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FEBRUARY 1, 2017 NEWSLETTER #9



Charlie Bobuck

The Charles Bobuck Interview

Charles and I are relaxing on his covered porch. It is raining but it is a warm rain. I have a blanket over my lap. He is in shorts as he usually is. Charlie had opened a bottle of Pinot Noir, carefully smelling the cork before pouring measured amounts into our glasses. He then lectured me for five minutes over its merits while swirling the glass in circles.

When he finally paused, I ask if we can get started. He mumbled something about me always spoiling a good time.

WR. Let's address the first thing first. There have been several mentions about your health issues. How is your health?

I think one's health is rather personal, but I can comfortably say that I do not have anything life threatening other than old age. Everyone has that at some point. I have some serious arthritis that affects my mobility as well as a problematic respiratory problem that is too boring to go into.

WR. That was enough to cause you to drop out of working with **The Residents**?

It was enough to make me rethink my goals, after all, The Residents had to evolve into a touring band to pay the bills and I could no longer physically keep up. Stairs had become my enemy. I really wanted to get back into the studio anyway. Music for touring is very repetitive.

WR. Didn't you still have studio work needing to be done with The Residents?

Not enough to keep me busy. The last album we released was **The Bunny Boy** in 2008. Nine years ago. That is the same time span as from **Meet The Residents** to **The Mole Show**. We all know what was done in nine years back then. I wrote music for **Ghost of Hope** three years ago and it kept being delayed by tours. I hear they are finally recording it. By now it will probably be totally different from what I wrote. I'm excited to hear it.



"... that greased my exist out of The Residents since I was facing absolute boredom."

WR. You wrote music for *Ghost of Hope* three years ago?

I was writing for *Ghost of Hope* at the same time as I was writing **What Was Left of Grandpa**. My original idea was that we would complete the recordings in the Spring of 2015, and release the album in September of that year. Then launch the **Ghost of Hope Show** tour in the fall of 2015. I was going to participate in conceiving the touring show and I wanted to develop the arrangements with my buddy, **Eric Feldman**, since he would be replacing me on the road.

That did not happen, the **Shadowland** show kept touring on and on, which meant I had nothing to do. *Shadowland* already existed and the *GOH* album was dropped, at least at that time. I suppose that greased my exit out of The Residents since I was facing total boredom (*laughs.*)

WR. Why didn't you start something independently? There was nothing to prevent you from working within The Residents concept.

That is true. I could have declared *What Was Left of Grandpa* to be a Residents album, but I had tried that with **Coochie Brake**. It did not get the reception I hoped for and I ended up being frustrated. I thought it was a great project but Randy wanted to focus on live stuff. I had to adjust rather than trying to force something to conform to my expectations.

WR. It sounds like maybe you are blaming Randy?

I know you need to ask that question, people want to know. I don't blame Randy, this is not a "blame" situation. Randy and I are long time friends. He loves performing more than anything and I love the studio more than anything. When the financial shift came, touring made money and recording albums didn't, he was in the position to spend energy on real-time projects and not albums. I wasn't happy about it, but it worked good for Randy. It was a force larger than us.

WR. Why didn't you work on the touring projects?

I did. I was the person who proposed the smaller shows, the Randy, Chuck and Bob shows. To decreased the expense of touring, we needed to become a lean and mean organization. I wrote the arrangements for all the shows. I mixed and put together the live albums. I was 100% on board. I made obtuse Bobuck albums on the side. That worked for a while, then I started having old age issues that made touring unpleasant, even painful and I knew I had to stop. But it isn't like I am a kid, I am a senior citizen. I got my time in. I am supposed to slow down.

WR. I think some old-time, hard-core fans blame your leaving for ruining The Residents. You broke the illusion.

The idea was to break it with Randy, Chuck and Bob. We intentionally demanded fans take a fresh look at The Residents. That is hardly "ruining." The illusion of The Residents did not end with the invention of RCB, it changed, it made a twist. The hard-core fans should know that The Residents are going to challenge their concepts. That is part of the idea. I am staunchly against fans determining what The Residents should be. That will be the true "ruining."

I don't want to be flippant. I think it is worth saying that choosing to leave The Residents was no easy decision. It took months of intense introspection. It was my decision and I still believe it was the wise thing to do for myself and The Residents.

WR: Do you remember the moment when you first realized that you would be leaving The Residents?

There was no actual moment. A year earlier I realized I was unhappy, but I figured things would get better. When I didn't feel any change I started thinking about my options as well as what was important in life, the broader perspective. It all became very clear to me. It seemed simple and positive. The Residents seemed like it needed a drastic change. I realized that the drastic change would be me leaving. I still see things in a Residents way. Making a point of intentionally not doing something is a form of doing it. Like making a point by going on a hunger strike is still a form of eating. Just negative eating.

WR. Were you dealing with depression?

Not clinical depression, but the kind of depression of knowing you have to resolve a problem in your life when you wish you didn't have to. I have

high expectations for living. A lot of the depression was associated with aging. Everyone has to deal with physical degradation due to aging, but it is frustrating. I have always tried to make things better for myself. Change was being forced on me. What was important was protecting my friendship with Randy while rediscovering life pleasures. I realized a need to be part of nature, to have a guided transition from living to dying and rejoining the greater force. That sounds more mystical than it should. I am like a reverse child. I grow reverse younger until I disappear into where life comes from. Hmmm. That sounds even more mystical. Wine tends to have that effect on me.

Speaking of mystical, do you follow a religious belief system? It sounds like you do.

I do not follow philosophies made up by other people since I am as capable of making them up as the next guy. I do like the "we are all star matter" idea, and I see humans as part of the greater natural world. We are born and we die, and there is a beauty in that fragility that we share with all creatures.

WR. How are you and Randy getting along now?

We are good. Ever since he moved to LA and I moved to the country we had not seen much of each other, unless we were touring. Our individual new living environments are a clear indication of how we are envisioning our futures. He wants to be closer to Hollywood and I want to be closer to nature.

He is benefiting from the change. When we worked together I had no encouragement to try singing and he had none to write music. He has a good music sense and a style that is different from mine. It is going to be fun to hear what he does.

WR. What has changed now that you have support from **Hacienda Bridge** and **Klanggalerie** instead of **The Cryptic Corporation**?

Cryptic needs a bigger cash flow to operate. The Residents are the source of that income. Since I am just me, I don't have to make money anymore with music. I live on my pension and my royalties from forty years with The Residents. That is very freeing. I can now try things I didn't do before.

WR. Like singing?

(laughs) Yeah. I am not a singer. I have gotten more comfortable using my voice as an element of the music. **Randy's** attitude toward singing has always been a great inspiration to me.



"Touring requires the illusion of a band."

WR. Do you think you will do a project with Randy again?

Neither of us has an objection to it, but at the moment it is not logistically realistic. He has to think in terms of making albums that can be toured. It makes the most sense that he would do recordings using musicians from the touring version of The Residents.

WR. So you see the current Residents as a "version?"

There have been many Residents concepts. The eyeballs, the CDROM designers, the big performance shows. The reluctant rock band, **Randy, Chuck and Bob**. I expect a new Residents version in 2017 as the RCB one is a bit played out. Some people don't accept anything after 1980 as Residents. Residents is a word, the people behind the word are what counts.

WR. You were a primary person behind it. Are you implying that you are also a "version of The Residents?"

I can't work using the word, "Residents." I can easily put that word in my past, but there is no way to leave who I actually am back there with that word. Who I am and what I do came with me. I can't use the word, but the word cannot use me either.

WR. What happened to "Chuck" and who is "Rico?"

"Chuck" is part of The Residents touring band. He had to stay with Randy and Bob. Chuck was also Carlos, and I suppose, partly me. But I am not "Chuck." That was a character I played for the show. That is a stage name and I am no longer on the stage. Chuck and Carlos kind of folded together and was able to fit into one small touring case that never has to be unpacked. Rico is the spirit of the case. Hmm. I think that is the wine talking.

I'll start over. Despite how difficult it is for people to accept, The Residents is a concept, not a band. Concepts are free to take various forms, even ones that superficially seem like a band. Touring requires the *illusion* of a band. Basically the organizing team assembles the resources required to make a concept work. As dry as that sounds, it is what producers do, and The Residents is a production. There is no Randy, Chuck, Bob, Carlos, or Rico. Just assembled resources.

WR. Who is the "organizing team?"

Well, now that Hardy is gone it is primarily Homer Flynn, the only remaining original Cryptic guy. But Cryptic has two newer corporate owners too. So there are three inputs with Homer being the primary one. The Residents concept is completely malleable. It doesn't have to be associated with music. It could become an iPhone app design company. That is the remarkable aspect that sets the Residents apart from "bands."

WR. If The Residents are "assembled resources," what is "Charles Bobuck?"

(Laughs loudly, then a long silence) I have to confess that I am somewhere in between a resource and a person. There is only one me so I cannot be replaced. But in the same way that I participated in The Residents illusion, I now have a "Charles Bobuck" that is partly illusion. There are differences. I can do interviews, I never have to wear a mask. I can have opinions about the world. It is a comfortable change for me.

WR. Then you are okay with me publishing an actual photo of you?
(Charlie stared at me and then very slowly shook his head "no.")
Why not?

I'm not certain what I look like.

WR. Am I talking to a person or am I talking to an illusion?

I try to be honest with you, Will. You know me. I also like to tell stories and sometimes the stories are more interesting than the reality. I don't think this is a good line of questioning, the nature of reality. Reality is a vortex and we can only end up lost and confused.

(Charlie said he was getting chilly and went inside to get a jacket.)



"My Tiny Tunes are me laying eggs."

WR. Since we all know there is not as much interest in music and CDs anymore by the general public, what is your perspective on getting your music out to people?

The line from that *Bobby McGee* song comes to mind. Freedom being a word for nothing to lose. I have nothing to lose. I don't have to get it out to the public. Most people in the world who make music do it for the pleasure it brings, not for money or fame. It is not an ego thing.

I am really enjoying making **Tiny Tunes** and if someone doesn't like one, it is of no consequence. I have a short attention span and they are a pleasure to record. I can use them for the newsletter, for downloads, like the **Black Tar** thing on Halloween. Klanggalerie has collected a bunch for a CD. **EGGS FOR BREAKFAST.**

WR. **Eggs for Breakfast?** Why Eggs for Breakfast?

(Smiles) When Roman and I first moved to the country, we raised chickens. They are sort of horrible animals, but they do lay eggs. Lots and lots of eggs. Every morning there would be a cry through our house,

"Eggs for Breakfast!" Roman was very inventive about finding new egg dishes to eat, but it was always eggs for breakfast. Until we got rid of the chickens.

An egg is also the beginning of life just as breakfast is the beginning of the day. Symbolically it represents a fresh start. While eggs have the potential to become a chicken, they are also a magically thing all by themselves, an egg. These tiny tunes could become full fledged songs, but I'm not into potential, I'm embracing the moment. I accept that a tiny tune is a thing to be appreciated. My Tiny Tunes are me laying eggs.

WR. Looking beyond the new CD, what does your future look like in your mind?

Hardy talked me into doing the Hacienda Bridge project by saying that it would only run through 2020. That meant I wouldn't get stuck in another open ended concept. We are all older and a sense of closure to what we do feels good. That still gives us plenty of time to turn ideas into results. To me it means doing as much as I can as quickly as possible.

WR. Your album, **Bobuck Plays The Residents** had a sad quality about it, not the manic Residents quality we all love.

Sad? Really? I am naturally fragile, I am told. There is a very thin layer of skin separating me from the world. I wanted to take the songs away from seeming manic. I didn't always write them to be performed that way.

(Charlie paused for a long time, his head down in thought.)

I am not sad, Will, really I'm not. I can miss the old days, but I already did the old days, every single moment of those forty years. I do miss the people I worked with. I felt like I lost a family when I stopped touring. I can't go back to who I was, though. Life is lived in only one direction.

WR. *(Charlie gazed out into the rain, a bit of a distant look in his eyes. I could tell I had lost his attention.)* Do you want to stop?

So many memories, Will.

(Charlie managed a smile at me, and I could see a lifetime playing in his eyes.)

Will Rothers is the promotions guy at Hacienda Bridge. For years he worked as Big Brother, founder and operator of the official Residents web site, the BOG.



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Here you will find the entirety of **BLACK TAR** + the tiny tunes from summer and SEVEN brand new ones. 26 in all.

Also, Bobuck will donate 100% of his earnings from the sale of this CD for the month of February to **PLANNED PARENTHOOD**.

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Charles Bobuck is a big chicken. Chickens make horrible song writers. Their songs are just a bunch of repetitive clucking. However, they make a lot of them. Almost every morning you can hear them singing, having forced a big song lump out of their vaginas, or wherever those things come from.

Bobuck doesn't have a vagina, but you can still hear him singing every morning over some song lump he left on the carpet, or on the stairs. Fortunately **Klanggalerie** picks them up so they don't get stepped on. Well, some do get stepped on, but it is no matter. There are always more.

Eggs for Breakfast is a collection of 26 of Bobuck's song eggs that did not get stepped on.



Available today:
Bobuck's **EGGS FOR BREAKFAST**
26 Tiny Tunes CD

Coming in March:
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Remastered + bonus tracks

EGGS FOR BREAKFAST



Q. Could The Residents / Bobuck make it in the music business if they started now? Were the 70s more open to new musical ideas?

I see two factors. Baby Boomers were still young in the 70s. That meant there were a lot of young people to allow a wider range of musical styles finding support. And the emergence of Punk / New Wave as a reaction against the slicker music. **Journey** was very popular back then. And for any list of two, I like to include a "third." The rise of home recording. Technology.

Every youth era has some kind of reaction that they think is new, because youth are generally, not very experienced or knowledgeable about cultural history.

Punks were like rock and rollers in the 50s. Elvis and all that. That kind of rawer music grabs each generation and gives it a sense of a personalized cultural experience.

So when punk / new wave came along, it brought a lot of attention for people who were working independently. That suited The Residents EXACTLY. In fact, they had already been doing it for a few years by that point.

Today music is not the uniting element for youth. That is more technology's job. Music had a good run. It is mostly boring now. Even the alternative music is not breaking barriers now. It is where painting got to a while back. Not much left to say. It needs time to regenerate.

Q. My question is based on Bobuck's interest in 'dance music'..... inspirations, and, perhaps, your motivations for said music?

So you have noticed that Bobuck likes to groove at times. It was Bobuck who said, "Disco will never die," because he and I agree that people will always want to shake their lower extremities. The reason comes down to basic sex, not the fancy kind of sex either, the smelly kind. Music and dancing have, throughout history, been a couple. Even a baby will start dancing when it hears a beat. It seems to be a natural response to music so why deny it.

Inspirations. Wow, so easy. Let's start with with the *Staying Alive* guys, the **Bee Gees**. Toss in some **MJ**, **Donna Summer** and **Barry White** and you have Bobuck

loosening his clothes and onto the dance floor in an instant.

Bobuck is moved by any groove. For instance, a couple of decades ago upon hearing **Jaipong** from West Java, he flew to Bandung, Indonesia to meet the creator, **Gugum Gabira**. Bobuck makes as good a fan-boy as the rest of us.

<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jaipongan>

Q. I will be retiring next year at 66. I am concerned about what to do with a sudden wealth of time I don't currently have. You guys seem to be dealing with aging successfully. Any suggestions?

We each get only life so I can't say I have a lot of experience outside of doing what I do. However, I have an automatic need to answer questions. Due to that I suggest taking some quiet time and think of these three things.

- 1.yourself
2. your greater self
3. others

Consider your hobbies and interests. Continue that interest, only add a related interest or detailing. For instance, if you like cooking, study the food of Piedmont, or plant a garden to grow your own food.

Your greater self is your significant other, family, close friends, extended family. Get closer with them, let them know who you are and be open to learning more about them. We can never be too close to people we love.

And "others." Many people get a lot of satisfaction from volunteering with charities once they retire. This gives a person depth and a real sense of self pride. There is always a need for people willing to help other people.

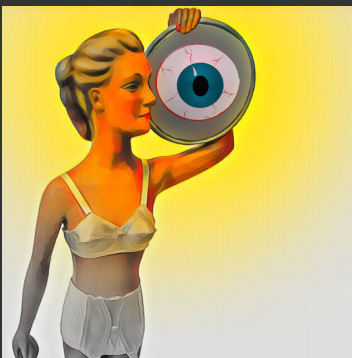
The thing to NOT do. Collect. Especially collecting physical objects. Why? Because you are also preparing to die. Good die, Natural die. The last thing you need is clutter for others to have to deal with after you are dead. A garage full of vinyl is not a good idea. Sell all but your favorite 100 and give yourself an *experience* rather than an *object*.

WALL



MUSICA

WALL from Charlie Bobuck



Next time we meet on Hacienda Bridge, we take a moment to appreciate the women of the last nearly fifty years who have contributed their talents to The Residents, Ralph Records, and The Cryptic Corporation. It's the Vagina Issue.



Little Fried Egg, 2009 - Tjalf Sparnaay

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There is an actual mental illness called Narcissist Personality Disorder, NPD. It is diagnosed by recognizing an individual exhibits five of the

following nine traits.*

- A grandiose logic of self-importance
- A fixation with fantasies of infinite success, control, brilliance, beauty, or idyllic love
- A credence that he or she is extraordinary and exceptional and can only be understood by, or should connect with, other extraordinary or important people or institutions
- A desire for unwarranted admiration
- A sense of entitlement
- Interpersonally oppressive behavior
- No form of empathy
- Resentment of others or a conviction that others are resentful of him or her
- A display of egotistical and conceited behaviors or attitudes

It is common for people to have two or three of these traits, and politicians and movie stars often have more. But it is rare that a President is a gold star holder of all nine. So yeah. Think about it. Trump is the Mad President. And he could start a war if he wants. And apparently other Republicans, though aware of all this, are too scared of him to do anything about it.

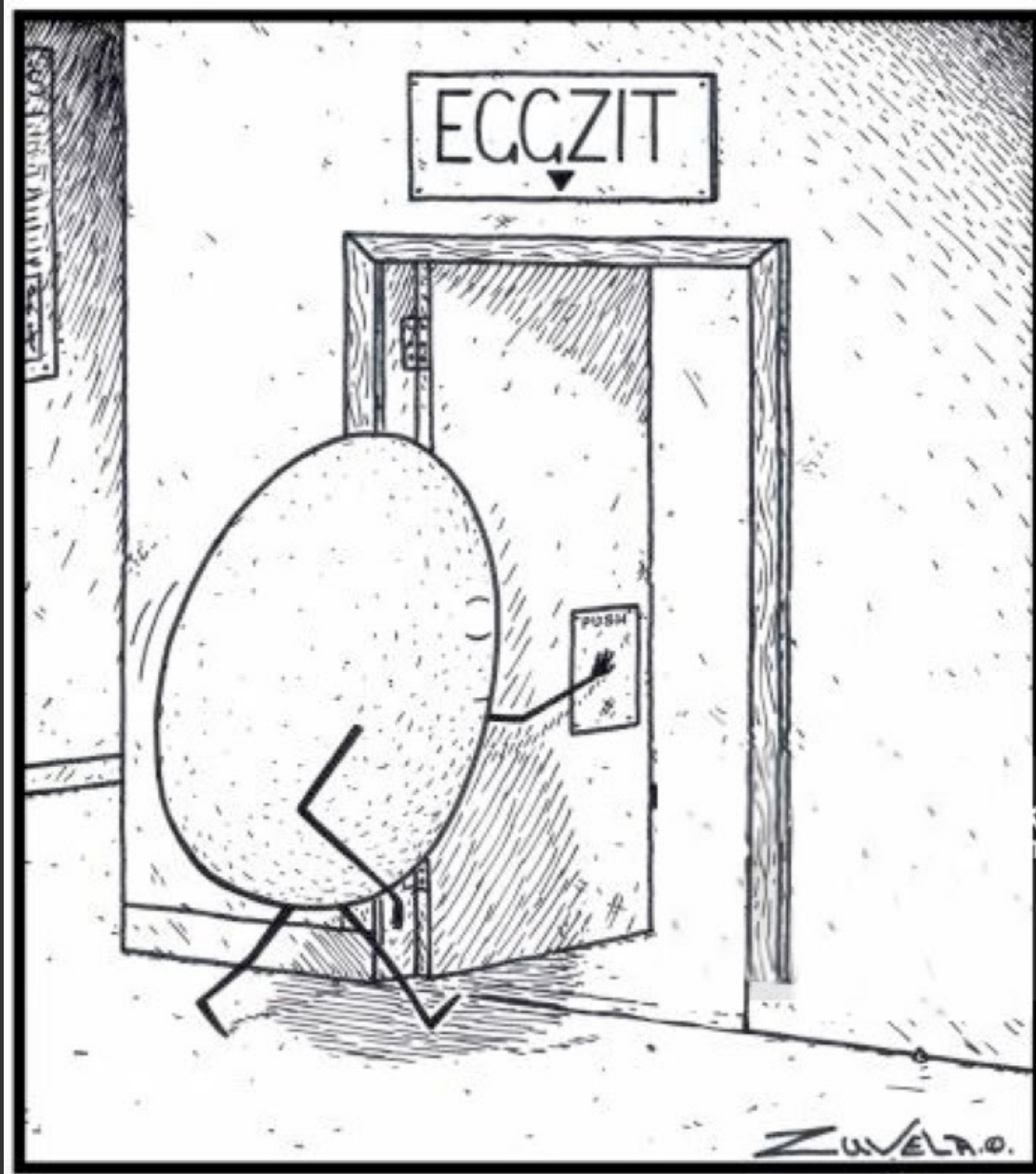
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