

## THE RONDO HATTON REPORT VOL II, MARCH 21, 2010

This quarter's issue features further contributions from diverse denizens of the Zappa Universe, plus the usual suspects, and a still-wider variety of pan-cultural perspectives. We aim to encourage submissions from each and every *ambient domain*, and hope to sweep the entire planet shortly. For the benefit of those who prefer a really good one in a foreign language, in this issue we're publishing the original texts of those who put forth in languages other than English. You can find English versions at the end in 'One More Time For The World'. Through the ever-improving magic of Google Translate, you can now enter the world of the English-only texts through the language of your choice by *whizzing, pasting and pooting* into your favourite search engine. You can use the same trick to help you create a translation for any non-English contribution you might be thinking of making, and in-house humans are also available to supply the occasional syntactic beef-up. There is no reason why you or your loved ones should suffer as you hesitate to commit yourself outside of 'your' language. In the end, it's all a translation.

As previously, the texts are supplied as a single pdf file. Those wishing to *fondle & fetish* a paper version can download, print and shuffle combinations of texts at their leisure; conservers of the carbon footprint can view online. Thanks to all who contributed this time. Content is in alphabetic order by *author*, there is no editing, and no overdubs. Views expressed are the opinion of the writer and the responsibility of the reader. *You is what you am*. Although this site is not a forum, anyone wishing to enter into correspondence with a contributor may do so through the 'SUBMIT' page, and messages will be duly forwarded. *Hopla!*

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Existen ciertas analogías entre el personaje Nietzscheano Zaratustra y el músico-filósofo, el único e irrepetible, Frank Zappa. Para empezar, ellos solían vivir en un refugio. Refugio de montaña en el caso del ermitaño y la United Muffin Research Kitchen en el caso de FZ, donde pasaba más de doce horas diarias recluido en sí mismo! Además, ambos siempre se cuestionaban cómo cambiar el comportamiento humano y los pensamientos colectivos establecidos como verdades absolutas; esta búsqueda fue tan importante como la finalidad que querían encontrar. FZ era capaz de comunicarse con el mundo entero construyendo sus castillos de notas de la escala pentatónica en Sol mayor, y, el personaje de Nietzsche solía convertir complejas, y aparentemente sin sentido, estructuras mentales como armas peligrosas contra los católico-judeo-musulmanes y todo tipo de religiones existentes en la Madre Tierra (Have I Offended Someone?).

Pero, ¿Qué movió al ermitaño Zaratustra a abandonar su refugio y descender de la montaña? Él se hastió de su sabiduría y necesitó predicarla a la gente común, y a los freaks también, por supuesto. Esto nos recuerda a FZ, ¿no? Hay similitudes en sus pensamientos. Nuestro músico también se hastió de la guitarra hasta tal punto que no podía tocarla, incluso siendo el mejor guitarrista de todos los tiempos! Y entonces llegaron los tiempos difíciles del Synclavier.

FZ quizá no descendió de una montaña pero siempre rehusaba la música comercial y popular; aún cuando las obras más comerciales coincidían justo a tiempo para inaugurar un nuevo sello comercial (p.e. Over-nite Sensation y DiscReet Records). Ellos siempre intentaban llenar nuestras vacías almas y cerebros con palabras y música -música inundada de mensaje-, y FZ se veía en la necesidad de escribir música, tanto como el ermitaño de escribir su libro de pensamientos.

Por otro lado, se identificaban a si mismos con todos los feos/raros y freaks del mundo: ¿Son éstos el último eslabón de la evolución humana Darwiniana? ¿Son nuestra esperanza contra la globalización y deshumanización del siglo XXI? El freak es el actual hombre/mujer, y ninguno de nosotros lo es si ponemos límites a nuestros pensamientos.

Volviendo a la religión, ellos no creían en Dios y en los estándares y reglas que ello comporta; y así eran su música y sus palabras. Nadie puede esperar ser crítico consigo mismo si no sabemos qué ocurre dentro de nuestras mentes. El objetivo primario de ambos fue alzar la conciencia social y encontrar el camino por dónde la verdad ha de ser reemplazada por la verdad. Pero, ¿hay una única moralidad? Una buena pregunta que no tiene una buena respuesta. va más allá de las concepciones metafísicas. Quizá sólo la Iglesia de la Aparatología tiene las respuestas correctas. La muerte de Dios y la figura del SuperYo aparecen a menudo, en los discursos del filósofo, como los ejes principales para construir la nueva Sociedad; FZ estaba de acuerdo con esta idea a pesar de su defensa de nuestra integridad e individualidad, no perteneciente a ningún grupo social.

Por lo tanto, yo, como Nietzsche, concedo a **ZAPPATUSTRA** el mejor regalo que la humanidad ha recibido: el peor Zappa más el peor Zaratustra equivalen al mejor músico y filósofo que podemos imaginar [versos de Joe's Garage]:

Eventually it was discovered  
That God  
Did not want us to be  
All the same (...)

Mankind must be made more uniformly  
If  
THE FUTURE  
Was going to work (...)

## 2. FRANK OVER MILES

Susan Doanim

Just in case Ben Watson doesn't choose to respond to Didier Mervelet's criticism of FZ's final works with his wonderfully splenetic prose (and I do hope he does!) I'm going to take a chance and stand up for the people who may not like Miles as much as Monsieur Mervelet. I'm not going to say that *The Yellow Shark* and *Civilization Phaze III* represent the peak of Zappa's career. They're certainly not the first things I want to listen to as I settle down for a cosy night with my FZ faves and raves. Like most of the albums, there are things that are exquisite (take a bow, 'None of the Above' and 'Amnerika') and things that are not. And things, too, that I have come round to, and others that I know I probably will. You're not much of a fan if you don't know that Zappa will always surprise you. I've fallen newly in love with his music enough times to know that if there's a piece I don't like yet, it's more likely to be my fault than his. If we don't understand it, as Samuel Beckett once said of *Finnegan's Wake*, it's probably because we're too decadent to receive it. *All your education won't help you no-how*. I still find *N-Lite* too much to take. That one certainly isn't formatted for the ears of classical radio station listeners, and yet Zappa chose to have it played over the PA in Frankfurt at the close of the concerts he was to sick too attend. Self-indulgent and redundant? Well, it won't be the first time that charge has been leveled at his work. It doesn't mean that it is. *Thing-Fish* was always an easy target for that jibe. But one day the penny dropped, and I saw it for the work of genius it is. You just need to find the way into it. It's the refusal to try that is self-indulgent. Not to mention sadly lacking in faith!

But let's talk about Doo-Bop. I admit it, I'm not a big Miles Davis fan. I like *Kind of Blue* (who doesn't?) and *Bitches Brew* was fine for a while until I discovered Zappa, and some of his eighties stuff was cool enough in that *of-course-I'm-still-hip* sort of way. *Tutu* and *Amandla* got spun a few times in the background at parties. But opening new horizons? Give me a break. It's just the same old tat re-heated against the latest life-style backdrop. Miles, like Picasso before him, spotted a lucrative line in old rope quite early on in his career, and stuck to the formula. Hoot & toot to the ambient beat, repeat bum notes so they sound deliberate, and project attitude. And it's a great attitude. Just look at him on the cover of Doo-Bop. What girl could refuse the chance for a one-night-stand with that man and his horn? But he'd leave a bad taste in the mouth, fer sure.

Miles is a trend-monger through and through, and an egotistical one to boot. Doo-Bop may have paired him with the wannabee-cool hip-hop-a-go-go of Easy Mo Bee (kudos with my kids, natch) but who but an egotist of monstrous proportions would allow someone to flatter him publicly in such a way? “Miles is so great, makes the ladies freaky, want to have sex.” That may be so, but Frank would never have stood for such fawning stuff. ‘Multi-talented and gifted musician / Who can play any position’. Not for this girl, I’m afraid.

No, for new mental horizons, it’s Frank over Miles every time. Not for nothing did the Nicholas Slominsky describe Zappa as ‘the pioneer of 21<sup>st</sup> Century music’. If you want a truly innovative slew of timbral textures on a rhythmic ride that runs the full spectrum from slide-rule to gut-bucket, try *Reagan at Bitburg* or *Ruth is Sleeping*. You may need to change your default settings. But they’ll take you places Miles never dreamed of. And that’s the basis for a real relationship, not just a one-night stand.

### 3. FRANK ZAPPA – JA UND? - ABER TROTZDEM...

Silke Groetschel

**1980**, eine Riesenfete bei Freunden und ich höre Frank Zappa (Bobby Brown) zum ersten Mal in meinem Leben. Ich fand den Text umwerfend, so ganz anders als den üblichen Kram den ich gewöhnlich hörte (Supertramp, Caravan, Camel, ich erspare Euch den Rest....). Mit Zappas Musik fühlte ich mich plötzlich erwachsen, was mir als damals 15 jährige sehr wichtig erschien. Der Mann mit dieser teuflischen Stimme war absolut sexy. Sheik Yerbouti, Joe's Garage; Tinsel town Rebellion, zwei Jahre lang hab ich die Platten ohne Ende gehört – dann war Schluss, keine Ahnung warum.

**1991**, Habe gerade meinen zweiten Ehemann kennengelernt und stelle fest, das er total Zappa-krank ist ! Er hat fast alle Platten (und Frank hat ja weis Gott viel produziert), kennt jeden Text auswendig und unsere Wohnung ist voll mit Fotos, Büchern, T-shirts und sogar einer Puppe ! Sein Verhalten wenn es um Frank Zappa geht, kann man mit dem des Eichhörnchens auf der Eichelsuche in "Ice Age" vergleichen. Aber immerhin fange ich, dank ihm, wieder an Frank Zappas Musik zu hören. Zugegeben, der Mann ist immernoch umwerfend – von seinen Texten mal abgesehen hatte ich Riesenspass seine Biografie "Zappa by Zappa" zu lesen.

Manchmal aber kann ich seine Musik nur schwer ertragen – Erklärung : Im Gegensatz zu meinem Mann habe ich nie gelernt ein Musikinstrument zu spielen. Auch kann man meine Musikkultur nicht gerade als sehr ausschweifend bezeichnen.

Wenn wir dann auf Reisen 5 Stunden lang im Auto sitzen und er ununterbrochen "Jazz from Hell" gefolgt von "Approximate", "Black Page" und "Yellow Shark" in höchster Lautstärke hört, habe ich leider das Gefühl, dass Frank Zappa einfach mal 25 Musiker auf der Bühne losgelassen hat und jeder spielt was er will... Ok, ICH HÖRE EUER ENTRÜSTETES PROTESTGESCHREI, tut mir leid, ich bin schon überzeugt davon das er jede NOTE geschrieben hat - selbst wenn es sich für mich nur wie Chaos anhört.

**2009** In diesen Sommerferien geht's ab nach Bad Doberan, ein kleines Kaff in Ostdeutschland an der See welches nicht nur für seine alte Dampflok sondern vorallem für sein schon 20jähriges Zappafestival die "Zappanale" berühmt ist. Nachdem was ich Euch oben erzählt habe, war ich schon etwas skeptisch drei Tage dort zu verbringen.

Aber zu meiner grossen Überraschung was es genial !! Es herrschte eine gemütliche "Peace & Love" Stimmung und wir haben viele sehr nette Leute kennengelernt. Das Wetter war bombig, das Essen prima und das Bier und die Mojitos sowieso. Was die Musik angeht : Ich bin sicher, Frank Zappa würde es sehr zu schätzen wissen, das alle diese Bands seine Musik spielen. Eins ist (für mich) klar : seine Musik ist live am Besten mit all diesen Musikern die auf der Bühne ihren Spass haben. Das ist doch etwas anderes als auf dem Sofa zu sitzen und eine CD zu hören (ich bin so müde, ha,ha,ha) !!

Noch eine nette Erfahrung : Ein Freund von uns hatte ein grosses Haus gemietet wo wir alle zusammen wohnten. Es war ein internationales Treffen da wir alle verschiedener Herkunft waren: Italien, Japan, England, Deutschland und Frankreich. Wir hatten viel Spass und interessante Diskussionen über Gott und die Welt.

Wie dem auch sei, für mich führt Frank Zappas Musik immer zum "Positiven", sie scheint immer da zu sein wenn man neue Leute kennenlernt, mit anderen kommuniziert, etwas neues lernt, einfach Spass hat....

*Information is not knowledge. Knowledge is not wisdom. Wisdom is not truth. Truth is not beauty. Beauty is not love. Love is not music. Music is the best.*

#### 4. TROUBLE WITH PIGS AND PONIES

Andy Hollinden

##### **Pt. II Pigs and Penguins**

BOLD PROCLAMATION: The pig is Zappa's symbol for organized religion.

Consider:

Zappa spent two-fifths of his life as a practicing Catholic.

*I was pretty devout up until the time I was eighteen.<sup>1</sup>*

Frank discovered music in church.

*The earliest music that I remember hearing was those Gregorian chants in the church...In fact, I can still remember the tune of the "Kyrie" that they were singing at my confirmation. That lick pops into my head sometimes, and I've wound up playing it on the guitar in the middle of solos--I swear to God...I like the medieval-sounding stuff because the minute I first heard it, it just had a familiar ring to me: I've been there before, I remember that one, that's real to me.<sup>2</sup>*

In church, Frank first realized the power of music over physical reality.

*I went to my grandmother's funeral when I was little and I sat there looking at the candles.<sup>3</sup>*

*The choir was singing and I could see from the way that the candle flames were wavering that they were responding to the sound waves coming from the choir.*

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<sup>1</sup> Once A Catholic by Peter Occhiogrosso

<sup>2</sup> *ibid*

<sup>3</sup> Playboy interview, April 1993

*That was when I realized that sound, music, had a physical presence and that it could move the air around.*<sup>4</sup>

Frank wrote autobiographically.

*Some people may find it hard to believe, but my music is a direct extension of my lifestyle.*<sup>5</sup>

*Conceptual continuity has got to do with me living my life and turning my life into things that entertain other people. The things that I release in the video and the records and the rest of that stuff, it's part of my life.*<sup>6</sup>

*Believe it or not, those songs actually happened to me.*<sup>7</sup>

On *Lumpy Gravy*, Spider explains the pigs' music:

*Remember that they make music with a very dense light...I think the music and the dense light is probably what makes the smoke stand still.*

Could this be a tweezed reference to the candles and incense reacting to music at Frank's grandmother's Catholic funeral mass?

### **Greggery Peccary and the Beginning of Time**

The calendar we use today is the Gregorian calendar. It was introduced in 1582 by Pope Gregory XIII. In "The Adventures of Greggery Peccary," Frank tells of a pig with a priestly white collar who invents the calendar.

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<sup>4</sup> Once A Catholic by Peter Occhiogrosso

<sup>5</sup> An Interview with Frank Zappa by Michael Bourne, *Down Beat*, 1971, p. 38

<sup>6</sup> Bob Marshall Interviews Frank Zappa

<sup>7</sup> *Hustler* Interview, 1975, p. 76

*I'm always interested in particle physics. One of the things that fascinates me about science is time and how people deal with the whole idea. That's how I got into 'Greggery Peccary' the idea that this little pig invents the calendar and then the trouble starts.<sup>8</sup>*

Greggery works for God and the Vatican (Big Swifty & Associates, Trend-Mongers), and he introduces to mankind the idea of linear time, a concept Frank rejected.

*You have to realize time doesn't start here and end over there. Everything happens all the time...The reason I can say that is time depends on the point from which you're looking at it. It only appears that things are transpiring because we are here. If we were someplace else, they would not have transpired yet. If you could move your point of reference to the event taking place, you could change the way in which you perceive the event. So, if you could constantly change your location, you could live the idea that everything is happening all the time.<sup>9</sup>*

### **The Torture Never Stops**

In "The Torture Never Stops," an evil prince eats a steaming pig near the dungeon of despair. The pig fuels evil. At first, the song seems to describe a medieval horror from the Holy Crusades. While it's easy to get lost in the song's graphic depiction of torture and the female screams of agony/ecstasy, it's the ending that's important:

*But a dungeon like a sin requires naught but lockin' in  
Of everything that's ever been  
Look at her  
Look at him  
That's what's the deal we're dealing in<sup>10</sup>*

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<sup>8</sup> East Coast Live, WROQ, June 6, 1993

<sup>9</sup> Bob Marshall Interviews Frank Zappa

<sup>10</sup> Thanks to Simon Prentis for pointing this out to me.

Frank's not describing reality. He's pointing out the self-imposed torture that accompanies the concept of sin, specifically church-induced fear and Catholic guilt<sup>11</sup> resulting from sexual pleasure. Flagellation never goes out of style.

## **Thing-Fish**

The Evil Prince and his pig return in Frank's AIDS saga, *Thing-Fish*, wherein the dungeon laboratory features

*a large aquarium tank housing a preposterous artificial pig made out of soft red vinyl...Dangerous-looking hoses, tubes, and air-conditioning duct-work run from an oversized I.V. bottle labeled 'GALOOT COLOGNE' into the pig and the tank.*

Disease is injected into the pig which will help propagate it. The Evil Prince sings of his sexually transmitted "*HOLY DISEASE*" and how it will eliminate homosexuals and blacks because "*our BIEGE-BLANDISH GOD tends to CERTIFY IT.*"

The pig is obviously artificial because the inventors of AIDS "*booked in de heavy pseudo re-LIJ-mus talent to pronunciate de doc-TRINE of BIBLICAL RETRIBUTIUM!*" In other words, fake religious leaders (especially televangelists) were enlisted to pronounce AIDS part of God's divine wrath. The sinners have it coming, and don't forget that condoms are sinful!

## **Church of Appliantology**

In *Joes' Garage*, Joe goes to see L. Ron Hoover at the First Church of Appliantology. Eventually, Joe winds up having sex with Sy Borg, a "*chrome-plated machine that looks like a magical pig with marital aids stuck all over it*" – the embodiment of church and

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<sup>11</sup> The term "Catholic guilt" is used to describe the feeling of remorse or conflict that can occur when a person who was raised as a Catholic has engaged in some type of behavior that their religious faith has declared wrong or sinful. Many issues and practices associated with sexuality are considered sinful by the Catholic faith, and may be the cause of Catholic guilt for either a practicing Catholic or a lapsed one.

**WisegEEK** <http://www.wisegEEK.com/what-is-catholic-guilt.htm>

science. The result is that Joe winds up in prison where he is raped by music executives. Once again, SEX + RELIGION leads to IMPRISONMENT + TORTURE.

*Joe's Garage* warns of an Orwellian society (overseen by The Central Scrutinizer, enforcer of laws not yet passed) in which people are controlled through the outlawing of music.

*Another one of my theories, which is expressed in the Joe's Garage album is the theory of total criminalization. One way of holding the society together is if everybody's a crook.*<sup>12</sup>

*Unfortunately, there are some people who don't want to be crooks so the government has to make it possible for anyone unwittingly to commit a crime. So a smart person somewhere figures out that since a lot of people already like music, if you make music illegal, bingo! You've created a whole new criminal element in society and created more sameness.*<sup>13</sup>

Pretty much the same as scaring society into believing sex is sinful?

### **Penguins in Bondage**

*They tried to make me go to Catholic school, too. I lasted a very short time. When the penguin came after me with a ruler, I was out of there...I think it was possible to do what I've done only because I escaped the bondage of being a devout believer. (emphasis mine)*<sup>14</sup>

In "Penguin in Bondage," Frank describes a cold, nun-like woman, "*just like a penguin in bondage.*" She's tied down by religion-based sexual repression, and her unfulfilled desires make her dangerous. If her restraints are loosened and she breaks free, "*Lord,*

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<sup>12</sup> Movin' To Australia Soon? by Trevor Lofts and Steven Homan, Society Pages USA #5, p. 45-46

<sup>13</sup> Zappa Busy As Ever While Coming Out Of Joe's Garage by Michael Davis, Record Review, February 1980, p. 7-8

<sup>14</sup> Playboy interview, April 1993

*you know it's all over!" and "She just might box yer doggie and leave you a dried-up dog biscuit!"*

As Frank saw, repressed "penguins" can become sadistic, taking out their sexual frustration on children (munchkins). In *200 Motels'* "Little Green Scratchy Sweaters & Courduroy Ponce," we hear:

*Broth reminds me of nuns  
I see them smashing (kids) with rulers  
Disciplining munchkin cretins  
Tortured munchkins  
Irish Catholic victims...  
Munchkins get me hot*

Ditto priests. In "Father O'Blivion," we see him making pancakes to raise money for his parish, but Frank reveals that *"the night before, behind the door, a leprechaun had stroked his smock."*

Frank takes the idea of power-perversed, church-sanctioned child abuse to the extreme in the original Billy The Mountain screenplay.

*It tells the story of the creation of life on this planet and in this version, it begins with an empty sky, a fat maroon sofa floating around in it. God sees the sofa, admires it and decides to explain to the sofa the basis of their future relationships, and he does this, singing in German. Then he decides he needs some entertainment so he summons his girlfriend The Short Girl and her assistant, Squat, The Magic Pig, and proceeds to shoot a home movie using the girl and the pig and the sofa.<sup>15</sup>*

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<sup>15</sup> Zappa's Latest Box Of Tricks, Sounds, November, 1971

Pigs have been a consistent symbol of sociopathic politicians, gluttonous consumers, and abusers of power - from Orwell's Animal Farm to The Beatles' "Piggies" to hippies taunting overzealous cops.

*"Brown Shoes Don't Make It" is a song about the people who make the laws that keep you from living the kind of life you know you should lead. These unfortunate people manufacture inequitable laws and ordinances, perhaps unaware of the fact that the restrictions they place on the young people in a society are a result of their own hidden sexual frustrations. Dirty old men have no business running your country.*<sup>16</sup>

Or running your church.

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<sup>16</sup> International Times, August 31, 1967

## **5. THE CHROME-PLATED MEGAPHONE OF DESTINY: Gargantuan and Sublime**

### **Pawnshop Marimba**

Have you read *In the Penal Colony* by Franz Kafka? If not, then you haven't done your assignment! On *We're Only in it for the Money*, Mr. Zappa assigned some homework in the liner notes, indicating in the instructions to THE CHROME PLATED MEGAPHONE OF DESTINY (CPMD), that, before imbibing his little composition, you should read the short story. For a guy who insisted that he didn't read books, it's ironic that he was one of the few "pop stars" that had issued such a homework assignment. So, those of you who haven't read it, please do so before tuning into the B side of *Money* (if you haven't already skipped ahead). Those of you dull creatures who occasionally are so perverse as to read a book, have probably already read it, but please permit me to summarize the monstrous thing (*In the Penal Colony*) for the uninitiated.

We join an expedition, wherein a visitor at a penal colony is introduced to a new punishment and execution device. The keeper or operator of the device is overwhelmed with the efficacy and beauty of his means of retribution. He waxes positively poetic about it. "It's a remarkable piece of apparatus". Eventually we learn that the device operates by scribing the name of one's crime, over and over again, into the skin of the perpetrator, until death. The whole piece has an air of calmness and normality about it. The astonishing thing is that Mr. Kafka wrote this monstrous story before the NAZI death camps. The claustrophobic ambience of the work, the depicted banality of cruelty, the submission of the chosen victim, the routine operation of the mechanisms of an organized death machine, all contribute to the nightmarish quality of the thing. If you read it first, you might think twice about spinning the disk. Ben Watson pointed out the odd correspondence between Kafka's apparatus and the audio turntable. Amidst a world of splendor and pleasure in the 20<sup>th</sup> century, for so many of the denizens of the "developed" world, lurking beneath it, a den of iniquity, a dungeon of incomparable cruelty operates like clockwork. What sounds are emitted when the needle glides around your grooves?

When you listen to CPMD, you'll hear that Zappa's music is evocative of *In the Penal Colony*, a kind of monstrous program music. It is the capstone at the end of the B side of *Money*. Zappa usually found space at the end of his albums to unleash a monstrous, indeed gargantuan piece of work. Dance music this ain't! It is electro-acoustic music or *musique concrete*. Don't expect to emerge humming or toe-tappin'.

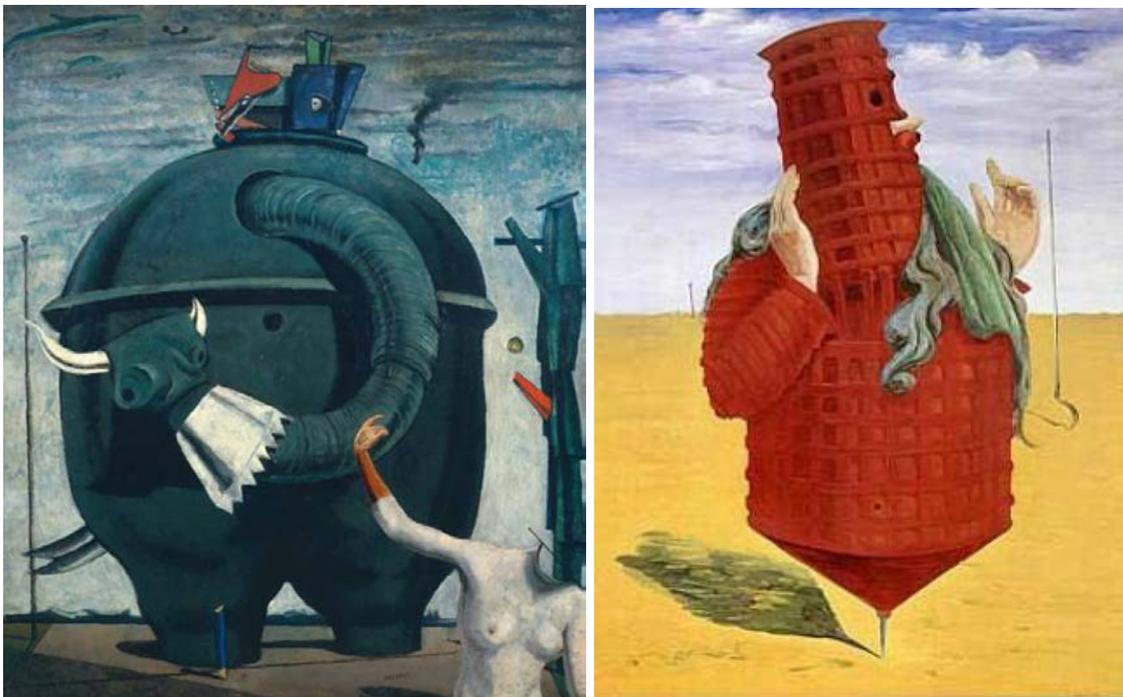
Zappa was always fairly obsessed with the apparatus of control, with the mechanisms that states and churches brought to bear to stamp out dissent, to stamp out pleasure and freedom. In *200 Motels*, the denizens of Centerville and the orchestra are enclosed in a concentration camp barbed-wire fence, the gates to which echo the gate at Auschwitz – *Arbeit Macht Frei*. In *Joe's Garage*, the wayward musician is imprisoned, in a state where music has been made illegal. In the liner notes to CPMD, Frank suggests that the state might soon round up the hippies and freaks and send them to Camp Reagan, in the ***Final Solution*** to the problem with young people. Paranoid delusion? America now houses more than 2.5 million prisoners, a great many of them drug offenders. Certain offenders have property confiscated by the state before conviction of crimes, based on the notion that the property confiscated could be used by the accused to defend themselves or that it was used in the commission of the crime. Police departments and sheriff's offices keep a part of such proceeds. All US internet traffic and phone calls are routed through NSA surveillance computers (is this still happening?). The notion of America as the land of the free is dying with a whimper, not a roar.

But what does it sound like? The Chrome Plated Megaphone of Destiny is mixed piano, electronic and tape effects – recorded laughter slowed to produce a mechanical-sounding, horrid simulacrum of that most human of noises. It is pointillistic, staccato, static-punctuated, accompanied by a low, ominous background. The piano part is serious music. Is this sounding sublime to you? Oh well, give it a listen – crank it up!

Much of *We're Only in it For the Money* is a great blast of polemics. Targeted for skewering are hippies, faux-hippies, women, men, parents, the cops, American society and shallow spiritualism. Zappa combines in one album snatches of surf music, cabaret social-satire and criticism, Eric Clapton ejaculating "It's God, God, I See God", the recording engineer threatening to erase the tapes, *Who needs the Peace Corps?*, and

rounding off the whole thing, this weird, modern music piece called the Chrome-Plated Megaphone of Destiny. This is indeed phase one of a very Lumpy Gravy. Allegedly, it, the megaphone in the title, is the metal orifice in a doll that simulates urination, a most unusual apparatus. Another word that has more Zappa connections – apparatus that is. The hygienic, European version apparatus is, of course, a lonely person device. Frank so often returns to the astounding uses we concoct for humble *objets*.

At one time in my life I forced a dorm-roomful of college kids on acid to listen to it (the whole of *We're Only in it for the Money*). They did not seem altogether pleased. Thus are Zappaheads disappointed in their brethren. Below, Max Ernst creates monsters.



*Celebes – Max Ernst – 1921 (left), Ubu 1923 (right)*

## 6. YOU WAS A FOOL

Phillippe Mériqot

Many Zappa-maniacs consider *You Can't Do That On Stage Anymore Volume 3* as “the least attractive of the series” (quoting Watson). Even if I must confess a sentimental attachment to it because it was the first Zappa’s album I ever bought, I think this severe judgement must be reconsidered. I just want to save one song: “Carol you Fool” is a good prototype of Zappa’s art. It encompasses many features of his style, and could be (one of) the perfect example(s) of the way he worked.

“Carol you Fool” has a doo wop basis, which is a foundation of Zappa style and taste. The melody is based on the doo wop chords (I-vi-ii-IV) and is beautifully sung by a male quartet, with wonderful vocal harmonies. The lyrics feature aspects of traditional doo wop themes.

The first one is the presence of the name of a girl. Many, many titles in doo wop music include female names. “Nadine” (The Coronets), “Oh Rose Marie” (The Facinators), “Barbara” (The Temptations), “Valarie” (The Starlites), “Lola” (The Chessmen), “Denise” (Randy & The Rainbows), “Darling Lorraine” (The Knockouts), “Runaround Sue” (Dion), “Blanche” (The 3 Kings) “Mary Lee” (The Rainbows), “Sherry” and “Marlena” (Frankie Valli & The 4 Seasons), “Lily Maebelle” (The Valentines), “Florence” (The Paragons), “Deserie” (The Charts), “Barbara Ann” (The Regents), “Marie” (The Four Tunes), “Charlena” (The Seviles), “Daisy Mae” (The Parliaments), and of course the *Anthem of doo wop*, “Gloria” (original version by The Cadillacs, as far as I know), are a few instances of that tendency. The scarce female doo wop groups propose the counterpart, title with male names: “Eddie My Love” (by The Teen Queens, The Shirelles, or even The Chordettes), “Mr Lee” (The Bobbettes)...

In fact, naming is an important matter in doo wop. Some songs are vague on the identity of the lover concerned, to enable greater identification by the listener, but others insist on revealing this identity, with lyrics like “*I got a girl and Ruby is her name*” (“Ruby Baby”, The Drifters), and even with fantasy names “*I got a girl named Rama Lama Ding Dong*” (“Rama Lama Ding Dong”, The Edsels). Zappa’s choice of a clear identity reflects his view of love songs: they are stupid. No one can imagine him declaring his love by

singing “Love Me Tender” or “Earth Angel (Will You Be Mine)”. So let’s give the name of the girl, it does not matter.

The second traditional element is the fool. In the world of doo wop, the theme of love is often associated with fool: “*I am just a fool / A fool in love with you*” (“Earth Angel (Will You Be Mine)”). Again, it is observable in titles such as “My Foolish Heart” (Dion & The Belmonts), “I Made A Fool Of Myself” (Frankie Valli & The 4 Seasons), “Why Do Fools Fall In Love” (Frankie Lymon & The Teenagers), “Dreams Are For Fools” (The Revalons), “Fools Fall In Love” (The Drifters), and “Fool, Fool, Fool” (The Clovers). In his song, Zappa warns Carol against the guy she is in love with. She is going to commit a robbery to pay her ticket to Pittsburgh to see the guy, but he’s left her, and she will not see him again.

The last element is not so obvious, and is not a “must have” of a doo wop song. The Mexican theme (“*You wanna try / To rob some Mexican guy*”) may be an allusion to the *pachuco doo wop*, a style invented by Mexican immigrants in the West Coasts. *Cruising with Ruben & The Jets* contains references to *pachuco doo wop*. A good example of the style could “Pizza Pie”, by Norman Fox and The Rob Roys. Naming also includes latin features: “My Juanita” (The Crests, one the first group mixing races), “The Bells Of Rosa Rita” (The Admirations)...

So Zappa loved doo wop, sang doo wop, and wrote doo wop. But Zappa hated the marshmallow conception of love sung in doo wop. So he always contorted the lyrics in his own doo wops. He sang in an ironic way, kneading the tradition. A list of instances of his method would mention “What’s The Ugliest Part Of Your Body?” on *We’re Only In It For The Money* or “Luigi & The Wise Guys” on *The Man From Utopia*, a beautiful a cappella doo wop which is not a song about love but an insulting song addressed to a “dork”.

Now listen to the lyrics of “Carol You Fool”. At first listening, it is not so deviant: the story of a foolish love, very classical; but the question of a robbery hijacks the love songs in a nasty story, closer to Tarantino or “Sailor and Lula” than to “New York Miami”. The profession of the guy she love, an engineer, is not glamorous, and even full of negative

connotations (nerdy, or conservative middle class with no ambition, anyway just examine your thoughts to find them). “*You’ll meet another engineer*”: does she really look for an engineer as her husband? Is this real love? Is this really romantic?

Another contortion of the doo wop style consists in twisting not only the lyrics but also the music. “Carol You Fool” features a reggae arrangement. That is congruent with the history of reggae music: one of its ancestors, rocksteady, was influenced by doo wop. “Carol You Fool” is an example of xenochrony in Zappa’s music: the melting of two styles that existed at two different periods.

And there is even more! Listen to the bridge (at 2:44): behind this classical doo wop a cappella harmonies, Zappa sings in a manner more appropriated for Schonberg’s music; a kind of *sprechgesang* similar to the one used in “Ship Arriving Too Late To Save A Drowning Witch” (“*Not even a witch oughta be caught / On the bottom of America’s spew-infested / Waterways, hey-hey*”). “Carol You Fool” is a perfect example of Zappa’s collage composition.

Finally, “Carol You Fool” illustrates another essential component of Zappa’s work on stage: improvisations and happenings are parts of the concert. Laughs can be heard during the song, especially when Ike Willis shouts like Tex Avery’s wolf. Zappa laughs, just as he laughs on Bobby Brown (same CD) when Ike Willis shouts “*Hi Ho Silver*”. No matter what the consequences are, live interaction is essential for the performance.

References to doo wop classics, contortion of the style in the lyrics and in the music, collage composition, live interaction on stage... A perfect Zappa song that you could use to introduce our idol to a beginner in his universe.

## 7. THE ART OF THE BALLET

Didier Mervelet

The first light went on in December 2009, thanks to my daughter Louise Moon who was 15 at the time of the events. She had just seen Francis Ford Coppola's new movie, *Tetro*, had liked it, and advised me to go. I'm not the type to check Coppola new releases but went anyway to show to Louise my appreciation of her getting interested in what is promoted as "serious cinema". *Tetro* was actually a ridiculous piece of senile restlessness and Louise was quick to share my views. BUT it contained a tribute to *The Red Shoes*, a 1948 masterpiece by English director duo Michael Powell & Emeric Pressburger. Powell is worshipped by Coppola, Scorsese and other big names of the Hollywood establishment. I couldn't care less but, well, it happens that I have a pretty nice series of Powell-Pressburger films in my videotape collection, including *The Red Shoes*. Never found the time to see it before. I had a vague notion that the movie was about ballet and dancers. Perfect for Christmas time. Thanks for the tip, Francis.

Remember those wankers who prophesied in the 80s that every videotape would irrevocably decay and go blank ? My 20-year old TV recording of *The Red Shoes* was a wonder: fantastic technicolor, perfect sound, absolutely no signs of wear. The story, as I quickly realized, was about Sergei Diaghilev and his notorious *Ballets Russes*, which flourished in Paris, London and Monte Carlo from 1911 till the death of their flamboyant impresario in 1929. Diaghilev will be remembered as the guy who commissioned the first major work of XXth century music, Igor Stravinsky's *The Rite of Spring*, premiered in 1913. Austrian actor Anton Walbrook, tall, thin, with a serious moustache, was impeccable as the lead character. Boris Lermontov, as he was called, was a very articulate man, arrogant, funny, implacable when it came to music, which was obviously the best... I was amused when Boris stopped an upset and somehow critical accountant dead with my favourite Zappa phrase: "*I've changed my mind!*" I speculated on Zappa seeing the movie on TV when he was a kid, discovering how those wild Europeans lived together for music, always on the road, working hard for popular success but never selling out for the sake of it... Again, the idea that Igor Stravinsky's career was maybe the first time in history when serious music met show-business crept into my mind – you have to remember that Stravinsky settled down in a Hollywood bungalow at the end of World War II. And again I had the feeling that Zappa's repeated references to "the art of

the ballet" were not only a joke about the idol of his youth but also a passionate commitment to what he might regard as the ultimate form of unserious serious music. I knew I had a case to make.

Time passed and for various reasons nothing happened. I even considered getting back to the topic I had announced in my first submission: *Resolver/Brutality* and *The Valdez Core*, two unsung pieces for Synclavier. I listened to them carefully and couldn't find anything stimulating to spit out about them, except maybe that I suspected Ruth Underwood of being the female artist who anonymously released the *Resolver/Brutality* cassette on the web and had had, in her own words, "an intensive artistic relationship with Frank Zappa, which lasted over several years". A bit light, ain't it? Actually, I also suspect that Ruthie and Frankie had a long love affair, but I digress...

A couple of days before having to meet the inevitable dead-line, I was still right at the start. I knew I should have invested a bit of my oh-so-precious time in solid zappological research but for various reasons I hadn't. The few lines I had scribbled on "The Art of the Ballet" were desperately pointless. On the eve of publication time, I kept maintaining some kind of coolness but secretly I wondered if I shouldn't consider the situation hopeless. Suddenly, in the middle of the afternoon of the 20<sup>th</sup> of March, I received a phone call from my long-time friend Frank Mathieu from Les Fils De l'Invention. He was in my neighbourhood and considered dropping by with a few bottles of beer. He came and we won. In the course of one long evening, we made a joyful trip through Zappa records, dedicated web sites (thanks again to Roman Albertos from *Information Is Not Knowledge*) and a few books. By noon on Sunday the 21<sup>th</sup>, I had completed the strange table you will discover on the following page. No further comments, except that an easy alternative title for this piece could have been: "Le Sacre du Printemps".

# BALLET IS THE BEST

## Phase 1 (1966-1967) : Paying his dues

Zappa's first serious composition is presented as a ballet and secretly dedicated to Stravinsky's <i>The Rite of Spring</i> (see below)	<b><i>The Return of the Son of Monster Magnet</i></b> Unfinished ballet in two tableaux I : Ritual Dance of the Child-Killer II : Nullus Pretii (NO commercial potential)	recorded <b>Spring 66</b> , "Freak-Out"
musical quotation of <i>The Rite of Spring</i>	<b><i>Amnesia Vivace</i></b>	recorded <b>Nov. 66</b> , "Absolutely Free"
new dedication to "Dance of the Young Girls", a scene in <i>The Rite of Spring</i>	<b><i>Invocation and Ritual Dance of the Young Pumpkin</i></b>	
a small tribute to another Stravinsky ballet	<b><i>Petrushka</i></b>	live <b>Sept. 67</b> , Stockholm "its the Season to Be Jelly" (BTB)

## Phase 2 (1968-1969) : Warming his chops

members of the Mothers of Invention mock serious dancing on stage	<b><i>Progress</i></b>	live <b>Oct 68</b> , London "Ahead of their time"
	<b><i>Mozart Ballet</i></b> FZ introduces the piece as "a grotesque parody of the art of the ballet"	live <b>June 69</b> , London "YCDTSOSA Vol.5"
the first known segment of <i>Greggery Peccary</i> ("New Brown Clouds") is presented as ballet music :	<b><i>Some Ballet Music</i></b>	live <b>July 69</b> , Boston "The Ark" (BTB)

Indulging in comedy music with Flo & Eddie (1970-1971)

## Phase 3 (1972) : Jammin' with the Pig

includes "New Brown Clouds"	<b><i>For Calvin and his next two hitch-hikers</i></b>	recorded <b>April-May 72</b> "The Grand Wazoo"
large quotations of <i>Le Boléro</i> (M. Ravel)	<b><i>The Adventures of Greggery Peccary</i></b> first version	live <b>Sept. 72</b> , Boston "Wazoo" (ZFT)
first appearance of the GP "Steno Pool" segment	<b><i>Farther O'Blivion</i></b>	live <b>between Oct. and Dec. 72</b> "Imaginary Diseases" (ZFT)

Deconstructing jazz-rock with the Roxy bunch (1973-1974)

original ballet music turns into cartoon music :	<b><i>The Adventures of Greggery Peccary</i></b>	recorded <b>January 1975</b> "Studio Tan"
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## Phase 4 (1979-1984) : Exploring the American deviation

the musical seen as a perverted American equivalent of ballet	<b>"Joe's Garage"</b>	recorded <b>April-June 1979</b>
	<b>"Thing-Fish"</b>	recorded c. <b>82-84</b>

## Phase 5 (1988-1993) : Going back to the original plan

performed on a regular basis throughout Tour 88	<b><i>Le Boléro</i></b> (Maurice Ravel)	live <b>May 88</b> , Rotterdam "The Best Band You Never Heard..."
serious live choreography	<b><i>G-Spot Tornado</i></b>	live <b>Sept. 92</b> , Germany "The Yellow Shark"

### **"Civilization Phaze III"** final mixes in 1993

last serious opus presented as an "opera-pantomime, with choreographed physical activity (manifested as dance or other forms of inexplicable sociophysical communications)"

F Zは日本以外のアジアの国では演奏しなかった。現在のところ、息子のドゥイーゼルもそれは同じで、F Zの音楽はアジアでは日本以外にファンがいないと思われるようだ。もちろんアジアに在住の西洋人は多くいて、彼らの中にF Zファンはいるが、それは除外する。一方、ヴァンクーヴァーでの冬季オリンピックのメダル獲得数からもわかるように、21世紀に入ってのアジアは、韓国と中国の躍進が目覚ましいのに、かつて経済的に急成長した日本は、いつ改善するかわからない不況にあえいでいる。そこで思うことは、もしF Zが今も生きていたならば、韓国や中国で演奏したり、あるいは自作のCDを日本以外のアジア諸国で積極的に売ったかどうかだ。これは父の音楽を広める活動をしているドゥイーゼルにとっても、心に留めておくべき問題ではないだろうか。日本と同様、F Zの音楽が今後韓国や中国で歓迎されるとすれば、それはどういう意味合いを持つだろう。いち早く西洋文明を取り入れた日本以外のアジア諸国が、ようやく西洋に追いつき、そこで西洋人が半世紀も前に楽しんだロックを再評価する。おそらくそういう見方が多いと思うが、それはオリエンタリズム特有の蔑視でもある。確かに経済的に豊かになったことで、今まで知らなかった西洋の娯楽文化を多様に受け取り始めることはあるが、そういう接近も含めて、期待したいのは、アジア諸国から新たに生まれるF Zファンの、その好きになった意味合いで、それが日本や西洋のこれまでのF Zファンとどのように違う観点を持つかは興味深い。それはF Zの音楽に対する新たな評価の始まりに寄与する。ともかく、F Zがすでにこの世にいない現在、古いファンはF Zの音楽が今後どう評価されて行くか気になるところで、アジアに住む者としては、日本以外のアジアの国でファンが今後生まれる、あるいは現在生まれているのかということを考えさせられる。それは、F Zの音楽がアジアのどの国でも、また時代を経ても理解されるかどうかという問題に変えることが出来るが、そのどちらの問いに対してもイエスであれば、F Zの音楽は普遍性を持ち、将来にわたって風化せずに済む。

ネットによって世界が結ばれる時代になったとはいえ、中国はまだ検閲があり、その点では日本や韓国と同じ条件が整っておらず、F Zの音楽が国民に歓迎されるかどうかを問うことはまだ時期が早いかもしれない。検閲やそれを設けようとする組織はF Zにと

って闘争の対象で、そのことが音楽そのものの内容や動機となったから、現在の中国の事情をF Zが知れば、おそらく風刺の題材を見つけて新曲を作ったであろう。

そしてその行為と作曲は中国国内に同調者を呼び起こし、F Zの音楽は、かつての東ヨーロッパ諸国のように、地下で密かに聴かれることにつながったとも思える。おそらくそうであろう。だが、それはすでに予想出来る問題のため、さほど興味を引くことではない。そこで想像を一步進めて、中国でF Zの音楽が妨害なく聴かれるようになったとしよう。そういう状態で湧き起こる関心は、たとえば禅や儒教、老荘思想など、中国特有の文化や思想から見てF Zの音楽がどんな興味深い事柄を抱えているのか、そうでないかだ。だが、それは別に論じるべき問題で、話を戻す。経済的に大きく台頭して来た韓国や中国が、F Zの音楽に対するある程度の数のファンを生み、そうした変化がそうした国の文化や音楽に多少なりとも影響を与えて、ザッパ派と呼べるような新たな音楽を生むかどうか。その答えのひとつは、日本におけるF Zのファン層にある。「ひとつ」と書いたのは、韓国や中国では、国民性の違いから日本とは違った受け留め方がなされ得るはずであるからで、また、F Zの音楽をそれらの国の音楽事情、政治事情、文化事情など、あらゆる事柄を測るリトマス試験紙として適用出来ないかと思う。そこでまず日本のファン事情を見る必要がある。日本のファンの数や質の実態は、ファン・クラブも存在しないので把握は困難だが、日本盤のCDを売るレコード会社が今までに2、3あり、ある一定数のCDが売れて来たことを思えば、欧米に比べるとはるかに数は少ないとはいえ、日本は今もなおアジア最大の理解国だ。日本のファンが欧米と比較してF Zの音楽をどのように楽しんでいるかだが、明治維新以降、国策としてあらゆる欧米の文化を摂取して来た国民性から考えて、欧米人とほとんど同じ観点で理解しているだろう。だが、F Zの音楽に対するファンの熱心度や関心は多様で、そのことが日本と欧米とではどのように差があるかも検証する必要はある。

アメリカのロックやポップスは今ではアジアの隅々まで席卷し、その一方でそうしたアメリカ生まれの流行音楽から影響を受けた新世代の日本人ミュージシャンがアジアでもはやされ、また逆に韓国のアイドル歌手が日本で人気を博するなど、もはやアメリカ生まれの音楽のみをありがたがる若者はきわめて少数派となった。つまり、アジアは自

前で西洋風の娯楽音楽を生んで消費する時代に至った。それは相変わらずアメリカの最先端の流行を模倣しているが、アメリカでの流行との時差が限りなく小さくなり、一方でアジア特有のスパイスを利かせることで、アメリカ風は見えにくくもなっている。そして、そういうアジアのアメリカ風の音楽を、アメリカが今度は模倣することも今後は加速化するだろう。それはハリウッド映画が日本や韓国の脚本を使って映画を作ることからも理解される。そうした新しい文化交流の中で求められるのは、まだ消費されし切っていない面白い素材だ。たとえば、早すぎた才能、隠れた才能で、作品が半ば埋もれている過去の音楽家を発掘し、そこから新時代にかなう斬新な要素を抽出する作業で、これは今に始まったことではないし、F Z自身がそのようにして自己の音楽を膨らませて来たところがある。ともかく、そういう新しい素材の発掘の観点でF Zの音楽が注目を浴び、流行音楽に取り入れられることが考えられる。そうなった時、F Zの音楽が一時的に脚光を浴びてすぐに忘れ去られるという事態が生ずるだろうが、期待したいのは、そうして生まれる新たな脚光の中から、本当に価値を理解するファンが誕生することだ。亡くなって20年ほどが経とうとしているF Zの音楽を、今から新たに聴く世代は日本では珍しいであろうし、それは韓国でも同じだ。だが、そうした事情はF Zが生きていた時から想定されたもので、日本ではF Zの音楽を楽しむファンは当初からごく限られた数であった。それは欧米でもほとんど同じかもしれない。アイドル歌手たグループとは違って、F Zの音楽は流行に一方で根差しながらも、それに流されないものを常に目指していた。そのために、F Zが世を去った後でも、その普遍的なる部分に聴き惚れるファンがいるのだが、F Zの音楽におけるそうした古典となった部分が、韓国や中国の音楽ファンの心にどう届き得るだろうか。

韓国では90年代前半にスティーヴ・ヴァイの『パッション・アンド・ウォーフェア』の韓国盤のLPが発売されたことがある。また日本でも爆発的な人気となった韓国のTVドラマでも、ヴァイの音楽が主題曲に使われるなど、少なくともヴァイは韓国ではよく知られている。となれば熱心な韓国のヴァイ・ファンは、ヴァイがF Zから育ったことを知り、その音楽も聴いていることだろう。だが、韓国でF Zの音楽がどの程度理解され、またそれに影響を受けたようなミュージシャンがいるのかは伝わって来ない。日本のF Zファンはネットも含めてあまり目立たないが、前述のように、F Zの音楽に対

するファンの熱心度や関心は多様であるから、他のアジア諸国にF Zの音楽の魅力を伝えることは充分あり得るし、またそのような個人対個人のつながりこそが国情や文化の違いを超えることに期待出来る。中国は国民の数が莫大であることからすれば、中国が日本と同じように西洋のロックやポップスを受容するようになった時には、F Zのファンの数もそれなりに大きいものになっていると考えてよい。その時期はまだ何年も先のこともかもしれないし、あるいは永遠にやって来ないかもしれない。そこで期待されるのが、ネットの威力であり、ファン同士の意見交換だ。それがもっと拡大し、また加速化すれば、案外早く韓国や中国での新たなファンの出現が期待出来ると思える。そしてその時、F Zの音楽は西洋だけで知られるものではなく、世界中の、そして時代を超えて楽しまれる、また聴く意義のある音楽としての地位を獲得するし、F Zの音楽に対する新たな解釈、つまりF Zが想定しなかった別の国民性における積極的な評価も生まれる。F Zの音楽という種子が、F Zが訪れなかったアジアの国でどう花開くか、それを楽しみと考えることはファンの特権と義務であるだろう。

## 9. MONKISH MEDITATIONS

Simon Prentis

One of the side-effects of the unfortunate cellular oxidation process we experience as aging – however slowly and hiplly – is that the aeons eventually start to close on you. The tipping point between what you think you know and what you suspect you still don't begins to lurch in favour of what you think you do – not because there's no more to know, necessarily, but because what you don't know increasingly starts to seem to be just more of the same.

That impacts in many ways. It's a long time since I had a really new musical thrill, for example. It's even worse when you're afflicted with the Zappa bacillus, because the bar is subsequently set so high. Whenever what's new out there fails to allure, and you're tempted in the direction of *things you used to listen to*, you soon realise the reason you defected in the first place is the fact that Zappa did it so much better – even if you recognise the bits you once liked. Ex-devotees of Soft Machine and their jazz-prog-rock ilk will know what I mean. And with Uncle Frank no longer letting out any new stuff on a monthly or any other basis – though fortunately there are still enough undigested portions of the back catalogue to supply the need for future nourishment – that can mean it's rare to find yourself getting off musically. So I was excited to find myself listening obsessively to a Thelonious Monk track I'd not heard before – *Raise Four* from his 1968 *Underground* album. For those of you who also don't know it, don't have it, or need reminding, you can hear an audially-attenuated version of it here: [www.youtube.com/watch?v=MJXaFd4hUdM](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MJXaFd4hUdM).

What is it about this track that did it for me? The best thing is that it surprised me. And it's that sense of surprise, the feeling that you're never quite going to be able to see it coming – no matter how many times you listen – that makes a piece worth listening to, because there's always more to extract from it. Which is what is so characteristic about Zappa, of course, and what makes *Raise Four* distinctively *Zappish*. By which I mean it goes far beyond being merely *Zappaesque*, in the way you might think of Bela Fleck ([http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aVNiFw\\_W3mA&feature=fvw](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aVNiFw_W3mA&feature=fvw)) for example. Nor is it simply *Zappoid*, in the manner of, say, the inimitable Baby Gramps (<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bJF9MyqPI1Q>) – to choose a random example. To

be *Zappish* is to speak the same language, to get right to the heart of the zen-like *none-of-the-above-ness* which is the essence of Zappa's (de)generative grammar. Zappishness doesn't have to involve the types of music that FZ worked with (although he tried his hand at most) or even have to involve music at all; it's more about an attitude to a particular medium than a method. Chopin can be *Zappish* – you may not like the idiom, but within its own terms and the context of its times it's just as innovative, unexpected and passionately original as anything Zappa played, which is why it is still listened to, despite everything. Technically demanding, yet not merely technique for its own sake, quirky, unexpected, authentic, and straight from the (he)art to you. <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YGRO05WcNDk>

*Zappaesque*, on the other hand, is simply a borrowing of clothes – adopting elements of style and technique that are superficially similar, but ultimately ersatz; whereas things that are *Zappoid*, though closer in spirit to the anarchic AAAFNRAA approach that leaves so many people thinking 'crazy!' never quite close on the other half of the equation, the intensely intentional aspect of Zappa's creation.

It was the 'out' quality of Monk's playing that most drew me, the ability to go off on a rhythmic and melodic tangent only to come back in again just when you were beginning to think you might have 'forgot what I was saying'. Great jagged arpeggios of sound cascade down the keyboard across the solid beat of the rhythm section, emerging unexpectedly from the insistent initial atonal figures, setting the stage for the solo, where Monk's playing ducks and dives between the steady presence of the bass and drums, creating the space for his imagination to run free. This gives both player and listener time to breathe, allowing an extended musical argument to develop, an essay in thought – rather than forcing a surrender to the mindless tyranny of the beat, like the vacuous twitterings of soundbite culture.

It's the stepping out of the framework that creates the interest, throwing both frame and content into a sharp relief that brings both of them to our attention – rather than letting us wallow unconscious in the nostalgia of the familiar. The same process of N-Litenment at work can be seen (for example) in the *Wet T-Shirt Night / Toad-o Line* sequence from

Joe's Garage (<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=58mWAWxlclo> for those of you who scrabbling frantically for the CD...)

The bouncy exuberance of the opening bars (which, like the eventual guitar solo, appear to take their cue from the core motif of Toto's infamous block-buster hit *Hold The Line*) gives the first clue that subversion is at work, with a brief Latino excursion after '*And they all crave some hot delite*' (0.29). But by the time this craving has mutated into the desire for *pink* delite, the rhythm section turns seriously left at 0.53 with a mesmerizing 'middle eight' that spirals into a parallel universe, suggesting to the suggestible listener how much more there can be to life than wet T-shirt contests. But never mind. By 1.38 we're right back on beat as if nothing had happened, and the remaining minute paves the way for Zappa's sarcastic excoriation of those who never noticed in the first place, and probably never will.

All of which is really just a preamble to the main business, the extraordinarily 'out' solo Zappa delivers in *Toad-o Line* (renamed *On The Bus* on the CD release). From the moment of the initial spike at the end of the 'Toto-line' quote (4.52) the guitar is in a world of its own, an apparent rhythmic free-fall whose orientation to the framing rhythms only resolves just before the central Scrutinizer's intervention some two-and-a-half minutes later. It's fantastic display of subtle pacing and interlaced timings, and while the track is clearly a xenochronous construction, it's instructive to listen to this solo in comparison to the context it was lifted from, which can be heard on the ZFT-released *One Shot Deal* as *Occam's Razor*. The pedestrian, lacklustre pace of the original backing brings to mind the origin of the title *Watermelon In Easter Hay*, and FZ's grumpy comment that "*playing a solo with this band is like trying to grow a watermelon in Easter hay*" (Easter hay being the tinder-dry hay left over from the previous harvest [on which Easter eggs are traditionally laid] on which it would be impossible to grow any kind of fruit, let alone a water-hungry melon). Or, as he also put it "*If they don't have any sensitivity to what I'm doing, or if they aren't smart enough to track the direction that I am going in, it's like dragging an anchor.*"



*[Eggs in Easter Hay, apparently.]*

*Occam's Razor* feels like that. It's clear that Zappa has in mind a much bigger canvas than the band are able or willing to accommodate, a canvas whose span only becomes truly clear with the addition of an up-tempo rhythm section in the studio and careful editing-out of sections where he was still working out the right phrasings in a live situation. It's like a piece of writing. If the live situation is the first draft, the studio offers the opportunity to pare down to the essentials.

Which is why, as the ZFT continues its slow drip-feed of unreleased nuggets from the vault, we perhaps shouldn't feel too bad about the pace, or the fact that they may not have released that killer version of [fill-in-the-blank] we've all been waiting for. It may not even exist in the first place, and secondly, whatever does exist will be a live draft, not a finished version. And although plenty of people have made a living out of the wastepaper baskets of famous artists, it's not an appealing way of life. Fact of the matter, we've had the best of what FZ had to offer, and there's enough there to spend a lifetime over already. It's what you do with it that counts.

It's probably no accident that FZ once wanted to be a Monk – 'You've got to be a little 'zen' for Thelonius', as he once told me. And if in the end it's all down to the advanced math of patterns – 'all musicians are subconsciously mathematicians', Monk is quoted as saying – then so much the better.

It's the inside track on the outside. And even the other way round.

Ever heard of Chladni plates? Cymatics? Me neither. Not until a friend told me about them recently, anyway. In the end I discovered that did know something about the phenomenon, or had heard about it, but just didn't know what it was called. It's probably the same for you. Well, cut to the chase; you can see a demonstration here: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Qf0t4qIVWF4>

What's remarkable about them is that they give substance to so much of what Frank Zappa believed about the nature of the universe, stuff, and how things work. Let's take the big picture. Everything, he said, starts from one Big Note. It's a vibration. Everything, including light, is a vibration, and a vibration is a note. We may not be able to hear it. But at whatever different octaves or other sub-divisions of the Big Note, we are all ultimately vibrations. We may not be as simple as the pure sine waves used to generate the Chadni patterns, but ever since Schrodinger cracked the quantum wave equation, it's been clear that all matter is waves, including us.

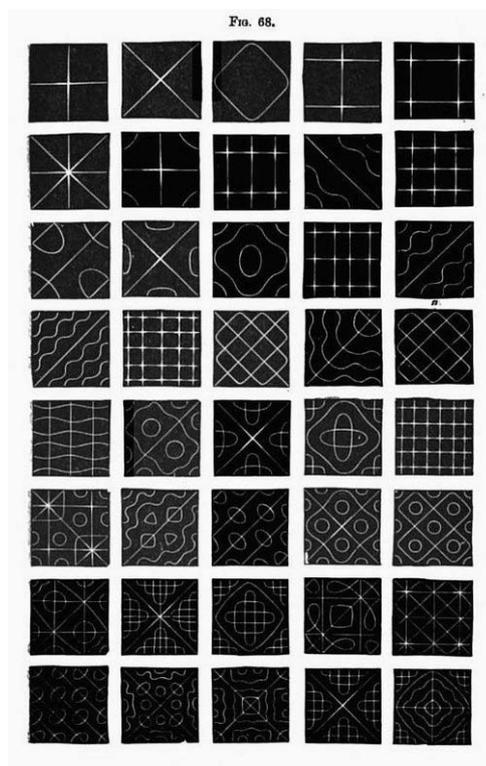
And our waves are all different. Again, Zappa had the brutally beautiful concept of the 'factory rate' to explain differences in people's tastes for music and everything else. The way you are wound, the vibration you are set at, will cause you to resonate with some things rather than others. The Chladni patterns offer a practical demonstration of this truth in action. It's not about one form being better than another, or complexity increasing with frequency, or that mattering, or anything else. It's just simply the observation that, in another famous FZ phrase, 'the when determines the what,' the 'when' in this case being the frequency.

What these fascinating progressions also show us is that there is an emergent, self-organizing nature to structure, and that this is driven, at least at one level, by vibration. Matter appears in the form of particular patterns because it can't help it. It's in its nature, and to the extent that it's driven by vibration, that nature is essentially mathematical, rhythmic – and, ultimately, musical. The fractal shapes of patterns in nature that we recognize as beautiful are algorithmic in origin, even if the complexity of the factors

needed to predict the shape of cloud, for example, mean that the thing itself is often as large as the smallest structure that could be built to model it.

Like a Zappa guitar solo, for example. Despite the accusations of 'self-indulgence' by those who don't have the ear for them, to those with a sympathetic faculty rate the most striking quality of his best improvisations is that there is no repetition, nothing that you could read in advance. They just emerge from the fault lines of the harmonic background in ways that are thrillingly unpredictable yet make such perfect sense once you hear them, brilliantly highlighting the tensions and contrasts of the music.

But in FZ's cosmology the idea of emergence is itself an illusion. In his vision of time, as he told Bob Marshall, everything is happening all the time. It's a hard concept to grasp, because we're not wired that way. But his idea of time as a spherical constant structured in the form of a Moebius vortex expresses the secret of the Big Note (as God?) that is the origin of all things. The ancients (whoever they were) used to talk about the Music of the Spheres. Turns out they might have been right, though they might have been wrong about the number.



What I like most of all about Frank Zappa's music that it crushes all boxes. And puts them in the garbage can. Good night. Sleep tight. Forever.

All the boxes they used for years or even for centuries to pack music in. To seal in. To isolate behind and under second-signal system labels. *Romantic, impressionist, intellectual*, and so on. Foggy things that music is not. Because music is something clear from the first-signal system domain. Like the heart, lungs and liver. Balls and cock. It's your direct link to Mother Nature. Like the circus, or the Olympic Games.

I never bought the idea that musicians are some special breed. Mediators, so to speak, between here and there. High and low. Like poets or philosophers. They are not. They are just hard-working people. Sort of clowns. Acrobats or tight-rope artists. You know all of them study for years, learning to play the violin. Or not to fall from the high-flying trapeze. There is no difference in approach. Everyday exercises. And the very same goal. Just to give us the instant feeling of life as the result. Overwhelming and physical. Through our own vertebral column. The real!

I don't know how obvious it was for Stravinsky fans half a century ago. It seems that for some of them *Petrushka* is still Berdyaev but written backward in Chinese characters. Something to contemplate upon, to keep your brain busy, and not something for your coccyx to happily vibrate to.

No. I'm talking about the new-born Huns of the sixties, with their mouths open at all the goods in the rock'n'roll megastore. It sold Hope, it sold Happiness, it sold Knowledge conveniently presented in the form of pop-stars' albums. And Listening wasn't the first requirement. The average customer could even be deaf, but he was good as far as he was able to Imagine that the musician was God. And music a sort of Nouveau Zen Testament. The real industry of Mr. Green Genes' fake I.D.s.

What I like most of all about Frank Zappa is that he put things straight – going from a brain tumor back to a normal blood circulation. I think he is the Surgeon-General of musicians and their audience as well. He made them healthy. He cured all these useless old musicians with their brown fiddles and little horns. By giving them a task. Saving them from Hope, Happiness and Knowledge. And offering the long horse, parallel and wall bars instead. And leaving the only real joy – physical but 100% natural. The Joy of absolute and impossible perfection. Known only to trained circus men. Acrobats or tight-rope artists.

The art of body control. That's the core of Frank Zappa magic. The highest and purest of all possible on Earth. And the best part of it is that you can share the feelings. And very easily. Just shut up. Shut up and play your favourite record. And play it again. And do it once more. Until all the boxes are crushed. And put in the garbage can. Forever. Good night. Sleep tight.

And then you feel fine. And no fake I.D. is needed anymore.

The winner is someone who wins!

## 12. WHEN I WENT INTO THE STEINWAY: Confessions of a Lonely Zappaphile

Daniel Whitehorse

Firstly, I hope you will permit me to acknowledge Ben Watson. Not all American Zappaphiles dislike his literary/critical efforts. I should apologize in advance to Watson in case (when) I rip off any of his ideas in this work. I've become so immersed in his views of the project/object that I will, almost inevitably, borrow/steal from his ideas. In particular, the view he has promoted that Zappa was crafting one giant Dada art work, of which all the albums and films are parts, seems to me to be right on target. The (figurative) little house that Frank lived in bears some resemblance to the Merzbau, the Dada domicile in Hanover that Kurt Schwitters built, which was bombed out during the 2<sup>nd</sup> world war. How/why Dada? The incorporation of found objects, the rubbishing of the notion that art is some refined and noble creature, the willingness to embrace ugliness, the devotion to work aimed at constructing a mysterious and vile, inexplicable thing, the procedure of engineering a travesty that masquerades as entertainment and the cleaving to a radical, free-thinking critique of the absurdities and injustices of society— all these are Dada attributes adopted and used by Mr. Zappa. In addition to seconding this view of Frank's work, I hope in this brief essay to review some of my own personal journey in Zappaland.

I've often found myself in the past two or three decades, oddly trapped in Zappaland. Any number of common phrases and words are rich in Zappa-connections, and the hearing of these words sets off a cascade of associations in the mind's ear and eye. Can you hear the word device, without thinking about **deVices**, lonely person devices, forbidden or furtive pleasures, and the paraphernalia of it all? I can't. Can you hear a mention of Alice Cooper, without wanting to break out in song? – “Some times I get so hot I could scream – Alice Copper, Alice Copper, waaaahhhh!” Not me. Poodles, thongs, tweezers, short persons, henchmen, round things – the list could be much longer. A lot of the everyday world becomes just another device for setting off Zappa-programmed memories and sounds. Yes folks, I've got it bad – trapped in this den of iniquity, this cesspool of excitement, this crazed world that I

inhabit, but illuminated by the sane and mad vision of an Italian-American autodidact, musician-sociologist. What a remarkable pleasure it has been, the untold hours spent consuming the music, singing along, the wild excitement, the astonishment at the musical skill and the uproar of it all. God, that grandly bearded, serious gentleman in the sky, must surely have welcomed Frank at the gate, and put him in charge of the heavenly choirs! “He’s up there with Jesus in a big purple chair.” Or at God’s right hand, on the great maroon sofa, poking fun at theological constipation.

I first heard some of Frank’s work in about 1974: Dinah-Moe Hum of course. That work was perfectly calibrated to appeal to the sensibility of a 14-year old boy, which I was at the time. But within the next year I heard much more, and at some point in this period I was given a rather scratchy, used copy of *Just Another Band from LA*. Thus introduced to *Billy the Mountain*, I really haven’t looked back since. The interesting thing is that I was given it by a friend from a family of Beatles fanatics, who, as you can imagine, did not appreciate the bizarre antics on display. *Magdalena*, a sordid little ditty about a Canadian, maple-syrup making, daughter-molester, does not really appeal to those who love *Hey Jude*. (I like it too, a little bit). The overwhelming preciousness of the saccharine musical efforts of Sir Paul can make you cringe and *Shove it right in* is a perfect antidote. The world, or that bit of it that notices, regards all Frank’s salacious, juvenile material as tacky, tawdry, and terribly low class, but if it could just give up its desire to keep the world serious, then it could celebrate the ridiculous pageant of human oddity. The fact is that somewhere, someone or two, or more, are engaging in forms of pleasure that would not be recommended by the surgeon general, and the reality is, there is no stopping it, and if they had any sense, the purple-lipped censors and other control-freaks would just try to find more useful work.

In re the title of this work, when did I go into the Steinway? And what the hell am I talking about? On *Civilization Phase III*, Roy Estrada? mutters something about “why/when I went into the Steinway”. Frank had gotten various people to put their heads into a grand piano with a sheet over it, miked, with the sustain pedal held down with a sandbag. The inhabitants of the piano then discuss such arcane topics

as pigs, ponies, repression and working at a gas station. Here I take going into the Steinway as a metaphor for escapism by musical obsession. But maybe you knew all this, if you are, shall we say, drenched in Zappa-lore. Doesn't it bring to mind children at play, heads stuck into the Steinway, babbling about silliness? Miked and recorded, for posterity. With Frank whispering into their ears, the chief of play, prompting topics, phrases, and surrealistic word association. That's the thing about humans, that we are, in the end, still children at heart, neotenous, at our best, still very capable of play, and of wonder.

So when did I go into the Steinway? Decades ago, I guess. My Zappa obsession has waxed and waned, but always come back. In the interludes when it had ebbed, I sought out jazz, bluegrass, klezmer, gamelan music, zydeco, Nusrat Fateh Ali Khan, Kurt Weill, Billie Holiday, ragas, Django Rheinhardt with Stephane Grapelli – all this and more. But now I yearn to go to Bad Doberan and the Zappanale. I want to be in Frankfurt if the Ensemble Modern stages Gregory Peccary again. I want to go to Montclair State U. in jersey and see Harry Partch's instruments. I want to see Petruschka, Le Sacre de Printemps and Les Noces staged as ballets. Frank had it right – how much of your life do you get to consume whatever you think is beautiful – all the rest is just accounting.

### **Tilting at Windmills**

Why is the world so dedicated to the lie? Why is America so plagued with puritanism – the insistence that people aren't what they are – at heart, mildly perverted. Frank responded to our American sickness (hypocrisy) with a relentless candor, an insistence that this strangeness too deserved to be immortalized in song. As the teabaggers run amok in the USA, as the Jesus-benighted continue to foul our politics, how sorely we miss Frank. When that irrepressible Willie Waggoner Bill Clinton was caught receiving fellatio in the windowless corridor in the White House, and it was revealed that he had used a cigar in a very interesting procedure with a young woman, how badly we needed Frank to record it all, to sing out about the relentless absurdities of life, to open again Pandora's box and coax out the hope. I live in the US south, in Texas, where their fingers are on their triggers, and that rugged old cross is still burnin' on the lawn. Bereft

as we are of Frank's ongoing commentary, encouragement and siren-song of raucous joy, we soldier on.



*Raoul Hausmann – Tatlin at home, 1920 (left) and Mechanical Head (Spirit of our Age), 1919. These works illustrate Dada's exploration of collage, manikins, homunculi, protest, poverty, use of technical drawings, and junk.*

Materialism, the philosophical belief in the reality of the mundane world in front of us, and in the concreteness of the world, animates the Zappa worldview. Orgasms and crap have more reality, as far as any of us really know, than immortal souls and virgin births. Why shouldn't there be a song about it and shouldn't that song be as glorious as Jesu, Joy of man's desiring?

Here's hoping it wasn't too tedious. Interested, lonely zappaphiles can contact me at [probegeek@gmail.com](mailto:probegeek@gmail.com).

## **13. ONE MORE TIME FOR THE WORLD**

### **English Versions**

## 1. THUS SPAKE ZAPPATHUSTRA

Jordi Cuenca

There are many analogies between Nietzsche's creation *Zarathustra* and the musician-philosopher, the one and only Frank Zappa. First of all, they both used to live in a refuge. A mountain refuge in the case of the hermit and the United Muffin Research Kitchen in the case of FZ, where he shut himself away for more than twelve hours a day! Moreover, both were always wondering about how to change human behaviour and collective thought established as an impassive truth; this search was as important as the purpose that they were looking for. FZ was able to communicate with the whole world by building his G-major Pentatonic Scale *castles of notes*, and Nietzsche's character used to convert complex, and apparently nonsensical mental structures into dangerous weapons (as did FZ too) against catholic-jewish-muslims and all kind of religious types on Mother Earth [Have I Offended Someone?].

But what moved the hermit Zarathustra to leave his shelter and go down the mountain? He got fed up with his knowledge and needed to spread it to the common people, and to the freaks as well, of course. It reminds us of Frank Zappa, doesn't it? There is a resemblance in their thinking. Our musician also got fed up with his guitar to such a degree that he couldn't play it, despite being the best guitarist of all time! And then began the hardest Synclavier years.

FZ may not have gone down a mountain but he always was rejecting commercial and popular music; even though his most commercial works were done just in time to inaugurate a new record label (i.e. Over-nite Sensation and DiscReet Records). They were always attempting to fill our empty souls and brains with words and music - music inundated with messages - and FZ was as much in need of writing music as the hermit was of writing down his thoughts in a book.

On the other hand, they identified themselves with all the ugly people and freaks around the world: Are they the last link in Darwin's human evolution? Are they our hope against 21st century globalization and dehumanization? The freak is the truly free (wo)man, as no one of us really is, especially if we continue placing boundaries on our minds.

Turning their back on religion, they did without the figure of God and the standards and rules that it entails; and those were their writings and music. No one can expect be critical with himself if we don't know what happens inside of our minds. With both, the primary goal was to get up with social conscience and find the way where the moral has replaced the truth; but is there only one morality? A good question that doesn't have a good answer. It goes beyond metaphysical conceptions. Maybe only the Church of Appliantology has the correct answers. The death of God and the figure of the Superman often appeared in the philosopher's speeches as the main base to build the new society; FZ agreed with this idea in spite of his defence of integrity and individuality, taking the assumption of not belonging to any social group.

So I, like Nietzsche, concede to **ZAPPATHUSTRA** the *best present that mankind has received*: the worst of Zappa plus the worst of Zarathustra equals the best musician and philosopher we can imagine [Joe's Garage verse]:

Eventually it was discovered  
That God  
Did not want us to be  
All the same (...)

Mankind must be made more uniformly  
If  
THE FUTURE  
Was going to work (...)

### 3. FRANK ZAPPA – SO WHAT? BUT STILL...

Silke Groetschel

**1980**, big party at a friend's house and I heard Frank Zappa's music (*Bobby Brown*) for the first time in my life. I loved the lyrics, so different from all the music stuff I listened to usually (Supertramp, Caravan, Camel – I spare you the rest of it...). Zappa's music made me feel "grown up" which, as a 15 year old one, seemed important to me. Also the man was so hot – and his voice... *Sheik Yerbouti*, *Joe's Garage*, *Tinseltown Rebellion*, for two years I listened to them almost continuously and then stopped, don't ask me why, I don't know.

**1991**, I'm about to meet my second husband and will discover that he is an absolute "Zappa-psychopath": he possesses almost every disc; he knows all the lyrics by heart, there are photos, books, t-shirts and even a *doll* everywhere in our apartment. His behaviour concerning FZ is like the squirrel finding an acorn in "Ice Age". Thanks to him, I started to listen to FZ's music again and realized that the man was really amazing. I also had a lot of fun in reading "*The Real Frank Zappa Book*".

Nevertheless sometimes it's a little bit hard for me to stand his music. Explanation: unlike my husband, I never learnt to play a musical instrument and I don't have a wide knowledge of music. So when we spend 5 hours together in our car and he's listening to *Jazz From Hell* followed by *Approximate*, *Black Page* and *The Yellow Shark* (volume on the highest level of course), I unfortunately have the impression that Frank Zappa sometimes just released 25 musicians on stage and everybody played what he wants. OK, I HEAR YOUR HORRIFIED SCREAMING, sorry – don't worry, I'm aware that every note was written even if it sounds like a mess to me.

**2009**, this summer vacation we had to go to Germany to assist with the "Zappanale" in Bad Doberan. From what I told you above, you'll understand I was kind of sceptical about spending three days at this festival. But to my big surprise it was GREAT! There was a kind "Peace & Love" atmosphere all over the place. We met a lot of nice people; the weather was good, the food and *mojitos* also. About the music: I'm quite sure that Frank would have loved listening to all those bands playing his music. And one thing's for sure: his music has to be played "live" with all these musicians having fun on stage.

It's quite something else to listening to a CD sitting on your sofa (ich bin so müde ha,ha,ha) !!

Another thing I appreciated a lot: A friend of my husband's had rented a big house where we stayed together with other people. It was an international meeting as we all had different origins – from Italy, England, Japan, Germany and France. We had lots of fun and very interesting discussions about everything and the world.

Whatever, all this is just to say that Frank Zappa's music seems to be linked up to the positive to me ever since: meeting others, communicating, learning something new, having fun.....

*Information is not knowledge. Knowledge is not wisdom. Wisdom is not truth. Truth is not beauty. Beauty is not love. Love is not music. Music is the best.*

## **8. ZAPPA IN ASIA**

**Kohjitsu Ohyama**

Japan is the only country in Asia where FZ ever played live. As things stand, the same is true for his son Dweezil, as if there weren't any FZ fans in Asia apart from Japan. Of course, there'll be some FZ fans amongst the many Westerners living there, though that's a different matter. But as the tally of medals at the Winter Olympics in Vancouver reveals, even though South Korea and China have made great strides since Asia entered the 21<sup>st</sup> century, Japan is still stuck in a deep depression which seems to have no end, for all its past record of rapid economic growth. Which makes me wonder, if FZ were still alive, whether he would have been performing in South Korea and China, or actively selling CDs in other Asian countries? It's certainly something that Dweezil should be considering, as he works to promote his father's music.

What would be the significance of FZ's music being as welcome in South Korea and China as it has been in Japan? That Asian countries other than Japan, the first to embrace Western culture, are now finally catching up, and rediscovering the rock music enjoyed in the West for half a century? I'm sure that's how many might see it, but it's a view loaded with Orientalist overtones. While it's certainly true that their new economic wealth has fuelled an interest in all kinds of Western entertainment denied them up to now, what interests me is what this new-found Asian interest would mean, and what new perspectives FZ fans from these countries might bring with them that would be different to those of fans of his music in Japan and the West. It would contribute to the beginning of a new appreciation of FZ's music. In any case, with FZ no longer with us, his older fans want to know how his music will be seen in the future, and as someone who lives in Asia, I am curious to know whether his music will attract new fans in Asian countries outside of Japan – or is in fact already doing so. And although the flip side of that is the question of whether his music can really be appreciated in any Asian country, regardless of the passage of time, if the answer is yes on either count, FZ's music will have proved it has what it takes to live on in the future.

Though we live in a world supposedly connected by the Internet, China still practices censorship, and in that sense is different to Japan and South Korea, and it may be too soon to ask whether FZ's music would be welcomed by its citizens. Censorship and the

structures that support it were of course something that FZ vigorously opposed, and were themes that he not only addressed in his work but even motivated it. So if FZ were to know about the current situation in China, there's no doubt he'd have written a satirical song about it. One can even imagine how this attitude and the new song might be taken up inside China, and listened to secretly just as it was in the former Eastern bloc in Europe. I'm sure it would be. That's pure speculation, of course, and not really worth dwelling on. But let us move the thought one step further and consider a world in which FZ's music can be heard freely throughout China. The really fascinating thing to consider is how the culture which gave us Zen, Confucianism and Taoism would engage with the content of FZ's music.

But that's a topic for another day. Let me return to the point. How will FZ's music be seen by South Korea and China, the new economic tigers, will it find new fans – even if only in small numbers – and will this have an influence on the culture and music of these countries, however small, to the point where a new music might appear that could be called Zappa-esque? One clue lies with the FZ fans of Japan. I say "one", because the differences in culture mean that his music is likely to be appreciated differently in South Korea and China than in Japan, and given their cultural differences, I'm not sure FZ's music can be applied as a kind of litmus test to take the measure of the various musical, political and cultural factors involved. Which is a good point to consider the situation in Japan. Though it's difficult to assess the number and type of Japanese fans here because there is no fan club, FZ's music has been released over the years by two or three labels in Japan, so if we consider that a certain number of CDs always sell, even if much less than in America or Europe, there is no question that there are more people in Japan who appreciate FZ's music than in any other country in Asia. That's not surprising given the huge influence of Western culture on Japan since the late 19<sup>th</sup> century. But despite the smaller numbers, the passion for FZ's music and the wide-ranging nature of their interest may be different from his fans in the West.

With American rock and pop music now heard in every corner of Asia, there's a new generation of Japanese musicians influenced by this music finding success in Asia. More recently, with South Korean pop stars becoming popular in Japan, young people who only really like American music are a distinct minority. In other words, we have

reached an age where Asia is producing and consuming its own Western-style musical entertainment. This is of course still largely copying American trends, but with the time lag in such trends now vanishingly small, the effect of a little Asian spice is sending American style out of fashion. At the same time this Asian born American-style music is being increasingly copied in America itself. You can see this with Hollywood starting to borrow Japanese and Korean scripts. What people are looking for in this new cultural collaboration is interesting material that has not yet been fully digested. Talent that was ahead of its time, hidden away, musicians from the past whose work is half buried; it's about extracting novel elements and matching them to a new age. This is nothing new; FZ used the same process himself to build up his body of work. But we can see that this might be how FZ's music will attract attention, how it might become incorporated into music that will be popular in the new age. Though it might be that FZ's music would pass through the spotlight only to be quickly forgotten, what I like to hope is that new fans might emerge from this spotlight who will understand its true value.

Some 20 years after his death, FZ's music is probably only being listened to by a tiny minority of the new generation in Japan, and this is presumably the same in South Korea. But this was something that was foreseeable even while he was still alive, as there's only ever been a small number of people in Japan who really enjoy his music. This is surely not that different to the way things are in America and Europe. Though FZ's music is rooted in popular forms, unlike pop groups it constantly aspired not to be carried away by them. That's why there will be fans who are still fall in love with the universal parts of his music even after his death, but how will these 'classical' elements in his music appeal to fans of music in South Korea and China?

Steve Vai's 'Passion and Warfare' was released in South Korea in the early 90s, and the theme tune to a Korean soap drama which has been extremely popular in Japan also featured Steve Vai's music. So at the very least Steve Vai is well-known in South Korea, and once his fans find out that Steve Vai studied with FZ, they are bound to start looking for his music. But there is no news yet about how FZ's music is appreciated in Korea, or whether there are any musicians there who have been influenced by his work. As I said earlier, Japanese fans keep a low profile, even on the net, but the ones that are out there are quite hard-core, so they may be instrumental in introducing FZ's music to other

parts of Asia, and it could be that individual links like this will overcome the barriers of politics and culture. Given China's enormous population, the number of future FZ fans will be that much greater when they are finally able to listen to Western rock and pop music as freely as in Japan. It may be some time before this happens. But what I want to see is an exchange of ideas amongst fans through the power of the Internet. As that expands and gains traction, we may see more new fans in Korea and China. At such time FZ's music will no longer be known only in the West, but will be enjoyed throughout the world and recognized for its timeless significance, with new interpretations of his music emerging as he is actively appreciated by different cultures in ways that FZ could not have expected. It is both the privilege and the duty of a fan to envisage the seeds of FZ's music blossoming in Asian countries that he never visited.