

These are excerpts from Jessica Zafra's Online Chat event at the PhilMusic Chatroom, conducted May 25, 1997. For this section, we've selected the portions which contain Jessica's comments about the Eraserheads and her new-found role as personal manager for the rambunctious foursome. A full transcript containing her responses to questions about her writing career will be made available at the PhilMusic Chatroom pages.

Session Start: Sun May 25 12:00:14 1997

<moderator> Welcome to our special SUNDAY edition of the PhilMusic Online Artist Chat Series! We're coming to you live from CYBERCAFE at Robinson's Galleria, Ortigas Center!

<moderator> Today we welcome Palanca-award winning author, newspaper columnist ("Twisted" on TODAY), radio talk show host, cable TV personality, and band manager (of the Eraserheads!) Ms. Jessica Zafra to the program! PhilMusic gets "Twisted" with Jessica Zafra!

<moderator> Folks, the channel is now moderated - users can't talk directly - if you want to ask Jessica any questions about her work, career, and most especially the Eraserheads (this is a music chat room after all!), please send me ("MC-Jazzbo") a private message.

<moderator> Ok! Let's begin! Welcome aboard Jessica!!

<moderator> "Barako" wants to know how you got the offer to manage the Eraserheads.

<Jessica-Z> I met the band in December 1993 when they played at the Christmas party of Today; I had just mentioned their album Circus --wait, I think this was 94 -- in a less than adoring way, which got their interest because everyone worshipped the album. Afterwards I interviewed Ely Buendia for an article, we kept in touch, and when they parted ways with their manager last year, my name came up as one of their choices. Not the first, I might add.

<moderator> jazzbo asks "Did this have anything to do with the fact you were helping them with the Fruitcake book?"

<Jessica-Z> I think so. I wish to repeat for the record that I DID NOT WRITE FRUITCAKE, I merely edited it for grammar, syntax, stuff like that. I could not possibly have written that book. You will note that it has no body count.

<moderator> Zaint has a general question about the Eheads - what's the latest with them? I guess he means, what are the current projects?

<Jessica-Z> The band is currently finishing its fifth album. An EP will be released late this month or early in June. Lest the band be accused (again) of greed, I must stress that none of the cuts in the EP have ever appeared in Eheads albums, nor will they appear in the fifth album.

<moderator> jazzbo asks "does the EP have a title yet?"

<Jessica-Z> The EP will be called Bananatype.

<moderator> PlanetG has a question "When will the next pillbox issue coome out?"

<Jessica-Z> The next issue of Pillbox is currently being written. Pillbox will probably be an annual thing.

<moderator> Were all those misadventures that happened in LA that you wrote in your column true? Were you really stuck in a house with no food, no phone, no car? (this is about the Eheads LA show, folks)

<Jessica-Z> Yes, everything is true. Let me explain. Everything was outlined in the contract-- the accommodations, logistics, etc, but when we got to L.A. we found that everything that was due us still had to be bitched about. It was very stressful, and I do not understand why the promoters took so long in giving us what they had promised when they were going to give it to us anyway.

<moderator> Back to the Eheads US tour, what was the difference between the LA show and the Oakland show? Did you get better treatment/response?

<Jessica-Z> The audience at both shows was wildly enthusiastic. The promoters were different. The Oakland shows were produced by Beyond 3D productions and Capri Limousine Service. We actually had a limo in San Francisco. In San Francisco we stayed in a hotel. We have a new rule for foreign tours: WE MUST STAY IN HOTELS. P.S. In the burbs of L.A. we stayed in a hovel with one bathroom. L.A. would have been unbearable were it not for our corps of volunteers. Yes, volunteers, fans who did the cooking and cleaning and laundry for nothing! It was amazing.

<moderator> Is there an eheads fan club in LA that helped you guys out?

<Jessica-Z> There was no formal fan club. There were people like Allen Lague, Levan and Haro de Guzman who knew the producers, saw the state we were in, and jumped in to save us. It also helped that much of the Marasigan and Zabala clans live in the area.

<moderator> PlanetG wants to know if the Eheads toured the hippie sections of San Francisco like the Haight-Ashbury area... the "head shops" ika nga.

<Jessica-Z> Yes. No further comment.

<moderator> Barako asks if you complained to the LA producers when you were being maltreated?

<Jessica-Z> Surely you do not think I would shut up while the band was not being treated properly. I yakked. And yakked. And yakked. I'm sure the people who produced the L.A. show do not have fond memories of me. The show at the Palace in Hollywood was sold out, though. I would like to acknowledge the great work of our sound engineer, Jaime Godinez, who has the remarkable ability to stay sane in the middle of chaos.

<moderator> Planet G has a question - he wants to know if the Eheads' Five city US tour will push through in August and September?

<Jessica-Z> The Eheads' business manager Earnest Mangulabnan is currently negotiating with promoters for a multi-city tour of the United States; as soon as details are confirmed they will be posted on the Philmusic.Com pages.

<moderator> Frank in SFO says the Oakland show was a success - what are your plans in promoting the band in the US among (a) Filipinos (b) a cross over audience?

<Jessica-Z> We are trying to convince the record company to release Eheads albums internationally; they are studying the prospect. As for the crossover market, I am still wracking my brains over how to get people of other nationalities to come to the shows.

<moderator> Zaint asks if you have plans for a San Diego show.

<Jessica-Z> Yes, there are plans for a San Diego show, as well as concerts in Chicago, New York, and Canadian cities.

<moderator> Any specific Canadian cities?

<Jessica-Z> Unfortunately my knowledge of Canadian geography is extremely limited; the only Canadian city I know is Vancouver because the X-Files are filmed there.

<moderator> Frank in SFO wants to know if there will be a repeat show in SFO for the Eheads!

<Jessica-Z> We would love to go back to San Francisco, it's a lovely place.

<moderator> jazzbo asks - "what was the concept behind the Eheads redux of "Tuwing Umuulan at Kapiling Ka" - and how did the Eheads get into the Ryan Cayabyab project? What was their reaction upon being asked?"

<Jessica-Z> The Ryan Cayabyab tribute album was done before I joined the band in mid-March. I have always liked Tuwing Umuulan; my only complaint is that they did it in almost the exact same way Basil Valdez did. Face it, Basil was a great singer.

<moderator> Cable wants to ask since the Eheads current single is climbing the charts, do you think Rivermaya can catch up?

<Jessica-Z> I don't see why people try to drum up a rivalry between the two bands when the members are all friends and they sound very different to me.

<moderator> TAZZ2 asks - "What is your priority... band managing or writing?"

<Jessica-Z> There is absolutely no question in this area: I am a writer. Managing the band is a sideline, and it certainly pays more than writing.

<moderator> PlanetG asks - ilan na ba ang total sales ng Eheads albums? What were the sales figures of Fruitcake?

<Jessica-Z> Fruitcake has gone platinum four times, I think.

<moderator> PlanetG also asks "why did the heads sign a 6 or 10 year contract? May advantage ba yan sa inyo?"

<Jessica-Z> I'm worming out of the question, but the contract was signed long before I even met the band.

<moderator> Gotenks asks... "what is your personal favorite song in Fruitcake?"

<Jessica-Z> The trouble with Fruitcake is, the album works as a whole. You can not isolate one cut call it your favorite, because everything works in conjunction with the other cuts.

<moderator> PlanetG asks if you can describe in one word each... each member of Eheads...

<Jessica-Z> I refuse to do that. It would reduce them into one-dimensional objects.

<moderator> CABLE wants to know if there is E-heads greatest hits coming out any time now.

<Jessica-Z> My understanding is that Greatest Hits albums come out when the recording act switches record labels. That means there is no greatest hits album being planned right now.

<moderator> we have a question from planetG... he wants to know if the Eheads are now into directing their own videos.

<Jessica-Z> Yes, they were very much involved in directing the videos for Fruitcake and Trip to Jerusalem. Their next video will be directed by them.

<moderator> jazzbo asks can we get copies of the videos so we can broadcast them on the Internet? it would be good promo and a Philippine internet first.

<Jessica-Z> Of course.

<moderator> Kalpol has a another interesting question... "Do you think the El Bimbo video was a bit on the corny side?"

<Jessica-Z> No, I think it was true to the spirit of the song. I like the fact that the band does not cringe at the concept of baduy.

<planetG> i liked the fruitcake book...why you didn't release it during Xmas?

<Jessica-Z> The Fruitcake book came out in March instead of December as originally planned because it took Ely Buendia longer than expected to come up with the manuscript.

<tazz2> would you like to manage Ely's sister?? she is into singing right? And she has a band too..

<Jessica-Z> I think managing the Eraserheads is enough. I have to explain something: It is not my career.
Jessica-Z> It is not about art. It is not a vocation. It's just a job.

<moderator> OK FOLKS, WE ARE WRAPPING UP!!! YOU CAN CATCH JESSICA ON THE RADIO AT K-LITE AT 103.5 AT 3PM TODAY FOR HER RADIO SHOW, "TWISTED"

<moderator> SAY GOODBYE JESSICA! THANKS FOR COMING TO OUT CHAT EVENT! AND THANKS TO THE AUDIENCE FOR THOSE *INTELLIGENT* QUESTIONS!

<Jessica-Z> Farewell, my people.

<MOD-Samantha> _Thank You _Jessica.in behalf of the people behind PhilMusic...:) We love yah!!!!_

Session Close: Sun May 25 14:00:49 1997
