

THEATER REVIEW



The Dallas Morning News: Beatriz Terrazas

AD, BUT PEPPY: Angela Wilson (left) has nostalgic pizzazz as a ghost in *Mrs. Kashfi*, the third playlet in *Hotel Room Trilogy*. Hayley Juster portrays her grandfather.

Even David Lynch might say, 'Huh?'

Cryptic scripts trip up *Hotel Room Trilogy*

By Lawson Taitte
Critic of The Dallas Morning News

If you thought *Twin Peaks* made too much sense, *Hotel Room Trilogy* may be just the thing.

David Lynch commissioned these scripts from Barry Gifford for an HBO special. The author adapted them for the stage, and

has brought his wife, Diane, to New York for psychological treatment. She has been acting strangely since their son drowned 12 years before. Her language is poetically deranged, but by the end of the segment the audience knows why.

The last and shortest of the plays, *Mrs. Kashfi*, would be a simple *Twilight Zone* affair except for one big loose end. A young mother comes to a fortuneteller for a séance. While she is in the trance, being

Composer's vision brilliantly presented

By Matt Weitz

Special Contributor to The Dallas Morning News

The late Frank Zappa once disavowed the lyrics he wrote for his songs, dismissing them as pop contrivances added only because "we live in a society where instrumental music is irrelevant."

Saturday night at SMU's McFarlin Auditorium, ACREQ proved him wrong, presenting *The Dangerous Kitchen: The Music of Frank Zappa* to 1,900 lucky souls. ACREQ, in case you were wondering, is a French acronym for Canada's Association for the Creation and Research of Electroacoustics, an experimental musical group that describes its endeavors as "electroacoustic" research.

Call it what you will; Saturday night was a brilliant evocation of Mr. Zappa's musical vision, a collision of avant-garde classicism and rock 'n' roll. The stage was crowded with instruments, electronics and microphones as the crowd filed in. As the lights went down a taped version of *Jonestown* — one of Mr. Zappa's collaborations with conductor Pierre Boulez — began, and it made perfect sense that



The Dallas Morning News: Milton Hinnant

MAJOR MUSIC: Walter Boudreau conducts the Canadian avant-garde ensemble ACREQ in a performance Saturday night of *The Dangerous Kitchen: The Music of Frank Zappa* at SMU's McFarlin Auditorium.

ing sounds one atop the other. This dissolved into a montage of sounds and noises — *Are You Hung Up*, a la Karlheinz Stockhausen — as the band members took the stage and then took over with *Peaches in Regalia*.

The members of ACREQ made a case for the relevance of instrumental music, and they didn't even have to ditch the lyrics to do it. With soprano Paula Vaillancourt and baritone Steve Pitkanen on board, this "disposable" aspect of Mr. Zappa's work was elevated to the same level as the other facets of

voice taking over as another instrument.

It was all there: the odd tonalities, the carefully plotted poly-rhythmic discombobulations, the seeming jumble of parts and voices. It could sound random but was in fact the result of punctilious attention and planning, sounding like an unlikely combination of jazz-rock, opera and Spike Jones.

ACREQ — the two vocalists, two MIDI keyboardists, two reedmen plus guitar, bass and who knows how many computers, sequence and taped parts, all un-

reau — didn't overlook any of the Zappa oeuvre: the complexity, the wailing virtuosity, even the locker-room puerility that some slammed him for (*Penis Dimension*, in this case sung like some future opera).

It was plenty loud as well, living up to Mr. Zappa's concept of music as "a recipe for sculpting air." It was a recipe they followed with furious exactitude, in the process delighting an attentive and enthusiastic crowd and no doubt — somewhere — making Mr. Zappa smile.

Matt Weitz is a Dallas free-