

THE RONDO HATTON REPORT VOL III, JUNE 21, 2010

The third issue of *The Rondo Hatton Report* continues to reflect the interest that this organ excites around the globe, featuring not only a first contribution from (the?) Indian of the group, but also an essay from the man behind that indispensable tool for true obsessives, the superlative *Information Is Not Knowledge* website. Fans of the statistical density that Google makes available will doubtless be thrilled to learn that *The Rondo Hatton Report* is now read in 35 different countries and accessed by 28 different language groups. As previously advertised, we still aim to encourage submissions from each and every *ambient domain*, and hope to sweep the entire planet shortly. We are committed to publishing texts in languages other than English, so there continues to be no reason why you or your loved ones should suffer as you hesitate to express yourself outside of 'your' language. As long as you speak *Zappish*, we'll understand you.

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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A translation into English can be found in **10: ONE MORE TIME FOR THE WORLD**

1. THE ORIGINS OF IINK

Román García ALBERTOS

So, how did it start? I suppose to explain it I'd have to go back to the mid 70s in Spain. I was a teenager then, and my hair was getting good in the back. And also I loved to hear music. The Beatles, Bob Dylan, The Rolling Stones, King Crimson, Eric Clapton or The Who. That kind of stuff. Long-haired people music, as we would call it then. Soon I began to look for more, just in time for the coming of punk and new wave, so suddenly short-haired people was also welcome.

Meanwhile, I think it could have been around 1977 or so, a friend lent me two albums by an old 60s group that he thought I would like. The albums were 'Mothermania' and 'Fillmore East - June, 1971'. What the hell was that? Supposedly they were both by the same group, but they didn't sound like that. I liked the music but I didn't understand a word, though you could tell the words were funny because the audience on the Fillmore one was laughing a lot, and the voices on the other onesounded even less serious.

Anyway I liked them a lot and heard them again and again, finally asking my friend to sell me his copy of 'Mothermania', which was my favorite. It was so funny I had to hear it again and again and show it to the rest of my friends until they hated me.

Except for the ones that didn't hate me and ended up buying some more Zappa albums (of course by that time we knew who was the man behind those Mothers). The next album I remember hearing was 'Zappa In New York' and by then I was absolutely hooked. The three albums couldn't be more different. Then probably 'Sheik Yerbouti', which had just been released, and 'Apostrophe (')', which was the first one I bought in a record store.

But the great advantage of 'Zappa In New York' was that, unlike the Spanish edition of the other ones, it had the lyrics printed on the cover! So with the help of a dictionary finally you could actually know what the hell they were saying. Our English teacher in high school asked us to bring to the classroom some English texts to translate and I

came up with the album cover of 'Zappa In New York' and asked him to translate "Titties & Beer."

Let's skip a decade now and go directly to the late 80s, when suddenly most of the Zappa albums were available in stores, either on vinyl or on CD, after years of searching for them. Actually I bought a CD player so I could hear the upcoming 'You Can't Do That On Stage Anymore' series, following Zappa's advice from the cover of the Sampler.

But the problem was still the same: What the hell were they saying? I tried to translate all the printed lyrics that I could find on the albums, and then started to try and transcribe some of the dialogs. In notebooks. Then the idea of a book with Zappa lyrics translated into Spanish started to form in my head. I even contacted some publishers, but of course they weren't interested.

Meanwhile almost another decade was passing by, and then, suddenly, I discovered the Internet. And the first thing you do when you discover the Internet is search for "Zappa." Soon I had contacted Marcelo Gasió and Carlos Formby, maintainers of probably the only two Zappa sites in Spanish in those days, and I decided to turn my Spanish translations into a third Spanish Zappa site on the Internet. Originally I named it "Zappa en español" ("Zappa in Spanish"), but later I changed it to "El 3er poder" ("The Third Power"), from the Spanish speech by Zappa in Barcelona, 1988.

I also started to read the alt.fan.frank-zappa newsgroup and discovered the wonderful sites of Patrick Neve, Robbert Heederik, Evil Bob, Biffyshrew, Vladimir Sovetov and some others and started to try and contact every one of them using the worst English in the world.

I had my Spanish translations site organized in two columns, one with the lyrics in English and the other one with the Spanish translations. For the English lyrics originally I was using the printed lyrics from the albums and some of my transcriptions. Then I wrote to Robbert Heederik to ask permission to use some of the stuff on his site but I had no response. I was told later that that site wasn't being updated anymore.

So, what about the transcriptions for the new albums being released and the parts still not available? I was going to put them on my Spanish site anyway, so why not split it into two sites, one in Spanish and one in English, accepting corrections so I could end up with a decent version of the English transcriptions and use it for my Spanish translations?

So I did. I named it "FZ Lyrics" and I didn't know what I was doing.

Corrections, additions and comments started to flood my Inbox. Meanwhile, just to put some order in there, I decided to set up a chronology of recording sessions and live recordings, which ended up being way more complicated than I expected. I also put a list of songs and decided to set up a page for each song. Including quotations. Another big mistake.

By that time, the community of fellow active webmasters also included Johan Wikberg, Patrick Buzby, Charles Ulrich, Jon Naurin, Bill Lantz and some others.

Next, Patrick Neve suggested that I take up the "Related Projects" and the "Unreleased Music" sections from his website, as he wasn't updating them anymore. Don't ask me why, but I said yes.

He also suggested I take up the "Videography" section, and I said no. It was too much. Then another day, probably after I was hit on the head or something, I said well all right. I would just host it and include the few updates people would send. That was quiet and calm for a minute. Then YouTube appeared.

Everybody started digitizing their video collections and new videos appeared on a daily basis.

In the middle of all this, I noticed that the name "FZ Lyrics" didn't suit the site anymore, so I changed it to "FZ Lyrics & Else," but after I was advised of its grammatical incorrectness, I finally changed it to the more appropriate "Information Is Not Knowledge." Or simply "IINK," as we're so fond of acronyms over here.

The monster has been growing and growing, and I don't know where it's going. In these days of blogs and wikis and who knows what else I still maintain the site using the same old tools, trying to use standard HTML and uploading the files via FTP. I try to do the corrections as they come, usually listening to the music before updating the site, because I love to have any excuse to listen to the albums one more time.

And every time I listen, there's something new. A word, an instrument, a melodic line, a quotation, whatever. Sometimes I compare the world of Frank Zappa and his music with a well. Beware! You gotta get out of it before you get into it.

2. CRUISIN' FOR A RUBEN

Sue Barashy

I didn't really like *Cruising With Ruben and The Jets* when I first heard it. My first encounter with Zappa's wonderful music was *Uncle Meat* and *Burnt Weeny Sandwich*, and although they both contain doo-wap elements, coming from a classical background my ear was not attuned to pop music, and I'd had almost no exposure to it. I'd always seen *Burnt Weeny* as a musical masterpiece sandwiched between two slabs of silliness, emphasising the difference between the sublime and the ridiculous, and I wasn't ready for a whole album of sheer silliness. My reaction was quite similar to some ex-members of the Mothers of Invention interviewed about the doo-wap music on the recent *Freak Out List* DVD, who had either thoroughly disliked it or never even heard of it.

But everything changed one day when I came back from a long trip abroad, when I had been starved of Zappa music for many months. Back in the days when it wasn't so easy to carry your record collection around with you, and cassette players were still a luxury item that you wouldn't take travelling with you, I'd been forced to listen to whatever passed for popular music in a typical travelling community, and it wasn't Frank Zappa.

So back home again, I was pretty keen to hear some Zappa. For some reason, I decided to give Ruben and The Jets another chance. I put on my headphones, locked the door to my room, lay down on my bed and gave myself to the music. Pretty soon, I started crying. Suddenly I understood what this record was. It was beautiful. I saw that it wasn't just another simplistic piece of pop, but a carefully-crafted parody that was also a genuine homage to a musical form which, however stupid it might seem on the surface, had a whole range of skills that demanded your full attention. And the whole beauty of the album lay in the tension between the loving recreation of the clichés of the genre and the boundaries beyond which the music was constantly pushing.

Once I saw that, it immediately reminded me of one of my favourite Stravinsky ballets, *Pulcinella*, in which Stravinsky based the music he eventually wrote on scores given him by Diaghilev, thought to have been written by an eighteenth century composer Pergolesi. Although he didn't like the music at first, Stravinsky went on to develop a respect for the classical forms, and it's from the tension between the formality of the original themes

and the freer modern cadences of Stravinsky's own original writing that beautiful textures and musical structures emerge that are far greater than the sum of their parts.

Many years later, I discovered that Zappa himself had seen that same parallel. In an interview in the magazine *Musician* in August 1979, he said "*There's a very scientific reason for the existence of Ruben and the Jets. The closest relationship between that album as an artistic effect event and another event from a different artistic field that you could compare it to would be the point of Stravinsky's career in which he decided he was going to write neo-classical music. He started doing stuff like Pulcinella, writing music in his day and age, but using forms that were thoroughly out of style and frowned upon by the academic establishment.*"

So as someone who'd been used to the old vinyl recording and so shocked at the sacrilegious substitution of new bass and drums when the album was first released on CD, it was great to finally get the 'original' recordings on CD with the latest *Greasy Love Songs* release from the ZFT. Finally a clean recording! One which didn't have any of the pops and crackles that always creep into the best recordings you can get from a vinyl original. I was expecting to be transported back to the raptures of my youth. But somehow, it wasn't working for me. There was a deadness to the clarity, a muffled quality. Out of curiosity, I decided to go back to the 'old' Ruben and the Jets CD, passed over for all these years. In fact, I don't think I'd listened to it once since throwing it aside in disgust when I first realised it had been 'ruined'.

And of course, now that I'm finally listening to it, I see what Zappa was trying to do in 'upgrading' the old recording. Once you get past your 'outrage' at the new bass and drums, there's is a spaciousness and clarity to the sound that is really beautiful in places. It's as if he's reached into the musty old box of sounds and given them a good cleaning, tweaking them anew against the tension of the new sounds. The tone of Ray Collins' oh-so-seductive voice stands out pristine and new in songs like 'Anything' and 'Fountain of Love' in particular, but the old instruments are given a new lease of life too.

So he's done it again. Or rather, more accurately, we've done it again – fooled into thinking, just like with Thing-Fish, that we didn't like what he'd done because it didn't

sound like we thought it 'oughta should', instead of actually listening to what and why he'd done it. The man never ceases to amaze, even from beyond the grave.

3. ZAPPA'S MUSIC IS A TIME MACHINE

Guillaume DAUZOU & Sabrina BERGAMIN (at The Whipping Post)

Time is a hidden reference in the Big Note concept. The crux of the biscuit, the apostrophe, the head of the pin, are all metaphors of the perfect note at the right time. Zappa has amused himself with time marks. First of all, let's have a look at the very first album, 'Freak Out!'.

First official brick of the conceptual continuity, first jump into the time machine, this album is full of quotes - Frank's background (I bet you remember the infinite list of thanks well-named the Freak List ?)*. Many styles of music are played between 'Hungry Freaks Daddy' and 'The Return of the Son of Monster Magnet'. It's as if Zappa needed this initial brick - 'Daddy' - to justify this first piece. That 'Daddy' is the symbol of Frank's complete background when he says to us 'OK, I'm ready to release my first LP, but be careful, the freaks are hungry !'. The Freak List is that big, no one can pretend he has the very same background as Frank has. He tells us we can follow him, but we'll never doppelgang him.

Frank did warn us with the titles of his LP's. 'Ahead Of Their Time' for instance, a 1968 gig only released in April 1993 ! Another way to travel with Frank is the monster series 'You Can't Do That On Stage Anymore, Vol. 1-6' with no less than 182 tracks from all around the world through time and space and who knows?! Anyway, you'll see the time pattern in many other albums such as 'The Best Band You Never Heard In Your Life', 'Ship Arriving Too Late To Save A Drowning Witch', 'Civilization Phaze III', 'Fillmore East June 1971', 'The Lost Episodes'... You can even have a look at many songs/instrumentals - 'Amnesia Vivace', '200 years old', 'This Is Phaze 3', 'Amnerika', 'Later That Night', '(More) Trouble Everyday', 'What's New In Baltimore', 'Nap Time', 'Little House I Used To Live In', 'The Torture Never Stops', 'When No One Was No One', 'We're Turning Again', 'The Moon Will Never Be The Same', 'Spider Of Destiny', 'Time Is Money', 'Progress?'... That last track, 'Progress ?', leads us to the idea Zappa had all along his career.

Remember that every single note of these works are religiously saved and stored in Zappa's house, the basement, called The Vault. Don't even try to tell me you've never wanted to settle down there! The Vault IS The Time Machine. And the reason why Frank used it was to reach the Big Note, to look for the perfect composition, the perfect mixture**, the musical quintessence. We've been lucky over the past 30 years to access, through his LP's, to the PROGRESS of his works. All these live LP's with overdubs, all these songs issued and reissued through time (Zoot Allures, King Kong, Big Swifty ...) to show us what he's been through to deliver the best version performed by the best band you've never heard in your life !

For Zappa, making progress is not necessarily a matter of chronology. He said it several times during interviews ; no matter what you do, to perform art you just have to start with building a frame. So, in order to make his work understandable, he gave us many clues. These clues are no more than 'years', referring to past events, allowing us the possibility to picture what Frank perfectly meant. It's a basic information to obtain the entire frame of his works. Let's have another bunch of examples, take a breath, put the records on, here they are : 'Dog Breath, In The Year Of The Plague' (with the skull '1348'), 'Wonderful Wino' (...L.A. in the summer of '69...), 'Would You Go All The Way ?' (A '55 Chevy that his brother just stole), 'The Planet Of The Baritone Women' (Robert Martin, from Philadelphia, Curtis Institute graduate, 1971. Let's hear it for him!) xxxx)...

Is it possible to continue the Big Note quest ? I think so.

Isn't that what we are doing with The Rondo Hatton Report ? Yep.

Would you go all the way ? I hope so.

Small notes :

* Many years after, with the MOFO album, GZ intended to do the same when listing the people who had pre-ordered the 6-cd Box. Different times, different people to thank!

** Few years ago, a pair of Italian musicians did something very interesting with '200 Motels'. With the project 'New Mother Old Dust', they tried to 'meld' and 'reform' parts of the LP, to find another way to understand 'where the heart is'.

4. NOSTALGIA FOR THE OLD FOLKS?

by Tom DeMonay

I'll be honest. I knew about Zappanale for 19 whole years before I got round to going. It wasn't that I couldn't go, though it's certainly bad timing for the summer holidays, given that an expedition to the former East Germany for a camping holiday in the woods is not necessarily everyone-in-the-family's idea of a good time. There are dues to be paid. But the reason I hadn't really made the effort was nothing to do with all that. It was, well, simply that I don't like the idea of tribute bands, especially ones that are attempting to play Zappa.

Why? Well, it's never going to be a substitute for the real thing, no matter what may be claimed on behalf of *Zappa Plays Zappa*. The fact of the matter is that 'the real thing' died with Uncle Frank in 1993, and anything that sets out to be an imitation of what he did will only ever be just that, a pale imitation. It couldn't be otherwise because, even if it's note perfect – and probably especially if it's note perfect – it can never be truly authentic because the authenticity of any given manifestation of the music derived from the time and the place in which it was performed. As performed, FZ's music was always written to and for a set of circumstances that included the desire to avoid the boredom of repeating himself, the urge to include topical issues, and the need to use the different abilities of the particular line-up of the band – so to slavishly reproduce a specific arrangement from a particular time is to be out of joint both with the spirit and the intent of the original. Like he said, *"After I am dead and gone, there is no need to deal with any of this stuff, because it is not written for future generations, it is not performed for future generations. It is performed for now. Get it while it's hot, you know? That's it."*

And even if that was *not* true, the fact of the matter is that most tribute bands don't have the chops to attempt most of the music that Zappa's bands actually played. How could they? They're not professional musicians in most cases. They have other jobs to do, other lives to lead. Even given the will and the ability, there's no way they could hope to match the levels of expertise that were only achieved by Zappa's bands after months of practice for many hours a day, most days of the week. Even tribute bands with members who actually did play with Zappa – the Grandmothers, for example – end up being

disappointing. And why would you want to go and listen less good versions of music that you had actually heard played as it was meant to be played?

Was what I'd thought, anyway. And still thought, as I made my way to Zappanale last year. I didn't expect to have a good time particularly, but it was the 20th year, Gail was apparently acting as if she wanted it to be their last, and despite my reservations I felt I had to go and lend some moral support, even if I wasn't necessarily going to cheer the performances with enthusiasm. So I was surprised to discover that despite there being some less-than-good performances (mainly from the ones I'd expected most from), overall I found myself having quite a good time. Certainly the plentiful supply of sunshine and caipirinhas had something to do with it, but even though the majority demographic clearly consisted of "a bunch of old men with rock & roll clothes on sitting around... mumbling about the old days", one thing was certain: they – we – really like this kind of music and no one was there by accident. Most people had been fans for years, and in many cases their love of the music had been a life-changing experience.

And then, the music. Nonetheless and notwithstanding all of my reasoning above, there is an undoubted thrill to be had from hearing, say, *Echidna's Arf* played really well by a hot live band. It can send shivers up and down your spine. At last year's Zappanale there must have been about four bands who played it, all very competently. It was thrilling to discover that this fantastically demanding music can after all be played by people who love it enough to put in the hours of practice, and played with great style, grace and enthusiasm, even if not always perfectly. I realised something else, too. Even if most of the world hasn't noticed yet, Zappa's music actually represents a body of music that raises the bar for composition and performance, not least because it actually poses and solves musical problems that can no longer be ignored. The artificial split between 'classical' and 'pop' (in the broadest sense of those terms) for example. Zappa's music crosses those boundaries effortlessly, and if we want to move on we all have to learn to do so as well. It's as if compositions like *The Black Page* will eventually have to become standards, an entry-level requirement for any musician who wants to be taken seriously as a professional, just as certain jazz tunes have become standards over the years. Some of the performances at the Zappanale showed that we're almost on the verge of a world where that could happen.

But it doesn't mean that we should get stuck there. The body of what's known as 'classical' music arose as certain composers raised the bar along the way, and it became a necessary level for musicians to aspire to. There is a point to recognising and acknowledging standards. But just like a religion, once the spirit dies you're left with a shell. Churches that just go through the motions, emptyly enforcing the forms of a dead teacher, are not only pointless, they are dangerous. We need to know what we are doing in following a form. To judge by the conversations I had with people, most of those going to Zappanale knew well enough what had brought them there. But it's a slippery slope – and, as FZ warns in *Excentrifugal Forz*, it's in crossing the line from later on to way back when that the suckers fall right in. If we're going to cherish the forms of what Zappa achieved, we need to be careful not to descend into nostalgia. Otherwise we're just wallowing in ditties and beer, even if there is something still left to sit on...

5. I'M A BANDLEADER:

Reflections on the Merits of taking a Firm Line with Amateur Musicians

by Dr Richard Hemmings (aka Evil Dick)

In April 2010, Ben Watson published an open letter to the Arf Society arguing that Zappanale should try to include not only Zappa tribute acts and the occasional alumni but also those artists whose work might be considered to be in a similar spirit to Zappa's. During his 'Late Lunch with Out to Lunch' broadcast on Resonance FM, Watson read his letter titled "[Address to the Arf Society](#)", interspersing it with tracks by those artists he thought might fit the bill. One such act was the fantastically inactive Evil Dick and the Banned Members (EDBM); the group I disbanded in 2006 having become dissatisfied with its limitations.

The idea of playing at Zappanale got me a little fired up. Maybe the time was right to reform the band? I could use the gig to tempt back the original members. It would be just like 2006 again, except, the original EDBM was at times a fairly sloppy outfit and I had no desire to go down that route again.

If musicians can't play something properly, why should an audience be expected to listen to it? This is something Zappa was acutely aware of. As the years ticked by, he demanded an ever-increasing standard of excellence from his musicians. Holding open auditions for positions in his band, Zappa was able to discover young musical talents with the potential to realise his technically challenging compositions. Fans became used to the idea of amazing musicians that appeared to be able to play anything perfectly every time. The reality is that such musicians are the exception. I formed EDBM in 2001 with a group of musicians of widely varying abilities, differing interests and ambitions, not to mention stressful/boring daytime jobs. Big Pete (drums) worked for British Gas, Little Pete (bass) was a student and Gimp Wilkinson (guitar) worked at Jessops. They were all self-taught and lacked certain skills (e.g., sight reading) but shared a desire to try something a bit different. Big Pete left the band after a gig at The Musician in Leicester in 2003, a departure that resulted in myself switching from synthesizer to drums.

A band is only as good as its leader(s). If you hire technically challenged musicians you can either make their lives a misery by constantly demanding that they “Do it again!”, put up with their shortcomings and declare that it helps ‘colour’ the music, or you can sack them... or they’ll get pissed off and leave. In my capacity as self-appointed mentor and role model to the Banned Members, I saw nothing wrong in making demands. Musicians get lazy because playing a musical instrument is often repetitive. Zappa used to threaten his musicians with fines if they didn’t meet his exacting standards. I have since learnt this is fairly common practise in professional bands and it can be viewed in contrast to getting amateur musicians to work properly and develop high standards. Zappa had money to “bribe” musicians; I only had my powers of persuasion and my ‘charming’ personality.

Almost exactly four years since we’d last played, EDBM met on 3 May 2010 to see if the ‘magic’ was still there. To celebrate our reunion we had chocolate brownies and flapjacks helped down by copious cups of tea and coffee. We had a little barbeque in the back garden. Guy and Pete chatted about Russian guitar pedals. I tried to divert the conversation to snare drums but they weren’t interested.¹ Eating food at rehearsals wasn’t something we’d ever done before. For a moment, I felt like a kindly boss bringing cream cakes into the office. I printed out some parts and gave them to the boys. Little Pete reads music well these days so I tended Gimp Wilkinson, helped him to understand the rhythms and generally goaded him. It’s a process sometimes referred to as “note bashing”. By the end of the session, Gimp could just about get through the piece. It was painful but we got there.

After the first rehearsal, I decided that the only way EDBM could reform with any level of satisfaction for me, would be as a much more disciplined ensemble. There was a new band rule: practise or leave. I felt like a schoolteacher but needs must. I set out the new ‘terms and conditions’ in an email, carefully adding a few strategic quips so as to make it seem like I’m still a nice guy. Gimp Wilkinson and Little Pete didn’t reply to my email making it difficult to gauge their individual reactions. I was making demands like Zappa did; standards were going to rise. I was going to shape these musicians. I was going to

¹ The Ludwig Black Beauty is, however, a classic snare drum... you just have to get the right heads. If you’re a Remo fan then an Emperor for the batter head and a Diplomat for the snare side will get you started. Get the thing in tune and you’ve got the ‘classic’ rock snare sound. Some might say the ‘classic Bonham snare sound’ but in truth practically every drummer of the 1970s owned a Ludwig Supraphonic, not just John Bonham.

help them unlock their full potential. I felt like a real bandleader for the first time. All they needed was a little discipline... practise, practise, practise!!!

Having been a drum tutor for the past five years and a more recently a part time lecturer at De Montfort University, I like to think I'm fairly familiar with the kinds of excuses used by students. One of the most common excuses made by drum students who haven't practised is, "I was able to play it before the lesson". This is often followed by some over-dramatic frustration in which they remain baffled by their sudden inability to play the exercise they could (apparently) play perfectly well before the lesson.

Mistake notes were not uncommon in the previous incarnation of EDBM because the band had been formed to explore uses of unpredictability in performance. Some scores comprised sequences of coloured notes which could be played differently each time to create random-sounding harmonic structures. In my current work, I've been composing with very conservative harmonies but have added the instruction *rand*. This gives the performers the option to either play their part as written or to choose their own pitches whilst maintaining the rhythms and the melodic contours. It also means interpretations can be tailored to specific venues. One assumes you should never underestimate the importance of having a mambo or a rumba up your sleeve to gain the attention of a county music festival organiser. If this can be 'randomised' on cue then the same material can also be used to please lovers of wacky ol' Zappa kinda music.

So where is this meandering tale heading you may well ask. By the second rehearsal, I was beginning to remember why I'd broken the band up in the first place. Gimp never practised in between rehearsals; he said he did, but he didn't. You could tell he didn't because he always made mistakes. At one point he scratched his head and declared, "I could play this before I came to the rehearsal!" Time for some bandleader spiel: "Everyone's got to raise their game this time around. I want the material learnt faster with fewer mistakes. I need to see your commitment to the band or I'll start losing interest again". That kind of talk always leaves a bad taste in my mouth. Zappa would have just fired him and brought in someone else.

By the end of the third rehearsal my worst fears were confirmed. Gimp wasn't making fast enough progress. He was fucking up all the time. All my carefully scripted bandleader banter wasn't sinking in; however, not one to shy away from labouring a

point, I took it upon myself to tell Gimp once again that he needed to get on top of the music, learn it faster with fewer mistakes. I told him I needed to be confident in his playing and that I'd rather break the band up again than be constantly nagging him. I gave him a couple of weeks to sort himself out, I wanted it to work but it was down to him to improve. Gimp promptly left the band in a huff, having failed to appreciate his bandleader's efforts to extract an amazing performance out of him. "You need a session musician", he wailed (in an email), "a soulless automaton". Yes, but they cost money, I thought.

6. TEN (ZEN) COMMENDMENTS

by Simon Prentis

This is an extract from a talk given at ICE-Z 2 in Rome back in June 2006. Since the transcripts from this conference seem never to have been published, I'm taking this opportunity to reach a wider audience with the core of the presentation, short comments on selected quotes from lyrics and interviews designed as a cut-out-and-keep guide to one of the great underlying themes in Zappa's work, a therapeutic sort of 'Po-Jama Person's Progress' toward the goal of ultimate enlightenment:

1) *Your mind is the ugliest part of your body*

To point at the ugliness of the human mind may not be the most original of insights. The future Queen Elizabeth 1 even composed a poem in 1554 along these lines, "*No crooked leg, no bleared eye, No part deformed out of kind, Nor yet so ugly half can be, As is the inward suspicious mind.*" But Zappa's lyric gets its punch from the implication that the mind is actually a part of the body, along with toes and noses, and equally deserving of critical attention. For not only are 'cosmetic issues' nothing compared to the reasons you think you have them in the first place, they are entirely secondary to the main business at hand, which is to *un-feature your hurt* and cease inflicting your personal problems either upon yourself or the rest of the world.

2) *You is what you am / A cow don't make ham.*

Dealing with the incipient ugliness involves owning it. As Zappa told Oui Magazine in 1979, "*If you're going to deal with reality, you're going to have to make one big discovery: Reality is something that belongs to you as an individual. If you want to grow up, which most people don't, the thing to do is to take responsibility for your own reality and deal with it in your own terms. Don't expect that because you pay some money to somebody else, or take a pledge, or join a club, or run down the street, or wear a special bunch of clothes, or play a certain sport or even drink Perrier water, it's going to take care of everything for you. Because it all comes from inside. As a matter of fact, that's where it stays.*"

3) *You oughta know now all your education / Won't help you no-how*

School was never going to be the answer. If you listen to anyone else telling you how to do your shit, don't complain if you don't like the results. Zappa's recommended procedure, based on available technology at the time, was *"If you want to get laid, go to school; if you want an education, go to the library"*, but his own body of work was clearly intended to function as a public service announcement in this regard: *"Everybody else writes songs about beautiful girls who make you fall in love, and groovy guys that are so wonderful, and heartbreak and all that shit - that's everybody else's department. I'm alternative information on specimen behaviour."*

4) *Whatever you can do to have a good time, let's get on with it, so long as it doesn't cause a murder*

Taking responsibility for your own reality, of course, includes acknowledging and accepting what you are and what you need to do to work out your personal demons. Barring homicide, it's clearly important to get into the paraphernalia of whatever it is that turns you on. *"As long as you don't do anything to damage anybody else's body or mind in the procurement of your sexual gratification, then go on ahead. If you want to fuck a dog and the dog likes it, you're in business; if you fuck a chicken and it dies, you're naughty."*

5) *You might be surprised at what you find out when you go.*

The classic quote in this context is *"There is no progress without deviation"*, but Zappa's penchant for pushing envelopes was much more of an active quest. As he told Playboy in 1993: *"I like taking things to their most ridiculous extreme because out there on the fringe is where my kind of entertainment lies."* Entertainment, of course, being the name of the game. *"The crux of the biscuit is: If it entertains you, fine. Enjoy it. If it doesn't, then blow it out your ass."* And then move on, because...

6) *You should be diggin' it while it's happening*

Though *you can be scared if it gets too real*, with *death valley days* staring straight ahead, it's best to celebrate the time left until you're a *cinder*, doing *"whatever you can that makes your particular life more beautiful, and you get involved in art. 'Cause that's what makes things beautiful."* In the face of collective collusion in the decision to choose cheese, Zappa's suggestion for improving the quality of life is to *"think of this matter in terms of how much of what we individually consider to be beautiful are we able to experience every day."* For even if time turns out to be a spherical constant, you've still *"got X number of moments of your undead state to deal with whatever you're going to deal with. And I think that the best way to do it is to deal with as much as you can deal with while you're alive, not as little."*

7) *When you pay the bill, kindly leave a little tip / To help the next poor sucker on his one-way trip*

Zappa's remarks about the usefulness of what he might be able to say through his work indicate that he saw an educational value in 'art' aside from its intrinsic entertainment value. And in the particular context of football: *"I think that if you had to choose between playing football or doing art, you'd probably be better off doing art, because if everything does disappear, the only thing that is going to be worth digging up later on is the art, not the footballs. To me that would be a better way of spending your waning hours, and that is what we're talking about."*

8) *Music is the best*

The culmination of the mini-manifesto, the ultimate tip is to tune in directly to whatever subdivision of the Big Note suits your factory rate. If, as Walter Pater said, *"all art aspires to the condition of music"* then the *decoration of time* through music is as good as it gets. And, as previously noted, anything can be music. Zappa's working definition was *"the organization of any data"*. But there has to be active participation: *"It doesn't become music until someone wills it to be music, and the audience listening to it decides to perceive it as music."* A dialectical dance between subject and object. And speaking of dancing:

9) *There will come a time when you can even take your clothes off when you dance*

Once you figure out that it's not only hair that not where it's at, but everything else as well, you are finally free. *Only if you want to be*, of course, but it should be noted that this song, Zappa's prescient prequel to *Imagine*, upstages John Lennon in advance by not only positing a world which has risen above all possible evils, including discrimination based on race, religion, gender and greed, but doing so without a po-faced PC agenda. Those still inclined to believe that this song is a parody of hippy banality might like to ponder the inverse square law that applies almost universally in Zappa's music: the stupider the music the meatier the lyrics and vice versa. It's his answer to the question "*Shall we take ourselves seriously?*" and further proof that "*despite all evidence to the contrary it is theoretically possible to be 'heavy' and still have a sense of humor.*"

10) *One size fits all.*

Free now from uniforms or shame at our new-found nakedness, the essential oneness of the universe is revealed. Snatching profundity from the jaws of banality, this phrase encodes the ultimate esemplastic vision, a Zen-like resolution of the many as one. The album offers a parody of partial perspectives of all persuasions, from spurious extra-terrestrial speculations on the origins of life on earth to the more immediate concerns of those who *can't afford to buy no shoes*, contrasting the poor-little-rich girl misery of the theoretically happy and advantaged Florentine Pogen with the unexpected lust for life of the supposedly unhappy and disadvantaged Bobby and his girl in trailer park heaven -- before plunging in to Andy, the key song in what is, essentially, an album about religion. As a climax, the absurdities of the extraneous verbiage washing over Evelyn are shattered by the poodle's sharp bark of enlightenment, a canine salutation Zappa once told me was "*suitable for all festive occasions as it possesses a certain interspecial comprehensibility.*"

7. POURQUOI VOULOIR METTRE UN CANICHE DANS UN BOCAL? John Raby

Dans l'album « *Guitar* », Scott Thunes utilise comme base rythmique le riff d' « *In-A-Gadda-Da-Vida* », tube du groupe psychédélique Iron Butterfly. Frank Zappa de son côté, lance son improvisation avec le thème du Sacre de Stravinsky. Outre l'intention humoristique, se dessine un phénomène plus subtil, plus souterrain. Ce qui naît du point de contact entre les thèmes hétérogènes c'est bien sûr un rire, mais aussi un devenir.

Deleuze parle de la rencontre entre une guêpe et une orchidée pour traduire ce qu'est un devenir. L'orchidée imite à son niveau la forme de la guêpe pour l'attirer et en faire ainsi un vecteur de reproduction. Cette orchidée se modifie au contact de la guêpe, tout comme l'insecte, qui devient un objet de fécondation. Les deux objets, dans leur rencontre, mutent, mais chacun à son niveau. Il ne s'agit pas d'un procès d'imitation, mais de « capture de particules ». Ce qui devient change autant que ce qui le fait devenir.

Ce devenir n'appartient pas aux objets eux-mêmes. Il n'est pas dans la guêpe ou la fleur mais au milieu, entre les deux, contre nature en un sens. Il n'y a plus de Stravinsky ou d'Iron Butterfly mais un mixte qui prend corps, fulgure dans leur interférence: devenir-Stravinsky de Butterfly, devenir-papillon du Sacre. Deleuze parle des oiseaux de Mozart: sa musique n'imité pas leurs chants mais donne corps à un devenir-musique de l'oiseau. Une ligne de fuite passe au milieu, rend indiscernable les objets, les emporte dans un élan créateur. L'écart, la différence, n'empêchent pas l'échange; bien au contraire donnent naissance à de joyeux monstres: « *In-A-Gadda-Stravinsky* ».

Le Sacre, comme la composition d'Iron Butterfly sont des ritournelles. Une ritournelle, c'est une petite musique qui, grâce à l'expressivité de son rythme, de sa pulsation, délimite un territoire. Deleuze et Guattari parlent de l'enfant chantant dans le noir pour calmer sa peur. Son chant signifie: c'est chez moi, j'ai un chez moi qui me sépare de l'inconnu qui m'opresse. Le chant trace une ligne, l'ampleur de sa mélodie faisant comme un cercle au ras du sol. Là où passe la pulsation, se dessine un intérieur et un extérieur. C'est dans ce sens que Deleuze interprète le *Fort-Da* freudien.

Les ritournelles de Stravinsky et d'Iron Butterfly sont des territoires forts, codés, chargés de leurs histoires. Ces thèmes sont des personnages musicaux, des sujets, des leitmotifs: on les reconnaît aisément. Par la rencontre, Zappa fait fuir ces thèmes, leur offre un devenir qui les libère du formol historique. Stravinsky fuit au contact d'Iron Butterfly (ce qui peut se comprendre) et inversement. Du fait de leur rencontre (qui se fait par leurs différences, il n'y a pas analogie, tout comme entre la fleur et l'insecte), Zappa ouvre leur territoires sur une nouvelle résonance, plus ample: une grande ritournelle qu'il faut trouver *sous* la musique.

Car en plus de sa fonction territorialisante, toute ritournelle possède un deuxième aspect, opposé au premier: un mouvement de déterritorialisation qui l'emporte. La pulsation applique un cadastre, un découpage délimitant un territoire (le leitmotiv wagnérien qui impose une identité, une fonction à un thème: « tiens v'là Tristan »). Le mouvement de déterritorialisation quant à lui maintient ouverte la ritournelle qui se présente ainsi sous une double forme, une spirale qui fonde (territoire) et fuit (déterritorialisation) simultanément. C'est le paradoxe qui fait la merveilleuse nécessité de sa répétition. La musique revient, mais toujours différente.

La fonction de l'art, c'est de créer une déterritorialisation car le territoire est toujours donné (les clichés hantent la page blanche, l'artiste doit les effacer avant de commencer), tandis que la déterritorialisation est à faire, « à conquérir » comme le dit Deleuze. Elle n'est pas donnée, c'est un plan à tracer, il faut l'inventer. Zappa a appris cela en grande partie avec Stravinsky: utiliser avec distance des codes stylistiques préexistants pour les pervertir, les ouvrir, les décoder sur une nouvelle ligne de fuite, inédite. D'une autre manière il y a ce qu'a fait Bartok à la musique traditionnelle hongroise. Le style zappaïen réside dans sa façon de confronter les matériaux et non dans les matériaux eux-mêmes. C'est entre les choses que son langage fulgure, dans le bégaiement créateur, xénochronique, qui emporte les formes.

La Grande Note n'a jamais été une Totalité, parfaite, harmonieuse, comme l'ont chéri les romantiques (ou les kobaiens de tout poil). Ce serait faire de l'oeuvre zappaïenne un objet plein de prétention mal dégrossie, une reprise de la quête indigeste de Wagner. Il faut libérer Zappa de cette image polluante! Il n'a au contraire jamais cessé de nous

démontrer l'infinie richesse de l'existant, les multiples sens virtuels, contenus dans chaque objet mais jamais actualisés, faute de courage, du sens de l'absurde de la part des hommes.

Le caniche n'a pas de sens chez Zappa, il peut tant en avoir! Comment on passe d'un sens à un autre: c'est là, dans ce passage, où se fait sentir la coexistence des sens, que Zappa intéragit, use de l'animal. Le caniche incarnant plusieurs sens, impossibles, devient énergie, musique, une onde entre les définitions toutes faites. Tout communique mais de façon dynamique, en repoussant toujours plus loin le territoire, invalidant toute volonté de clore, intensifiant toujours le mouvement de déterritorialisation. Les morceaux s'enveloppent les uns les autres, grossissent à vue d'oeil, non pour consolider un tout qui serait parfait, idéal, juste, mais pour intensifier la puissance d'expansion de sa matière. La Continuité Conceptuelle est un élan vital. Elle n'a de programmation que son extrême ouverture: n'importe quoi, n'importe quand, n'importe où, et sans raison particulière.

La Grande Note n'est donc pas un objet mais une vibration qui module l'air de proche en proche. Pourquoi vouloir mettre une onde (ou un caniche) dans un bocal? Tout ce qui tourne en rond est ennuyeux, demandez donc aux poneys dans leurs enclos. La Note n'est pas faite pour être saisie (ce qui serait la trahir dans son essence même) mais pour être *sentie*. C'est en ce sens que Zappa est un éducateur: il veut nous faire entendre ce qui nous file entre les doigts à force de conformisme: *Who Are the brain police?* La Grande Note est ce tissu incorporel, en perpétuelle variation, que notre intuition, à force de s'affiner aux indices, au gigantesque mouvement de reprise qui emporte toute son oeuvre, peut sentir en action sous la musique comme sous la vie en général. Elle affirme la vie comme élan toujours créateur. Elle est le bourdon qui insiste dans chaque événement sans le clôturer. La Grande Note est la Ritournelle cosmique qui revient toujours, mais perpétuellement différente. Encore faut-il qu'on soit à la hauteur!

8. FRANK ZAPPA: A VIEW FROM INDIA

Mahesh Ramchandani

I felt superior. I could hum Frank Zappa's `Apostrophe' backwards and, honestly, I felt superior to the rest of the blokes. It was my first FZ album and I was introduced to it in 1978 by a friend who was later swallowed by the system and is now busy amassing wealth in its dull grey interiors. But thanks to this guy I could say cool things like `The crux of the biscuit is the apostrophe', and be considered real cool by the others who were cool – but not as cool as I had become. But, thankfully, it didn't end there. Some of that music slipped in through the chinks, some of those manic guitar notes found a home inside me and refused to go away. I was to discover in some time that the music was real, and looking and being cool didn't really matter. The music was real, it shone, and anything that is bright and pure and beautiful and real eventually tames its subject. When I heard `Watermelon in Easter Hay' I could fly, when I listen to `Shut Up And Play Yer Guitar', I wish the government would make it compulsory listening, `Jazz From Hell' has convinced me that there are other worlds, and there is so much else that has been created by this magician-musician that has added value to the music buff's life. If Zappa fans' lives were packs of detergent powder, they would read `20 per cent extra'.

Sadly, though, the Zappa fan base in India, as I know it, has shrunk. In the 1980s, I knew three people who were into the music (excluding the two I met in Kuwait) and now I know only two. Including myself, of course. But I exaggerate... (not knowing too many FZ fans could be because I'm not much of a social animal.) On a more serious note, FZ's music is now available on CD in some of the music stores in my city (Mumbai, which used to be Bombay, in India) and they have been moving, a little slowly though, like all great music does. Yes, the world is a terrible place even in this part of the globe, but at least I have the music. My own collection of the music has gone up and includes scratchy, hissy tapes from the 20th century and also CDs, about 70 per cent of the music that has been released. Initially, they could be obtained by wagging one's tail in front of generous, wealthy friends who had connections in America but the world has shrunk now. The music scene in India is pretty vibrant, and sophisticated music-lovers have an acquaintance with Frank Zappa's music, which they even appear to admire, but I have yet to meet someone who has been tamed by the music like I have. This could be

because most other music comes to you, but this is music you have to go to. (Or maybe we are superior.)

So what is it about Zappaphiles that makes them come together and gush about what others would say is 'just some music by just another rock n' roll musician'? Just another band...? This sort of behaviour is not unexpected from teenagers, but you (and I) are much older, and I'm even feeling sort of embarrassed writing this piece, I can hear someone standing behind me and saying 'Come on, its just some music. Grow up...'. Somehow its alright to rave about Beethoven or Pandit Ravi Shankar, but you can't get serious about a long-haired rock'n'roll musician. But I suspect we've been touched by something real. Sadly, no one takes comic writers/musicians etc seriously, and I use this term loosely – for Zappa was much more than that. For most people, a thing can be revered only if it's grim and serious, and if its celebratory and fun then it must be sinful. (This is the same attitude that creates religious fanatics and pretentious art.)

But the comic writer/satirist/jester sources his material from the same place as the writer of the grimmer stuff (the 'Intensive care contingent'). The latter wallows in his suffering, the former's vision is broader and more detached; the former has a clearer vision of the landscape and acknowledges that we are responsible for our own misery. Unlike the 'Intensive care contingent' which wallows in self-pity and base emotion, the jester has a 'gift for laughter and a sense that the world is mad.' This detachment also makes it possible for him to make 'pure music', music that is ecstatic and celebratory and free of human tragedy, music that is a vision of beauty far beyond the 'colour pencil around your eye and the pair of shoes that makes you wanna die'. And that is the music that we have been touched by. For me, 'Waka Jawaka', 'Grand Wazoo', 'Hot Rats', 'Shut Up', 'Jazz From Hell' is that music.

And the music itself, I dare say, is 'sweet'. And I don't mean 'sweet' in the Carpenters sense of 'sweet'. On the contrary. This is music that grabs you by the collar and throws you on top of a mad horse that can also soar. But by 'sweetness' I mean the sweetness I have found so far only in Indian music including old Bollywood film songs and Indian classical music (sorry if I sound like a P.R. man for India but that's not the intention at all). The word 'madhur' in the Hindi language means 'melodious' and it also means 'sweet',

and it is derived from `madhu' meaning `honey' (as in bees' honey and not `Honey, honey, hey, don't you want a man like me?') and that's the `sweet' I'm talking about. I'm no expert but I've heard it said that Oriental music is more melodic whereas Western music is about `harmony, and I've heard a lot of both and Zappa's music does lean towards this side at times. Zappa's Indian/Oriental influences perhaps, if he had any, I don't know, but I can smell some Indian spice there.

And then growing under that hairy music are a few other things...

When I was much younger, my curiosity about music led me to jazz, and while I liked the stuff that I could tap my feet to, some of that plinkety-plink drove me nuts. Now some of that plinkety-plink stuff has meat in it and I like it, but there are phoney plinkety-plink players who are so dry and cerebral plants would die in their presence, but they and their music are admired because no one has the courage to call their bluff. Because most people have bought into the theory that `The good things in life should be boring'. And just when I concluded that I was too chimpanzee for this intellectual stuff, which was all head and no heart, along came Zappa's music, all guns blazing. This guy was thinking from his heart. The music was fun, funny, clever, intelligent, noisy, sweet, ballsy, sacred, profane and it touched your heart. Well, intelligent need not be boring; its OK if you cant `approach its statistical density in its basic form', you can still get down with `your bad selves'. The only other person I know of who was as iconoclastic was Osho, spiritual teacher and mystic, also known as Bhagwan Rajneesh. (Osho was expelled from America because of his radically different take on the world.)

As liberating as the music is the attitude. Zappa, as court-jester, was audacious enough to tell the king that he had no clothes, but it didn't stop there. Just when you laughed with him about the nasty kick in the pants he had delivered to the king, he turned around and took his next shot at you. No one was spared. It is said that an intelligent man is known for his ability to take two conflicting principles and speak cogently in defence of each. Pro-gay or anti-gay, pro-this or anti-that, everyone had an equal chance of being ridiculed by FZ and so there was no point in taking sides at all, no point following a herd. The music and the lyrics take you to a place away from the herd, where you are on your

own and you have to do your thinking for yourself. No easy, pre-digested nuggets of information here. On your own. Free...

There must be something really wrong with a world that is unable to appreciate FZ's music and his world-view enough. A man who worked for hours on end, strove to give the best of himself and his creativity, had solid family values, made heartfelt attempts to rouse a sleeping people, had the guts to confront an unfair system, and was clearly ahead of his times deserves a lot more credit. And yet Michael Jackson and Axl Rose are bigger heroes than Frank Zappa. That's something to worry about.

THERE IS SUCH A THING AS PROGRESS

by Hugo Vanneck

If ever there was a musician whose body of work should be considered as a natural, invaluable and endless reservoir for BGM, from the ridiculous to the sublime, surely it is Frank Zappa. That one hardly hears it anywhere other than when one has chosen to listen to it oneself, or when visiting like-smitten friends, just adds to the impression that one is living in a jar, under a bed.

When have you ever heard Zappa playing in the background?

Once, in Fez, Morocco in 1978, I was pleasantly amazed to hear 'Apostrophe' coming out of a carpet shop I was passing. On enquiring within I discovered that the owner had been given the album by a customer and on listening to it had liked it but was unaware who FZ was, or that he was famous, or that he'd made any other albums. Other than that, absolutely nothing... until the other day.

I was listening to a podcast from a 3-part series in Documentaries on the World Service called, "The Crash: Back from the brink" about the recent huge redistribution upwards of the world's wealth, quaintly referred to in the press as a financial collapse, when the subject of Iceland comes up. The narrator says, "Iceland's banks had debts worth 8 times the country's GDP. International depositors didn't believe the government could meet the debt and started withdrawing their money. A run on the country had started." Cue, a few bars of an instrumental version of 'Sofa', the bit which is accompanied by the lyrics, 'Ich bin hier, Und du bist mein Sofa' on the original 'One Size Fits All' version. (That's God talking, you understand.) Just that part... 'I'm here', and then the music fades on 'you are my sofa' and we're back with the narrator. Well, I never! I don't suppose I need to explain here why I find that choice so perfect...

I was so excited by this unexpected treat that I immediately sent an mp3 clip of the programme to a fellow Zappa fan, who was likewise impressed. He's been a solid fan since well before I ever met him, which is nearing 35 years ago, and he told me it was only the 2nd time he'd ever heard FZ being used as BGM. The 1st was weirder and was, coincidentally, when he himself was living in Japan.

Back in 1984 there was a crime that shook Japan and went positively surreal as it twisted and turned over the following year and a half. It started with the home invasion and kidnap of the president of the Japanese equivalent of Cadburys chocolate or Nestles, a huge confectioner called Glico, and a ransom demand of 1 billion yen and 100 kilograms of gold bullion. The president, called Ezaki Glico, managed to escape from the warehouse he was being kept in a few days later but there then followed a year and a half of arson attacks on the company car pool, product tampering threats, extortionate cash demands and regular letters from the perpetrators taunting the police for not having a clue who they were dealing with.

The group responsible, which has never been caught or even identified, called itself, "The Monster with 21 Faces". The closest the police ever got to anyone involved was someone they called, "The Fox-Eyed Man" on account of his features, but who managed to give a police officer tailing him the slip on a train bound for Kyoto following an arranged cash drop off. They got another glimpse of the Fox-Eyed Man but lost him again. This time there was a suspicious car at another cash drop-off point that a patrolman, uninvolved in the case and unaware of what the investigating police were up to, stopped next to and shone his light at the face of the driver of, whereupon the car sped off and after a hot chase managed to lose the patrol car. It was later found abandoned with radio equipment set to monitor police bands in 5 prefectures inside together with, whe'hey... a vacuum cleaner.

Eventually, following the suicide by self-immolation of the police chief who had headed the investigation, called Yamamoto, the group announced its decision to cease all threats to Glico, and another 3 confectioners called Morinaga, House Foods and Fujiya that they had begun menacing in the meantime (it seems the Monster with 21 Faces had a thing about sweets). Apparently, Yamamoto couldn't take the shame of his failure to crack the case. The Monster with 21 Faces even wrote a letter to the police announcing their decision to cease their activities, saying that while it was fun being bad guys, they had decided to send their condolences and to move on to other things that bad guys like them have to do.

Okay, you have the background. As the snip of Sofa that I heard was courtesy the UK's national broadcaster, so this snip was courtesy the Japanese national broadcaster, NHK. The BGM to their news coverage of the Glico case? Sinister Footwear.

10. ONE MORE TIME FOR THE WORLD

English Versions

10. WHY WOULD YOU PUT A POODLE IN A JAR?

John Raby

(translated by Simeon O’Gugel)

In the album "Guitar", Scott Thunes uses the bass riff from "*In-A-Gadda-Da-Vida*" by the psychedelic band Iron Butterfly as a basic rhythm. Beside him, Frank Zappa launches into his solo using the theme from Stravinsky's *Rite of Spring*. Besides the humorous intent, the phenomenon that emerges is more subtle, more subterranean. What is born of the contact between the disparate themes is of course a laugh, but is also 'becoming'.

Deleuze talks about the encounter between a wasp and an orchid to elucidate the nature of a becoming. The orchid imitates the form of a wasp to attract it, and also to use it as a means of reproduction. This orchid changes through contact with the wasp, just like the insect, which becomes an instrument of fertilization. The two objects mutate through their meeting, but each at their own level. It is not so much a process of imitation as a "capture of particles". What becomes changes as much as that which makes it become.

This 'becoming' is not apparent in the objects themselves. It is not found in the wasp or the flower, but between the two – against nature, in a sense. There's no Iron Butterfly or Stravinsky, but a mixture that takes shape and dazzles through interference between the two: becoming *Stravinsky-Butterfly*, *Butterfly-Rite*. Deleuze speaks of Mozart's birds: his music does not imitate their song but embodies them, 'becoming-bird' music. A line of flight passes through the middle, making the objects indistinguishable, carrying them off in a creative impulse. The gap, the difference between them does not prevent the exchange, but on the contrary gives birth to joyous monsters: "*In-A-Gadda-Stravinsky*".

Both *The Rite* and the Iron Butterfly composition have distinctive melodies. A melody is a tune that, thanks to the expressiveness of its rhythm and pulse, defines a territory. Deleuze and Guattari speak of a child singing in the dark to calm his fears. A song signifies something that is mine, something personal that separates me from the unknown that oppresses me. The song draws a line, the size of the melody making a

circle in the ground. Wherever there is a beat, an interior and exterior emerge. It is in this sense that Deleuze interprets the Freudian *Fort/Da*.

The distinctive melodies of Stravinsky and Iron Butterfly are strong presences, coded, loaded with their stories. These themes are musical characters, subjects, leitmotifs: they are easily recognized. In their collision, Zappa set these themes loose, offering them a future in which they are free from their history. Stravinsky flees at the touch of Iron Butterfly (which is understandable) and vice versa. Because of their meeting (which occurs through their differences – as with the flower and insect, there is no analogy), Zappa opens up their territories to new resonances, and more: a larger, more distinctive melody which can be found under the music.

For as well as being territorializable, a melody has a second aspect, opposite to the first: a deterritorialization which transports it. The pulse applies a form of ownership, a division delimiting a territory (the Wagnerian leitmotif that imposes an identity, according to a theme: "Look, here is Tristan"). The movement of deterritorialization in turn keeps open a refrain which appears in two forms, a spiral which fixes (territorial) and flees (deterritorializes) simultaneously. This is the paradox that generates the marvellous necessity of repetition. The music returns, but is always different.

The function of art is to create a deterritorialization because territory is always a given (clichés haunt the blank page, and the artist must remove them before starting), while the act of deterritorialization is to "conquer", as Deleuze puts it. It is not a given, it is a map for drawing which must be invented. Zappa learned that in large part with Stravinsky: using pre-existing codes at a distance with the purpose of stylistically perverting, exposing and decoding them for a new line of unmediated flight. In another sense it is what Bartok did with Hungarian folk music. The *Zappish* style lies in the method with which the material handled, not in the material itself. His language appears between the objects, in the creative endeavour, the xenochrony which carries the forms. The Big Note has never been a perfect, harmonious totality that romantics (and mystics of all kinds) wish it to be. This would make Zappa's work a mere grotesque, a reprise of Wagner's abominable quest. Zappa must be liberated from this vile image! Rather we must not cease in our endeavors to show the infinite riches of existence, the multiple

virtual senses contained within each object, but never realised due to a lack of courage and sense of absurdity on the part of men.

The poodle has no one meaning for Zappa, it has them all! It is in the passage from one meaning to another that we feel the coexistence of the senses that Zappa embodies in the animal. The poodle embodies multiple meanings, incompatible, energetic, musical, a standing wave between all the definitions. Always dynamically pushing further into the territory, invalidating any attempt to close, always increasing the movement of deterritorialization. The various parts envelop each other, not to build into an ideal, a perfect shape, but to intensify the material's power to expand. Conceptual Continuity is a vital force. It has no agenda except for opening to the extreme: anything, anytime, anywhere, for no reason at all.

The Big Note is not an object, but a vibration that brings the air closer and closer. Why would you put a wave (or a poodle) in a jar? Round things are boring – ask the ponies in their paddock. The Note is not meant to be grasped (which would be betraying its essence) but to be felt. It is in this sense that Zappa was an educator: he wants us to hear what slips through our fingers under the pressure of conformity: Who Are the Brain Police? The material form of the Big Note is intangible, in perpetual change, which we can feel with our intuition in music as in life in general, a huge refrain which embodies all works. It is a life-affirming creative spirit. It is the bumblebee busy to the very end. The Big Note is the Great Cosmic Refrain that always recurs, but is perpetually different. And you need to be in tune each time!