

## Zachary Herrmann

**Issue date:** 3/23/09 **Section:** [Diversions](#)

Most musical timelines give a pretty definitive end date for the 1960s and all the social ideals attached to that brief time period: Dec. 6, 1969, the notorious Altamont Free Festival where a man was stabbed to death as The Rolling Stones performed "Under My Thumb."

Tucked away in the Hollywood Hills though, psychedelic music and the optimistic principles of the Aquarian Age carried on well into the 1970s. The Source Family, a Los Angeles-based spiritual collective - or cult, if you can get past the negative connotations of the term - intertwined communal living and Kabbalah mysticism with musical experimentation.



Under the tutelage of Father Yod, the operator of Los Angeles's famous Source vegetarian restaurant and patriarch of the Family, Ya Ho Wha 13 (derived from the Jewish name for God, Yahweh) cut roughly 65 albums, some of which, in the last decade, have been rediscovered as landmark psychedelic recordings.

Within a few years of Father Yod's death in a 1975 hang gliding accident, Ya Ho Wha 13 and the rest of the Family mostly went their separate ways. However, the 2007 re-release of *The Source: The Untold Story of Father Yod, Ya Ho Wa 13 and The Source Family*, a book written by one of Yod's wives, Isis, ignited a new interest in all things Ya Ho Wa.

The three core members of the band reunited in 2007 to tour and record *Sonic Portation*, an album cut in the spontaneous nature of those early, Source Family albums. The band will appear at the Talking Head Club in Baltimore on Thursday and at Velvet Lounge in Washington on Friday.

In an interview with *The Diamondback*, guitarist Djin Aquarian said the 2007 tour and forthcoming dates were really the first proper live shows the band had ever played.

"We were so busy creating the Family energy, so to speak, and taking care of all the needs of the restaurant and the children and the Family, we didn't have a lot of time to go out and do the things we used to do," Aquarian said.

As a teenager in Chicago, Aquarian more or less paid his dues as a professional musician before joining the Source Family in Hollywood. He recorded sessions at the legendary Chess Records and shared concert bills with the likes of Howlin' Wolf.

Needless to say, Ya Ho Wha 13 and life in the Family was a change of pace.

"Back then, we were in our 20s and we had no frame of reference for what happened to us," Aquarian said. "We just sort of joined in, joined up with the Family and surrendered our mortal egos."

His regular bandmates Sunflower and Octavius Aquarian (all Family members share the last name), were also professional musicians, so it took some adjusting to Father Yod's free-flowing musical direction.

Aquarian cannot remember the exact point where he gave in to Father Yod's "spontaneous energy," but it changed his musical approach from thereon.

"He was like the conductor," Aquarian said of Father Yod. "He usually had a point that he was making in the music, whether we knew it or not. We were pretty much just following his lead. A lot of his technique was very childlike. And that brought in a lot of the innocence and magical spirit that we had in the old days."

Although Aquarian admitted Sonic Portation occurred more out of a "conscious volition," than the albums recorded at the wee hours in the Family mansion, there still seems to be some guiding Ya Ho Wha magic behind the whole thing.

A chance introduction with recording producer/engineer Peter Lyman led to Lyman's donating his services and studio for two days, during which Ya Ho Wha 13 recorded the album.

"It all just came together just from people feeling connected to us and having a good feeling about us," Aquarian said.

Without much left of the original Family infrastructure, Aquarian spoke of Ya Ho Wa 13 as "really carrying the torch of family and brotherhood" to deliver Father Yod's message. It's what Aquarian believes Father Yod would have wanted.

"I can't say that for sure, of course," Aquarian said. "But you know, he did create this, he loved playing with the band and he probably would be playing with us now. He wouldn't miss a chance to get in front of a bunch of people who loved them and fill their ears with wisdom teachings.

"That's what he did."

Ya Ho Wa 13 will play Thursday at the Talking Head Club in Baltimore. Doors open at 8 p.m. and tickets are \$10 in advance and \$12 at the door. The band will also play Friday at Velvet Lounge in Washington. Doors open at 9 p.m. and tickets are \$10.

zherrm@gmail.com

Page 1 of 1

## Article Tools

### Share:

- [Facebook](#)
- [Blogger](#)
- [del.icio.us](#)
- [digg](#)
- [newsvine](#)

### Subscribe:

- [My Yahoo!](#)
- [Google](#)

Submit a [letter to the editor](#) or post a comment below.