
Frank Zappa

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Posthumous Frank Zappa Talks To Bob Marshall FLIPSIDE #101 - APRIL/MAY '96

PART I - September 29, 1994

Bob Marshall: Greetings, Frank.

The Evergreens (a group of entities speaking through Michael Blake Read while he is in trance): He says "greetings".

Bob Marshall: Frank and I did a 3 1/2-hour interview that was conducted in October of 1988, and a publisher in Ontario wants to print that interview. It's considered a great interview. As a matter of fact, Frank, it has been bootlegged in a collection called APOCRYPHA. It has been featured in the booklet that goes with the bootleg of your music. So I, too, have the honor that you've had in being bootlegged, Frank.

Evergreens: He says he feels he's in good company.

Bob Marshall: What does that mean?

Evergreens: He says they never bootleg the cheapies. It's the good ones that get bootlegged.

Bob Marshall: Alright. So I was thinking this publisher is going to publish the interview because they think it's really worth it, and because they thought the media, when you died, Frank, did not give a proper assessment or coverage of the details of your work. So, I thought later that to make the book complete, to make the book unique, and this is maybe the first time it's ever been done - why not have an interview with Frank Zappa now, between you and me, Frank, and have that as part of the book? I think this would continue to enhance the uniqueness of your career. Maybe your audience is not that inclined to think about life after death, or would not believe it. But, Frank, do you think this is a good idea?

Evergreens: He says, "You don't ask for anything simple, do you?"

Bob Marshall: (Laughs) Yes, maybe my first interview was probably a little too complex. Was I a little too complex, you mean?

Evergreens: Not at all. He says, "Under these circumstances, might as well."

Bob Marshall: But what do you mean when you say, "You don't ask for anything simple?" It's hard to do?

Evergreens: No, he's talking about the complexity of the situation as it exists at the present.

Bob Marshall: You mean, to ask those people to believe?

Evergreens: That, too.

Bob Marshall: What is the complexity of the situation at this moment?

Evergreens: The complexity is that he is here and he goes through us.

Bob Marshall: That will be an accurate translation, won't it?

Evergreens: As much as you want.

Bob Marshall: But I can talk to Frank directly, so to speak?

Evergreens: "So to speak", yes.

Bob Marshall: Frank, since you have passed over, have you met and talked to Edgard Varese?

Frank Zappa: Yes.

Bob Marshall: What did he think of your work?

Frank: He said, "Good enough." And then he was uncomplimentary. Then he was complimentary. It was a long discussion. It continues to be a long discussion. One's present work must show its linkage and its derivativeness, that from which it creates its own essence. Not that the music itself is derivative. It must have a certain root from which it

springs and a certain emphasis. And when it follows, you know it creates an emphasis. Now, when one comes to any instrument untrained, there is the influence of the particular music that you like or frankly dislike. And rather than being pushed to the left or to the right by dislike, one's own direction is more important to the creative artist. And not necessarily the creativeness... (Tape malfunctions).

Bob Marshall: Can you remember what we were talking about before the tape got garbled?

Evergreens: Music is derivative in that some is obviously copied. The joke of "derivativeness" is - does a person as a composer go against a trend and, by that, establish a trend? There is then a break with a certain continuity that is being formed by a trend. Stravinsky was not following a trend. He was very much establishing a musical form that was within itself new, but still it was based upon a past. No composer is without a past. That was the joke of "derivativeness".

Bob Marshall: Have you, Frank, talked to Elvis Presley?

Frank: Yes, might as well say I talked with all of them when I get the opportunity.

Bob Marshall: John Lennon?

Frank: Same with that... get the opportunity, you will talk. And this is an opportunity. But, not to the extent of comparing what every person thinks would be talked of. Life is not only the music that was in it. It was the living of the music. It was the creation and the airing, and whether to keep at it. It was the decision to continue in the face of rejection. It is the desire to perform more than just the music alone. It's so much! What can be talked about is the tiredness of travelling in a bus for 27 days, the seemingly "no-difference" audiences from place to place, and the inadequacies of different sound systems. These things all add together. There is not just one area of discussion. Some of these are faded in importance. They were important. They are not that important once you "cast off clay". They're not as important. What is important is the thrust, the meaning behind what's done. Mark Twain said, "Nobody but a fool wrote, but for money."

Money comes in when you are a performer. You get the recognition. You get the dates. You get the places you could not get before. You get the approval that was withheld before. Everyone tries to jump on the bandwagon and say, "Oh yes, we knew that you were gonna be this good all along". Where were they when there were days when it was difficult to pay for various "venues". But more now, it is important as to - it was a living, it was a life. And there is a difference between "it's a living" and "it's a life". That to complain of these things as we did, we did not choose to do other things. But we could have. We're not untalented. But we wanted to do it. And do it we did.

Bob Marshall: And that is what was discussed in common with John Lennon, Jim Morrison, all these musicians?

Frank: Yes.

Bob Marshall: And Varese? Or was that another era?

Frank: Another era, another time. But the same reason. You see, if you were to take Stravinsky as an example. He could have done other things. Why have your work denigrated and called "a cattle wailing"? This is not what you'd think would happen. Stravinsky had critics. I had critics. I am not saying that the value of the music is the same. It is and it isn't. But he was just the same. No, he did not spend 27 days on a bus, but he had the equivalent of it, had the equivalent of being in smaller venues. His work was not greeted with open arms all the time. I can understand his feelings about his music. But when you are trying to do something that is a value to yourself and that you're fortunate enough to find someone who also finds that value good, then that's why you do it.

Bob Marshall: So, considering that when we "cast off clay" we become aware of all the lives we have lived and will live, you're saying that you've talked to your fellow musicians who are now with you and discussed the meaning of being a musician. Is that what you are saying? That is the meaning of the life?

Frank: Yes, the meaning of the life. There is one musician. I talked to this man for a long time, a drummer, a man who used a talking drum to inform. This man had as much musicalness in himself as any known Western musician, and considerably more than many, because this man knew his instrument intimately. That is an important discussion. That's a pleasurable discussion. Is there a difference between the harpsichordist of the 1700's and a pianist of the 20th Century? Musical forms are different. Musical shapes are different. But the musician within is the same. Different instruments, different quality, different and different. But still that within is exactly the same. You could take an 18th-Century cellist and have this person play with a 20th-Century orchestra. He'd fit in. You see, the commonality of it, is that some would say that a long-haired rock player is a degenerate form of the nicely cuoiffed 19th-Century musician. And that a guitar fixed with flange and reverb is a step downwards from a Stradivarius. These arguments are wrong. If you take breaking glass and record it to get different tones and assemble them together, you can make music. It is not what you expect it to be. It does not mean it is not of worth. In the 16th, 17th and 18th Centuries, a considerable body of music was done. How much of it remains? A lot of it, and quite rightfully, has gone into the scrap pile. In fact, much more is being produced in the 20th Century, especially in these decades - quantity means nothing. Much of this that is being produced these days

rightfully would be trashed. But within a few lifetimes, this will be seen, that which survives, as a core of a music-form that influenced the observer, and influences the observer two generations from now.

Bob Marshall: By "observer" you don't mean me, you mean the common listener?

Frank: Common listener.

Bob Marshall: Yes. So you are saying that it's trash, but it influences.

Frank: Not all of it's trash. Some of it's trash. Some of it's just plain copies of this group or that group, copies of mine. Fine, let it be. But it does not remain.

Bob Marshall: Are you saying the best does remain?

Frank: The best, that which is obviously across a test of time, is kept. That's best.

Bob Marshall: Will you be part of that future "best" category? Will your music be part of that?

Frank: Of course, it will. Not all of it. But much of that which we do and which we've been very proud of, yes.

Bob Marshall: When you say "we", who are you speaking of?

Frank: The entire group.

Bob Marshall: The various groups that you've worked with?

Frank: Yes.

Bob Marshall: So, looking at your life as a musician and comparing that life and the meaning of it to other lives that you have lived and will live, would you want to be a musician again, in another life?

Frank: Yes, as long as it's not staying on a bus for 27 days.

Bob Marshall: But you will not be a musician for the next few lives you can see?

Frank: Not for the next few.

Bob Marshall: Yes. Can we talk about some of the content of your ideas?

Frank: Please.

Bob Marshall: Re-reading the interview with you, that we did in 1988, you were still investigating the question, "Who are the brain police?" You then had some notions but you were not quite ready to say what they were. From the perspective of the existence you are in now, in spirit, who are the "brain police" on our dimension?

Frank: People who say that this is supposed to be and that's not supposed to be. Who gives the right to do this? Who is the arbiter of taste? Who says that this is acceptable? Who are these?

Bob Marshall: Are they the critics?

Frank: Critics, the good ones, recognize goodness. The bad ones couldn't recognize a wall if they were told what it is. It's the others, not the critics. You see, take the generic rock'n'roll. It was not what some expected. It was a new form. But go before that, get into jazz. That was considered bad music. Not bad because it was played badly or because it was configured badly, but it was too jovial for some people to like. Rock'n'roll is different from jazz, but suffered under the same derogatoriness that jazz did. Is rock'n'roll the Devil's music? Is Satan alive and well in that particular chord form? These people say that if you listen to this, you become not normal, or away from the norm. Then I say, listen to it more. To be normal is not always the preferable state.

Bob Marshall: You mentioned generic rock'n'roll - so in the Fifties that was the public discussion about it, being the Devil's music, but rock'n'roll by the '80s, or even by the '70s, was more widely accepted, wasn't it?

Frank: By brain police?

Bob Marshall: No (laughs), I mean the high-art critics.

Frank: Some of them sneered, but it is various religious groups, it is various Bible-holding people who say that the world is coming to an end because of this Devil-inspired, Satan-inspired music.

Bob Marshall: Aren't they a minority part of American culture?

Frank: Minority, but vocal. Often, extremely influential. Sometimes, destructive. But they are given credence. And what does that do until it's realized it falls down from its own lack of proof? You see, if you take generic rock'n'roll, some of the early material was bright and lively. It was loud. It was often dissonant. But it had "fresh air" in itself. It pushed over the stale, not because it was replacing one generation's music with another. It's that music, to continue, must be alive, must have that breath of "fresh air" in it - that something that causes you to say, "Ah, now that is real". But if you were to institutionalize rock'n'roll, then it will be superseded by something that has the breath of life in it. Someone may not like how this breath is exhaled. They may say it's discordant. They may say it's different. Of course it is, that's the whole point, it's different. It does not mean it's wrong. It does not mean it's Devil-inspired. Talk of Stravinsky - see what happened to "The Rites Of Spring" (sic). See how that was received. How many punches were thrown? How many people demanded their money back because of this terrible music, this licentiousness, this foolishness? And wouldn't it be good when it gets back to the real music? What is real music? You can take Bach - you've got something there that was a breath of fresh air. That still, in its way, is full of fresh air. Cannot rock'n'roll, rock, and all of this be seen that it has fresh air in itself?

Bob Marshall: Now, was part of the freshness of rock in the Fifties due to the technology of electric amplification?

Frank: Yes, it gave you more control over your sound. It made it different from anything else, not only the amplification. You could slur it, you could blur it, you could shift it, you could shape it. It became a tool, a useable tool. Here is something for you. Go out and find a copy of Bill Haley's original "Rock Around The Clock". Play it. Listen to it. Hear the freshness that's in it. That record was banned from radio play. It was considered music that was, in one reviewer's words, "totally without any merit." So he wants to become famous for a day by saying that? Now, go a year before Haley produced that. Listen to some of the music that was being done then. Much of it good, but beginning to tire, beginning to lose its breath of fresh air. So, a new music was ready to come in.

Bob Marshall: As well as the technology was there to do it.

Frank: Of course. Now, why would it be that a musician would grasp technology? Why? Easy enough to just put microphones. They were good. Sound systems were mostly good. Not everything you wanted. But you got the sound out. The revolution was in the instruments themselves - in that the guitar became electrified. Not amplified - electrified. The bass became electrified, not necessarily amplified. Now with the equipment that the modern musician has, you can do so much with a sound as to make it anything you want. You can sample a breaking window pane and you've got a chorus of breaking window panes. You can make a tune out of it, as I said, breaking glass. Get a tone. Put it on digitizing equipment. Look what you've got. You have another sound. Now they're experimenting with sounds, they're experimenting with timings. And some of them are beginning to lose the breath of fresh air. Not through experimentation, but because of continuance of the older style. It must evolve. It's going to get replaced in any event.

Bob Marshall: By new technology?

Frank: By new technology. By new bands. By new composers.

Bob Marshall: So, does technology create this evolution?

Frank: Technology creates a manipulable sound to the advantage of the musician. What comes up next? Anyone can buy a system that will give them an almost infinite number of voices. Everything from single violin to multiple violin, multiple cello, so on, french horns, every instrument in the orchestra. Plus any rhythm you want. Plus you can make your own rhythm. You can build an orchestra on a computer. You can build a rock band on a computer.

Bob Marshall: That's happening now. Are you going to tell us what's coming next? Is that what you are leading to?

Frank: What we are leading to is going to be those who compose for the music that comes after rock. Punk was just a derivative. It was just an off-shoot. Grunge is an off-shoot. There is and there will be a shift in music.

Bob Marshall: And you're saying it will be built on rock in general?

Frank: It will take from rock, but it will not be rock. Everyone's searching for what it's going to be. And when it comes, the first thing that's going to happen is somebody is going to say, "This is terrible". They are going to say, "Oh, this is not it. This is out of reality". But what reality are they talking about? They are talking about a reality that they're used to. Music is there for its enjoyment. You get used to it. But you do not play the same tune over and over. No matter how much you like it. You do not play it over and over and over. You enjoy it. What we say is, how you will recognize it: because it will be there as a breath of fresh air.

Bob Marshall: This is Frank talking?

Frank: Yes.

Bob Marshall: Was rap, what's called rap music the last few years, fresh air?

Frank: Some of it. Some of it is good. Most of it is a waste of time. But, you see, rap is more a political statement than it is music.

Bob Marshall: Would you consider it an offshoot like Grunge and Punk?

Frank: As what? Where are they? Where's Punk? Where did it go? It gave up. You can't give up on a music. Can't give up.

Bob Marshall: Has Grunge given up?

Frank: Yes. Look at it. What is it? Where is it? Not that it didn't break ground. Where's its fresh air? Where's its verve? Where's its causing a person to move?

Bob Marshall: Is that why Kurt Cobain killed himself? If he did?

Frank: Cobain, aah... Take a look at a performer. You'll find that through the dirt and the dust and the cold and the heat and the bad amplification, poor halls, terrible management of venues, problems with ticketing, problems with people movement, still you do it. If some knew what has to be done, they would never attempt it. Now, Cobain talked continually of being ready to die, that there was no reason to continue, no reason to work at what he did.

Bob Marshall: As a musical performer?

Frank: As a musical performer. And it became too much. It became too much.

Bob Marshall: The grind of professional musicianship?

Frank: The grind. That's a kind word for it. It's appalling. Anyone who thinks that they want to become a rock star should be taken out and tied to the wheels of a truck. And driven over for several miles. And if he still likes that feeling, then he can do it. It's not easy, but it's all you want to do. Through all of it, it's what you want to do.

Bob Marshall: But Cobain didn't have that want?

Frank: He did not have that.

Bob Marshall: Have you talked to Cobain? Communicated with him?

Frank: Yes. More of another aspect, another aspect of music.

Bob Marshall: The other question we talked about in our last interview was that you thought it was curious that when you would watch a movie, and it would be a bad movie, a dull movie, or even a bad Broadway musical, but you would cry. Tears would come out. And you wondered what was that situation - what was the chemistry involved?

Frank: Do you know how hard it is to put on a musical? And to smile all the time when your feet are hurting? When you have done a scene over and over and over, and the director says, "Cut. Do it again" - these people work. When you see that movie, some would say that's a bad movie. But they are not looking at it right. They are looking at it: does it match this picture or that picture? Take a picture by Spielberg - JAWS.

Bob Marshall: Yes.

Frank: There was no movie like that - the terror created by the movie. Look how they did it. Good staging. Good performance. Real. Some would say that's a bad movie. Some would say it's a good movie. But they both saw the same movie. Think of any picture you want. And you'll see that there's a "something" there. I've called it in music, "a breath of fresh air". You can see movies like this. Even potboiler movies, if done well, can cause the emotions to flip.

Bob Marshall: Why was that a puzzle then when you were alive?

Frank: Because I had not figured it out.

Bob Marshall: What is it that you hadn't figured out?

Frank: First, I had not figured out that these were designed to create a sentiment.

Bob Marshall: But you know that a composer works with effects.

Frank: Yes.

Bob Marshall: What you mean is, that what you thought were bad movies, you missed some of the effects that were being made?

Frank: Subtly, I missed them.

Bob Marshall: Because you were judging it as a bad performance?

Frank: Not reflective of me.

Bob Marshall: What was not reflective of you?

Frank: A movie... a movie about...

Bob Marshall: Not part of your life?

Frank: Not a part of mine.

Bob Marshall: I'm reminded of Marshall McLuhan's phrase, "The user is the content".

Frank: Yes.

Bob Marshall: You would agree with that?

Frank: If I was the content, then I was also the container in which the content resides. I did not realize how the content fit into the shape of the container. Now I know.

Bob Marshall: You did not realize how the content fit?

Frank: Of course, I did not. I still cried. I didn't know why. I do now.

Bob Marshall: Is it the case that the medium is the message?

Frank: The medium gave me a message and I received it, but I didn't know what it said. All I know is that the message-content affected me.

Bob Marshall: Are the "medium" and the "message", if they have equal meaning, the staging of the effects... the manipulation?

Frank: The manipulation?

Bob Marshall: Yes.

Frank: But these people work hard.

Bob Marshall: Yes.

Frank: That I could see.

Bob Marshall: You did see that?

Frank: Oh yes.

Bob Marshall: Now, I would like to go into some of your ideas that you had as Frank Zappa. I give you a quote from 1972 where you said, "I believe the basic stuff of the universe is in the shape of waves, not subatomic particles. Then, if the two components of the universe, waves and time, are actually one, and if a wave equals a wave, all time equals all other time and you aren't going nowhere because you've already been there. Viewing this whole mechanism from a distance, it would just be a solid object".

Now, in my own personal experience, I've met a man named Irving Dardik who is developing a whole theory of physics based on the idea that everything waves, that reality is waves waving. And my wife is involved in working with him. And when she read your quote, she said that is what Irving Dardik is saying. Would the Evergreens say that Dardik will have an influence on thinking about physics in the future?

Evergreens: It's a wave on a wave on a wave on a wave on a wave on a wave on a wave on a wave.

Bob Marshall: That's Dardik's view?

Evergreens: That's the view of Time. It's a wave on a wave on a wave.

Bob Marshall: That's a fact?

Evergreens: It's an S-curve. And you go closer to the S-curve and you find that there's another S-curve inside of that. There's another S-curve in that. There's another S-curve in that. It's a fractal time.

Bob Marshall: This is the Evergreens saying what is? You are describing what is?

Evergreens: We're describing.

Bob Marshall: Dardik is close to that idea, isn't he?

Evergreens: Yes.

Bob Marshall: Now, were you, Frank, thinking of that when you were talking about this twenty years ago?

Frank: I could claim it, but I cannot. I looked at Time as more a wave because it made more sense as a wave than a particle.

Bob Marshall: Made more sense as a musician?

Frank: Yes. It made Time more understandable. Of course, there's that phrase, "Time was created to prevent all things from happening at once."

What travels along a wave? Another wave? But the wave is there. Does it take Time to go along a wave? Does a wave need to form itself? How fast is Time? Everything exists. Now that I found to be true. Everything exists.

Bob Marshall: When did you find that?

Frank: Now that I'm here.

Bob Marshall: Yes, but that's not what you were thinking?

Frank: No, not then. It was more that particles were too gritty, and waves were much neater. I could not see a universe made out of crumbs, but I could see it very easily made out of waves.

Bob Marshall: Is that what you meant when you said, "Music is the best"?

Frank: Yes, you see the wave in music and you understand what music is. When it loses that wave, it loses it's time. And once its lost its time, it's replaced.

Bob Marshall: By another kind of music or wave?

Frank: Yes.

Bob Marshall: Just an aside, will Dardik's theory gain acceptance over the next twenty, thirty years?

Frank: It's going to be linked to quantum physics to a greater degree than any other. And you'll find that this wave imprinted upon wave imprinted upon wave imprinted upon wave gives the answer in various areas of quantum physics that have not been found at this present time.

Bob Marshall: And that relates to the rediscovery of Atlantean resonance?

Frank: It does.

Bob Marshall: Yes. So it's inevitable that it will be appreciated in the future.

Frank: Yes, it will.

Bob Marshall: So, Frank, as a musician, were you biased toward having a wave theory?

Frank: Yes.

Bob Marshall: When did you, during your life, start thinking about music as waves? In the '50s or the '60s?

Frank: The '60s.

Bob Marshall: Was your thinking influenced by Pauline Oliveros?

Frank: To a degree.

Bob Marshall: Or were you already thinking about it before her?

Frank: More that our thinking coalesced much. It was more that the waves were neat, and particles were not.

Bob Marshall: And you were thinking that before you heard Oliveros' ideas?

Frank: Yes.

Bob Marshall: But she coalesced it and made a great picture of it...

Frank: Yes.

Bob Marshall: ...to consolidate and then you worked with that confidence from that point on?

Frank: Yes.

Bob Marshall: In your book, THEM OR US, the book of your plays and transcripts, there's a point on page 172 where we've been reading about Frank Zappa as a character. And then your daughter in the script interacts with a person who is not named. It just says "Moon's Dad". Moon is obviously interacting with Frank, her father, but he is not named. Why didn't you name that person "Frank Zappa" along with the character, the Frank Zappa, that played a role in the rest of the script?

Frank: Because the interaction's different.

Bob Marshall: Was it personal? Was it because it was private family life?

Frank: It was her, and her interaction with the real as opposed to a character.

Bob Marshall: So it was a figure/ground relationship?

Frank: Yes.

Bob Marshall: With Moon?

Frank: Yes.

Bob Marshall: I read an interview with you in the late '80s where you say, "Investors in radio buy life". What did you mean by that statement?

Frank: This is not physics. Radio is a medium that seems almost was invented for music. Of course, it was invented for speeches. But it became a natural home for music. If you'll see that the advances in radio have been to improve the clarity of this, the reproduction of it, radio is that ingredient, that if removed, the dish is a very flat-tasting dish. So, it's a perfect medium.

Bob Marshall: How is it "life"? If investors in radio "buy life"?

Frank: They buy continuance. They buy life. If you invest in radio, it's a good investment. It buys life. Can you not see?

Bob Marshall: Yes, technology is "fresh air".

Frank: It is. It's that opportunity to have these new breaths of fresh air. Radio itself is nothing. It's what it broadcasts is what it is. And that through this, newness is found.

Bob Marshall: When we met on October 22, 1988 and had that interview, you thought it was a great interview and you wanted to release it. The next day you asked your publicist, Jim Nagle, some questions about me. How did the interview affect you? And why wasn't it put out? Not that that's a major concern. Maybe there were other things you were busy with. What did you make of me and what kind of thinking did you have privately, considering it was a good interview?

Frank: You should have been in a rock band.

Bob Marshall: Did you know that I asked you to be in your band in 1974 and I would read FINNEGANS WAKE? You did not know that then?

Frank: Not then. But you should have been in a rock band. You're a breath of fresh air.

Bob Marshall: What instrument would I play?

Frank: Whatever you want. Just be there on time. The point is that it was a breath-of-fresh-air interview.

Bob Marshall: I agree.

Frank: If you would see most of the interviews, you would see how predictable they were. There would be no exploration. "Tell me what you think about this. Tell me what you think about that." And they consider that an interview. You pushed.

Bob Marshall: We explored.

Frank: Exactly.

Bob Marshall: So, if I had an instrument and I had auditioned for your band in the '70s and if I was reasonably competent, not a genius at the instrument, my personality might have attracted you to put me in your band?

Frank: Because you are a breath of fresh air. In saying that you should have been a rock musician, what we're saying is that you're that temperament. That's a good temperament to have.

Bob Marshall: The temperament I have is appropriate for pop culture?

Frank: Exactly.

Bob Marshall: Also, I'm a private person, which you were, and so I might have found it a grind living the rock life.

Frank: Remember what I said. You do it because you do it and you do it because there's no other, and you do it because you want to. You get to a point where you want it. You wonder what life would be without it. Then again, you are so tired sometimes that you say to yourself, "I'll do anything than this." And then you put your foot down on the ground and say, "I'm going to stay here." Then after a while, you say, "Where's the bus?"

Bob Marshall: My life took a different direction and I probably was meant to do what I am doing now.

Frank: Yes.

Bob Marshall: Which will create a fresh air?

Frank: Which creates a fresh air.

Bob Marshall: So my final question will be: You dedicated your autobiography to Stephen Hawking. Were you influenced by Hawking when you talked about the "Time idea" with me? I mean, we had the interview in October '88. The book was finished in August '88. Did you become aware of Hawking later in early '89 to dedicate the book?

Frank: He coalesces things too, doesn't he?

Bob Marshall: Yes.

Frank: Now there's a man on a 27-day bus ride. There's a man who's working at doing what he does. There's other things he could do. But he chooses to do the hard way and does it. Fine mind. Fine man. Yes, he influenced me. Of

course, he influenced me.

Bob Marshall: You read his work before we did our interview in '88?

Frank: Yes.

Bob Marshall: And in our interview, you say a scientist someday will prove your ideas about Time - that everything is happening all at once, at the same time.

Frank: Yes.

Bob Marshall: Is he the scientist proving it?

Frank: In part, but there's more to come.

Bob Marshall: But he helps, he moves it towards that?

Frank: He does. But look at him from another direction. Take a good look at him as a person on a 27-day bus ride. Think of it. And he still does not want to get off.

Bob Marshall: Alright, my final question. What is "latex solar beef"?

Frank: You find out.

Bob Marshall: Well, Frank, you've created great music and it'll live for me as long as I'm around to have a say in it.

Frank: Thanks for that. Some of it will. When you listen to it, listen for the fresh air. If it doesn't have the fresh air in it, I guarantee you, it's going to go down the tube. If it does, it keeps.

Bob Marshall: Thank you very much, Frank.

Michael Blake Read is the medium who channels the Evergreens. He is asleep during the interview with the Evergreens. However, the topics covered by Bob Marshall, while talking to Frank Zappa and the Evergreens, trigger impressions in Michael while he's in trance. When he comes out of trance (usually 60 minutes), Michael has impressions and memories of the covered topics that are immediately taped. The following are his impressions evoked by the session with Frank Zappa and Bob Marshall via the Evergreens.

Michael Blake Read: I was in a recording studio and there was Frank Zappa and, I think, there were 4 or 5 other musicians in there.

Bob Marshall: Famous musicians?

Michael: I don't know who they were. They were in the studio and it must have been somewhere in the States. And Frank Zappa looked quite young. They miked the band and they were getting sounds off them individually to get the meter levels. He said, "Okay", and cued them to start. They went into their first piece. They play at a slightly louder volume, so they adjust to that. And then he went, "Cut". These guys were not used to stopping in the middle of a song. They weren't used to it at all. They went, "What's wrong, what's wrong?" "No, this is a cut. We've got to start from the beginning again because of the levels." "Oh, we play it again. Okay."

Bob Marshall: Frank knew. They were asking Frank, "Why are we doing this?"

Michael: Yes. They're saying to Frank, "Why are we doing this?" And he said, "We've got to do this over again. They've got to get the sound levels." And they said, "Why didn't he get the sound levels right the first time?" He said, "They're working on it." Then they said, "Oh, everybody's working on it." So for the rest of the day, when anything ever happened, they'd say, "Oh, they're working on it." When somebody would say, "Can I go for coffee?", they'd say, "They're working on it".

Bob Marshall: That becomes the phrase of the day.

Michael: The phrase of the day - "They're working on it."

Bob Marshall: That's what Frank would do. He'd incorporate the phrase of the day into the performance that night.

Michael: Oh, is that right?

Bob Marshall: Yeah.

Michael: I saw these guys recording. They played a piece a number of times. And did it and did it and did it and did it. And they worked all day. Then the studio closes down. That night they get on a bus. The next day they are in Philadelphia. They've got many concerts across the next three days, all the buses and equipment. Riding on the bus is not a nice experience. It doesn't matter how luxurious you can make them. You are on a bus.

Bob Marshall: Is this Frank still when he was young?

Michael: Yes, this is younger. You know, on the bus.

Bob Marshall: This was a formative thing in Frank's life?

Michael: Oh, God - you know, you go on tour. You might as well say to yourself, "I don't have a life." You enjoy playing and have a great time with the fans. There's good interaction. That fuels it, if you're good. You know when you've given a good performance. And it's back on the bus again. Also, I saw Frank Zappa looking at all the electronic equipment and just becoming absolutely intrigued by the stuff, intrigued by the stuff.

Bob Marshall: In his life or now?

Michael: In his life, because now he has a different perspective. Then, all the stuff that was coming up. You'd have all the music set out. Somebody said, "There's gonna be a day when they don't need musicians." And he said, "Yeah, but who's gonna do the machinery. It doesn't matter how good it is, some guy's gonna have to come behind there and compose it.

Bob Marshall: How old was Frank? How old did he look when he talked to you?

Michael: He looked about 45.

Bob Marshall: Before he got grey from the cancer?

Michael: He lost a lot of weight when he died.

Bob Marshall: But when he was 45, which is many years ago, he was fit.

Michael: Yeah, he looked fit. He looked like a guy who could spend another trip on the road and not fall apart.

Bob Marshall: Did you see other musicians, Stravinsky or Varese?

Michael: What I saw was a hall, a very nice hall, nice music and beautiful acoustics for an orchestra, and they were playing some Stravinsky pieces. There was an introduction of his music to somewhere, and Stravinsky was doing what producers do, which is stay at the back of the theater and walk. He was on "tenderhooks" about his music.

Bob Marshall: Nervous?

Michael: Nervous. He should be because people threw their programs. They folded up their programs and threw them at the stage.

Bob Marshall: So you saw him on that famous day in 1913 preparing for "The Rite Of Spring" and being nervous?

Michael: They threw their programs. People were leaving. The musicians were faltering. Finally, the conductor stopped it. At that point, there were people throwing things.

Bob Marshall: What was the meaning of you seeing Stravinsky going through that?

Michael: Frank says, "Any music that comes out, there's a continuity of other music. It's another stanza on the same poem." And he said, "Which is okay. But after a while, it's not that it gets boring, it begins to loose the fire that it had. By the time you got to the two-thousandth stanza of the poem, it's such an epic that you say to yourself, 'Well, how great. What next?' And then somebody comes along with a dirty little limerick. And you say, 'No, that's not poetry.' And you say, 'Well, it is different than what I've been reading for two thousand stanzas.' Somebody says, 'But, it hasn't got the rhyme and the meter of the great epic poem.' And he says, 'No, it doesn't, does it? I'll agree with you. Da da da da da da da..." (Ed. - limerick rhythm) The epic poem is Bum bum bum bum bum... Then when you finish that stanza, you go into Da da

da da da da da... That's Frank Zappa's addition to a limerick, to jazz up the limerick. And he says, "So it comes along. So, it's not the same as it was before." And he says, "A lot of it's crap, a lot of it. They're all gonna be curios." The band recorded this piece in 1969 and you listen to it and you say, "Well, why do we keep it for posterity because it's..."

Bob Marshall: Curios are not worthy antiques.

Michael: They're not worthy antiques. He says, "But there are some things that just will stay. Some people will say, 'This is good rock.' It is good rock. Some of the heavy metal stuff is good. Not all of it. But some of it." But the one thing he said, what I thought was very interesting to me, was, "Listen to Bill Haley's 'Rock Around the Clock'". Now we look at it and we say it's nice, and bright, and it's tame. Yet, he said, "Same thing as Stravinsky all over again. Corrupting youth. The objective of music - to corrupt youth".

Bob Marshall: Did you see anything of Hawking in the physics part? The waves and Dardik?

Michael: No, I didn't see that. What I did see was Zappa's fascination with it, which wasn't talked about that much, but his fascination with it was: For example, say the words "Frank Zappa", what do you think? Music. But do you see Frank Zappa the husband, the father, the guy who reads books, and the guy who has interests above and beyond this? The only thing he seemed to regret was that he wanted to take the music on to the next stage. And he didn't, because he wasn't able to.

Bob Marshall: You mean, because he died?

Michael: Yes, because he died. But, he said, "taking it on to the next stage".

Bob Marshall: He was ready to, he had an idea of what he wanted to do?

Michael: Yes. And he said, "One thing is: the pressure on a performer to stay the same way all the time is tremendous because..." He said he would have loved to just smash the mold and say, "That was Frank Zappa before. This is Frank Zappa now. But the record companies would say, "You piss off too many people if you do this. You won't sell that album. It will not sell because it's going back to square one again." He said he'd like to do it, but the record companies have incredible power. He said, "There's some music coming along that's gonna be around for ages". One thing he did say was, "Rap is political".

Bob Marshall: Yeah. It's almost not music. It had another agenda.

Michael: Well, it was more or less a soap box for people who can't get elected.

Bob Marshall: What about his private life that you didn't go into? You saw the private Frank?

Michael: Frank, the family man, was quite a devoted man. It was important to him, very important. His family was very important to him because that was not only the stability, but where he could say to a new life, "Go and do new music".

Bob Marshall: He could say to a "new life" - you mean, his children?

Michael: Yes, his children. "Go and do something different. You are gonna be Frank Zappa's kids, but be your own selves". That was the crucible. He thought that was the good thing about a family. And that's what he really, really, really was aiming towards.

Bob Marshall: That he could say that?

Michael: Yes, he could say that. The other thing is: I asked him one thing - "You had so many talents in so many areas. Why didn't you just put things under pseudonyms, just write plays and commentaries under a different name?" And he said there wasn't enough time. But it was something, if he had to do it again, he would have done that. He would have done a lot of things under different names.

Bob Marshall: In other words, there was enough time, maybe? He realized that now?

Michael: He realizes now what he should have done. He should have done a lot of stuff under different names, under George Smith, a play by George Smith. Because there was another area he was so interested in. And another thing, it was a bit of a privilege for me in one area. I've had this happen before, in a session for a guitarist. I was able to be in a teacher's mind, listening to a teacher's mind who was thoroughly conversant with a guitar. Being in Frank Zappa's mind for a while is interesting because you realize it's such a cavernous mind. Music was a part of him but it wasn't all of him. And the other thing was, the guy could hear music in traffic noises and say, "Hey, I like that. I could take that, I could make that into a song. Vroom da boom..." The other thing was, not many people have known this about him - how well he brought out the musicianship in other people.

Bob Marshall: That's been commented on, but maybe not that known in general. But that's true.

Michael: Yes, he brought it out of his musicians. I don't know Frank Zappa's music that much. Now, of course, from following this, I'll go out and buy some. I will. I've got some time off later in this trip to do that. I'll go buy a couple of discs.

Posthumous Frank Zappa Talks To Bob Marshall

PART II - October 3, 1994

Bob Marshall: As you probably know, we had a little distortion in the beginning of the interview with Frank Zappa last Wednesday.

Evergreens: Yes.

Bob Marshall: There's a little section I want to go over again because I found it a little awkward. So, maybe if we can have Frank tell us about his discussion with Varese. And to anchor it, I'll just read the introductory remarks at that point in the interview. I asked Frank, "What did Edgard Varese think of your work?" Frank said, "He said, 'Good enough'. And then he was uncomplimentary, and then was complimentary. It was a long discussion. It continues to be a long discussion because talking of one's present work must show either its linkage and its derivativeness, that from which it then creates its own essence, and that what influences is creatively derivative." And it gets a little confusing there. I was wondering if Frank could tell me, explain a little more, the dialogue he's having with Varese, and the complexity? And one of the themes in the garbled part that we couldn't transcribe was how a musical instrument is of its own, an instrument. And then the composer brings something to it.

Evergreens: You see, Varese was uncomplimentary saying Zappa's work was derivative. But what appeared to be uncomplimentary was that he was showing that from what Varese had done to what Zappa did, there was a progression.

Bob Marshall: Frank showed that or Varese said that happened?

Evergreens: Varese said that happened. Now, the discussion between the two is: how much influence does a composer have on a composer that follows? How much does this sway influence a composer? Zappa's point is that music itself becomes incestuously derivative - that it becomes a circuitousness that perpetuates a particular style until someone breaks out of the mold.

Bob Marshall: Does Varese agree with that, in their discussion?

Evergreens: He agrees with it, yes. But the discussion between the two is: does the breaking out of the mold mean that it is opposite of the existing incestuousness and, by its oppositeness, starts something new? Or is it then opposite to that which already exists and, so therefore, it was created by the circuitous, incestuous cycle? Where then is the creativeness of a composer? How far can the difference be done between the existing cycle and the beginning of a new cycle? And the discussion between these two and others has been a long discussion because they have the advantage of being able to see music, the invention of instruments, the use of musical instruments, the Zappa era of amplification, and others saying that possibly all music is derivative. There are many points of view on this. It's becoming a discussion on the philosophy of music.

Bob Marshall: Yes, I saw an art show in New York on the tradition of art since World War II up till the '80s, and the discussion of what's called the post-modernist phase is: what is original and what is derivative? That is a theme in other arts during Frank's lifetime.

Evergreens: Yes, it is.

Bob Marshall: Was he thinking that during his life or just in the conversation evoked by meeting Varese?

Evergreens: Oh, it's been a thought in his mind for years. But, he now has a chance to work and interact with that entity Varese so that there is a dialogue, but there are more that are being drawn into this, especially those supporters of Stravinsky, Prokofiev, and others, as to cultural dissonance. Even the individual Adolphe Sax, the inventor of the saxophone, has a say in this. He says he wanted a particular sound that was not produced by other instruments, and would have the rounder, buzzier sound as opposed to the sharper sound of a trumpet, or the woodwind sound. He wanted the lower registers to be more examined. The creation of this instrument itself caused controversy because it was a new instrument. It was not previously an instrument that was considered for orchestral use. It was considered to be an interloper.

Bob Marshall: You said that Frank talked about amplification. Did he mean with electrical instruments, or he amplified his point in the discussion?

Evergreens: Electrical instruments.

Bob Marshall: Like the saxophone, Zappa brought in a new environment?

Evergreens: Yes. Now, what Zappa, as part of this discussion, is stressing is how far can dissonance go. Because what one era considers resonant, another era considers dissonant, especially a future era, in that the saxophone, when first played, was heard by ears often as dissonant with that which they had been accustomed. The sound of the saxophone was to those who heard it a blaring sound. It did not have the controlled sound. But Zappa points out the music itself was controlled by the instrument. The introduction of new instruments can produce new music. New music can produce new instruments. It's the instruments that alter the direction of the music, and that which appears dissonant eventually begins to appear resonant.

Bob Marshall: To me, Frank is applying Marshall McLuhan's figure/ground concept in relation to new musical technologies, here.

Evergreens: Yes.

Bob Marshall: So, he's actually thinking like McLuhan did?

Evergreens: Very much.

Bob Marshall: Does McLuhan enter into that discussion, or is he not considered a musician?

Evergreens: Ahh, but he is considered a musician. Not a performing artist, but he understands what musicians understand.

Bob Marshall: That's why Frank said I should have been in a rock band?

Evergreens: Yes.

Bob Marshall: Can you name a few composers who are not on Stravinsky's and Prokofiev's side? Who has the opposing argument?

Evergreens: The opposing argument is taken, strange as it may seem, by Mozart.

Bob Marshall: That comes into Lyndon LaRouche's ideas. LaRouche would be on the Mozart side, I think.

Evergreens: Now, Mozart is not adverse to the argument. But he says, "Stretch it too far and it breaks, and then there is no rapport between the music and the audience. The objective of the music, as performed by the musician, is to form a bridge to the audience. And that the dissonance taken too far creates possibly a pocket of people who delight in it." But, as he points out, there is a pocket of people who will delight in anything. But the majority are essentially turned off.

Bob Marshall: I don't know if you are familiar with LaRouche's writings on music, but from my familiarity, he would be taking Mozart's point of view. Do you agree?

Evergreens: Yes, we'll agree on that. But Mozart's point is that you can stretch it, but you must know how far you can stretch it because if you do not know, then you become alienated from the audience. And he points out that this was done by certain late 18th and early 19th and early 20th-century composers who decided that they would not necessarily be avant-garde for avant-garde's sake, but because they believed that the music was going in such a direction, that they would get there first. One point must be stressed: Mozart says that any individual, who is trained in music and understands musical training, knows if you break certain rules, you must know how to support breaking that rule.

Bob Marshall: Am I talking to Frank directly today?

Evergreens: Not at this moment.

Bob Marshall: It's hard to do?

Evergreens: No, it can be done, but we're summarizing this.

Posthumous Frank Zappa Talks To Bob Dobbs FLIPSIDE #110 - JAN./FEB. '98

PART III - October 15, 1996

Bob Dobbs: Frank Zappa was born on December 21, 1940 and died on December 4, 1993. Do we have him?

Evergreens: Yes.

Bob Dobbs: Greetings, Frank. Did you enjoy the publishing of Bob Marshall's talk with you, channelled through the Evergreens, in FLIPSIDE magazine?

Evergreens: "Stuck a stick up their nose, didn't it?" he says.

Bob Dobbs: Yeah, there was not much of a positive response, it was sort of ignored, but are you implying that many people noticed it?

Frank Zappa: Oh, they noticed it.

Bob Dobbs: Kept their reaction to themselves?

Frank: Yes, but there were reactions. You would be surprised at the number of people who cut that out and pasted it to the back of an album.

Bob Dobbs: How did your wife Gail react?

Frank: Positively.

Bob Dobbs: Would she like to talk to you through the Evergreens herself?

Frank: Yes.

Bob Dobbs: So I should get in touch with her and tell her how to do it?

Frank: If she wants. It's always her choice.

Bob Dobbs: Was she struck by the reality of it, did it seem to ring true?

Frank: She thought it was a rehash of an interview that actually took place and edited, and that it was ascribed to some source. But that interview never took place anywhere.

Bob Dobbs: But it sounded so real to her, and she couldn't believe it was done through a medium, so it was an echo of an interview she thought she knew. So she's not ready to believe it yet?

Frank: If you tell her exactly how it was done, then she will know.

Bob Dobbs: I could even play her this dialogue here?

Frank: If you want.

Bob Dobbs: There is one particular thing - you're aware of Gerry Fialka who used to work with you?

Frank: Oh yes.

Bob Dobbs: Gerry Fialka and I in August tried to find the date of your bust at Studio Z in Cucumonga in either the fall of '64 or early '65. Can you give us the exact date because the newspaper clipping doesn't have the date and the court records are lost?

Frank: If you want to rehash this, it was October 29, 1964.

Bob Dobbs: Who rehashed this again?

Evergreens: He says, "It's up to you if you want to bring up all this, but it's long gone."

Bob Dobbs: The records are gone accidentally?

Evergreens: Oh, they're gone. Not exactly accidentally.

Bob Dobbs: Was it influenced by Frank's father?

Evergreens: No, it was influenced by a person who figured that it didn't need to be there.

Bob Dobbs: Because they were thinking that Frank could benefit?

Evergreens: No, they were thinking that it didn't need to be there.

Bob Dobbs: Didn't think it was important, the documents?

Evergreens: No, didn't think it important at all.

Bob Dobbs: The newspaper clipping that he published, the article on his bust, didn't have the date? Is there a reason, did he not want the date to be known?

Evergreens: No, this was strictly sloppy reporting.

Bob Dobbs: So he was arrested on October 29, 1964, and was in the can for ten days?

Evergreens: Yes.

Bob Dobbs: Did Frank's father have a very knowing influence over Frank as a young man, more than Frank realized?

Evergreens: In a way, yes.

Bob Dobbs: Because I've created this scenario, this sort of play/drama that the father was the real person behind Frank's thinking because you can look at Frank as a young man in his teens who criticized his father for watching TV so much, but in the end the last ten years of Frank's life was devoted to watching a lot of television. He ended up like his father.

Evergreens: Yes.

Bob Dobbs: Was his father watching TV acutely like Frank says he did?

Evergreens: You have to understand Frank's ability to observe. He's a good observer, from the very first, and grew up to be a very good observer. Frank at that time was looking at the world wondering what the world had to offer and what he had to offer the world and so on - these things that pass through a young man's mind. And he observed his father not participating and said "You watch TV too much, you're too caught up in what television has to offer. There are other things to be offered." And his father agreed "Yes, that's true". Then turned back to the television. Frank as he got older began to realize one could observe the world also through the television.

Bob Dobbs: So did he re-appraise his father?

Evergreens: He re-appraised television. But still in his own mind said that his father spent too much time doing it at a time when there were other things to see. But then what could be said of Frank is: in those days his father was observing the world through television and Frank had not realized that his father was doing this. To Frank, his father was just watching television, not observing the world, just watching television.

Bob Dobbs: So his father was observing pretty discriminatingly.

Evergreens: Yes, and Frank realized that when he was older, but not fully.

Bob Dobbs: Now, the metaphor in UNCLE MEAT and in some other albums of Frank's, it sounds a lot like his father's meteorological career - the fact that Frank wanted to make music in "climates". Were these there because jokingly he was making reference to his father's profession?

Evergreens: Of course it was.

Bob Dobbs: So he was making fun of his father and using him as a model for satire.

Evergreens: Yes.

Bob Dobbs: And yet it was useful information to bring meteorological science into the world of music. It worked for many purposes.

Evergreens: Yes. It worked to make a point, and the point is: what are you going to use to describe this world with?

Bob Dobbs: So he took the experience around him - the experience he observed of his father as a working man.

Evergreens: Yes.

Bob Dobbs: Now, I came up with the conceptual continuity of a particular motif that really struck me this past year, and I feel that I've cracked the code because on the first album FREAK OUT, side four has the Ritual Dance of the Child Killer. Then I noticed the dwarf motif and the Rumpelstiltskin motif running through his work to the point he described his own home as "Rumpelstiltskin decor". Did I hit on the meaning of the electric doll in the CAPTAIN BEEFHEART VS. THE GRUNT PEOPLE movie?

Evergreens: It's a midget.

Bob Dobbs: It's a midget? Now the Ritual Dance of the Child Killer - that's what Rumpelstiltskin did. Was he thinking of Rumpelstiltskin as a midget in reference to that?

Evergreens: Yes.

Bob Dobbs: So I did hit on the motherlode of his main motif?

Evergreens: On that aspect, yes. "There's still more to learn" he says.

Bob Dobbs: Now why is the midget a useful motif, what is the meaning in relation to the Sixties?

Evergreens: Now what is a midget? A dwarf, a small person. What small people are there?

Bob Dobbs: Children.

Evergreens: How much power do they have?

Bob Dobbs: None.

Evergreens: You see? Power and small.

Bob Dobbs: And Frank felt that was him as a fringe musician in relation to the monster mega-media machine?

Evergreens: Yes.

Bob Dobbs: So it was an image referring to himself?

Evergreens: Yes.

Bob Dobbs: Which is what I thought it meant. Then that can be translated into musical concepts.

Evergreens: Yes. Then again, as he says, "I dwarfed them."

Bob Dobbs: And he was aware he'd do that from the beginning?

Evergreens: Yes.

Bob Dobbs: So that was part of the metaphor/joke.

Evergreens: Yes.

Bob Dobbs: Would the Evergreens agree that's pretty ingenious and insightful for a young man to come up with those ideas?

Evergreens: Let us speak for ourselves and not for Zappa for a moment. Remarkably intelligent and perceptive, yes. That he chose music was his choice because it was his form of expression. There are other forms of expression that he was moving towards. He was beginning to realize, and this is what worried him, that would he be as smart older as he was smart younger? We see intelligence but we see philosophy, too. Some people do not realize there is a very powerful philosophy in Zappa's work.

Bob Dobbs: Is Frank happy with the new book THE NEGATIVE DIALECTICS OF POODLE PLAY which approaches Frank as a deep-thinking philosopher?

Evergreens: Yes. He appreciates it muchly. But what he says, and let us talk for him for a moment, "How do you like the

new CD set?"

Bob Dobbs: LATHER?

Evergreens: The complete one.

Bob Dobbs: CIVILIZATION?

Evergreens: The complete one. All of them together.

Bob Dobbs: Oh, all his works?

Evergreens: Yes.

Bob Dobbs: I had the experience of listening to him as one work this past spring, as I went from the first album up to number sixty, approximately.

Evergreens: But they're going to be released as one huge block.

Bob Dobbs: Is this Gail's idea?

Evergreens: This is the Zappa collection. "How do you like them" he says.

Bob Dobbs: Gail is planning to do that?

Evergreens: She's going to be asked to participate in it, yes.

Bob Dobbs: Because you will be able to put it on a computer and experience it through the sound system of a computer?

Evergreens: One of the disks is a CD ROM and one of the disks is a CD DVD and the rest is CD. But that is '97. "That,"he says, "is going to be a true money maker."

Bob Dobbs: Who gave this idea to Gail?

Evergreens: Himself.

Bob Dobbs: Through dreams?

Evergreens: Through dreams.

Bob Dobbs: So Gail came up with the idea?

Evergreens: Gail is going to be in that Zappa collection. You see, it's going to be put together by another organization and she will give the authorizations for it, but it is the ultimate Zappa.

Bob Dobbs: In other words, instead of writing the book that Gail's been talking about, her talkings will be part of the CD ROM.

Evergreens: Somewhat, but it's much of his work put in order.

Bob Dobbs: When you say Gail will be part of it, she'll be given credit as producer?

Evergreens: She'll be credited as part producer because there are others involved in the production of this.

Bob Dobbs: Maybe she would like to have some of the Evergreens' channeling, as content, on it?

Evergreens: Not necessary, in truth. What is necessary to realize is that there is going to be a resurgence of that work done by Frank.

Bob Dobbs: By other musicians?

Evergreens: No, in the public's re-buying of his records.

Bob Dobbs: Re-interest.

Evergreens: Re-interested. Zappa is 1997. Look at how it's going to fit, look at what's happening around the world, look at the number of pieces that fit.

Bob Dobbs: Should I offer my "dwarf" analysis to Gail?

Evergreens: Yes, we would suggest this.

Bob Dobbs: Has she seen that in FLIPSIDE?

Evergreens: No.

Bob Dobbs: It hasn't come to her attention?

Evergreens: No.

Bob Dobbs: Another "dwarf idea" is the mu-mesons which Frank mentioned a lot, his physics concepts like mesons and mu-mesons. Is that a material version of midgets?

Evergreens: Not exactly.

Bob Dobbs: Other concepts?

Evergreens: Other concepts.

Bob Dobbs: I should pursue that for other links.

Evergreens: Yes.

Bob Dobbs: The other aspect that I discovered about Zappa's work in listening to an interview with David Walley that he did in 1971 preparing for his book on Zappa. Zappa talked about the making of the film, the training film about bizarre behavior, for the Cucamonga police department in 1964. This turned out to be a setup for his arrest, but the fact that he was making a film, which Frank was happy to do to put his studio to work, in order to educate the police department about bizarre behavior in the population so they could have better public relations with these deviants, struck me that that was a basic concept that he expanded for the concept behind his first album FREAK OUT in which he wanted to educate the American public about people who do different things and bizarre behavior, but he did this through the music industry. And to me it seemed an expanded notion of his original task of educating the police department, so it is an interesting motif of his conceptual continuity that his educating the American populace through the music industry about bizarre behavior was a replay of what he did with the original police department of Cucamonga, which led to a setup. So that complex situation made Frank very ironic and self-conscious about his albums because he knew he was educating the public, but he also knew he could get in trouble for it. Was that Frank's thinking at the time of making FREAK OUT?

Frank: You're almost exactly on.

Bob Dobbs: So is there anything to add to what I said?

Frank: You can educate but sometimes they don't listen.

Bob Dobbs: You can also get into trouble with those people who don't want to be educated.

Frank: Yes indeed.

Bob Dobbs: You learned a lot from your police bust about American society, the corrupt side, and that was always a reference point in later ideas in scripts and plays?

Frank: Yes.

Bob Dobbs: So that is part of the conceptual continuity?

Frank: Yes.

Bob Dobbs: Including up to CIVILIZATION PHAZE THREE, your last work?

Frank: CIVILIZATION was more of what would it be after they learned.

Bob Dobbs: And, of course, the other conceptual continuity motif we discussed was the dwarf. So, we have two parallel

major themes in all your work here: the dwarf theme, and the original porno bust and educating from that. I'm correct on that?

Frank: Yes, you are.

Bob Dobbs: Another point - maybe you know David Walley has put out his new final edition of his biography of you, which probably was the first rock biography, and he found my interview with you from 1988 very helpful. But, of course, David and yourself had a falling out so I told him I spoke to you through a medium, and he's open to that, and he wondered if you have anything to say to him now?

Frank: Frank Zappa is a kind and gentle soul loved by millions. Never forget it.

Bob Dobbs: And that's for David Walley to hear?

Frank: Specifically for him.

Bob Dobbs: In that tone?

Frank: In that tone.

Bob Dobbs: Because I sense a satirical tone there.

Frank: Oh there is.

Bob Dobbs: You feel that's the way to say it to David at this time?

Frank: Yes. And also, to be not as sarcastic, but in truth, trying to capture another person's life in a bottle called book, it's difficult. But, nonetheless, better him than certain others.

Bob Dobbs: Do you have a more positive attitude toward his book now than you did?

Frank: Oh absolutely. The point is, even though there were differences, better him than someone else.

Bob Dobbs: At that time.

Frank: Even now.

Bob Dobbs: But you do like Ben Watson's book?

Frank: Absolutely. But the point is, I stand by it, better him than certain others.

Bob Dobbs: Okay, thanks for talking to me, Frank.

Impressions by Michael Blake Read after coming out of trance.

Michael Blake Read: I saw a thick CD slipcase, there were about eight or nine CD's in there and it was called THE COMPLETE FRANK ZAPPA, and the person who put it together didn't put the recordings in consecutive release date, he put them in consecutive order of thinking.

Bob Dobbs: Really? He imposed his system of thinking on it?

Michael: Yes, he said Frank was this way, I'd like you to hear something he did eight years later and see how they relate, these two fit together.

Bob Dobbs: So he'd take something from ten years later and put it back to the previous point where similar things were happening.

Michael: So he puts it not in chronological order but he puts it in style or sense order. There is one disk that has a warning that says do not play track, you can play track one and track two on a regular CD player but after that it's CD ROM. There are a couple of movies of Frank performing.

Bob Dobbs: In the CD ROM?

Michael: On the CD ROM, and there is some video files in there with the background music and everything with it and some short clips.

Bob Dobbs: But he's perfect for CD ROM, that's why it will be his year because CD ROM is peaking and people are getting it and he's the guy to get.

Michael: And the other one was a DVD disk with some old interviews that were done by Frank. You see the ones that are on the CD ROM are fifteen-frame stuff.

Bob Dobbs: What does that mean?

Michael: Fifteen frames a second. Regular TV is sixty frames a second. Fifteen frames is slow but you can still put it on a computer.

Bob Dobbs: Oh, you're talking computer-frame?

Michael: Fifteen frames a second is all that computers can handle at this time unless you've got expensive stuff, and this goes for anyone who has a CD ROM on their computer. The other disk, the DVD disk, is one of the first DVD's produced that isn't a movie, it's a series of interviews with Frank Zappa from a number of compilations from all over, and his wife has them. She has them on tape and film.

Bob Dobbs: Yeah, they have everything in their vaults. But I'm not sure what is the difference between the first one and the second?

Michael: Oh, the second one you can put it on a computer and it's got a lot of reference stuff in there. The CD ROM has fifteen frames a second stuff.

Bob Dobbs: How is it different from the other one?

Michael: It's just seeing him in performance, and the DVD disk is interviews, not performance.

Bob Dobbs: And because there's less information in an interview...?

Michael: The DVD disk is one of the first disks that is not a movie, because most of the DVD disks that come out are going to be movies. It's a new technology coming up, but they haven't even been introduced yet. This one is going to be a Frank Zappa DVD disk.

Bob Dobbs: Because it's going to have an interview, not a movie?

Michael: Oh, lots of interviews.

Bob Dobbs: It's going to be the first non-movie.

Michael: The first non-movie which will please Frank no end. The first DVD disk for interviews, just a compilation of interviews with Frank across a number of years and there is even his wife on there saying what it's like living with Frank - you know, when you're living with a mind that thinks all the time.

Bob Dobbs: No one else would put out interviews with Phil Collins or Johnny Carson. It just wouldn't go.

Michael: Nobody has done that yet because the system hasn't even been thought out yet.

Bob Dobbs: He's going to be the first talking head.

Michael: The first talking head is Frank Zappa. A lot of people are going to say "How right!".

Bob Dobbs: Well, he considers interviews part of his composition. So it's appropriate.

Michael: It was fascinating how he said "How do you like that set, guy, how do you like that?".

Bob Dobbs: He was saying that to you - he's really happy to be the first.

Michael: Yeah, oh yeah.

Bob Dobbs: Okay, thank you for giving me your dream-impressions, Michael.

ADDENDUM:

On August 7, 1995 Bob Dobbs met with Nigey Lennon for a freewheeling, seven-hour discussion/interview about Frank Zappa. Lennon is a musician and author whose personal and professional relationship with the late Zappa is described in her book *Being Frank: My Time With Frank Zappa* (California Classics Books). At the end of the discussion, Dobbs thought it might be interesting to play a tape of the 1994 sessions with the medium, Michael Blake Read, who had "channeled" Zappa and was supposedly passing along the composer's messages from the afterlife. Lennon, who professes to be a rationalist, expressed some skepticism, but she did note that the medium somehow seemed to be aware of a couple of Zappa eccentricities - namely, his tendency to call Stravinsky's *The Rite of Spring*, "*The Rites of Spring*", and also his intense obsession with audio gear. She also noticed that at another point in the tape the medium mentioned something that sounded like the "secret word" routine that was featured on Zappa tours. All in all, Nigey felt it was a fitting coda to a very 'pataphysical afternoon!

THE END