

The Music Outpost – Publicity & Promotion

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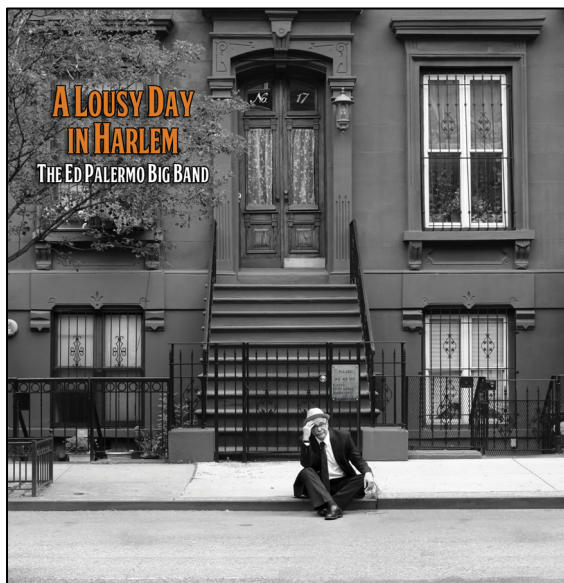
Artist: **THE ED PALERMO BIG BAND**

Album: ***A LOUSY DAY IN HARLEM***

Genre: **JAZZ / BIG BAND**

Label: **Sky Cat Records**

Release Date: **April 12, 2019**



***A LOUSY DAY IN HARLEM* is a GREAT DAY for JAZZ with THE ED PALERMO BIG BAND, as the band known for reinventing the music of Frank Zappa turns its attention to a riveting program of Monk, Coltrane, Ellington, and hard-swinging originals, confirming Ed Palermo's place in JAZZ's top ranks of contemporary BIG BAND ARRANGERS**

***"...one of the greatest musicians and arrangers in the world."* – Christian McBride**

In a radical departure, jazz's state-of-the-art orchestra – **The Ed Palermo Big Band** – has recorded a thrilling program of...jazz! An ingenious arranger, composer and alto saxophonist, **Ed Palermo** has spent much of the past three decades earning international renown with a series of albums transmuting fervently loved rock songs by **Frank Zappa**, **Todd Rundgren**, and their British brethren into supremely imaginative vehicles for improvisation with his 18 piece jazz big band. With ***A Lousy Day in Harlem***, he unleashes his talent-laden ensemble on a gorgeous array of music by **Ellington**, **Monk**, **Coltrane**, **Egberto Gismonte**, and his own finely wrought originals. Slated for release on **Sky Cat Records**, the album captures a master arranger and jazz big band leader at the top of his game, putting his own unmistakable stamp on canonical compositions. Firmly in the tradition, the project reveals that Palermo's nonpareil gift for recasting beloved tunes encompasses jazz too.

"The thing about this record is, I wanted it to be jazzier," says Palermo. "We play a lot of jazz in my band, but I've been doing **Zappa** and **British Invasion** stuff for years and I've had these other types of music in my book, jazz tunes that had been close to my heart for decades. I finally felt ready to record these tunes – tunes I'd composed, and tunes I'd arranged. It felt like the right time to show the world another side of the band."

Palermo doesn't waste a moment in setting the agenda. The album kicks off with "**Laurie Frink**," a surging piece that feels like a theme from a 1970s action film. He rechristened the tune as a tribute to its namesake, a dear friend who played lead trumpet in the band for years. Revered by her peers as a brass savant who mentored generations of trumpeters, "she was just a tremendous musician and a musical partner for decades," Palermo says. "She used to love this song, so I retitled it after she passed."

In many ways *Lousy Day* makes a compelling case for Palermo's abiding love of luscious melody, like "**Affinity**," a winsome piece featuring **Cliff Lyons'** expert soprano sax work. And for sheer unabashed beauty it's hard to surpass **Egberto Gismonte's** episodic "**Sanfona**," a piece that moves through a variety of emotional spaces without shedding a sense of innocence and discovery. "Brazilians are so much better at creating this kind of emotional material," Palermo says.

He uncovers an overlooked gem from **Duke Ellington's** vast songbook with "**Brasilliance**," a movement from 1968's ***Latin American Suite***. The piece takes an unexpected detour with the interpolation of **Juan Tizol's** "**Caravan**," powered by **John Bailey's** bravura trumpet work. Bailey sounds equally formidable swaggering through Palermo's brief and torrid "**Like Lee Morgan**."

[press release continued on verso]

If the album has an emotional centerpiece, it's Palermo's "**The One With the Balloon**," a playful tune that combines gentle humor, sweet lyricism, and a strikingly graceful tap dance solo in the middle by **Nicki Denner**. Moving from whimsy to ferocity, he pays tribute to his alto sax hero **Cannonball Adderley** with a fierce arrangement of **Gigi Gryce**'s standard "**Minority**," which opens with Palermo's deft orchestration of eight measures transcribed from Cannon's famous solo.

The band gets Spherical with an ingenious **Thelonious Monk** medley that opens as "**Well, You Needn't**" but quickly sprints into "**In Walked Bud**," then references "**Straight No Chaser**," and drops hints of "**Evidence**" too if you listen closely to the rhythm section. It's an off-kilter tour de force, but not nearly as wacky as his tenor battle "**Giant Steps**," a showcase for saxophonist **Bill Straub** and **Ben Kono** by way of the dueling banjos in *Deliverance*.

The album comes rushing to a sensational close with "**Gargoyles**," a brilliant piece by **Renee Rosnes** and **Walt Weiskopf** that Palermo learned from **Billy Drummond**'s 1993 album *The Gift* (though it's better known from Rosnes's 2001 album *With A Little Help From My Friends*). It's a careening post-bop thrill ride that keys on Kono's brawny tenor solo and Bailey's flashing trumpet. And as a sweet kiss off, Palermo concludes the adventure with the appropriately brief foray into rhythm changes, "**This Won't Take Long**," featuring his fiery alto.

All in all, Palermo's *Lousy Day In Harlem* makes for a thrilling musical outing, even if his very big band failed to show up for the cover art photo shoot. Palermo's photos were taken on the steps of the same brownstone where **Art Kane** captured 57 jazz legends and sundry neighborhood kids for *Esquire* magazine on that fateful summer morning in 1958. His kidding reference to the iconic jazz image "**A Great Day in Harlem**" makes sense given Palermo's off-beat, self-deprecating humor and the album's mission to align The Ed Palermo Big Band within the esteemed tradition and history of jazz. Previous Palermo Big Band releases celebrated such other musical genres as pop, rock and blues, as broadcast by their humorous cover art. Most recently, 2017's *The Adventures of Zodd Zundgren* (Cuneiform), zigzagged between the music of Todd Rundgren and Frank Zappa, and featured a drawing of Palermo on the cover, dressed like a comic book super-hero. Earlier that year, he released the acclaimed double album *The Great Un-American Songbook Volumes 1 & 2* (Cuneiform), planting a DayGlo American flag in British Invaders like **The Beatles**, **Rolling Stones**, **Jeff Beck**, **King Crimson**, **Traffic**, and **Jethro Tull**.

Palermo's sojourn away from the straight and narrow path of straight-ahead jazz has roots in his origins. Born in Ocean City, New Jersey on June 14, 1954, Palermo grew up in the cultural orbit of Philadelphia, which was about an hour drive away. He started playing clarinet in elementary school, and soon turned to the alto saxophone. He also took up the guitar, and credits his teenage obsession with Zappa to opening his ears to post-bop harmonies and improvisation.

Palermo caught the jazz bug while attending **DePaul University**, and took to the alto sax with renewed diligence inspired by **Phil Woods**, **Cannonball Adderley**, and **Edgar Winter** (the subject of an upcoming EPBB project). Before he graduated he was leading his own band and making a good living as a studio player recording commercial jingles. But like so many jazz musicians he answered New York's siren call, moving to Manhattan in 1977. After a year of playing jam sessions and scuffling Palermo landed a coveted gig with **Tito Puente**, a four-year stint that immersed him in Afro-Cuban music.

An encounter with trumpeter **Woody Shaw**'s septet at the **Village Vanguard** in the late 1970s stoked his interest in writing and arranging for larger ensembles, and by the end of the decade he had launched a nine-piece rehearsal band with five horns. Between **Don Sebesky**'s well-regarded book *The Contemporary Arranger* and advice from **Dave Lalama** and **Tim Ouimet**, "I got a lot of my questions answered, and I'll love them forever," Palermo says. "Then the real education was trial and error."

Palermo made his recording debut in 1982, an impressive session featuring heavyweights such as **David Sanborn**, **Edgar Winter** and **Randy Brecker**. As a consummate studio cat and sideman, he toured and recorded with an array of stars, including **Aretha Franklin**, **Eddie Palmieri**, **Celia Cruz**, **Lena Horne**, **Tony Bennett**, **Mel Tormé**, **Lou Rawls**, **Melba Moore**, **The Spinners**, and many others. As an arranger, he's written charts for the **Tonight Show Band**, **Maurice Hines**, **Eddy Fischer**, and **Melissa Walker**. Employed frequently by bass star **Christian McBride** for a disparate array of projects, Palermo has written arrangements for a **James Brown** concert at the Hollywood Bowl, a **Frank Sinatra** tribute featuring **Kurt Elling**, **Seth McFarland**, and **John Pizzarelli**, and a 20-minute medley of **Wayne Shorter** tunes for the **New Jersey Ballet**.

Palermo had been leading his big band for more than a decade before the Zappa concept started coming together. Inspired by electric guitar master **Mike Keneally**, who performed with Zappa on some of his final concerts before his death in 1993, Palermo decided to arrange a program of 12 Zappa tunes. When the time came to debut the material at one of the band's regular gigs at the **Bitter End** in early 1994, a sold-out crowd greeted the band.

He earned international attention with the ensemble's 1997 debut *The Ed Palermo Big Band Plays Frank Zappa* on **Astor Place Records**. With Palermo's brilliant arrangements and soloists such as **Bob Mintzer**, **Chris Potter**, **Dave Samuels**, **Mike Stern**, and **Mike Keneally**, the album made an undisputable case for the Zappa jazz concept. While Palermo has written more than 300 Zappa charts, he's cast an increasingly wide net for material. On 2014's *Oh No! Not Jazz!!* and 2016's *One Child Left Behind* (both on Cuneiform), he explored many of his original compositions and material by composers not named Frank Zappa.

Nothing demonstrates the ensemble's ongoing vitality better than the stellar cast of players, with longtime collaborators such as baritone saxophonist **Barbara Cifelli**, drummer **Ray Marchica**, and keyboardist **Ted Kooshian**. Many of these top-shelf musicians have been in the band for more than a decade, and they bring wide-ranging experience, expert musicianship and emotional intensity to Palermo's music. Embracing his iconoclastic reverence, a sensibility he sums up as "nothing is sacred and everything is sacred. It's all done with love," the ensemble takes jazz places it rarely gets to go.

With a monthly residency at **Iridium**, bi-monthly gigs at **The Falcon**, and performances at jazz festivals in the US and abroad, the Ed Palermo Big Band continues to reach new audiences. In returning to his jazz roots, *A Lousy Day in Harlem* makes an incontrovertible case that Palermo belongs in the top ranks of the music's arrangers. A *Lousy Day* like this one certainly deserves another.

"He [Ed Palermo] has a breathtaking approach to re-contextualizing everything in a fantasia that swoops from Frank's (Zappa) work to Todd Rundgren to Wayne Shorter to whatever - just traveling through the history of music. I was absolutely flabbergasted."
– Mike Keneally

For more information on The Ed Palermo Big Band

www.palermobigband.com/music – www.facebook.com/palermobigband – www.twitter.com/palermobigband

PROMOTIONAL PHOTOS

Please credit photographer: **Hugh Brennan**. Digital [High-Resolution] images available on request.



WHAT THE PRESS HAS SAID ABOUT...

THE ED PALERMO BIG BAND THE ADVENTURES OF ZODD ZUNDGREN CUNEIFORM 2018

"...*The Adventures Of Zodd Zundgren*...reinvents music by Zappa and Todd Rundgren, two much-admired but drastically different American rock composers who made a strong impression on Palermo during his teenage years... Palermo and band navigate seamlessly between the Zappa and Rundgren oeuvres, playing with passion and precision one moment, embracing hilarity and absurdity the next. ... Madcap humor abounds, which should come as no surprise from Palermo..."

- Ed Enright, "[Editor's Picks: February 2018](#)", *DownBeat*, February 2018

"While Zappa was the snarling cynic, Rundgren is the hopelessly eccentric romantic – but both share a sense of the absurd and a appreciation of complex composition arrangements, and it is this link that Palermo uses to fuse their music together. Drawing from their collected songbooks, the saxophonist chooses pieces for his Big Band that are immediately familiar, together with some that are more obscure. ... unexpected diversions prevent the album from falling into a greatest hits hole, and even the diehard Zappa or Rundgren admirer will be seduced by Palermo's adventurous labour of love."

- Edwin Pouncey, *The Wire*, January 2018

"...Even as guitarist/saxophonist/bandleader Ed Palermo contrasts Frank Zappa and Todd Rundgren in his liner notes, describing the opposite roles of the two rock polymaths, he and his eccentric big band brilliantly reconcile their oeuvres.

...Ultimately, Palermo makes both artists' music sound like something Ed Palermo would do."

- Michael J. West, *Jazz Times*, March 2018

"I really do feel that I could rave about this album for hours... Apparently Rundgren has also given this release his seal of approval, as I saw some photos on Facebook the other day of him attending one of the gigs promoting this, and having his photo taken with the band. This is an essential purchase, as is the case with many of Cuneiform's albums. [5/5 stars]"

- Kev Rowland, [JazzMusicArchives](#), 12/2/2017

"...there are two primary languages being spoken here—jazz that rocks (as opposed to fusion) and big band swing with all the idiosyncrasies of the leader. More than anything else, *The Adventures of Zodd Zundgren* is big, irresistible fun. [4/5 stars]"

—Karl Ackermann, [All About Jazz](#), October 16, 2017

"This time, the Ed Palermo Big Band ingeniously melds Rundgren's pop material with Zappa's unique compositions. In the process, Palermo also morphs the two personalities into one individual, using the guise of Zodd Zundgren, a middle-aged, overweight hero who'd rather walk dogs than fight supervillains.

...the CD mostly alternates between Rundgren and Zappa, although there are often no breaks from track to track, thus creating a suite-like organization akin to what Zappa and Rundgren frequently concocted. ...

....Alongside the wonderfully entertaining and amazing music, *The Adventures of Zodd Zundgren* also comes with a reference-gushing comic strip which provides a detailed look at the life of the Zodd Zundgren character. Not to be missed. [5/5 stars] ”

-Doug Simpson, [Audiophile Audition](#), Feb. 11, 2018

THE ED PALERMO BIG BAND *THE GREAT UN-AMERICAN SONGBOOK: VOLS.1 & 2* CUNEIFORM 2017

“...this ace bandleader-arranger is dead serious about his song-renovations, striving for exceptional music that contains levels of technical resourcefulness and emotional exposition associated with premium jazz.

Palermo bloody well nails it. ... Palermo’s modern alchemists spin everything they touch into gold... [4 stars]”

- Frank-John Hadley, *DownBeat*, June 2017

“...*The Great Un-American Songbook: Volumes I & II* has close to two hours of prime UK material (think Cream, the Beatles, King Crimson, Jethro Tull and more)... Palermo... crafts swinging large ensemble jazz interpretations of both well-known and obscure tracks...which breathe new life into these older songs. ... The results are phenomenal. ...

...there is undeniable depth as well as requisite wit... These are not throwaway arrangements, and there is plenty of musical virtuosity. ...[5/5 stars]”

-Doug Simpson, [Audiophile Audition](#), June 13, 2017, [www.audaud.com](#)

“...it’s a thrilling rollercoaster ride through the last 50-odd years of prominent musical Brits filtered through a decidedly modern big band lens.

...Palermo’s arrangements...are played ingeniously straightforward, paying the necessary respect to the originals while making them something wholly new and different. It’s a brilliant bit of musical reimagining that has long been the hallmark of progressive jazz figures (John Coltrane’s “My Favorite Things,” anyone?) and proves well-suited to Palermo’s strengths as an arranger. ...

...*The Great Un-American Songbook: Volumes I & II* is a wickedly enjoyable listen from top to bottom. [Rating: 8/10]”

-John Paul, *Popmatters*, July 25, 2017, [www.popmatters.com](#)

“In this era of Great Again , the very American big band of Ed Palermo offers us a British Invasion in its own way. Beatles' interpretations , of course, ...Stones (We Love You), Jeff Beck (Definitely Maybe) or King Crimson (one of the best versions of Lark's Tongues In Aspic 2). ...this one is loaded with Zappian quotations. ... [Rating: 4/5 stars]” - Rejean Beaucage, *VOIR*, March 23, 2017, [www.voir.ca](#)

THE ED PALERMO BIG BAND *ONE CHILD LEFT BEHIND* CUNEIFORM RECORDS 2016

“*One Child Left Behind* swarms with excellent musicianship bundled with seriously zany creativity. ... [4 stars]”

- Frank-John Hadley, *Downbeat*

“... Roughly half of the tunes on *One Child Left Behind* are drawn from the Zappa canon; the rest are Palermo originals and other covers (Neil Young, Peggy Lee, Giorgio Moroder’s theme from *Scarface*). ...

Of the Zappa tunes, both “Cletus Awreetus-Awrightus” and “The Grand Wazoo”...are given bright, nearly effusive arrangements... Three tracks, the funkiest of the lot, feature the vocals of Zappa alumnus Napoleon Murphy Brock...

Palermo’s three originals more than hold their own. ... “Dirty White Bucks”...it’s a real swinger of a tune, full of drama and animation. “Vengeance” projects a film-noir ambience while “The Goat Patrol” confirms...this well-oiled 17-piece unit, one size doesn’t fit all.”

- Jeff Tamarkin, *Jazz Times*, [www.jazztimes.com](#)

“... The great thing about *One Child Left Behind* is that the non-Zappa material is just as strong, especially the big band sounds of “Vengeance”, the gentle “Harvest Moon”, the mysterious “The Goat Patrol” (featuring some stellar trumpet & trombone), and the acrobatic “Kiko and the Lavender Moon”. The highlight however has to be the legendary Zappa cut “Andy”... it’s a real treat for any longtime Frank Zappa fan.

It’s not very hard to gush about this band...they just keep delivering such amazing music on a consistent basis. If you are a Frank Zappa fan, and have not yet checked out the incredible Ed Palermo Big Band, I urge you to do so as quickly as possible. ... Big band jazz is alive and kicking folks!!”

- Pete Pardo, *Sea of Tranquility*, February 6th 2016, [www.seaoftranquility.org](#)

“There’s two qualities of Ed Palermo Big Band recordings that are sure to appeal...each time. One, there’s a raw electricity that gives the sense that I’m actually hearing a live performance...a palpable sense of in-the-moment creativity. Two, that I’ll get my required quota of sharp wit and intelligence.”

- Dave Sumner, *Bird is the Worm*, [www.birdistheworm.com](#)

“...what a joyous collection of tunes...

...the album is a delight, and I’m grinning like a kid in a sweetshop. A finger-poppin’ take on Zappa’s *Pygmy Twylite* and then turning his *Po-Jama People* into a street-funk workout in the manner of Gil Scott Heron are just two examples of Palermo’s cheeky but always winning arrangements.

...both...sung by former Zappa singer Napoleon Murphy Brock...

... For fans of Frank, obviously, but anyone with a musical ear should be able to appreciate this fine album. Recommended.”

- Roger Trenwith, *The Progressive Aspect*, June 30, 2016, [www.theprogressiveaspect.net](#)

“... I’ve listened to around 5,000 newly-released albums since the start of this decade. ... I share a list of 40 musicians who... are all on my radar screen, and ought to be on yours, too.

Ed Palermo... Rock Repertory Big Band Music... Is there even such a thing as a rock repertory big band? Well, not until Ed Palermo came along and invented the concept. He first made his mark in the music world with elaborate big band arrangements of Frank Zappa compositions... But Palermo has gone on to show that Paul Butterfield and Todd Rundgren songs are also suitable for hot horn hoedowns. His latest album is *One Child Left Behind*.”

- Ted Gioia, “The 40 Most Intriguing Musicians of 2016”

“... Alternating between ambitious originals like “Dirty White Bucks,”...and stately, “difficult listening” Zappa themes like “Grand Wazoo,”...Palermo’s large ensemble shows an uncommon tightness in its execution. In mixing more familiar FZ fare like “Village of the Sun” ...with big band interpretations of Neil Young’s “Harvest Moon” and Los Lobos’ “Kiko and the Lavendar Moon,” Palermo presents a convincing argument for these pop gems belonging in the big band pantheon. ... Somewhere FZ is smirking.”
- Bill Milkowski, “Not Your Father’s Big Band: New Releases Catch Large-Ensemble Jazz in Transition”, *The Absolute Sound*, March 6, 2017, www.theabsolutesound.com

“You can also enjoy the variations that Palermo brings to the music; he’s...not attempting to produce replicas... What makes this a great album is the quality of the compositions combined with the skill of the musicians... Augmented by musicians who worked with the man himself like guitarist Mike Kenneally and collaborators including Katie Jacoby on violin and drummer Ray Marchica, they produce a glorious sound that does full justice to work. ...in many ways Ed Palermo’s work is as authentic as you can get, and definitely worth catching live if you can.”
- Jason Kennedy, *hi-fi+*, Issue 145, March 2017

THE ED PALERMO BIG BAND

OH NO! NOT JAZZ!!

CUNEIFORM

2014

“This... double-CD...features Zappa music on disc one and Palermo’s own on the second. The Zappa half...add some choice nuggets to the ever-growing Ed-does-Frank canon. The Palermo half is just as good, in some ways better. ...

Palermo is nothing if not ambitious. He’s comfortable enough...to delve into a complex creation such as “Lumpy Gravy,” the theme from Zappa’s first fully realized orchestral work. And he’s also savvy enough to know to trim it and throw some funk at it—Ronnie Buttacavoli’s trumpet and Bill Straub’s tenor saxophone give a downtown edge to the piece that Zappa’s quite-serious original reading lacked.

Free to make his own statement and unbound by another composer’s ideas, Palermo takes greater risks on his own material on disc two. At times that means setting the big-band formula aside altogether, or at least swatting it around... the set-closing take on the Beatles’ “She’s So Heavy” (one of two non-Palermo tracks here) is monstrously good.”

- Jeff Tamarkin, *Jazz Times*, June 2014

“With his internal radar tuned into Zappa’s zany frequency since middle school, Palermo and his assembly of 18 wayward sons and daughters prove they’ve mastered all the quirky complexities of the master’s music. ... Palermo has done his own creative thinking about song structure, dynamics, riffing, combining instruments and sections for an uncommonly appealing big band sound... Palermo presents a second disc of original compositions. All...are triumphs of serious-minded orchestral jazz, with occasional whiffs of Palermo-style comedy. ... [4 of 5 stars]”

-Frank-John Hadley, *Downbeat*, May 2014

“Jazz from heck. Ed Palermo has been arranging and performing the music of Frank Zappa with his 17-piece big band for about 30 years, and he keeps getting better at it. *Oh No! Not Jazz!!*...consists of both a new album of ingeniously reimagined early Zappa material along with another disc’s worth of the saxophonist’s own inventive compositions. ...”

- Richard Gehr, “Ear Crystals: The search for other world audio gems,” *Relix*, March 2014

“... This is utterly wonderful, in every sense of the word; wonderful in being just gorgeous music, and wonderful in the sense of being full of wonder. It is 2 discs of astonishing big band music, one devoted to the music of Frank Zappa and one featuring compositions written by Ed Palermo himself. His band is filled with master musicians and top-notch improvisers, who have the technical skills required to play these thorny, detailed and hugely musical charts.

Talk about ambitious. The first disc begins with...the most iconic of Zappa compositions, “Inca Roads.” ... Each of the Zappa songs is played in a manner different from the original. They...demonstrate new facets to each of the compositions. ...all seem to stand out. ...

Disc 2 is all about Ed Palermo’s own writing. The tone...differs from the Zappa, though the charts are no less complicated. ... All of this is a wonder. ... [Rating: 5 of 5 Stars] “

- Dana Lawrence, *Sea of Tranquility*, February 14, 2014, www.seaoftranquility.org

“Palermo doesn’t just play his own big band arrangements of Frank Zappa tunes, he writes his own in the spirit of the man. So *Let’s Reproduce* has the stacked horns and vibraphone that we expect from Frank, but also some violin and mandolin touches... The album finishes...with a revisit to Zappa’s re-working of The Beatles’ *She’s So Heavy*, Palermo taking its big band inclinations even further... “

- Peter Bacon, *The Jazzbreakfast*, November 26, 2014, www.thejazzbreakfast.com

“... *Oh No! Not Jazz!* a feisty double-CD release from Ed Palermo... is as surreal as the Micros, but in a way that is hectic and driven and madly inventive. The first CD consists of arrangements for big band of Frank Zappa’s orchestral music, and brilliantly apt they are, too. ...Palmero’s own pieces on CD2...evokes John Zorn’s way of juxtaposing styles in disconcerting and invigorating ways. Why is the Doctor Barking? is a good example, with its entertaining combination of filmic tension (think Bernard Herrmann’s score for North by North-West) with the Roadrunner’s mad velocity.”

- Ivan Hewett, *The Telegraph*, October 7, 2014, www.telegraph.co.uk

“... Ed Palermo has dedicated himself to the spirit of Zappa through arranging his music for a big band but has also created a substantial body of original work beautifully steeped in big band jazz.

The first of two discs on *Oh No! Not Jazz!!* is simply called *Zappa*. ... It’s a perfect combination of Zappa and Palermo’s big band smarts. ...

The second disc, *Palermo*, opens with a tune by David Leone, a Basie-ish big band swinger... There’s a wide range of moods throughout the Palermo set, with an almost manic array of colors and textures. The inspiration of Zappa thrives...but it’s the leader’s skill in a jazz feel and the brilliance of the big band that shine here. Think Zappa, the rants of Buddy Rich and late-period Beatles’ playfulness.”

- Donald Elfman, *The New York City Jazz Record*, August 2014

“...In many ways the EPBB is the best band you could possibly see if you are a Zappa aficionado. They don’t usually attempt the vocal elements and bring a freshness to works that more than warrant it. [Score: 5/5]”

- Jason Kennedy, *The Ear*, April 2014

“Presenter picks for 2014... Jazztrack with Mal Stanley...#2. Recording (International): Ed Palermo Big Band - *Oh No! Not Jazz!!*”
- *ABC Radio Jazz*, Dec 19, 2014, abcjazz.net.au

“Music To Listen To Jazz By – Best of 2014... David Basskin [Best of list] ...*Oh No! Not Jazz!!* - Ed Palermo Big Band ...”
- *JAZZ.FM91*, www.jazz.fm

**“Welcome to ukvibe’s BEST JAZZ ALBUMS OF 2014 ...UKVIBE TOP TWENTY...
17. The Ed Palermo big Band – Oh Not! notJazz! (Cuneiform) “A very special big band project” “**
-*UK Vibe*, ukvibe.org

THE ED PALERMO BIG BAND EDDIE LOVES FRANK CUNEIFORM RECORDS 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 ... With his sixteen-piece band, executing difficult charts, Palermo’s horns arrangements are teeming with polytonal layers, crisp accents and gobs of verve... ...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

“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...”

-Jerry D’Souza, *All About Jazz*, Oct. 7, 2009

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

“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... "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

“... 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, *Allmusic*, www.allmusic.com

“Saxophonist/arranger and acknowledged fan 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. ... What really makes this project successful is that 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 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. ... *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

“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 ... 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

THE ED PALERMO BIG BAND TAKE YOUR CLOTHES OFF WHEN YOU DANCE CUNEIFORM RECORDS 2006

“...One doesn’t necessarily have to be a devoted FZ listener--or even profess familiarity with the original music--to appreciate or understand Ed Palermo’s arrangements. Although Zappa’s unique style and twist in moods is present in each of the tracks, Palermo’s own palette of colors shines through. ... Palermo sometimes strips Zappa’s music from its lyrics, so whatever story there’s left to tell, Palermo has to make his arrangements work twice as hard to get the job done. His musicians really pull it off... Besides the whack, the humor and the intricate ingredients Zappa was known for, Palermo added a touch of melancholy and sensitive awareness one wouldn’t ascribe to the genius of his hero.”

- Gina Vodegal, *All About Jazz*, www.allaboutjazz.com, December 10, 2006

“... Ed Palermo and his big band celebrate that musical legacy by re-imagining nine Zappa songs from a jazz perspective.

Palermo developed these charts during years of live shows with these musicians, and their mastery of the material shows in the performances, which turn on a dime yet feel fierce with spontaneous invention. ... Palermo's arrangements and these performances are precise, dedicated, raucous and incisive—just like Zappa himself.”

- Andrew Lindemann Malone, *Jazz Times*, www.jazztimes.com, January/February 2007

“... the Ed Palermo Big Band achieve the difficult task of making Zappa's music more accessible...and certainly give it more of a jazzy big-band swing, without selling out. These versions won't replace the originals...but they have a listenable breeziness that could work as an entry to the music for listeners who might be put off by the more jagged ugliness that Zappa was often wont to insert into his own renditions.**[Rating: 3 ½ stars]**”

- Richie Unterberger, *All Music Guide*, www.allmusic.com

“... “Take Your Clothes off When You Dance” is saxophonist Ed Palermo's second collection of Zappa tunes in the big-band format, and it is another grand success, from the spirited performances to Palermo's comical liner notes to the cover cartoon (by Palermo's sister-in-law)... Palermo's arrangements take advantage of the entire 16-piece band, as the outfit passes the ball back and forth in typical Zappa fashion. Dead serious passages often alternate with pure hilarity...”

— Tom Ineck, *Berman Music Foundation Jazz*, bermanmusicfoundation.org, 2007

“...This is the second Palermo collection of Frank Zappa compositions and, like the first CD, this one continues to enthrall. It's fun and serious at the same time. Arrangements are superb and the band seems to get tighter as the CD develops...”

— Doug Ramsey, *Riffides*, artsjournal.com, July 14, 2006

“...*Take Your Clothes Off When You Dance* really is a blast, whether you are a Frank Zappa fan or not. For the longtime Zappa fan the CD offers up classic songs given a new and refreshing treatment, and for the casual fan who loves jazz, there's plenty of stunning jazz and fusion here to tantalize your senses. **[Rating: 4 stars]**”

— Pete Pardo, *Sea of Tranquility*, seaoftanquility.com, July 3, 2006

“... Palermo has spent a dozen years playing Zappa's music, and he and his cohorts nail the rhythmic pleasures of Zappa's compositions with spot-on accuracy. The inevitable swing generated by a good big band – and this band is good – breathes especially well on the title track, which adds Latin elements to a six-minute performance so rich, it seems like an epic. The one-two punch of “Dwarf Nebula Processional March & Dwarf Nebula” and “Pound For a Brown On the Bus”... shows off Palermo's coloristic affinity for Dmitri Shostakovich and Sergei Prokofiev; both tracks boast charts that bring several strands of Zappa's compositional scope together, with great writing for the clarinets and flutes. ... arrangements favor the horn and ensemble work, rather than the often guitar-centered originals. ...Sleaze, humor, genius, and hubris – more could one want?”

— Larry Nai, *Signal to Noise*, Fall 2006, Issue #43

“... For this second album with the Big Band, Palermo repeats the formula of the first...by arranging some of Zappa's most fiendishly funky and groove-based compositions for a full-scale 16-piece jazz ensemble, with the emphasis on huge, rambunctious Count Basie-style horn charts and plenty of room for soloing. And you know what? It really burns. ...**This is masterful arrangement: the ability to see beyond the idiom and find instead the fundamental building blocks that give a piece of music its essential character.**

Elsewhere, Palermo plays it more straight—more faithfully recreating Zappa's originals...but with some of the thorniness of Zappa's ragged, disorientating charts smoothed out and sweetened. Mostly, Palermo seems intent on finding the latent groove within these pieces.... Zappa once famously said “Jazz isn't dead, it just smells funny.” **Ed Palermo is making one hell of a wonderful stink. [Rating: 8 out of 10]**”

— Daniel Spicer, *Pop Matters*, August 30, 2006, www.popmatters.com

“...big band music still has an important place in jazz. ...Ed Palermo...has continued his exploration of the music of Frank Zappa. ...

The band ably handles Zappa's quirky melodic deviations and trademark time signatures, and its own musicianship is never in doubt. ...As with any performance of Zappa material, the rhythm section is required to do much of the heavy lifting—and drummer Ray Marchica and bassist Paul Adamy are up to the task. ...the mood is generally upbeat and the band can cook. **[3 stars]**”

— Mitch Myers, *DownBeat*, October 2006, Vol. 73, No. 10

“Palermo's...goal here seems to be to stress the jazz elements and potential of Zappa's music – and it works. ... A fine album from a band it would be great to see over here.”

— Duncan Heining, *Jazzwise*, September 2006, Issue 101

ARTICLES / INTERVIEWS

JAZZIZ “Funny as He Goes: Bandleader Ed Palermo laces his seriously good music with wit and irreverence”, by Michael Roberts, *Jazziz*, May 2017

excerpt:

“...While this defense of smart humor sums up one aspect of Palermo, whose discography features vibrant originals and witty big-band reinventions of rock songs, he's much more than a genre-busting jester. His skills as an arranger impressed the late Gil Evans, and he's earned the respect of contemporary heavyweights such as bassist/composer Christian McBride. “I know at least 30 musicians who think he's one of the greatest musicians and arrangers in the world,” McBride says. ... The first time [Mike] Keneally sat in with Palermo and his big band, he expected to play...“fairly standard Zappa cover versions—but found out that Ed had taken wild liberties in a really creative way. He has breathtaking approach to re-contextualizing everything in a fantasia that swoops from Frank's work to Todd Rundgren to Wayne Shorter to whatever – just traveling through the history of music. I was absolutely flabbergasted.” ...From the beginning, Palermo...ignored the supposed barriers between musical styles. ...”