

YOUR Q'S, ZOUKI'S A'S

From time to time questions directed to the far-famed Zouki Cultural Labs will be turned over to yours truly for a "personalized" response. I always welcome the chance to assist fellow musicians. Here are a few samples of recently-dispensed wisdom.

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Q: Zouk ol' buddy - do you have the address of a good yet inexpensive flute maker?

A: Bob Smillkeef, Xenia, Ohio, manufactures playable flutes from zucchinis, which grow in abundance in the area. Some of Bob's earlier efforts - basically built before he perfected his patented reaming technique - had serious intonation problems caused by seeds and squash goop hanging around in the bore. Those problems have been overcome, except on some of Bob's lower-priced keyed flutes which have to be flushed out occasionally with an enzyme product like Rid-X. Bob's website is www.puffgourd.com.

UPDATE:

Due to problems with a pair of untrainable pit bulls, Bob is presently not receiving snail mail. Since he can't pay bills he doesn't get, his phone service, e-mail account, and web hosting have also lapsed. If you really need a flute, you might want to see what's on offer on E-Bay until Bob gets his act together.

Q: I know all about "Hootie and the Blowfish", but who in the name of Miko Russell are "Brian and the Celtic Mudbugs"?

A: That's the former name of the Celtic hyper-group "Dirtfish", which is now pronounced "Dervish".

Q: Why does the hot new hyper-group "Dirtfish" or whatever they are play

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so goddamn fast? How am I supposed to sit in my lonely room learning to play along with their CDs when they play like that? How selfish is Dervish?

A: Easy there - Zouki is sad to reveal that all of the band members are afflicted with the rare genetic disease called progeriasis, which prematurely ages individuals and in effect makes one year of their lives equal to about 5 or 6 normal years. As a consequence, everything they do is speeded up by a factor of at least 5 or 6. For example, jigs that you might be comfortable playing at 160 bpm they play at 800 bpm. However there seems to be no truth to the rumor that the group has had to have special titanium metronomes constructed to handle their hyper-prestissimo playing style. There is also doubt as to whether their next album, "Fast Airs" (actually a double record set recorded between two and two-nineteen p.m. last July 16th), will be released in time for Christmas (which for the group arrives on November 8th).

Q: Zouki, help me: can a middle-aged guy with a flabby bodhrán, limp clapper, and hand-me-down hairpiece badly made of roadkill remnants ever expect to find happiness with an intensively cute 22-year-old fiddler with long blond hair, non-stop legs, violet eyes, and an inheritance?

A: No.

Q: Mary Black, Frances Black, Mike Black, and Shay Black are all from the same place, share a last name, are musicians, and look alike. Are they like related?

A: This query has been referred to our Responder to Extremely Stupid Questions for reply. He's on vacation just now in Moron-land, so you might get to meet him and ask him yourself. Look for a middle-aged guy with bananas sticking out both his ears.

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Q: I'm just starting out playing Irish music. What do you consider to be the defining goal of a traditional musician?

A: To make a million and a half dollars a year playing jigs, reels, and hornpipes three hours a day, four days a week.

Q: Have Jennifer Lopez, Frankie Gavin, and Shamu the Killer Whale ever been seen in the same place at the same time?

A: To the best of my knowledge, no. Why do you ask?

Q: Just for a goof, I am constructing a computer simulation of the intersecting sonic nodes between Aeolian, Dorian, and Mixolydian, but somewhere about halfway through the program my computer freezes. What gives, oh Possible Source of Relevant Knowledge?

A: Simple - you're in the middle of a modal model muddle. Slip two aspirin into your computer's hard drive and try again in the morning.

Q: Is the previous question for real, or is it just an excuse for a stupid un-funny answer?

A: Certainly.

Q: What tuning would you recommend for a Nenets seven-string fungmok player who wants desperately to back up Irish music? I'm thirty-six years old, work as a shelf-stacker and robot-greaser at Amazon, and live with my parents, if that's any help.

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A: According to the rich tradition of fungmok tuning, it must reflect the circumstances under which you will be playing. For example, you could try FEEBDEB if you're going to playing in the company of rich but dumb college girls, BADBEEF if you're playing anywhere near cattle that are acting oddly, or EFCEBAB if you're playing at a Dublin pub next door to a Middle Eastern take-out place. (By the way, according to legend, one of the greatest fungmok players of all time, Zdrev Kmurha, invented a tuning called FACEDAD after he wrecked the family reindeer sled after a frat party and had to explain the circumstances to his father DEADBAD.)

Q: Does meaningless drivel come naturally to you?

A: (*evasively*) Did it come naturally to Joyce, Yeats, Kafka, Bob Dylan, and the rest of that lot?

Q: When will this be over?

A: Now, because you're really starting to annoy me.

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