

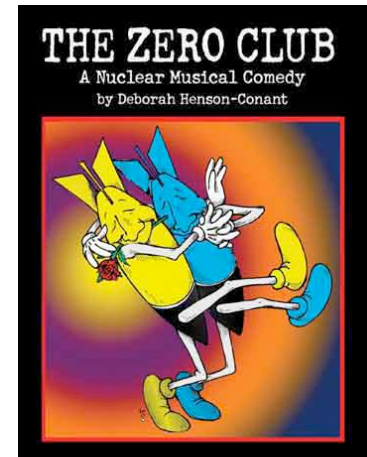
## The Zero Club - A Nuclear Musical Comedy

Book, Lyrics & Music by Deborah Henson-Conant

"When then unthinkable happens, your best defense is a wicked sense of humor." Zero Club slogan

**A troupe of anti-nuclear activists uses music, comedy and intrigue to battle a nuclear arms entrepreneur – and one ordinary woman is caught in the crossfire.**

"If we weren't serious, we wouldn't be laughing." Zero Club Motto



### Summary

"The Zero Club" is celebrated composer/playwright Deborah Henson-Conant's biting satirical and unconventionally moving, award-winning musical about a troupe of nuclear war activists. Based on a real club started in the late '70's in NYC, the original Zero Club used guerilla theatre to explore fears of nuclear annihilation and poke holes in political rhetoric. Now, in 2007, the story of a motley group committed to battling their worst nightmares through the use of humor is more pertinent than ever. "Zero Club" is the tale of an ordinary girl who infiltrates the Zero Club and becomes caught in a web of personal ties and secret fears. It's packed with music, comedy, pathos and "Megatons of Fun."

### Synopsis

In the late '70's an eclectic group of activists has banded together in NYC to perform anti-nuclear guerilla theatre led by colorful former TV-star, Octavia Valentine. The club's goal is to "Combat Complacency with Confrontational Comedy" by staging dances (called "MX-ers,") cabarets and demonstrations -- using humor to fight the syndrome of mental avoidance known as "psychic numbing" -- as people struggle to ignore their growing fear of nuclear war.

"The Zero Club" Musical is the story of Molly, an ordinary girl, whose life is changed by the club. Molly's fiance, Ned, is a nuclear arms entrepreneur and her brother, Pete, is a staunch survivalist. Pete, has come to New York to beg Molly to escape with him to Sandbag, Idaho, the one safe place in the world. Her fiancé Ned is about to unveil the world's smallest nuclear warhead and has secretly built a luxury fallout shelter where he plans to take Molly -- with "pairs of all the best domestic pets" -- to wait out the inevitable holocaust and then repopulate the world.

Ned hears that The Zero Club is planning to demonstrate at his unveiling and sends Molly to infiltrate the club. When she does, Molly discovers the club's founder is her childhood hero, Octavia Valentine, former star of the "Space Girl" TV series. Octavia is committed to bringing nuclear dangers forefront in people's minds by singing, dancing and inviting everyone to have "Megatons of Fun" at a "party that's the greatest blast of all."

"The Zero Club" is about Molly's struggle to find a future she can live in, torn between the people she loves and the fear she's afraid to feel.

## Characters

- **Female** - 4    **Male** - 2    **Plus Chorus, some of whom with featured solos**
- **Octavia Valentine** – accomplished mature actress, strong occasionally operatic voice, moves well
- **Molly (Mo) Wilson** – accomplished actress, strong singing voice
- **Edward (Ned) Sneedly** – accomplished actor, strong singing voice
- **Shiela Leeburt** – accomplished actress, strong singing voice, moves well
- **Pete Wilson** – strong actor, character singing voice
- **Adele** – character actress, strong singing voice, moves well
- **Zeros** – chorus of various ages/genders – all with strong singing voices and the ability to move (but not necessarily dancers). In the various Zero Club events, Zeros have small solos and ensemble features.

## Musical Numbers

### Act I

**Join the Club / Leave Me Out** – Zeros & Molly

**Megatons of Fun** – Octavia & Zeros

**Sandbag Idaho** – Pete

**Megatons of Fun Reprise** – Zeros

**Pentagon Dance** – Octavia & Zeros

**Mad Sisters** – Sheila, Adele & Zeros

**Molly & Ned's Paradise** – Molly & Ned

**Ned's Soliloquy** – Ned

**Absolute Now** – Octavia & Molly

**Freeze a Little** – Octavia & Molly

**Something's Gotta Mean Something** – Molly

**Missile Medley**

**Bombshells** – Sheila, Adele & Zeros

**Meet Mirv** – Solo Zero Feature

**Carmen Mirvanda** – Adele & Zeros

**Cruisin' Little Cruise Missile** – Solo Zero Feature

**I Am A Ballistic Missile** – Solo Zero Feature

**Nuclear Family / Strip My Defenses** – Octavia

**Tell Me Your Dreams of Apocalypse, Darling** – Octavia, Ned & Zeros

### Act II

**Motorola TV** – Pete, Sheila & Zeros

**Something's Gotta Mean Something Reprise** – Molly

**Who Will Mourn Me** – Sheila

**Something's Gotta Mean Something Reprise** – Molly & Octavia

**Tell Me Your Nightmares & Ned's Paradise** – Ned, Octavia & Zeros

**When the End Comes** – Molly

**Requiem** – Octavia

**Absolute Now Reprise** – Octavia, Molly, Pete, Sheila, Adele & Zeros

## Scenes and Settings

2 acts, 17 scenes, 1 stage with various levels for the different locations

### Act I

- Scene 1: Bus Stop** in Greenwich Village, NYC , a warm summer afternoon. Sheila and other Zeros wait for the bus and pass out leaflets; Molly waits for her brother, Pete
- Scene 2: Zero Club**, a few miles away in the Village, same time. Octavia and Zeros prepare for that evening's MX-er.
- Scene 3: Bus Stop**, same time. The bus comes.
- Scene 4: Chez La Deluge**, a trendy Greenwich Village restaurant, a few minutes later. Molly, Pete and Ned have lunch.
- Scene 5: Zero Club** – at the MX-er Party, later that evening. Pete & Molly visit the Zero Club where Sheila, Adele, Octavia and other Zeros rehearse.
- Scene 6: Ned's Office**, Financial District, after the MX-er. Ned comforts Molly.
- Scene 7: Zero Club**, a few days later. Molly visits Octavia at the Zero Club.
- Scene 8: In the Park**, later that day. Molly and Pete talk about the future.
- Scene 9: Ned's Office / Phone Booth**, that evening. Molly convinces Ned to visit the Club.
- Scene 10: Zero Club**, later that evening. Pete, Ned & Molly visit the Club, with Ned in disguise. Octavia and the Zeros perform cabaret and Octavia convinces Ned to perform.

### Act II

- Scene 1: Molly's Apartment**, the next morning. Pete and Zeros watch TV.
- Scene 2: Outside the Zero Club**, early that evening. Pete and Sheila talk about death.
- Scene 3: Molly's apartment**, the same time. Molly dreams about Space Girl.
- Scene 4: Zero Club**, immediately afterward. Ned, Octavia & the Zeros sing.
- Scene 5: Zero Club**, immediately afterward. Molly surprises Ned, Octavia and the Zeros at the Club.
- Scene 6: Zero Club**, immediately afterward. Ned & Pete fight over Molly's future.
- Scene 7: Zero Club**, immediately afterward. Octavia leads the Zeros in, wearing shrouds and singing a Requiem.
- Scene 8: Zero Club**, immediately afterward. Ned, Pete, Octavia, Sheila, Adele, Molly and all the Zeros sing the Finale.

## Instrumentation

Piano, bass & drums – can also be played on piano alone

## Period & Costumes

Costumes are simple and not strongly evocative of a particular era.

## Choreography

Choreography can be minimal or extensive, depending on the company.

## Lighting & Special Effects

The set is bare-bones, lighting is important to convey mood and scene shifts.

## Discography

"When the End Comes" recorded on "Little Jazz Bird" (Meredith D'Ambrosio)