



Soda And His Million Piece Band

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Occasionally, we here at *FLYMF* enjoy going out and having a good time, tipping cold sodas, and milling around with the dollies and the metrosexuals of the greater Los Angeles social landscape.

On one such night in a secluded, back-alley bar in Pasadena called The Old Towne Pub, the three of us sat, arguing about the doctrines of socialism and basketball. Suddenly, the tip of a shovel broke through the floor, and in our moment of confusion a three-foot hole in the floor was sculpted. What emerged was the following: eight young men, dirty and worn, carrying an assortment of guitars, amplifiers, a mandolin, a banjo, a pair of saxophones (both tenor and baritone), an accordion, an upright bass, a concertina, and, naturally, a drum set.

The filthy strangers shook off the dirt and situated themselves upon the small stage in the corner of the bar. After some plug-ins and some fiddling, it appeared as if we'd be treated to some musical enlightenment. Then, the leader stepped forward to the microphone and said, "I am Soda. This is my Million Piece Band."

A drunken patron pointed to the hole in the ground and shouted, "Where did you come from, man?"

"China," Soda said. "Here's our first number."

The boys began to play a sound I'd never heard before, incomparable to any outfit I'd ever seen. Their million instruments were orchestrated perfectly. I could hardly keep from whooping and hollering along with their drummer as they unleashed songs called "Christine" and "July", forcing my head into a steady bopping motion. And then, just at the moment they had me, Soda and His Million Piece Band proceeded to rock the fucking roof off of The Old Towne Pub with one called "You Cheat"!

That night I was emancipated by the holy greatness of The Million Pieces, who had excavated through earth and concrete to be here, transforming my soul with musical narcotica. What that means, I do not even know.

I found out later that they had dug their hole from China in just six days, which included sleep, four hours a day of rehearsals, and two hours a day of silent reflection.

In talking to them, I realized that not only were they the most talented and steadfast musicians I'd ever seen, but they also were great humans. They admitted to me that they had, of course, built the pyramids, invented sunlight, and wrote large portions of *The Bible* (but not the stupid parts). They'd traveled to eighty countries, spoke

five hundred languages between them, and always lent money to friends who needed it.

Multi-instrumentalist Ben Loory whispered to me privately, "We are also unbeatable in hand-to-hand combat, which we only use in defending women, children, and the peace of the land."

"Wow," I said.

But their real love is music and all of its fantasticness. And they pledged to travel the earth and bring the sound of the Million Pieces to every man, woman, and child with functioning ears.

I sat there, dumbfounded. How could I not love this?

They had traveled from China where they played one night only, The Millions In Front Of Billions Concert in Tiannemen Square. They were exhausted but knew there was more music left to play. And with that, Soda and The Million Pieces rose and played another set, for which they weren't even paid. This one was even greater than the first. And afterwards, they scaled the walls and reattached the roof.

When they came down, I approached them again and said, "You have done great things here tonight. I, too, want to be a member of the Million Pieces."

"Can you play an instrument?" they asked.

"The kazoo," I said. "I also have a sea shell that I could blow every few bars."

"No thanks."

"Please, can I be a roadie or something? I will cater your shows. Hand out flyers. Manage your groupies!"

Sensing my disturbing persistence, they shook their heads and asked that I keep a more appropriate distance from them.

"Perhaps you could father my children?" I mumbled.

They did not answer.

I turned away, dejected. But not that dejected because my world had been musically altered that night.

I went to Soda's next show, the one after, and the one after that and saw The Million Pieces rock roofs off of such places as Molly Malone's, Room 5, and the Thunderbird Saloon. Often I even imagine them rocking roofs off of Soldier Field and Shea Stadium, neither of which have roofs. But they'll be there one day because I will help spread the word to every man, woman, and child with functioning ears.

Because they're my new favorite band.

More information about Soda & His Million Piece Band—including show dates, mp3's, and their forthcoming new album—can be found on their web site, sodaband.com. Feel free to love them as much as we do!