

Zack Kouns



Undoubtedly one of the busiest and most insightful individuals in the realm of contemporary outsider art, Zack Kouns works in capacities such as bandleader, performer, author, visual artist, researcher, prankster, and composer.

Resulting from his strict recording schedule, Kouns has released over 20 albums to date, including *Michael Jackson: "I Just Can't Start Loving You"* through Ownness in 2009. Amongst the long list of labels which have issued his work are Chocolate Monk, Clinical Archives, Wintage, Albert's Basement, Isle of Man, Hobo Cult, Past Futures, Bumtapes, Teenage Whore, Myhand.thanx, and Tired Trails Collective. While he continues to develop and put forth new recordings such as 2011's *The Concealed History of the Coming Races* LP, dozens of other unpublished volumes of Kouns' music still remain for future release.

Amazingly, the musical stylings between each body of Zack Kouns' work vary considerably, in no small part due to the wide assortment of tools with which he develops his songs. As a multi-instrumentalist, he plays tenor and alto saxophone, harmonium, electronics, duduk, guitar, violin, clarinet, vocals, trumpet and banjo along with other devices to bring about what Kouns describes as Death Jazz, Modern Liturgical, and Apocalyptic/Hermetic musics. Likewise, the thematic and lyrical content of Kouns' forays into these self-developed genres also draws from many distinct sources, allowing him to create concept albums teeming with metaphor and allegory. Numerous esoteric subjects, chiefly religion, mythology, ancient history and romantic philosophy, manifest themselves across the spectrum of his creative output - Kouns addressed his interest in these topics during an interview with Australia's *Rave Magazine*:

"The human organism in general can't escape these ageless ideas; to ignore them is to wither and die away, to withdraw into forests of personal meaninglessness of our own construction. Conversely, to acknowledge and explore them is painful; it requires fumbling through dark and hidden recesses inside yourself; hidden, archetypal afflictions that have been buried to make life a bit more bearable, but ultimately less enriched and illuminated."

A life-long resident of rural Appalachia, the region in its juxtaposition of beauty, brutality, love and poverty also plays heavily into the aesthetic of Kouns' work. Perhaps as a way to evaluate his place of birth through comparison, Kouns has a definite mandate to carry out adventures abroad. Through his exploits, Zack Kouns has conducted lengthy tours in North and South America, as well as Europe and Australia, with ambitions to perform on all seven continents.

Applying his talents to the literary realm, Kouns developed and writes for the graphic novel/comic book *Homo Novus*, which he describes as an ongoing series concerning "the evolution of mankind and the eternal clash of the urge toward light and life and the urge toward annihilation that plagues mankind." Similarly, Kouns authored the only book cataloged in the Library of Congress in the genre of "Revisionist History" - the text titled *Christopher Columbus is as Bright as the Moon* appeared in 2010.

For booking and press inquiries: [ownness {AT} ownness {dot} org](mailto:ownness@ownness.org)

Praise for Zack Kouns:

"Michael Jackson: "I Just Can't Start Loving You" is one of those records which can both be categorized with ease when it comes to its off-kilter pop, but nearly impossible to pigeon-hole when paired with the sickness of the lyrics. As far as its genre-twisting content goes, it's the kind of record I love. Bizarre and catchy, Zack Kouns has managed to create one of those weird ones. Cheers! 9/10"

- P. Somniferum (*Foxy Digitalis*)

<http://www.digitalisindustries.com/foxyd/reviews.php?which=5097>

"With the same hypnotic power as staring at the stars on acid, "The Moon and the Radio Tower" is an epic piece of improvised music that drifts, startles, soothes and constantly surprises, mixing electronics, horns, distorted voice and, presumably, anything else the creator Zack Kouns can get his hands on. Sometimes music like this gets tiresome or plain dull, here however, there is enough variety and imagination to carry you along for the ride in a state of perpetual wonder, the piece sounding fresh and alive."

- Simon Lewis and Stephen Palmer (Terrascope)

http://www.terrascope.co.uk/Reviews/Rumbles_March09.htm

"With "The Tree of The Elders" Zack Kouns has rendered the entire of Carlos and Elkind's soundtrack for *The Shining* into 70 minutes of celestial, atmospheric pop music. It is a master class in chilling, underwritten, atmospheric music; kind of like the musical equivalent of a Susan Hill novel. With soundscapes as dense and oblique as a London pea-souper, infused with an atmosphere of creeping dread, it's a trip to say the least."

- Bob Average (Chicken Ramen)

<http://fin.jablekable.net/reviews/zackkouns>

Links:

Website:

<http://www.myspace.com/zackkouns>

"Our Bodies Washed Up In Storm's Creek" by Zack Kouns from his 2010 7" through Past Futures:

<http://www.ownness.org/zk/zackkouns-ourbodieswashedupinstorm'screek.mp3>

"The Pharaoh's Army Assembles" by Zack Kouns from *God Drowns Egypt*:

<http://www.ownness.org/zk/zackkouns-thepharaoh'sarmyassembles.mp3>

"God's Hands on my Forehead" performed by Zack Kouns on January 18, 2011 in Riga, Latvia:

<http://www.ownness.org/zk/zackkouns-jan182011rigalatvia-god'shandsonmyforehead.mp3>

"Dead Animals" by Zack Kouns from *Vast Dark Expanses Inside Our Body*:

<http://www.ownness.org/zk/zackkouns-deadanimals.mp3>

Zack Kouns performing "Running Up That Hill" at Smith's Alternative Books, Canberra, Australia:

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ERHWZLVo0_I

Video for "Brother Lead Me Home" by Zack Kouns:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3RnNSmaVm4M>

High resolution photograph of Zack Kouns performing in Vilnius, Lithuania on January 19, 2011:

<http://www.ownness.org/zk/zackkouns-high.jpg>

Free download of *Endless Fertile Valley* by Zack Kouns:

<http://clinicalarchives.blogspot.com/2011/01/ca418-zack-kouns-endless-fertile-valley.html>

Free download of *I Lift My Hands Against The Gods* by Zack Kouns:

<http://clinicalarchives.blogspot.com/2009/07/ca290-zack-kouns-i-lift-my-hands.html>

Free download of *A Catalogue of Erica's Misfortunes* by Zack Kouns:

<http://clinicalarchives.blogspot.com/2008/12/ca192-zack-kouns-catalogue-of-ericas.html>