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#### REVIEWS: THE RESIDENTS - [ALBUM]



**ARTIST:** The Residents - [Album]

**DATE:** 10-06-08

**REVIEW BY:** Bill Adams

**ALBUM:** The Bunny Boy

**LABEL:** Santa Dog

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Now Playing: 'I Killed Him' from *The Bunny Boy*

Since first appearing in 1974, The Residents have followed a lonely and insular path through the underground fraught with creative dead ends and lengthy, spiraling cul-de-sacs. Initially, it was all very interesting and compellingly strange but, as time has worn on (read: for the last twenty-seven years) the band has gone from purveyors of gloriously odd and remarkable music to a group lost in a meandering musical labyrinth of its' own design. Since 1981, the band has trekked through kid's music (well, sort of – on *Diskomo*) wastelands, spectacularly unmistakable obscurantism (think that's an awkward mouthful? So was the unfinished *Mole Trilogy*), a sixteen-year proposed endeavor designed to pay homage to the band's heroes that has only partially materialized before apparently being abandoned, a sort-of history of American music series (the *Cube-E* series that included *Buckaroo Blues & Black Barry* and *The King And Eye*) and an endless stream of compilations and live documents. Just to illustrate that some of those musical inroads do lap over each other too, the band has even been known to go back and rework old material.

Eventually, on their rudderless course (to paraphrase Chinese philosophy), The Residents were bound to meet themselves on ground they had covered before and, finally, only thirty-four years after they started, they have done just that.

*The Bunny Boy* is without a doubt the best album that The Residents have released since *Duck Stab/Buster & Glen* in 1978. While in a lot of ways, the album is precisely what one could expect from a band that has often lost their way (they're still riding an indecipherable conceptual wave), this time the confusing nonsense that the band has always been guilty of doesn't hobble the proceedings; from the opening funerary pall of "Boxes Of Armageddon," The Residents unfurl a most comprehensible storyline about a man gone missing with the only clue to is whereabouts being a poorly shot DVD that was sent to the band's rehearsal space (for the whole story, scan the liner notes included with the album). According to the lore, *The Bunny Boy* was written and sequenced to coincide with images shown on the DVD and, judging by this audio, it's easy to make the assumption that the images are very disconcerting.; The Residents cram more clamor and dystopian effects than anyone has ever attempted before as well as a terrifying amount of surrealist delirium into these nineteen two-minute (give or take) blasts and, all along the way, listeners get shocked to attention by the overwhelming senses of apprehension and worry that dominate the record.

The low end and methodical pacing that drives each of these songs is the hook here; as the band plods its' way through "Rabbit Habit," "Butcher Shop," the title track, "Blood On The Bunny" and "I Killed Him," the ensuing menace is undeniable and despair is most definitely in the air. As the band winds its' way through the story, it's evident that the endpoint is unclear and that's not unusual for a Residents record but this time the band has managed to turn what has always been regarded as a negative for the band into a positive by making sure that the story is upfront and excuses the confusing nature of the music. It's apparent that the band is trying to recreate a series of event as only they are aware of them, but the further the record goes (down the rabbit hole maybe?) it becomes clear that there is no end in sight because none is present; as the liners explain, the mystery of the missing man hasn't been solved and so the record spirals off into the abyss by "Patmos" and "The Black Behind."

On one hand, both the characters and the band's submergence into oblivion at the end of the album

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