MARCH 15 2017 #12



BEWARE THE EYES OF MARCH

It was three years coming but Charles Bobuck's music for The Ghost of Hope is finally arriving. At least some of it. What does CB think about it after all this time? Well, I suggest we ask him.





Will Rothers had summoned me and Charlie to meet him at Saint Sebastian's this morning. He had this idea a few days ago that the three of us should sit around and chat about the new Residents' album, considering it is the last time Bobuck is likely to write for and play on a project by the orbed four.

You may wonder why Saint Sebastian.

Will wanted an environment that was neutral. Peter, the priest at the church, is a friend and suggested it. Unfortunately we are not using the spooky part of the church. Peter has put us in a drab classroom where they torture children learning catechism. The Virgin Mary watches over us to keep everything in line.

While I thought it was an interesting approach to discussing the album, Charlie had misgivings. He seemed to be a bit uncomfortable.

Ultimately he joined us and we three sipped coffee made by Peter the Priest. Will brought some stale Girl Scout cookies that no one ate.

WR = Will Rothers
HF = Hardy Fox
CB = Charles Bobuck

- Hardy

The Residents' THE GHOST OF HOPE

WR: I think the best place to start is the title, **The Ghost of Hope**. That could be merely a poetic phrase or it could hold deeper symbolic meaning.

HF: Poetic or not, those are the chosen words. "Hope" implies a positive outlook on uncertainty. *Ghost of Hope* could be pointing to "dead hope" or a "lingering hint of hope." That depends on the definition of the word, *ghosts*. A Patrick Swayze ghost is different from *Ringu*.

CB: Actually "Hope" could be a proper name. A woman, a town or name of a train, we don't know.

HF: Even so, it is the name of the album and chosen for intentional reasons. It has some significance even if an unconscious one.

CB: I wondered how long it would take for Freud to show up.

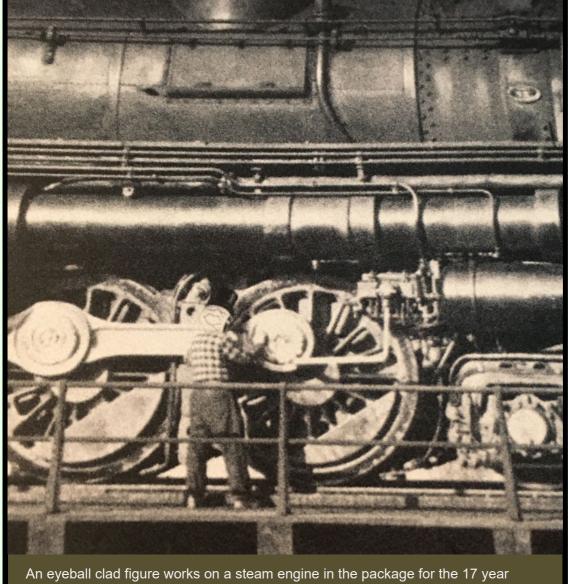
HF: I also thought the title printed on the cover was in surprisingly large type. It consumes almost a third of the cover. That is big type so the words have to be important, even "shouted" with capital letters.

WR: The cover image is actually two images. In the background are two trains about to crash. That image is overlaid with a "sticker" of an 1997s stock Residents image. The train photo is sepia and the Resident is gray-scale. And there is only one person, not a group as one might expect, historically. Could it be that the two trains about to crash are the Randy train and the Charles train, and The Resident floating above it is the "ghost" of The Residents.

CB: This is why I had misgivings about coming today. That is a terrible suggestion and now it will go into print. There is no "crashing" with Randy and me. He is my bro'. The Residents figure is probably just for marketing, not even intended to be a ghost. I think your explanation is totally off track. Get it? Off track?

HF: He's right, there is no basis for that thought, and anyway a steam locomotive was used similarly in **Kettles of Fish on the Outskirts of Town**. A man wearing an eyeball is working on a train. Locomotives are nothing new. Wait.... I got it. "Loco" + "Motives." *Crazy reasons*! I figured it out, we can all go home now.





old Kettles of Fish on the Outskirts of Town.

WR: Eyeball imagery has not been the focus of covers recently. **Wormwood** made the last bold statement on a cover in 1998-99.

HF: We (Cryptic) were bouncing back after the fallout of the CR-ROM game idea meltdown in 1998. We were pushing the eyeball image again. I suspect that this is a return to the idea of pushing that image for marketing.

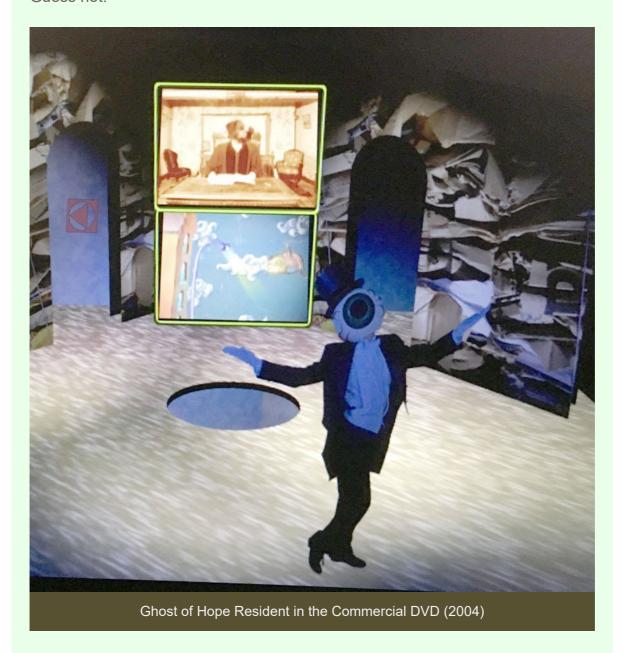
WR: I think it is strange that it is done with the stock photos from 1997. This same image was used in the Commercial DVD, probably other places too.

CB: I have to say that confused me too. Knowing the powerhouse of creative people Cryptic could put onto the job. The design could be anything, even a modernization of this same image. I assume it is INTENTIONAL, using an idea from 2000 combined with one from 1997 to highlight the eyeball masks from 1979. Maybe it is to say that nothing has changed. Though the Residents concept has been in constant evolution since the beginning.

WR: Now that **Cherry Red Records** owns a big part of The Residents, could they be insisting on the return of the eyeball?

HF: I don't know, it seems unlikely. We have not seen the final version either. Resi's seem really big on collector product these days. Maybe this is the plainer "Joe public" version and the fatter wallets can get something fancier.

WR: Any of you familiar with the band, **Hope in Ghosts**? **Ted Flynn**'s band? Just throwing it out there to see if anyone knew what I was talking about. Guess not.



WR: How about the music? How much is it a Charles Bobuck album?

CB: Not very much, actually. There are bits and pieces that I remember having written scattered through it. My playing is minimal. The production is not mine at all. I think it is nicely done, professional. I like the album.

HF: But you were saying that they lifted a huge section from **What Was Left of Grandpa**.

CB: That is true. It was three years ago. I was writing both albums at the same time. The Residents lifted a chunk of "Israel" from *What Was Left of Grandpa*. That was a bit jarring when I first heard it. Probably some mix up.

WR: I will insert a comparison here.

Comparison of Bobuck and Residents recordings

What Was Left of Grandpa (2015) - Charles Bobuck

The Ghost of Hope (2017) - The Residents

WR: Are we going to discuss the music?

CB: I think it is a waste of time to talk about music. People should listen to it without hearing our prejudices. I feel comfortable saying that it is dark. That it is well produced and sounds most like it is old "The Residents" when my writing is in the foreground. I like that The Residents are not trying to emulate the old sound and are moving in new directions.

WR: This maybe off subject, but does "Randy" still exist?

CB: The character of "Randy" isn't on the album, that persona. I don't know about what is planned for live shows.

HF: I haven't heard the future plans. I saw a reference to the "Real" Residents. That could be a slam against the **Randy**, **Chuck and Bob** "cover band" Residents. That could mean Randy is gone as well as Chuck and Bob.

CB: I won't miss Chuck. I am amazed at how many people email me thinking my name is "Chuck." It's creepy.

HF: You did get called that by Randy at many Residents shows.

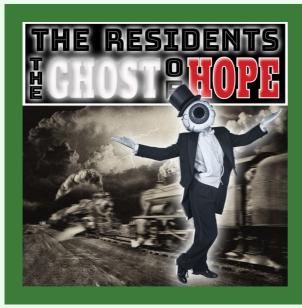
CB: That is true. I remember Paul Reubens talking about how people keep

calling him Pee Wee. (Paul Reubens played the character, **Pee Wee Herman** on TV.)

WR: Seems like we have wandered off subject. Why don't we give *Ghost of Hope* another spin. Maybe we can post some fan perspectives in a future newsletters.

(HF: CB said he had to go to the hardware store and left. Will and myself listened to the album again.)

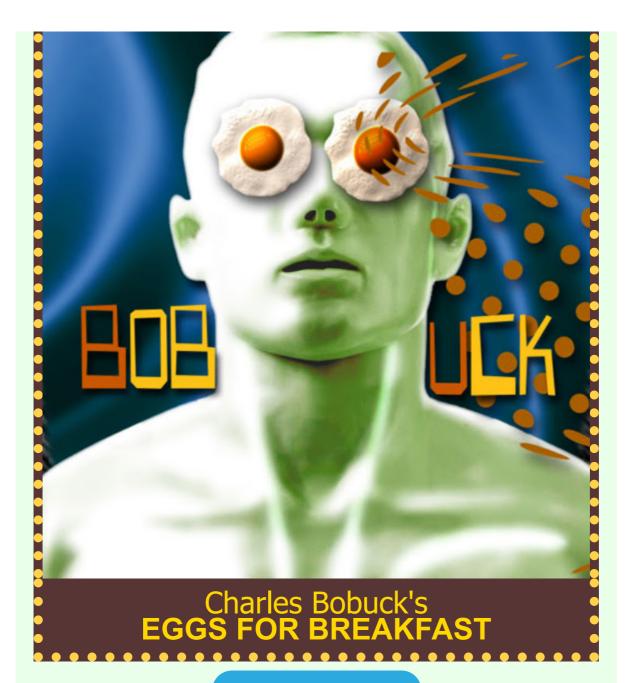
Note: I apologize for not publishing credits. We were only provided with MP3 files.



GHOST OF HOPE
will be released
March 24 by
Cherry Red Records
https://www.cherryred.co.uk/
product/the-ghost-of-hope/

"OMG... the perfect album!"

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Bobuck

The Ghost of Hope listening party....

I am not a big supporter of committee thinking. I don't like group decisions and maybe that is partly why I was hesitant to attend the church gathering today.

It is certainly inevitable that all of us still feel the pull from the gravitational force that is The Residents. But it seems irrelevant to me. I like the idea of newsletters, but it needs to grow up and not obsess over The Residents. Residents obsess over themselves just fine.

Though it could be that Hardy and Will are outside of *The Ghost of Hope* and I am inside. I am inside the compositions, inside the concept of The Residents, even if I have escaped the constraints of that world, it was my life, and it will always be a big part of me. It is like escaping a cult, there is always that pull.

Will's idea of gathering at the church is full of good intentions, but I had to leave. I said I had to go to the hardware store, which I did. Ants. All this rain is driving the ants into the house.

I walked down to the river as I often do when I feel the need to be alone. This is not my usual river. Swollen with constant rain, it is brown and angry. It is lapping at the edges of its containment, wanting to wash all us humans into its whirlpools. All that water trying to get to the ocean as quickly as it can. And why? What is so important about going to the ocean? What does it do once it gets there?

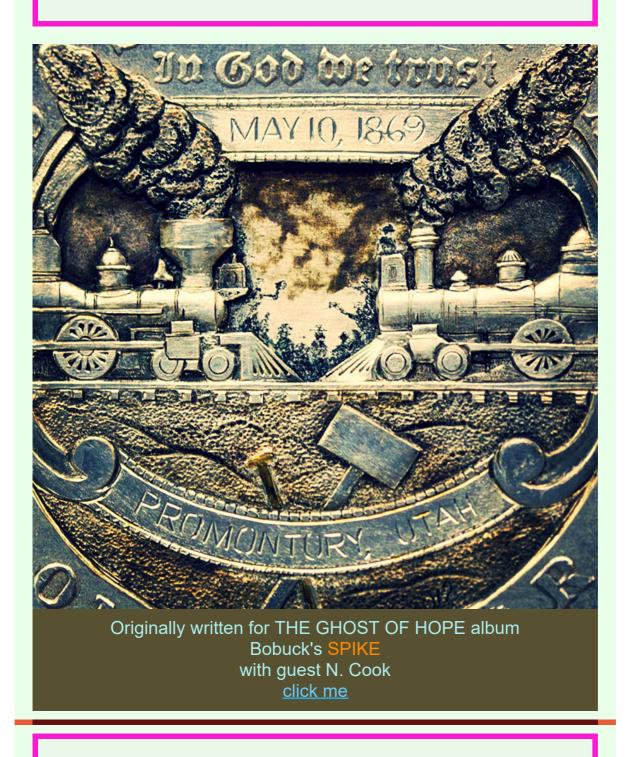
Were I still working with The Residents, I confess I would have reservations about *The Ghost of Hope* album. It is not my world view. Despite my writing for it, the way the music has been used is not what I would have done. That is not a complaint. It actually feels good to know that my absence has allowed a freshness to the project.

The *GOH* album is like an epic film. It is big and noisy. The stories form a wall of passionless dark despair. Lives casually lost, bodies tossed about and mangled. I listen like the way I look at a car wreck as I creep by, wanting to turn my eyes but unable to not search for some human in pain. It is like making an album based on Pan Am flight 103, blown up by terrorists over Lockerbie, Scotland in 1988, only romanticized with picnics and steam locomotives. I flew that Pan Am route over Scotland many times in 1988.

The Ghost of Hope is like this river I am sitting beside. Big, brown, threatening. I appreciate the river, I respect it's power, I understand its philosophical meaning in my life, but it is not the river I wish to swim. Not today.

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Bobuck



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ch. 1

The church was quiet again. Hardy and Will had finished listening to *The Ghost of Hope*, packed up the laptop and headed to the coffee house down the street. Charles, reciting some rehearsed excuse, had left an hour earlier. Father Peter was alone, walking in a church hallway designed to be as bland as possible. He fantasized making the hall into an art gallery, but he knew he never would.

Peter stopped by the room where the album listening had taken place. Picking up the dirty coffee cups, he thought how depressing a half cup of cold coffee was. He grabbed the bag of left-over girl scout cookies and bit into one, but spit it back into his hand. He wondered what to do with them. Ants had been a plague of Biblical proportions this year. The rains were driving them inside. Millions of ants.

Peter rinsed the cups in the men's room and took them to his office with plans to carry them home later to wash properly. His office was quiet. In fact the entire building seemed unusually quiet. He thought that maybe it only seemed that way because the guys were playing *The Ghost of Hope* so loudly.

Peter reflected for a moment over his youth and how he had been a huge Residents fan. *Duck Stab* was all he had listened to for months when he was 13. He only listened to a bit of the new album from the doorway as he passed. He might have listened longer if Charles had not left early. Hardy and Will were still in the strangers category to him, though he thought they seemed like they were okay. It was Charles that Peter had bonded with. That had started years ago when Peter revealed to Charles that he liked to wash people's feet, like in the Bible.

Having a confidant was important. He had been feeling conflicted. He kept finding himself at odds with the Pope and the President of the United States. Questioning one's church and ones country did not fit his sense of what was right. Peter knew his congregation was made up of what President Trump would consider "illegals." The entire valley was dependent upon undocumented workers to tend the vineyards. The local economy would collapse without them. Everyone was understandably scared so, sensibility, turned to the church to give them comfort. Peter told them not to worry, but lacked confidence that Trump cronies wouldn't come breaking down the doors of churches that try to offer sanctuary to the hard working people.

He saw too much similarities between the gold loving Trump and the gold

loving Pope, both out of touch with what an actual human has to deal with every day to get by. They didn't see the anguish that they caused looking down from their pretentious thrones.

Peter often thought he should give up representing God but knew that too many people depended on him. No one blamed him for what was going on at the White House. But still, he felt guilty and responsible.

That wasn't the only problem. Ironic though it might seem, Peter maybe had a ghost. At least the church maybe had a ghost, and it certainly seemed like it was not the Holy Ghost he so often talked about, or even the Ghost of Hope that The Residents liked to go on about. Perhaps this wasn't a ghost at all. Perhaps Peter the Priest was losing his mind.

Yesterday he first noticed the stone. He noticed it on the altar and assumed that someone had come in to pray and left it there because it had some personal significance. Out of respect for this imagined intent, he did not move it. Peter thought it rather pretty, the kind of black shiny stone one would see in a rock shop. He didn't think too much more about it.

Later that evening as Peter the Priest made a final pass through the nave before going home for the day, he noticed a man sitting in the front row. The man looked like a local. He was wearing a yellow rain suit, a look which had gotten to be a common sight as the rains continued to fall. The man did have an intensity about him that made Peter pause to wonder if he should leave him to his thoughts or stroll over to offer support for some issue he might be focused on. Peter knew that his job was to offer support, not to leave people alone, talking about issues was a big part of what a priest did. Part psychologist, part witch doctor.

Priests are taught to approach people in contemplation with a bit of flourish so as not to startle them. Slowly swinging into the mans visible range, Peter approached him, but there was no acknowledgment from the yellow suit. So Peter stopped about ten feet away. Priests are also taught to analyze people, their looks, gestures, speaking patterns. Peter instinctual thought, male, midthirties, eyes unfocused, possibly on drugs.

Then he realized the man was holding the stone from the altar. A quick glance back at the altar confirmed it was no longer there. Instead, there appeared to be a black flat shape that was undulating. Ants. Where the stone had been was now covered in ants. Long streams of ants went up the side of the altar and climbed on the candles and the crucifix.

Peter felt a little apprehension at getting any closer, the stone could be used as a weapon. Like many small poor towns, meth had gained a hold of some of its fringe inhabitants. A closer inspection revealed that he wore no shirt under the rain wear and he was barefoot. Peter thought; no shoes, no shirt, no service. Still the man had not acknowledged that anyone was in the room with him.

Peter spoke softly to him, "Good evening."

Shocked, the stranger turned to him with big eyes that were full of pain and fear. Dropping the stone he ran for the nearest door, but the door he chose was only to a small maintenance room for the organ bellows intake and led nowhere. Priests were also taught not to approach a cornered and potentially wounded animal, especially if it was human.

So Peter called for backup. The town has no police of its own so the call was to the county sheriff. It was not the first call the priest had made to the sheriff. The public doesn't realize the number of questionable characters that come to the church when troubled. Many churches locked their doors at night, but Peter still kept the nave open all the time even though it was not monitored. In the last ten years had had only had a small bit of vandalism and nothing stolen.

The sheriff's office said a deputy was on the way. Peter sat down in the front pew to wait. He noticed the stone laying on the floor nearby. Ants were already making their way to it. Peter knew not to touch anything. He heard that on crime shows all the time. Don't touch anything.

When the deputy arrived, Peter recognized him as an officer he had dealt with before when an angry drug addled teenager had blamed him for his father kicking him out of the house.

The situation was quickly explained.

The deputy neared the door and called to the man, saying he was a police officer and only wanted to talk. He loudly told the man that he was going to slowly open the door and that he should stay calm, he was not there to hurt him.

And with that the deputy placed his foot about six or eight inches in front of the door. If the guy tried to burst through the door the foot placement would prevent the door from opening wide enough to allow escape. The deputy opened the door all the while calmly giving reassuring support to whatever the man was going through.

"We all have bad days, but there are always solutions to problems."

No one charged out. So the officer peeked inside then swung open the door. The room was empty, except for an abandoned yellow rain suit. Peter realized that the suit was his own that he kept in the little room for emergencies. The space was the size of a walk-in closet and had no windows, there was no place to hide and no way to escape.

The officer turned to Peter and suggested that the guy must have slipped away before he had arrived. Peter agreed, since no other explanation was satisfying. The priest knew that he had sat waiting for the sheriff with a clear view of the door and the door had never opened.

The deputy chuckled, "Looks like you have ants like the rest of us." He pointed to a dark spot on the rug that was covered with small black ants. It was the spot where earlier, the stone had been dropped. The stone was gone as well.

Peter pondered momentarily whether he should risk sounding crazy before launching into the story from the beginning. The altar, the stone, the ants, the man, the yellow rain-suit... he told everything he could think of. The deputy listened calmly, and then added, "You have yourself a real mystery here." He gave Peter his direct number.

Peter felt no comfort from the sheriff's visit.

He wanted to hear all the explanations that an objective person would come up with so he texted Charlie Bobuck. At least that was what he told Charlie. Truthfully he wanted to be with another person.

Charles Bobuck showed up the next afternoon, clearly intrigued, with his clipboard ready to go.

He immediately launched into his list of explanations.

- "1. It is all a dream and you wake up screaming at any moment now." At that, both broke the tension with laughter.
- "2. You are making it up to get attention." Charles rolled up his eyes to look suspiciously at Peter.
- "I don't fit the profile for someone who needs a lot of attention," suggested Peter. But Charles reminded him that religious zealots WERE the profile. They

both laughed again.

- "3. This church is built on an old Indian burial ground." Peter smiled and suggested that asking him for help was not a great idea.
- "4. God is testing you." Peter shot him a questioning look. "That is something I hear Christians say when tragedy happens. But then again, I think it is only Protestants that say it."
- "5. You are losing your mind."

Peter thought about what proof he might offer. He took him to see the stain the rock left on the rug to prove it really happened. Charles looked at it and said, "That looks like blood to me." Peter was prepared to laugh again, but Charles was serious this time.

"And you have an ant problem," he drawled pointing to a ribbon of ants crossing the floor. The ribbon disappeared under the door leading to the small room containing the organ bellows.

Peter mumbled, "Oh shit."

Charles took one sniff of the foul odor and didn't hesitate, he did not place his foot 6 to 8 inches from the door to block a rain-suited man. He just opened the door. There on the floor was the stone covered with ants.

Charles looked at Peter and said, "I think I found your rock." Then he looked closer and nudged it with his finger. As ants scattered, he looked at Peter and announced, "Congratulations, your rock is a piece of liver."

Bobuck adjusted his glasses as he looked at the clipboard, "So I will now skip down my list of objective explanations to number 26. Number 26 explanation is that it is not a stone but a piece of liver. The rain-coat man probably killed someone and cut out his liver. Feeling remorse, he brought it to the church and placed it on the altar."

Peter the Priest asked, "How did he disappear?"

Charles confidently responded, "He didn't disappear at all. The guilty party is the deputy sheriff and he pulled a switch on you in the little bellows closet. He set you up knowing that a priest would be a good witness to throw off suspicion."

There was a silent pause.

Charles admitted, "Okay there are too many holes for that to be a plausible explanation."

Peter asked, "Was that really number 26 on your list?" Charles replied, "No, I only have 25 possibilities."

Peter plopped down onto the pew and said, "I better call the sheriff."

Charles said, "Wait just a minute. Let me make sure the liver is still there."

Peter yelled to him, "Take a picture with your phone and we will send it to the deputy."

Charlie stopped at the door of the room, and slowly whispered, "Peter, I think you better come see this."

---To Be Continued

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♦♦♦♦♦♦♦♦♦♦♦♦♦♦♦♦♦♦♦**LOCO PRESIDENT**

Donald J Trump



Q. Now that you have left The Cryptic Corporation, I suspect you have a lot of collectable things that might be going up for sale. Any chance for us collectors to score some unique items?

Not immediately, but possibly in time. I don't have children so it will be thrown away if I don't find a home for it all before I die. However, I do not have that as a priority at this time. Dying.

Q. I am feeling a need for a change. Is HACIENDA BRIDGE hiring, or maybe even offering apprentice positions? I would be willing to relocate to wherever you are? I'm a single male in my late 20s looking for direction. Not very talented but energetic.

Theoretically that would be great, but we don't actually have a company, we are a loose concept. Most of any money we make we give to charity. This operation created itself. I don't know what you would do if you were here.

You know how grass is greener on the other side of the fence. I don't think you would find this a great situation as a young guy. We are older people doing things that senior citizens define as fun.

- Q. In the early days...
- A. How was all this equipment (tape recorders, microphones, mixer, effects) acquired? That stuff cost a fortune relative to the average income back then.
- B. Were the brass sections created through overdubs or did you have a lot of people playing at once?
- C. Did The Residents ever have someone record something without them being able to hear the other track(s). Or were recordings sometimes made on separate tapes and then mixed together without regard to sync?
- D. How was the dog bark added to "Breath and Length" in a way that makes the barking in time with the music. Obviously today you could play the dog bark on a sampler.
- E. What makes the screeching sound in the middle of "Fire" (aka Santa Dog)?
- A. Much equipment was borrowed, loans were taken out for tape machines, instruments came from thrift stores or the closet of people who played in high school bands.
- B. Horn section were overdubs most of the time, it is called bouncing, which loses quality with each bounce.
- C. We were all about trying things. So yes and yes.
- D. That was not a dog, it was a human barking.

Q. One thing we always hear about is fights in bands. Has it been a problem in The Residents?

The Residents always benefited in the fact that they were not a band. Our perspective in the Cryptic / Residents development was that we had lively discussions, not arguments. Often discussions were focused on money. There was never enough money to do everything so that would require some lively decision making. Residents didn't always like the promotional ideas of Cryptic. Cryptic didn't always like project ideas due to marketability or expense. Healthy interaction, in general. I can't remember anyone storming out of the room, though I can remember some yelling.







GHOSTS

R.B. Russell is a British author of supernatural fiction. Mr. Russell also makes intriguing music.

"Ghosts" is his debut album.

Vocals are provided by the French singer, Lidwine, whose poignant voice is the perfect complement to the music.

This is an album of haunting songs from ambient to rock, with both vocal and instrumental tracks. Melancholy, evocative.

more information about R.B. Russell's GHOSTS







Web Site

http://hardyfox.com

Bandcamp

https://bobuck.bandcamp.com/music

Klanggalerie

http://www.klanggalerie.com/gg240

MVD

http://mvdshop.com/search?q=BOBUCK

Hacienda Bridge Blog

https://hardyfoxblog.wordpress.com/

iTunes Bookstore

https://itunes.apple.com/au/book/the-swords-of-slidell/id1129364212? mt=11

The Residents

http://www.residents.com





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