

Dead goat skins and old cracked pieces of spruce.

(Thursday, 21 January 2010) Written by The Sidewalk Boys

From the Handbook to Indigenous Planetary Musics: 98th edition. 1254 HS;

Hailing from planet Earth, which the Handbook to the Planets describes as a highly stabilized planet in the moderate zone of a forgotten Type G star way out on the seedy side of the Milky Way, the Sidewalk Boys present a form of native folk music consisting of grunts and groans and incessant snappings of taut wires stretched over long dead goat skins and old cracked pieces of spruce. In this fashion local idioms are passed along by musicians mimicking true music much the same way that shadows were cast upon Plato's cave wall. Of special note here the Sidewalk Boys promoted through their twangings the worshiping of some sort of tipple, or intoxicating agent commonly used to hornswaggle the willing victims of their own numbness. These special tipples figured into the current mythologies of the day, which by all accounts were stimulating, entrancing, expansive, and slightly illegal to operate machinery on. With strangely wired musical instruments that change pitch with the seasons the Sidewalk Boys moved through the early 21st Century like bards across vast plains or maybe even mountains. The seasons changed on this little planet and the Boys became balladeers and beer drinkers to suit their wanderlust and thirst. So it is written in the chronicle. In the Handbook to Indigenous Planetary Musics: 98th edition. 1254 HS

Ballidic Minutia

(Thursday, 21 January 2010) Written by The Sidewalk Boys

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The Sidewalk Boys stalked 21st Century AD Earth searching for anyone interested in listening to long strings of balladic minutia regarding local custom and commerce with an occasional tale of bloody murder thrown in. Usually it was someone named Willy who had impregnated Polly and then made some really bad choices. Whatever the anniversary or special event the Boys were on the spot writing ballads and performing while sitting in facing chairs. The resulting vectors intersected in all the right places during rehearsals and other relaxed atmospheres, but in times of sheer panic the chairs would straightened out dissipating harmonies into shouts, raggy blues into the screech of feedback. Other venues such as gazebos and circus tents tended to attract the Boys and their collection of round, square, and triangular instruments and primitive recording devices. Most natives were delighted and surprised to hear the obscure representations presented in authentic costume of sweats, sneakers, and baseball caps. Another amusing aspect is that most of the natives knew all along that they had nothing to pay the Boys with except lentil soup and a pat on the back. Then the Sidewalk Boys would wander on playing to popular acclaim and the great amusement of other tribes and confederations across Old Earth. So

it is written in the chronicle, in the Handbook to Indigenous Planetary Musics: 98th edition. 1254 HS

Word of Folk Wisdom

(Friday, 22 January 2010) Written by The Sidewalk Boys

From the Handbook to Indigenous Planetary Musics: 98th edition. 1254 HS;

The Sidewalk Boys of Old Earth championed the plight of poor lonesome traveling musicians by both being poor themselves and by traveling far afield in a vain attempt to spread their word of folk wisdom and balladic local truth. Everywhere they went they sat on front porch swings all day and spiked their lemonade with lightning and Rocking Chair whiskey. They never encountered a chance to play for nothing without jumping at it. By all accounts they patted themselves on the back when necessary. The system must have been sustainable because the Boys were reputed to have traveled extensively, as is evidenced by a trail of misdemeanors throughout several decades of that particular eon. Back and forth it appears they traveled between Long Sands and Kingston calling every gazebo and music club their own. Their songs echoed the sentiments of families and drunken maniacs alike. It was necessary for the Boys to become martial artists as well just for crowd control alone, let alone the occasional need for revenge. Ancient digital records revealed layout maps of what appear to be tone poems, perhaps early attempts of humans to categorize the various moods and hungers and amazements distilled from living in a golden age. Also ancient plans for gigantic statues of the Sidewalk Boys were unearthed during successive eons but no evidence was ever found that such statues were ever built. Anthropologists alike wondered why would any sane society praise folksingers in this way? So it is written in the chronicle, in the Handbook to Indigenous Planetary Musics: 98th edition. 1254 HS

The Beaten Path

(Saturday, 30 January 2010) Written by The Sidewalk Boys

From the Handbook to Indigenous Planetary Musics: 98th edition. 1254 HS;

The Sidewalk Boys blazed a clear trail through coffeehouses and cornfields alike leaving a beaten path, at first mistaken as some kind of metaphoric crop circle hundreds and hundreds of dollars wide. Seen from above the track appeared to wander aimlessly into drunken geometric shapes in a forest for the trees situation. Seen from below there may have been alcohol involved. The point is that the Boys were able to engender large themes through ordinary renditions of the next local fare. The native population was usually in on it having bought the beer in the first place and thereby enabling the whole artist sleeping late thing. But the everyday incidents, including the occasional need for an attorney, were seemingly cast into the swirling air to manifest in larger than life ballads. Their stories were told on the erratic path, the contoured highways of political truth.

Wandering on the clearly blazed trail The Sidewalk Boys shielded their eyes as reality slanted in like shards of sunlight through the windshields of ancient Earth. So it is written in the chronicle, in the Handbook to Indigenous Planetary Musics: 98th edition. 1254 HS

Digital Fossils

(Sunday, 31 January 2010) Written by The Sidewalk Boys

From the Handbook to Indigenous Planetary Musics: 98th edition. 1254 HS;

Picking through the bones and digital fossils of the 21st Century of the Carbon Age anthropologists have always agreed on one thing, the Sidewalk Boys left an indelible mark, much like a long winding slime trail, across the native cultures of that vast golden age. Long sunsets of sad wavelengths and happy hours found the Boys in a circle daring each other to write bigger and bigger songs regarding the dominant paradigm. This nervous habit was part of the impetus to ingrain their music, consisting of groans, grunts, bleating through megaphones, and twanging on wires, into the lives of those who would eventually care for the Boys in their final years. Their incredible legacy spread like molasses throughout the assisted living communities of Old Earth, lost upon the daily news organs, but seeping through to the past like spirited water passing through solid rock. The songs themselves became somewhat fossilized and laden with more meaning than useful to historians. The obscure references could only now be taken on face value. Any universal truths of that eon had been eroded away leaving thin air where once stood mighty ballads built into the mountainside. So it is written in the chronicle, in the Handbook to Indigenous Planetary Musics: 98th edition. 1254 HS

Narrow Track

(Tuesday, 02 February 2010) Written by The Sidewalk Boys

From the Handbook to Indigenous Planetary Musics: 98th edition. 1254 HS;

Slogging through the late 20th Century Earth the Sidewalk Boys spent their early years picking up rumors, folksongs, legends and other detritus to stuff into their sack of dreams. These dreams were then distilled and compressed to be used as future building materials such as bricks and mortar. Dreams of a lesser variety would become light and air. The ebb and flow of humankind served as an ocean for the Boys to sail, to soak in while plying heavy surf. The Boys rode the waves all the way through small Americana towns that basked in the long sunsets of the Golden Eon. The sustenance was in the giving of common music and the taking of uncommon wealth in the form of camaraderie, laughter, and beer. The Boys walked from town to town along a narrow track each chewing on whatever had occurred the night before. When the Boys ran afoul of local custom then songs of leniency and redemption were written out on the narrow track. Also the Boys were known for their ability to carry water from one hamlet into the next. So it is written in the chronicle, in the Handbook to Indigenous Planetary Musics: 98th edition. 1254 HS

Banging and Twanging

(Saturday, 06 February 2010) Written by The Sidewalk Boys

From the Handbook to Indigenous Planetary Musics: 98th edition. 1254 HS;

Little is know about Old Earth and its people and culture except a rare archeological find compacted in the rock strata commonly referred to as the Carbon Age. The eminent planetary anthropologist Rathbone Strang unearthed a small cache of digital records of a rambling folk band calling itself the Sidewalk Boys. It appears that this band existed in the backwaters of a coastal area now deep beneath the Sangoral Sea. Their primitive attempts to infuse local idioms into tone poems were achieved by apparently banging and twanging on taut wires drawn across old boxes of wood. One theory is that the digital record had been degraded because the singing sounded so gruff and cracked, the harmonies slightly skewed. The Boys were famous for their amplified foot tap technique. Although internally controversial this innovation fared well into the next several eons. The Boys roamed from town to town leaving a string of misdemeanors in their wake just one step ahead of the folk police and hoping to outlive the next new ballad. So it is written in the chronicle, in the Handbook to Indigenous Planetary Musics: 98th edition. 1254 HS

Brash Noises

(Monday, 15 February 2010) Written by The Sidewalk Boys

From the Handbook to Indigenous Planetary Musics: 98th edition. 1254 HS;

Having little record of the Earth local folk record from the so-called Golden Carbon Age it is hard to categorize or even compare the bleatings, trumpetings and otherwise brash noises that are at least hailed as music in the promotional materials of the Sidewalk Boys. These artifacts were found next to a fane or ceremonial marking presumably left as way finding points on the band's long journey back and forth across an age remembered primarily for the sheer volume of carbon that was flung willy-nilly into Earth's atmosphere. Even as the sunlight was slowly diminished so too did the records of any meaningful artistic expression survive the ensuing dimness. The vague historical references, mid-range screechings, and incessant foot tapings may well be the hallmark of high standards for the time, no one is sure. All that is known is the oddly structured music and other musings left in an obscure rock strata of a planet now all but abandoned. So it is written in the chronicle, in the Handbook to Indigenous Planetary Musics: 98th edition. 1254 HS

Misunderstood Fossils

(Saturday, 20 February 2010) Written by The Sidewalk Boys

From the Handbook to Indigenous Planetary Musics: 98th edition. 1254 HS;

The Sidewalk Boys, a wandering folk band from Old Earth's Golden Carbon Age, conjured up the various myths by which they leapfrogged gazebos and music pubs alike in the old northeast coastal region of the then North American continent. The famous and oft misunderstood fossilized rock stratum is a testament to the musings and many passages by the Boys and their followers. There appear to be many impromptu recordings of seeming musical arrangements, or something in approximation thereto by today's standard. Also a sort of camaraderie was evident in the logs left by the scribe of the band, who, by all accounts had a warped sense of humor and wit. Not only were ballads collected and sung they were also created and lived as the band moved through the busy century. If history was changed a little nobody seemed to notice because of the high entertainment value. In those days the Great Corporations were warring against the smaller governments of the planet so anything was fair game. Advertising quick gratifications never seemed to fail for the corporations in a Barnum and Bailey sort of way. Based on the ancient record the band seemed to oppose the raiding of public treasuries for political gain but no information survived to support the theory that it made any difference. So it is written in the chronicle, in the Handbook to Indigenous Planetary Musics: 98th edition. 1254 HS

Mythical Persona

(Saturday, 06 March 2010) Written by The Sidewalk Boys

The Sidewalk Boys were hiking along a narrow track heading north through the Steinway Wilderness during the later part of Old Earth's Golden Carbon Age. Their goal, as always, was to spread their ambient message outward while also putting good distance from the ever-pursuing past. There may have been a few minor indiscretions lurking back there, some of which were reputed to have kept moving the Boys along from place to place on a regular basis. Looking back from the present day where beautiful music can be simply "thought" the harsh croakings and staccato like string snappings are what can only be categorized as vibrations at best. However we also know that their music was as advanced as any of its primitive time. The Boys appeared to have had a special appeal for coffee and beer drinkers if their promotional materials were to be believed.

Anthropologists suspect that, because of the band's longevity the Boys probably didn't believe their promo either. Ancient websites have been unearthed that have debunked most of the wild legends surrounding the band leading some scholars to speculate that the Boys may have been just regular Joes with day jobs and dogs. As with most wandering folk bands of the eon the idea was to create a mythical persona and take it to the bank. So it is written in the chronicle, in the Handbook to Indigenous Planetary Musics: 98th edition. 1254 HS

Small Impact

Sunday, 07 March 2010

The Sidewalk Boys, late of Earth's great Carbon Age and shortly before the mass human migration to the stars, toured various northern mountainous regions mostly because of their apparent interest in descending great slopes on boards strapped to their feet. In those days it seemed that their journeys were downhill both ways. Each day brought some new thrill and another push into some remote village to spread what was then considered to be music but would now be difficult to even comprehend as other than mid-range squawks and scrapes. Their messages were delivered in barrooms and gazebos to a surprisingly receptive populace. The current theory is that the primitive music was so genuine and germane to the times that relationships were easily formed with the prettiest girls of the town. In this regard the Boys left a somewhat generational legacy that dogged their heels and created a few hot pursuits out of town through the window type of thing. Future lawyers raised their eyebrows at the mere mention of the Sidewalk Boys. Delicately restored websites from that Eon allow a glimpse into several travelogues posted by the band's scribe that may have exaggerated certain accomplishments but it is generally agreed that the Boys made a small impact on the evolving human condition. So it is written in the chronicle, in the Handbook to Indigenous Planetary Musics: 98th edition. 1254 HS