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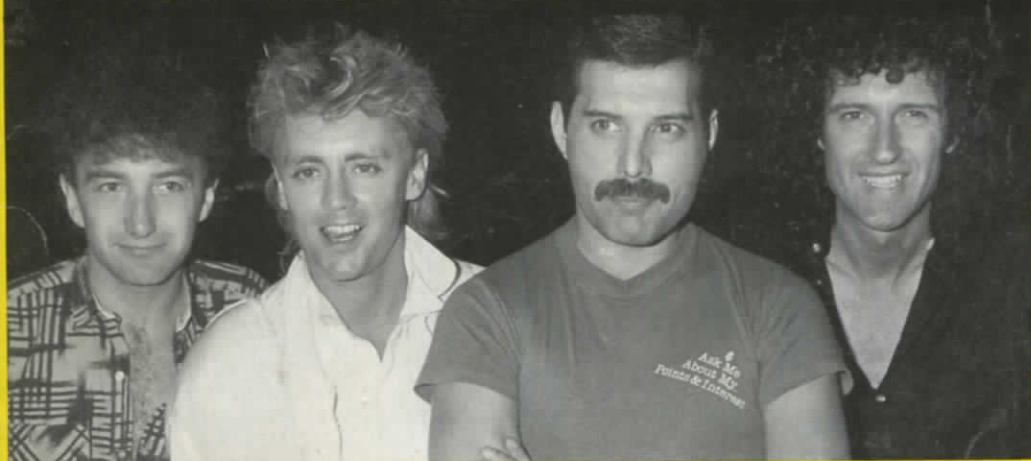
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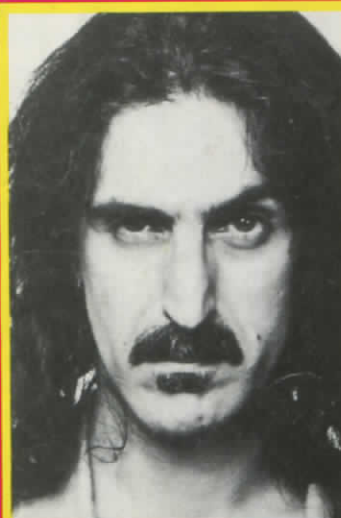
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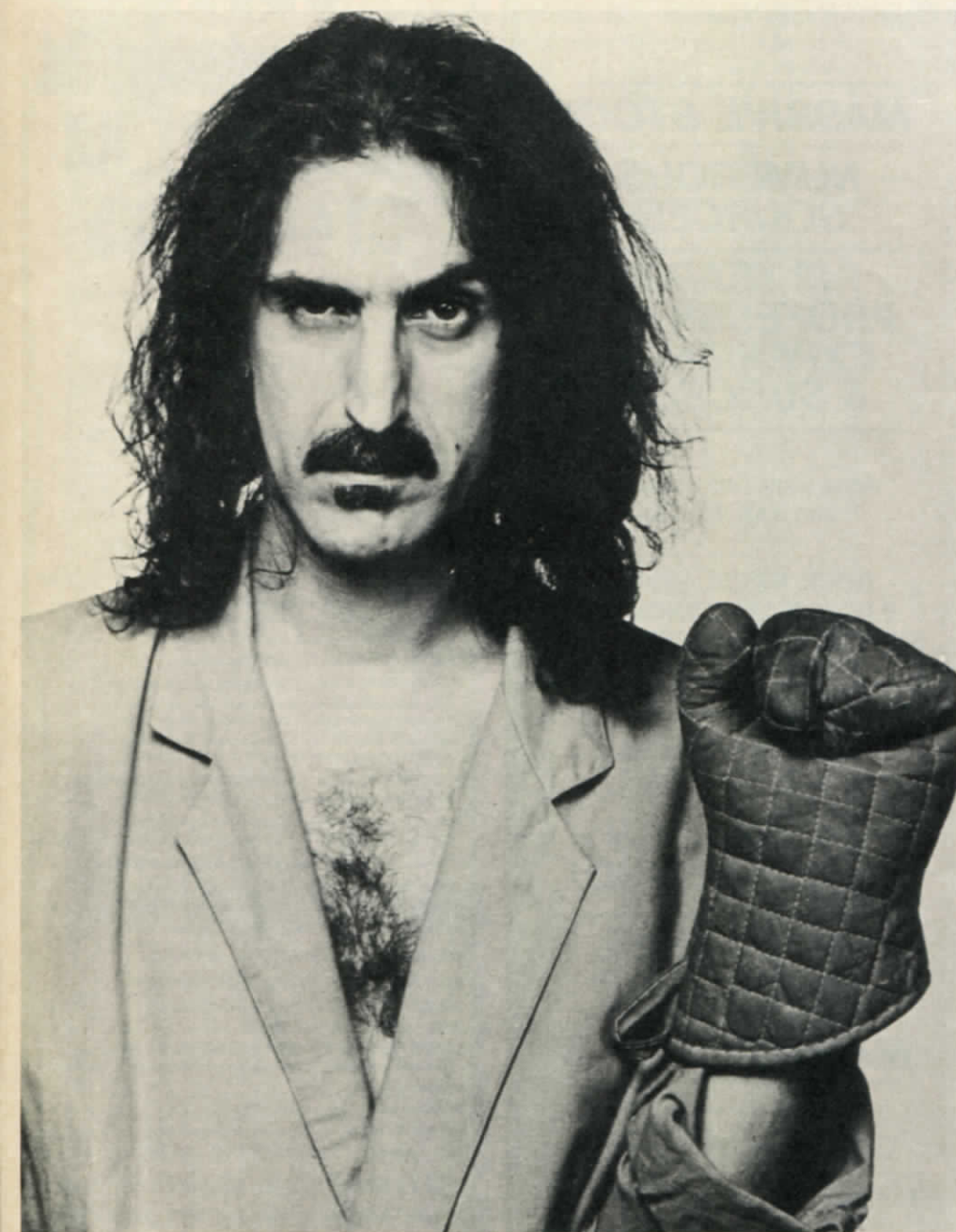
**FRANK
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FRANK ZAPPA

THE BIZARRE YEARS

STUART PENNEY PROVIDES THE FINAL WORD ON FRANK ZAPPA'S RELEASES FROM 1968 TO 1973
— BOTH AS A SOLO ARTIST, AND AS LEADER OF THE MOTHERS OF INVENTION



of his choice, many of whom no other label would touch. Frank also retained ownership of all his master tapes — a very unusual arrangement back in 1968. At that time of course Warner Brothers Records was not the huge conglomerate we know today. In 1968 they had just acquired the Reprise label from Frank Sinatra and had brought in Mo Ostin to run it. Before long, Warner/Reprise would add Elektra and Atlantic to their roster of labels, until the giant Kinney Corporation swallowed the entire company in 1971 (hence the 'K' prefix of U.K. pressings after that date).

In the U.S., the Bizarre albums were initially pressed with Cal Schenkel's custom designed blue and green label until 1972, when Zappa wound up both Bizarre and Straight in favour of the more streamlined DiscReet label. From then on, the Bizarre albums were issued on the standard (U.S.) brown Reprise label until they were deleted in the late '70s. The U.K. releases are somewhat more complicated and the label variations which occurred here are better dealt with in the album-by-album section below.

UNCLE MEAT (Transatlantic TRA 197) September 1969, 2LPs, U.K.

UNCLE MEAT (Bizarre 2MS 2024)

April 1969, 2LPs, Original U.S. w/ booklet.

UNCLE MEAT (Reprise 2MS 2024)

1973, 2LPs, U.S.

Uncle Meat, Main Title Theme/The Voice Of Cheese/Nine Types Of Industrial Pollution/Zolar Czaki/Dog Breath, In The Year Of The Plague/The Legend Of The Golden Arches (Zappa)/Louie Louie (Richard Berry)/The Dog Breath Variations/Sleeping In A Jar/Our Bizarre Relationship/The Uncle Meat Variations/Electric Aunt Jemina/Prelude To King Kong/God Bless America/A Pound For A Brown On The Bus/Ian Underwood Whips It Out/Mr. Green Genes/We Can Shoot You/If We'd All Been Living In California/The Air/Project X/Cruising For Burgers/King Kong Itself (As Played By The Mothers In A Studio)/King Kong (It's Magnificence As Interpreted By Dom Dewild)/King Kong (As Motorhead Explains It)/King Kong (The Gardner Varieties)/King Kong (As Played By 3 Deranged Good Humor Trucks)/King Kong (Live On A Flat Bed Diesel In The Middle Of A Race Track At A Miami Pop Festival... The Underwood Ramifications) (Zappa).

The Mothers: Ray Collins, Jimmy Carl Black, Roy Estrada, Don Preston, Billy Mundi, Bunk Gardner, Ian Underwood, Arthur Tripp, Jim Sherwood.

Plus: Ruth Komanoff and Nelcy Walker.

Recorded between October 1967 and February 1968 at Apostolic Studios (New York)

In the first part of this series of articles, we covered Frank Zappa's early work and looked at the albums he recorded for Verve/MGM (RC 93). This month we move on to the next phase of Zappa's career and examine the ten albums he released between 1969 and 1972, all but one originally issued on his own label in the U.S.

When his MGM contract expired in 1968 Zappa, together with his (then) manager Herb Cohen, set up Bizarre and Straight which were among the first ever artist-controlled indepen-

dent labels. In fact Bizarre had existed as a production company for at least a year prior to 1968. Three of Zappa's Verve releases (as well as an album by Sandy Hervitz) already carried the famous logo on their sleeves, but the first true Bizarre release didn't appear until mid-1968, when Lenny Bruce's "Berkelley Concert" double set was issued.

Although he would live to regret it, Zappa chose Warner/Reprise to distribute his new label. He was promised full control over all Bizarre releases, with freedom to sign artists

and Sunset Sound (Los Angeles) except: Louie Louie (Royal Albert Hall, London), God Bless America (Whisky A Go Go, New York), Ian Underwood Whips It Out (The Trivoli, Copenhagen) and King Kong — The Underwood Ramifications (Miami Pop Festival).

Produced by Frank Zappa. Engineered by Dick Kunc and Jerry Hansen.

From "Uncle Meat" onwards, Zappa began to exercise more control over his music (and his musicians), both in the studio and on stage, than almost anyone in rock had ever done before. Although much of the material on this double set illustrates the experimental nature of the Mothers' work from the period (it was recorded simultaneously with "Ruben And The Jets"), Zappa left nothing to chance. Meticulous care was taken during the recording and mixing stages, and overdubbing was pushed to unprecedented levels for the time — up to 40 tracks in some places. The result was an astounding collage of rock, classical, doo-wop and jazz pieces, demonstrating Zappa's talents as a composer and arranger of vocal parts.

This was the third release on Bizarre, following the Lenny Bruce album and the classic "An Evening With Wild Man Fischer", all of them double sets (although "Uncle Meat" was originally planned as a triple album titled "No Commercial Potential").

BUDGET

Zappa's deal with Warner/Reprise was initially for four albums only, with a budget of between \$22,500 and \$27,500 each (the increase was based on rising union costs). When a second deal was negotiated in 1970, the stakes were raised to \$60,000 per album. This was at a time when — in Frank's words — "your average 'big time' group was spending a quarter of a million dollars per album". Budget notwithstanding, "Uncle Meat" was lavishly packaged in an excellent Cal Schenkel-designed sleeve, complete with custom-designed inner bags which were common to all U.S. Bizarre releases. These black inners have become quite collectable in their own right as, apart from providing a continuity between the sleeve, the label and the music, they also carry the following statement from Zappa, which goes some way in explaining the entire Bizarre philosophy: "We make records that are a little different. We present musical and sociological material which the important record companies would probably not allow you to hear. Just what the world needs . . . another record company."

U.S. copies contained a 12-page booklet, illustrated by Cal Schenkel, which featured 'The Story Of Uncle Meat' — although the few vocal tracks on the album had little in common with the storyline of the movie delineated in the booklet. The "Uncle Meat" film has yet to appear in the cinemas (officially), though it's been some twenty years since it was first mooted on the album sleeve. In 1972, a rough edit without a proper soundtrack was screened in New York by a company called Paradigm, but it was not until January 1989 that "Uncle Meat" was finally made available to the public via Honker Home Video, Zappa's newest company.

The U.K. launch of Bizarre Records couldn't have got off to a worse start. Outside of the U.S., Zappa's label was signed to appear on Reprise, but in 1969 Warner/Reprise didn't have their own U.K. distribution and were handled by Pye Records. Pye refused point-

blank to handle "Uncle Meat", and to Zappa, it must have seemed like he'd never left MGM. (This was one of the reasons why U.K. distribution of Zappa's second label Straight was placed directly with CBS.) Eventually a licensing deal was struck with Transatlantic Records, a small independent label run by Nathan Joseph, which specialised in folk, blues and jazz releases. The Transatlantic deal also included the Lenny Bruce album, which surely must have given the Pye executives apoplexy. The Wild Man Fischer LP did receive a belated U.K. release on Reprise, but only after distribution was switched from Pye to CBS.

PROMOTE

Nathan Joseph ran his small label efficiently and with integrity, but he just didn't have the resources or the experience to promote an album like "Uncle Meat". Consequently sales were disappointing, especially when compared to Zappa's next four albums, all of which charted in the U.K.

Labels aside, U.K. and U.S. pressings of "Uncle Meat" are very similar, although the British sleeve, printed by MacNeill Press, is somewhat darker in colour and not as sharp as the U.S. version. Needless to say, U.K. pressings did not contain the Bizarre inner sleeves or the booklet, although this was included with some European issues.

The double compact disc which appeared at the end of 1987 included an extra 45 minutes of unreleased material, most of which was simply dialogue from the soundtrack of the aforementioned movie.

HOT RATS (Reprise RSLP 6356)

February 1970, 3-colour label, U.K. original.

HOT RATS (Reprise RSLP 6356)

September 1970, 1-colour label, U.K.

HOT RATS (Reprise K 44078)

July 1971, renumbered U.K.

HOT RATS (Bizarre RS 6356)

October 1969, U.S. original.

HOT RATS (Reprise RS 6356)

1973, U.S.

Peaches En Regalia/Willie The Pimp/Son Of Mr. Green Genes/Little Umbrellas/The Gumbo Variations/It Must Be A Camel (Zappa).

Musicians: Ian Underwood, Lowell George, Captain Beefheart, Sugar-Cane Harris, Jean-Luc Ponty, Paul Humphrey, Ron Selico, Max Bennett, Shuggy Otis.

Recorded at Whitney Studios (Glendale), T.T.G. (Hollywood) and Sunset Sound (Los Angeles) between August and September 1969.

Produced by Frank Zappa. **Engineered by** Dick Kunc, Jack Hunt, Cliff Goldstein and Brian Ingoldsby.

Zappa's second 'solo' LP contained some of his most accessible work to date. A complete departure from the experimental approach of his previous albums, it is often referred to as the first jazz-rock fusion record. Almost every track is a self-contained guitar work-out with beginnings and endings and none of the sound effects or multiple edits we had come to expect from Zappa. Packaged in another of Schenkel's superb sleeve designs, the album sported a distinctive cover shot of the late Miss Christine of the G.T.O.'s (a group Zappa had then recently signed to Straight) emerging eerily from a hole in the ground.

By the time "Hot Rats" was released in the U.K., Warner/Reprise had switched their distribution from Pye to CBS. First pressings used the old-style Reprise labels with the words

'distributed by Pye Records Ltd' blocked out. These are easily identifiable as they feature a large version of the Reprise river-boat logo on a yellow, green and cream 'Pop Series' label. Within a year, the label was changed to a one-colour (mustard yellow) design with a smaller boat logo, although the catalogue number remained the same. In 1971 a third variation occurred when the Kinney Corporation took over the entire Warner Brothers organisation and all U.K. albums (and singles) were re-numbered with a 'K' prefix. Stocks of old covers were used up by adding 'K' number stickers to 'RSLP' sleeves – thus creating a possible fourth variation!

By the time of the first label change, Warner/Reprise had established their own U.K. distribution and the late 1970 pressings no longer had 'distributed by CBS Records' on the back cover. The front cover logos were also changed at this point: the Warner Bros./Seven Arts 'W7' symbol was dropped and the Reprise 'R' design was now set in a square instead of a circle.

ZAPPED

Once again, U.K. and U.S. sleeves were virtually identical except for the labels and Bizarre inner sleeves on American pressings, which by this time had begun to carry order forms for the mail-order sampler LP "Zapped".

"Hot Rats" has the distinction of being Zappa's only U.K. Top 10 entry, peaking at No. 9 and spending little over six months in the chart. In common with the Zappa/Mothers Verve albums, and most of the Bizarre releases, "Hot Rats" has been widely counterfeited in recent years. These 'exact reproductions' as they are euphemistically described, are sold openly by many apparently reputable dealers, both in Britain and the U.S. Needless to say, these pirate copies are 100% illegal and while that may not worry some buyers, the blurred cover artwork and poorly pressed discs should be enough to deter most self-respecting collectors. These counterfeits are based mostly on U.K. and European Reprise pressings, although some are reproduced from U.S. Bizarre issues, so any 'new' copies offered for sale in this form should be avoided.

The October 1987 CD release of "Hot Rats" features, as part of Zappa's on-going digital refurbishment programme, a radically different mix of the album. Unreleased material from the original sessions has been somehow incorporated into the familiar tracks to produce a virtually 'new' release.

BURNT WEENY SANDWICH
(Reprise RSLP 6370)

March 1970, three-colour label, U.K. original.

BURNT WEENY SANDWICH
(Reprise RSLP 6370)

September 1970, one-colour label, U.K.

BURNT WEENY SANDWICH
(Reprise RSLP K 44083)

July 1971, re-numbered U.K.

BURNT WEENY SANDWICH
(Bizarre RS 6370)

February 1970, U.S. orig. with photo insert.

BURNT WEENY SANDWICH
(Reprise RS 6370) 1973, U.S.

WPLJ (Ray Dobard and Luther McDaniels)/Igor's Boogie – Phase One/Overture To A Holiday In Berlin/Theme From Burnt Weeny Sandwich/Igor's Boogie – Phase Two/Holiday In Berlin, Full Blown/Aybe Sea/Little House I Used To Live In (Zappa)/Valarie (unknown).



Frank Zappa onstage in the early Seventies. Planned concert appearances in Britain weren't always happy occasions for Zappa and the Mothers.

The Mothers: Roy Estrada, Jim Black, Bunk Gardner, Buzz Gardner, Ian Underwood, Arthur Tripp, Don Preston, Sugar-Cane Harris, Jim Sherwood.

Plus: Gabby Furggy on "WPLJ".

Produced by Frank Zappa. Engineered by Dick Kunc.

A part-live, part-studio collection of material recorded before Zappa disbanded this particular line-up of the Mothers, the nucleus of which had been with him since before "Freak Out" (the group officially disbanded in October 1969). But this was no throwaway album of left-overs and out-takes. Sandwiched between a couple of excellent doo-wop tracks was some of the most complex and subtle music Zappa had released to date, much of it recorded live. Unlike most other artists, whose live recordings merely consist of onstage re-workings of their most popular studio tracks, Zappa is known to prefer recording his new material in concert. His prolific output enables him to release live material for which there is quite often no equivalent studio version – the ongoing "You Can't Do That On Stage Anymore" series is a classic example of this.

Frank's penchant for 50s R&B was again evident on this album, with the inclusion of a couple of obscure doo-wop tracks. Ray Dobard's "WPLJ" was originally recorded by the Four Duces, while "Valarie" was first cut in 1960 on the Fury label by the Starlites (later to become Jackie and the Starlites).

U.K. issues of "Burnt Weeny Sandwich" correspond, more or less, to those already described for "Hot Rats" (i.e. first pressings were issued on three-colour Reprise labels with Pye details blocked out and 'Distributed by CBS' inside the sleeve). Early U.S. pressings included a multi-fold-out photo insert showing the group in an assortment of poses above an inscription which read 'The Mothers Of Invention sincerely regret to inform you...'. Both U.K. and U.S. pressings had Cal Schenkel's gatefold sleeve design featuring on-stage shots of the group during their 1969 U.K. tour. The front cover was in fact a photograph of an intricate model made by Schenkel featuring a bizarre collection of electrical components and dismembered hands amongst other things. Frank still has this original model and keeps it – along with other similar pieces of memorabilia – in his Los Angeles home.

In terms of U.K. chart placing, this was the Mothers' second most successful album, reaching No. 17 in April 1970.

WEASELS RIPPED MY FLESH
(Reprise RSLP 2028)

September 1970, U.K. original.

WEASELS RIPPED MY FLESH
(Reprise K 44019)

July 1971, re-numbered U.K.

WEASELS RIPPED MY FLESH
(Bizarre MS 2028)

September 1970, U.S. original.

WEASELS RIPPED MY FLESH
(Reprise MS 2028) 1973, U.S.

Didja Get Any Onya (Zappa)/Directly From My Heart To You (R.W. Penniman)/Prelude To The Afternoon Of A Sexually Aroused Gas Mask/Toads Of The Short Forest/Get A Little/Eric Dolphy Memorial Barbeque/Dwarf Nebula Processional March And Dwarf Nebula/My Guitar Wants To Kill Your Mama/Oh No/The Orange County Lumber Truck/Weasels Ripped My Flesh (Zappa)

The Mothers: Roy Estrada, Jim Black, Arthur Tripp, Don Preston, Ray Collins, Sugar-Cane Harris, Lowell George.

Recorded between 1967 and 1969 at T.T.G. (Hollywood), Whitney Studios (Glendale), A&R Studios (New York), Apostolic Studios (New York) and Criterion Studios (Miami).

Plus live tracks at Philadelphia Arena, Festival Hall (London), Thee Image (Miami), The Factory (New York) and Birmingham Town Hall (England).

Produced by Frank Zappa.

This was another retrospective album containing previously unreleased material recorded by the 'old' Mothers line-up. Some tracks ("Oh No" and "Dwarf Nebula") date back to the "We're Only In It For The Money" sessions, while others came from the comparatively recent "Hot Rats" series of recordings. Zappa's editing skills pulled together what could only be described as a rag-bag of material – some of it live, some recorded at innumerable studios – into a cohesive and impressive album.

Resident sleeve artist Schenkel was 'rested' for this album in favour of Neon Park, whose superb design gave "Weasels" one of the most memorable covers in rock history. By coincid-

ence, Neon Park designed many of the best known sleeves for Little Feat, a group whose founder member Lowell George was briefly a Mother in 1969 and who actually appears on this album.

By September 1970 Warner/Reprise had established their own U.K. distribution and first pressings of "Weasels" went straight onto 'one colour' Reprise labels with the small boat logo.

This album is notable as it established a couple of precedents for Zappa: it was the first time a Zappa/Mothers album had been issued without a gatefold sleeve in the U.S., plus Britain finally caught up with America and released it almost simultaneously. From here on, most Zappa releases would be issued within a month of each other in both countries.

RAT-TRAP

Although foreign pressings are outside the scope of these features, an exception must be made here for an early German issue of "Weasels" which sported a unique sleeve featuring a silver doll caught in a rat-trap — complete with blood!

Very little difference exists between U.K. and U.S. originals but in July 1971, when the 'K' series was introduced, the Bizarre and Reprise logos were moved to the back cover on the British edition.

CHUNGA'S REVENGE (Reprise RSLP 2030)
November 1970, green cover, U.K. original.

CHUNGA'S REVENGE (Reprise RSLP 2030)
1971, red cover, U.K.

CHUNGA'S REVENGE (Reprise K 44020)
July 1971, re-numbered U.K.

CHUNGA'S REVENGE (Bizarre MS 2030)
November 1970, U.S. original.

CHUNGA'S REVENGE (Reprise MS 2030)
1973, U.S.

Transylvania Boogie/Road Ladies/Twenty Small Cigars/The Nancy And Mary Music Pt. 1/Pt. 2/Pt. 3/Tell Me You Love Me/Would You Go All The Way?/Chunga's Revenge/The Clap/Rudy Wants To Buy Yez A Drink/Sharleena (Zappa).

Musicians: Ian Underwood, Max Bennett, Aynsley Dunbar, Jeff Simmons, George Duke, Mark Volman, Howard Kaylan, John Guerin, Sugar-Cane Harris.

Recorded at The Record Plant (Hollywood), Trident Studios (London), T.T.G. Inc. (Hollywood), Whitney Studios (Glendale) and live at the Tyrone Guthrie Theatre (Minneapolis, Minnesota).

Produced by Frank Zappa. Engineered by Dick Kunc, Stan Agol, Roy Baker and Bruce Margolis.

With a new band and a fresh approach, the third solo album set the tone for a new era of Zappa music, the main themes of which would be carried over onto the next three albums. The introduction of ex-Turtles Howard Kaylan and Mark Volman, keyboard man George Duke and British drummer Aynsley Dunbar made for a much more conventional 'rock band' sound than any previous Mothers' line-up. This was also the album where Zappa's wicked satire began to turn away from his usual target of middle-class America and focus on the absurd goings-on in the world of rock music itself — a theme that would be taken to its (il)logical conclusion on the "200 Motels" album. Cal Schenkel was back on form with a cover design featuring the famous gypsy-mutant industrial vacuum cleaner, which would reappear in later years



Lowell George, pictured in 1975 during his time as leader and guitarist with cult band Little Feat. For a few months, however, he was also a guitarist in the rapidly expanding Mothers Of Invention.

(most notably in the "200 Motels" movie, though more recently in the sleeve notes to 1984's "The Perfect Stranger" LP).

The initial U.K. pressing of "Chunga's Revenge" was something of an oddity, having a green sleeve instead of the red one used for the U.S. and elsewhere. The U.K. cover was reprinted in red shortly before the Kinney takeover in July 1971 but quite why the green sleeve was peculiar to Britain has never been fully explained.

FILLMORE EAST – JUNE 1971
(Reprise K 44150) August 1971, U.K.
FILLMORE EAST – JUNE 1971
(Bizarre MS 2042) August 1971, U.S. orig.
FILLMORE EAST – JUNE 1971
(Reprise MS 2042) 1973 U.S.
Little House I Used To Live In/The Mud Shark/What Kind Of Girl Do You Think We Are?/Bwana Dik/Latex Solar Beef/Willie The Pimp Pt. 1/Willie The Pimp Pt. 2/Do You Like My New Car? (Zappa)/Happy Together (Garry Bonner and Alan Gordon)/Lonesome Electric Turkey/Peaches En Regalia/Tears Began To Fall (Zappa).
The Mothers: Mark Volman, Howard Kaylan, Ian Underwood, Aynsley Dunbar, Jim Pons, Bob Harris, Don Preston.
Recorded live at the Fillmore East, New York, June 5th and 6th 1971.
Produced by Frank Zappa. Engineered by Barry Keene.
Zappa's first full-blown live album opened up a whole new market for his music, mainly due to the knockabout comedy routines perform-

ed by Mark Volman and Howard Kaylan, alias Flo and Eddie. Their style of humour appealed to a section of record buyers who had probably never heard Zappa's music before and, for the most part, had no idea what he was about. Because of this, "Fillmore East" unfortunately came to be thought of as little more than a Cheech and Chong-style comedy record, something which probably contributed more to its commercial success than the excellent music it contained. Although Zappa must have welcomed the extra sales, he was probably frustrated by the reasons for them, as he stated in 1970: "There's nothing more embarrassing than someone who agrees with you for the wrong reasons. People thought the Mothers were great – the funniest act they'd ever seen on stage. That's nothing to do with what the group was into. The Mothers were no joke. We were successfully exploring new methods of communication through music."

During the series of Fillmore concerts, John and Yoko got up to jam with the Mothers, the results of which later formed part of the Lennon's 1972 double-set "Sometime In New York City". It was agreed that Lennon and Zappa would each mix and release their own version of the event, an arrangement Zappa would later regret when John and Yoko changed the title of his "King Kong" to "Scumbag" and claimed composer credits. Lennon also extracted his revenge for Zappa's "Sgt. Pepper" cover parody by using a facsimile of the "Fillmore East" sleeve – suitably mutilated – as an inner bag for "Sometime In New York City".

200 MOTELS (United Artists UDF 50003)
November 1971, 2LPs w/ book & poster, U.K.
200 MOTELS (United Artists UAS 9956)
October 1971, 2LPs w/ book & poster, U.S.
Semi-Fraudulent Direct-From-Hollywood
Overture/Mystery Roach/Dance Of The Rock & Roll Interviewers/This Town Is A Sealed Tuna Sandwich (Prologue)/Tuna Fish Promenade/Dance Of The Just Plain Folks/This Town Is A Sealed Tuna Sandwich (Reprise)/The Sealed Tuna Bolero/Lonesome Cowboy Burt/Touring Can Make You Crazy/Would You Like A Snack?/Redneck Eats/Centerville/She Painted Up Her Face/Janet's Big Dance Number/Half A Dozen Provocative Squats/Mysterioso/Shove It Right In/Lucy's Seduction Of A Bored Violinist And Postlude/I'm Stealing The Towels/Dental Hygiene Dilemma/Does This Kind Of Life Look Interesting To You?/Daddy, Daddy, Daddy/Penis Dimension/What Will This Evening Bring Me This Morning/A Nun Suit Painted On Some Old Boxes/Magic Fingers/Motorhead's Midnight Ranch/Dew On The Newts We Got/The Lad Searches The Night For His Newts/The Girl Wants To Fix Him Some Broth/The Girl's Dream/Little Green Scratchy Sweaters and Courduroy Ponce/Strictly Genteel (The Finale) (Zappa).

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The Mothers: Mark Voman, Howard Kaylan, Ian Underwood, Aynsley Dunbar, George Duke, Martin Lickert, Jimmy Carl Black, Ruth Underwood, Jim Pons.

Plus: The Royal Philharmonic Orchestra, the Top Score Singers, the Classical Guitar Ensemble and Theodore Bikel (narration).

Recorded live February 1971 at Pinewood Film Studios (London) using the Rolling Stones Mobile. Overdubs recorded April and May 1971 at Whitney Studios (Glendale).

Produced by Frank Zappa for Bizarre Productions. Engineered by Bob Auger and Barry Keeene.

"200 Motels" is the soundtrack album (of sorts) from the only full-length feature film Zappa has made to date. Some of the music on the album is not in the movie and vice versa, but the record did stick close enough to the actual soundtrack to warrant a release by the film's distributor, United Artists. As such, the double album remains one of the only three post-Verve releases not to appear on one of Zappa's own labels, the others being "Zoot Allures" (Warner Bros. 1976) and "The Perfect Stranger" (Angel/EMI 1984). Even so it was very much a Bizarre Production and as impenetrable as anything Zappa had done before.

The film itself was equally opaque and managed to polarise fans and critics alike. One scribe hailed it as "a minor classic" while another waggishly opined that "it had the attention span of a speed freak". For most of the movie Zappa is portrayed by Ringo Starr, only appearing in person during the live music sections dotted throughout the film. The rest of the Mothers appear as themselves and together with Theodore Bikel, Keith Moon and others present a vivid, though chaotic, documentary on the rock'n'roll lifestyle. The movie was shot initially on video before being transferred to film: as usual, Zappa was well ahead of his time.

Not only was "200 Motels" the first major film to use the new technology, but it also broke new ground in other areas. Shots of musicians playing were intercut with footage which, although seemingly unrelated, nevertheless visualised the lyrics of the songs. It was at least eight years before the rock video industry picked up on this technique and turned it into a cliché now seen at least fifty times a day on MTV.

Both U.K. and U.S. pressings were issued with a large poster and a booklet similar in format to the "Uncle Meat" insert. The poster and album front cover were the work of Dave McMacken, while the trusty Cal Schenkel was responsible for the booklet and the rest of the sleeve. Only one significant variation exists between U.K. and U.S. issues — some later American copies featured black and silver United Artists labels as opposed to the usual cream and brown design.

It appears that United Artists still have

control of the master tapes, and this is why "200 Motels" was conspicuously absent from "The Old Masters Box 2" set released in 1986.

A reissue of sorts is available in the States. However, it is a most pitiful affair, not only minus all the inserts, but with the two records housed in a single sleeve.

Honker Home Video released "The True Story Of 200 Motels" in January 1989. This one-hour documentary contains footage shot in 1970 during the filming of the movie itself.

JUST ANOTHER BAND FROM L.A.

(Reprise K 44179) June 1972, U.K.

JUST ANOTHER BAND FROM L.A.

(Bizarre MS 2075) May 1972, U.S. original.

JUST ANOTHER BAND FROM L.A.

(Reprise MS 2075) 1973, U.S.

Billy The Mountain/Call Any Vegetable (Zappa)/Eddie, Are You Kidding? (Seiter/Volman/Kaylan/Zappa)/Magdalena (Kaylan/Zappa)/Dog Breath (Zappa).

The Mothers: Mark Volman, Howard Kaylan, Ian Underwood, Aynsley Dunbar, Don Preston, Jim Pons.

Recorded live at the Pauley Pavilion, UCLA, Los Angeles, 7th August 1971.

Produced by Frank Zappa. Engineered by Barry Keene.

1971 was not a good year for Zappa. His troubles began in February when he ran up against that pillar of the British establishment, the Royal Albert Hall. The custodians of that venerable institution took one look at the libretto for Zappa's proposed live presentation of "200 Motels" and choked on their pink gins. Sir Louis Gluckstein, then President of the Hall, justified the board's decision to cancel the show in a letter which read, in part: "It is time that a stand was taken against the production of what many regard as dreary and inartistic filth for money." In an attempt to recoup some of his losses, Zappa took the matter to court but when the case was eventually heard — some four years later — it had all but become a lost cause. The spectacle of Zappa's "Shove It Right In" being read out in the Strand Law Courts in 1975 was highly entertaining but the verdict was a foregone conclusion. Not only did he lose the case, but it also set him back another £20,000 in costs.

Having put the cancellation of the show behind him, Zappa diverted his attentions to

organising the actual "200 Motels" movie. The Mothers were back in Europe by December for a major tour, but by the time they reached Switzerland, Zappa's troubles had begun again. At the Casino, Montreaux, the stage caught fire, taking with it £25,000-worth of the Mothers' equipment, an incident which was subsequently immortalised by Deep Purple in their song "Smoke On The Water". Zappa and the band then flew on to London to play the Rainbow Theatre with hired equipment. What happened next has been documented many times with varying degrees of accuracy. Suffice to say that at the Rainbow, Zappa was pushed off stage by Trevor Howell, a member of the audience, and sustained severe head and leg injuries.

Out of action for almost a year, and unable to tour, Frank turned his attention to studio work. His first project was to issue "Just Another Band From L.A.", recorded in concert almost one year earlier. Unfortunately, it was little more than "Fillmore East" Chapter Two — heavy on technique, but light on content. The Flo and Eddie comedy routines may have been entertaining in concert, but on record the humour palls quickly, detracting from what was otherwise a well executed piece of musical theatre. As always the music itself was flawless: Aynsley Dunbar in particular contributes some sterling drum work, with Ian Underwood and Zappa both filling in nicely behind the jokes. The saga of "Billy The Mountain", which occupied the whole of Side One, was intended to be the basis for yet another film, but the Rainbow incident put a stop to that also.

Cal Schenkel's ingenious design managed to combine the artwork from both "Ruben And The Jets" and the "Uncle Meat" booklet to produce a neat bit of conceptual continuity.

Following a cameo appearance on the cover of "We're Only In It For The Money", Schenkel was again pictured on this album, providing the centrepiece of the inside gatefold sleeve.

WAKA/JAWAKA — HOT RATS

(Reprise K 44203) August 1972, U.K.

WAKA/JAWAKA — HOT RATS

(Bizarre MS 2094) July 1972, U.S. original.

WAKA/JAWAKA — HOT RATS

(Reprise MS 2094) 1973, U.S.

Big Swifty/Your Mouth/It Just Might Be A One-Shot Deal/Waka Jawaka (Zappa).

Musicians: Sal Marquez, Alex Dmochowski, Aynsley Dunbar, Tony Duran, George Duke, Chris Peterson, Joel Peskin, Mike Altschul, Jeff Simmons, 'Sneaky Pete' Kleinow, Janet Ferguson, Don Preston, Bill Byers, Ken Shroyer.

Recorded at Paramount Studios, Los Angeles "under the thoughtful supervision of Marshall Brevitz".

Produced by Frank Zappa. Engineered by Kerry McNabb.

The first album recorded after the Rainbow incident saw Zappa playing, conducting, producing and mixing from his wheelchair. It was an altogether different proposition compared with the previous pair of live albums and, as the name suggests, was intended as a kind of follow-up to the hugely successful "Hot Rats". "Waka/Jawaka" never achieved similar recognition, but it was nevertheless a well-crafted album, assembled with Zappa's usual meticulous attention to detail.

"Lumpy Gravy" excepted, this was the biggest line-up Zappa had used on record to

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date, totalling 14 musicians, and though on most tracks they didn't all play at once, the record had a big-band feel which would be taken further with the next release.

Schenkel again provided the graphics, which included a nice reference to Zappa's well-known anti-drugs stance. On the rear of the sleeve, Frank is seated next to a plant which bears more than a passing resemblance to marijuana, although it was in fact only a type of castor oil plant commonly known as Finger Aralia. In an attempt to avoid confusion, Schenkel drew a cartoon name tag on the plant with the full Latin name of Aralia Elegantisima. Sharp-eyed horticulturalists would have noticed that he mis-spelled the second word rather badly, omitting the 'n' and the second 'i'!

THE GRAND WAZOO (Reprise K 44209)

January 1973, U.K.

THE GRAND WAZOO (Bizarre MS 2093)

December 1972, U.S. original.

THE GRAND WAZOO (Reprise MS 2093)

1973, U.S.

For Calvin (And His Next Two Hitch-Hikers)/The Grand Wazoo/Cletus Awreetus-Awrightus/Eat That Question/Blessed Relief (Zappa). The Mothers: Janet Neville-Ferguson, Sal Marquez, Mike Altshul, Earl Dumler, Tony 'Bat Man' Ortega, Joanne Caldwell McNabb, Johnny Rotella, Fred Jackson, Malcolm McNabb, Bill Byers, Ken Shroyer, Ernie Tack, Bob Zimmitti, Alan Estes, Don Preston, Tony Duran, Erroneous, Aynsley Dunbar, George Duke, 'Chunky', Joel Peskin, Lee Clement, Ernie Watts.

Recorded at Paramount Studios, Los Angeles. Produced by Frank Zappa. Engineered by Kerry McNabb.

The last Bizarre album of all utilised what was by far the biggest ever Mothers line-up (although by now the name 'Mothers' had become nothing more than a loose title applied to each of Zappa's constantly changing series of recording and/or touring bands). A slightly different (though only marginally smaller) version of the unwieldy 'Grand Wazoo Orchestra' as it became known, was brought to Europe in September 1972 for Zappa's first concerts since the Rainbow drama. After a successful tour, which included a memorable outdoor gig at the Oval Cricket Ground in South London, Frank returned to America where he cut the band down to a more manageable (and affordable) 10-piece unit. This line-up then continued to perform as 'The Little Wazoo' for some time.

The album itself was also a huge critical — if not commercial — success. The big band approach was used to great effect, taking the complex jazz/rock arrangements of the previous album to new heights of sophistication and intricacy. Regarded by many as one of Zappa's major works, it was probably no coincidence that "The Grand Wazoo" was the first Bizarre album available on compact disc.

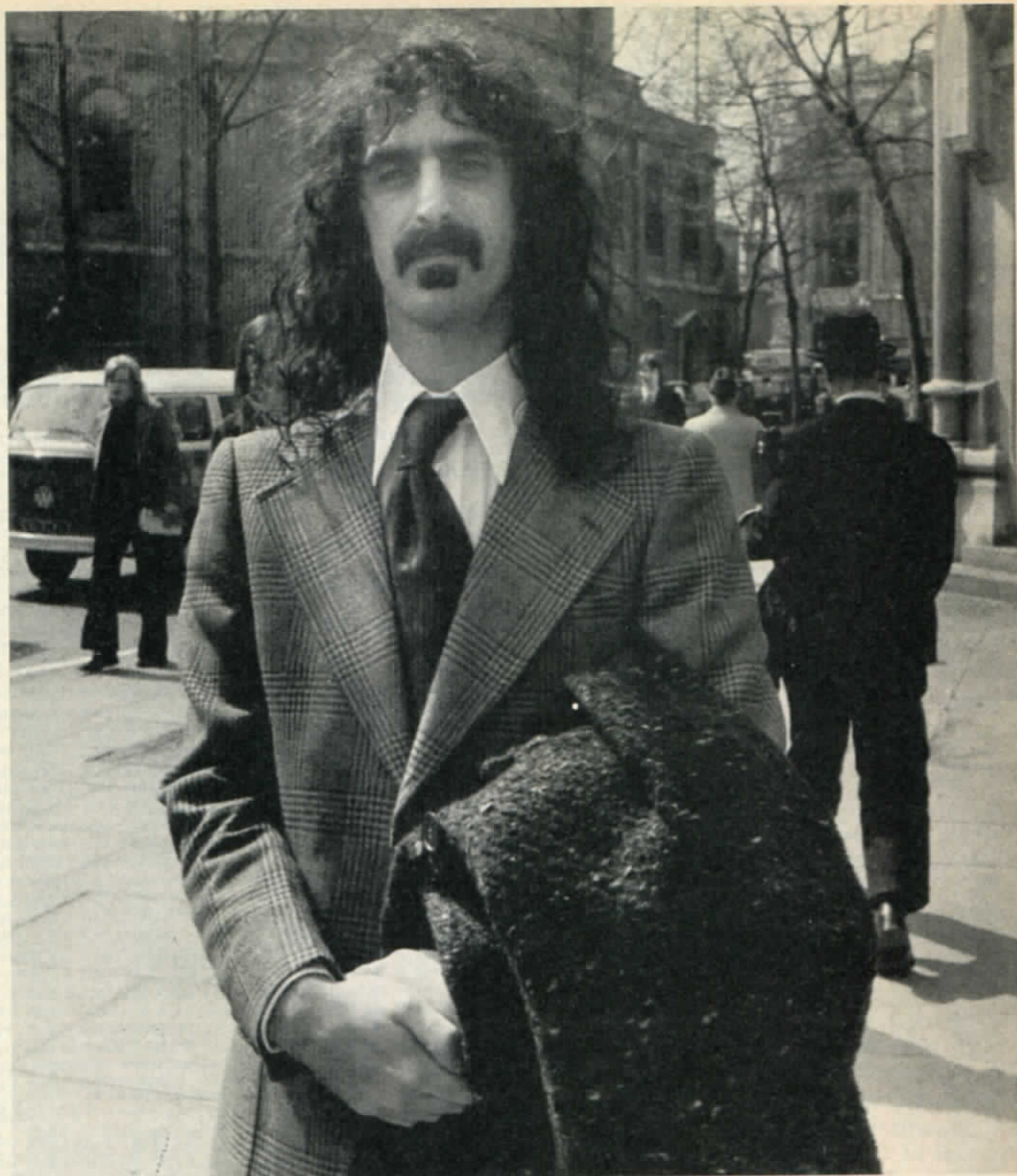
Cal Schenkel's cover art-work scaled new heights this time, with visual references to "Uncle Meat", "200 Motels", "Ruben And The Jets" and "Waka/Jawaka". He was justly rewarded for his efforts by having the album's opener dedicated to him.

THE OLD MASTERS BOX TWO

(Barking Pumpkin BPR 8888)

November 1986, 8LPs, U.S.

Includes: Uncle Meat/Hot Rats/Burnt Weeny Sandwich/Weasels Ripped My Flesh/Chunga's Revenge/Fillmore East — June 1971/Just Another Band From L.A. plus "The Mystery



Zappa's concerts at the Royal Albert Hall were cancelled by the venue's management. Zappa sued, and the case came to court in 1975. Most observers reckoned he won the argument, but he lost the case.

Disc — Harry, You're A Beast/Don Interrupts/Piece One/Jim, Roy/Piece Two/Agency Man (all recorded at the Festival Hall, London, 1968)/Agency Man (studio 1967)/Lecture (Festival Hall, 1968)/Wedding Dress Song/The Handsome Cabin Boy (from "Uncle Meat" sessions, 1967)/Skweezit Skweezit Skweezit (live, the Ballroom, Hartford, CT)/The Story Of Willie The Pimp (with Annie Zannas and Cynthia Dobson, NYC, 1972)/Black Beauty (live, Thee Image, Miami, 1968)/Chucha (Criteria, Miami, 1968)/Mothers At KPFFK/Harmonica Fun (Zappa).

Produced and arranged by Frank Zappa. Box designed by Donald 'Roller' Wilson.

Following 'The Grand Wazoo', Zappa wound up both Bizarre and Straight in favour of the more manageable DiscReet label. Distribution, however, remained with Warner Brothers, a decision which would lead to problems a few years later when Frank had to sue not only the company but also his ex-manager Herb Cohen and, indirectly, his own record label in order to gain possession of his master tapes (see RC 93).

When he first signed with Warner/Reprise in 1968, Zappa stipulated that ownership of the master tapes would eventually revert to him. This was partly to forestall the release of any unauthorised compilation albums (Verve/MGM had issued a plethora of 'Best Of' coll-

ections without Frank Zappa's knowledge or consent and continued to market them long after they had no legal claim to material). But he also had an eye on the future, ensuring that when he eventually parted company with Warner Bros., he would be able to take his masters with him. As it turned out, that's exactly what he did in 1976, following a series of acrimonious disputes with the label. The story of Frank's final three years with Warners will be covered fully in the next part of this series of features when we look at the DiscReet label in detail.

The release of the second and third "Old Masters" boxes in 1986 and 1987 respectively, means that, together with the reissue of "200 Motels", all the Zappa/Mothers Bizarre albums are now available again. As with the first box, all the albums in "Box Two" have been digitally remastered and come with their original sleeves and inserts where applicable (these are contained in a bogus record sleeve featuring similar artwork to the box itself). Unlike the originals, which in the U.S. all had heavy-duty matt cardboard sleeves, the reissues are relatively flimsy affairs with a glossy finish giving the covers a modern appearance. The discs themselves have benefitted immeasurably from the remastering process, especially the two live albums, both of which originally suffered from somewhat muddy sound

but now sound totally rejuvenated. Each box is individually numbered and buyers are invited to obtain an 'owner's certificate' by filling in and returning a postcard/questionnaire. As for the "Mystery Disc", this is another fascinating collection of unreleased Mothers performances drawn from the same era as the masters themselves. Not quite as historically important as its "Box One" companion, it nevertheless contains some valuable archive material. The "Old Masters Box Two" can be ordered direct from Barfko-Swill, Zappa's mail-order outlet in Los Angeles for around U.S. \$150, but expect to pay at least £130 for an imported copy.

Only a couple of the Bizarre singles contain material unavailable elsewhere. The U.S. coupling of "My Guitar"/"Dog Breath" represents one of the most interesting and collectable Zappa 45s of all, in that both songs are completely different to the versions which appear on "Weasels" and "Uncle Meat". Although "Dog Breath" appears to be an alternate take of the album track, "My Guitar" was recorded at a different studio to the LP version and would seem to be a prototype run-through.

HOAX

The other unusual single features the guitar solo, "Junier Mintz Boogie", a track which has never been released elsewhere in any form. It appeared on the B-side of a slightly different version of "Tears Began To Fall" and is notable for an elaborate hoax which Zappa dreamed up (so the story goes) to see if the record would sell without his name on it (it didn't). On the label the composer, producer and guitarist credits were all given to a certain 'Billy Dexter', of whom nothing has been heard since! As sometimes happens with singles of limited sales potential, the amount of promotional copies sent out exceeds the number of records sold. This is certainly true of "Tears Began To Fall", where white label promo copies outnumber stock pressings by about three-to-one in the U.K.

The Bizarre mail-order sampler "Zapped" is worth mentioning here, not least because it was available in two different sleeves with several track variations. Depending on which copy you received, the Mothers' contribution was either "Holiday In Berlin, Full Blown" or "Valarie", both from "Burnt Weeny Sandwich". Also included was Frank's "Willie The Pimp", together with a selection of tracks from all Bizarre and Straight LPs released up to February 1970, with the exception of "Uncle Meat" and the Lenny Bruce album. Some of the tracks by other artists also vary from copy to copy. "Zapped" could only be purchased in the U.S. by mail-order for what now seems like the laughable price of one dollar, although certain countries (Australia included) took the liberty of issuing it as a full-price album.

FRANK ZAPPA & THE MOTHERS COMPLETE UK & US DISCOGRAPHY 1968-73

Mothers of Invention is abbreviated to M.O.I.; Frank Zappa to F.Z.

Reprise K 14100
United Artists UP 35319

Bizarre 0781
Reprise PRO 332
Reprise 0840
Reprise PRO 366
Bizarre 0889
Bizarre 0889
Bizarre 0892
Bizarre 0967

Bizarre 1052

Straight 1027

Bizarre 1052

United Artists 50857
United Artists 50857
Bizarre REP 1127

Bizarre REP 1127

Transatlantic TRA 195
Transatlantic TRA 197
Reprise RSLP 6332

Reprise RSLP 6356
Reprise RSLP 6356
Reprise K 44078
Reprise RSLP 6370
Reprise RSLP 6370
Reprise K 44083
Reprise RSLP 2028
Reprise K 44019
Reprise RSLP 2030
Reprise RSLP 2030
Reprise K 44020
Reprise K 44150
United Artists UDF 50003
Reprise K 44179
Reprise K 44203
Reprise K 44209
Reprise K 44024

Bizarre RS 6329
Reprise RS 6329
Bizarre RS 6332

Bizarre 2MS 2024
Reprise 2MS 2024
Bizarre RS 6356
Reprise RS 6356
Bizarre RS 6370
Reprise RS 6370
Bizarre PRO 368
Bizarre PRO 368
Bizarre MS 2028
Reprise MS 2028
Bizarre MS 2030
Reprise MS 2030
Bizarre MS 2042
Reprise MS 2042
United Artists UAS 9956

MCA 24183
Bizarre MS 2075
Reprise MS 2075
Bizarre MS 2094
Reprise MS 2094
Bizarre MS 2093
Reprise MS 2093
Barking Pumpkin BPR 8888
Barking Pumpkin BPR 8888X
Barking Pumpkin BPR 9999

Zappa CDDZAP 3
Zappa CDZAP 2
Zappa CDZAP 10

Rykodisc RCD 10064/65
Rykodisc RCD 10066
Rykodisc RCD 10094
Rykodisc RCD 10026
Rykodisc RCD 31001

As a footnote to our Frank Zappa Verve feature (R.C. 93), the following CDs have been released since that issue appeared:
Rykodisc RCD 40062
Rykodisc RCD 10093
Rykodisc RCD 10063

U.K. SINGLES

TEARS BEGAN TO FALL/JUNIER MINTZ BOOGIE (8/71, M.O.I.) . . . 20
WHAT WILL THIS EVENING BRING ME THIS MORNING?/DADDY, DADDY, DADDY (11/71, F.Z.) . . . 20

U.S. SINGLES

CIRCLE/MERRY GO ROUND (1968, Wild Man Fischer) . . . 18
UNCLE MEAT (promo jukebox EP, 4/69, p/s, M.O.I.) . . . 65
MY GUITAR/DOG BREATH (9/69, M.O.I.) . . . 30
HOT RATS (promo jukebox EP, 10/69, p/s, F.Z.) . . . 65
PEACHES EN REGALIA (mono/stereo, promo only, 1/70, F.Z.) . . . 25
PEACHES EN REGALIA/LITTLE UMBRELLAS (1/70, F.Z.) . . . 30
WPLJ/MY GUITAR (1970, M.O.I.) . . . 30
TELL ME YOU LOVE ME/DO YOU GO ALL THE WAY (11/70, F.Z.) . . . 30
TEARS BEGAN TO FALL (mono/stereo, promo only, 8/71, F.Z. & M.O.I.) . . . 25
TEARS BEGAN TO FALL (mono/stereo, promo only, 8/71, F.Z. & M.O.I.) . . . 25
TEARS BEGAN TO FALL/JUNIER MINTZ BOOGIE (8/71, F.Z. & M.O.I.) . . . 30
MAGIC FINGERS (mono/stereo, promo only, 10/71, F.Z.) . . . 25
MAGIC FINGERS/DADDY, DADDY, DADDY (10/71, F.Z.) . . . 30
CLETUS AWREETUS-AWRIGHTUS (mono/stereo, promo only, 12/72, the Mothers) . . . 20
CLETUS-AWREETUS-AWRIGHTUS/EAT THAT QUESTION (12/72, the Mothers) . . . 20

U.K. LPs

THE BERKELEY CONCERT (dble., 1969, Lenny Bruce) . . . 25
UNCLE MEAT (dble., 9/69, M.O.I.) . . . 30
AN EVENING WITH WILD MAN FISCHER (dble., 1969, Wild Man Fischer) . . . 25
HOT RATS (3-colour label, 2/70, F.Z.) . . . 20
HOT RATS (1-colour label, 9/70, F.Z.) . . . 18
HOT RATS (re-numbered, 7/71, F.Z.) . . . 12
BURN'T WEENY SANDWICH (3-colour label, 3/70, M.O.I.) . . . 20
BURN'T WEENY SANDWICH (1-colour label, 9/70, M.O.I.) . . . 18
BURN'T WEENY SANDWICH (re-numbered, 7/71, M.O.I.) . . . 12
WEASELS RIPPED MY FLESH (9/70, M.O.I.) . . . 15
WEASELS RIPPED MY FLESH (re-numbered, 7/71, M.O.I.) . . . 12
CHUNGA'S REVENGE (green cover, 11/70, F.Z.) . . . 15
CHUNGA'S REVENGE (red cover, 1971, F.Z.) . . . 12
CHUNGA'S REVENGE (red cover, re-numbered, 7/71, F.Z.) . . . 12
FILLMORE EAST - JUNE 1971 (8/71, the Mothers) . . . 15
200 MOTELS (dble., w/ book + poster, 11/71, F.Z. & M.O.I.) . . . 20
JUST ANOTHER BAND FROM L.A. (6/72, the Mothers) . . . 14
WAKA/JAWAKA: HOT RATS (8/72, F.Z.) . . . 15
THE GRAND WAZOO (1/73, the Mothers) . . . 14
BURN'T WEENY SANDWICH/WEASELS RIPPED MY FLESH (dble., 1979, M.O.I.) . . . 12

U.S. LPs

THE BERKELEY CONCERT (dble., 1968, Lenny Bruce) . . . 25
THE BERKELEY CONCERT (dble., 1973, Lenny Bruce) . . . 15
AN EVENING WITH WILD MAN FISCHER (dble., 1968, Wild Man Fischer) . . . 25
UNCLE MEAT (dble., w/ book, 4/69, M.O.I.) . . . 30
UNCLE MEAT (dble., 1973, M.O.I.) . . . 15
HOT RATS (10/69, F.Z.) . . . 15
HOT RATS (1973, F.Z.) . . . 10
BURN'T WEENY SANDWICH (w/ photo insert, 12/69, M.O.I.) . . . 22
BURN'T WEENY SANDWICH (1973, M.O.I.) . . . 10
ZAPPED (mail-order only, Zappa on cover, 1970, Various Artists) . . . 30
ZAPPED (mail-order only, photo collage on cover, 1970, V. Artists) . . . 20
WEASELS RIPPED MY FLESH (9/70, M.O.I.) . . . 15
WEASELS RIPPED MY FLESH (1973, M.O.I.) . . . 10
CHUNGA'S REVENGE (11/70, M.O.I.) . . . 15
CHUNGA'S REVENGE (1973, F.Z.) . . . 10
FILLMORE EAST - JUNE 1971 (8/71, the Mothers) . . . 15
FILLMORE EAST - JUNE 1971 (1973, the Mothers) . . . 10
200 MOTELS (w/ book + poster; some pressings had black & silver labels, dble., 10/71, F.Z. & M.O.I.) . . . 30
200 MOTELS (dble. in single sleeve, 5/86, F.Z. & M.O.I.) . . . 12
JUST ANOTHER BAND FROM L.A. (5/72, the Mothers) . . . 15
JUST ANOTHER BAND FROM L.A. (1973, the Mothers) . . . 10
WAKA/JAWAKA: HOT RATS (7/72, F.Z.) . . . 15
WAKA/JAWAKA: HOT RATS (1973, F.Z.) . . . 10
THE GRAND WAZOO (12/72, M.O.I.) . . . 12
THE GRAND WAZOO (1973, M.O.I.) . . . 10
THE OLD MASTERS BOX TWO (8-LP box set, 11/86, F.Z.) . . . 110
THE OLD MASTERS BOX TWO SAMPLER (promo-only, 11/86, F.Z.) . . . 25
THE OLD MASTERS BOX THREE (9-LP box set w/ 2 Bizarre albums, 12/87, F.Z.) . . . 120

N.B. This discography does not include the many sampler and compilation LPs issued by Warner/Reprise in the U.S., all of which contain one or more previously released Zappa/Mothers tracks. They do not form part of the Bizarre catalogue and, without exception, received no direct input from Zappa.

U.K. CDs

UNCLE MEAT (2 CDs, 10/87) . . . 20
HOT RATS (10/87) . . . 10
WAKA/JAWAKA (1/89) . . . 10

U.S. CDs

UNCLE MEAT (2 CDs, 10/87) . . . 25
HOT RATS (10/87) . . . 12
WAKA/JAWAKA (1/89) . . . 12
THE GRAND WAZOO (9/86) . . . 12
PEACHES EN REGALIA/I'M NOT SATISFIED/LUCILLE HAS MESSED MY MIND UP (3" CD single, 10/87) . . . 6

As a footnote to our Frank Zappa Verve feature (R.C. 93), the following CDs have been released since that issue appeared:
FREAK OUT (U.S. 10/87; U.K. Zappa CDZAP 1) . . . 12
ABSOLUTELY FREE (U.S. 1/89; U.K. Zappa CDZAP 12, + 2 tracks) . . . 12
RUBEN & THE JETS (U.S. 10/87; U.K. Zappa CDZAP 4) . . . 12

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