

## THE RONDO HATTON REPORT VOL V, DECEMBER 21, 2010

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There continues to be an encouraging increase in viewings: **over 1500 readers** visit *The Rondo Hatton Report* from up to **39 language zones** in over 50 countries. With our organ now accessed from every continent, we are indeed *sweeping the planet...*

However, in terms of active input **it must still be said**: *The response from this particular community has not been especially gratifying.* Whether this is because y'all are *a bit too intellectual*, or simply too shy, **the fact of the matter** is that your organ needs **YOU**. As previously stated, it's a platform for community involvement. If you like what you read here, **join in**. If you don't, why not *contribute something better*.

Remember, there are no auditions, no editing. Just **spit it out** and your thoughts can be on stage before *a hockey-rink* of interested readers, no questions asked. **What's not to like?** And with our ongoing policy of publishing texts in languages other than English, there is still 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.

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\*English translations of 6 and 8, which are published in their original language

## 1. LINGUA FRANKA PART 1: VIGOROUS CIRCULAR MOTION

Arjun von Caemmerer

Round about September, in my little red Echo, buffeted by the lunchtime traffic in downtown Moonah, Tasmania, Australia, 2005 I flicked the radio on to ABC FM.

And had to lurch to a halt. In my little red Echo.

Because issuing actually from the very speakers themselves, hitherto unheard on Broadway (and in these ears also too) was something strange & miraculous & orchestral: I knew it probably could not have been, but it sounded for the world as if it was: **Unheard Orchestral Zappa**. Such compositions I had before only encountered in Dream, typically stumbling across the sonic siblings of **Sad Jane** or **Greggery Peccary**, and from which I'd awake, enthralled but bereft.

The radio piece turned out to be the orchestral suite from **The Miraculous Mandarin**, the pantomime by Béla Bartók played as part of a week-long programme given over to commemoration of the 50 year mark of the composer's death in 1945. Who it was played by, I missed. And I was completely unfamiliar with this piece despite having, to some extent, followed up on Zappa's enthusiasm for Bartók: in an interview article he had favourably remarked on the danceworthiness of the Bartók concertos for piano and orchestra. I had pursued this lead, and though ever an awkward dancing fool, I became mightily endeared to much his music [not least to the brilliance of Bartok's **Concerto for Piano and Orchestra #1**, a piece initially derided as "unmitigated ugliness" according to the Cosmic Utensil of one long-gone Theatrical Criticizer. Its world premiere was conducted by one Nicholas Slonimsky with Bartók at the keyboard, and arguably reaches its recorded apogee as played by Géza Anda with the Berlin Radio Symphony Orchestra].

**The Miraculous Mandarin** has a chequered history: it was banned on the grounds of obscenity after its Cologne premiere in 1926, and performed just once again in the composer's lifetime. Sex & death: **Galoot Cologne!**

Thus started more sleuthing, and a visit to my local CD shop **Music with Affront**, from where, amidst the dust and rubble, I pulled from the shelves an RCA Red Seal reissued CD of **The Miraculous Mandarin** by the Chicago Symphony Orchestra, conducted by a Jean Martinon. It was recorded in around 1967, & remastered in 1999, and not only did it have the **Miraculous Mandarin** suite, but also co-incidentally **Arcana** by Edgar Varèse. I had listened to **Arcana** before but never really heard it like this: I understood now for the first time what Varèse meant when, in 1928, he wrote: **it is perhaps in Arcana that you will truly find my thought**. This particular version wears **The Eyebrows** big time, much more convincingly to these ears than either of the later versions by Pierre Boulez or Kent Nagano. I wondered whether Frank Zappa had ever heard this recording of **The Miraculous Mandarin** and toyed with the idea of sending Gail Zappa a copy of the CD. Only somewhat later did realise this gesture would have been completely rdnndnt: I re-read Zappa's article **Varèse: Idol of My Youth** (written in 1971) where at the bottom occurs a sort of postscript which I assume I must have looked at before but not really seen:

***I can't give you any structural insights or academic suppositions about how his music works or why I think it sounds so good. His music is completely unique. If you haven't heard it yet, go hear it. If you've already heard it and think it might make groovy sound effects, listen again. I would recommend the Chicago Symphony recording of Arcana on RCA (at full volume) or the Utah Symphony recording of Ameriques on Vanguard.***

This whole episode — hearing something that I thought might have been by Zappa; discovering it to be a piece that Zappa must have already been thoroughly familiar with (and by a composer whose music he also championed); and, discovering collaterally on the very same recording **the version** of Varèse's **Arcana** that Zappa had himself recommended over 30 years previously — has a bizarre circularity which seems, to this particular Zappaphile, especially <sup>z</sup>apposite.

Thus the circular linkages to Zappa in the pieces below:

*Edgar's Eyebrows*

Zappa, impressed by Varèse's unruly hair, looms as Varèse's unruly heir.

*What Goes Around...*

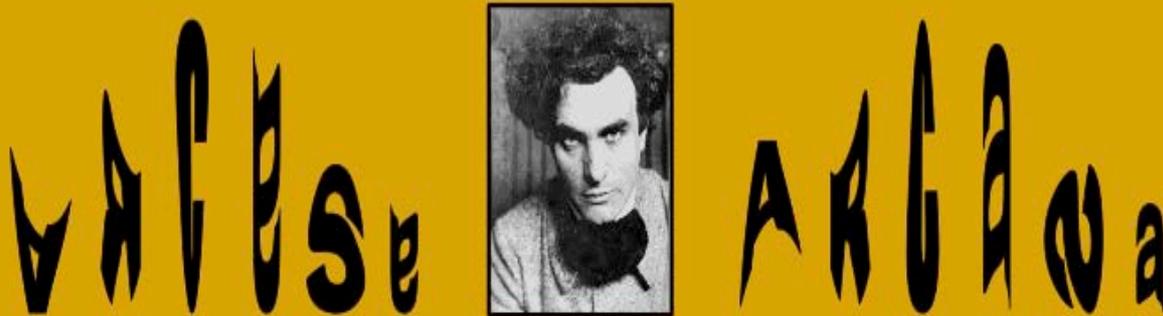
**Time is an affliction** quoth Quentin Robert De Nameland. For him therefore, a timepiece, its tik-toks spherically constant, but perhaps not soothing.

*Para11el Motion*

The tóks continue in another synchronous oddity, this time regarding the continuing legacy of Bartók. The beat goes on...

<sup>z</sup>as above, so below

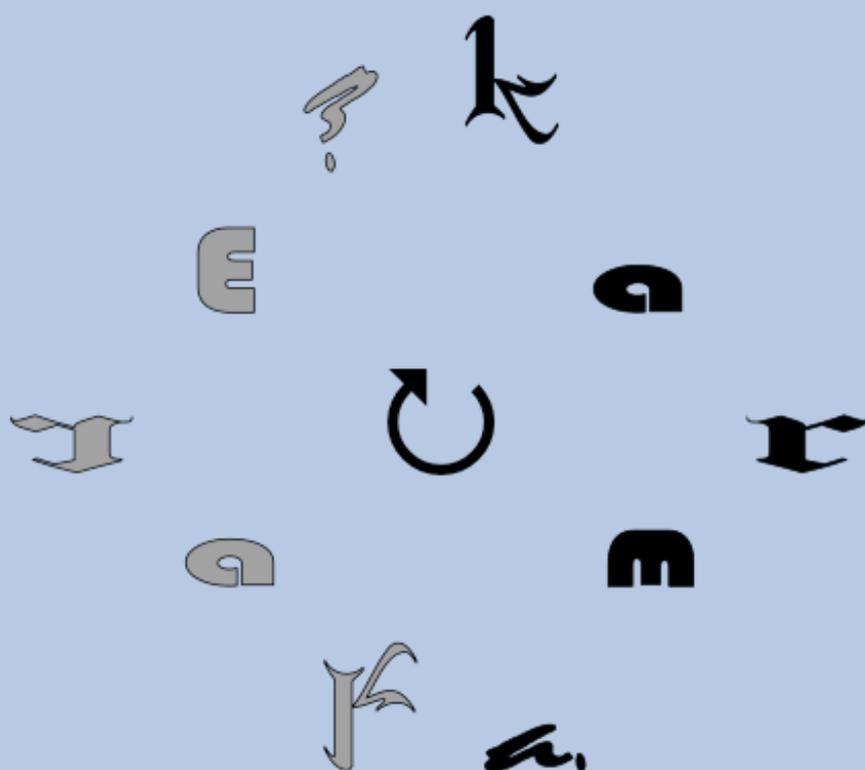
## Edgar's Eyebrows



"...music that explodes into space" Edgar Varèse

# What Goes Around...

for Q.



for Béla Bartók

# Para**11**el Motion\*

b.

1 **8 8** 1

Exactly

1 2 1

years later

(11

X

11)

in

**2002**

:

**Keller**

András

44

Duos

**&**

*mikrokosmos*

Andrea

**Keller**

\*Title of piece 11 from Bartók's *Mikrokosmos*.

Andrea Keller's album is on the Australian ABC Jazz label; András Keller's is on ECM.

## 2. FRANK ZAPPA: DECEMBER 21, 1940 – DECEMBER 4, 1993

Paul Carr

On the anniversary of Frank Zappa's death, I thought it appropriate for me to write my own tribute to him. As a young person growing up in the 1970's, I was introduced to Zappa's music at around the age of 14. The album was *Apostrophe*, and the first thing I remember latching on to was his humour – this guy was so intelligent and funny! As I had only just started playing the guitar at that point it took a couple of months to 'get' his guitar playing. As he moved outside of the predictable blues riffs of many of his contemporaries (probably the main reason his playing style is rarely featured in 'how to play the guitar' publications), the angular rhythmic approach of his playing initially took some getting used to – but once I did – Amazing.

In the years that followed Zappa was a constant but peripheral part of my musical landscape, as I continued to be impressed by his irreverent approach to the establishment, something that seemed to appeal to my generation, as it had to the generations before. Although I heard fragments of albums such as the London Symphony Orchestra recordings, I have to admit I initially thought his experiments with 'classical music' were a gimmick. However, I WAS WRONG! When revisiting his music over the last several years with more mature ears, and listening intently to all of his orchestral material (in addition to everything else), I realise that not only was he a quick witted satirist, a brilliant guitarist, and a talented songwriter, but also an outstanding composer. What other 'rock' musician had his music 'accepted' and recorded by Pierre Boulez? I am sure it would have brought a huge smile to his face experiencing orchestral renditions of his music by bands such as *Ensemble Ambrosius* (The Zappa Album), or his music being featured as part of the *Huddersfield Contemporary Music Festival* a couple of years back.

Oddly during my years as a professional musician, I did not get the opportunity to play much of Zappa's music. As it is usually so complex it was not a part of many of the jazz 'scratch bands' I used to play in, although another great irony considering his opinions of Jazz (and many of its musicians) was that 'Blessed Relief' and 'Son of Mr Green Genes' were featured in *The Real Book* – a collection of jazz standards for performing jazz musicians! Also, when conversing with Paul Buff last year, it was interesting to find out that at one point the only thing he was playing was jazz! When you hear the bossa nova influenced jazz version of 'Take Your Cloths Off When You Dance' from *The Lost Episodes*

(recorded in 1961), it makes you realise there was very little this man could not do when it came to placing dots on a sheet of paper.

Of late my work has given me the opportunity to follow in the footsteps of Ben Watson and a select group of others, and examine Zappa from an academic perspective. In fact I am currently awaiting on a decision from publishers to give the green light to set in motion an edited collection of essays on him – something that I hope will contribute to the understanding of who I consider one of the greatest composers of this age. This is representative of the fact that Zappa has not only continued to ‘grow on me’ musically, but also philosophically. Subjects such as politics, sex, death, religion and technology only scratch the surface of the areas this man interfaced with – something that the *Rondo Hatton Report* is referencing in ‘quilt’ format extraordinarily well.

After finishing this short essay, I am going to raise a glass to Frank Vincent Zappa and thank him for the jaw dropping joy he has given me over the last 30 years – both musically and conceptually. I will be listening to his music with a particular sadness over the month of December, as like legends such as Hendrix, I can’t help but wonder where his musical genius would have taken him if he were still around today. However, he did pack an incredible amount into the years he was with us, so there is only one thing to say – THANK YOU.

### 3. THE LIL' IPOD SHUFFLE

Sally Genaku

Fascinating though it was to read Kohjitsu Ohyama's essay on the ultimate FZ selection, and interesting though his selection was, I can't help feeling it's a doomed project to come up with an 'ultimate' selection. As someone who's made any number of attempts over the years (first with tapes, then CDs) to infiltrate the minds of friends, associates and others in the hope that I could get them to share my obsession, not only is there no telling what's going to appeal, I have to admit my own tastes change over the days, weeks, years and aeons that I have been listening to the music.

And if you talk to fellow obsessives, you can be surprised to find that the track that first led them down the sudsy path was something that you personally might least have expected. I once had a friend who resisted all my attempts to get her to like Zappa until she heard *The Dangerous Kitchen*. I should have guessed, she is a chef. But I hadn't thought it would appeal to her musically, and didn't want to put her off with what I considered to be an 'oddity'.

Knowing how people tend to take the sexual references the wrong way, I tend to steer clear of the Flo and Eddie period. But you can never tell with that, either. Some 3. people like that stuff – and even as sheer music, the vocal performances are really superb. Check out *Bwana Dick* again, if you haven't recently. The lyrics can make you cringe if you have a low tolerance for irony, but the way Howard Kaylan sings is out of this world, and the musical performances are none too shabby either.

Some people like guitar music, others – even fans – can apparently take it or leave it (though I find it really hard to see how you can be a Zappa fan and not love his playing). Then again, some people claim to really like his music but get put off by the lyrics (though you suspect that if they don't understand the perspective of the lyrics, they haven't really understood the fundamentally subversive qualities of the music, either. If Zappa isn't disturbing you, you aren't listening right.)

Either way, a 'best of' selection is always going to be subjective, or polemic at best. Even Zappa himself couldn't really manage it, however ironically. Because it's always a denial of possibility, a judgment call that limits you to the tastes of the person who's making the

selection. Even *Lather*, perhaps the best 'best of' album showcase of the work, doesn't really work. There's always more.

So I'm in love with my iPod in shuffle mode. With all the albums loaded, you can finally treat the entire output macrostructure as one album. Or like a concert. With the added thrill that you genuinely don't know what's coming up next. And you can always fast-forward to the next one if you're not in the mood for whatever appears. The beauty of it is, you're always in for a surprise. Who would have thought of following *The Man From Utopia* with *Beat The Reaper*, then *Mount St Mary's Concert*, *Don't You Ever Wash That Thing*, *Envelopes* (LSO version), *Whatever Happened To All The Fun In The World*, and *Heavenly Bank Account*. Not me. But my iPod just did. That's an album's worth of fun, right there.

Forget the ultimate selection. Check out the *oeuvre* shuffle.

#### 4. DIONYSUS ON A HALF-SHELL

Igor Goldkind

[Note: This poem was read by Igor Goldkind at a wake held at The Martian Embassy in honour of Paul Gamble, known to many as Gamma, who passed away last November. It is reproduced with his permission.]

Hey there, alien-scum-bastard Dave from Sirius  
You were supposed to meet me for a drink last week.  
What's all this?  
You frequent crematoriums now?  
Haven't you had enough hassle from the police for DaDa and your inner theatre?  
For your divine desecrations of the mind?

Go on, pull up a stool.  
Have one on me.  
You can drink as much as you want now.  
Nothing can hurt you, now.  
Nothing ever could hurt you anyway.

Nothing you couldn't smirk off  
With a Ken Kesey smile.  
Foam streaming down your bearded chin  
Another pint of Guinness flowing in, flowing down your shirt  
What is it, the third, the tenth?  
I've lost count.  
My eyes are bleary from the booze,  
From the marijuana smoke inspiralling the room,  
Haloed above your head.  
I can barely hear your voice anymore.  
Now.  
There it is, in the distance  
Mushy Yorkshire vowels keeping time  
Keeping Doctors Seuss and Zeus  
Tap dancing on my brain.  
Painting Salvador Dalis on the surface of my mind

No, please. Not another Zappa song  
My name's not Dave, my name's not Dave, my name's not Dave  
Fuck, what is my name?  
When I first looked up at my mother's face  
When I look down now at this patch of ground.  
Who was I again?  
You also seemed to know.  
You recognised me.  
And I recognise you:  
Your name is alpha, beta, Gamma  
Paul  
The third rung from the source  
Non-sequiturs jumping like flying fish from the stream  
Alice's rabbit watching his watch melt.  
Dionysus on a half shell  
Standing on Guinness foam.

Alien  
Scum  
Bastard  
Dave

Are the names of the four winds  
That blew threw your hair  
And spilt the Guinness  
That foamed your beard  
The churn of conception  
Clarity comes with only the highest state of inebriation  
Let the truth pour in with wine  
And let the sparks of the divine, from your eyes, from your tongue from your mind finally  
reach  
Their home again  
Goodbye Gamma

## 5. FZ: A MEMORIAL CURLICUE

Ron Guy

As Private Eye sardonically observed of the hoopla surrounding John Lennon recently, this is the anniversary of the birthday of a man who would have been 70 if it hadn't been for the fact that, well, he wasn't and isn't. The question is, should anyone care? More importantly, perhaps, would he have cared? Given Zappa's well-known disrespect for those who did care about such things ("I don't care about being remembered. People like Reagan and Bush care about that kind of thing") what are we to make of the desire to memorialise him? The sad fact that humans seem to need to worship something, perhaps. But for a man who believed that time is a spherical constant where everything is happening all the time, the desire for a commemorative event springs from too linear a perspective: the ultimate memorial barbecue for Frank Zappa being, of course, the vast body of work he leaves behind (as well as forwards, and even sideways), challenging anyone still feeling the urge to offer up retro-prophetic interpretations.

Because Frank Zappa was not just another late 20th century icon who died too young; he held in his hands the drawstrings of almost every musical tradition his time was heir to, weaving them into an extraordinary art in an environment that, even as the aeons close, remains distinctly hostile to dreamers. The breadth of reference in his work may place him in a tradition (wheel on the usual suspects; Stravinsky, Webern and Varese, R&B, blues and doo-wop) – but his is not so much a continuance as a summation, a mighty technicolor bisque of ingredients that defies all attempts at classification.

For how do you describe the work of a man who trained his bands to be able to deliver the raunchiest of rock and roll and then turn around and play chamber music? How do you describe music that undermines the very traditions it affirms, that never allows you more than the briefest nod of recognition before whisking out the carpet from under your feet, challenging almost every assumption about how music should or could be played? For there is no-one - certainly among his contemporaries - who has even attempted such a sexy, suave and sophisticated fusion of 'classical' refinement and populist balls, let alone supplied it with such style.

As composer, conductor and performer – and lest we forget, he was also a guitarist of frighteningly expressive power and ingenuity - Zappa both demanded and inspired the kind

of devotion from his bands that most musicians can only dream of. He also commanded both the technical expertise and the requisite artistic freedom to produce albums that will remain a benchmark for the attitude and style that is such a crucial part of the performances.

In a final twist, he was also a master wordsmith, displaying in lyrics, articles and interviews a wit and articulacy that stands up in the company of George Bernard Shaw, Mark Twain or Oscar Wilde. One of my favourite quotes dates back to the late sixties: "I keep hoping that one day I'm going to wake up and discover that a sufficient number of people have decided: 'These guys are great!'. And I'm going to agree with them. I'm not even going to bother to say 'What took you so long?'"

But don't take my word for it, even assuming you need to. The true memorial to dear Uncle Frank is the words of his ongoing fans, the ones who've made it through the sound barrier of conventional listening and emerged the other side as changed people. 'Cos it's a one-way trip. Once you get the 'soul' of Zappa's music, as he tells Terry Bozzio in *Titties and Beer* (the *Baby Snakes* version) *you can't give it back – you've got to keep it forever, and that's a natural fact!* And when you start to doubt your own sanity, further testimony is always available in the comments people so frequently feel moved to leave on YouTube. You never have to look very far to find them. Here's a random selection. Enjoy the language:

- You can't get better than this, if only people would start understanding that frank's solo's weren't full of mistakes, cuz they arn't, and when he did make a mistake he would make it work! The way he looked at guitar blows my mind, he found the range a guitar can do and had then had no limits. Same thing goes for his music, there was music, then there was zappa! Nothing like him. To me that's harder than makin up a new genre, he made up a new way to think of music!!
- He's the really God... FZ Forever
- Zeppelin shmeppelin... ZAPPA IS the GOD of ROCK! his band was like a musical army that attacked the audience with sound. Thanks mom for playing Zappa when I was a kid, I grew up right.

- This can rock your brain out...good as hell....paradise on earth
- I'm so sorry for today's youth they'll never get to know Zappa, I'm 15 and I'm a HUGE fan of FZ, but none of my friends (are able to) understand me...
- This is amazing. That guy has a sense of music and arrangement which is almost impossible to find in other musicians. I'm blown away.
- Why has today's music taken such a total dump? Man, this is where it's at. God, please rid Earth of hip-hop, rap, today's militaristic "Country" garbage and massive corporate power
- I love Zappa. He was insanely intelligent and had more integrity than anyone on Earth ever. Zappa's strong and honest opinions were so punk it made punk rock look like children's music
- Zappa has done more for artistic creativity than most artists will ever think of. Zappa was a genius!
- Frank was the greatest social commentator of his time. Everything he said, even the supposedly flippant comments are just as relevant today.
- Amazing, wish I was born earlier so I could see this god live!!!
- Frank the genius. Guitar virtuoso. There's not a rapper on the planet who's fit to polish Frank's shoes. None of 'em even come close (genres notwithstanding) to Frank's talents. Emotion, finesse, dexterity, brilliance.
- Zappa? Oh, just the best guitarist the world ever knew, that's all
- oh, supremo.... estoy en otra dimensión. gracias FZ, gracias, gracias....
- Fucking Brilliant. Flawless Perfection. It's like the guitar is a vessel of which he uses to channel pure emotion. Unlike anything else in life, this really touches my soul.
- Witchcraft, surely...
- ...Zappa is beyond category; if this is "rock" then Mt. Everest is a pitching mound. What a collection of musicians...GENIUS.
- our own mozart
- Bow down. I am. This is Godliness, and Frank is pure.
- now AINT that the absolute TRUTH though huh ?As i've always said... "an original BEYOND and above ALL other so called originals".. yup.. HE was da man !
- The word genius is too light for him there still isn't anyone that can match his velocity.
- He's so incredibly good! All people should be jealous of this guy! This is awesome!!!
- This guy was awesome! He's fucking god on guitar!
- There is no mind greater than the mind of Frank Zappa.

- Il Franco magnifico!!!! I can't get enough of this guy! Unfortunately he's dead...
- TRoppo GRANdEEEEEE ...qualcuno è riuscito mai più a colmare il vuoto lasciato da LUi ????

Of course, there are the ones who don't get it yet:

- i don't understand why people got into this shit. Zappa sucks worse than anyone i can think of.
- This is the kind of "music" some "people" "like" just to get laid with bookish girls with too much body hair when really they would be much better off checking out some Justin Bieber

Ah well. *If they only coulda heard it, half-a-dozen of 'em woulda strangled while they was suckin' on each other's dick.* But we know what's good for us, even if they don't. Happy Birthday, Frank.

בפעם הראשונה בה שמעתי את זאפא (בכוונה איני אומר "הקשבת") הייתה בתחילת שנות ה-70, עת הייתי חייל סדיר. הטעם הישראלי בלבוש היה אז נעלי פלדיום, חולצת פלנל משובצת ודובון (בחורף), וסנדלים תנ"כיים וטי-שירט לבן (בקיץ). הטעם הקולקטיבי במוסיקה היה גם כן אחיד: גולדן גיטר, שירי נצחון ומולדת, להקת כוורת, והמהדרין והמתקדמים בעם שמעו אז סנטנה ולד זפלין ב"ערבי גבינות ויין" פרובנציונלים. אני מודה שזו הייתה גם הגוודרובה המוסיקלית שלי. פה ושם הסתננו לארץ שמועות רחוקות על היפים וביטניקים, על וודסטוק, ועל תחילתו של עידן מלא אהבה, סקס, רוקנרול וג'וינטיים. אי שם בקליפורניה החולמת התרחשה מהפכה, בעוד כאן הערצנו גנרלים, לא אומנים...

את הברנש הבריטי שערך לי היכרות עם זאפא פגשתי בעיר שחוברה לה יחדיו. ביטניק נודד שהביא איתו ריחות אחרים (לאחר שנים הפך לחבר קרוב של זאפא). בין ג'וינט לג'וינט שמענו את זאפא. לא ממש הבנתי מה הביג דיל. זאפא נשמע לי כמו מליון צפרדעים בשלולית חורף... לאט לאט התחלתי לעכל ולהקשיב. נפתח לי עולם אחר, שונה ומשונה, מוזר הן בצליליו והן במילים והרעיונות שבו. הכל היה כל כך אחר ושונה, וכל כך הרבה מסגרות נופצו, שהייתי בטוח שזאפא מסניף על בסיס קבוע, אחרת איך ארעה המוטציה הזו??

ההתחברות קרתה ממש בין לילה. אחרי כמה אלפי סיבובים במהירות 33 ושליש של "הוט ראטס" על נגן התקליטים, כאשר הקקפוניה של מקהלת מליון הצפרדעים הפכה לשירת נערי כנסיה הרמונית, באה בצד ההנאה העצומה גם ההבנה שמדובר לא רק במשהו אחר ושונה מכל מה שהכרתי, אלא בראיית עולם מלאה הרמוניה פנימית והגיינה מנטאלית שאין כדוגמתן בעולם בכלל ובעולם המוסיקה בפרט. נכבשתי ע"י השפה החדשה שזאפא המציא וליהטט בה (מין סוג של אפרים קישון שלנו), שפה שלמרות היותה כל כך אחרת ושונה, הינה שפה אוניברסאלית בטבעה, הגיונית, חדה, שנונה, מלאת הומור מיוחד במינו, ובעלת יכולת התבוננות מופלאה בטבע האנושי. היכולת של זאפא לתמצת רעיון או אמירה בשתיים-שלוש מילים הינה אבסולוטית, כך גם היכולת שלו להביט בטריויאלי מזוית שונה מכולנו, ולתת לו משמעות אחרת לחלוטין. הבריטי ואני

קראנו לשפה הזו "זאפיש", ורוב חילופי הדברים בינינו נעשו (ועדיים נעשים) בשפה זו. די לנו בכמה מילים כדי להעביר מסר ארוך ומסובך. לפני כמה שנים צ'וטטתי בא"י. סי.קיו. עם בחור גרמני מכור

לזאפא. הצלחנו להתכתב שעתיים שלמות אך ורק בזאפיש, וזאת מבלי לחזור על אותה פראזה פעמיים.

זאפא מהעמיד מול השומע ראי, ומכריח אותנו לראות ברזולוציה גבוהה את הכיעור, הקלישאות, הפחדים והטיפשות שבו בפרט, ובאינטראקציה האנושית בכלל. ברם (וגם בזה יחודו), הוא עושה זאת בהומור מיוחד במינו, ללא רשעות וללא התנשאות, כשברקע מין סוג של אמפטיה וסלחנות לחולשות האדם. זאפא כאילו אומר: הארתי לך בפנס פינה חשוכה – עכשיו תחליט מה אתה עושה בקשר לזה. ואתה/אני יכול לעשות הכל, חוץ מלברוח ולהתעלם... הציניות הינה כלי בו הוא משתמש כדי לנער אותך ולהכריח אותך להביט במראה.

והגיטרה, הו הגיטרה... זאפא מנגן בנושלנטיות מדהימה. לעולם אינו מתפתל על הבמה כאילו הוא חייב לחרבן ממש עכשיו (עיין ערך ג'ימי הנדריקס ואריק קלפטון)... הוירטואוזיות והגאונות שלו כנגן גיטרה הינן חד פעמיות ואין שניה להן. אני עוד זוכר איך נקרעתי כשהחליט בעשור האחרון בחייו להפסיק לנגן בגיטרה, אבל – יש לנו למעלה מ 70 אלבומים ועוד כמה מאות "בוט לגים" להתנחם בהם.

אחרי 4 עשורים אני עדיין מקשיב לזאפא. לא רק שאיני משתעמם, אני תמיד מוצא טון או רעיון חדשים שלא שמתי אליהם לב בכל 992,657,043 הפעמים הקודמות בהן הקשבתי לו... זאפא גורם לי לחשוב. בעצם, אונס אותי לחשוב... מי עוד עושה זאת?? מה עוד אפשר לבקש ממוזיקה??

## 7. PLAGUE-A-RHYTHM: The Electric Wedding Dress Song

Simon Prentis

Listening to *Safe As Milk* again a few days ago in honour of the Captain's departure on his last tour, I stumbled on a strand of thought once sparked by a remark my eldest son made a few years back after first discovering *Electricity*: "Isn't that the intro from *The Wedding Dress Song* on *The Lost Episodes*?"

Pretty obscure, you might think. But so what. Just listen up (go on, you know you're going to.) Here's *Electricity*: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=S8eRDkiwGMM>. And now the *Wedding Dress Song*: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QPTrm1uUSVM>. For your further edification, you can even watch a live version of *Electricity* – which preserves the same intro – performed by the Magic Band in 1968 on the beach at Cannes here: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3JEOtSVkjJc&feature=related>, and as a final curiosity, the Pentangles with their version of the *Wedding Dress Song*, including the lyrics, here: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-JIsQX1lgz0>.

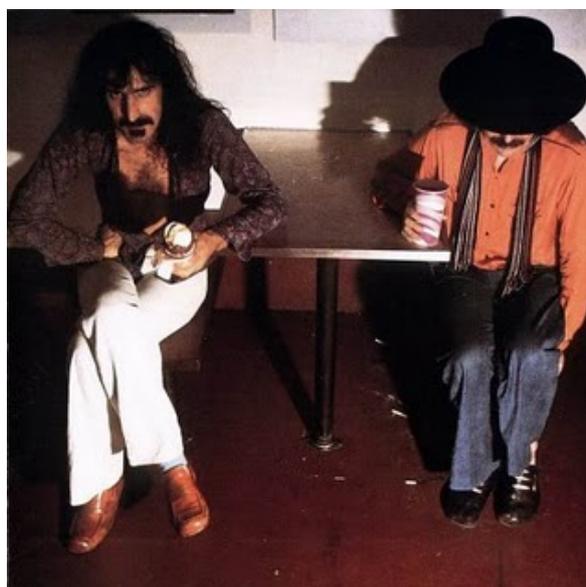
Mere coincidence, perhaps. A bit like busting George Harrison for 'subconscious plagiarism' of *He's So Fine* (<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vpAcQrt8-SE>) in *My Sweet Lord* (<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rBxc0LqyRTs&feature=related>). Except even less so, as it's only the intro. But then again, it's a much more complex melodic and rhythmic pattern. While it's quite plausible that the simple chord changes and undemanding melody of *My Sweet Lord* could have been produced independently by two moderately musical chimps on a piano, the statistical density of the *Electricity/ Wedding Dress Song* overlap makes it astronomically much less likely. And the Zappa version of the *Wedding Dress Song* was recorded in 1967, the same year as *Electricity*, a year in which, according to Rip Rense's liner notes to *The Lost Episodes*, not only did the Mothers used to play FZ's arrangements of these songs "all the time", but Zappa actually loaned Beefheart (or 'gave' according to the Captain) an album containing the song.

Does it matter? Not a whit. The stars are matter. What Beefheart did with his magical poetry was, regardless of his sources, something else entirely, a place that neither folk music nor Zappa could or would think of having gone to. Even assuming he did jump off from a borrowed line, *Electricity* alone is worth more than the entire output of the Pentangles, and then some. *Trout Mask Replica*, however much it may owe Zappa for its very existence as

a recorded artefact, is more radically creative than anything the puppet master could have come up with. It's a division that always seems to inspire tribal loyalties, the driven, erection-at-all-times encyclopaedic work ethic of Zappa vs van Vliet's semi-schizoid, fast & bulbous paranoid poetry; the control freak vs the loony tune-ster.

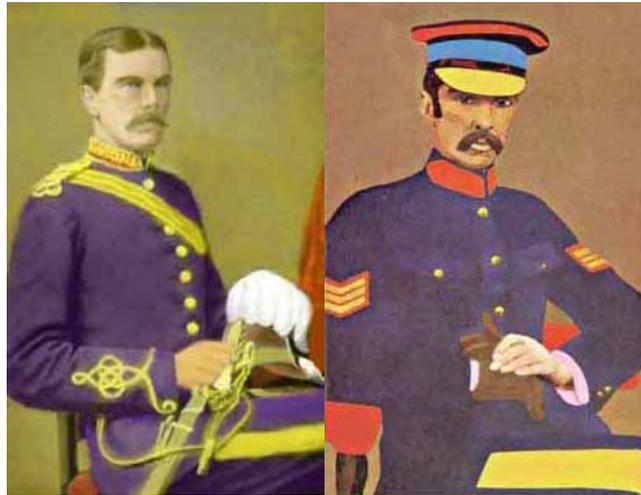
The irony, of course, is that the electricity was almost frozen into place. Zappa has commented in *TRFZB* and elsewhere on the difficulties of working with the absent-minded yet obsessive Beefheart – and stories of the eccentric nature of his composing techniques are legendary. Bruce Fowler once told me how different it was working for the two of them. Beefheart would never give a clear instruction of what he wanted played, expecting his musicians to intuit the melody from verbal hints, mumbles or the odd hum or whistle, and working with them at all hours of day and night until they got it 'right' – whereupon it had to remain the same no matter how many times the piece was performed. Zappa, on the other hand, would turn up with sheets of written music, expect you to learn it overnight, only to change it all again in the morning when some chance event inspired a new direction.

But it's not a question of either/or. The answer is both/and. Zappa and Beefheart have immeasurably enriched my life in very different ways – and will continue to do so, even though neither of them may be with us any longer. It doesn't matter. We are matter. So long, Cap'n, and send my regards to Gamma.



## 8. SGT PEPPER ET SES COEURS SOLITAIRES VS SGT FURY ET SES COMMANDOS HURLANTS

John Raby



Lord Kitchener et Sergent Pepper

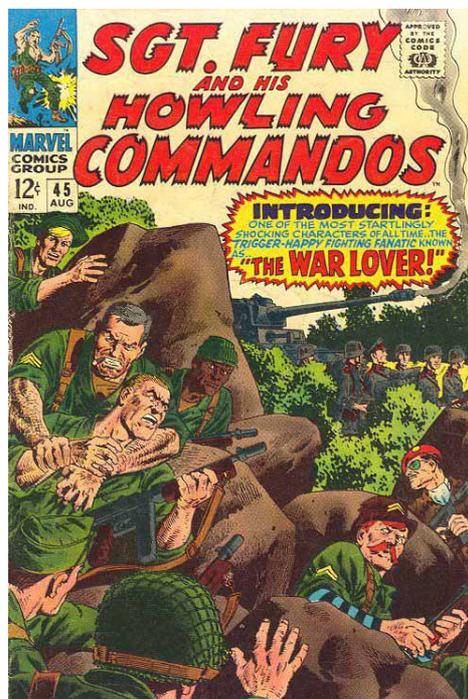
Tout commence par une idée farfelue que propose Paul Mc Cartney : fonder une agence matrimoniale et une armée sous la forme d'un club pour célibataires. Les Beatles composeraient sa fanfare officielle et un militaire de haut rang superviserait les opérations, alias le sergent Poivre. Pour le rendre sympathique, McCartney lui donne les traits et la casquette de Lord Kitchener, maréchal de l'empire britannique et ministre de la guerre pendant la Première Guerre Mondiale. Pour les anglais, cet homme est un symbole national de patriotisme et de victoire. On le retrouve sur des assiettes, des mugs, des t-shirts... il est devenu le logo d'une chaîne de boutiques de souvenirs British. Avec le temps, sa moustache a pris des allures inoffensives.



Lord Kitchener (affiche réalisée par Alfred Leete, en 1914),  
et l'Oncle Sam (affiche réalisée par James Montgomery Flagg en 1917)

Pourtant, affichée sur les murs de toute l'Angleterre dès 1915, cette moustache a convaincu un million cinq cent mille civils de se faire tuer sur le front pour leur patrie. Cette pose autoritaire, désignant le passant d'un gros doigt prêt à crever la surface pour l'attraper par le collet, sera plus tard adoptée par l'Oncle Sam et Trotski afin de gonfler leurs propres rangs. Près de cinquante ans plus tard, le Sergent Poivre recrute toujours, mais le vent a bien tourné. Au lieu de jouer pour le moral des tranchées, la fanfare pose sur un parc fraîchement tondu, entouré de fleurs et d'amis. En 1967, il n'est plus question de se battre en ce bas monde, mais bien de s'aimer le plus possible. L'armée elle-même s'investit dans les problèmes de coeur pour que l'amour s'infilte partout. Avec le psychédélisme, une société neuve est en train d'éclorre. Timothy Leary n'hésite pas à parler de « transmutation cérébrale ».

Pour Zappa, aussi vrai que le patchouli voile l'odeur de la crasse, prêcher l'amour à tous les coins de rue revient à chanter pour ne plus avoir peur du noir. Les hippies se mentent à eux-mêmes. Leur Amour est d'autant plus dangereux que sa superficialité permet de se prétendre pacifiste pendant que l'armée américaine déverse un demi million de tonnes de bombes sur le sol vietnamien. Pour extirper le hippie de ses douces illusions et lui remettre un tant soit peu les pieds sur terre, Zappa a misé sur son propre sergent qui, tout en étant un personnage de bande dessinée, est bien plus proche de la réalité, malheureusement...



«The War Lover», numéro 47, publié en août 67, en plein Summer of Love.

Parmi les figures bariolées et censurées qui entourent les Mothers travestis sur la pochette de *WOIIFTM*, Calvin Schenkel a placé Nick Fury, un personnage créé en 63 par l'usine à phylactère *Marvel Comics*. La vie de ce « héros » s'apparente à un indigeste parcours du patriote modèle. Après s'être engagé dans l'armée américaine en 41, Fury est rapidement fait Sergent. Quand son meilleur ami Red Hargrove est tué à Pearl Harbor, il promet de se venger des Allemands et des Japonais. Les Etats-Unis déclarent alors la guerre aux forces de l'Axe. Le cœur du sergent et celui de son pays battent la même cadence. Fury est promu officier supérieur d'un groupe de soldats Britanniques: les «commandos hurlants». Pendant quatre ans, son équipe luttera sur tous les fronts, allant jusqu'en Afrique pour bouter les nazis hors du désert. Ils se lanceront dans des missions suicidaires; tenteront de capturer le Führer et d'assassiner le Baron Strucker, grand officier nazi. Ils liquideront au passage une poignée de magiciens convertis au fascisme et le Comte Dracula, protecteur des tziganes, les rejoindra ponctuellement dans leur lutte contre les Allemands. La guerre terminée, Fury décide de ne pas repartir avant d'être sûr d'avoir éliminé tous les «parasites». Il lance son équipe dans une série de missions de « nettoyage » en Europe puis au Japon. Il sert ensuite quelques temps dans les services secrets américains alors nommés l'OSS avant de reformer son équipe de commandos pour une mission spéciale en Corée. Fraîchement revenu, la toute récente *CIA* décide de le recruter comme colonel.



(De gauche à droite) Sgt Fury, Lydon Johnson, James Leavelle, Lee Harvey Oswald

En 1963, année du premier numéro de la série Sgt Fury, John Fitzgerald Kennedy fixe le retrait des troupes américaines du sol vietnamien pour décembre 1965. Mais peu de temps après, le 22 novembre, il est assassiné à Dallas avant d'avoir pu mener à terme son projet. L'après-midi même, Lee Oswald, son assassin présumé, est arrêté. Deux jours plus tard, alors que le charismatique détective James Leavelle escorte le futur condamné en prison, Jack Ruby tire à bout portant sur Oswald. Le visage horrifié de Leavelle et la grimace d'Oswald au moment du tir sont reproduits sur la pochette de *WOIIFTM*. Elles côtoient une autre personnalité, suspectée d'avoir participé à l'assassinat du président: Lyndon Johnson. Vice président dans le gouvernement Kennedy, il remplace d'office ce dernier

après le drame de Dallas. Au lieu de poursuivre la politique de son prédécesseur concernant le Vietnam, Johnson, après son élection en 64, autorise l'utilisation du napalm et lance l'Opération « Tonnerre Roulant » qui consiste à intensifier les bombardements dans le Nord du pays. Un an plus tard, les effectifs des troupes américaines ont doublés par rapport à l'année précédente. Le sergent Fury et ses Howlers en font parti. Les commandos hurlants, toujours en bons patriotes, se sont engagés comme simples volontaires. Leur nouvelle mission: saboter une bombe nucléaire mise au point par l'ennemi. Elle serait cachée à Haïphong, une importante ville portuaire située non loin d'Hanoï. Le sergent et ses hommes se déguisent en réfugiés vietnamiens à l'aide de couvre-chefs traditionnels pour entrer dans la ville. Malgré ses 1 mètre 85 et ses 102 kilos, Nick Fury parvient sans anicroches à s'infiltrer avec ses acolytes. Avec ce sergent, chaque mission est une réussite. Alors que l'avion des américains décolle pour rejoindre le sud du pays, l'équipe du Sergent Fury fête leur victoire. « Maintenant elle explose ! » jubilent-ils, tandis que le champignon radioactif rase des centaines de civils. Ce que les hippies oublient à force de tout vouloir réduire à l'amour, c'est qu'une telle scène, pendant le Summer of Love, est bel et bien une *happy end* pour certains américains.



Le numéro annuel de 1967 publié au mois d'août, date à laquelle les Mothers commençait l'enregistrement deWOIIFTM

## 9. RAT TOMAGO

Ozzy Ting

It pains me to admit it since my father is a big Zappa fan and I hate to have to agree with him, but Zappa is a fucking genius. In fact, throughout all of my 17 years, Zappa's music has gradually become another language to me. Right now I'm obsessed with *Rat Tomago*, for some reason. Growing up in a household where music has always been diverse, I've gone through phases of listening to rock, pop, soul, funk, even classical, though I've been mainly listening to 90's hip hop ever since my older brother introduced me to it.

But seeing as how I do have some Zappa on my iPod, (it was bound to happen) I can go through days or phases of just listening to Zappa. For instance the other day, I was walking around school with my iPod on shuffle. I remember being angry at something that day, when suddenly *Rat Tomago* started to play. The minute I knew it was Zappa I really started to listen; as my Dad always says, to appreciate Zappa you really *have to pay attention*, and it's true. I can't really explain it, but for the mood I was in it seemed like it was the perfect song choice. Aside from the fact he plays the crap out his guitar in this one, it felt like he was parodying my ugly mood and that everything was all good. It made me laugh at how damn right he was.

What's astonishing is the fact that more people don't seem to know about his music, or perhaps, don't have the time or space to really hear him. Actually, being the only Zappa 'fan' out of my friends, and probably one of extremely few in my entire school, I never know how to explain Zappa when somebody asks about him, what music he plays, or who he is. It's almost impossible. The only way you can understand Zappa is when you are willing to listen to it, a skill which took me around 15 years to achieve (and how thankful I am now to have it). I know it's not just me that thinks like this. There's a comment on a Youtube site for *Rat Tomago* <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=66d74GWzej4> which says: "What the fuck??? Only 404 views for frank zappa??? Holy crap. He should have about 1.000.000 millions!" And I agree with him.

I can take a guess as to why there are so few fans though; people like to nod their head along to nice-sounding and consistent beats in a song that maintains speed throughout

(that's partly why I enjoy hip hop, though I mainly appreciate the lyrical content), and I do think hip hop suits and explores certain emotions, but Zappa is capable of taking your emotions all at once and transforming them whilst making fun of you, making you laugh and just ENJOY yourself all in ONE song... and most shockingly it's all deliberate!!! That's what I mean when I say, Zappa is a fucking genius – and I know that if you're reading this you'll know exactly what I mean.

And the worst of it is, he seems just to be able to pull these things off on the spur of the moment. How dare he! Rat Tomago is apparently taken from an improvised solo he played in the middle of a song (a version of *The Torture Never Stops* – amazingly, you can find it on <http://www.youdopia.com/2010/11/29/frank-zappa-the-origin-of-rat-tomago-live-in-berlin-15th%EF%BB%BF-february-1978/>), just like the rest of the *Shut Up And Play Your Guitar* album. And the other interesting thing you notice when you listen to the original live solo is how well he edited it for the version he released. With him you get the best of the best, every time. It makes you sick...

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

### **English Versions**

## 6. ZAPPA THE DATE-RAPE BASTARD (or: He Are What We Is)

Eli Michaeli

I'd never heard of Zappa until I ran into this crazy English guy who was a big Zappa fan, (later becoming a close friend of his) back in 1972.... Israel was a closed country in those days. True, there were some vague rumors of a sex and rock'n'roll revolution far away in dreaming California, but 90% of the people were still admiring generals rather than artists, dressed the same, ate the same, and had more or less the same taste in music (classic music, pop, jazz, shit like "Golden Guitar") and very few had even heard of Santana and Led Zeppelin). I must admit, that was my musical wardrobe too... I'd never heard anything like Zappa before, and his music hit me like a blazing blow right up my snout. At first it sounded like a choir of a million frogs in a winter puddle, and I was wondering where this mutation came from, who the hell this guy was, and what the "music" that he played was. He was brutally breaking all musical frames I knew... Was this cacophony really music?? It took me long time before I could digest Zappa. The English guy and me used to drop acid, smoke joints and listen to the music. We did nothing else. Days (and nights) of endless looping of "Hot Rats" on a 33rpm vinyl player broke the wall at last, and in between the joints the guitar seemed to be a belly dancer putting a spell on me...

I was used to listening to Mozart hours and hours, thinking that his music was so perfect and profound, that if you take out or change even the smallest note, it would make the whole structure collapse. And that's what I feel with Zappa. His music really is a "movie for your ears", and I imagined that Zappa must have been the biggest acid-head on the planet. But he wasn't. He was the straightest guy in the world. And then, only after I could digest his "strange" music, and the frog choir started to sound more like angels in heaven, I started also listening to the lyrics, and realizing that it was no accident that the guy could make music like that. He'd really done some thinking and taken the time to get his head straight.

He created his own special language we used to call "Zappish". I remember an ICQ chat I had with a German guy some years ago. We talked "Zappish" for about 2 hours, without repeating the same phrase twice... Zappa's ability to summarize an idea or a statement in two or three words is absolute, so is his ability to look at the trivia from another completely different angle, and give it a totally new and different meaning and significance you never thought of before. Over the years I realized that Zappa's fans all over the world behave and feel like cult members, united by the love and admiration of Zappa's music and ideas, and

of course they all speak fluent "Zappish"... And if there's anyone out there that does not hear or speak this language, wake up, clean the sleep dirt from your eyes, and start today. Zappa's ship never arrives too late.

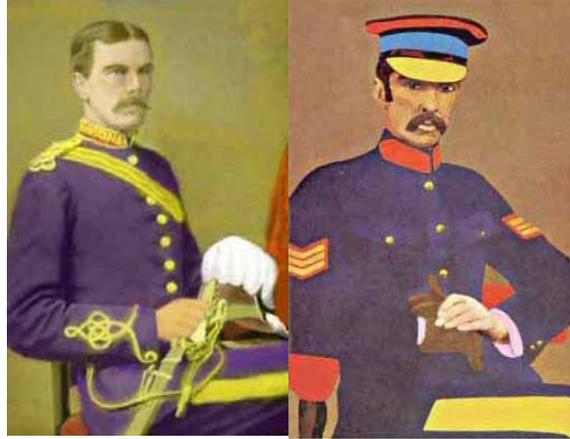
What really stunned me is what we used to call Zappa's "mental hygiene". Everything he ever said (lyrics or interviews) not only makes sense, but is also crystal clear, full of integrity, refreshing, and infested with insights you never thought of before – that are not only really sharp and completely to the point, but funny too. That's the thing about Zappa. He can amaze you with the profundity of his music and his thinking, but he'll make you laugh harder than almost anyone else as well, the bastard. He puts a mirror in your face, making you see and realize all the ugliness, fears, clichés and stupidity in mankind and in you, but he does it with lots of humor, (proving that humor does belong in music...) without being evil or wicked, and with a kind of hidden compassion for human weakness... His cynicism is just a tool he uses to shock you and shake yer (mental) booty... It's as if Zappa is saying: I shone the flashlight in a dark corner of you - now you decide what you do about it. You/I can do everything, except escape back to ignorance... All of a sudden, you find yourself completely naked, covering your balls with two hands, wondering if anyone else (except Zappa, of course) can see your naked mental core...

And, playing the guitar like the fucking nonchalant genius that he is, with no apparent effort at all, he'd never twist or wriggle himself on the stage like he desperately needs to have a shit (see Jimi Hendrix, Eric Clapton...). His virtuosity as a guitar player is completely unprecedented. Endless talent. I still remember how I was torn over the last decade of his life when he decided to stop playing the guitar. But – we have over 70 albums and a few hundred "bootlegs" to take comfort in. So even though he doesn't do it on stage anymore, let's just shut up and listen to his guitar.

After four decades, I'm still listening to Zappa. Not only do I never get bored, I always find a new tone or idea I never noticed during the 992,657,043 times I've listened to him before.... He makes me think, he rapes me into thinking... Who else does it?? What else can anyone look for in music??

## 8. SGT. PEPPER AND HIS LONELY HEARTS VS SGT. FURY AND HIS HOWLING COMMANDOS

John Raby



Lord Kitchener and Sgt. Pepper

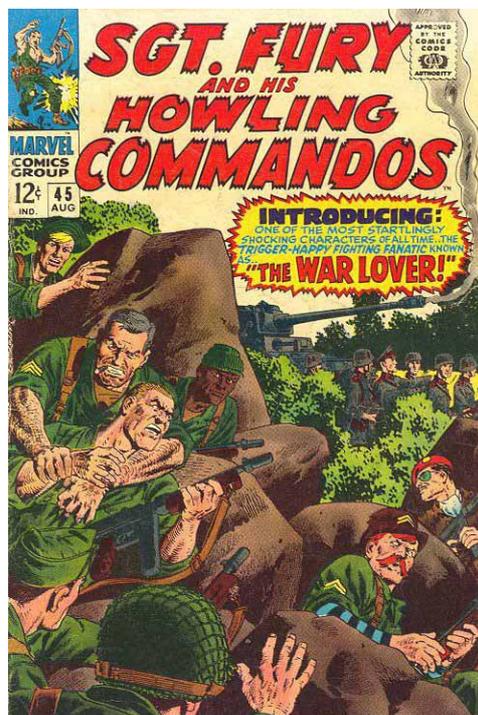
It starts with a crazy idea of Paul McCartney's: the creation of a singles club which combines a marriage agency and an army. The Beatles compose the official fanfare and a military man, aka Sgt. Pepper, oversees operations. To make him more appealing, McCartney gives him the peaked cap and features of Lord Kitchener, Field Marshal of the British Empire and Secretary of State for War during the First World War. For the English, this man is a national symbol of patriotism and victory. His face is found on plates, mugs, t-shirts... it even became the logo of a chain of British souvenir shops. Over time, his moustache starts to appear harmless.



Lord Kitchener (poster by Alfred Leete in 1914), and  
Uncle Sam (poster by James Montgomery Flagg in 1917)

Yet, displayed on walls across England in 1915, this moustache convinced 1.5 million civilians to die at the front for their country. The authoritarian pose, the fat finger singling out the passer-by as if ready to break through the surface to catch him by the collar, was later adopted both by Uncle Sam and Trotsky to swell the ranks of their own armies. Almost fifty years later, Sgt Pepper is still recruiting, but the wind is blowing the other way. Instead of playing to boost morale in the trenches, the band is on a freshly mowed lawn, surrounded by flowers and friends. In 1967, there is no question of going out to the world to fight, only to love as much as possible. The army has involved itself in the problems of the heart, for love is everywhere. With psychedelia, a new society is emerging. Timothy Leary does not hesitate to speak of "cerebral transformation."

For Zappa, it was also true that the incense masked a stench, with love preached on all street corners, and songs being sung about not being afraid of the dark. The hippies are fooling themselves. Their love is all the more dangerous as their superficiality allows them to pretend to be peaceful while the U.S. military drops half a million tons' worth of bombs onto Vietnamese soil. To root out these sweet hippie illusions and get himself a little more grounded, Zappa falls back on his own sergeant who, despite being a cartoon character, is unfortunately much closer to reality...



"The War Lover", No.47, published August 67, the height of the Summer of Love.

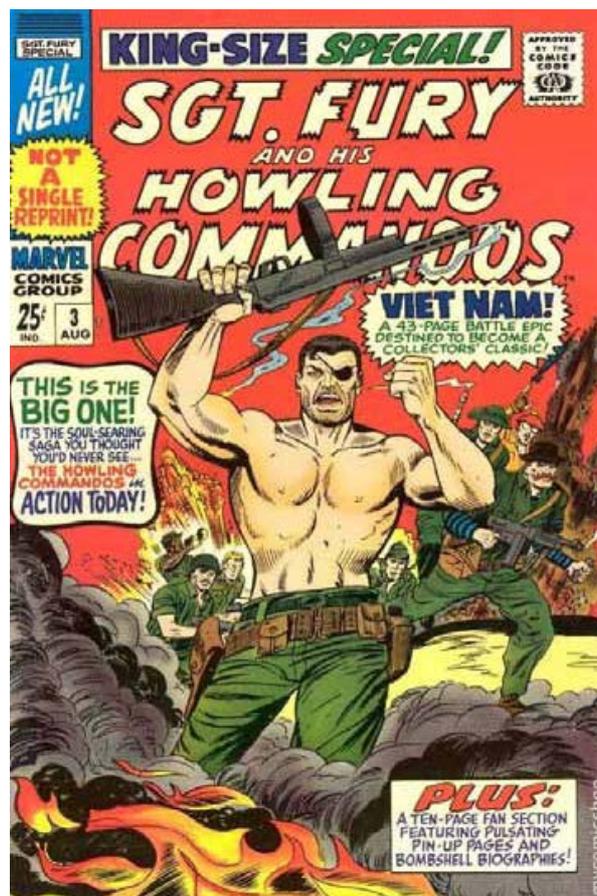
Among the motely collection of censored figures surrounding the cross-dressing Mothers on the cover of WOIIFTM, Calvin Schenkel has placed Nick Fury – a character created in 1963 through the auspices of Marvel Comics. The life of this "hero" is clearly an unashamed model of a patriot. After enlisting in the U.S. Army at 41, Fury is quickly promoted to Sergeant. When his best friend Red Hargrove is killed at Pearl Harbor, he swears to take revenge on the Germans and Japanese. The United States declares war on the Axis powers. The heart of the sergeant and his country beat as one. Fury is promoted to lead a group of British soldiers: the "Howling Commandos". For four years, his team will fight on all fronts, ranging as far as Africa to drive the Nazis out of the desert. They will engage in suicide missions, try to capture the Führer, and assassinate Baron Strucker, a leading Nazi. They liquidate in passing a handful of magicians converted to fascism and Count Dracula, protector of the gypsies, occasionally joins their fight against the Germans. After the war, Fury decides not to go home until he is sure all the "parasites" have been eliminated. He launches his team into a series of "cleansing" missions in Europe and Japan. He serves some time in the U.S. Secret Service, then known as the OSS, before re-grouping his team of commandos for a special mission in Korea. The newly formed CIA decides to recruit him as a colonel.



L-R: Sgt Fury, Lyndon Johnson, James Leavell, Lee Harvey Oswald

In 1963, the year the first issue of Sgt Fury appeared, President John F. Kennedy fixed the withdrawal of American troops from Vietnamese soil for December 1965. But shortly after, on November 22, he was assassinated in Dallas before being able to complete the project. The same afternoon, Lee Oswald, the alleged assassin, was arrested. Two days later, as the charismatic detective James Leavell is escorting the suspect to jail, Jack Ruby fires point blank at Oswald. Leavell's horrified face and the grimace of Oswald at the moment of the shooting are reproduced on the cover of WOIIFTM. They rub shoulders with another person, suspected of involvement in the assassination of the President: Lyndon Johnson.

Vice president in the Kennedy administration, Johnson automatically replaced him after the tragedy at Dallas. Instead of pursuing the policy of his predecessor on Vietnam, after his election in 64, he allowed the use of napalm and launched "Operation Rolling Thunder" to intensify the bombing in the north. A year later, the number of U.S. troops has doubled from the previous year. Sgt Fury and his Howlers celebrate. The Howling Commandos, always good patriots, are engaged as volunteers. Their new mission: to sabotage a nuclear bomb being developed by the enemy. It is hidden in Haiphong, a major port city situated not far from Hanoi. The sergeant and his men disguise themselves as Vietnamese refugees using traditional headgear to enter the city. Despite his 6ft height and 100kg bulk, Nick Fury and his cronies manage to infiltrate the base. For the sergeant, each mission is a success. As the plane takes off to join the Americans in the south, Sgt. Fury's team celebrate their victory. "See that sucker blow!" they gloat, as a radioactive mushroom clouds wipes out thousands of civilians. What the hippies forget in wanting everything to be reduced to love, is that for some Americans, a scene such as this during the Summer of Love was in fact a happy ending.



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