

FiDOPLAYSZAPPA - 25 Years Extended

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In the tangled musical cosmos of Frank Zappa, FiDOplaysZAPPA have been forging their own path for almost a quarter of a century. Rather than seeing themselves as law-abiding guardians of the iconic US composer (1940–1993), the five Swiss musicians consider themselves respectful grave robbers. Five musicians who have made a name for themselves in numerous rock, pop and jazz projects, here they joyfully tear through a breathtakingly demanding repertoire.

Drawing on Zappa’s multifaceted music—which draws equally on driving rock and richly coloured jazz, complex avant-garde music and comedic Dadaism—FiDOplaysZAPPA do far more than simply give it a new coat of paint. With drums, bass, guitar, keyboards and percussion, they bring out the essence of individual parts, enthusiastically exploit the music’s improvisational spaces, and are not afraid to Frankenstein new works together from different motifs.

For their 25th anniversary in 2027/28, the core quintet is expanding its sound with a horn section featuring trumpet, saxophone and trombone. Just as Zappa did on his celebrated final tours in the 1980s, and just as FiDOplaysZAPPA themselves did when the band first started. The arrangements, at once powerful and intricate, give the music an orchestral dimension and open up new spaces for musical interplay.

Yet Zappa’s songs are not merely acrobatic finger exercises or mathematical brainteasers. They are also packed with danceable grooves, sing-along hooks and big emotions. Since the successful “Fido Five” tour in summer and autumn 2025, FiDOplaysZAPPA have been using all five of their voices for the first time,

developing multi-part vocal arrangements for Zappa's songs. Who needs a bandleader when you can have five?

This new identity of the group, which has featured various frontmen over the course of its history, grew out of the five tours FiDOplaysZAPPA undertook with guest singer Robert Martin between 2020 and 2025, taking them through Germany on several occasions. The American singer and multi-instrumentalist was a member of Frank Zappa's band from 1981 to 1988, and FiDOplaysZAPPA made good use of their shared hours and days on the tour bus, soaking up original sheet music and first-hand insider knowledge. During soundchecks, they also worked on the vocal arrangements, laying the foundations for the five-piece lineup in which everyone can, must, should and gets to sing.

For newcomers to Frank Zappa's sonic universe, FiDOplaysZAPPA offer songs about landing strips for extraterrestrials, cosmic debris and black napkins. You'll discover how free the wind feels, which vegetables you should call, and where dental floss grows. Insiders and completists, meanwhile, can rejoice when FiDOplaysZAPPA hide Easter watermelons in Baltimore or dress wild love in sinister footwear.

This unabashed way of messing with Zappa's canon and breathing new life into songs that are sometimes half a century old has earned FiDOplaysZAPPA not only a loyal following but also praise from Zappa's former collaborators. Robert Martin, mentioned above, summed it up with: "These guys know how to crank some Frank." Guitarist Mike Keneally praised the band's power and energy after one of their Zappanale gigs near Rostock. The City of Basel has also recognised the work of the five Fidors, awarding them the city's first-ever Recherchebeitrag, a grant supporting artistic research.

But naturally, FiDOplaysZAPPA's mission continues after 25 industrious years. They want to reach even more curious newcomers and inspire them to discover Zappa's oeuvre, which unfairly suffers from a reputation for being difficult to access with uninitiated ears. Because when it comes to the question of whether humour has a place in music, there is still only one answer: Arf!

Lineup:

Stef Strittmatter – Guitar & Vocals

Oliver Friedli – Piano, Keys, Vocals

Martin Medimorec – Vibraphone, Marimba, Percussion, Vocals

Pascal Grünenfelder – Bass & Vocals

Remy Sträuli – Drums & Vocals

extended:

Nicola Bernhard - Trumpet

Fabienne Hörni - Saxes

Andreas Tschopp - Trombone

Online:

fidoplayszappa.com

fidoplayszappa.com/linkstack

youtube.com/@FiDOplaysZAPPA

fidoplayszappa.bandcamp.com

instagram.com/fidoplayszappa

facebook.com/fidoplayszappa



Discographie:

- **THE GREAT ESCAPE FOR ALL OF YOU, FIDO** + Robert Martin, Doppel-CD/Vinyl, 2023, Timezone Records
- **ATLANTIS & ELSEWHERE** - Doppel-CD/Vinyl, 2018, Sireena Records
- **DIRTY BROWN** - Bobby Brown & Dirty Fingers, 7" Vinyl, 2015
- **FiDO wird 10 und feiert – Live at Gare du Nord & More**, Film auf USB-Stick 2013
- **TOO BIG TO FAIL**, CD Januar 2011, Czar Of Crickets
- **FiDO plays ZAPPA on the Dental Floss**, DVD August 2007
- **Live @ Sudhaus Basel**, CD September 2006, Limited Handmade Red-Sofa Edition