one side with the obverse listing all the relevant facts about this CD, including that it features cameos from KRS-One and Killah Priest. The next card has an index tab reading **ALBUM** that explains producers Resurrector and Patch recorded this album for five years across multiple continents. The release is of course "highly-anticipated" but we'll forgive that bit of hyperbole.

The next oversized card is **BIO** and has a photo of all three members - looking a Samoan wrestler, Ras Trent and a tattooed heavy metal rocker respectively. On the card is a quote from KRS: "Heavyweight Dub Champion restores all hope." For my sake as a reviewer I hope so. The last card is tabbed **LIVE** and lists all of the artists they've played with and festivals they've played at. I'm a little bit boggled that Heavyweight Dub Champion appear to have been everywhere and done everything despite this being my very first exposure to the crew. Seems that this writer deserves a late slip. The CD itself is a work of art too - a minimalistic sleeve reminiscent of Metallica's black album with a glowing face that I can best describe as one of the Transformers wearing a gas mask. This isn't a standard gem case - it's better to describe it as an double thick sleeve for a CD single that opens from the top instead of the side. **EVERYTHING** about Heavyweight Dub Champion was designed to reach out and grab my attention like a motherfucker.

Enough of the bollocks - time to get into the album. "Rise of the Champion Nation" opens with the short track "Renegade" featuring J Criminology. This is some loud unapologetic dub, with bass hitting you in the ear like an angry rap song from Paris. The spoken word and the scratching promise we'll "witness the strength of soldiers" and so far I'm down with this dub. KRS-One and A.P.O.S.T.L.E. are featured on the following track "Arrival," and it's only a half minute in before Kris Parker starts spitting to the beat:

*"Live on arrival, you know my title  
KRS-One, Heavyweight Dub, I got you  
Check the gospel, in Denver with A.P.O.S.T.L.E.  
Live at the spot we bound to hip-hop you  
Let me prove it! We lead a real movement  
Battlin the teacher you need to not do it  
We raw, I don't know what you was told  
But I swing mics like Neo in a park with a pole"*

Nice. The track is stripped down, electronic, and vaguely reminiscent of Trent Reznor. The group likes to call their style "dub hop" but I think "industrial hop" would be equally fitting. "Destroy the Industry" featuring A.P.O.S.T.L.E. follows and it opens as a very East meets West track with Asian instruments meeting up with

HDC's long drawn-out bass beats. That theme fades a bit in the song itself once the Deltron 3030-inspired rapper starts flowing, and it becomes more of a guitar rock revolutionary epic, but those long bass hits are still in full effect. "Trouble" featuring Lady K completely changes the mood as she brings a soulful blues singing sound to the HDB beats, and they dial back the bass a bit in favor of a more relaxed beat. Not my favorite of their jams. "Babylon Beast" brings in back in a big way though, returning to the Guerrilla Funk style of the intro and putting A.P.O.S.T.L.E. and Killah Priest on the beats. It's a very anti-New World Order style jam, and if you think about KRS-One referencing Neo earlier, I could definitely see the citizens of Zion getting their dance on to this one.

Heavyweight Dub Champion's stylee tends to be righteous indignation at the oppressors of the downtrodden, laced up with heavy bass and influenced by the Carribean sounds of dancehall and roots reggae. It's an intoxicating mix which is easy to get drunk off but which also seems to lack focus. Who is the "enemy" referred to on "Warrior Divine One?" Is it the politicians? The pigs? The powerful and the rich? The lyrics encourage you to tap into universal spiritual harmony through dance, but what the Saul Williams-like delivery has in intensity it lacks in specificity. If we're dancing to beat the devil, let's know which devil it is we're fighting. When you don't think about the philosophy too much, in fact when you don't even think about the guest lyricists too much, this is some funky bass-driven futuristic dub. The big bottom bass of "Dawn" is some P-Funk mothership vibes that George Clinton could groove to. "Rise" featuring KRS, Stero-Lion and A.P.O.S.T.L.E. is as hip-hop as dub gets or vice versa. "Exorcism" featuring Ganga Giri may want you to lock your dreads and look like Ras Trent yourself. Don't mistake bass for a lack of melody though, because songs like "Villain's Impasse" definitely have it - just in a lower key than those of you used to pop and R&B are familiar with. Some of these songs are a bit large to get a handle on ("Rise of the Mountain" is almost eight minutes) but you could put this disc on random play and enjoy just about anything here. Don't fear the Dub.

**Music Vibes: 8.5 of 10 Lyric Vibes: 7 of 10 TOTAL Vibes: 7.5 of 10**

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