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The Residents - **Not Available** [Cryptic/MVD Audio - 2011]

Not Available is the 5th album released by the musical art collective, derange pop and genreal off the wall sonic collective know as The Residents, who have been mixing and blurring the lines between musical genres for the last near on forty years. This album original appeared back in 1978, but it's claimed it was recorded in 1974 just after the bands unhinged d but Meet The Residents.

Like much of The Residents output musical or otherwise Not Available is very distinctive, strange and difficult to describe/analyze. but I'll give it a go, the album is sort of a bizarre meeting of: wonky surreal musical music, early Electronica, wonky jazz work-outs, layers funny & strange voices/ signing, rudimental and wavering yet felt piano textures, and genreal very weird & individualistic sound making.



This reissue finds the album given a fresh remix which seems to uncover quite a lot of fresh sonic detail I'd not noticed before in past edition; like new layers of vocal textures, electronic textures or wonky musical elements. But at times I do wonder if the band have added in extra elements to the mix for this new edition, though none of it sounds glaring and on the whole it enhances the strange & unequal sonic trip that is Not Available. The other thing that's different about this edition is that seven minutes that were cut from the original album are added back in, apparently the seven minutes are added onto parts One, Three and Four (Edwina, Ship's a Going Down, and Never Known Questions), but to my ears the only notable added point is the end "Ship's a'Going Down" when the track drops into this great early synth throb n bob like groove that's cut by wondering and wavering rudimentary electric guitar element.

Package wise the album is interesting through a little ltd compared with say the wonderful Mute reissues that were put out of some year back which featured thick booklets & great book like lay-out. This reissue just features a four page inlay which has a brief write-up about the album on one page & rare/ crazy rehearsal pictures of various characters from the albums plot, which suggest the album was once thought of been made into stage show which really makes the mind boggle!

There are few if any records that are as odd or strange as Not Available, even in The Resident own crazed discography. And this new reissue makes it seem all the more strange, unhinged and wonderful. of interest to both long term Rez heads & newbie's to the crazed world of this truly one of a kind American collective who are still puzzling and entertaining people near on forty years after they started!

KUDOS:

Roger Batty

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