

# THERE'S JOHN ZORN EVERY MINUTE

● Zorn to boogie! From his New York avant-garde garret, JOHN ZORN is busy invigorating the slumbering corpse of jazz with hardcore shock therapy. STEVEN WELLS joins in with the muso-scaring and wonders; would a jazz stage-diver be called Chuck Beret?

**W**hen was the last time a piece of music kicked you in the face, grabbed you by the hair and dragged you screaming through the broken glass, crisp packets and pigeon corpses of the festering gutter of your stunted imagination? OK, that's got rid of the REM fans.

John Zorn is a little man who

sits all alone in a New York apartment the size of a Shredded Wheat box and single-handedly plans the death, destruction and resurrection of Punk Rock As We Know It. He is a geeky, stringy fella with a specky jazz-type face and dinky little real-music-writing-fingers and he chuckles to himself as he puts the finishing touches to 'Jazz Snob Eat Shit' and 'Perfume Of A Critic's Burning Flesh'. He is 37.

There are 42 tracks on Naked City's 'Torture Garden' – an album which does for jazz what *Godzilla And The Smog Monster* did for Tokyo STOMP STOMP. It's extreme, loud, violent – 'y'know – all that *fun* stuff. But it is

as *nothing* compared to the out-this-week 'Guts Of A Virgin' by Pain Killer, featuring Napalm Death's Mick Harris on vocals and drums. 'GOAV' takes the concept of rock as aural brain surgery further than Terminal Cheesecake, further than Extreme Noise Terror – further even than the death screams of a PCP addled killer elephant coughing up its fungi-infested lungs in sheer terror as its spine is eaten by ultra-fast space cancer and its skull is crushed in a gigantic, squeaking, cast-iron vice.

Like someone said, listening to Zorn is like watching a 700 channel Porn & Violence TV with the remote on automatic overdrive. This is jazz on serious drugs.

Since the days when he lived on home-made bread and cockroaches in a basement flat that made his skin rot, Zorn has been a razor-studded glove up the ass of the musical establishment. Recently, his hardcore tinged tribute to the jazz

godhead Ornette Coleman was seen by most jazzers as blasphemy "because I didn't bend down and kiss his ass".

"When we played that stuff the promoter apologised to the audience because it was so loud. People kicked over the tables and ran out with their hands over their ears during the first few numbers. . ."

If you react to that little story by tut-tutting at the desecration of a sacred musical icon, then you are already dead. Stop reading. If you thumped the table and roared 'Yeah! Run off squealing and die you boring groin dead jazzer scumbags!' then you are wet and ready for the Naked City/Pain Killer experience.

ZORN EMEMIES are the constipated trainspotters – the "fans" of any genre who want to make it safe and cosy, with neat little borders, everything in its place. . . "F—— them! F—— THEM! They can eat a piece of dogshit! Preciousness really pisses me off – it's anti-musical.



Hardcore hero Fester Skullflaps . . . erm, John Zorn

There are assholes in every scene who do the same thing over and over again – they're the ones who are usually canonised. . .

And he knows that these analogically retentive scum are the *enemies* of music because music is only really exciting when it breaks the rules, when it interbreeds. The moment someone comes along and says *this is what jazz/hardcore/rap is* they should be exterminated, because they are trying to sterilise that music.

"Jesus, it's scary, the idea of a 'pure' anything is scary. It's that kind of thinking pattern that makes people put on white sheets and go burn crosses. The idea that jazz is this pure music – that's disgusting, everybody gets ideas from all over the place all the time.

"We live in a hybrid society," says Zorn, squatted cross-legged on the mattress that takes up almost his entire flat, the walls covered in records and dodgy looking Japanese videos. "I grew up in New York, a crazy mixed-up f——ed-up world . . . my music reflects that. . ."

The "jazz press" hate Zorn. "It's a really good feeling to take a review into the toilet and wipe your ass with it. . ."

Metaphorically? "Actually. . ."

Aren't you afraid of cancer of the colon?

"I don't get that many reviews." Zorn is like Hunter S Thompson – a man who punk rocked whilst waiting for the world to speed up and catch up with him.

"I draw on that energy and that attitude. That maverick f—— you attitude. Hardcore was a confirmation of the way I already felt."

Zorn is like The Joker in *Arkham Asylum* – taking in a vast array of uncensored information and regurgitating it as extreme violence (musical). He is the first cyberpunk musician, his music aping the brevity and savagery of *Brute!* and the stream of brutalist-imagery of William Gibson. He's been listening to Hardcore for

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some five years now and is adept at reeling off the correct names in interviews – Black Flag, Hüsker Dü, Repulsion, DRI, Siege, Die Kreuzen and, of course, Napalm Death.

"That Napalm Death Peel Session, that is it. That is a f——ing masterpiece. The Sore Throat album with 101 tracks on one side – that's as avant garde as anything John Cale ever did!"

"Jazz got totally destroyed by people who wanted to study it in school. In terms of energy, if you wanted to see some wild man going crazy in the '60s you went to a jazz gig. In the '80s you went to a hardcore show."

Zorn's explosive interventions into hardcore probably won't blast the genre out of its petty-minded retreat into ghettoisation, interbreeding and conservatism and already Zorn has been sneered at by 'real' hardcore musos because he hasn't paid his hardcore dues.

They dig their own graves, these morons.



Naked City's fearsome hell-spawn (l to r); Wayne Horvitz, Zorn, Bill Frisell, Fred Frith and Joey Baron