



MAY 1981

OINGO BOINGO

Oingo Boingo's history is as confusing as their name (which incidentally, has absolutely no meaning). Although none of the members will talk about it, and much of what they do say is conflicting and/or impossible to believe, this much we have pieced together:

The group is incredibly tenacious and never gives up. They seem to have existed for almost a decade under various incarnations. Originally called the Mystic Knights of the Oingo Boingo, they started as an avant-garde musical-theatrical troupe. They became well-known for their absurd, colorful (and occasionally obscene) appearances which occurred randomly—on streets, in backyards, movie lines and makeshift stages.

Some years later, they moved indoors exclusively to produce elaborate, fast-moving, multi-media musical shows. These were described in one article as "brilliantly paced, high-energy, dark, surrealistic cabaret which puts time-warped pieces of pre-war Berlin into a schizophrenic, modern format."

Now, years later, they have evolved into an eight-piece band. The nostalgia has disappeared, but the inspired schizophrenia is stronger than ever, as is the versatility which separates them from other bands and makes them very difficult to categorize.

In late 1980, Oingo Boingo came out with a four-song, self-produced, low-budget EP which was released on the embryonic IRS label. The results were astonishing and quick as the EP sold almost 50,000 copies nationally, and went immediately on the Billboard sales charts and national and regional airplay charts (something very rare for an EP).

Oingo Boingo's live shows are as exciting as ever, and the band worked its way up to becoming one of the top-drawing acts in Los Angeles. The band likes high-energy, danceable music with imagination. Their song topics range from dementia ("Controller," "I'm So Bad"—EP) to Americana ("Capitalism," "Only A Lad," "What You See") to sexual obsessions ("Nasty Habits," "Little Girls") to blasting L.A. critics ("Impostor").

THE BAND:

DANNY ELFMAN (*leader, songwriter, lead singer, rhythm guitar, co-arranger*)

Son of a retired army colonel, brought up military. Loved sci-fi/horror films as a child, troubled. Much travels in West Africa as youth. Loves music of Nina Nota, Kurt Weill, Bernard Herrmann.

STEVE BARTEK (*lead guitar, co-arranger*)

Played music since baby, considered prodigy by some. College boy—conservatory too—you name it. Hot shot!

KERRY HATCH (*bass, vocals*)

Background a much guarded secret. Raised by famous percussionist. Many years of experience. Also knows how to bang on wood.

JOHNNY "VATOS" HERNANDEZ (*drums*)

Grew up with gangs in San Gabriel. Very tough. Has settled down somewhat. Became well-known for powerful style. Still speaks Spanish (but not so good anymore).

RICH GIBBS (*keyboards, trombone*)

Toured with Chaka Kahn. Plays all kinds of electric stuff. Can fix cars, too!

DALE TURNER (*trumpet*)

Been around a long time—U.S. Army man, great stories, won't divulge age to anyone. Played in many orchestras, big bands, and mariachi bands. Great taste. Best dresser in the band.

(over please)



SAM "SLUGGO" PHIPPS (*lead sax, mainly tenor, plays all reeds*)

Well-trained. Berklee College of Music. Played with many great jazz artists. Toured Europe. Big, takes no guff!

LEON SCHNEIDERMAN (*saxes, mainly baritone*)

Self-taught. Also traveled Africa with Elfman as a kid. Fantastic cook. Can fix or build anything in the world.

GREATEST HOPES: To see America get strong again. To make people dance faster. To be allowed to perform on space stations in the future.

WORST FEARS: That we'll get killed in a plane crash like Lynyrd Skynyrd. That the Russians will get us, that nuclear war will start (and we'll lose), mutants won't be as fun as the ones in the movies. Technology will break down.

GOALS: To keep pumping out imaginative albums and movie soundtracks (unless technology breaks down, in which case we'll reluctantly go back to being an acoustic street theater troupe).

FOOD PREFERENCES: Enchiladas and sushi.

PREDICTION: "Japan and America will surprise everyone and merge to form the highly successful United Pacific Republic. We can't wait."