

The Music of Frank Zappa: 1966 - 1976

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1966 - 1976

BY CHRIS WADE

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The pictures have been removed from this version by an idiot bastard....

INTRODUCTION

Frank Zappa has been dead for over twenty years, yet his music becomes more and more popular and influential by each passing year. The success of the seemingly endless amount of posthumous releases shows that there are still a lot of people out there interested in his work, and sales of those classic albums, including those done with original The Mothers, continue at a steady pace. At a time when artistic freedom and integrity are at an all time low in mainstream music, Zappa and his ilk represent something special - hope perhaps.

There's a reason people still look back to Zappa's work so often and with such enthusiasm, and that's not only because he was so good, it's also because he was real. He didn't care about trends, fads or pop charts - he cared about the truth. He said things others didn't dare to say, he did things they wouldn't dream of doing and he explored avenues of music that were often so challenging that no other human being on the planet could dare to dream of coming close to them.

In another entry of the "Music of" series of books I wrote, I explored the musical world of Captain Beefheart and I found that many of the players and associates crossed over, from both Zappa and Beefheart's universes. Both men shared a certain fearless individuality, both very different beasts in many ways (Zappa was way more proficient and precise than the more earthy, primitive Beefheart) but similar in their single mindedness. They were both geniuses and it's remarkable to think that they were school friends way back when. And it's even more remarkable that the two mavericks both went on to develop parallel careers in the arts.

But Zappa exists in his own alternate reality, and I found that the people who came in and out of his zone, some of whom I have had the pleasure of being in contact with, all speak fondly of him as both an artist and a man. Musically, he was a genius, if that term can be used in regard to art. Not many would dare to argue with that.

This book explores the origins of Zappa's music, the early Mothers albums and the first stage of Zappa's career before he went out there on his own name for good, beginning with 1966's breakthrough record *Freak Out* and ending with his one and only Warner Bros. release *Zoot Allures*. The latter was an album which sonically brought in a new Zappa era, dominated mostly by a harder sound, much more blunt humour and what some called his often vulgar lyrics. That's another sound for another book. Until then though, let's look at those early records and take in the accounts of those who worked with him.

I hope you find something to enjoy in this book, whether you're a Zappa disciple or a new visitor to his world.

IN THE BEGINNING...

AND GOD CREATED ZAPPA

Zappa was born in Baltimore, Maryland in December 1940, to Francis Sr., a Sicilian (with Arabic ancestry) and Rose Marie. Frank's dad had filled various interesting job roles as a younger man, including history professor, meteorologist, data reduction clerk and even as the author of a book of gambling tips, while his mother had been a librarian before entering motherhood. By 1950 the family had relocated to Monterey, California, then to Pomo, California and in 1954 to San Diego. Primarily interested in chemistry, the young Frank's love for music began when he was 15.

Frank Zappa : "I was riding in the car and I turned the knob on the radio and heard this song. It was 'I' by The Velvets and it sounded fabulous. In our house we didn't even have a record player. I had heard background music to soap operas. That was it though. I didn't start listening to music until I was 15 years old because my parents weren't too fond of it..."

The young Frank Zappa soon got the music bug and joined his first band, The Ramblers, sitting in on drums. They played mostly rock and roll standards, in particular Little Richard's songs. Frank had convinced his parents into buying him a full drum set for 50 dollars.

Frank Zappa: "For band rehearsals we used this guy Stuart's house. His father was a preacher and he didn't have any interest in having a drum set in his house, but they allowed me to beat on a pair of pots that I held between my legs. And I'm sitting there trying to play shuffles on these two pots between my legs! The band leader was Elwood Madeo. He fired me because I couldn't keep a good beat and because I played the cymbals too much."

An important discovery came soon after when Frank was browsing through Look Magazine and came across an article about a record store owned by Sam Goody, in which he boasted he could sell any record to anyone. Used as an example was The Complete Works of Edgard Varese, Volume 1, an avant-garde piece consisting mostly of sirens and percussion.

Frank Zappa : "It took me almost a year to find that record after I saw that article and I found it in a store and the guy wanted six dollars for it and I said "Six dollars for a record!" he said "How much money you got?" So I gave him two bucks and went away. That was the first album I owned, period, but it was the first record of any kind of music other than rhythm and blues that I was

interested in.”

The album itself sounds like a blueprint of some of Zappa and the Mothers’ strangest moments, and it is clear to see the influence it had on the young Frank. He was always much more interested in the bizarre than any straight forward rock and roll number.

Frank Zappa: “My parents forbade me to play it in their presence because the sirens made my mother neurotic while she was ironing. ”

It was in 1956 when Frank was 16 that the family relocated yet again to Lancaster, California. By now, Frank was fully amerced in the avant-garde and even straighter classical music, in particular Stravinsky and almost obsessively the album by Varese.

Frank Zappa: “I liked them equally as well as rhythm and blues, so my whole background is just those elements. It was so far out that anybody should listen to Johnny Guitar Watson because nobody knew who he was and in Lancaster, there was nobody that you could discuss Johnny Guitar Watson with. When we moved to Lancaster I couldn’t find those records any more. There was no record store up there that had it, it was mostly like a cowboy era and the closest you could get to any kind of rock and roll was Elvis Presley and I wasn’t going for that.”

While still at school, and being desperately frustrated by the limited musical tastes of his new town, Zappa got a job at a local record store, working there after school and on his lunch breaks. He would order imports of The Dells, The Gaylarks and Rocking Brothers.

Frank Zappa: “I ran a campaign to upgrade the musical taste of the community.”

Academically, Zappa’s early musical training is easy to gather together; there are harmony courses at Chaffey JC and Antelope Valley Junior College Campus according to Zappa, and a composition course at Pomona College which the young Frank would sneak into. Zappa graduated high school in June of 1958 with “20 units less than what you were supposed to have.” With his musical interests blossoming, Zappa rented tape recorders from a local stereo shop at the weekend and would record improvisational musical pieces with a group of friends. Here Zappa would begin his fascination with documenting evidence of events as well as the tales and views of interesting people (almost like a primitive version of what he did with Wild Man Fischer and The GTOs on his own Bizarre/Straight label in the late 1960s). He would also get inspiration for future tracks.

Frank Zappa: “I also did research, where I would interview people and get their life stories. Some of the most grotesque events of the century. The story of Ronnie and Kenny, like Kenny saved his piss in Mason jars in the back of his house until black things started growing in it and increased in size and swam around in the jars and no doctor knew what it was. And his brother Ronnie saved his snot on the window in his room. I had them tell me about these things. They were kids that lived in Arturo. If I met somebody and they looked like they had a story to tell, I would just say ‘Here!’”

At this time, Frank put together his own group The Blackouts, named so because of the band members’ habit of passing out face down after drinking Schnapps. They were an 8 piece band, consisting of Mexicans, Sicilians and even a half Indian. Early gigs included opening for Earl Bosctic. Still drumming for the band, it was soon after that Zappa took up the guitar. He learned chords from a guitar book, and started practising on his dad’s old guitar which was hanging around the house not being used.

In his early 20s, Zappa finally moved over to the electric guitar, starting from scratch to perfect

the instrument. He rented a Telecaster before purchasing his very own Jazzmaster. Playing with a new band called Joe Perrino and The Mellow Tones, Frank found himself playing lounge bars with little passion for the material the band were taking on.

Frank Zappa : "I got the chance to write some music for a movie and actually earned something doing that. So with the money I got from the film job I bought a Gibson ES 5 Switchmaster, which I used for about 5 years."

A turning point for Zappa came when he managed to get his own recording studio together in Cucamonga, California. His plan was to hire the recording and rehearsal space out to local bands wanting to cut some music, but Zappa found there wasn't a lot of musical activity going on in there, and the studio became more of an experimental playground for himself. One person he worked with in the newly named Studio Z was Ray Collins, an aspiring young singer and future Mother.

Frank Zappa : "I produced some stuff with him. I took the masters to town and shopped them around, and nobody picked up on them. Ray and I wrote a song called Memories of El Monte which was recorded by The Penguins and released on Original Sound."

Ray Collins : "I was living in Pomona. There was a bar I used to go to, and my friends and I were drinking there one night. Frank's band came in there, and I heard him playing R&B stuff, which I thought was pretty bizarre because they were playing pretty obscure things. Four pieces: bass, drum, guitar, the basics, maybe two guitars. I eventually got up and sang Work With Me, Annie and some R&B ballads, and I told Frank I had an idea for a song called 'How's Your Bird' – it was a Steve Allen thing [on TV]. He'd also say, "How's your fern?" and that's how we came up with the name Baby Ray & the Ferns. So Frank called a couple of days later, and he said, "I've written How's Your Bird, how would you like to record it?" So we went to Studio Z and did How's Your Bird backed up by 'The World's Greatest Sinner.'"

Studio Z was Zappa's pride and joy. Described by the man himself as "an L shaped room", this was the place where Frank learned his craft. But something was just around the corner which would shake Zappa's world upside down and shatter his now steady income as a composer and musician. One day Zappa was approached by a gentleman who offered him a cash sum to come up with a tape of simulated sex sounds for a bachelor party he was organising. After Zappa and a girlfriend made the tape, faking the orgasmic noises, he was devastated and shocked to discover his latest client was an undercover police officer, and he busted Zappa there and then.

Frank Zappa : "My hair had been growing and I was a little weird and there was music coming out of that place 36 hours a day, so they sent this guy in there to entrap me. They got me for conspiracy to commit pornography. The town had about 7,500 people in it and they didn't like my long hair so they decided to get me."

Frank got a ten day jail sentence, from evidence recorded by a hidden microphone in the detective's watch. While in jail, Zappa experienced the appalling conditions which prisoners had to endure. Frank Zappa: "There were 45 men in the jail cell, the toilet and shower had never been cleaned, the temperature was 110 degrees so you couldn't sleep by night or day, there were roaches in the oatmeal, sadistic guards and everything that was nice."

When released, Zappa saw that his studio was about to be torn down due to plans to widen the street. He had also fallen behind in his rent and eventually gave up Studio Z. The establishment had not only set him up for crimes he hadn't committed, they had also ruined his business. On top of that, he only got a small amount of his tapes back after the police confiscated them. After this, Zappa wasn't messing around anymore!

When California based rock combo The Soul Giants invited Frank Zappa to play guitar for their band, the group were totally unaware that the new arrival would soon be taking over completely. Scruffy, with long scraggly hair and a moustache, Zappa looked anything but a master controller and conductor. Ray Collins himself had joined The Soul Giants by getting up on the stage one night when the band was playing in a bar.

Ray Collins: "Yeah, they were playing at a club in Pomona. They had Roy Estrada, who became the Mothers' bass player, and Jim Black, later the Mothers' drummer. I'd get up and sing with them, and the club owner said they could stay if I became the lead singer. The Mothers evolved from that."

Having had Zappa in mind, Ray Collins told drummer Jimmy Carl Black that he knew a guy who had just come out of prison who was sure to replace their recently departed guitarist.

Jimmy Carl Black: "The Soul Giants were mainly an R&B band but we played a few current hits because we were playing in bars mostly. We did do a few songs by Frank. You know we had Ray Collins as the lead singer and he is one of the best R&B singers around, in my opinion."

Frank Zappa: "I met Ray Collins, who was working weekend gigs with The Soul Giants. He got into a fistfight with the guitar player. They needed a substitute guitar player in a hurry, so he called me. I got really involved and learned how hard it is to run a band, especially if you are trying to put together some nonstandard musical offering with no money. You try to convince a musician that it is a worth-while thing to do, when deep in his heart every rock musician thinks that he, too, should be the fourth member of Cream or the eighteenth Beatle. That group of people became the Mothers, anyway." *

A guide to the albums released by Frank Zappa between 1966 and 1976, both solo and with the Mothers of Invention. Features pictures, album reviews from Freak Out to Zoot Allures and interviews with those who worked with him, including Pauline Butcher, Tony Palmer, Randy Brecker, Chester Thompson, Bruce Hampton, Carol Kaye and Dr Demento.

The Music of Frank Zappa 1966 - 1976 by chris wade - The Big Note: A Guide to the Recordings of Frank Zappa. The Mothers of Invention originally released from 1966 to 1976 on other labels, THE BIG NOTE is the complete guide to the music of Frank Zappaâ€”100 albums The Music of Frank Zappa: 1966 - 1976 (English - Amazon - A guide to the albums released by Frank Zappa between 1966 and 1976, both solo and with the Mothers of Invention. Features pictures, album The Music of Frank Zappa 1966 - Amazon.com - + Â£2.95 postage. By Jiminy in the Highlands David Scott Daniell 1966 Book 97791 The Music of Frank Zappa 1966 - 1976 by Chris Wade (Paperback, 2015) Le 20 migliori copertine rock a fumetti - Le prochain film de David Fincher, "Mank", sera diffusÃ© sur Netflix et s'est dÃ©gotÃ© un duo prestigieux pour

sa bande-originale. The Music of Frank Zappa 1966 - 1976: Chris - Amazon.ca - Een ontdekkingstocht in Zappa-eske stijl door zijn werk. cd-dvd-boeken-etc. recensies & info, The Hot Rats Book, Mick Ekers The Music of FZ 1966-1976 The Routledge Dictionary of Modern American Slang and - Hold Me Tight (Lennon/McCartney) 2:34 Song Take 21 (date unknown) The TMOQ Gazette series, this time focusing on The Beatles' concerts in Tokyo in 1966. Frank Zappa, irritated by the multitude of bootlegs devoted to his work, made his. Reuploaded: 1976 - Roosevelt Stadium (Definitive Edition) - June 17, 1976 The Music of Frank Zappa 1966 - 1976 (Paperback) - Walmart - Compre The Music of Frank Zappa: 1966 - 1976 (English Edition) de Chris Wade Editora: Wisdom Twins Books; EdiÃ§Ã£o: First (25 de agosto de 2015); Vendido Any Major Dude With Half A Heart - Frank Zappa with Peter Occhiogrosso, The Real Frank Zappa Book (New York, 1 989). He was educated by the Franciscans and had some music lessons from Dimostrazioni armoniche (Venice, 1571; facs., Ridgewood, N.J., 1966; MML ser. he composed the hit tune "Birdland" (on the album Heavy Weather, 1976). The History of Rock Music - The Sixties - Piero Scaruffi - Apparently it's originally from this book: 1966: Frank Zappa and the Mothers of Invention, "Freak Out" 1966: 13th Floor Elevators, "The 1976: Blondie, "Blondie" 1976: The Modern Lovers, "The Modern Lovers" 1976: The Frank Zappa on Spotify - Between 1966 and 1976 he often functioned as the official reporter and touring In 1973 he also founded a music fanzine named Hot Raz Times. Gwerder published two books about Zappa, namely Frank Zappa et les Frank Zappa - Musiikkikirjastot.fi - zappa wrote the music; performed by the pomona valley symphony orchestra (cond. (1966, lp, us, mgm se 4414) - frank zappa arranged two tracks (1999, book + cd, suisse) includes fragment from frank zappa & the mothers, live in basel 1974 in 1976 frank zappa recorded with grand funk railroad. he produced the

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