

Mixed Mead Ear

Tony Reay

1968

Frank Zappa

Mothers of the American Revolution

Zappa, in England, must wield much power. Granada TV, a semi-national TV station, has asked Frank to produce an hour for their station to show.

Frank, when asked of the proposed idea for the show, said, "Visualize a huge aircraft hanger with at one end a huge form, 15 feet high, completely concealed by canvas and screened off with velvet ropes, with armed sentries pacing up and down in front of it."

Enter three midgets, in full drag, as cheerleaders with briefcases instead of batons. Then gradually enter members of Congress who take their seats in front of the mysterious Form and are served with bourbon and water by white-coated Negro waiters.

Then march in teams of underwater demolition experts, a squad of green berets and a section of Chicago police, armed with sticks, dogs, guns, Mace and teargas.

The little army forms up around the covered object and, with cheerleaders yelling encouragement, the canvas is lifted off to reveal a 14 foot high vegetable, a cross between a red cabbage, an eggplant, and a giant asparagus.

On a signal, the army attacks the vegetable viciously with machetes and flame throwers. The frogmen drill holes in which they plant dynamite charges.

Then suddenly a face appears on the vegetable; a really agonised face in terrible pain, whereupon the Chicago police move in and spray the face with Mace nerve gas. The vegetable eyes start to bleed and it vomits a stream of peas and carrots, which are immediately pounced upon and atomized. Meanwhile Congress goes wild loving every minute. Then the battle sounds die out and the vegetable screams, "I have just been killed by the government because I know too much!"

The rest of the show is told from the viewpoint of the injured vegetable, and then it all starts getting kind of strange.

On top of producing this incredible hour of TV, Mr. Zappa [Mr Zappa?] has just signed four new talents to his own "Bizarre" recording company—Wild Man Fisher (his parents committed him at 17 years old), Sandie Hurbitz, Crazy Gerry, and Girls Together Outrageously, a seven-girl group. His two new albums ("Reuben and the Jets" and "Uncle Meat") are already finished. Zappa also recorded three cuts on the new Capt. Beefheart album.

Zappa on the TV show:

"These two guys came to me, asked me to do an hour-long show for Granada TV, and they said I could do anything I wanted to. It's difficult to turn down a chance to go completely wild on someone else's money—and the budget is pretty hefty. I'm thinking of making it musical—after all, who's to say vegetables don't perceive music."

Zappa on those weird artists:

"This guy, Crazy Gerry, is bright to the point of brilliance, verging on cosmic. They all do things which I think are unique and things that other record companies will not record."

Crazy Gerry, the physical fitness freak who works out with the aid of a special pair of shoes with six-inch springs built into them. He doesn't use them for bouncing, the effort comes in stomping around keeping both feet firmly on the floor.

The album itself is a powerful experience with him singing unaccompanied or over instruments played by Zappa alone with the Mothers drummers on some tracks.

"Reuben & the Jets" is a record I like listening to all the time," says Zappa, "it makes me feel young again! It contains four of the songs from *Freak-out*, rearranged in the '50s style, plus two which I wrote, played eight instrumental backing tracks and six vocal tracks for, recorded and mixed all in one Sunday afternoon in the studio alone, just for a laugh."

"Uncle Meat" the newest album, has the distinction of having on it a recording of the actual album which was broken up by the New York police force—in stereo."

Plans for the Mothers' concert at London's Festival Hall on October 24, already include a Renaissance Choral group, a Baroque brass section plus an amplifier for a concert grand piano which works on the same principle as a guitar amplifier by picking up each string.

Says Zappa: "It's stratospheric."

Damn right it is, Frank!

fifth Estate

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