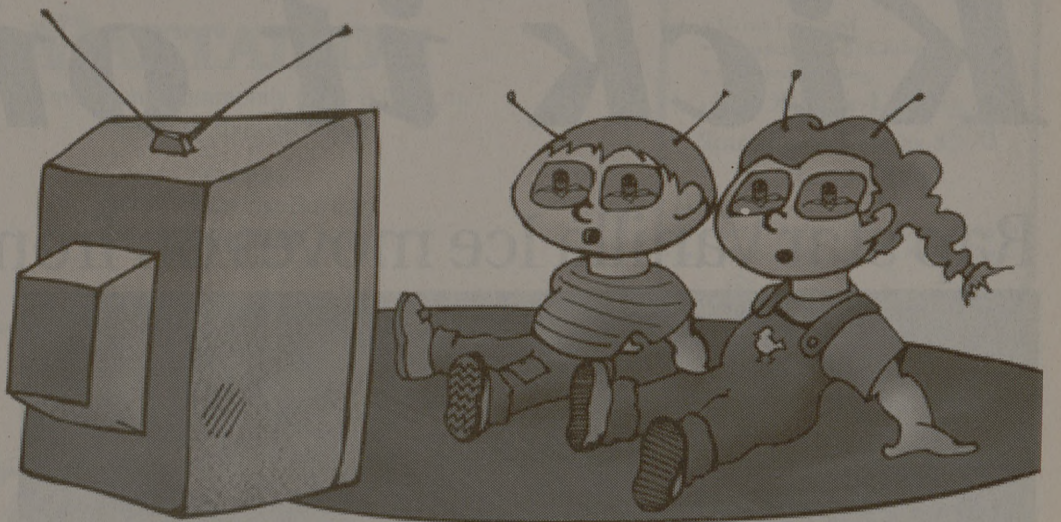


Friday • November 21, 1997

Cartooned in or turned off ??



Interview with cartoon legend Space Ghost shows there is more to the hero than a black mask, a monkey sidekick and a hit talk show on the Cartoon Network

By CHRIS MARTIN
Staff writer

If the musical refrain of a song like "Don't Send in the Clowns" or "Minkey Boodle" suddenly fills the air, look up up into the sky, because Space Ghost might be near.

"Space Ghost and Dino Boy," a Hanna-Barbera cartoon about a bulky black-hooded comic-book superhero, made its debut on American television in 1966. After swinging through the '60s and defeating a myriad of evil villains from outer space, Space Ghost took the next two decades off.

In that time, according to the Cartoon Network, Space Ghost discovered Earth's "talk show wars" and, with a burning desire to become a "player," pitched his own talk show to the channel.

The Cartoon Network bought the idea, and in 1994 "Space Ghost Coast to Coast" became the latest foray into the late-night talk show scene. The show is a simultaneous blend of brilliance and awkwardness, and has hastily become the hip hangout for celebrity guest stars ranging from Michael Stipe to Fran Drescher to Alice Cooper.

Space Ghost's co-stars include Zorak, a giant, locust and former arch-enemy who now heads up the house band. Also on hand is slow-witted former space pirate Brak.

The comedic musical interludes by Space Ghost, Zorak and Brak sprinkled throughout the show are now available for Earth citizens in a convenient compact-disc collection called *Space Ghost's Musical Bar-B-Que*, from Rhino Records. Space Ghost has released two previous albums in limited edition through the Cartoon Network.

The new CD features 37 tracks of songs and comedic vignettes from the show, such as "I

Love Beans," "Smells Like Cartoon Planet" and "I Love You, Baby."

To promote the release, Space Ghost and Brak hosted a conference call for college newspapers to field questions about the album and themselves.

Question: Howdy, Space Ghost.

Space Ghost: Greetings, American young people!

Q: How are you?

SG: I've never been better. I'm living a dream. I feel like a hundred dollars.

"No, I'm plain as chipped beef. I am Mr. Humble. A lot of people can take the kind of success we've had on *Musical Bar-B-Que* and just lost their minds. We've sold over 370 copies and I'm humble as dirt."

SPACE GHOST

ON THE SUCCESS OF HIS NEW ALBUM

Q: Since the success of your debut album, have you turned into a diva or are you still flat on the ground?

SG: No, I'm plain as chipped beef. I am Mr. Humble. A lot of people can take the kind of success we've had on *Musical Bar-B-Que* and just lose their minds. We've sold over 370 copies, and I'm still humble as dirt.

Q: And why—

SG: Never begin a sentence with "and." I must teach you kids. Good heavens.

Q: Why did you feel the need to put out another album?

SG: Brak, Zorak and I are, of course, very musical. It's just one of those natural things. We get in the studio, we sing, we dance, we set fire in our pants. And the music just happens.

Q: While you were recording *Musical Bar-B-Que*, who were your greatest musical inspirations?

SG: Well, I don't want to gross anybody out, but Zorak, Brak and I got naked, turned on the black light, sat in a room and we got down to our roots. We started talking about Hendrix, listening to Morrison and Charlie Parker. We were boiling apple cider in the kitchen — that'll make you nutty. So we sat naked, we had our apple cider, and we got in touch with that whole '60s experience.

Q: Do you feel like you are competing with current performing artists like Jewel?

SG: No, I really don't. Entertainment is a giant palette of many different colors and flavors. I'm the yellow ocher in the entertainment spectrum. There's room for everybody.

Q: *Space Ghost*, who are you a ghost of?

SG: I was Tad Ghostal, originally. I fell into a Hormel meat grinder during a tour. I wanted to see how they made the chili. They were busy throwing a goat in at the time. I leaned over to see if it would totally grind up the horns, lost my footing and the rest is history.

Q: So do you or Zorak have anything to do with the mysterious crop circles?

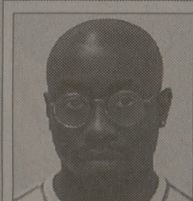
SG: Yes, as a matter of fact. What you do is eat pimento loaf and go stand in the middle of a field. In the middle of the night, if you wait long enough and you eat enough pimento loaf, a miracle happens. And thus are born the crop circles.

Q: Your past two pets from the show are now dead. Do you plan on having any more pets?

PLEASE SEE GHOST ON PAGE 5.

The resurrection of shows like 'Knight Rider,' 'Fame' begs the question: 'Is it all worth it?'

Pinwheel, pinwheel, memories around ... Look at my pinwheel and see a mute clown ... Pinwheel, pinwheel, where have you been? ... Good question.



JAMES FRANCIS
opinion editor

As Paula Cole continues to wonder where all the cowboys have gone, our generation should investigate the disappearance of quality television shows from our childhoods, namely the cartoons we grew up watching.

Scooby Doo has long since been replaced by the likes of Two Angry Beavers and cheesy Fluke films. So where have all the pot-smokers of the Mystery Machine gone?

Luckily, this is just one of many cartoons and children's programs that has survived the ridicule of remake-mania (although, I hear there is talk of a Scooby Doo movie with Jim Carrey as Shaggy).

It never seems to fail that some television executive gets it into his or her head to bring back oldies in an attempt to recapture the nostalgia Generation-X members harbored as kids.

From "Knight Rider" came "Knight Rider 2000." The classic film *Conan the*

Barbarian has become a syndicated series filled with extras from "Baywatch."

But the ultimate display of television wrongdoing has finally reared its ugly head. No longer will the musical theme of "Fame ... I'm gonna live forever; I'm gonna learn how to fly, high ..." be one of thousands of tunes we pass on to our children.

Now the song will sing, "Fame ... I'm gonna toke forever; I'm gonna learn how to fly, high on crack-cocaine." And we owe this all to the makers of "Fame L.A.," adding this updated series to a list of unnecessary television remakes.

The time period from the '70s to mid-'80s held a vast array of entertaining programs for children. From "Inspector Gadget" to "Thundercats," these animated shows were our passion, our diversions from the evil plague of growing up. Forget football — the shows were our great American pastime.

But when a certain power-hungry industry makes an attempt to transform the good 'ol days into a more modern, nineties depiction, the essence of childhood memories is lost.

And what do we get in return? Simon, Chalkworld's longtime hero, has switched over to using penlights on his IBM supercomputer. "You guys need a new basketball goal because the last one you had got erased by someone standing too close to it?"

PLEASE SEE FRANCIS ON PAGE 4.

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