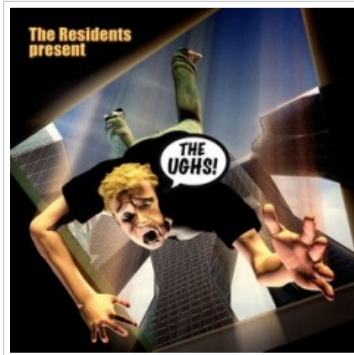




TUESDAY, JANUARY 24, 2012

The Residents - "present THE UGHS!" CD Review (MVD Audio)



To call The Residents “prolific” would be an understatement as the band seems to release new and archival releases almost monthly. If you follow the band closely though, there are a number of themes that reemerge across the years and most of the band’s recent projects first surfaced on 2009’s *Ten Little Piggies* compilation (see [previous review](#)). The Residents will be releasing a new CD next month, *Coochie Brake*, which is the second release under “THE UGHS” concept so I thought this would be a good time to go back and review *THE UGHS!* disc (originally released in Nov. ‘09).

THE UGHS! is a return to the minimalist avant-garde music of the band’s *Eskimo* era. The band described the concept behind

THE UGHS! as “[w]hen The Residents begin work on their 2007 opus to insanity, *The Voice of Midnight*, the group felt the need to shake things up, consequently they created an alter ego through which they could act out new roles. Proudly, The Residents christened this conceptual alter ego as THE UGHS! The group then fashioned “written music” from the raw, impulsive ideas created by The UGHS!, building the musical structure of *The Voice of Midnight* on these pieces. Two years later these original UGHS! recordings were rediscovered; freed from its previous role supporting *The Voice of Midnight*’s narrative, the music suddenly sounded as fresh as when it was first recorded. The time had come to resurrect THE UGHS!”

THE UGHS! is a primal, percussive-based album that, aside for some inarticulate grunting and chanting, is all instrumental. The band uses this rhythmic foundation as a base to which they add a variety of instruments which twist and turn the music in different and often unexpected directions. The disc starts with “The Ughs”, which mixes industrial percussion with a prominent jew’s harp and xylophone and jumps from there into the free-form freak-out of “The Dancing Duck”. This later track builds up a wall of organic and industrial sounds over which soft woodwinds and crazed duck quacking are layered. On different numbers on the disc, the band works in assorted organic and electronic percussion, reeds and strings along with ambient synths. The music ranges from the Middle-Eastern note-bending tribal stomp of “Floating Down the Nile” to the movie soundtrack gone astray (“Squeaky Wheel”) to the free form jazz of “The Horns of Haynesville” to the King Crimson sounding “In the Dark”.

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