

= Frank Zappa =

Frank Vincent Zappa (December 21 , 1940 ? December 4 , 1993) was an American musician , songwriter , composer , record producer , actor and filmmaker . In a career spanning more than 30 years , Zappa composed rock , jazz , jazz fusion , orchestral and musique concrète works , and produced almost all of the 60 @-@ plus albums that he released with his band the Mothers of Invention and as a solo artist . He also directed feature @-@ length films and music videos , and designed album covers .

As a self @-@ taught composer and performer , Zappa 's diverse musical influences led him to create music that was often difficult to categorize . While in his teens , he acquired a taste for 20th @-@ century classical composers such as Edgard Varèse , Igor Stravinsky , and Anton Webern , along with 1950s rhythm and blues music . He began writing classical music in high school , while at the same time playing drums in rhythm and blues bands ; later switching to electric guitar . His 1966 debut album with the Mothers of Invention , *Freak Out !* , combined songs in conventional rock and roll format with collective improvisations and studio @-@ generated sound collages . He continued this eclectic and experimental approach , irrespective of whether the fundamental format was rock , jazz or classical .

Zappa 's lyrics reflected his iconoclastic view of established social and political processes , structures and movements , often humorously so . He was a strident critic of mainstream education and organized religion , and a forthright and passionate advocate for freedom of speech , self @-@ education , political participation and the abolition of censorship . Unlike many other rock musicians of his era , he disapproved of and seldom used drugs , but supported their decriminalization and regulation .

During Zappa 's lifetime , he was a highly productive and prolific artist , earning widespread acclaim from critics and fellow musicians . He had some commercial success , particularly in Europe , and worked as an independent artist for most of his career . He remains a major influence on musicians and composers . Sterling Whitaker described Zappa as " one of the most innovative and versatile rock musicians of his generation . " His honors include an induction into the 1995 Rock and Roll Hall of Fame and the 1997 Grammy Lifetime Achievement Award . In 2004 , Rolling Stone magazine ranked him at number 71 on its list of the " 100 Greatest Artists of All Time " , and in 2011 at number 22 on its list of the " 100 Greatest Guitarists of All Time " .

= = Early life = =

Zappa was born in Baltimore , Maryland . His mother , Rose Marie (born Colimore) , was of Italian (more specifically , her family was from Naples and Sicily) and French ancestry ; his father , Francis Vincent Zappa , was an immigrant from Partinico , Sicily , with Greek and Arab ancestry . Zappa , the eldest of four children , was raised in an Italian @-@ American household where Italian was often spoken by his grandparents . The family moved often because his father , a chemist and mathematician , worked in the defense industry . After a time in Florida in the 1940s , the family returned to Maryland , where Zappa 's father worked at the Edgewood Arsenal chemical warfare facility of the Aberdeen Proving Ground . Due to their home 's proximity to the arsenal , which stored mustard gas , gas masks were kept in the home in case of an accident . This had a profound effect on Zappa , and references to germs , germ warfare and the defense industry occur throughout his work .

Zappa was often sick as a child , suffering from asthma , earaches and sinus problems . A doctor treated his sinusitis by inserting a pellet of radium into each of Zappa 's nostrils . At the time , little was known about the potential dangers of even small amounts of therapeutic radiation , and although it has since been claimed that nasal radium treatment has causal connections to cancer , no studies have provided significant enough evidence to confirm this . Nasal imagery and references appear in his music and lyrics , as well as in the collage album covers created by his long @-@ time collaborator Cal Schenkel . Zappa believed his childhood diseases might have been due to exposure to mustard gas , released by the nearby chemical warfare facility . His health worsened

when he lived in Baltimore . In 1952 , his family relocated for reasons of health . They next moved to Monterey , California , where his father taught metallurgy at the Naval Postgraduate School . They soon moved to Claremont , California , then to El Cajon , before finally settling in San Diego .

Zappa recalled his parents being " pretty religious " and trying to make him go to Catholic school despite his resentment . Zappa showed disgust towards organized religion (Christianity in particular) because he believed that it promoted ignorance and anti @-@ intellectualism .

= = = Musical influences = = =

Zappa joined his first band at Mission Bay High School in San Diego . He was the drummer . About the same time his parents bought a phonograph , which allowed him to develop his interest in music , and to begin building his record collection . R & B singles were early purchases , starting a large collection he kept for the rest of his life . He was interested in sounds for their own sake , particularly the sounds of drums and other percussion instruments . By age 12 , he had obtained a snare drum and began learning the basics of orchestral percussion . Zappa 's deep interest in modern classical music began when he read a LOOK magazine article about the Sam Goody record store chain that lauded its ability to sell an LP as obscure as The Complete Works of Edgard Varèse , Volume One . The article described Varèse 's percussion composition Ionisation , produced by EMS Recordings , as " a weird jumble of drums and other unpleasant sounds " . Zappa decided to seek out Varèse 's music . After searching for over a year , Zappa found a copy (he noticed the LP because of the " mad scientist " looking photo of Varèse on the cover) . Not having enough money with him , he persuaded the salesman to sell him the record at a discount . Thus began his lifelong passion for Varèse 's music and that of other modern classical composers .

Zappa grew up influenced by avant @-@ garde composers such as Varèse , Igor Stravinsky , and Anton Webern ; 1950 's blues artists Guitar Slim , Johnny Watson , and B.B. King ; R & B and doo @-@ wop groups (particularly local pachuco groups) ; and modern jazz . His own heterogeneous ethnic background , and the diverse social and cultural mix in and around greater Los Angeles , were crucial in the formation of Zappa as a practitioner of underground music and of his later distrustful and openly critical attitude towards " mainstream " social , political and musical movements . He frequently lampooned musical fads like psychedelia , rock opera and disco . Television also exerted a strong influence , as demonstrated by quotations from show themes and advertising jingles found in his later works .

= = 1955 ? 60 : Youth and early career = =

By 1956 , the Zappa family had moved to Lancaster , a small aerospace and farming town in the Antelope Valley of the Mojave Desert close to Edwards Air Force Base , in northern Los Angeles County . Zappa 's mother encouraged him in his musical interests . Although she disliked Varèse 's music , she was indulgent enough to give her son a long distance call to the composer as a 15th birthday present . Unfortunately , Varèse was in Europe at the time , so Zappa spoke to the composer 's wife and she suggested he call back later . In a letter Varèse thanked him for his interest , and told him about a composition he was working on called " Déserts " . Living in the desert town of Lancaster , Zappa found this very exciting . Varèse invited him to visit if he ever came to New York . The meeting never took place (Varèse died in 1965) , but Zappa framed the letter and kept it on display for the rest of his life .

At Antelope Valley High School , Zappa met Don Vliet (who later expanded his name to Don Van Vliet and adopted the stage name Captain Beefheart) . Zappa and Vliet became close friends , sharing an interest in R & B records and influencing each other musically throughout their careers . Around the same time , Zappa started playing drums in a local band , the Blackouts . The band was racially diverse , and included Euclid James " Motorhead " Sherwood who later became a member of the Mothers of Invention . Zappa 's interest in the guitar grew , and in 1957 he was given his first instrument . Among his early influences were Johnny " Guitar " Watson , Howlin ' Wolf and Clarence " Gatemouth " Brown . (In the 1970s and ' 80s , he invited Watson to perform on several albums .)

Zappa considered soloing as the equivalent of forming "air sculptures", and developed an eclectic, innovative and highly personal style.

Zappa's interest in composing and arranging flourished in his last high school years. By his final year, he was writing, arranging and conducting avant-garde performance pieces for the school orchestra. He graduated from Antelope Valley High School in 1958, and later acknowledged two of his music teachers on the sleeve of the 1966 album *Freak Out!* Due to his family's frequent moves, Zappa attended at least six different high schools, and as a student he was often bored and given to distracting the rest of the class with juvenile antics. In 1959, he attended Chaffey College but left after one semester, and maintained thereafter a disdain for formal education, taking his children out of school at age 15 and refusing to pay for their college.

Zappa left home in 1959, and moved into a small apartment in Echo Park, Los Angeles. After meeting Kathryn J. "Kay" Sherman during his short period of private composition study with Prof. Karl Kohn of Pomona College, they moved in together in Ontario, and were married December 28, 1960. Zappa worked for a short period in advertising. His sojourn in the commercial world was brief, but gave him valuable insights into its workings. Throughout his career, he took a keen interest in the visual presentation of his work, designing some of his album covers and directing his own films and videos.

= = Early 1960s : Studio Z = =

Zappa attempted to earn a living as a musician and composer, and played different nightclub gigs, some with a new version of the Blackouts. Financially more rewarding were Zappa's earliest professional recordings, two soundtracks for the low-budget films *The World's Greatest Sinner* (1962) and *Run Home Slow* (1965). The former score was commissioned by actor-producer Timothy Carey and recorded in 1961. It contains many themes that appeared on later Zappa records. The latter soundtrack was recorded in 1963 after the film was completed, but it was commissioned by one of Zappa's former high school teachers in 1959 and Zappa may have worked on it before the film was shot. Excerpts from the soundtrack can be heard on the posthumous album *The Lost Episodes* (1996).

During the early 1960s, Zappa wrote and produced songs for other local artists, often working with singer-songwriter Ray Collins and producer Paul Buff. Their "Memories of El Monte" was recorded by the Penguins, although only Cleve Duncan of the original group was featured. Buff owned the small Pal Recording Studio in Cucamonga, which included a unique five-track tape recorder he had built. At that time, only a handful of the most sophisticated commercial studios had multi-track facilities; the industry standard for smaller studios was still mono or two-track. Although none of the recordings from the period achieved major commercial success, Zappa earned enough money to allow him to stage a concert of his orchestral music in 1963 and to broadcast and record it. He appeared on Steve Allen's syndicated late night show the same year, in which he played a bicycle as a musical instrument. Using a bow borrowed from the band's bass player, as well as drum sticks, he proceeded to pluck, bang, and bow the spokes of the bike, producing strange, comical sounds from his new found instrument. With Captain Beefheart, Zappa recorded some songs under the name of the Soots. They were rejected by Dot Records for having "no commercial potential", a verdict Zappa subsequently quoted on the sleeve of *Freak Out!*

In 1964, after his marriage started to break up, he moved into the Pal studio and began routinely working 12 hours or more per day recording and experimenting with overdubbing and audio tape manipulation. This established a work pattern that endured for most of his life. Aided by his income from film composing, Zappa took over the studio from Paul Buff, who was now working with Art Laboe at Original Sound. It was renamed Studio Z. Studio Z was rarely booked for recordings by other musicians. Instead, friends moved in, notably James "Motorhead" Sherwood. Zappa started performing in local bars as a guitarist with a power trio, the Mothers, to support himself.

An article in the local press describing Zappa as "the Movie King of Cucamonga" prompted the local police to suspect that he was making pornographic films. In March 1965, Zappa was approached by a vice squad undercover officer, and accepted an offer of \$ 100 to produce a

suggestive audio tape for an alleged stag party . Zappa and a female friend recorded a faked erotic episode . When Zappa was about to hand over the tape , he was arrested , and the police stripped the studio of all recorded material . The press was tipped off beforehand , and next day 's The Daily Report wrote that " Vice Squad investigators stilled the tape recorders of a free @-@ swinging , a @-@ go @-@ go film and recording studio here Friday and arrested a self @-@ styled movie producer " . Zappa was charged with " conspiracy to commit pornography " . This felony charge was reduced and he was sentenced to six months in jail on a misdemeanor , with all but ten days suspended . His brief imprisonment left a permanent mark , and was central to the formation of his anti @-@ authoritarian stance . Zappa lost several recordings made at Studio Z in the process , as the police only returned 30 out of 80 hours of tape seized . Eventually , he could no longer afford to pay the rent on the studio and was evicted . Zappa managed to recover some of his possessions before the studio was torn down in 1966 .

= = Late 1960s : The Mothers of Invention = =

In 1965 , Ray Collins asked Zappa to take over as guitarist in local R & B band the Soul Giants , following a fight between Collins and the group 's original guitarist . Zappa accepted , and soon assumed leadership and the role as co @-@ lead singer (even though he never considered himself a singer) . He convinced the other members that they should play his music to increase the chances of getting a record contract . The band was renamed the Mothers , coincidentally on Mother 's Day . They increased their bookings after beginning an association with manager Herb Cohen , while they gradually gained attention on the burgeoning Los Angeles underground music scene . In early 1966 , they were spotted by leading record producer Tom Wilson when playing " Trouble Every Day " , a song about the Watts riots . Wilson had earned acclaim as the producer for Bob Dylan and Simon & Garfunkel , and was notable as one of the few African @-@ Americans working as a major label pop music producer at this time . Wilson signed the Mothers to the Verve division of MGM , which had built up a strong reputation for its releases of modern jazz recordings in the 1940s and 1950s , but was attempting to diversify into pop and rock audiences . Verve insisted that the band officially rename themselves the Mothers of Invention as Mother was short for motherfucker ? a term that , apart from its profane meanings , can denote a skilled musician .

= = = 1966 : Debut album : Freak Out ! = = =

With Wilson credited as producer , the Mothers of Invention , augmented by a studio orchestra , recorded the groundbreaking Freak Out ! (1966) , which , after Bob Dylan 's Blonde on Blonde , was the second rock double album ever released . It mixed R & B , doo @-@ wop , musique concrète , and experimental sound collages that captured the " freak " subculture of Los Angeles at that time . Although he was dissatisfied with the final product , Freak Out immediately established Zappa as a radical new voice in rock music , providing an antidote to the " relentless consumer culture of America " . The sound was raw , but the arrangements were sophisticated . While recording in the studio , some of the additional session musicians were shocked that they were expected to read the notes on sheet music from charts with Zappa conducting them , since it was not standard when recording rock music . The lyrics praised non @-@ conformity , disparaged authorities , and had dadaist elements . Yet , there was a place for seemingly conventional love songs . Most compositions are Zappa 's , which set a precedent for the rest of his recording career . He had full control over the arrangements and musical decisions and did most overdubs . Wilson provided the industry clout and connections and was able to provide the group with the financial resources needed . Although Wilson was able to provide Zappa and the Mothers with an extraordinary degree of artistic freedom for the time , the recording did not go entirely as planned . In a surviving 1967 radio interview , Zappa explained that the album 's outlandish 11 @-@ minute closing track , " Return of the Son of Monster Magnet " was in fact an unfinished piece . The track (as it appears on the album) was created to act as the backing track for a much more complex work , but MGM refused to approve the additional recording time Zappa needed to complete it , so (much

to his chagrin) it was issued in this unfinished form .

During the recording of *Freak Out !* , Zappa moved into a house in Laurel Canyon with friend Pamela Zarubica , who appeared on the album . The house became a meeting (and living) place for many LA musicians and groupies of the time , despite Zappa 's disapproval of their illicit drug use . After a short promotional tour following the release of *Freak Out !* , Zappa met Adelaide Gail Sloatman . He fell in love within " a couple of minutes " , and she moved into the house over the summer . They married in 1967 , had four children and remained together until Zappa 's death .

Wilson nominally produced the Mothers ' second album *Absolutely Free* (1967) , which was recorded in November 1966 , and later mixed in New York , although by this time Zappa was in de facto control of most facets of the production . It featured extended playing by the Mothers of Invention and focused on songs that defined Zappa 's compositional style of introducing abrupt , rhythmical changes into songs that were built from diverse elements . Examples are " *Plastic People* " and " *Brown Shoes Don 't Make It* " , which contained lyrics critical of the hypocrisy and conformity of American society , but also of the counterculture of the 1960s . As Zappa put it , " [W] e 're satirists , and we are out to satirize everything . " At the same time , Zappa had recorded material for an album of orchestral works to be released under his own name , *Lumpy Gravy* , released by Capitol Records in 1967 . Due to contractual problems , the album was pulled . Zappa took the opportunity to radically restructure the contents , adding newly recorded , improvised dialogue . After the contractual problems were resolved , the album was reissued by Verve in 1968 . It is an " incredible ambitious musical project " , a " monument to John Cage " , which intertwines orchestral themes , spoken words and electronic noises through radical audio editing techniques .

= = = 1966 ? 68 : New York period = = =

The Mothers of Invention played in New York in late 1966 and were offered a contract at the Garrick Theater during Easter 1967 . This proved successful and Herb Cohen extended the booking , which eventually lasted half a year . As a result , Zappa and his wife , along with the Mothers of Invention , moved to New York . Their shows became a combination of improvised acts showcasing individual talents of the band as well as tight performances of Zappa 's music . Everything was directed by Zappa using hand signals . Guest performers and audience participation became a regular part of the Garrick Theater shows . One evening , Zappa managed to entice some U.S. Marines from the audience onto the stage , where they proceeded to dismember a big baby doll , having been told by Zappa to pretend that it was a " gook baby " .

Zappa uniquely contributed to the avant @-@ garde , anti @-@ establishment music scene of the 60 's , sampling radio tape recordings and incorporating his own philosophical ideals to music and freedom of expression in his pieces . Bands such as AMM and Faust also contributed to the radio sampling techniques of the 60 's , yet Zappa was unique in his mixtures of rock , classical , jazz , and avant @-@ garde styles of composition . He is credited by musicologists as making a fundamental contribution to the studies of how sound determines music , and music sound .

Situated in New York , and only interrupted by the band 's first European tour , the Mothers of Invention recorded the album widely regarded as the peak of the group 's late 1960s work , *We 're Only in It for the Money* (released 1968) . It was produced by Zappa , with Wilson credited as executive producer . From then on , Zappa produced all albums released by the Mothers of Invention and as a solo artist . *We 're Only in It for the Money* featured some of the most creative audio editing and production yet heard in pop music , and the songs ruthlessly satirized the hippie and flower power phenomena . He sampled plundered surf music in *We 're only in It for the Money* , as well as the Beatles ' tape work from their song *Tomorrow Never Knows* . The cover photo parodied that of the Beatles ' *Sgt Pepper 's Lonely Hearts Club Band* . The cover art was provided by Cal Schenkel whom Zappa met in New York . This initiated a lifelong collaboration in which Schenkel designed covers for numerous Zappa and Mothers albums .

Reflecting Zappa 's eclectic approach to music , the next album , *Cruising with Ruben & the Jets* (1968) , was very different . It represented a collection of doo @-@ wop songs ; listeners and critics were not sure whether the album was a satire or a tribute . Zappa later noted that the album was

conceived in the way Stravinsky 's compositions were in his neo @-@ classical period : " If he could take the forms and clichés of the classical era and pervert them , why not do the same ... to doo @-@ wop in the fifties ? " A theme from Stravinsky 's The Rite of Spring is heard during one song .

In New York , Zappa increasingly used tape editing as a compositional tool . A prime example is found on the double album Uncle Meat (1969) , where the track " King Kong " is edited from various studio and live performances . Zappa had begun regularly recording concerts , and because of his insistence on precise tuning and timing , he was able to augment his studio productions with excerpts from live shows , and vice versa . Later , he combined recordings of different compositions into new pieces , irrespective of the tempo or meter of the sources . He dubbed this process " xenochrony " (strange synchronizations) ? reflecting the Greek " xeno " (alien or strange) and " chronos " (time) . Zappa also evolved a compositional approach he called " conceptual continuity " , meaning that any project or album was part of a larger project . Everything was connected , and musical themes and lyrics reappeared in different form on later albums . Conceptual continuity clues are found throughout Zappa 's entire ?uvre .

During the late 1960s , Zappa continued to develop the business sides of his career . He and Herb Cohen formed the Bizarre Records and Straight Records labels , distributed by Warner Bros. Records , as ventures to aid the funding of projects and to increase creative control . Zappa produced the double album Trout Mask Replica for Captain Beefheart , and releases by Alice Cooper , The Persuasions , Wild Man Fischer , and the GTOs , as well as Lenny Bruce 's last live performance .

In 1967 and 1968 , Zappa made two appearances with the Monkees . The first appearance was on an episode of their TV series , " The Monkees Blow Their Minds " , where Zappa , dressed up as Mike Nesmith , interviews Nesmith who is dressed up as Zappa . After the interview , Zappa destroys a car with a sledgehammer as the song " Mother People " plays . He later provided a cameo in the Monkees ' movie Head where , leading a cow , he tells Davy Jones " the youth of America depends on you to show them the way . " Zappa had respect for what the Monkees were doing , and offered Micky Dolenz a position in the Mothers . RCA / Columbia / Colgems would not allow Dolenz out of his contract .

= = = 1969 : Disbanding the original Mothers of Invention = = =

Zappa and the Mothers of Invention returned to Los Angeles in the summer of 1968 , and the Zappas moved into a house on Laurel Canyon Boulevard , only to move again to one on Woodrow Wilson Drive in the autumn . This was Zappa 's home for the rest of his life . Despite being a success with fans in Europe , the Mothers of Invention were not faring well financially . Their first records were vocally oriented , but Zappa wrote more instrumental jazz and classical oriented music for the band 's concerts , which confused audiences . Zappa felt that audiences failed to appreciate his " electrical chamber music " .

In 1969 there were nine band members and Zappa was supporting the group himself from his publishing royalties whether they played or not . 1969 was also the year Zappa , fed up with MGM Records ' interference , left them for Warner Bros. Records ' Reprise subsidiary where Zappa / Mothers recordings would bear the Bizarre Records imprint .

In late 1969 , Zappa broke up the band . He often cited the financial strain as the main reason , but also commented on the band members ' lack of sufficient effort . Many band members were bitter about Zappa 's decision , and some took it as a sign of Zappa 's concern for perfection at the expense of human feeling . Others were irritated by ' his autocratic ways ' , exemplified by Zappa 's never staying at the same hotel as the band members . Several members played for Zappa in years to come . Remaining recordings with the band from this period were collected on Weasels Ripped My Flesh and Burnt Weeny Sandwich (both released in 1970) .

After he disbanded the Mothers of Invention , Zappa released the acclaimed solo album Hot Rats (1969) . It features , for the first time on record , Zappa playing extended guitar solos and contains one of his most enduring compositions , " Peaches en Regalia " , which reappeared several times on future recordings . He was backed by jazz , blues and R & B session players including violinist

Don "Sugarcane" Harris, drummers John Guerin and Paul Humphrey, multi @-@ instrumentalist and previous member of the Mothers of Invention Ian Underwood, and multi @-@ instrumentalist Shuggie Otis on bass, along with a guest appearance by Captain Beefheart (providing vocals to the only non @-@ instrumental track, "Willie the Pimp"). It became a popular album in England, and had a major influence on the development of the jazz @-@ rock fusion genre.

= = 1970s : From Mothers to Zappa = =

In 1970 Zappa met conductor Zubin Mehta. They arranged a May 1970 concert where Mehta conducted the Los Angeles Philharmonic augmented by a rock band. According to Zappa, the music was mostly written in motel rooms while on tour with the Mothers of Invention. Some of it was later featured in the movie 200 Motels. Although the concert was a success, Zappa's experience working with a symphony orchestra was not a happy one. His dissatisfaction became a recurring theme throughout his career; he often felt that the quality of performance of his material delivered by orchestras was not commensurate with the money he spent on orchestral concerts and recordings.

= = = 1970 : Rebirth of the Mothers and filmmaking = = =

Later in 1970, Zappa formed a new version of the Mothers (from then on, he mostly dropped the "of Invention"). It included British drummer Aynsley Dunbar, jazz keyboardist George Duke, Ian Underwood, Jeff Simmons (bass, rhythm guitar), and three members of the Turtles: bass player Jim Pons, and singers Mark Volman and Howard Kaylan, who, due to persistent legal and contractual problems, adopted the stage name "The Phlorescent Leech and Eddie", or "Flo & Eddie".

This version of the Mothers debuted on Zappa's next solo album Chunga's Revenge (1970), which was followed by the double @-@ album soundtrack to the movie 200 Motels (1971), featuring the Mothers, the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra, Ringo Starr, Theodore Bikel, and Keith Moon. Co @-@ directed by Zappa and Tony Palmer, it was filmed in a week at Pinewood Studios outside London. Tensions between Zappa and several cast and crew members arose before and during shooting. The film deals loosely with life on the road as a rock musician. It was the first feature film photographed on videotape and transferred to 35 mm film, a process that allowed for novel visual effects. It was released to mixed reviews. The score relied extensively on orchestral music, and Zappa's dissatisfaction with the classical music world intensified when a concert, scheduled at the Royal Albert Hall after filming, was canceled because a representative of the venue found some of the lyrics obscene. In 1975, he lost a lawsuit against the Royal Albert Hall for breach of contract.

After 200 Motels, the band went on tour, which resulted in two live albums, Fillmore East ? June 1971 and Just Another Band from L.A.; the latter included the 20 @-@ minute track "Billy the Mountain", Zappa's satire on rock opera set in Southern California. This track was representative of the band's theatrical performances ? which used songs to build sketches based on 200 Motels scenes, as well as new situations that often portrayed the band members' sexual encounters on the road.

= = = 1971 ? 72 : Accident, attack and aftermath = = =

On December 4, 1971, Zappa suffered his first of two serious setbacks. While performing at Casino de Montreux in Switzerland, the Mothers' equipment was destroyed when a flare set off by an audience member started a fire that burned down the casino. Immortalized in Deep Purple's song "Smoke on the Water", the event and immediate aftermath can be heard on the bootleg album Swiss Cheese / Fire, released legally as part of Zappa's Beat the Boots II compilation. After losing \$ 50 @,@ 000 worth of equipment and a week's break, the Mothers played at the Rainbow Theatre, London, with rented gear. During the encore, audience member Trevor Howell pushed

Zappa off the stage and into the concrete @-@ floored orchestra pit . The band thought Zappa had been killed ? he had suffered serious fractures , head trauma and injuries to his back , leg , and neck , as well as a crushed larynx , which ultimately caused his voice to drop a third after healing .

This attack resulted in an extended period of wheelchair confinement , making touring impossible for over half a year . Upon return to the stage in September 1972 , Zappa was still wearing a leg brace , had a noticeable limp and could not stand for very long while on stage . Zappa noted that one leg healed " shorter than the other " (a reference later found in the lyrics of songs " Zomby Woof " and " Dancin ' Fool ") , resulting in chronic back pain . Meanwhile , the Mothers were left in limbo and eventually formed the core of Flo and Eddie 's band as they set out on their own .

During 1971 ? 72 Zappa released two strongly jazz @-@ oriented solo LPs , Waka / Jawaka and The Grand Wazoo , which were recorded during the forced layoff from concert touring , using floating line @-@ ups of session players and Mothers alumni . Musically , the albums were akin to Hot Rats . Zappa began touring again in late 1972 . His first effort was a series of concerts in September 1972 with a 20 @-@ piece big band referred to as the Grand Wazoo . This was followed by a scaled @-@ down version known as the Petit Wazoo that toured the U.S. for five weeks from October to December 1972 .

= = = 1973 ? 75 : Top 10 album = = =

Zappa then formed and toured with smaller groups that variously included Ian Underwood (reeds , keyboards) , Ruth Underwood (vibes , marimba) , Sal Marquez (trumpet , vocals) , Napoleon Murphy Brock (sax , flute and vocals) , Bruce Fowler (trombone) , Tom Fowler (bass) , Chester Thompson (drums) , Ralph Humphrey (drums) , George Duke (keyboards , vocals) , and Jean @-@ Luc Ponty (violin) .

By 1973 the Bizarre and Straight labels were discontinued . In their place , Zappa and Cohen created DiscReet Records , also distributed by Warner Bros. Zappa continued a high rate of production through the first half of the 1970s , including the solo album Apostrophe (') (1974) , which reached a career @-@ high No. 10 on the Billboard pop album charts helped by the chart single " Don 't Eat The Yellow Snow " . Other albums from the period are Over @-@ Nite Sensation (1973) , which contained several future concert favorites , such as " Dinah @-@ Moe Humm " and " Montana " , and the albums Roxy & Elsewhere (1974) and One Size Fits All (1975) which feature ever @-@ changing versions of a band still called the Mothers , and are notable for the tight renditions of highly difficult jazz fusion songs in such pieces as " Inca Roads " , " Echidna 's Arf (Of You) " and " Be @-@ Bop Tango (Of the Old Jazzmen 's Church) " . A live recording from 1974 , You Can 't Do That on Stage Anymore , Vol . 2 (1988) , captures " the full spirit and excellence of the 1973 ? 75 band " . Zappa released Bongo Fury (1975) , which featured live recordings from a tour the same year that reunited him with Captain Beefheart for a brief period . They later became estranged for a period of years , but were in contact at the end of Zappa 's life .

= = = 1976 ? 79 : Business breakups and touring = = =

Zappa 's relationship with long @-@ time manager Herb Cohen ended in 1976 . Zappa sued Cohen for skimming more than he was allocated from DiscReet Records , as well as for signing acts of which Zappa did not approve . Cohen filed a lawsuit against Zappa in return , which froze the money Zappa and Cohen had gained from an out @-@ of @-@ court settlement with MGM over the rights of the early Mothers of Invention recordings . It also prevented Zappa having access to any of his previously recorded material during the trials . Zappa therefore took his personal master copies of the rock @-@ oriented Zoot Allures (1976) directly to Warner Bros. , thereby bypassing DiscReet .

In the mid @-@ 1970s Zappa prepared material for Läther (pronounced " leather ") , a four @-@ LP project . Läther encapsulated all the aspects of Zappa 's musical styles ? rock tunes , orchestral works , complex instrumentals , and Zappa 's own trademark distortion @-@ drenched guitar solos . Wary of a quadruple @-@ LP , Warner Bros. Records refused to release it . Zappa managed to get an agreement with Phonogram , and test pressings were made targeted at a Halloween 1977

release , but Warner Bros. prevented the release by claiming rights over the material . Zappa responded by appearing on the Pasadena , California radio station KROQ , allowing them to broadcast *Läther* and encouraging listeners to make their own tape recordings . A lawsuit between Zappa and Warner Bros. followed , during which no Zappa material was released for more than a year . Eventually , Warner Bros. issued different versions of much of the *Läther* material in 1978 and 1979 as four individual albums (five full @-@ length LPs) with limited promotion . When the music was first released on CD in 1991 , Zappa chose to rerelease the four existing albums . *Läther* was released posthumously in 1996 .

Although Zappa eventually gained the rights to all his material created under the MGM and Warner Bros. contracts , the various lawsuits meant that for a period Zappa 's only income came from touring , which he therefore did extensively in 1975 ? 77 with relatively small , mainly rock @-@ oriented , bands . Drummer Terry Bozzio became a regular band member , Napoleon Murphy Brock stayed on for a while , and original Mothers of Invention bassist Roy Estrada joined . Among other musicians were bassist Patrick O 'Hearn , singer @-@ guitarist Ray White and keyboardist / violinist Eddie Jobson . In December 1976 , Zappa appeared as a featured musical guest on the NBC television show *Saturday Night Live* . Zappa 's song " I 'm the Slime " was performed with a voice @-@ over by SNL booth announcer Don Pardo , who also introduced " Peaches En Regalia " on the same airing . In 1978 , Zappa served both as host and musical act on the show , and as an actor in various sketches . The performances included an impromptu musical collaboration with cast member John Belushi during the instrumental piece " The Purple Lagoon " . Belushi appeared as his Samurai Futaba character playing the tenor sax with Zappa conducting .

Zappa 's band at the time , with the additions of Ruth Underwood and a horn section (featuring Michael and Randy Brecker) , performed during Christmas in New York , recordings of which appear on one of the albums Warner Bros. culled from the *Läther* project , *Zappa in New York* (1978) . It mixes intense instrumentals such as " The Black Page " and humorous songs like " Titties and Beer " . The former composition , written originally for drum kit but later developed for larger bands , is notorious for its complexity in rhythmic structure and short , densely arranged passages .

Zappa in New York featured a song about sex criminal Michael H. Kenyon , " The Illinois Enema Bandit " , which featured Don Pardo providing the opening narrative in the song . Like many songs on the album , it contained numerous sexual references , leading to many critics objecting and being offended by the content . Zappa dismissed the criticism by noting that he was a journalist reporting on life as he saw it . Predating his later fight against censorship , he remarked : " What do you make of a society that is so primitive that it clings to the belief that certain words in its language are so powerful that they could corrupt you the moment you hear them ? " The remaining albums released by Warner Bros. Records without Zappa 's consent were *Studio Tan* in 1978 and *Sleep Dirt* in 1979 , which contained complex suites of instrumentally @-@ based tunes recorded between 1973 and 1976 , and whose release was overlooked in the midst of the legal problems . Also released by the label without the artist 's consent was *Orchestral Favorites* in 1979 , which featured recordings of a concert with orchestral music from 1975 .

= = = 1979 : Zappa as an independent artist = = =

Resolving the lawsuits successfully , Zappa ended the 1970s " stronger than ever " , by releasing two of his most successful albums in 1979 : the best selling album of his career , *Sheik Yerbouti* , and in Kelley Lowe 's opinion the " bona fide masterpiece " , *Joe 's Garage* . The double album *Sheik Yerbouti* was the first release on Zappa Records , and contained the Grammy @-@ nominated single " Dancin ' Fool " , which reached No. 45 on the Billboard charts , and " Jewish Princess " , which received attention when a Jewish group , the Anti @-@ Defamation League (ADL) , attempted to prevent the song from receiving radio airplay due to its alleged anti @-@ Semitic lyrics . Zappa vehemently denied any anti @-@ Semitic sentiments , and dismissed the ADL as a " noisemaking organization that tries to apply pressure on people in order to manufacture a stereotype image of Jews that suits their idea of a good time . " The album 's commercial success was attributable in part to " Bobby Brown " . Due to its explicit lyrics about a young man 's encounter

with a " dyke by the name of Freddie " , the song did not get airplay in the U.S. , but it topped the charts in several European countries where English is not the primary language . The triple LP Joe 's Garage featured lead singer Ike Willis as the voice of the character " Joe " in a rock opera about the danger of political systems , the suppression of freedom of speech and music ? inspired in part by the Islamic revolution that had made music illegal within its jurisdiction at the time ? and about the " strange relationship Americans have with sex and sexual frankness " . The album contains rock songs like " Catholic Girls " (a riposte to the controversies of " Jewish Princess ") , " Lucille Has Messed My Mind Up " , and the title track , as well as extended live @-@ recorded guitar improvisations combined with a studio backup band dominated by drummer Vinnie Colaiuta (with whom Zappa had a particularly good musical rapport) adopting the xenochrony process . The album contains one of Zappa 's most famous guitar " signature pieces " , " Watermelon in Easter Hay " .

On December 21 , 1979 , Zappa 's movie Baby Snakes premiered in New York . The movie 's tagline was " A movie about people who do stuff that is not normal " . The 2 hour and 40 minutes movie was based on footage from concerts in New York around Halloween 1977 , with a band featuring keyboardist Tommy Mars and percussionist Ed Mann (who would both return on later tours) as well as guitarist Adrian Belew . It also contained several extraordinary sequences of clay animation by Bruce Bickford who had earlier provided animation sequences to Zappa for a 1974 TV special (which became available on the 1982 video The Dub Room Special) . The movie did not do well in theatrical distribution , but won the Premier Grand Prix at the First International Music Festival in Paris in 1981 .

Zappa later expanded on his television appearances in a non @-@ musical role . He was an actor or voice artist in episodes of Shelley Duvall 's Faerie Tale Theatre , Miami Vice and The Ren and Stimpy Show . A voice part in The Simpsons never materialized , to creator Matt Groening 's disappointment (Groening was a neighbor of Zappa and a lifelong fan) .

= = 1980s = =

In 1980 , Zappa cut his ties with Mercury Records after the label refused to release his song " I Don 't Wanna Get Drafted " . It was picked up by CBS Records and released on the Zappa label in North America and the CBS label internationally . After spending most of 1980 on the road , Zappa released Tinsel Town Rebellion in 1981 . It was the first release on his own Barking Pumpkin Records , and it contains songs taken from a 1979 tour , one studio track and material from the 1980 tours . The album is a mixture of complicated instrumentals and Zappa 's use of sprechstimme (speaking song or voice) ? a compositional technique utilized by such composers as Arnold Schoenberg and Alban Berg ? showcasing some of the most accomplished bands Zappa ever had (mostly featuring drummer Vinnie Colaiuta) . While some lyrics still raised controversy among critics , in the sense that some found them sexist , the political and sociological satire in songs like the title track and " The Blue Light " have been described as a " hilarious critique of the willingness of the American people to believe anything " . The album is also notable for the presence of guitarist Steve Vai , who joined Zappa 's touring band in the fall of 1980 .

The same year the double album You Are What You Is was released . Most of it was recorded in Zappa 's brand new Utility Muffin Research Kitchen (UMRK) studios , which were located at his house , thereby giving him complete freedom in his work . The album included one complex instrumental , " Theme from the 3rd Movement of Sinister Footwear " , but focused mainly on rock songs with Zappa 's sardonic social commentary ? satirical lyrics targeted at teenagers , the media , and religious and political hypocrisy . " Dumb All Over " is a tirade on religion , as is " Heavenly Bank Account " , wherein Zappa rails against TV evangelists such as Jerry Falwell and Pat Robertson for their purported influence on the U.S. administration as well as their use of religion as a means of raising money . Songs like " Society Pages " and " I 'm a Beautiful Guy " show Zappa 's dismay with the Reagan era and its " obscene pursuit of wealth and happiness " .

In 1981 , Zappa also released three instrumental albums , Shut Up ' n Play Yer Guitar , Shut Up ' N Play Yer Guitar Some More , and The Return of the Son of Shut Up ' N Play Yer Guitar , which were

initially sold via mail order , but later released through the CBS label due to popular demand . The albums focus exclusively on Frank Zappa as a guitar soloist , and the tracks are predominantly live recordings from 1979 to 1980 ; they highlight Zappa 's improvisational skills with " beautiful performances from the backing group as well " . Another guitar @-@ only album , Guitar , was released in 1988 , and a third , Trance @-@ Fusion , which Zappa completed shortly before his death , was released in 2006 .

= = = " Valley Girl " and classical performances = = =

In May 1982 , Zappa released Ship Arriving Too Late to Save a Drowning Witch , which featured his biggest selling single ever , the Grammy Award @-@ nominated song " Valley Girl " (topping out at No. 32 on the Billboard charts) . In her improvised lyrics to the song , Zappa 's daughter Moon Unit satirized the vapid speech of teenage girls from the San Fernando Valley , which popularized many " Valspeak " expressions such as " gag me with a spoon " , " fer sure , fer sure " , " grody " (gross) , and " barf out " . Most Americans who only knew Zappa from his few singles successes now thought of him as a person writing novelty songs , even though the rest of the album contained highly challenging music . Zappa was irritated by this and never played the song live .

In 1983 , two different projects were released , beginning with The Man from Utopia , a rock @-@ oriented work . The album is eclectic , featuring the vocal @-@ led " Dangerous Kitchen " and " The Jazz Discharge Party Hats " , both continuations of the sprechstimme excursions on Tinseltown Rebellion . The second album , London Symphony Orchestra , Vol . I , contained orchestral Zappa compositions conducted by Kent Nagano and performed by the London Symphony Orchestra (LSO) . A second record of these sessions , London Symphony Orchestra , Vol . II was released in 1987 . The material was recorded under a tight schedule with Zappa providing all funding , helped by the commercial success of " Valley Girl " . Zappa was not satisfied with the LSO recordings . One reason is " Strictly Genteel " , which was recorded after the trumpet section had been out for drinks on a break : the track took 40 edits to hide out @-@ of @-@ tune notes . Conductor Nagano , who was pleased with the experience , noted that " in fairness to the orchestra , the music is humanly very , very difficult " . Some reviews noted that the recordings were the best representation of Zappa 's orchestral work so far . In 1984 Zappa teamed again with Nagano and the Berkeley Symphony Orchestra for a live performance of A Zappa Affair with augmented orchestra , life @-@ size puppets , and moving stage sets . Although critically acclaimed the work was a financial failure , and only performed twice . Zappa was invited by conference organizer Thomas Wells to be the keynote speaker at the American Society of University Composers at the Ohio State University . It was there Zappa delivered his famous " Bingo ! There Goes Your Tenure " address , and had two of his orchestra pieces , " Dupree 's Paradise " and " Naval Aviation in Art ? " performed by the Columbus Symphony and ProMusica Chamber Orchestra of Columbus .

= = = Synclavier = = =

For the remainder of his career , much of Zappa 's work was influenced by his use of the Synclavier as a compositional and performance tool . Even considering the complexity of the music he wrote , the Synclavier could realize anything he could dream up . The Synclavier could be programmed to play almost anything conceivable , to perfection : " With the Synclavier , any group of imaginary instruments can be invited to play the most difficult passages ... with one @-@ millisecond accuracy ? every time " . Even though it essentially did away with the need for musicians , Zappa viewed the Synclavier and real @-@ life musicians as separate .

In 1984 , he released four albums . Boulez Conducts Zappa : The Perfect Stranger contains orchestral works commissioned and conducted by celebrated conductor , composer and pianist Pierre Boulez (who was listed as an influence on Freak Out !) , and performed by his Ensemble InterContemporain . These were juxtaposed with premiere Synclavier pieces . Again , Zappa was not satisfied with the performances of his orchestral works , regarding them as under @-@ rehearsed , but in the album liner notes he respectfully thanks Boulez 's demands for precision . The

Synclavier pieces stood in contrast to the orchestral works , as the sounds were electronically generated and not , as became possible shortly thereafter , sampled .

The album *Thing @-@ Fish* was an ambitious three @-@ record set in the style of a Broadway play dealing with a dystopian " what @-@ if " scenario involving feminism , homosexuality , manufacturing and distribution of the AIDS virus , and a eugenics program conducted by the United States government . New vocals were combined with previously released tracks and new Synclavier music ; " the work is an extraordinary example of bricolage " .

Francesco Zappa , a Synclavier rendition of works by 18th @-@ century composer Francesco Zappa (no known relation) , and *Them or Us* , a two @-@ record set of heavily edited live and session pieces , were also released in 1984 .

= = = Digital medium and last tour = = =

Around 1986 , Zappa undertook a comprehensive re @-@ release program of his earlier vinyl recordings . He personally oversaw the remastering of all his 1960s , 1970s and early 1980s albums for the new digital compact disc medium . Certain aspects of these re @-@ issues were criticized by some fans as being unfaithful to the original recordings . Nearly twenty years before the advent of online music stores , Zappa had proposed to replace " phonographic record merchandising " of music by " direct digital @-@ to @-@ digital transfer " through phone or cable TV (with royalty payments and consumer billing automatically built into the accompanying software) . In 1989 , Zappa considered his idea a " miserable flop " .

The album *Jazz from Hell* , released in 1986 , earned Zappa his first Grammy Award in 1988 for Best Rock Instrumental Performance . Except for one live guitar solo (" St. Etienne ") , the album exclusively featured compositions brought to life by the Synclavier . Although an instrumental album , containing no lyrics , Meyer Music Markets sold *Jazz from Hell* featuring an " explicit lyrics " sticker ? a warning label introduced by the Recording Industry Association of America in an agreement with the Parents Music Resource Center (PMRC) .

Zappa 's last tour in a rock and jazz band format took place in 1988 with a 12 @-@ piece group which had a repertoire of over 100 (mostly Zappa) compositions , but which split under acrimonious circumstances before the tour was completed . The tour was documented on the albums *Broadway the Hard Way* (new material featuring songs with strong political emphasis) ; *The Best Band You Never Heard in Your Life* (Zappa " standards " and an eclectic collection of cover tunes , ranging from Maurice Ravel 's *Boléro* to Led Zeppelin 's *Stairway to Heaven*) ; and *Make a Jazz Noise Here* . Parts are also found on *You Can 't Do That on Stage Anymore* , volumes 4 and 6 . Recordings from this tour also appear on the 2006 album *Trance @-@ Fusion* .

= = 1990s : Classical music and death = =

In 1990 , Zappa was diagnosed with terminal prostate cancer . The disease had been developing unnoticed for ten years and was considered inoperable . After his diagnosis , Zappa devoted most of his energy to modern orchestral and Synclavier works . Shortly before his death in 1993 he completed *Civilization Phaze III* , a major Synclavier work which he had begun in the 1980s .

In 1991 , Zappa was chosen to be one of four featured composers at the Frankfurt Festival in 1992 (the others were John Cage , Karlheinz Stockhausen , and Alexander Knaifel) . Zappa was approached by the German chamber ensemble , Ensemble Modern , which was interested in playing his music for the event . Although ill , Zappa invited them to Los Angeles for rehearsals of new compositions and new arrangements of older material . In addition to being satisfied with the ensemble 's performances of his music , Zappa also got along with the musicians , and the concerts in Germany and Austria were set up for the fall . In September 1992 , the concerts went ahead as scheduled , but Zappa could only appear at two in Frankfurt due to illness . At the first concert , he conducted the opening " Overture " , and the final " G @-@ Spot Tornado " as well as the theatrical " Food Gathering in Post @-@ Industrial America , 1992 " and " Welcome to the United States " (the remainder of the program was conducted by the ensemble 's regular conductor Peter Rundel) .

Zappa received a 20 @-@ minute ovation . It would become his last professional public appearance , as the cancer was spreading to such an extent that he was in too much pain to enjoy an event that he otherwise found " exhilarating " (though he did do an audio interview in the final months of his life) . Recordings from the concerts appeared on The Yellow Shark (1993) , Zappa 's last release during his lifetime , and some material from studio rehearsals appeared on the posthumous Everything Is Healing Nicely (1999) .

Zappa died on December 4 , 1993 , in his home with his wife and children by his side . At a private ceremony the following day , Zappa was interred in an unmarked grave at the Westwood Village Memorial Park Cemetery in Los Angeles . On December 6 , his family publicly announced that " Composer Frank Zappa left for his final tour just before 6 : 00 pm on Saturday " .

= = Politics and religion = =

Zappa was often characterized as an atheist . On Dweezil 's birth certificate , for father 's religion Zappa put " musician " .

Describing his political views , Frank Zappa jokingly categorized himself as a " practical conservative " , or " independent " . He favored limited government and low taxes ; he also stated that he approved of national defense , social security , and other federal programs , but only if recipients of such programs are willing and able to pay for them . He favored capitalism , entrepreneurship , and independent business , stating that musicians could make more from owning their own businesses than from collecting royalties . He opposed communism , stating , " A system that doesn 't allow ownership ... has ? to put it mildly ? a fatal design flaw . " Some of his songs , concert performances , interviews and public debates in the 1980s criticized and derided Republicans and their policies , President Ronald Reagan , the Strategic Defense Initiative (SDI) , televangelism , and the Christian Right , and warned that the United States government was in danger of becoming a " fascist theocracy " . Zappa expressed opinions on censorship when he appeared on CNN 's Crossfire TV series and debated issues with Washington Times commentator John Lofton in 1986 . He had always encouraged his fans to register to vote on album covers , and throughout 1988 he had registration booths at his concerts . He even considered running for president of the United States .

Frank Zappa tried cannabis ten times , but without any pleasure , and " never used LSD , never used cocaine , never used heroin or any of that other stuff . " Zappa stated , " Drugs do not become a problem until the person who uses the drugs does something to you , or does something that would affect your life that you don 't want to have happen to you , like an airline pilot who crashes because he was full of drugs . " He was a regular tobacco smoker for most of his life , and strongly critical of anti @-@ tobacco campaigns . While he disapproved of drug use , he criticized the War on Drugs , comparing it to alcohol prohibition , and stated that the United States Treasury would benefit from the decriminalization and regulation of drugs . Describing his philosophical views , Zappa stated , " I believe that people have a right to decide their own destinies ; people own themselves . I also believe that , in a democracy , government exists because (and only so long as) individual citizens give it a ' temporary license to exist ' ? in exchange for a promise that it will behave itself . In a democracy , you own the government ? it doesn 't own you . "

In early 1990 , Zappa visited Czechoslovakia at the request of President Václav Havel . Havel designated him as Czechoslovakia 's " Special Ambassador to the West on Trade , Culture and Tourism " . Havel was a lifelong fan of Zappa , who had great influence in the avant @-@ garde and underground scene in Central Europe in the 1970s and 1980s (a Czech rock group that was imprisoned in 1976 took its name from Zappa 's 1968 song " Plastic People ") . Under pressure from US Secretary of State James Baker , Zappa 's posting was withdrawn . Havel made Zappa an unofficial cultural attaché instead . Zappa also planned to develop an international consulting enterprise to facilitate trade between the former Eastern Bloc and Western businesses .

= = = Senate testimony = = =

On September 19 , 1985 , Zappa testified before the United States Senate Commerce , Technology , and Transportation committee , attacking the Parents Music Resource Center or PMRC , a music organization co @-@ founded by Tipper Gore , wife of then @-@ senator Al Gore . The PMRC consisted of many wives of politicians , including the wives of five members of the committee , and was founded to address the issue of song lyrics with sexual or satanic content . Zappa saw their activities as on a path towards censorship , and called their proposal for voluntary labelling of records with explicit content " extortion " of the music industry . In his prepared statement , he said :

The PMRC proposal is an ill @-@ conceived piece of nonsense which fails to deliver any real benefits to children , infringes the civil liberties of people who are not children , and promises to keep the courts busy for years dealing with the interpretational and enforcement problems inherent in the proposal 's design . It is my understanding that , in law , First Amendment issues are decided with a preference for the least restrictive alternative . In this context , the PMRC 's demands are the equivalent of treating dandruff by decapitation The establishment of a rating system , voluntary or otherwise , opens the door to an endless parade of moral quality control programs based on things certain Christians do not like . What if the next bunch of Washington wives demands a large yellow " J " on all material written or performed by Jews , in order to save helpless children from exposure to concealed Zionist doctrine ?

Zappa set excerpts from the PMRC hearings to Synclavier music in his composition " Porn Wars " on the 1985 album Frank Zappa Meets the Mothers of Prevention , and the full recording was released in 2010 as Congress Shall Make No Law ... Zappa is heard interacting with Senators Fritz Hollings , Slade Gorton , Al Gore (who claimed , at the hearing , to be a Zappa fan) , and in an exchange with Florida Senator Paula Hawkins over what toys Zappa 's children played with .

= = Legacy = =

= = = Acclaim and honors = = =

Zappa earned widespread critical acclaim in his lifetime and after his death . The Rolling Stone Album Guide (2004) writes : " Frank Zappa dabbled in virtually all kinds of music ? and , whether guised as a satirical rocker , jazz @-@ rock fusionist , guitar virtuoso , electronics wizard , or orchestral innovator , his eccentric genius was undeniable . " Even though his work drew inspiration from many different genres , Zappa was seen establishing a coherent and personal expression . In 1971 , biographer David Walley noted that " The whole structure of his music is unified , not neatly divided by dates or time sequences and it is all building into a composite " . On commenting on Zappa 's music , politics and philosophy , Barry Miles noted in 2004 that they cannot be separated : " It was all one ; all part of his ' conceptual continuity ' . "

Guitar Player devoted a special issue to Zappa in 1992 , and asked on the cover " Is FZ America 's Best Kept Musical Secret ? " Editor Don Menn remarked that the issue was about " The most important composer to come out of modern popular music " . Among those contributing to the issue was composer and musicologist Nicolas Slonimsky , who conducted premiere performances of works of Ives and Varèse in the 1930s . He became friends with Zappa in the 1980s , and said , " I admire everything Frank does , because he practically created the new musical millennium . He does beautiful , beautiful work ... It has been my luck to have lived to see the emergence of this totally new type of music . " Conductor Kent Nagano remarked in the same issue that " Frank is a genius . That 's a word I don 't use often ... In Frank 's case it is not too strong ... He is extremely literate musically . I 'm not sure if the general public knows that . " Pierre Boulez stated in Musician magazine 's posthumous Zappa tribute article that Zappa " was an exceptional figure because he was part of the worlds of rock and classical music and that both types of his work would survive . "

In 1994 , jazz magazine Down Beat 's critics poll placed Zappa in its Hall of Fame . Zappa was posthumously inducted into the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame in 1995 . There , it was written that " Frank Zappa was rock and roll 's sharpest musical mind and most astute social critic . He was the most prolific composer of his age , and he bridged genres ? rock , jazz , classical , avant @-@

garde and even novelty music ? with masterful ease " . He received the Grammy Lifetime Achievement Award in 1997 . In 2005 , the U.S. National Recording Preservation Board included We 're Only in It for the Money in the National Recording Registry as " Frank Zappa 's inventive and iconoclastic album presents a unique political stance , both anti @-@ conservative and anti @-@ counterculture , and features a scathing satire on hippiedom and America 's reactions to it " . The same year , Rolling Stone magazine ranked him at No. 71 on its list of the 100 Greatest Artists of All Time . In 2011 , he was ranked at No. 22 on the list of the 100 Greatest Guitarists of All Time by the same magazine .

= = = Artists influenced by Zappa = = =

Many musicians , bands and orchestras from diverse genres have been influenced by Frank Zappa 's music . Rock artists like Alice Cooper , Larry LaLonde of Primus , Fee Waybill of the Tubes all cite Zappa 's influence , as do progressive , alternative and experimental rock artists like Can , Pere Ubu , Henry Cow , Trey Anastasio of Phish , Jeff Buckley , Faust , John Frusciante , and Steven Wilson . Paul McCartney regarded Sgt. Pepper 's Lonely Hearts Club Band as the Beatles ' Freak Out ! , Jimi Hendrix , and heavy rock and metal acts like Black Sabbath , Simon Phillips , Mike Portnoy , Warren DeMartini , Steve Vai , Strapping Young Lad , System of a Down , Clawfinger , and Devin Townsend acknowledge Zappa 's inspiration . On the classical music scene , Tomas Ulrich , Meridian Arts Ensemble , Ensemble Ambrosius and the Fireworks Ensemble regularly perform Zappa 's compositions and quote his influence . Contemporary jazz musicians and composers Bill Frisell and John Zorn are inspired by Zappa , as is funk legend George Clinton . Other artists whose work is affected by Zappa include ambient composer Brian Eno , new age pianist George Winston , electronic composer Bob Gluck , parodist and novelty composer " Weird Al " Yankovic , industrial music pioneer Genesis P @-@ Orridge , and noise music artist Masami Akita of Merzbow .

= = Personal life = =

Zappa was married to Kathryn J. " Kay " Sherman from 1960 to 1964 . In 1967 , he married Adelaide Gail Sloatman , with whom he remained until his death from prostate cancer in 1993 . They had four children : Moon , Dweezil , Ahmet and Diva .

= = Discography = =