



“The Jungles of February”

Excerpts from the www.RPMChallenge.com blog:

by The Sidewalk Boys



Jungles of February

Sunday, 11 February 2007

Blogging through the jungles of February we've got guitars, banjos, pianos, and dulcimers flinging around with all the other Grundles and Trinkets back on board the bus. It's cold outside but we've got blankets for the banjos and quarter notes under the hood. It's very dry but that new six-pack in the fridge will fix things. The dogs take to fighting over the last bone out back of the woodshed. We're out on the Organic Fringe with Lazy Half Moons high above. 17 days left but we can't wait for the next twenty years. The Bordertown falls behind us while we notice we're watching way too much CNN thinking, "How do we turn off the bad news?" So, we crack open our usual brew and throw digits to the wind. Meanwhile the good bus 'Grundles and Trinkets' pulls out of Station 17. Heading East for the world party at the end of March.

back on the bus me boys

Tuesday, 13 February 2007

Each song is its own town on the world party tour. Written in the first days, almost in the before time, they've become good friends. The Lazy Moon has gone out back with good ole' reliable "tone 45." The old slot head parlor guitar is now chairman of the blues committee looking for volunteers. Rosie, the human dog, licks my face and races out back to do her business. The piano, too, is planning an escape. Now the entire challenge; songs, instruments and all, are hangin' on the Fringe. So its "Back on the bus me boys, me Sidewalk Boys."

GRUNDLES & TRINKETS

Thursday, 15 February 2007

Sidewalk Brian, the Happy Boy with the Chunk watches as Sidewalk Tom begins to lean back in his chair too far, battling for balance on the ledge. The bus is crawling down the breakdown lane with headlights flashing ones and zeros attempting to avoid that looming deadline. The Boys pull over into the buffer zone and prepare for overhaul. The Challenge is safely in the rear as we lay low waiting for the storm a'comin', the lightnin' a'crackin', thunder a'rollin'... and the rain to sweep up the dirty night. Meanwhile we retool and polish the sidewalks. We build the studio out back by the woodshed, 40 cubits by 40 cubits. We gather dogs, stringed instruments of each gender, and the medicine man. Then we execute the pit stop maneuver we never trained for: GRUNDLES & TRINKETS.

Old number nine

Saturday, 17 February 2007

The bus is stalled out over the tracks. The Sidewalk Boys quickly read the train schedule and hear the rail a'poppin'. The gear is heavy and the Challenge a burden. There is no time to get out before old number nine smashes through the bus for points unknown. Instead we set up the equipment and start to record songs so we can use them for makeshift "On/Off" switches. If we write ballads where the train stops in time, or jumps the track to irrigate the fields, or maybe the captain says, "SHIELDS UP!" or something like that, when do the songs become reality and dogs become human; once called bestial for the sins of man? There are no hidden meanings on the bus. No war of monsters. The banjo has a hangover, the dulcimer is high-strung and has already sprung into action. The piano is in brief therapy with Milton Erikson and the Sidewalk Boys are due in court March 1st. Meanwhile old number nine is bearing down.

The bus pulls away headlights flashing

Monday, 19 February 2007

The hammer has dropped on the anvil. The warm, well-worn surface of the metal gleams as the Sidewalk Boys put down their sidewalk toys. The ballads have prevailed. Alan Lomax just rolled over in his grave. The Boys do the Adirondack Break as their gear is loaded into the frigid midnight bus. Nine songs in six hours, not counting the bus ride and the trips and falls on all the trinkets scattered all over the hickory floor. Rosie idled the night moaning at the gate for Buster. The Long Trail Ale prevails with the assist. The bus pulls away. Headlights flashing.

The rack harp dangles from the rear view

Thursday, 22 February 2007

We drove the good bus 'Grundles and Trinkets' on the wrong side of the road through every little town while heading into the Adirondack last night. The parlor guitar shouted out the window to anyone who would listen, "The Sidewalk Boys, Live! at the world party!" We pass the reverend Bruce Brimstone hollering "Hallelujah, Hallelujah!" Sunrise streams into the windshield as the bus screeches to a stop, suspended half over a cliff. We go out to the back of the bus and roll out the two-ton jack. We are chided by the banjo, "You don't know Two-Ton Jack!" The dulcimer is all alone, no case, no blankets, No Shipyard IPA. Not a cookie left on the plate. We sacrifice the environment, throwing it under the bus to put rubber back on the road, petal back to the metal. The Sidewalk Boys are back on the road again speeding toward the world party. The rack harp dangles from the rear view.

We scrape grundles and trinkets from the inside of the windshield

Friday, 23 February 2007

The bus takes a dogleg left onto the Internet at the last minute, spilling the instruments, dogs, lyrics, and the like. The Boys dive for cover amidst the random ones and zeros. We re-boot the bus and continue deeper into the world-wide web. The Challenge is just ahead, the future is far behind in the before time. The Tierneycaster needs a beer. The Takamine is too toasted to chunk. The Challenge eludes the endless bus ride and the Sidewalk Boys take stock of the liquid spirits. Only five days of fuel left. Grand Central station is blipping on the screen. The Yamaha yells, "maintain course and speed, North Boys, North!" The Boys enable cruise control and walk away from the wheel. The bus lurches to the left and hits a ditch at sixty miles per hour. We scrape Grundles and Trinkets from inside the windshield.

First and second order reality are honored with a toast

Saturday, 24 February 2007

The good bus continues on in misadventure. The winter crop is being stuffed into the digital can; ones and zeros being rounded up by the dogs, instruments resting once again in atmospherically challenged cases. The Sidewalk Boys drive the bus all the way from the Landfill to the Woodshed and back again. CNN is following close behind. We hang our dusty boots by the café door and rake the room with metaphoric rants. Good beer is definitely on the Sidewalk Boy's menu. Chili and Lentil soup becomes the stuff of life and provide a constant for the energy equations. Bernoulli is honored with a toast. The dogs race around back and gather up the spare digits and trinkets. They bark at the microphones through the back door. The dogs are honored with a toast. The storm janitors arrive to sweep up the dirty night. Lightning and thunder does due diligence. The janitors are honored with a toast. The movers pack up the grundles into little grundle packages for submission to the Challenge. The movers now know Jack and are honored with a toast. The Sidewalk Boys have long since been driving 24 straight days under the influence of this Challenge. The bus starts to weave in and out of first and second order reality. The reasonable choice is to honor it with a toast. The Boys submit to the request.

The Sidewalk Boys hitch a ride back to the music hall for the world party

Monday, 26 February 2007

The Sidewalk Boys are losing power. The proximity alert sounds as Wimpy's scrap metal yard looms ahead. The bus willy-nilly pulls over as time sensitive programming signals all high level alarms. The grundles are packed, trinkets are placed just so. The Boys begin removing the steering wheel and start wondering what they will do for the next eleven months. The Challenge is too heavy for ten to carry, so we borrow a front-end loader for the delivery. It can barely fit through the front wall of the Music Hall so minor alterations occur. Once the packet has been delivered the loader backs out the way it came and accidentally restores the front of the building to prehistoric condition. It is a short walk back to the bus. We push it on over to Wimpey's lost and found. The bus is destined for many more future projects, the least of which is to prop it up on forty acres twelve miles north of Watertown, New York, its final resting place. The Sidewalk Boys hitch a ride back to the Music Hall for the world party.