

## ZOUKI'S FANTASY TIME

*Let's be honest - sometimes too much reality is a real bummer. Sometimes you have to tear yourself away from CNN or Fox News to restore your faith in . . . whatever. Traditional musicians are no exception, as the following feverish vignettes will attest.*

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### FANTASY 1:

A session somewhere and Heidi Klum and Beyoncé are there. They love the banjo and say things like "It's so much more meaningful when a mature man plays it". They sit to the right and left of me and we share a quiet mirthful moment any time the overbearing box player tries to show off and use his left hand. When he completely screws up "Doctor Gilbert's", Heidi shakes her pretty head sadly and whispers - as she places her warm hand on mine - "If only he had your sensitivity . . ." There are tears in her eyes - and mine - as she speaks. Beyoncé "accidentally" kicks the box player in the shins, and we all giggle . . .

### FANTASY 2:

I know every tune, but am kindly and not malicious. I play "The Butterfly" slowly and plainly for the adoring newbies [*you can tell this is fantasy*] and then a sixteen-part version of "Lord Gordon's" in A flat with Frankie Gavin. I slow the tempo down a little when he seems to be getting lost. When someone not related to or employed by me comments "Gee, Zouki, you know a lot of tunes!", I blush modestly and wave my finely-sculpted right hand in a gentle gesture of dismissal. I casually tell Frankie that with little more work, he'll have his rolls almost perfect. He seems grateful.

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### **FANTASY 3:**

A strange, rapidly-spreading fungus appears almost Biblically and begins devouring the heads of every bodhrán in the tri-state area. A cute redhead visiting our session notices the damage and begins to weep. I courageously intervene and save her drum by sprinkling a little Jameson's on it and muttering a spell taught me by a Papuan witch doctor. Her gratitude is quite naturally unbounded. She leaves early but not before slipping her phone number - written on a purple post-it note - into my banjo case.

### **FANTASY 4:**

When five guitar players appear, I offer them a chance to bid on the privilege of playing: highest bidder gets to be sole backer-upper for the next hour. I advise them that bids must be US currency or bitcoin. I explain that at the completion of the hour, the bidding re-opens, but the previous winner cannot bid again. I conceal the fact that all proceeds from the bidding are deposited the next day in a bank account maintained in a bogus name on a Caribbean island so tiny that the IRS would need a microscope to locate it. I remit \$100 to the Home for Unloved Uilleann Pipers and feel good the rest of the day.

### **FANTASY 5:**

I welcome a harp player who gratefully promises never to bring the session to a screaming halt by playing [a] anything slow lasting over 72 seconds [b] anything by O'Carolan. She assures me her instrument will never make the windows vibrate or loosen floor tiles when its lower strings are played. She proves equally adept at melody as well as at tasteful backup, offers to share a recipe for veal piccata, tells a couple of silly jokes, and buys a round for the

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musicians. She tells me she lives near the North Pole and is married to a guy with a red suit, long beard and a team of reindeer who works one or two days a year. There are also elves. I believe her.

### **FANTASY 6:**

I welcome musicians of all species, races, creeds, political persuasions, etc. to my session, with a few minor exceptions:

- anyone with yellow teeth and a general aroma of a landfill on fire
- anyone with anything electric or any instrument weighing more than 8.26 kilograms (harps excepted)
- anyone intending to play bones borrowed from any animal larger than a juvenile weasel, spoons of any size larger than a doctor's examination finger, or bodhráns that say "Goodyear" or "Pirelli" on the rim
- anyone dressed in a kilt with breath smelling of haggis or shortbread
- anyone with a failed candidate sticker on their instrument case
- anyone requiring a quiet five minutes staring deeply into his/her private crystal before attempting to play the "Kesh Jig"

### **FANTASY 7:**

The pub where we play is owned by an elderly unmarried ITM lover who has just hit the largest Powerball jackpot on record. He asks us to play at the ceremony when he picks up his check. In order not to lose his Social Security, he decides to lower his taxable income a bit by paying all the musicians five hundred dollars apiece - per hour - on session nights. He arranges for lavish meals to be provided to us at his expense. He never ever even thinks of putting the jukebox or a cheesy CD on while we're on break eating his food. There are no TVs or games in the pub. Any oaf asking for

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"Danny Boy" is hustled out of the pub by a couple of former Marines and is not likely ever to be seen again. The owner asks us each for the correct spelling of our names so that he can make his will out correctly.

### **FANTASY 8:**

A loudmouthed goon comes in and starts harassing the musicians at every opportunity. I reduce him to a sniveling puddle of wastewater with carefully-chosen Wilde-esque barbs. After the goon stumbles gasping and sobbing out of the pub, the most gorgeous woman in the place stands up and proposes a toast to me in which the entire pub joins. Finally, after rousing choruses of "God Bless America" and "The Soldier's Song", the session resumes. . .

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**BUZZBUZZZBUZZZBUZZBUZZBUZZ**

Is that the alarm clock oh god it must be come on wake up you idiot youll be late again what did i have for dinner last night oh yeah no wonder taco bell always gives me those funny dreams heidi klum?

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