

Practice Freedom!
Lose your mind
I'm here

Practice Freedom!
Because we have been found wanting

Practice Freedom!
Act local, think cosmic
Be in the world but not of it

Practice Freedom!
For all of you who gave up on me, I'm
sorry
For all of you I gave up on, I regret
nothing
Regret Nothing!

Practice Freedom!
Salvage your pain with new works
New thirsts, new drugs
In this aching world
Your company is a thing to be prized

Practice Freedom!
But above all, practice compassion
Turn somewhere other than within
& do it soon
You're no relic protecting ruins
Halt the desert's spread!

Practice Freedom!
I am a good place to collect your
thoughts
To visit old haunts

Practice Freedom!
Even after the words have gone
Into unreachable silence
& miles between us, miles between us

Practice Freedom!
May we all meet our equals, again

Practice Freedom...
Forget my words & heed your own
Out there in Voids we contemplated
alone
I never held you truly but in my heart

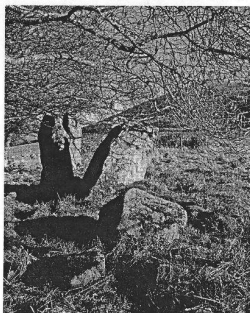


Photo: Alan Davidson (Kitchen Cynics)

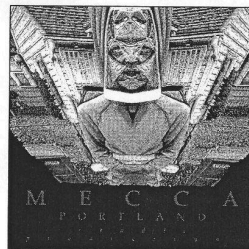
Interview: Scott Nydegger, Sikhara / Mecca / Di Kang /
Android Void (Portland, Oregon, USA)

A Man from Mecca

One of the most unusual shows I have experienced was played by Sikhara, a kind of underground DIY band of tribal drummers, led by American Scott Nydegger. The show happened in 2005 in a small Belgrade club called Fili and I have recorded the most part of it with my old Kodak digital camera. Eight years later, I have posted that recording on Youtube ('Sikhara - Live in Belgrade 2005') and after some time got in touch with Scott again via email in 2016.

Scott Nydegger toured extensively and collaborated with a lot of other musicians. In the meantime, he ended Sikhara project, but continued to record under a few different names and constantly travel from place to place. The following interview happened during coronavirus pandemic, when Scott was back in USA and answered the questions from Portland.

A few years ago you've emailed me from Colombia, then after some time you wrote from Mexico... Right now you're back in your native USA, but in the past times you were living on a few



different continents... When and how did you get into that nomadic way of life? And how it influenced your creativity and music projects (Sikhara, Radon Collective, Mecca)?

Scott: A lot of your questions connect to my crazy history and explain why you are always getting my news from all over the world, who all these musical collaborators are, and how I came to spend the pandemic in Portland with some old friends.

In the early 90's when I was starting, I had a live band, but was also in the home taper scene. I am from a small town in Iowa, so most of

my knowledge of the world came from trading cassette tapes in the mail, and even my first shows in Europe were booked by postal mail. During that early period of touring the first crew of people – I meant who were doing the same thing – was in New Jersey. That group included Jay Reeve who runs MuteAnt Sound, the netlabel that releases most of my projects, and Vincent Paternostro (Total System Failure, Steve Mackay Radon Ensemble, Temple of Bon Matin etc.), who lives with me now in Portland. As touring and trading tapes continued, the founding members of the Radon Collective came together quickly and became our main network for touring and releasing our music. That group includes Paul Beachamp (Italy via North Carolina) Steve Mackay, Nyko Esterle (France), Kamilsky/Koonda Holaa (Czech Republic) and Noah Mickens (Portland).

During the decade of Radon, I was always touring with Sikhara in the US and Europe, including 5 or 6 stops in Serbia, where we met up. All those years our network was expanding and that's how I came to play with so many people from all over and have many "home towns".

At some point after Radon (it began as a recording studio) I started calling any temporary studio I set up in the

world: Mecca. The first one was in Portland, and now the latest Mecca is here again.

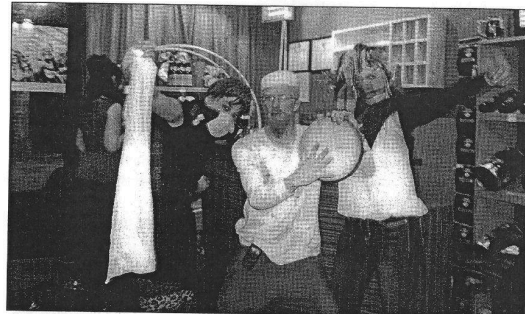
After those years, I got anxious to see the rest of the world, so I moved to China. Sikhara and Steve Mackay both toured there, and then I made a more permanent version of Mecca in Xi'an. For a couple years, I recorded there and did show with Sikhara in a solo version, as a part of the System Error collective.

What is the concept behind your project Di Kang?

Scott: I started Di Kang with Sasha Drumure from Portland, as a long distance project using file sharing. The concept for Di Kang is to make 1 record that I record on each of the seven continents, themed on that continent.

So Asia was done in Xi'an, then I came back to Portland for North America, and then went to Istanbul for Europe.

I got back in touch with you during the year I spent in Colombia. I set up a primitive Mecca studio, and did the album *Seerkind* for Di Kang, and some other projects and collaborations. Colombia was great, but I couldn't get any money to travel to my remaining 3 continents, so I came back to Portland and worked.



Sikhara Uighur party in Mecca, Xi'an China 2013

During 2019 (damn that year sounds great compared to 2020) I went to Capetown and recorded the Di Kang Africa album, and Wellington, New Zealand for the Oceania album.

The plan for 2020 was to spend April in Peru, doing an extra Di Kang EP, and then go to Antarctica in October and record the 7th and final Di Kang album and have visited all 7 continents.

And then..... the Pandemic.

As Di Kang, you did cover versions of Killing Joke and Bauhaus songs. Why these particular bands and songs?

Scott: Well, we got this tradition of recording a cover song between records. I don't know why we keep coming back to 80's bands from England. I love that whole scene (maybe Joy Division is next), but I also love other genres. It seems like we argue forever about what to record and we end up agreeing on that.

You did a lot of collaborations with other musicians. One of them was Steve Mackay, who was a member of The Stooges for some time, also played with Violent Femmes and Andre Williams... What was it like to collaborate with him? Some of the other collectives that you've toured with were Temple of Bon

Matin and The Master Musicians of Hop-Frog...

Scott: Hop-Frog are amazing people and also were the label for Sikhara. It was a small label, but they were really effective in helping us get our records out. Also, they did an amazing job of documenting the scene on the West Coast of all these bands like Hop-Frog, Sikhara, and Nequaquam Vacuum who were doing this kind of extreme world music that we describe as "Post-Asiatic".

Temple of Bon Matin is a band I knew from my early days of touring. At some point Vin became a member and then later I joined up for a while. On tour with them was when we met Steve Mackay from The Stooges, who at the time, most people thought was dead. He ended becoming a founding member of the Radon record. We formed a rotating member backing band, and for year we released his records and did tours all over the world with him. During that period, Iggy Pop reunited The Stooges. So Steve would be playing in a squat in Europe with us one day, and football stadium the next day. He is maybe the most kind, wonderful person I have ever known and I love him forever.

Tell about the experience of being a part of Damo Suzuki's Network...

Scott: Damo Suzuki is one of my heroes, because I love the life that he made for himself. He just travels around the world and plays with different people. I have many amazing stories from touring with him, but since you are in Serbia, I will tell this one.



Damo Suzuki in Paris, France with Sikhara, Vialka, Mr Natural and Nyko Esterle, 2005

I was touring with Sikhara in Serbia, and everywhere I went, Damo had just been there. We visited a radio station, the DJ said, "Hey, your friend Damo just left." We did a TV interview, and they told me they had recorded his interview the night before. Finally, we arrived at Metelkova Mesto (a venue in Ljubljana, Slovenia – note by

blacksyrup) and Damo was playing next door to Sikhara. It turned out our shows were at the same time, so it seemed we could not play together. Then, at 2:30 in the morning after all the shows were done and all the people were gone, we set up on the stage of one venue and played a 2 hour show of Damo Suzuki, Sikhara and some guy who worked in the place. The audience for the show was 1 person. Later, I found out he was from Laibach.

One of your most recent projects is called Android Void. What is it about? Do you have some other things on the way?

Scott: My plans were destroyed like everybody else, but instead I am making some good records. Android Void is a project that I am very happy with and I think expresses my feelings about the pandemic/quarantine. I am finishing the debut of my rap project and Vin and I are at work on a metal record.

In what way has coronavirus pandemic influenced your life and work? Tell about your living in Portland today and feel free to write some final message...

Scott: I am going to try to say something nice, and be positive for a moment.

I probably would not be able to survive in the USA if Noah Mickens from the Radon Collective had not kept a house here all these years. So I spent the quarantine with him and Vin Paternostro, in our home studio making music, plus Sasha Di Kang is in the same town. I had it better than most people. Also, in the craziest times here, I have seen these small moments of kindness and beauty that give me some faith in the human race.

However... Portland is a mess. We have one of the largest homeless populations in the country. Many of these people have mental health and addiction problems that they cannot get for. The police are at war with the citizen they should be protecting. Now for the last weeks, the federal government has invaded our city and terrorizes the people.

I really don't know how this situation will work out. I know other places around the world are facing difficult situations of their own. My only comment is: don't freak out, try the best you can to do what you love and see what happens.

The way things are now, we could all be dead soon and it would not surprise me.



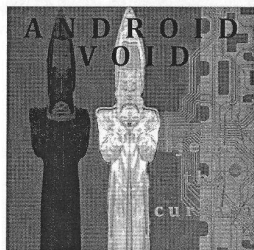
Left to right:
Mr Natural, Steve Mackay, Scott Nydegger
and Yann Geofriad in Minneapolis, MN 2007

One thing I learned from all the amazing people I met over the years serves me well now and always. Travel, hang out with your friends and do something creative that gives you fulfillment. In these current times, we should all remember that (and be nice, don't be a dick to people!)

Thanks for your time, old friend!

More info and sounds:

mecca-faces-me.bandcamp.com
muteantsoundsnetlabel.bandcamp.com



Italian Damiano Lanzi in his own words about the songs from the album

LENZ: Time spent together



discovered that he suffered from Wernicke's Aphasia, that is when you get hit on the forehead and then you are no longer able to articulate language in a proper way. So this song is not about Panama at all, it's just a collection of all the crazy stuff that this poor man said to me.

II - MY OLD FRIENDS

This is a reflection about friendship and how it is influenced by the passing of time. I have written it after meeting an old classmate, we were very good friends in high school, but after a bunch of years and many experiences made each one on his own, we had no longer that much to talk about. We had become two adults, discussing about ordinary things, without any real connection between us. I felt embarrassed about it, but after writing these bitter lyrics, I became more relaxed about the situation. Now I believe that all the things we shared back then are a good memory, and it's

I - PANAMA

In my everyday life, I work as a commercial agent for a factory of tissues. I once visited a customer and asked him about the business, how much of our products he planned to buy for the upcoming season, et cetera; but he kept giving me the most inappropriate and lunatic replies, like "there are 40.000 different species of Butterflies in Panama" or "the guy at the gas station hung himself yesterday". It made absolutely no sense, until I