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VISITING ACT | Father Knows Best **Oddities from the Trachtenburg paterfamilias**

BY SHAWNTÉ SALABERT



The Trachtenburgs are more than just your typical rock 'n' roll family

Jason Trachtenburg is a bit of a spaz, a musical nutty professor running on all cylinders, plus an extra two or three thrown in for good measure. He floats somewhere between mad genius and science-fair dork, inventive and zany, an unlikely counterculture icon for the modern age.

Papa Trachtenburg's band, Trachtenburg Family Slideshow Players, play a bit like a warped Partridge Family. Tina Piña (Mama) Trachtenburg is the overzealous projectionist and stylist, partial to gold lamé and dual ponytails. Prepubescent Rachel (Daughter) Trachtenburg is the drummer and crowd-pleaser with a wit to rival her father's. And Papa (on guitar, vocals, and histrionics) provides not only the politically-provoking lyrics, but also the nonsequiturs and nervous twitches.

The family likes to poke around estate sales and such, and on one fine day, they discovered a gem in a discarded slide collection. Already a notable player in NYC's anti-folk circuit, Papa T started penning slightly subversive lyrics to sing alongside the Trachtenburgs' yard sale finds, heavy on '80s corporate training videos and forgotten holiday road trip nostalgia, sprinkled with anti-government rhetoric.

JT is a rare specimen, and whether on stage throwing a 10-minute hissy fit or on the phone talking about vegetarianism and cellphone radiation, it's hard to tell where the line is drawn between performer and neurotic basketcase — if there is even a line at all.

Jason Trachtenburg On...

Anagrams and Old Guys:

"Do you know Baby Gramps? [Yells something at a family member] Oh! Palindromes! Like 'Ronald Wilson Reagan' – 'Insane Anglo Warlord.' Okay, so anyway, on your own time, Google Baby Gramps. He's this 65-year old folk/blues legend. We just toured with him for a couple of weeks."

Selling no-brainer homemade crafts at shows:

"For people who keep burning themselves, it's time to get a potholder! We always make bookmarks – if you keep reading the same page over and over, folks, it's time for a bookmark!"

Coming back to Charleston ... on Ice:

"We can talk in the article specifically about the fact that Charlottesville ... Charlottesville, right? [No, Charleston] Oh. You know what else I can't get straight is stage left and stage right. But Charleston, S.C. is a progressive, very artistically open-minded town. We did this Piccolo Fellatio – what's it called? – to very positive response and feedback, and this show is going to be different. Why? It's our holiday presentation! The Trachtenburg Family Slideshow Players on Ice!"

The '80s:

"When we first lived in NY in the late '80s, me and Tina were a lot younger, obviously. If we could turn back time, we would be wearing tight thong pants with our butts exposed. That's a Cher joke."

The differences between Bono and Christ:

"Dylan's like the closest thing we have to a Shakespeare or a Christ ... well, maybe just a Shakespeare. Like, Bono thinks he's Christ, he really does. Look, Christ didn't wear sunglasses. Christ didn't use a digital delay pedal and nauseam." — *Shawnté Salabert*

The Trachtenburg Family