

NRBQ □ – NRBQ (1969/2018)

Written by bluesever (Bogdan Marszałkowski)
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A1 C'mon Everybody A2 Rocket Number 9 A3 Kentucky Slop Song A4 Ida A5 C'mon If You're Comin' A6 You Can't Hide A7 I Didn't Know Myself B1 Stomp B2 Fergie's Prayer B3 Mama Get Down Those Rock And Roll Shoes B4 Hymn Number 5 B5 Hey! Baby B6 Liza Jane B7 Stay With Me Bass, Vocals – Jody St. Nicholas Guitar, Vocals – Steve Ferguson Keyboards, Harmonica, Recorder, Vocals – Terry Adams Percussion – G. T. Staley Trombone – Don Adams (tracks: A2, A3, A6) Vocals, Percussion [Auxiliary] – Frank Gadler

NRBQ have evolved considerably over the course of a career that's lasted over 50 years and isn't done just yet. But the band's self-titled debut album, originally released in 1969, is joyous evidence that their originality and spark were there right from the very start. Cut several years before NRBQ settled into their "classic" lineup, here founders Terry Adams (keyboards and vocals) and Joey Spampinato (bass and vocals) are joined by lead singer Frank Gadler, guitarist Steve Ferguson, and drummer Tom Staley. Gadler and Ferguson's musical personalities put a different spin on this music than NRBQ would generate a few years down the line, when Al Anderson's guitar work and songwriting would become a key part of their recipe. Here, they sound more like a boogie band than they did when they hit their stride, albeit one with a very individual approach. But the group's trademark eclecticism and sense of fun are very much in evidence. The album's opening one-two punch of Q-approved reworkings of Eddie Cochran's "C'mon Everybody" and Sun Ra's "Rocket #9" demonstrate both their musical reach and the depth of their influences, Adams' crazy-quilt melodic ideas and inspired keyboard work are featured on "Kentucky Slop Song" and "Stay with We," Spampinato contributes a first-class rocker in "You Can't Hide" (NRBQ would revisit the song on 1980's Tiddlywinks), and Steve Ferguson's estimable guitar work and songwriting bona fides ("I Didn't Know Myself," "Stomp," and "Fergie's Prayer") are a reminder of what a potent force he was in the band's early days. NRBQ is the work of a band that sometimes sounds like it's still finding its way in the recording studio, and Eddie Kramer's production sometimes lacks the punch the musicians needed. But even though NRBQ would make better albums in the future, their debut is the work of a group that already had a sound all its own and a love of music that was wildly infectious, and this is an often overlooked gem in the Q's catalog. ---Mark Deming, AllMusic Review

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