

Slightly Stoopid

As a musical brotherhood since 1995, Slightly Stoopid, led by the vastly versatile duo of Miles Doughty and Kyle McDonald, has expanded its fusion of rock, reggae, acoustic soul, hip hop, heavy metal, and punk rock, and achieved artistic freedom and commercial success while subscribing to their own DIY ethos. In the process, the talented collective has grown both onstage- from their original trio to a seven-piece ensemble- and as the generational forebearer of an immensely growing subculture and lifestyle movement. Bound by their devotion to a musical agenda that relies on the spirit of collaboration and improvisation, and a social agenda that advocates for the freedom and legalization of marijuana, Slightly Stoopid's musical melting pot continues to earn the respect of their mentors and peers, inspire countless young musicians, and delight millions of fans.

Doughty and McDonald grew up together in the Ocean Beach neighborhood of San Diego. By age 11 they had their first acoustic guitars, bonding over Metallica, Megadeth, and Mötley Crüe. In the mid-1990s they attended Point Loma High School and formed Slightly Stoopid, playing their first gig- a punky and subversive lunchtime set on the quad- that earned them a trip to the vice-principal's office and a reprimand for the trio's explicit lyrics.

As ambitious high school students, they played house parties and small clubs, and met Sublime's Bradley Nowell after attending one of his band's shows. Nowell quickly became a champion of the group's precocious talents, inviting them to play, and signing Slightly Stoopid to his label, Skunk Records. He endorsed them to Michael "Miguel" Happoldt, co-founder of Skunk, who agreed to record the band at Sublime's Fake Nightclub studio in Long Beach. In 1996, they released their debut studio album, the punk-inflected, eponymously titled *Slightly Stoopid*. Though Nowell had passed away shortly before the record's release, fittingly he appeared, posthumously, on the song, "Prophet."

The surf-inspired follow-up, *The Longest Barrel Ride*, came in 1998, also on Skunk. The band's first two albums generated regional buzz and motivated the three-piece to load up the van and hit the road. Persistently they ticked off the miles up and down the West Coast, venturing east to Colorado ski towns, playing a circuit of small clubs to small but enthusiastic crowds slowly increasing in size each time around. "Brad and Miguel would always tell us that, to make a name for yourself, you have to get in the van 200-plus days a year," said Doughty in a December 2018 interview. "They would tell us: 'Don't be scared, keep grinding, and build that organic fanbase.'"

An early breakthrough came in 2001, Doughty and McDonald issued *Acoustic Roots: Live and Direct*, self-released on their own newly formed indie label, Stoopid Records. A 40-minute acoustic, one-take, live-radio set captured at San Diego's Rock 105.3 studio, the album demonstrated a profound strength of songwriting and vocals that inspired favorable comparisons to Dave Matthews Band and Jack Johnson. Subsequently, the band expanded, welcoming drummer Ryan Moran, as well as percussionist Oguer

“OG” Ocon from The B-Side Players and a horn section from John Brown’s Body of C-Money on trumpet and Daniel “Dela” Delacruz on saxophone.

The ensemble’s diversity and repertoire encouraged charmed collaborations in the studio, such as with reggae legend Barrington Levy, G. Love (Garrett Dutton) and onstage, with the Marley family, Snoop Dogg, and Cypress Hill. Between 2003 and 2008, the band released four studio albums- *Everything You Need*, *Closer To The Sun*, *Chronchitis*, and *Slightly Not Stoned Enough To Eat Breakfast Yet Stoopid*- and two live collections: *Winter Tour ’05-’06* and *Live in San Diego*, routinely charting on Billboard’s Top 100. Their touring expanded, as well, both domestically and internationally, including sold-out dates in locales from Australia to the Caribbean, Denmark to Japan, Germany to Guam, and the famed festivals of Coachella, Lollapalooza, and New Orleans Jazz Fest, among others.

In 2011, the band taped a performance with the Grateful Dead’s Bob Weir, *Live at Roberto’s TRI Studios*, performing alongside Weir, reggae icon Don Carlos (Black Uhuru), and Ivan and Ian Neville (Dumpstaphunk), as well as frequent band contributor and saxophonist Karl Denson (Greyboy All Stars/The Rolling Stones). The TRI appearance echoed the band’s longstanding roster of guests that serve, in some ways, as honorary members of Slightly Stoopid, including Carlos, Denson, Chali 2na, and Rashawn Ross (Dave Matthews Band).

They released their seventh studio effort, *Top of the World*, in 2012, peaking in the top five of several Billboard charts. In 2014, the band hosted its first *Closer to the Sun* destination event, for what would become an annual multi-day, multi-act festival in Mexico. 2015 saw the release of *Meanwhile...Back At The Lab*, which embodied instant Stoopid classics “The Prophet”, “Rolling Stone” and “Life Rolls On” followed in 2018 with the reggae chart topper *Everyday Life, Everyday People* that featured guest appearances by Chali 2na, Ali Campbell (UB40), Alborosie, G. Love, Don Carlos, Yellowman, and Sly Dunbar, among others.

In May of 2019, the band delivered one of the weekend’s more scintillating sets at the inaugural BeachLife Festival in Southern California, welcoming Weir as a special guest for impassioned takes on the Grateful Dead classic, “Franklin’s Tower,” and a tribute to Tom Petty on “You Don’t Know How It Feels.” Despite the COVID-19 global pandemic that paused much of the industry’s touring in 2020, the band’s founding duo earned Top Ten spots on Pollstar’s Live Stream chart: McDonald capturing #3; Doughty earning #7.

The group returned to the stage firing on all cylinders in 2021; performing as a headliner at the debut of the massive Cali Vibes Festival in February, and appearing for two sold-out nights in August at Colorado’s famed Red Rocks- their livestreams garnering two-million views and 7.6 million minutes of viewing time. They also introduced Stoopid Strains, partnering with established brands to produce a line of high-quality cannabis products. December of 2021 saw Slightly Stoopid issue the single, “Everyday People (Remix),” featuring B-Real of Cypress Hill and G. Love, as well as revive its flagship *Closer To The Sun* event in Mexico for a sold-out, 7th installment. The band’s 2022 Summer Traditions Tour celebrated over 300,000 tickets sold, including 13 sold-out shows, leading in December to another sell-out at the 8th *Closer To The Sun* fest.

Consistently throughout the band's career, Slightly Stoopid has made a conscious effort to parallel their creative output with charitable work. Doughty and McDonald have often recognized their fortunate positions as an opportunity to give back, proving to be a constant source of inspiration. Perhaps two of the better examples of their philanthropic commitment are their involvement in the fight against pediatric cancer with Candlelighters NYC and Ronald McDonald House- visiting with and hosting affected families at shows, as well as contributing financially to the cause- and the auction of original art used in the "One Bright Day" video; the proceeds from which enabled Global BrightLight Foundation to provide solar installations for electricity in five Third World villages. Additionally, a portion of their sales from Stoopid Strains benefits The Last Prisoner project; a non-profit devoted to the release of tens of thousands incarcerated for cannabis-related offenses.

Slightly Stoopid is and continues to be a musical brotherhood that always welcomes guest musicians and the art of collaboration. Doughty and McDonald remain unwavering in their principles of independence, honoring their diversity of influences and mentors, and furthering their inherited legacy of the Southern California sound.

"Once we found music as a form of expression, as an outlet, we did whatever it took to survive," said McDonald in a 2018 interview. "We are who we are- a product of Southern California. And, we are where we are in life because of how passionate we are about the music."