

WHAT THE PRESS HAS SAID ABOUT

ED PALERMO BIG BAND

EDDY LOVES FRANK

CUNEIFORM

2009

“...this disc is marvelous--and precisely what you'd want to play for someone who enjoyed Zappa's *Grand Wazoo* and *Waka Jawaka* albums but was put off by the "funny stuff" that followed thereafter. Bandleader Palermo...has created something unique here, and something that accords Zappa all the respect he has long deserved. Seek it out!”

-Dave DiMartino, *Yahoo! Music*, May 19, 2013, music.yahoo.com

“Bandleader Ed Palermo's third release of Frank Zappa compositions is a persuasive and deeply personalized revitalization of the artist's songbook, as he continues to spin a thoroughly hip vibe... With his sixteen-piece band, executing difficult charts, Palermo's horns arrangements are teeming with polytonal layers, crisp accents and gobs of verve... Palermo offers multiple mood-evoking thematic forays, including nicely placed dabs of humor, and warmly designed choruses... Saxophonist Phil Chester, trumpeter Ronnie Buttacavoli and others, engage in ballsy soloing spots...to complement some straight-ahead swing breakouts...the band is a precision machine, keeping in line with Zappa's intricately engineered movements and seemingly impossible time signatures.”

- Glenn Astarita, *EJazznews*, August 13, 2009, www.ejazznews.com

“For those of us who love all things Frank Zappa and the mighty sounds of big bands, this is the album! It's all here – a 16 piece jazz band playing Zappa tunes with masterful arrangements that showcase Zappa's compositional brilliance in a jazz format. The tight, precise playing is fantastic, and it's obvious the band is having a great time... The EPBB has been doing jazz covers of Zappa's work for 15 years, and it shows... The performance here is masterful and solid, and conveys Zappa's sense of humor. A great band with great material and a wonderful tribute to the genius of Zappa.”

- Pam Thompson, *Exposé*, Spring 2010

“...to his credit Palermo makes no attempt to reproduce the original arrangements in any way, instead using FZ's compositions as a springboard for some brilliant structural rearrangements as well as his trademark energetic swing adaptations. ... All fans of Zappa's music really need to hear this!”

- Peter Thelen, *Exposé*, Spring 2010

“...Ed Palermo's lifelong fascination with Frank Zappa's music continues with this splendid recording, where Palermo arranges – with vitality, insight and fun – such musically smart Zappa works as “Night School” and “Dupree's Paradise.”

- Jay Lustig, *NJ.com*, December 27 2009, www.nj.com

“...Paul Adamy, a pro who's done everything you can do in New York—major network TV...and movie sessions, Broadway shows, jazz festivals, A-list jingles, the New York Philharmonic, and a list of credits...that'll make your eyes pop. For fun, Adamy's been playing in the Ed Palermo Big Band... *Eddy Loves Frank* is a session pro's dream gig to stretch out on, taking on the Frank oeuvre and nailing rock, funk, swing, and all manner of involved form and arrangements...and bassists will dig Adamy's thick, no-nonsense groove and tone. If you're a bassist and a Zappa fan, it's just required listening.”

- Bass Player, 2009

“... Palermo's commitment to the music of Zappa is no minor affair. ... *Eddy Loves Frank* is an understatement... What makes Palermo's arrangements...work...is the sense of fun he brings to the music. ... *Eddy Loves Frank* really swings. ... Take the first track, “Night School,” originally released on the 1986 *Jazz From Hell* album. ... One of the difficulties...was the sometime “gimmicky” sound of the instrument. Here, all of that is stripped away immediately, revealing a song with a beautiful melody. Ed's alto sax solo midway through is a revelation... Palermo never goes for the obvious in choosing tracks to arrange. Of the seven FZ tunes *Eddy Loves Frank* contains, two hail from the relatively obscure *Live At The Roxy And Elsewhere* (1974). Both “Echidna's Arf (Of You)” and “Don't You Ever Wash That Thing” were concert staples, but were never released as studio recordings. It is fascinating to hear an 18-piece big band recreate these classic mid-Seventies pieces, as they are prime Zappa-fusion. ... Another song that has flown under the radar over the years is “Regyptian Strut.” ... The way Palermo has approached it is something of a wonder, and the trombone solo by Joe Fiedler puts everything completely over the top. ...”

- Greg Barbrick, *BlogCritics Music*, December 29, 2009

“Palermo has now become the jazz face of Zappa, having prepared close to 200 transcripts that leaven the music with jazz harmony, while leaving the inherent flavor and quirkiness intact. The charts lend themselves to lush orchestration as much as they leave room for individual musicians to make distinctive statements... the players are one with vision, verve and vitality... Palermo steps out of the Zappa frame with "America the Beautiful,"... Sung with warmth and sincerity by Bruce McDaniel, with the voice of Veronica Martell swirling midst the instrumentation, the song makes for an engaging finish to the record.”

-Jerry D'Souza, *All About Jazz*, October 7, 2009

“Ed Palermo leads this sixteen piece big band through yet another remarkable set of compositions by the late Frank Zappa. By no means are these slavish covers, they are liberal reinterpretations. His meticulous attention to detail, and his highly creative reconsiderations of Frank's music opens it up in a welcoming and engaging manner to a potentially much wider audience.”

- Greg Parsons, *Dream Magazine*, #10

“...the third collection of Frank Zappa tunes imaginatively arranged and performed by the Ed Palermo Big Band... It is...the best one yet, with the ensemble of 12 horns and a rhythm section cruising through complex orchestrations with seemingly breathtaking ease. With their high degree of commitment and respect for the material and an equally high degree of technical skill, Palermo and his colleagues again raise some of Zappa's more obscure instrumental gems to new, unimagined heights. For example, take the opener, “Night School.” ... here it has been given a dense, driving horn arrangement that veers fearlessly from jazz to rock and classical influences, including a devastating, note-perfect sax solo section and some great alto sax improvisation by Palermo himself. As FZ himself said, there IS a place for humor in music, and Palermo demonstrates that with his interpretation of “Don't You Ever Wash That Thing?”... After a comic introduction it moves uptempo with a confident swagger and features outstanding solos by Kooshian, Palermo and McDaniel, whose keening, controlled feedback and snaking lines remind the listener of Zappa's own fret board style. ... I suspect Frank would approve.”

-Tom Ineck, *Berman Music Foundation*

“...the eclectic Zappa transcended genres, and in Palermo's hands his music becomes an expanded "third stream," a combination of jazz and classical elements...plus rock. ... The Palermo group has been playing Zappa for 15 years, and it is expert at the rhythmic and stylistic jump cuts in the music. ...the album is a revelation.”

- Owen Cordle, *News & Observer*, September 20, 2009, www.newsobserver.com

“One of the great things about Palermo's albums is his choice of material. Showing himself to be a true fan, he often picks obscure or overlooked tracks. A case in point is "Night School," originally from *Jazz from Hell*, Zappa's album consisting almost entirely of Synclavier (state-of-the-art sequencing/sampling computer circa 1986) performances. Palermo's arrangement is fantastic and he contributes a really nice alto solo... Palermo...isn't afraid to alter the form of a song to make it work for the band. He doesn't change the melody at all... Palermo doesn't strictly adhere to FZ's notes on paper, but he does it with such a deep knowledge of the tune and executes it so well that it seems natural... Eddy loves Frank all right... [3½ stars out of 5]”

- Sean Westergaard, *All Music*, www.allmusic.com

“...The 17-piece band are capable of the layered and undulating textures that were a hallmark of Zappa's jazz and orchestral writing. ...Frank would be pleased.”

-David Greenberger, *Metroland Online*, www.metroland.net

“His take on Zappa's music is such that it transcends the notion of repertory, and such is the enthusiasm and commitment with which the band puts the

music across that **it's obvious they know it well too...** Seeing this band live would be a rocking night out because they're obviously polished to the point where the music shines...despite never disguising the band's depth of character. Palermo's band relishes what it does... The trombone swooping in the opening passage of "Regyptian Strut" testifies to this as much as the band's easy greasing proves what an overrated commodity polish can be. **"What's New In Baltimore" ...exemplifies the depth of identity that Zappa's music has to such a degree that the somehow pertinent comparison with Charles Ives, in terms of both men being true American originals, can be made.** As a collective this band knows that and the results speak for themselves."

- Nic Jones, *All About Jazz*, Dec 3, 2009, www.allaboutjazz.com

"... Ed Palermo is helping to keep Zappa's concepts and compositions alive by producing jazz interpretations of Zappa music and in the process has introduced jazz listeners to Zappa and/or leading Zappa aficionados to jazz music. ... *Eddy Loves Frank* is Palermo's third Zappa tribute and his best collection so far. ... Palermo's arrangements – which are readymade for ornate orchestration but also have room for soloing – are heavy on jazz harmony while retaining Zappa's original built-in characteristics and humorous impulses. ... Palermo makes use of challenging Zappa songs that were not incipiently construed in a jazz vein. ... Palermo peels the numbers apart in unique ways and coats them with his own orchestral enhancements, sustaining Zappa's melodic and harmonic designs but giving them a different texture. An example is opener "Night School," ... Palermo intertwines the brass players into a unified entity that discloses the composition's elegance and emotional heart. Palermo's arranging skills come to the fore on...an outstanding rendition of "Echidna's Arf (Of You)". The 9:49 piece is the album's longest and is nearly twice as lengthy as Zappa's 1974 version. ... Palermo does not conform to the way Zappa performed his music. ... Palermo and his big band execute "Regyptian Strut" so well the new treatment seems customary even when it is not. ... Zappa often made light of U.S. cities... "Let's Move To Cleveland" is refashioned to emphasize the melodically-spindled theme that has a jaunty modern verve. **Listening to this big band resolutely advance with such animated instincts and transition at a second's notice is both enormously entertaining and remarkable.** *Eddy Loves Frank* is an adroit big band jazz delight, but it is also a commendable introduction to an artist whose work was wide-ranging and genre-free. **While Palermo's arrangements let the music breathe, much credit must also go to engineer Steve Jankowski and Bruce McDaniel, who produced, mixed and also helped engineer the record. The studio production is reverberant and clean. Each soloist is marked out distinctly in the mix and the group sound is always warm and full...**"

-Doug Simpson, *Audiophile Audition*, December 10, 2009, www.audiophileaudition.com

"...Palermo arranges Zappa's deeply musical, intelligent works with characteristic vitality, insight and fun. ..." - *Zan Stewart, NJ.com*, July 2, 2009

"Since 1994, Ed Palermo has arranged and performed over 200 works by the late Frank Zappa, a brilliant musician whose often controversial lyrics distracted people from his gifts as a composer. Putting together a tightly rehearsed band consisting of New York City-based musicians, Palermo...**excelling at putting his personal stamp on Zappa's music in a jazz setting, drawing material from different periods in the rocker's career.** The opener, "Night School," was originally composed on the Synclavier, deemed too difficult for musicians to play... Palermo and his players dive head first into this complex work, with the leader soloing with gusto on alto sax. Longtime pianist Bob Quaranta gets the spotlight in the sarcastic "What's New in Baltimore" and also takes "Dupree's Paradise" into new territory. **To appreciate Ed Palermo's Big Band, one has to see them perform in person, as their energy is even more potent.** This is another memorable tribute by Palermo to his hero."

-Ken Dryden, *All About Jazz*, December 8, 2009, www.allaboutjazz.com

"Zappa was...a master of big band composition. ...when most rock...played with drums, guitar and bass, Zappa was writing multifaceted compositions featuring strings, intricate percussion, and complex horn charts. **Distracted by the satirical and occasionally frivolous nature of some of his more well-known songs...the general public seemed to be less aware of Zappa's stunning instrumental work... Let's all say a collective 'thank you' to Ed Palermo. ...all of the complexity of the original songs remain intact, lovingly arranged to allow improvisation, never played without a palpable sense of fun, and always remaining true to the familiar Zappa-ism, 'music is the best.'** The Ed Palermo Big Band is one of the few bands that have successfully translated Zappa's compositions outside of the context of Zappa's in-house 'conceptual continuity,' and (in particular) the theatricality of their original settings. **The track list will delight Zappa fans.** Palermo includes material from...Frank's 'post-Mothers' period. ..."Echidna's Arf (of You)," and the challenging "Dupree's Paradise" stand out... 'Dupree's' has never sounded more like a hard-core jazz lounge. Palermo's talented group of soloists...do a fine job stating the intricate melodies and taking them into a more conventional Big Band context. **Not only is *Eddy Loves Frank* a fine Big Band Jazz album on its own, but it's also a good introduction to the more jazz-oriented instrumental music of Frank Zappa...** Palermo's arrangements allow the music to breathe and Bruce McDaniel's production is clean and vibrant, allowing the soloists to make their mark clearly in the mix...**very good sounding CD, indeed. Play it loud. [4½ clocks out of 5]"**

-Bert Saraco, *The Phantom Tollbooth*, www.tollbooth.org

"...What Edgard Varèse was to Frank Zappa, Frank Zappa is to me," New York-based composer and bandleader Ed Palermo once stated. ... his 18-piece orchestra have perfected over 200 songs from Frank's varied repertoire. For his third album of Zappa tunes, **the saxophonist gets more adventurous in his selections** ... tried-and-true Zappa classics appear on *Eddy Loves Frank*, like "Regyptian Strut", "Dupree's Paradise", and "Let's Move to Cleveland". Even more intriguing...is Palermo's choice to reconfigure the computerized "Night School"... **Say what you will about the decision to end the album with a sincere cover of "America the Beautiful", but hardcore Zappa fans will certainly see it as a fitting tribute to *The Best Band You Never Heard in Your Life.*"** [7/10]

-Ron Hart, *Pop Matters*, December 13, 2009, www.popmatters.com

"W. Royal Stokes's Best CDs of 2009... Ed Palermo Big Band, *Eddy Loves Frank* (Cuneiform)" - W. Royal Stokes, *Jazzhouse Diaries*, www.jazzhouse.org

Early in the first cut, "High School", **I found a softer edge to Zappa's music than I remembered, or perhaps that's only how Palermo's band plays it, gentler than the acerbic Zappa of yore.** Then Palermo hits a wrong note with the inclusion of "America the Beautiful". Yet on an album otherwise devoted to the iconoclast Frank Zappa... it feels very much out of place." -Michael R. Mosher, *Leonardo On-Line*, April 1, 2010, www.leonardo.info