DEVO

BETTER LIVING THROUGH MARKETING

Devo is back! The flowerpot-hat-wearing band is ready to "Whip It" again after almost two decades away. Cofounder Gerald "Jerry" Casale invited us to the group's corporate headquarters, Mutato Muzika, a bright-green spaceship-shaped building on L.A.'s Sunset Strip. It was the perfect place for Casale to discuss those crazy hats (they're actually Energy Domes), performing as holograms and Devo's new CD, *Something for Everybody*.

HUSTLER: What happens here?

GERALD CASALE: Mutato Muzika is where composing music for film, TV and video games and Devo recordings takes place. We have four studios. We're sitting in the main one here—Studio A with a live room. Then there are two smaller studios and a large studio downstairs called the Round Room.

Has there ever been a moment when all the members of Devo sat around in your Energy Domes planning world domination?

We wish. (*Laughs.*) We have a conference room and have had meetings, but we forgot to put the domes on.

How did the Energy Domes originate?

I grew up in Ohio and had the misfortune of growing up both blue-collar and Catholic. That was two really bad things, although it produced some good results. It made you look at HUSTLER Magazine at a younger age. I hated the nuns. I hated the priests. It was a horror show. I used to find things to do to escape in my mind as I sat there in this disgusting setting.

I would look up at these 1930s milk-white glass light fixtures. They were exactly the size and shape of the Energy Domes. I fixated on them. I thought it was a great design. I would stare at them and daydream. Obviously that was burned into my brain because many years later when we started talking about wearing some strange headgear onstage as Devo, I said, "Hey, how about this shape?" I think it had something to do with a *Nancy* comic book that Bob Mothersbaugh from the band had.

In it Nancy couldn't stand what everybody was saying around her, so she had this helmet that cut out all the noise. She called it a "Cancellater Helmet." We used the ceiling fixture design and made it red like Nancy's helmet.

I went to a junk store and found the light fixture. Then I drew on graph paper the top and side views. I then gave it to a fabricator, who made the mold that we could strike vacuform plastic domes from.

Why have you switched to blue domes?

That was part of the color study. We took the marketing money that Warner Bros. gave us for the new CD and turned it over to Mother. They're the coolest, smartest, most forward-thinking ad agency you're ever going to find. We talked about what we wanted to do, and they decided that we should make the Devo campaign about marketing.

Everything in society today is marketing. You don't know that anything exists without marketing. You don't know why you should care about it or buy it without marketing. With 10,000 CDs coming out every month, and people not wanting to even pay for music, why should people give a fuck about Devo? Why should anybody care that we're here again? Why should they listen to our music or even know we have new music? Marketing.

Mother decided to use all the techniques that are used in the corporate world to market content: focus groups, study groups, roundtable discussions. We did it and documented it all. We have so much documented that we're thinking of doing a reality show. What you will see is like Spinal Tap with brains.

What's with the new masks?

We came up with the idea of the Everybody Mask. It's a half-head mask that reduces the difference between people and makes them look more similar. We started molding designs and stuff. We did life casts of all the members of Devo and then started making a cross-ethnic and cross-racial head that was none of Devo—kind of like an *Avatar* head. You don't know what ethnicity or race it is, and that's the mask people will be able to get.

During a show, do you want to look out at the audience and have everyone look the same?

That'd be great! We played a couple of concerts where that happened with the domes. We played the [Vancouver Winter] Olympics, and the Olympic committee gave everybody a blue dome. We were looking out at 5,000 people in blue domes. It was great. Then we played a big concert for Cisco with about 8,000 people. Cisco ordered domes for all of them.

Selling domes seems to have been a wise move.

People will pay for domes. They don't want to pay for music.

Is it true you were at Kent State University during the tragic shootings in 1970?

I was in the middle of it. I was a member of SDS [Students for a Democratic Society]. I knew Allison Krause and Jeffrey Miller, two of the four students that were murdered. In fact, I just went back for the 40th memorial. I gave a keynote speech to a few thousand current students there.

What was it like to go back?

Very, very strange. Because I hadn't been back at that location where the killings took place in all that time. Walking through it reminded me of exactly what had happened: There were more than a couple of thousand students out there that day protesting the expansion of the Vietnam War into Cambodia by [President Richard] Nixon. He did it without an Act of Congress. He just sent bombers in there on the sly. *Boom!*

We found out on the Sunday night news, and the next morning was May 4. All the antiwar students knew they were going to hold a protest, but the [Ohio] National Guard knew that too. Governor Rhodes had the campus surrounded by the National Guard. He had two units hiding in the heating plant and gymnasium ready to go with gas masks and everything.

We didn't know that their M1 rifles had live ammunition. Students were totally unarmed. It started as a typical '60s political game where [the guardsmen] shot tear gas at us to get us corralled over the hill into this one area where they could arrest everybody and put us on buses. Some of the braver students were trying to throw the canisters back, but most people were running from the tear gas.

When [the guardsmen] reached the top of the hill and had people pinned down, I saw some guy in a gas mask yelling. I don't know what he was saying because there was so much chaos, but he made a big hand gesture, and these 12 soldiers turned about 130 degrees, lowered their guns and then *boom!* It didn't even appear that they were aiming specifically. Just like a duck shoot, they were shooting at anybody they could get.

Most of the students that were wounded or killed were not even in on the protest. They were just coming out of class or trying to get the hell out of campus. Allison got shot down by the parking lot trying to get to her car. There I was looking at what it's like to see someone shot with an M1 rifle bullet.

Did that horrific event inspire you to stop being a hippie and ultimately start Devo?

Unlike Steven Stills, I didn't "almost cut my hair." I got really pissed off and really dark inside because you see what really goes on. Brute power won the day. The Guard got away with murder. The way history was written by those that control it, people thought the students had shot at the National Guardsmen and deserved to be shot. You realize there ain't no justice. That's what it was.

Devo cofounder and chief strategist Gerald Casale doesn't wear an Energy Dome at the office.

PHOTO BY LADI VON JANSKY

PHOTO BY CINEMACIA.COM

THE DIRTY DOZEN

12 NEW DISCS YOU NEED

ANN CORIO & SONNY LESTER
How to Strip for Your Husband…

Back in the 1960s, burlesque queen Ann Corio and jazz producer Sonny Lester teamed up for a pair of albums featuring big-band striptease tunes. Now packed into one CD, these classic platters are sure to get your wife to take it all off. Available exclusively at **CollectorsChoiceMusic.com**.

SWEETHEAD
Sweethead

We love all kinds of head, but nothing beats some Sweethead. This tight rock combo treads solid and familiar ground on its debut. Singer Serrina brilliantly channels her inner Shirley Manson and Chrissie Hynde.

VARIOUS ARTISTS
Live at Knebworth

In 1990 the Knebworth House hosted a rock concert whose superstar lineup included Paul McCartney, Eric Clapton, Elton John, Jimmy Page, Robert Plant and Pink Floyd. Listening to this 20th-anniversary two-CD set is almost as good as having been there. Almost. A *Live at Knebworth* DVD, sold separately, has also been released.

JUSTIN CURRIE
The Great War

As leader of the '90s outfit Del Amitri, Justin Currie became a master of the perfect pop gem. Remember "Roll to Me"? *The Great War*, his second solo outing, is high on stylish pop and melancholy.

UFFIE
Sex Dreams and Denim Jeans

Sassy, brassy Uffie is our kind of girl. The Brit pop tart's debut is part Lily Allen, part Lady Gaga and full of ditties about being drunk in public. Uffie is a lot like Ke$ha, except she can sing without sounding retarded.

JIMMIE VAUGHAN
Jimmie Vaughan Plays Blues, Ballads & Favorites

The guitar genius's first solo disc in nine years is a master's class in the blues. Vaughan rips through classics like Little Richard's "Send Me Some Lovin'" and Willie Nelson's "Funny How Time Slips Away," accompanied by a ripping horn section and a heavy dose of B-3 organ (courtesy of Bill Willis).

Gerald Casale: "We were the Rodney Dangerfields of rock 'n' roll. Now Devo seems contemporary."

I don't think I would have started Devo without that change in me. I started forming Devo in 1972. There were a lot of theories, ideas, posturing and attitude after the killings. Then it got serious in '72. By '74 we had a working band with a bunch of songs. It would be two more years till we moved to L.A.

How did Devo fit into the L.A. punk scene back then?

We went from being reviled in Ohio to being revered here in one month's time. We were embraced immediately. By our second gig we had gotten a following. By the end of that month we were pulling in 400 people. We were the kind of punks that L.A. people could embrace. There was an Americana angle to Devo because of the humor, the theatrics and the costumes. It was fun. It wasn't violent like British punk.

Most bands with brothers in them, like the Kinks and Oasis, don't last. How has Devo lasted with two sets of brothers?

It's the old Stockholm Syndrome, the old brow-beating. It's the devil you know that you're more familiar with.

Was it a blessing or a curse to have "Whip It" become a huge hit?

It's always both because until then we had autonomy. The record company just let us do whatever we wanted to do. We did our own costumes and graphics. We booked the studio, recorded and decided what our record sounded like, and then we turned it all in to the record companies. As soon as "Whip It" happened, then it was like, "Okay now we need another 'Whip It.' Here's what you got to do next." Everybody then thought they understood Devo. All the second-guessing and control started from there.

Everyone thinks "Whip It" is about sex. Is it?

No. We let everybody think it was because that's immediately where everybody's heads went at radio. We realized we shouldn't tell them the truth because it would turn them off. We let them think it was about whacking off and S&M. But I'm sorry, it wasn't. That was in our personal lives—us whacking off and then some S&M.

Was it an even balance between whacking off and S&M?

There was too much whacking off. But then later, after we had a hit, it turned around. There was no more need to whack off.

Why has it been 20 years since Devo's last studio album?

It took that long to recover. The last record [*Smooth Noodle Maps*] was on Enigma Records at the time when the whole music business was shifting, and musical tastes were radically changing. Devo got trampled and left in the lurch. It wasn't fun. We got so mismarketed and neglected by Enigma that it turned everyone in the band off. No one had a taste for going back in the ring to start another boxing match after that. Then I went off and started directing music videos full-time, which turned into commercials five years later. Mark [Mothersbaugh] started scoring for TV shows like *Rugrats*, and that led him to doing scores for action movies. There was no energy for collaboration for Devo.

What restored that energy now?

We wrote a song for Dell Computer's new XPS laptop. The commercial ran for three months nationally, and even though it didn't mention it was Devo, everybody knew it was us. Then all these calls came in from managers, A&R men from record labels and producers. They said, "You guys are crazy if you don't do a new record." Plus there are all these groups now from the Ting Tings to LCD Sound System and Hot Chip that sound like and say they are influenced by Devo. So there's a taste for the Devo aesthetic again. We're as relevant as any band. Just because we did it first doesn't mean we can't come back and do it again.

Was it weird to re-sign with Warner Bros. Records?

Once again that's the devil you know. There were practical reasons. Despite the much-ballyhooed news of the death of the record companies, all the alternatives to that business model—like getting sponsorship deals or getting Live Nation to pay you millions in advance on hundreds of concerts—is pie in the sky. It's an illusion.

Warner Bros. owns our back catalog in perpetuity. The first thing they did was to reissue four of our CDs. We said that's fine, but let's give the marketing money to Mother.

On your Web site you let the fans listen to 16 songs and pick the top 12 that would end up on Something for Everybody. Did the fans really have a say?

Oh, yeah!

Were you surprised with the results?

The overlap between our favorite 12 and the fans' favorite 12 was nine. We were surprised by the songs they *didn't* like. With the songs that scored the lowest I think the wrong 30 seconds got played. I wanted longer samples, but the label said no. I felt that people needed to get a sense of what the song is, not just a snippet.

The fans didn't like the ballad "No Place Like Home." They didn't like the grandiose song "March On," which takes a while to develop. And they didn't like one of my favorite songs, "Cameo," which was a Devo dance track. The songs that didn't make the focus group-approved package will make it out there as bonus tracks somewhere. The package will be put out with the 12 tracks that won in the order of the popularity votes.

You just finished a string of dates where you played the songs from *Are We Not Men? We Are Devo!* one night and *Freedom of Choice*'s the next night. What was it like to reprise those albums?

It was totally bizarre. It was like rebirthing therapy. You start to remember what you were thinking then [1978-1980] and what your life and energy were like. It's almost therapeutic. The other thing was we forgot how fucking fast we played then. We had to learn how to play those songs over again at those tempos.

Will you be touring?

We're going to be playing a lot of isolated dates and then a fall tour. We're doing Letterman, Colbert and Regis & Kelly. The most exciting gig is we're going to play a hologram show. We're going to be playing here at Mutato, but we'll be projected as holograms, possibly in Beijing, China. It's never been done before, and that's why we love it. It's an idea Mark and I had 20 years ago and thought, *Why can't we do it?* Now you can. If it works, you can appear onstage in ten major cities in the U.S. on the same night.

Has technology finally caught up with your ideas?

Yeah. We're not shocking. We're not far out. Unfortunately we were ahead of our time, and that's why we were underappreciated. We were the Rodney Dangerfields of rock 'n' roll. Now Devo seems contemporary. Everything we were warning about has unfortunately came true. Now we live in a devolved world. There's no doubt about it.

Did Devo ever have any groupies?

We definitely had females that found us appealing because of what we did. I wouldn't call them groupies though, because they did it *for* Devo. It wasn't like they were screwing every band that came to town.It's like all the girls that were with Tiger Woods. Were they groupies? They're just interested in Tiger Woods. We had the benefit of that. And to be honest—because underneath it all we were not aliens or weirdos but just all-American guys—the girls didn't have to make all that much effort to get what they wanted. They usually just followed us back to the hotel.

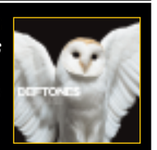
Did you ever have a girl while she was wearing an Energy Dome?

I did have a few girls pose in the dome only. They look so cute naked with a dome on.

PHOTO BY LADI VON JANSKY

MORE DIRTY DOZEN DISCS

THE DEFTONES
Diamond Eyes



Because we're perverts, the minute we got the new Deftones CD we went right to the track "Sex-tape." But instead of getting a gritty ode to filmed screwing, it was the most beautiful love song we'd ever heard. The rest of the disc offers similarly inspired beauty and rock genius.

DWEEZIL ZAPPA
Return of the Son of…

Dweezil not only plays the late Frank Zappa's musi c on this brilliant two-CD set, he also channels his father note for note. Plus the singer sounds just like Frank! This powerhouse tribute borders on a religious experience.

JUDAS PRIEST
British Steel: 30th Anniversary

Some things get better with age: fine wine and Judas Priest's 1980 album *British Steel*. This milestone release features a bonus live DVD and fully remastered sound. It will make you want to bang you head all over again. Just don't. You're too old for that shit now.

OZZY OSBOURNE
Scream

All aboard! The metal madman returns, and it isn't the bumbling and mumbling Ozzy whom people know from the reality show. *Scream* is the real deal, a reminder that the former lead singer of Black Sabbath created rock radio staples like "Crazy Train" and "Bark at the Moon." All you need to hear is the opening riff of the first single—"Let Me Hear You Scream"—to know the Prince of Darkness is back!

BONE THUGS-N-HARMONY
Uni5: The World's Enemy

Hip-hop isn't always known for being the most thoughtful and introspective music out there. That may be why Bone Thugs-N-Harmony's latest CD is so refreshing. All five members got together for the first time in ten years, took a look at themselves and the world around them and crafted this deep and dope disc.

PAUL WELLER
Wake Up the Nation

The Modfather's new CD is easily his most raucous effort since his stint as the Jam's lead singer. Weller is fired up and ready to roar. Making it feel like the good old days even more is the appearance of former Jam bandmate Bruce Foxton on two tracks.

Because You Can't Watch Just Porn

DVD DISTRACTIONS

THE RUNAWAYS

Kristen Stewart and Dakota Fanning turn in stellar dead-on performances as rockers Joan Jett and Cherrie Currie in this top-notch biopic. While you'll be watching it for the tunes and simulated lesbo action, be sure to pay attention to Michael Shannon. He steals the film as scumbag manager Kim Fowley..

ELVIS & ANABELLE

This quirky road picture follows the unlikely pairing of a beauty queen (played by *Gossip Girl*'s Blake Lively) and a mortician named Elvis. Quaint and often creepy, this flick is worth checking out just to look at Lively cavorting in cemeteries.

HOARDERS: THE COMPLETE SEASON ONE

TV's most fascinating reality show focuses on people who can't toss things away, transforming their homes into piles of junk. *Hoarders* looks at their lives and the professionals who try to help them get back to living. Remember, if you have a bunch of cool things that are organized on shelves, you're a collector. If they're stacked in piles? You're probably a hoarder.

CHICKENFOOT: GET YOUR BUZZ ON LIVE

If you haven't seen this rock supergroup live, you're missing out. The combined energy of drummer Chad Smith (RHCP) with former Van Halen bassist Michael Anthony, guitar god Joe Satriani and frontman Sammy Hagar is awesome.

SAINT JOHN OF LAS VEGAS

Sarah Silverman, Steve Buscemi and Peter Dinklage star is this screwball comedy about a gambler who leaves Sin City hoping for a better life selling auto insurance in New Mexico. When an odd accident leads the guy back to Vegas, he is thrust into a twisted world full of carnival freaks, wheelchair-bound strippers and one angry nudist. The often-laugh-out-loud flick is worth a look.

I KNOW WHAT I SAW

Are UFO's real? One look at this documentary and you might just change your answer. It looks at the lives of people who know that they have actually seen flying saucers and had alien encounters. Particularly fascinating is the event surrounding the "Arizona Lights."