

### 3. Ann Grootjans August 1. 2014

As I already mentioned, there certainly is no lack of potential singles amongst the tracks Robin recorded with Pete in 2007-2008, but there are also some fine "album" tracks. I would say that "Sorry", "Cherish", "Sanctuary", and most notably the breathtaking "Don't Cry Alone" fall into that category. Fans will remember the latter from the recording that featured on the "Titanic Requiem" cd which had kept the original version's vocal, with added orchestration. The original version is in contrast extremely sparsely produced, drawing all attention to Robin's impressive vocal delivery. What makes "Don't Cry Alone" even more impressive is that it was written and recorded almost simultaneously. "It went down once. I ad-libbed the words, just the words as they came into my head at the moment, and the melody as well, and whatever the result was is what you hear", Robin had told me about its creation process. "Sanctuary", is one of those typical left of field Robin nuggets, not a traditionally structured song, but what a great atmosphere and feeling. I could hear this song going down well in a live setting alongside "Sorry", which has a stadium rocker feel. "Sorry" is truly a powerful song with equally powerful vocals, and I really like it a lot, but ... it doesn't sound like a Robin Gibb record - which explains why I wouldn't consider it as a single release, as good as it may be. I remember that the first time I heard "Sorry" I thought I was hearing the new Coldplay, or Embrace, or Kaiser Chiefs! "Cherish", had not been written for the St Catherine's Drive sessions but it was really too good not to include. I will never forget hearing the writing demo of this song, 2005 or 2006, in the Gibbs' black Range Rover, and the impact it had on me, in its unfinished state, not even having actual lyrics back then. So I nagged and nagged and kept telling Robin he should record it ... Unfortunately, Pete's interpretation of "Cherish" didn't quite capture the melodic style and emotion of Robin's demo. This song had been intended for Barbara Streisand and the home studio recording Robin had made in 2006 with Michael Graves was subsequently in her vocal style and somewhat reminiscent of "Woman in Love", the fab no1 hit Robin had come up with in 1980 and of which he was ever so proud (and rightly so!) Still, while totally different in sound and vocal style to the original, Pete's production of "Cherish" is nonetheless a great "soft-soul" flavoured effort, with hints of The Police and George Michael, and, I'm pretty sure Bee Gees fans will love this one.

Maybe I should pause a moment to point out that my comments reflect upon the original recordings from the Area 21 sessions which were completed in 2008, concretely, on a final mix of seventeen tracks on a promo cd I received in the mail in the summer of that year. It was this collection of songs, or at least part of it, that was set for release in May 2009 in the G/A/S countries. A contract had been negotiated with a German record label, which was a joint venture company between the local Warner music subsidiary and the mother company of a major commercial TV station. The album would have come out, coinciding with Robin's concert tour of Germany, and supported with a big TV campaign. In other countries, the album would be released later that year then on other labels with which Robin's then manager Jim Morey was in talks. But days before the finalisation of the contract, Robin changed his mind following a phone call from his brother Barry and plans they made to work together. When I brought this matter up with Robin a year or so later while trying to have breakfast in a Dutch hotel, he said: "This album was completed but I put its release on hold because my priority is Barry and myself. Doing an album together with Barry is my dream and hopefully that will materialise soon. This is the only reason why 50 St Catherine's Drive hasn't been released yet. I put my heart and soul into recording that album so it's certainly not something I've done half-heartedly. And when 50 St Catherine's Drive does come out, there are other, new tracks as well that could be added to it."

As a side note, we never had that breakfast, rarely have I seen food that looked that suspicious, I couldn't even tell what it was! So it was cappuccinos only ...

A.G.