

The Residents - Coochie Brake

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The Residents - Coochie Brake [MVD Audio/ Ralph Records/ Cryptic Corp - 2012]

The Residents have spent most of their forty years existence releasing albums that break/ twist the rules-"Coochie Brake" sees them once more pulling the rug from under the listener, with one of the biggest twists they've done in some years. The Resident's normal & fairly constant singer(Mr Skull or Randy, as he now likes to be known) is replaced here by a Spanish singer called Carlos, who mumbles, whispers & sometimes sings in Spanish through-out the whole album.

I'll have to admit on my first play through I was rather shocked, and more than a little unsure about this new change in vocalist, and well also takeb a back that the whole album was sang/ whispered in Spanish. But over the next few more plays, and taking in the concept of the

album, this does make perfect (through little crazed) sense. You see Coochie Brake is apparently the name of a large swamp in the middle of Louisiana, where the teenage Resident's spent much of their time. The swamp is supposable meant to hold buried Spanish gold, and there are all manner of other legends connected to the place too.

So this new album is somewhat of a sonic tribute to their memoires of the place, and it's connected legends. The collective musically offer up here a quirky, yet at times creepy mixture of: slowed cinematic dark psychedelic rock scaping, murky 'n' swamp sound ebbed ambience, dark Latin rock & blues tinged elements, off-kilter electronica, slightly unwell Latin rhythms, drugged out carnival vibes, ethnic wound down jazziness, and even odd steps towards off-kilter 'n' drowsy pop-ness like the end of the albums first track "Theatre Of Shadows", when they drive head first into tripped-out vocoder drifts & buoyant yet hash hazed jaunting musical backing. As already mentioned all but a few of the albums vocals are sung in Spanish, and Carlos' voice goes from creepy whispers, to mecphone fed rants, onto rolling & theatrical, to puffed up and almost rap like, to jaunting & punchy singing.

So "Coochie Brake" is another rewarding & quirky ride from the Residents, with the added quirk of all the album been sung in Spanish. One small criticism one could level at this release is, unless you understand Spanish, your missing out on one big part of the albums concept i.e. the lyrics...so it would have maybe nice to have the lyrics translated & printed up in the albums inlay, but I guess the whole thing does add another extra layer of mystery to the album.



Roger Batty

