

4. Ann Grootjans August 4, 2014

The fact that Robin decided last-minute not to release his solo cd back in spring 2009 did not mean that he gave up on it. When we had a first meeting in May 2010 to "re-skin" and expand Robin's official website, that was with the promotion of a 50 St Catherine's Drive release in mind. Similarly when we decided to start filming interview and performance videos for the site and YouTube channel, it was again with the promotion of a forthcoming release of the solo set in mind. Eventually The Titanic Requiem was released first, but, again, that didn't mean St Catherine's Drive wouldn't have come out after that. What did happen was that as time passed Robin wanted to replace some of the tracks recorded in 2007-2008 which he had in hindsight become less fond of with recordings of some newer songs he had written since. Unfortunately his health problems prevented Robin from going into the recording studio.

The promotional cd that was put together in August 2008 and sent out to record labels in view of brokering a deal, consisted of seventeen recordings (not in running order): Sanctuary, Days of Wine and Roses, Sorry, Cherish, Anniversary, All We Have Is Now, Mother, Avalanche, Don't Cry Alone, I Am The World, Wanted, Instant Love, Broken Wings (Robin and Valeriya), Broken Wings (Robin), Solid, 911, and Alan Freeman Days.

When I first started putting bits and pieces on paper a few weeks ago I didn't have the foggiest that an album release was planned for September, and, the day I posted the second part of my musings an announcement was made including a track list. I have since had a look at that press release. I do see a couple of tracks that likely wouldn't have been included if Robin were still here, while others that he favoured are missing, most notably "911". "One Way Love" of which he kept mentioning that he wanted to record it for the album is there however. Only a (good) demo of that song by Robin exists so whether it's the demo or a post-humous production we can expect I can't tell. I haven't heard the "One Way Love" demo since giving it a couple of plays in Robin's home studio three years or so ago, so I don't remember enough to describe it in detail today. What I do remember is, that it was both very good and commercial, in the same style as "Broken Wings" and "Juliet", and I thought it was top priority to have this one added to St Catherine's Drive, even though it had been half-promised to Peter Andre. I see a song featured that is called "Wherever You Go". Is this Wing & A Prayer? Now I was all pro that Robin record this song properly and include it and I did mention that to him a few times, but again, to my best knowledge he didn't get to that point, and only a demo by Robin exists. Something tells me though that Robin wouldn't have been impressed with people changing his all-important, dare I say "sacred", song titles. That's just one of a number of ethical issues surrounding the post-humous release, and I gather different people may react differently to these. "Sydney" is there too, and although it's quite a statement to close the album with this particular track I can't help having mixed feelings, as Robin sounds so vulnerable here, and I also don't think he intended the song to be on his solo album. That said, if one wanted to make a statement by ending the album with "Sydney", wouldn't the symbolism have been so much greater if "I Am The World" would have been the cd's opening track?

On a related note, I do remember the origins of "Sydney" and also of "Wing & A Prayer" well, and will post some more details about those two next time.

A.G.