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He put a subversive face on a sly jazz-rock fusion, collaborated with the Los Angeles Philharmonic and the London Symphony Orchestra, and worked with classical figures from Zubin Mehta to Pierre Boulez... Beachin, right? Twenty years after his death, Zappa can roll over and gag himself with a spoon in the grave if he knew that the Valley Girl remains his most enduring public legacy. Before her death on December 4, 1993, the counterculture icon shared many feelings about the hopelessness of her biggest hit, some of them more gnarled than tubular. The worst part in this record is the fact that no one listened to it, he said to critical supporter Joseph Woodard. The whole coverage of the song barely mentioned what the song was actually saying that these people are really airheads. Another time, he waxed even less enthusiastic about how his song was adopted: It just goes to show that the American public likes to celebrate infantile. I mean, I don't want people to behave like that. I think Valley Girls is disgusting. However, at other times he seemed to relish the attention Valley Girl provided to him and his collaborator on the single, 14-year-old daughter Luna Zappa. He denounced the fact that, despite its ubiquity, the song had sold maybe 350,000 copies, but added that sociologically, it was the most important record of 1982 in the United States. Exaggeration? Maybe not. (And what are you going to pit against it for this title - White Wedding?) Linguistically, at least, it was the most significant piece of music of the decade, satirical and/or popularized by Val-speak, which both pleased and horrified the nation. It wasn't just Lingo, but the then-new-fashioned teenage way of inking every declarative statement so that it sounded like a question. Lost in hysteria about Moon's contribution to the band was the fact that it started with a hell of a riff, which Zappa was piddling off at the sound check for a year before he decided it would be a thunderous hue piece of wild taunts by his daughter's contemporaries. I had no idea it was going to be such a big success. I just wanted to spend some time with my dad, Moon told People magazine at the time, talking about how she begged to be on one of her father's records. It wasn't her real, well-spoken voice on the track. I would go to a bar mitzvah and go back to talk valley lingo that everyone in the bar mitzvah was talking about and the song came out of that... He wrote the song and then he asked me if I would improvise over what had already been recorded and just make the tracks just speak straight. And so I just babble about my nails and slavery and everything else. The result was one of those Rorschach pop tests. Was it a merciless dissection of youth culture in decline, or a fun celebration of kidspeak? Sappa biographer Kelly Fisher Lowe certainly takes first opinion. Song, Despite Its Stupid, Valley Girl Lyrics is pretty wild wild Gross consumerism in the early 80's, Lowe wrote in The Words and Music of Frank Sappa. The characters that Moon plays throughout the song are obsessed with shopping and beauty and status. The choirs, performed by Zappa and the band, then offer a meta-commentary to the moon's narrative... While many probably didn't see or understand the connection between Valley Girl and Marxist theory of commodity fetishism, it was there that buried under four minutes of pure pop confectionery. It's one of the most subversive acts of art in the '80s. Zappa himself, of course, seemed to think, or hope-so. I'm not too excited about the (San Fernando) Valley as an aesthetic concept... For me, it represents a number of very evil things, he said. And, in Billboard magazine: People think 'Valley Girl' is a happy kind of song, but it's not. I've always hated the Valley. This is the most depressing place. It was in contrast to the positive spin put on him by The Moon Unit himself, who insisted on the press: He doesn't put Walz down. Of course, the Valley had so much state of mind, and the state of the mouth as a specific place in the song. Valley Girl slang ... It's really a beach talk that moved a few miles to the east because Waltz had a hangin' on the beach, said Corky Carroll in the book How to Speak American: A Guide to Our Native Languages. "Gnarly," "rad," "radical to the max" - it was all beach talk. But now you can go to school in Boise, Idaho, and hear kids say that. He thought so little of the song that he never played it live and never mentioned it in the main text of his memoirs. But he had to review it in an interview. There are a few things the Battle Girl from the Valley is a hit: first, it's not my fault - they don't buy this record because it has my name on it," he said. They bought it because they liked the voice of the moon. It has nothing to do with a song or a performance. He has everything to do with the American public wanting to have a new syndrome to identify with. ... Hits are not necessarily musical phenomena. In the same breath, he added: We hired a guy to do merchandising deals on this song. Indeed, Zappa licensed clothing and cosmetic lines and dolls using valley girl imprint. He even took credit as co-author with his daughter on Official Valley Girl Coloring, published just months after the song hit the airwaves. In the introduction, he wrote: Dear man who likes to consume stupid Valley Girl products. ... Ever since Ship Arriving Too Late to Save the Drowning Witch was released and America discovered the song 'Valley Girl', many of those anonymous little companies that crank out disposable poot for people like you to identify themselves with working overtime to flood the market with disgusting types of UNAUTHORIZED VALLEY GIRL SWILL. Nwo... After all! Real POILO FROM PRICE/STERN/SLOAN WITH THE SCENT OF VALLEY GIRLS! From the moment you buy this gorgeous little item and from your pencils, you can become personally involved in one of the dumbest quirks to take to the streets in years. He told Billboard in the midst of the song's popularity that, dumb fad or not, we were working to get the script thing organized and wanted to make sure it wouldn't be any Beach Blanket Bingo a real fast and cheap teen piece s-t. But this choice is ultimately not in his hands. The film went into production using the title, but not the song, and Zappa sued, in a fruitless effort to stop production. The resulting feature, 1983's Valley Girl, was most notable for taking his Valley Boy, Nicolas Cage, into stardom. Aside from Cage's career, Zappa may also be indirectly responsible for Alicia Silverstone, since 1995's Clueless seemed to be the obvious ancestor of The Girl of the Valley tradition. How much he has done for the debate, even now. He complained that the album only sold about 125,000 units. Perhaps this is to be expected, as biographer Barry Miles noted, it wasn't an album that would have been beaten by a teenage novelty consisting, as it did with songs about male lust, industrial pollution and Teenage Prostitute, sung live in a bloated high-operatic cry. It's got Zappa more of a reputation as a novelty song guy, coming on the heels of I Don't Want to Get a Project, about the Carter Administration Recovery Project, and the disco parody of Dancin' Fool and of course Don't Eat Yellow Snow Before. But it was more of an anomaly, given that, right before this 1982 release, he'd put out an all-instrumental tri-LP set called Shut Up and Play Yer Guitar, and he followed The Valley Girl in 1983 with the classic London Symphony Orchestra project and in '84 with Boulez's Dinde Zapp. Valley Girl was nominated for a Grammy, but Zappa didn't have to win one until he won the rock instrumental trophy in 1986. In 1988, he performed his final concert in Italy, five years before his death from prostate cancer. Luna, meanwhile, eventually dropped Unit on her behalf and became a guest of MTV VJ, a writer, and alternative stand-up comics. Most recently she made news with her yet impending divorce from Matchbox 20 guitarist Paul Doucette. I think lawyers take leave about 30 times a year, she joked, discussing the divorce in an October 2013 WTF podcast interview with Mark Maron. Frank Sappa has released 62 albums in his life (many others have appeared since his death), but Valley Girl is his only song to crack the US Top 40. Hearing him on playlists along with Rick Springfield and Journey was shocking for fans of Zappa, who are used to his subversive melody and ekotic attitude to mainstream music. Valley Girl caught the attention of the directors of radio programs (nemesis of the Zappa) as a whimsical novelty of the song, which listeners could easily digest. 'Valley Girl' is harmless enough that they will play, Zappa said in Cream. They think will just have to have laugh, and that's it. No real information is passed on. There is certainly an anti-information syndrome as far as radio is concerned. No real content is ever allowed to air anywhere. The song ridicules talk of Valley Girl, a trend of the early 80s that began in California and led to teenage girls across the country saying things like Gag me with a spoon. This makes fun of what, according to the opinion of the Sappa, was spoiled by rich girls living in the San Fernando Valley in California. Laraine Newman was doing variations on the Valley Girl character on Saturday Night Live at the time. It features the daughter of Zappa, the moon unit of Zappa, as valley girl. She was 14 when they recorded it. Luna was also the inspiration for the song as she would come home from a bar mitzvah repeating the Valley Girl talk she had heard and covering topics such as a grody English teacher and a place to get her nails done. She received a co-written credit for the song for coming up with many of the lines. Moon doesn't consider herself a Valley Girl, but has learned to speak like one. Leave Frank Zappa to get a song on the radio that discusses THEM, albeit from the perspective of a girl who doesn't want anything to do with it. Can you just imagine me as a leather teddy? She asks. Luna band Zappa got a taste of fame with this song, suddenly becoming very popular at school. In Cream, she said that the kind of thing that you expect a 14-year-old girl with a flash of fame to say: I don't want to be recognized. But I feel like I know what it's like to be disabled now. You know when you go to someone in a wheelchair you kind of stay away. Luna stayed in the corner of the public eye, making appearances as VJ on MTV and appearing in various TV shows and movies. Her most famous role is played by Rusty's love interest in the 1985 film National Lampoon European Vacation. In 2000, a California man named Timothy Brownfield sent letters to the FBI threatening to kill Luna Zappa's unit because he thought she had stolen texts from him. 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