



Bio information: **CHEER-ACCIDENT**

Title: **VACATE** (Cuneiform Rune 526)

Format: CD / DIGITAL

www.cuneiformrecords.com

FILE UNDER: **ROCK**

When I was five years old (or maybe younger; I know I had not yet made it to kindergarten), my favorite activity was to bop around to Herb Alpert's rendition of "Zorba The Greek." You know the part of the song where everything stops, there's a brief silence, then it starts back up, slowly and quietly? Well, from there, it just builds and builds and builds in volume and intensity, the tempo making its way from slower-than-adagio to faster-than-fast high octane über-polka in the course of sixty seconds... and I would work my five-year-old self into a frenzy, racing around the ottoman in the living room, faster and faster, matching the song's energy, and finally, collapsing into ecstatic oblivion at the song's conclusion (at 4 minutes and 25 seconds).

By the time I'd reached that aforementioned age, my parents had acquired five of his albums, all of which I listened to voraciously. Herb was my guy. I was obsessed. He's the reason I started playing trumpet in 6th Grade and drumming (or, rather, cereal boxing) well before that, probably before I'd learned how to walk. When I'd entered junior high, and found myself in the school band, I'd managed to track down almost every one of those thirteen original Tijuana Brass albums that came out in the '60s. Most of these I'd found in the "easy listening" section at the record store, where I'd noticed another familiar name that would consistently pop up: Burt Bacharach. I'd become enamored with him as well, initially by learning that he had written an impressive number of songs that Herb would go on to record, but also because he had achieved ubiquity on the airwaves, via artists such as Carpenters, BJ Thomas, and (most notably and prolifically) Dionne Warwick.

Fast forward three decades later to this scenario: *Phil Bonnet (our guitarist for the entirety of the '90s) and I are talking at Solid Sound (the studio in Hoffman Estates, IL where he'd become quite beloved, engineering a multitude of local bands from Chicago and its nearby suburbs), as we take a break from recording the basic tracks for "Salad Days" (along with Jeff Libersher and Dylan Posa) on Sunday, January 31st, 1999. Phil is very excited to have recently gotten his hands on the Burt Bacharach box set, and we are listening to it in the control room. As we sit there together, blissing out to the sublime strains of "Our Day Will Come," he looks over at me and says, "I never use this word, but he's a... (pause)... (sheepishly)... genius."*

But Phil was not merely "our guitarist" or "our engineer" -- he was also a dear, dear friend. He and I lived together (in Streamwood, then Palatine) from the fall of 1990 to the summer of 1992, and we became very close during this time period. Sometimes eerily close. On one summer day in 1991, after we'd been living together for over half a year, I had decided to cut off all of my long hair. Phil came home that night after a lengthy studio session and, as he walked through the front door, we just looked at each other in shocked silence: he, too, had cut off all of his long hair. On another day that same summer, we toiled around Streamwood in his Suzuki Sidekick, cranking my Herb Alpert mixtape. Did that Sidekick have a sun roof, or can I still feel the sun's warmth on my face and arms because that moment unlocked one of my earliest and fondest memories: riding in my mom's Galaxy 500 convertible, listening to "Whipped Cream & Other Delights" on her car's 8-track player?

How perfect was it that Phil and I were in a dissonant/abrasive/aggressive rock band together, and yet our strongest convergence was in the area of "easy listening?" Indeed all four members of this '90s incarnation of CHEER-ACCIDENT shared a deep passion for this music, and there were murmurs of dedicating an entire album to this genre, starting in the mid-'90s. These murmurs grew louder and more insistent (accompanied by serious demos being recorded by all involved), and by early '99, there were specific plans being made to record this selection of songs... **just in time for Phil's sudden and devastating death on Tuesday, February 2nd, 1999.**

And now, one year after Burt's death and 25 years after Phil's death, we have unlocked this treasure chest of heartfelt songs (three of which have the latter's stamp on them), and Cuneiform Records has taken on the noble task of availing them to the public. Pandemically recorded by one Steve Albini (whose name is virtually synonymous with "easy listening") at his charmed studio, Electrical Audio in Chicago, this is surely our most severe example of "delayed gratification" to date. I know that "severity" and "easy listening" do not exactly go hand in hand, but we always have had a rather BachAssarach way of doing things.

Thank You For (Easily) Listening.

-- *Thymme Jones / CHEER-ACCIDENT*