



## **YAHOWA 13**

by Sarah Godlin

In the year 1969, at 1831 Sunset Boulevard in Hollywood, there was a vegetarian restaurant. Out on the patio were robed, long haired men and women all eating food that was meant to “align the currents” of the eater. Frank Zappa and John Lennon ate there. The eatery was called The Source and it very well might have been the first Health Food Restaurant ever.

Out of this restaurant sprang a family made up of employees, friends, and the owner Jim Baker who eventually came to be known first Father Yod, then later YaHoWha. Together, based around the spiritual teachings of Father Yod, the followers became known as the Source Family and lived together communally in a mansion in the Hollywood Hills wearing robes and exploring meditation. Father Yod was a charismatic and interesting patriarch to the Family taking 14 “spiritual wives” and teaching his children the new commandments for the Age of Aquarius. The commandments mostly revolved around vibrations and what to do with them once you have found them. He also fronted a psychedelic band called YaHoWa 13. Many of the family members were musicians and fit well into the ever changing group. The band was quite prolific.

“They must have put out something like 70 albums,” said Isis Aquarius, the Family’s historian and one of Father Yod’s 14 wives. “13 of the albums were published and survived and they are re releasing a few. We are very excited about that.”

The group was experimental and unplanned. Nothing was written and there were no songs that could be repeated. The music moved from one wavelength to another and was more about the vibration than the chorus.

Their published records became psychedelic cult classics well into the ‘90s and after a book about the family sparked interest in their music again, three of the main members of the group are resurrecting the music and bringing it back together. Octavius, who plays a number of interesting percussion instruments including Tibetan bowls, Sunflower, who sews the music together with rhythmic bass and Djin who plays different styles of guitar have reanimated the group and are touring together. The group is missing their front man Father Yod because he left his earthly body behind after a crash landing while hang gliding in Hawaii in 1975.

“Back then we would begin spontaneously and our teacher (Father Yod) would join in with the kettle drum,” said Octavius. “We are still spontaneous and we play what we feel. Music is a process. It’s about orchestral listening value. Sound is a mechanism.”  
When told that Humboldt County is a place that might be receptive to the style of music that YaHoWa plays he responded with; “So I hear.”

The Source Family was recently a feature on National Public Radio. A reporter followed Aquarius around for 15 days collecting sound bites from members of the Family. An audio slide show about the Family can be viewed on NPR.org by searching The Source Family.

“We were kind of pioneers to a lot of stuff that is happening now,” said Aquarius. “We did home schooling and believed in natural child birth. The music was just one part of us. The family had many threads that completed the tapestry.”

The musical thread had not played together in 30 years. When the book Aquarian wrote called "The Source, the Untold Story of Father Yod, YaHoWha 13 and the Source Family" was released the musicians reconvened in Los Angeles for the book signing. There they recorded their latest album, "Sonic Portation." It is in the same vein as their '70s recordings but a little more modern. "We've had calls to wear our robes but we just don't feel like it," said Octavius. "We're all pretty normal with the exception of our guitar player, he is pretty wild."

You are invited to listen and dance in any way that moves you on Wednesday, Dec.17 at Humboldt Brewery in Arcata. The show begins at 10:30. It is \$10 at the door to experience the pioneers of psychedelic rock.