



MAGNOLIA PICTURES AND GREAT POINT MEDIA
A TROUPER PRODUCTION
IN ASSOCIATION WITH ZIPPER BROS FILMS AND ROXBOURNE MEDIA LIMITED
Present

ZAPPA

A film by Alex Winter

USA – 129 minutes

THE FIRST ALL-ACCESS DOCUMENTARY ON THE LIFE AND TIMES OF FRANK ZAPPA

Official Selection

2020 SXSW – World Premiere
2020 CPH:DOX

FINAL PRESS NOTES

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SYNOPSIS

With unfettered access to the Zappa Vault, and the archival footage contained within, ZAPPA explores the private life behind the mammoth musical career that never shied away from the political turbulence of its time. Alex Winter's assembly features appearances by Frank's widow Gail Zappa and several of Frank's musical collaborators including Mike Keneally, Ian Underwood, Steve Vai, Pamela Des Barres, Bunk Gardner, David Harrington, Scott Thunes, Ruth Underwood, Ray White and others.



DIRECTOR'S STATEMENT – ALEX WINTER

It seemed striking to me and producer Glen Zipper that there had yet to be a definitive, all-access documentary on the life and times of Frank Zappa. We set out to make that film, to tell a story that is not a music doc, or a conventional biopic, but the dramatic saga of a great American artist and thinker; a film that would set out to convey the scope of Zappa's prodigious and varied creative output, and the breadth of his extraordinary personal and political life. First and foremost, I wanted to make a very human, universal cinematic experience about an extraordinary individual.

What helped make this vision possible was Gail Zappa granting us exclusive access to Zappa's vault; a vast collection of his unreleased music, movies, incomplete projects, unseen interviews and unheard concert recordings. With this wealth of material, and the minimal addition of present-day interviews with Frank's closest friends and musical collaborators, we built a narrative that is both intimate and epic in scope.

But before we could set about making the film, we needed to preserve a great deal of material from the vault that was deteriorating and in great danger of being lost forever. So we created a crowdfunding campaign, and were lucky to break funding records for a documentary related project. And thus began an exhaustive, two year mission to preserve and archive the vault materials. When this was completed, we set about making the film.

Frank Zappa was not only a creative genius, but also a great and eloquent thinker who articulated the madness of his times with extraordinary clarity and wit. A legitimate maverick who lived and worked amongst other extraordinary people in historic times. Ultimately, ZAPPA is not a retro trip into the past, but a thoroughly modern exploration of a man whose worldview, art and politics were far ahead of their time, and profoundly relevant in our challenging times.



ABOUT THE FILMMAKERS

Director/Producer, *ALEX WINTER*

Alex Winter entered show business as a child actor with co-starring roles on Broadway in *The King & I* and *Peter Pan* and came to prominence in movies such as Warner Bros' hit *The Lost Boys* and the wildly popular *Bill & Ted* franchise. As a filmmaker, Winter's narrative features include the cult classic *Freaked*, for 20th Century Fox and Fever, for Lionsgate, an official selection in the Directors' Fortnight at Cannes.

Winter founded Trouper Productions, a company that supports his films. In 2019, Winter released two new documentary feature films; *The Panama Papers*, about the biggest global corruption scandal in history and the journalists who worked in secret and at great risk to break the story. A multiple award-winner, *The Panama Papers* is executive produced by Laura Poitras, opened to a 100% rating on Rotten Tomatoes, and is out now on Hulu, Amazon Prime and Epix in the US. *Trust Machine: The Story Of Blockchain*, about the rise of bitcoin and the blockchain was released last Fall and is now available on Amazon Prime

Previous documentary work includes *Deep Web*, about the online black market Silk Road, and the trial of its creator Ross Ulbricht. The film premiered on the Epix network, opening as the #1 documentary on iTunes and earning a Cinema Eye nomination among several award wins. *Deep Web* is now available for streaming and VOD. *Downloaded* is a VH1 RockDoc about Napster and the digital revolution. The film premiered at SXSW, garnering worldwide critical acclaim at theatrical and festival screenings, and is available for digital download from all major outlets, free streaming on AOL in the US.

Winter's *Showbiz Kids* documentary feature for HBO, produced by frequent collaborator Glen Zipper and Bill Simmons' Ringer Films, premiered July 14th on the network and is now available through HBO GO, HBO NOW, and on HBO via HBO Max and other partners' platforms. The highly anticipated third installment in the *Bill & Ted* franchise, *Bill & Ted Face The Music* is now available in theaters and on demand in the U.S. and is continuing to roll out internationally this Fall.

Zappa, the first all-access documentary on the life and times of Frank Zappa was set to premiere at the 2020 SXSW film festival. The Kickstarter campaign for this project was the highest funded documentary in crowdfunding history. *Zappa* was acquired by Magnolia Pictures in August and will be released day and date on November 27th in the U.S.



PRODUCER, *GLEN ZIPPER*

Glen Zipper is the founder and president of Zipper Bros Films and formerly an Assistant Prosecutor in Hudson County, New Jersey.

In addition to producing the Academy Award® winning documentary UNDEFEATED, Glen Executive Produces the hit Netflix Original documentary series DOGS which is now entering Season Two, and Executive Produces and showruns the acclaimed Cinemax comedy/documentary series TALES FROM THE TOUR BUS directed by Mike Judge (*Silicon Valley, Beavis and Butthead, King of the Hill, Idiocracy*).

Glen recently Executive Produced the HBO two-part event documentary feature WHAT'S MY NAME: MUHAMMAD ALI, directed by Antoine Fuqua (Training Day, The Equalizer), and Produced Thom Zimny's THE GIFT: THE JOURNEY OF JOHNNY CASH alongside Executive Producer Frank Marshall (Raiders of the Lost Ark, Back to the Future), ELVIS PRESLEY: THE SEARCHER, a multi-part HBO documentary, also directed by Thom Zimny, THE PANAMA PAPERS directed by Alex Winter, as well as BETTING ON ZERO directed by Ted Braun. Glen additionally served as the Executive Producer of THE BILL MURRAY STORIES directed by Tommy Avallone.

Glen is currently producing THE UNTITLED ELIZABETH TAYLOR SERIES alongside Bad Robot, and the HBO documentary SHOWBIZ KIDS directed by Alex Winter and produced in partnership with The Ringer's Bill Simmons.

Glen's other prior credits include the Grammy Award®-winning FOO FIGHTERS: BACK AND FORTH directed by Academy Award® winning director James Moll, and the Emmy Award®-winning GEORGE HARRISON: LIVING IN THE MATERIAL WORLD directed by Academy Award® winning director Martin Scorsese.

DEVASTATION CLASS, his debut novel written with filmmaker Elaine Mongeon, will be released by Blink (an imprint of HarperCollins) in 2020. Film rights have been acquired by Stampede Ventures.



PRODUCER, *AHMET ZAPPA*

Ahmet Zappa is an entrepreneur, NY Times Best Selling Author, film and television screenwriter and producer as well as Executive Vice President, Eyellusion. He also runs the extensive Frank Zappa estate through the Zappa Trust as co-Trustee.

As a co-Trustee he manages and administers all assets of the Frank Zappa business. This includes recordings, publishing, name image and likeness as well as furthering the Zappa business and trademarks in the marketplace.

As EVP of Global Business Development at Eyellusion, “live music’s premier hologram production company,” Ahmet helps create holographic tours of rock and roll’s most legendary performers.

As an entrepreneur, Zappa consults or partners with a variety of businesses and brands often creating content for their marketing strategies. He helped form the company Blk-Ops in 2012. Blk-Ops has done all of Microsoft’s major commercials since 2014. As a creative, he stays involved from pre-production to post-production on all projects. To Ahmet, marketing is just another form of storytelling, which is what he loves.

Under his entertainment shingle, Monsterfoot Productions, he conceived the story, developed and produced “The Odd Life of Timothy Green,” for Walt Disney Pictures. He also originated the ideas and wrote the screenplays for “Monster Witness Relocation Program” and “Tiki.”

As an author, he wrote the critically acclaimed novel “The Monstrous Memoirs of a Mighty McFearless,” the picture book “Because I’m Your Dad,” graphic novels and co-created Disney’s brand and book series “Star Darlings” with his wife.

Zappa began his TV writing career working on short form, comedic web content for various production companies and animation studios. He then moved into scripting family content, sitcoms, action-oriented dramas as well as supernatural and science fiction based high concept television shows.

As a musician, Zappa has written and scored commercials, web series, reality series, specials, television projects and recorded songs for motion picture soundtracks. He has been a member of a few bands, made a handful of albums and music videos and has also toured the globe playing music.

As an actor and TV personality, he has performed in many half-hour and scripted television shows, lent his voice to numerous ads, and hosted hundreds of hours of reality programming and various game show formats.

You can now catch Ahmet’s radio show Rocktails on Sirius XM Volume 106.



EXECUTIVE PRODUCER, *SETH GORDON*

Seth Gordon started in documentary film, directing the feature *The King of Kong: A Fistful of Quarters*. The film chronicled the intense rivalry between two Donkey Kong aficionados and won Best Documentary awards at numerous festivals. In 2012, Gordon produced *Undeclared*, which took home the 2012 Academy Award® for Best Documentary Feature. He also produced the critically acclaimed documentaries *New York Doll* (2005), *Mitt* (2014), *Print The Legend* (2014), *Finders Keepers* (2015), *Gleason* (2016), and *Wrestle* (2019). Gordon has directed several studio feature films: *Four Christmases* (2008), *Horrible Bosses* (2011), and *Identity Thief* (2013), all of which grossed over \$100M domestically. Gordon has directed eleven pilots for Sony Television including *The Goldbergs*, *Sneaky Pete*, and *Lincoln*, all of which have gone to series. He has directed several episodes of *Atypical* for Netflix, and *The Good Doctor* on ABC. Most recently he directed the pilot of "For All Mankind," the newest show from Ron Moore, to be debuted on Apple's streaming platform in November 2019.

EXECUTIVE PRODUCER, *ROBERT HALMI*

Robert is co-founder of Great Point Media and is an Emmy Award and Golden Globe Award-winning film and television producer, with over 250 production credits to his name. He previously founded the Hallmark Channel and is a former Chairman of Crown Media.

EXECUTIVE PRODUCER, *JIM REEVE*

Jim co-founded Great Point Media and is an Emmy Award-winning producer with over 25 years' experience in the development, production, financing and distribution of television programmes and films. He is one of the UK's leading authorities on media investment with 80+ film and TV credits.

SUPERVISING PRODUCER, *DEVORAH DEVRIES*

Devorah DeVries is a New York-based producer whose credits include *Fahrenheit 11/9*, *Where to Invade Next*, *Summercamp!*, and *Elvis Presley: The Searcher*. She started her career as Michael Moore's personal assistant and went on to become a coordinator, associate producer, and line producer in TV, commercial, feature, reality and documentary production. Devorah has been a supervising producer for Trouper Productions since 2012, working on *Downloaded*, *Deep Web*, *The Panama Papers*, *Trust Machine: The Story of Blockchain*, *Showbiz Kids*, and *Zappa*.



COMPOSER & PRODUCER, JOHN FRIZZELL

John Frizzell has composed music for Film and Television across a wide range of genres in his career. Recently his dark mysterious score for two seasons of Kevin Williamson's CBS All Access series *Tell Me A Story*, is a sharp contrast to his comedic score for FOX television's *Duncanville* starring Amy Poehler, and his co-composed score to *Mike Judge Presents: Tales From the Tour Bus* on which he collaborated with the legendary George Clinton. As a Producer and Composer, he recently completed work on Alex Winter's documentary *Zappa* which explores the complex life and music of Frank Zappa.

Over the years, he has created scores as varied as the dark and violent *Alien Resurrection*, the quirky off-beat music for the cult classics *Office Space* and *Beavis and Butt-Head Do America*, the epic sound of *Gods and Generals*, and the dark and disturbing score for the FOX series *The Following*. In addition, he has composed the gentle melodies of the intimate period drama *The Prize Winner of Defiance, Ohio* and created the plaintive jazz score behind James Franco's Golden Globe winning performance in *James Dean*. In recent years Frizzell, a mandolin and guitar player, has worked with BMI (Broadcast Music, Inc.) to promote and support Bluegrass Music on the west coast.

Born in New York City, Frizzell began his music career early, singing in the chorus of the Paris Opera Company and the Metropolitan Opera Company. As a teenager he played guitar in rock bands, and later became focused on Jazz, a passion that led him to pursue a formal musical education at the University of Southern Thornton California School of Music as well as the Manhattan School of Music. It was during his college years that Frizzell met his mentor, guitar legend Joe Pass, and through Pass Frizzell discovered his calling as a composer.

After college Frizzell worked for acclaimed producer/vibraphonist Michael Mainieri, who owned the first digital music workstation, a Synclavier. Frizzell became a master synthesist, a skill that led him to work with Academy Award winning composer Ryuichi Sakamoto, for whom Frizzell provided orchestrations to Oliver Stone's landmark mini-series *Wild Palms*. When he relocated to Los Angeles, Frizzell was introduced to James Newton Howard, who mentored him and composed the themes for Frizzell's first two feature films, *The Rich Man's Wife* and *Dante's Peak*.

Known to experiment with evolving music technology in his Film/TV scores, Frizzell has utilized experimental devices and software to create a fluid, collaborative and creative process, while still incorporating more traditional orchestral writing. Whether he is recording dry ice being rubbed on the inside of a piano or capturing the nuances of great violinists like Mark O'Conner or Sara Watkins, Frizzell strives to create a score intimately tied to picture and enhance the story.

A proponent for film music and film music issues, Frizzell has served on the Executive Board of the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences, lectures to graduate students at USC Thornton School of Music and the Sundance Film Music Lab. He has also served as the Honorary President of the International Film Music Conference in Ubeda, Spain.



CREDITS

Directed By
Alex Winter

Produced By
Alex Winter and Glen Zipper

Producer
Ahmet Zappa

Producer
John Frizzell

Executive Producers
Robert Halmi
Jim Reeve

Supervising Producer
Devorah DeVries

Executive Producer
Seth Gordon

Edited By
Mike J. Nichols

Director of Photography
Anghel Decca

Sound Design and Supervision by
Lon Bender

Original Score by
John Frizzell



CAST/SUBJECTS

Bruce Bickford
Pamela Des Barres
Bunk Gardner
David Harrington
Mike Keneally
Scott Thunes
Joe Travers
Ian Underwood
Ruth Underwood
Steve Vai
Ray White
Gail Zappa