

The Great Unknown: the Musical

Written by Alex Baer

Monday, 30 January 2012 16:55

It's the easiest thing in the world, feeling twitchy and empty and hollow after listening to, or just watching, what passes for newscasts -- enduring all the blowhards, all the posers and hosers. You can feel like nothing's much left of you but a sack of moist sawdust, and a ripped one, at that.

If you are in the market for recommendations at a time like this, here's an easy one to do: Turn your life's car keys over to Google for a bit, or whatever search engine you use -- step on the "go" button, turn out for a ride on the electron highway, tool around for a while, see what you can find.

For the heck of it, and to vanquish the queasy fears left behind from the news, this time around, Google got fed "The Unknown" as a challenge, to zip around and go find.

You could start anywhere, of course.

This start, this time, was because every news item triggered that FDR quote, in the back of the mind, about fear being the only thing we have to fear -- fear itself was. Fear was the unknown. If it was to keep descending all around, all the time, brought on by the news, it was time to find out more about fear.

At the very least, new fears could be substituted for the old ones, and be distractions from all the usual junk the news always dragged in with itself.

The first try on Google, a smile was delivered right away. The search in the engine had been a bit off, misfiring some, as it sometimes goes. Google brought me back, "X the Unknown," a fine old, British, black-and-white, sci-fi jewel -- one from the golden age, a nicely mellowed slice of imported cheese heaven, comfort food, in trade for the news. A bargain, at any cost.

It is about a mysterious source of radioactivity. Dean Jagger is in it, working, this time, at an atomic energy facility in Lochmouth, England. You could do worse than this one. You should

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see it sometime. It is a lot more fun than Fukushima, and is a lot easier to find out facts about, all you want, in living color, with the only mystery being in that black and white film.

No Republicans appear in this film, so it is safe for the whole family.

Nice as the first discovery was, it was time to urge Google on again, to some new terrain, so its new mission was to sniff out, to go find, "The Great Unknown."

It could be an order of magnitude more striking, than the regular unknown, once we got there, maybe. It seemed like it would be a good place to mine for some new fears.

No matter what happened, it sure beat the pants off listening to Republican oratory and such soaring logic of thought -- about as vibrant, inspirational, and searing as a deflated cluster of balloons, as a de-bagged loaf of Wonder Bread soaked in a pail of milk.

Whatever happened, "The Great Unknown" had to be even scarier, or greater somehow, than these milk-toothed chowderheads.

As it turns out, "The Great Unknown" appears to, in fact, be a music group, a band, from Philadelphia, looks like. They are magnificent in the way that all honest and simple things are magnificent, that go right through you, that brush through you, mingling with your atoms.

They have some music that incorporates thoughts and voices from children right into their songs. It is good and cheering and heartening stuff. It will catch you off balance. It will make you smile, even if you hadn't planned on smiling until Spring, at the earliest.

There's information and a spot on their site where you can hear some of their music, and an interview about what it is they do: thegreatunknownmusic.com.

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Just go to "free download."

"HeartRhythmLoveSound" is a favorite. It starts out with a shout from the children and features what they have said. It will disarm you. It could disarm nations, if we'd all listen, maybe see what we all have in common.

Even Republicans, if they would get the money and propaganda out of their ears long enough to listen.

There is laughter inside this music, too. It's mentioned as a warning, in case you haven't laughed in a while, in case there hasn't been much to laugh about lately. You will need to prepare yourself to smile, so, limber up.

It's certainly wonderful stuff, all on its own, a musical shower of shooting stars.

After the news, after feeling my hands over my ears, hearing someone -- maybe me -- saying, "La-la-la-lalla" as a distraction, while stumbling around in a marked minefield, waiting for the *clik*
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before the big
ka-boom
...

The teevee is off, and this music is on: It will be all right.

There is less winter now, with this music, even though big, popcorn snow flakes were falling, fat and lazy, at the inaugural playing hereabouts.

They matter, those snaggletoothed gaps in the picket fence, even less than they did, a few hours and days ago. It's a little more obvious now, the places where slats have keeled over, fallen out, maybe from weather, mostly from age. Snow graces everything at first.

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Now that the snow has been stacking up a little, etching away and making contrasting extremes, light and dark, on all around, everything surprisingly trimmed in frost and in white, it will all be perfectly fine.

Even with Republicans squeezing doughy, milk-sopped comments at one another. They are food-fight candidates from Bizarro World, sent to annoy and entertain us, to make us shudder if we thought they were real.

If it wasn't so deathly serious, we could relax and laugh, full time, at these ridiculous pudding heads all day and all night -- which, of course, is the only response to a hall filled with court jesters and fools.

In a trick of the snow and the light, and in the right mindset and perspective, and with the right music, almost anything is possible.

Right now, for example -- it's a wonderful life, out here in The Great Unknown.