



**BIO INFORMATION: THE ED PALERMO BIG BAND**

Title: **ONE CHILD LEFT BEHIND** (Cuneiform Rune 420) Format: CD / DIGITAL

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**FILE UNDER: JAZZ / BIG BAND**

**From Los Lobos and Neil Young to Scarface and Leiber & Stoller,  
THE ED PALERMO BIG BAND**

**Explores Brave New Worlds Without Neglecting Frank Zappa on *One Child Left Behind***

Over the past two decades **Ed Palermo** has earned an avid international following with his brilliantly executed, reverently irreverent arrangements of **Frank Zappa's** tempestuous and wildly inventive music. On previous Cuneiform albums like 2006's *Take Your Clothes Off When You Dance* and 2009's *Eddy Loves Frank*, the New Jersey saxophonist, composer and arranger infused the world of Zappalogy with his own brand of incisive wit and bracing improvisation. He doesn't neglect Zappa on his fourth Cuneiform dispatch, *One Child Left Behind*, released in January 2016. But instead of offering another full-Frank immersion he turns his big band loose like it's playing one of its regular gigs at **Iridium** or **The Falcon**, a Hudson Valley jazz oasis. Exploring an expansive array of moods and material, the band delivers an audaciously entertaining program that's full of surprises.

Featuring the same formidable cast of players as on his last release, 2014's critically hailed double album *Oh No! Not Jazz!!*, the 18-piece band interprets a fatalistic film theme and a gorgeous **Neil Young** ballad. They demolish an existential **Leiber and Stoller** hit and rhapsodize with an intoxicating **Los Lobos** classic. Palermo also throws in some beautifully crafted originals, and of course offers a generous helping of Zappa too. As he's quick to acknowledge, *One Child* "is more of a mixed bag, where my past albums were more thematic. I've been wanting to mix it up like we do at our live shows. These pieces are all road tested, and it felt like a good time to document them."

Longtime fans of the Palermo band can rest assured that Zappa is well represented on *One Child*, which opens with a sassy and brassy version of "**Cleetus Awreetus Awrigtus**," a chart that always goes over big at gigs. "**Spider of Destiny**," a brief track from 1979's *Sleep Dirt* (released on Zappa's own **DiscReet Records**) turns into a glorious fanfare, while veteran Zappa vocalist **Napoleon Murphy Brock** brings his dexterous swagger to "**Pygmy Twylyte**" and "**Po-Jama People**."

"Napoleon used to sing with Zappa in the 70s and was part of Frank's greatest band with **Jean-Luc Ponty**, **George Duke** and **Chester Thompson**," Palermo says. "We've played a lot of gigs together over the last 15 years and I got him to sing one tune *Oh No! Not Jazz!!* What's funny is that Zappa originally wrote 'Po-Jama People' for Napoleon, but Frank sang it on *One Size Fits All*," an injustice rectified on *One Child*. Speaking of authentic Zappalogy, Frank's younger sister, **Candy Zappa**, provides vocals that capture the gentle absurdity of the psychedelic art song "**Evelyn, A Modified Dog**."

The band is equally impressive when it ventures into non-Zappa territory. Candy Zappa's voice brings just the right note of mythic grandeur to "**Kiko and the Lavender Moon**," a mysterious gem from the Los Lobos songbook. Palermo's arrangement of Italian record producer **Giorgio Moroder's** theme for **Brian De Palma's** movie *Scarface* recasts the film as a Spaghetti Western, a mood perfectly captured by **Katie Jacoby's** emotionally trenchant violin work. Another highlight is the lush treatment of Neil Young's "**Harvest Moon**" which features artful and heartfelt crooning by **Bruce McDaniel** (an essential Palermo collaborator who produced the big band's two previous albums).

"I think 'Harvest Moon' is one of Neil Young's best songs, and I gave it a **Nelson Riddle** treatment, like it was something written for **Sinatra**," Palermo says. "I've done a lot of arranging in that style and a lot of transcribing of Riddle, and I wanted to recontextualize the song like I've done with Zappa. If you're trying to replicate the original, you're going to lose."

It's not surprising that Palermo's originals stand up so well alongside the other material. The second disc of *Oh No! Not Jazz!!* focused exclusively on his compositions, and he includes three excellent tunes on this album that showcase his deep bench of players. Keyed to the orchestral drumming of **Ray Marchica**, "**Dirty White Bucks**" soars and swoops like a daredevil on a flying trapeze, building to a pyrotechnic trumpet solo by **John Bailey**. **Ben Kono's** booting tenor gives "**Vengeance**" its predatory vibe, and "**The Goat Patrol**" writhes and surges as it bounces back and forth between the sections.

If there's one track that distills the Palermoian aesthetic in all its erudition and broad humor, it's the caustic rendition of "**Is That All There Is?**" that hymn to anomie that turned into an unlikely hit for **Peggy Lee**. More a deconstruction-by-dynamite than an homage, the track features vocalist **Mike James**, who mostly dispenses with Leiber and Stoller's jaded lyrics and improvises his own hilarious, *[press release continued on verso]*

gimlet-eyed narrative while the saxophones quote various Zappa tunes behind him (including “**Uncle Meat**,” “**Idiot Bastard Son**,” and “**King Kong**”). “I have great respect for the composers. but I always considered it one of the most overblown, melodramatic songs ever written, and through the years I would quote it as a joke,” Palermo says. “When I started doing the Zappa tributes I decided to throw the song in with all these Zappa quotes. Mike James ad-libbed all of that stuff, and I was crying laughing.”

In many ways, Palermo’s career is a case study in getting the last laugh. Born in Ocean City, New Jersey on June 14, 1954, he 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. He caught the jazz bug while attending **DePaul University**, and took to the alto sax with renewed diligence inspired by **Edgar Winter**, **Phil Woods** and **Cannonball Adderley**. 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 from band to band, 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 multiple horns, 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 Ouimette**, “I got a lot of my questions answered and I’ll love them forever,” Palermo says. “Then the real education was trial and error. I lived in a little apartment with no TV or furniture. All I had was a card table, and once a week I’d rehearse my nonet, then listen to the cassette of the rehearsal and make all the changes.”

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**, **Melissa Walker**, and a concert by **James Brown** at the Hollywood Bowl.

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.

“The Internet was just becoming powerful, and word really got around,” Palermo says. “We were used to paying small audiences, and the place was packed. There were people who had driven down from Canada, and up from West Virginia who didn’t have a clue who I was, but they wanted to hear Zappa’s music. It was amazing night.”

The Ed Palermo Big Band earned international attention with its 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.

At this point, the Palermo Big Band has honed some 300 Zappa arrangements, while steadily expanding the band’s book with his originals and the kind of arrangements that make *One Child* such a revelation. Nothing demonstrates the ensemble’s ongoing vitality better than the stellar cast of players, with longtime collaborators such as violinist **Katie Jacoby**, baritone saxophonist **Barbara Cifelli**, drummer **Ray Marchica**, keyboardist **Ted Kooshian**, and the father/son trumpet tandem of **Steve Jankowski Sr.** and **Jr.** Many of these top-shelf musicians have been in the band for more than a decade, and they handle the diverse array of material with aplomb. *One Child Left Behind* doesn’t leave Zappa behind, but it makes a compelling case that the Palermo bandwagon can comfortably accommodate a wild and wooly menagerie.

*For more information on The Ed Palermo Big Band:*

[www.palermobigband.com](http://www.palermobigband.com) - [www.facebook.com/palermobigband](http://www.facebook.com/palermobigband) - [www.cuneiformrecords.com](http://www.cuneiformrecords.com)

**WHAT THE PRESS HAS SAID ABOUT**  
**THE ED PALERMO BIG BAND**

**OH NO! NOT JAZZ!!**

**CUNEIFORM**

**2014**

“Frank Zappa was wary of jazz. But after ditching...the Mothers of Invention, in 1969, he sought out musicians who were fluent in jazz to negotiate his intricate, demanding charts. ... 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 eight, plus non-original swing-fest “Moosh,” are triumphs of serious-minded orchestral jazz, with occasional whiffs of Palermo-style comedy. ... [4 of 5 stars]” —Frank-John Hadley, *Downbeat*, May 2014

“Ed Palermo’s righteous fixation on Frank Zappa...the saxophonist and arranger retools the late genius’ work for big band. 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

"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. Napoleon Murphy Brock pops up in an extended "Inca Roads,"..."

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

"... **Jazz purists may snivel at the idea of the late Mother Of Invention's music being reinterpreted as jazz sides but, fact is, Zappa's work is more conducive to jazz treatment than many of the pop sides that are being bandied about these days.**

For this record, Palermo charts his musical expedition beyond covers to include a number of blithely titled, Zappian-inspired originals like "Let's Reproduce," "Nostalgia Revisited" and "Prelude To An Insult" ...

"There is a lot of humor, and I probably got a lot of that from Zappa," Palermo says...

**Humor notwithstanding, this record isn't a joke. Extending the big band concept from Duke Ellington through Zappa to the present day, Palermo's band knows it's way around the bandstand. ... Seriously recommended."**

- Michael Verity, *About.com: Jazz*, Feb. 24, 2014, jazz.about.com

"... **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." ...Napoleon Murphy Brock adds his vocals to the stew... Palermo transmutes this burner into a more swinging, fluid piece of music. **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. ... Palermo does a superb job of capturing the spirit and ethos of Frank Zappa, keeping the flame alive.**

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

"**This album, their fourth of Zappa material, is as expansive as their hero, stretching to two CDs, taking in *Inca Roads, The Uncle Meat Variations, America Drinks And Goes Home, Lumpy Gravy... The Dog Breath Variations.***

**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. The music acquires a brassy, strutting edge...Zappa would surely have approved. ...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

"**Oh yes it is!** The title is a giveaway that Ed Palermo is a Frank Zappa fan and the first disc here is his fourth album of Zappa charts... CD2 is all Palermo and it's **one of the most exciting, irreverent and entertaining big bands I've heard for years.**"

- Peter Bevan, *Northern Echo*, October 9, 2014

"...**Palermo's own compositions...are somewhat Zappa influenced yet...sound extremely original at the same time, pulling in a strong swing component working in a powerful orchestral jazz style, and pulling out all the stops. ...the dozen Palermo pieces...are the real icing on the cake here. But that in no way lessens the excellence of the arrangements of Zappa material on disc one; in fact, that they can both exist side by side complementing each other is a testament to Palermo's brilliance as both a composer and arranger. ... a version of "The Uncle Meat Variations"...is every bit as impressive as the original from 1969, in fact...it's better than the original. ... The five minute arrangement of "Lumpy Gravy" is a real surprise, breathing new life into what was probably one of Zappa's weirdest endeavors. ...this is an outstanding package that underscores Palermo's prowess as a composer, arranger, and bandleader. My highest Recommendation."**

- Peter Thelen, *Exposé*, March 11, 2014, www.expose.org

"... The first eight tracks of the double-CD are Ed's big band arrangements of Zappa classics, ...era of 1966-1970. Included are very **impressive arrangements of "Inca Roads," featuring...Napoleon Murphy Brock, as well as a notoriously difficult to play "Black Page #2. ...great solos are too many to mention!**

The second disc (tracks 9-19) offers up **original Palermo compositions...diverse, alive and vibrant...often transitioning...from intricate and complicating, to elegant and lush on the drop of a dime! ...solos are magnificent and numerous, yet the compositions... still...stretch out and breathe.**

**The themes and stories are...cleverly conveyed through the music. ...the music rides a fine line between tongue-in-cheek vamp and...serious music...like Frank Zappa, himself. ...**

**...Oh No! Not Jazz!! is simply full of wonderfully bright and innovative compositions, impeccable musicianship and mouth-dropping, killer solos throughout.**

Released on Cuneiform Records, **the colorful CD packaging is great, complete with liner notes and some campy band-selfies!"**

- Joe Milliken, *Standing Room Only*, July 27, 2014, www.standing-room-only.info

“... 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*. “Lumpy Gravy”... It’s a perfect combination of Zappa and Palermo’s big band smarts. **All of the tunes...have the same mix of discipline and abandon.** ...

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** in tunes like “Why is the Doctor Barking?” 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

“... The Ed Palermo Big Band have been exploring the music of Frank Zappa for the past couple of decades. The latest is *Oh No! Not Jazz!!*...a two-disc set with half devoted to Zappa compositions and the other to (primarily) Palermo’s own writing. ...**there’s a warm and regal bearing in the arrangements and playing.** There is humor in the writing...but of a more gentlemanly sort than the framing devices he likes to deploy. **The 18-piece band are capable of both rich enormity** (“The Dog Breath Variations”) **and supple quietude** (“Little Umbrellas”). **Palermo’s compositions stand nicely alongside Zappa’s, utilizing a similar love of precision overlaid with bursts of abandon, and all with a rich harmonic complexity and sly movement to the many horns.** ...”  
- David Greenberger, *Metroland*, December 11, 2014

“... The first disc of this double CD finds the 18 piece ensemble tackling classics like ‘Dog Breath Variations’ and ‘The Black Page #2’ alongside a slew of tunes from the Mothers era. Disc two collects Palermo’s original work ...

Things get off to a good start with *Inca Roads* and take a further positive step when the...should-be legend Napoleon Murphy Brock takes to the stage. ... The arrangement of *Chunga’s Revenge* is also excellent, the big band bringing color and dynamic to the piece... **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

“Ed Palermo's Big Band gives a double-dose of big-band jazz so good it's scary...

**On the Zappa compositions Ed performs his musical alchemy, preserving the integrity of the compositions while translating them into the voices of Big Band.** ...there's a special treat...the stunning "Inca Roads,"...Zappa alumnus Napoleon Murphy Brock on vocals. ... The title track from Zappa's *Chunga's Revenge* is sonically expanded with some full-bodied horn section work, while Katie Jacoby's fiery violin solo...evokes the tone of Don 'Sugarane' Harris.

Zappa...asked... "Does humor belong in music?" His answer was obvious... On "America Drinks and Goes Home" Ed gives us a Sinatra-like character (performed by Mike James)... the lounge-lizard / band singer that can't...come to grips with the more esoteric arrangement he's trapped in. **Palermo's gang is flying and swinging and generally having a good time.** ...

With the exception of "Moosh" (David Leone) and "She's So Heavy" (Lennon & McCartney), the second disc is made up of Palermo originals... **Ed's music is whimsical and intricate.**...and the 'Palermo disc' features wonderfully inventive soloing by Ed himself and various members of the band... **Bottom line: plenty of good playing, a good dose of humor, and not really scary at all. Unless Big Bands scare you, that is.**”

-Bert Saraco, *The Phantom Tollbooth*, February 1, 2014, www.tollbooth.org

“For years, Ed Palermo and his 18-piece orchestra have been performing and recording as one unit, working as flawlessly as if they all shared one conscious mind. Palermo has long been celebrated for his inspirational playing and amazingly inventive jazz arrangements of Frank Zappa compositions.”  
-Nick Abitia, *Sound Colour Vibration*, Jan. 24, 2014, www.soundcolourvibration.com

“...Ed Palermo and his big band have been a critical part of helping to revive and keep alive Zappa's music via Ed's very sympathetic and hip re-arrangements of Zappa music and the fine ensemble that grew around the fine idea.

...*Oh, No! Not Jazz!!*...has two CDs, one another excellent collection of Zappa big band rearrangements...**essential. ...the compositions are some of Frank's very best, pieces that give you Frank's melodic genius, the daring and the (for then) very complicated yet directly communicative sounds. It is a veritable best of...Frank's jazz-rock works:** "Inca Roads", "The Uncle Meat Variations", "Little Umbrellas", the "Dog Breath Variations", the Theme from "Lumpy Gravy" and the "Black Page #2". Then there is a hilarious Sinatra-like Las Vegas sleaze version of "America Drinks and Goes Home". **The re-arrangements are marvelous, the band tight as a drum, and they are peppered through with effective solos... ... the Zappa disk is essential listening if you don't know why Zappa is musically important.**”

- Grego Applegate Edwards, *GappleGate Music Review*, April 29, 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

““Oh No! Not Jazz!!” is a fine double album. ...**It's a great selection, the arrangements are beautiful and the playing is excellent.** ...this is the **fourth album in which Ed Palermo and his band pay tribute to Frank Zappa. Each and everyone of these is essential listening.** ... Disc two of the set is original Ed Palermo material. No Zappa references, but top notch swingin' big band jazz. Nice. Very nice. **You definitely need to hear this.**”  
- *United-Mutations*, March 9, 2014, united-mutations.blogspot.com

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

## THE ED PALERMO BIG BAND

## TAKE YOUR CLOTHES OFF WHEN YOU DANCE

CUNEIFORM 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. “RDNZL,” for example, is like a rollercoaster taking the listener down and up a variety of big band jazz-infused moments, while flirting with its rock ‘n’ roll heritage. **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

“More than perhaps any other 20th-century musician, Frank Zappa celebrated both the visceral and the cerebral, obscuring and enhancing his memorable melodies with mercurial, complex harmonies, irregular variations on rock and funk rhythms, and bawdy humor mixed with real pathos. ... 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.** “RDNZL” tracks Zappa’s dizzying excursions with remarkable fidelity while still carving out space for imaginative solos... Palermo creates a memorable atmosphere in “Sleep Dirt” by setting Phil Chester’s soprano sax solo and some other high-end melodic filigree against a rhythm section rife with bass undertow... **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

“...It's to their credit...that the Ed Palermo Big Band recognize how adaptable some of Zappa's works are to the big-band format. *Take Your Clothes Off When You Dance* puts eight of Zappa's composition...into a big-band context. Using almost 20 musicians, it sticks almost wholly to an instrumental

approach... **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 another grand success, from the spirited performances to Palermo’s comical liner notes to the cover cartoon (by Palermo’s sister-in-law) depicting musicians in the buff,** with instruments discreetly positioned... Palermo himself kicks things off on alto sax with the swirling melody of “RDNZL”... The whole band joins in on the stop-time shouts and the affair wraps up with a trademark Count Basie ending. The title track gets a syncopated Latin treatment, perfect for the circular melody line... “The Gumbo Variations,” which debuted on...“Hot Rats” as an extended jam nearly 17 minutes long, here is reduced to about six minutes of funky bliss, with solos by Dave Riekenberg on tenor sax and the fabulous Carl Restivo on wah-wah guitar... Restivo also sings the haunting first half of “Mom and Dad/Oh No,” while most of the second half is performed as an instrumental with very jazzy alto sax by Palermo.... Coming in at over nine minutes, **this medley tour de force may be the brightest gem in the jewel box. 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

“... **Palermo's arrangement sounds great. 'RDNZL' asks for dynamics and that's exactly what you get.** ... Next up is 'Take Your Clothes Off When You Dance'... Arranged by Ed Palermo and Jose Madera, we get a superb afro-latin version. ...this is great stuff. 'Take Your Clothes Off' is turned around and inside out at the same time. ... 'Sleep Dirt' could well be my favourite track on this disc. Tip to the hat for Phil Chester: a beautiful tone and a very melodic solo against a very open-sounding band. I love it. ... **"Take Your Clothes Off When You Dance" is one of these albums that will stay in your CD-player for a long while. It's great. ... Highly recommended."**

– Peter van Laarhoven, *United Mutations*, August 3, 2006, www.united-mutations.com

“...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 is a vibrant re-imagining of eight Zappa classics, done with...jazz flair rather than a note for note remake, giving these already masterful songs an accessible sheen that should easily bring Zappa's music to the mainstream jazz fan.**

Palermo's band consists of 16 members and 2 guests, with most of them part of the horn section, giving the overall sound a huge and rich presentation that helps these songs really swing in a sort of Grand Wazoo way. "Pound For A Brown On the Bus" really cooks with plenty of soaring sax and muscular horns, while the cascading melodies and tight rhythms of "Rdnzl" sees the lengthy Zappa guitar solo...replaced by horns and reeds... The quirky, complex, & progressive side of Zappa's arsenal comes out through "Mom and Dad/Oh No", with Palermo's band really firing on all cylinders on a song with many intricate parts. Ultimately, **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*, seaoftranquility.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. ...the arrangements favor the horn and ensemble work, rather than the often guitar-centered originals. ... “Mom and Dad”, one of FZ’s loveliest melodies, has an exotic setting worthy of the great arranger Les Baxter, and Restivo does justice to the lyrics with a coolly restrained vocal. Zappa’s warm, witty organ parts were one of the many pleasures of his writing, and Ted Kooshian caresses the keys yummily on “Moggio”... **Sleaze, humor, genius, and hubris – more could one want?”**

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

“...**Frank Zappa struggled to be recognized as a serious composer who just happened to be working largely in a rock idiom. ...orchestras...interpret his compositions.**... Zappa was—and remains in posterity—a singular American composer of great breadth and vision, every bit as important as Copland, Ives or Gershwin. **Strange, then, that the jazz world has been somewhat slower to catch on to the brilliance of Zappa’s arrangements. ... his work was constantly infused with elements of jazz: despite his protestations, he’s...one of the original pioneers of jazz-rock, and his many bands boasted countless accomplished jazz musicians,** from George Duke to Jean Luc Ponty.

... it’s possible to see what Ed Palermo is doing with his Big Band as an attempt to restate Zappa’s jazz credentials on the back of his new-found classical kudos. 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.** Take the title track, for instance, which transforms Zappa’s original jaunty pop-pastiche into an irresistibly sweaty, hugely authentic slice of percussion-heavy salsa, without losing one ounce of Zappa’s tongue-in-cheek humour. **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—often obscured by Zappa’s penchant for tricky time signatures, but here brought to the fore and held together by Paul Adamy’s rock-solid electric bass. And when Palermo drops in a few bars of straight-ahead, 4/4, up-tempo, swinging jazz...these tunes flower into the jazzy workouts he clearly always imagined them to be.** It’s a winning vindication of his whole concept in re-scoring these pieces for jazz big band, and a genuine treat for Zappa-friendly jazz heads. ... Clearly, this is a labour of love for Palermo, born of his genuine admiration and passion for Zappa’s music... **The bottom line is that, for Zappa fans, this is almost as good as a new Zappa album and the closest thing we’re ever going to get. 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

“...**JAZZ ALBUM OF THE MONTH OF OCTOBER... Wonderful, breathtaking, fantastic, exhilarating, great sound, great production, great musicianship, great sleeve, great concept., I run out of superlatives to describe ‘Take Your Clothes Off When You Dance’. It’s an album that’s not just for Frank Zappa fans, it’s an album for everyone!”**

– Phil Jackson, *Paradox One*, www.paradoxone.co.uk

“...sax player Ed Palermo and band have released a second disc of **Zappa interpretations that may upset the protectors of his legacy but will reveal to new and original fans some less obvious aspects of his orchestral arrangements. As Palermo and associates in true jazz style open up sections of these compositions we hear the accessibility of Zappa...**

Palermo does the job of a sophisticated interpreter-respect the original intention and design while using that design to find his own creative balance between freedom and discipline.”

– James Hopkins, *Charlottesville Newsweekly*, c-ville.com

“...Some good repertory choices by Palermo, who had decided to mostly dedicate his attention to "first period" (... roughly 1966-1970) compositions, which he obviously felt as nearer to his heart... **Quite a few nice orchestral colours, with muted trumpets, flutes and clarinets. A nice wind section, backed by a**

good and agile rhythm section... **...the music is always happy and joyous, never rhetorical or lugubrious...** all solos... always show a link - via logic or feeling - to their themes, in so avoiding one of the "jazzy" most common failures. Compared to its predecessor, the present album sounds a lot better... *Take Your Clothes Off When You Dance* shows its love right from the graphics, with the funny cover design, those liner notes à la *Uncle Meat* and those little things (like "tasty little sucker") that Fans of Zappa will be quite happy to spot. ... In my opinion Sleep Dirt is maybe the high point of the whole album: delicate and more than a bit sad, with a very good and quite appropriate solo by Phil Chester on soprano sax...

**In an unspecified place among Uncle Meat, Roxy & Elsewhere, Zappa In New York and The Best Band You Never Heard In Your Life Ed Palermo appears to have found himself.** See you on tour?"  
– Beppe Colli, *Clouds and Clocks*, June 23, 2006, www.cloudsandclocks.net

"Under the direction of Palermo **this marvelous eighteen-piece band revels in the structural complexity and wonderfully melodic conceptions which characterized Zappa's prolific yet all too short career. These are no slavish reproductions either.** Zappa, who on his final tour played a reggae version of Led Zeppelin's "Stairway to Heaven" would no doubt have been tickled by Palermo's slick salsa interpretation of the song "Take Your Clothes Off When You Dance"... "Gumbo Variations"... rocks like hell. Carl Restivo takes the album's only guitar solo, wild and hugely enjoyable. **Less predictable material is visited.** Zappa's acoustic gem "Sleep Dirt" highlights Palermo's wonderful arrangement as much as it does Zappa's ability to pen a sensitive, beautiful tune. **Like Zappa, and Duke Ellington before, Palermo's main instrument is his band. And with him at the helm it manages to capture perfectly the spirit of Zappa's music whilst stamping its own authority on the adventurous arrangements with its exuberant, joyous ensemble playing and in the quality of the solos. Ed Palermo, with impeccable olfactory taste, has done both big band jazz and Zappa's music a huge service. If you didn't like big band jazz before, then the riotous, swinging celebration that is *Take Your Clothes off When You Dance* may well be the record that converts you. If you didn't get Frank Zappa's music, then this record might make you consider his vast musical legacy in a whole new light."**  
– Ian Patterson, *All About Jazz*, May 4, 2007, www.allaboutjazz.com

"... Zappa's music has been merged with jazz before, but **Palermo brings in a distinct touch with his arrangements, which have a sense of adventure and a sly sense of humour. ...he not only evokes Zappa's zany intelligence, he gives the music a tantalising body and a scintillating soul.** "RDNZL" lends itself perfectly to a big band arrangement. Palermo's chart opens the vent for five soloists and gives interplay and dialogue a place... The ensemble lines of the horns are as smooth as silk, but the soloists cut a deep groove, led by Palermo, who nips at the melodic line on the alto saxophone. ... A bit of funk from the organ of Ted Kooshian and the rocking pummel of the horns are fine harbingers of what is to come on "Gumbo Variations." However, Dave Riekenberg adds the essence: his tenor saxophone spews lines that are at first flinty, before they go into a trajectory, wailing and swinging and creating a host of flaming ideas. In comes Charlie Restivo rocking out on the guitar... The heat is on and it never cools off. ... **Palermo shows that a big band and jazz can do credit to Zappa—and do it really well."**

– Jerry D'Souza, *All About Jazz*, August 29, 2006, www.allaboutjazz.com

"... **54 minutes of fun-time music.** ...the music was composed by Frank Zappa. ... **these renditions are quite as studiously carefree as the originals, although the band has impressed their own flavor on the material. There are brass sections aplenty....** These horns generate the nucleus of the music, conveying intricate melodies with strident definition. ... A bevy of woodwinds brings a rollicking whimsy to the dense structure. **The percussion is complex and steadfast...** In typical Zappa fashion, the mix frequently pauses to allow a catch of beats to resound with startling clarity before the instruments come crashing back in to reestablish the wall of fun. ... **The compositions themselves are flawlessly bewitching. The band's takes on these tunes are quite fresh, however, injecting idiosyncratic swing and Latino flairs, and transforming the tuneage into doses of pure delight."**  
– Matt Howarth, *Sonic Curiosity*, www.soniccuriosity.com

"For the past several years alto saxophonist/arranger Ed Palermo and his big band have been performing the music of Frank Zappa—and **Palermo has it down to a deeply personalized science.** Sure, the original compositions are amazingly complex, but **Palermo's arrangements successfully fuse Zappa's idiosyncratic harmonic approach with torrid swing vamps and other creative departures.** Drummer Ray Marchica effortlessly handles the difficult time signatures and provides a solid foundation for the orchestral parts. Organist Ted Kooshian's sleek and fluent soloing adds spice and color. Carl Restivo's endearing vocals...inject childlike innocence into a piece teeming with rich horn charts and knotty twists and turns. **Palermo's latest effort is an irresistible charmer and likely to find its way onto numerous end of year top-ten lists."** – Glenn Astarita, *All About Jazz*, Sept. 11, 2006, www.allaboutjazz.com

"...big band music still has an important place in jazz. ...Ed Palermo...has continued his exploration of the music of Frank Zappa. ... the straightforward arrangements still illuminate Zappa's nimble musicality. **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

"This is Palermo's second take on...the music of Frank Zappa. ... The title track gets a Dizzy-ish Afro-Cuban reading, while the opener 'RDNZL' gets a glistening Marty Paich treatment. Palermo's emphasis is less on Zappa's idiosyncrasies... **His goal here seems to be to stress the jazz elements and potential of Zappa's music - and it works.** 'Gumbo Variations' is down and dirty with bar walking tenor saxophone from guest Dave Riekenberg and screaming guitar wailing from Restivo over a pounding big band riff... The combination of 'Mom And Dad' and 'Oh No' pits Zappa's cynicism against his distrust of authority to poignant effect but best of all is the lovely 'Sleep Dirt' with hymnal soprano from Phil Chester. **A fine album from a band it would be great to see over here."**  
– Duncan Heining, *Jazzwise*, September 2006, Issue 101

"...With this album, **Palermo's eighteen-piece ensemble... attempts to restate Zappa's compositions in a non-conventional jazz style that does succeed...**

... The opening "RDNZL" is a spirited tune with spurts of fire, featuring a muscular solo by Palermo and nice accompaniment by trombonist Charles Gordon. ... **My favorite item on this program has to be the classic title tune, which Palermo does a great job of transforming into a shoulder-moving Latin jazz salsa piece that swings...** This album is clearly an unconventional, non-traditional big band recording with a message: **pay homage to this legendary composer and rock star. Palermo's dedication, commitment and talent as an arranger serve to pull this off as a big band jazz album, albeit an unusual one."**  
– Edward Blanco, *All About Jazz*, www.allaboutjazz.com, September 17, 2006