

(Library ebook) Songs in the Key of Z: The Curious Universe of Outsider Music

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Irwin Chusid

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Irwin Chusid : Songs in the Key of Z: The Curious Universe of Outsider Music before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Songs in the Key of Z: The Curious Universe of Outsider Music:

8 of 9 people found the following review helpful. The Best Book on Outsider Music, Period.By Robert I. HedgesThis book is truly a rarity. Chusid vividly tells the tales of the most incompetant, inept musicians in history with a genuine love and affection that makes this book a true joy to read. It may be my very favorite book of all time.The concept of

"outsider music" is one that I have embraced for years. While I don't deny liking some classical music and traditional album rock (Dire Straits, Lynyrd Skynyrd, etc.), I have always had a place in my heart for the struggling artists that just don't seem to (and never will) get it (like The Shaggs), others that DO get it, they just mock the norm (Brave Combo, PDQ Bach, etc.) and that peculiar group that are seemingly from Mars (Jandek, The Legendary Stardust Cowboy), that possibly get it, but are a so far beyond the norm that nobody pays attention to them. This book is an unabashed celebration of ineptitude and (seeming) insanity. It is not to be missed, but when purchasing please make sure to buy the CD as well so you can grasp what he is talking about. Of particular note is the section on the famous MSR Song-Poems (where you send them \$100 and your lyrics and they record your song) which, to me is the ultimate in outsider music. I couldn't put it down. I can't recommend it strongly enough. Buy this book. Do it now! 1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. fun read By Baranabus While this book is a bit old and some of the outsiders are not exactly obscure (Syd Barrett, Captain Beefheart), it's comprehensive and fun. I like that he acknowledges the nuttiness factor frankly and with humor but in an affectionate way that we fans of this genre tend to have. I don't think it comes off as too snarky or condescending, and that's tough to do in this area. I think that those of us who love this stuff (and not everyone loves say, Daniel Johnston) will dig this. He also puts the 'outsider' genre in context, referencing Art Brut and publications like Raw Vision, which is a nice way to frame this instead of just saying this is for jaded hipsters to laugh at. I happen to find Daniel Johnston quite moving in his own odd way. For many, he's an acquired taste. Overall, I think this is just the right take on this subject. 1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. a brilliant introduction to the world of "outsider" music. By AndreasGI have been familiar with Irwin Chusid since I was listening to his "Atrocious Music Show" on New Jersey's WFMU - a pioneering independent free-form radio station. Listening to his show opened my ears and my mind to an alternative universe of "outsider music", which is the subject of this book, and its companion CD's. Chusid is a good story teller with a great sense of humor. The book is a very funny read. Unlike some other compilations or books on the subject matter, however, Chusid does not sneer with a superior attitude, but rather he has a sincere admiration for these individualists, who in countless different ways pursued their unique muses. This book is a celebration of their curious achievements. A couple of these are fairly well known (Tiny Tim, Daniel Johnston), whereas others are totally obscure, and in one case no recordings have ever surfaced. More than a few of these artists have been challenged with mental health problems to various degrees. Almost all have been thoroughly rejected and ignored by the music industry, but they all persevered and followed their own muses. Chusid clearly has done a lot of work to research this obscure subject matter. Despite this commonality, the music and the biographies span an incredible diversity. This is one of the main appealing aspects of outsider art; that the scope is so much broader than the average consumer of commercial media will experience. Long-time admirers of outsider art, such as myself, will very much enjoy this book and CD's. Newcomers to the subject will find it a very useful guide for an introduction. Even people with only a passing interest will find this an amusing read. There is an accompanying 2 volume CD featuring many of the artists discussed in the book, and it is a crucial complement. Songs in the Key of Z, Vol. 1-2. Please see my review of the CD - <http://www..com/gp/customer-reviews?ie=UTF8action=preview>. Both the book and CD are very highly recommended.

Outsider musicians can be the product of damaged DNA, alien abduction, drug fry, demonic possession, or simply sheer obliviousness. This book profiles dozens of outsider musicians, both prominent and obscure figures such as The Shaggs, Syd Barrett, Tiny Tim, Jandek, Captain Beefheart, Daniel Johnston, Harry Partch, and The Legendary Stardust Cowboy and presents their strange life stories along with photographs, interviews, cartoons, and discographies. About the only things these self-taught artists have in common are an utter lack of conventional tunefulness and an overabundance of earnestness and passion. But, believe it or not, they're worth listening to, often outmatching all contenders for inventiveness and originality. A CD featuring songs by artists profiled in the book is also available.

From Publishers Weekly Sincerity and lack of self-awareness rarely earn musicians platinum status or a spot on MTV. Thankfully, for every manufactured boy band and lip-synching pin-up there are 10 "outsiders"--the earnest, often psychotic and not necessarily ingenious stars in Chusid's enchanting universe. For those who've been bemoaning the shortage of ingenuity on the airwaves, Chusid, a radio personality on WFMU in Hoboken, N.J., profiles 20 darlings of dissonance. Several of them--including Tiny Tim, Captain Beefheart and Pink Floyd's former acid troubadour Syd Barrett--have made a few bangs, but the great majority have enjoyed mere whimpers of success. Take Eilert Pilarm, the Swedish Elvis; Joe Meek, who produced the 1962 instrumental hit "Telstar" before committing suicide; and the Shaggs, three sheltered sisters from Fremont, N.H., who recorded the "aboriginal rock" masterpiece Philosophy of the World. Careful not to ridicule his more eccentrically volatile subjects (e.g., Wesley Willis and Daniel Johnston), Chusid narrates each musician's vital statistics and career with rhythm and respectful wit. Even if readers do not rush out to buy Larry "Wild Man" Fischer's recordings, they will remember his musical achievements (he inspired Frank Zappa's record An Evening with Wild Man Fischer), thanks to Chusid's encyclopedic tags. History, as the director Tony Philputt points out in the introduction, is also made by losers; Chusid has given them a microphone and cranked

the amp to 11. 60 bw photos, 15 line drawings, discography. Copyright 2000 Reed Business Information, Inc. From Library Journal If VH1's Behind the Music were as interesting as Chusid's first, and reportedly last, book, this reviewer would never leave his apartment. A record producer, music historian, and host of WFMU's (Hoboken, NJ) Incorrect Music Hour, Chusid has written a valentine to "outsider" artists, musicians who Dunlike frayed pop icons Phil Spector and Brian Wilson lack total self-awareness but overflow with earnestness. Among others, Chicago-based schizophrenic troubadour Wesley Willis, former Pink Floyd songwriter Syd Barrett, and street musician Larry "Wild Man" Fischer. Da man even weirdo Frank Zappa found captivating. Dare profiled in a voice many rock writers dream about mastering. The "outsider" genre was in desperate need of a biographer, and luckily Chusid was there to tell each musician's tale as if he were writing about the next "big thing." He possesses a knowledge of music culture that most contemporary rock critics think they have. Guaranteed: this book will take readers to record stores searching for Chusid's list of musical miscreants. Good luck finding all of them. Recommended for all libraries. DRobert Morast, Pro Rodeo Sports News, Colorado Springs Copyright 2000 Reed Business Information, Inc. From Booklist Chusid defines outsider music as "crackpot and visionary music, where all trails lead essentially one place: over the edge." It is created by mavericks, iconoclasts, and borderline nut cases. Such as? Well, the Shaggs and Tiny Tim, who are probably known by adventurous listeners. Fewer may know Syd Barrett, acidhead supreme, who has been "creatively catatonic since around 1972," though they probably know the band he started: Pink Floyd. But who knows the Cherry Sisters of Marion, Iowa? They flourished in the 1890s, creating such locally memorable cacophony that they must be reckoned the godmothers of the Del Rubio Triplets, limned in the catchall last chapter. The two brightest lights Chusid describes must be Captain Beefheart and Wild Man Fischer. Beefheart has garnered considerable critical acclaim, and Chusid carefully explodes many long-standing myths and misconceptions about him, including some spawned by Beefheart himself. Like his music, Wild Man Fischer defies description, but Chusid comes close with the chapter subtitle "Ritual of the Savage." Essential reading about the fringes of popular music. Mike Tribby Copyright American Library Association. All rights reserved