

Mp3 Atlas Fret - Repeat The Days - Songs Inspired By World History

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Archaic futuristic rock (and reggae, electronica, folk, etc.) for high school history students, world history buffs, and aficionados of archaeological pop. 19 MP3 Songs ROCK: Modern Rock, POP: Quirky Details: Bands are the tiniest societies. --Jared Diamond What happens when two high school history teachers run out of lesson plans? They pick up guitars and sing the history of the ancient and medieval worlds, of course. Inspired by sources as disparate as Jimmy Driftwood (the high school teacher who wrote The Battle of New Orleans), the B-52s (Mesopotamia), Schoolhouse Rock (the 70s era public television mainstay), and the more recent Songs Inspired by Literature compilations, Jeff Mettee and Jim Gardner set out to write the history of the world via rock and other forms of pop music. The result, after many recording-session epochs, is the band Atlas Fret and its debut album Repeat the Days. Mettee (aka Jeff Scott) and Gardner (aka Jr. James) are history instructors at Asheville School, a co-educational boarding school in Asheville, NC. founded in 1900 C.E. Both teachers are seasoned musicians with previous recordings under their belts. Mettee released his debut CD, Handmade Machine, in 2006. Gardner, co-owner of the indie label A-Tone Music, has released four discs with Jr. James The Late Guitar. Both guitarists have played in numerous bands, and both are songwriters. Writing songs about world history opened the creative floodgates. We had been looking for a way to collaborate, says Gardner, and, once we agreed on this concept, the ideas came fast and furious. It was liberating to write on subjects completely out of the first-person experience that inspired so many of our previous songs. I think we both felt freed-up to try different things lyrically and musically. It was a whole new writing experience, Mettee chimes in. Creating songs about significant historical events lends a weight to lyrics. The trick was trying to distill the major themes from complex historical narratives. The (academically) undisciplined approach to songwriting, so to speak, opened a portal to an array of historical topics and musical styles: a rave up about the symbolic power of red shoes in the Byzantine Empire; a New Orleans r&b-style tribute to Egypt's Queen Hatshepsut; an acoustic folk love song inspired by the Japanese Heian period. Other originals include a Springsteen-styled rocker about Genghis Khan, a Brazilian-style samba about the

Lisbon earthquake of 1755, and a genre-hopping celebration of ancient Rome's original bad girl, the scandalous Messalina, ill-fated wife of emperor Claudius. With an eye to using songs for lesson plans, the writers decided to fill the CD with a whopping 18 tracks rather than edit down to an artistically pithy 10 or 12. A couple of covers rounded out the stack of originals: Rock With The Caveman, one of the first British rock n roll records, originally performed by Tommy Steele (later remade by Big Audio Dynamite for the Flintstones soundtrack); and The Great Historical Bum, Woody Guthrie's working-class history of the world. Virtually every culture studied in world history courses is represented: Mesopotamia, Egypt, Greece, Rome, China, India, Byzantium, Mongolia. Mettee and Gardner promise to write about the Aztecs, Incas, Olmecs, and Maya for volume II. Students and alumni also pitched in. Asheville School junior Paru Gopalan contributed vocals on India Pronunciation Guide and sophomore Wei-Yin Ko voiced the China Pronunciation Guide, both songs recorded in historical shades of techno and electronica. Asheville School alumnus Noah Francis, a senior at Howard University, became the fearsome arbiter of Hammurabi's Code in a rewriting of Prince Buster's Judge Dread, a Jamaican hit from the 1960s. Asheville School junior Sunny Kims' drawing of Mettee and Gardner graces the inside album cover. Mettee and Gardner elicited the help of stellar musicians to record the instrumental tracks. Jim Harmon (bass, guitar) and Alan Marcha (drums) contributed key parts to many songs. Asheville multi-instrumentalist Tyler Ramsey added keyboards and guitar to three tracks, and Aaron Price of Collapseable Studios mastered the disc. Even National Public Radio got involved. Unable to schedule a recording session in Asheville or in Jamaica to record the vocals for Hammurabi's Code, and with production deadlines looming, the band arranged for Asheville School alumnus Noah Francis to record at NPR's Studio 4A in Washington, DC. In an intense hour session, the Jamaican native tracked the reggae-styled narration, and, voil!, Hammurabi's Code was in the mix. There you have it: the history of the world in 54 minutes of spinning digital technology. Expect a quiz, or a concert, soon.

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