

Helen Marketti's Music Corner



By Helen R. Marketti



An interview with Dweezil Zappa

Dweezil Zappa will be performing at The Agora in Cleveland on Saturday, August 17th. He will be paying tribute to two of his late father's albums. His father was Frank Zappa. The two albums that celebrate their 50th anniversary this year are "Apostrophe" and "Roxy and Elsewhere."

"I never really knew that my dad was well-known to people when I was a kid," recalls Dweezil. "I didn't have a sense of that until I became older. I never had the experience of classmates being around me because my dad was famous. It was because his music wasn't popular among kids. His music did not reach my generation. I always knew he enjoyed what he was doing, however. He was creative. His music was cool."



He continues, "I spent a lot of time with him while he was working. It was during those moments that I became more interested in music as well. I was the only one in our family who connected with him on that level. I started playing the guitar when I was twelve years old. I

find the guitar to be a very exciting instrument. My dad played guitar. I grew up liking his music. His music had all kinds of colors and different ways of making you feel. You had to know a lot to play his music. Other guitarists I liked listening to was Eddie Van Halen and Randy Rhoads when he was with Ozzy Osbourne. I always thought their guitar playing was very appealing."



Dweezil explains his father's style of creating and working. "My dad wasn't overly social so I didn't grow up seeing a lot of other rock stars hanging out at our house. If there were any people over, it was because they were getting ready to work on material and record. He didn't have a set schedule. He worked on his music mostly at night. He liked to work on the opposite side of the clock. This way he was not distracted by household activity."

When asked about inspiration for writing his own material Dweezil had this to say. "An idea you have can affect millions of people. It's an interesting way to go about life or as my dad used to say, "Decorate time". It's definitely a process of experimentation. Finding sounds that are intriguing and putting them together. It's a bit like putting a puzzle together."

The albums "Apostrophe" and "Roxy and Elsewhere" are turning 50 years old this year. "We will be doing versions of songs from each of these records," said Dweezil. "We will be doing unique versions of some of the songs but we aren't going to play each album in its entirety. I will be incorporating some of my own creative spin on my dad's music. Music is the focus. My dad is the guidepost and I fill in the blanks with my own ideas."

"It's a big challenge to play my father's music. It's much more akin to classical music. It's very orchestral in its arrangement. A lot of it is sophisticated rhythmically. There are many different styles and they have to be played authentically. This music requires training like a Navy Seal team."

"The two albums we are celebrating are from a popular era in my dad's music. We will play a two-and-a-half-hour show. I will do a little bit of storytelling. We will do some orchestral interpretations and bring back traditions."

"It's easy for people to pigeon hole my dad and say his work was just novelty music," said Dweezil. "Some people may not realize that he made over 60 albums in his lifetime. I want to give people a broader view of my dad's music. I don't have to explain it. I will play it. I want to show the other side of his compositional skills."

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