

# Mp3 Zot Theater - Mayberry Beret: The 20th Anniversary



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Comedy sketches and songs from the Akron, Ohio radio comedy troupe. 7 MP3 Songs SPOKEN WORD: Sketch Comedy, SPOKEN WORD: Musical Comedy Details: "Who do we use as actors? Anyone who's breathing." This statement, by Zot co-founder Mike Crooker in a 1985 group interview with the Akron Beacon-Journal's Bob Dyer, is one of the two firm and solemn credos adhered to by Zot Theater during its prolific 5 year existence. The other, which also is the title of their first farewell radio program as well as their comic and production ethic, is "I can live with it." From 1984 to 1988, Zot Theater prodded the humor reflexes of Akron's fringes-of-society college radio listenership with alternately thoughtful and bizarre radio comedy, firmly held to discipleship of not only The Firesign Theatre and National Lampoon, but also the burgeoning movement of modern comedy music (the genre finally emblazoned with the moniker "dementia", after legendary syndicated radio host and music scholar Barry "Dr. Demento" Hansen, to whom the group owes its success outside the Akron area). The group developed concurrently with "Weird Al" Yankovic's rise to fame courtesy of the good Doctor. Zot Theater was watching closely. "Sing, Kenny!" Zot Theater was formed at radio station WAUP-FM (now WZIP-FM) at the University of Akron in 1984. Craig Marks, a computer science major and illustrator of "Zippy", a regular comic strip in the U's "Buchtelite" newspaper, was producing sketch comedy featurettes for station airplay under the banner Kangaroo Theater during 1983 and early 1984. Communications major Mike Crooker joined with Craig during that time and the work continued. In spring 1984, music major Chris Mezzolesta, then cutting his teeth at 'AUP as a jazz jock, ran into Craig and Mike at the station, ideas exchanged, and production began on the early Zot Theater sketches, many of which are distinguished by cutting to a Kenny Rogers record when the jokes ran out! "A + B + Perky The Clown = Comedy Zot-style" Soon Zot Theater was producing a roughly monthly half-hour sketch comedy and music program. The classic Zot comic rhythm

can be summed up as "A...B...Perky The Clown", where "Perky The Clown" equals any unrelated non-sequitur. Skills were honed in the comedy and funny music areas, until some purple guy had a hit about fruit and hats. Craig, ever the classic TV aficionado, penned parody lyrics to that hit, Chris recorded the instruments and vocals in the Music Department's recording studios, Dr. Demento loved the tune and not only played it on his nationally-syndicated show, but made it his "Pick of the Week" on his local program on Los Angeles' KMET-FM. This was "Mayberry Beret". 20 years on, Zot Theater is baffled that anyone would remember the tune, but indeed Dr. D has reprised the tune from time to time on his program, for which they are extremely grateful yet again. So let's head on down to the psychedelic fishin' hole, and listen to Zot Theater. Craig Marks: Tull requestor, 2nd cola kid. Mike Crooker: Sean Penn, the court musician instruments on Hans Laurie Anderson. Chris Mezzolesta: Zot DJ, Carol Channing, Beatlemart pitchman, Yoko Ono, Eubanks spokesman, voices instruments on Mayberry Beret, 1st cola kid, Max Headroom, cola announcer, schoolhouse voices. Frank Casamento: You Make The Call announcer. Dean Roney: Hans Laurie Anderson announcer. Rowena Shards: Hans Laurie Anderson.

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