

VINNIE CARUANA OFFICIAL BIOGRAPHY

"I found what I love to do long ago," says Vinnie Caruana. "Writing, recording and performing music, traveling, and making friends and memories. I don't think I'd truly be happy doing anything else. When you look at it that way, what else is really important than to be happy with your life and how you choose to live it."

That sentiment precisely embodies the spirit in which Caruana wrote his debut solo album, *Survivor's Guilt*. While he may have been alone in writing these songs, however, *Survivor's Guilt* is not a solo record in the same way as Caruana's largely acoustic 2013 EP, *City By The Sea*, was. On *Survivor's Guilt*, Caruana plays acoustic and electric guitars, and enlisted the talents of I Am The Avalanche's Kellen Robson and Brett 'The Ratt' Romnes on bass and drums as well.

Romnes' role went far beyond performing on the album, however. "Along with playing the drums on the record," Caruana explains. "Brett also produced and mixed the record. He's an extremely talented producer and completely understands my vision. He works out of The Barber Shop Studios in New Jersey, where we tracked *Survivor's Guilt*, and it's a world-class facility. The gear at our disposal was pretty ridiculous and we made the very most of it."

In addition, Rx Bandits' Steve Choi was brought in to add instrumentation and sonic embellishments to *Survivor's Guilt*. "Steve is an extremely talented and versatile musician," explains Caruana. "His role was to fill spaces left for him with guitar, keys, etc. He took a real interest in the record and his belief and passion in my songwriting completely humbles me. His instincts with what certain parts of the songs needed were spot on."

The result is an album boasting ten incredibly compelling, multi-layered tracks that bear witness to the breadth of Caruana's all-encompassing musical vision. "The record turned out exactly how I pictured it," says Caruana "I'm lucky to have Brett, Steve and Kellen on the album. They are brilliant musicians and the record is the best it can be as a result."

Survivor's Guilt is truly the creative culmination of Caruana's career to date – something that's extremely evident from the very first listen. There are, of course, some songs – "Burn It Down", "Heavy Weighs The Summer", "I Don't Believe You" – that lean towards Caruana's punk rock roots, but much of what's heard here is fresh and new. "We Don't Have To Die Alone" and "Angel Of North", for example, are sad and beautiful songs that expose the frailty and vulnerability of the human condition, while, on the flipside, closing track "Your Religion Is Killing Me" is a fierce, ferocious instrumental boiling with existential angst and torment. "The amount of ill will done in this world in the name of religion makes me feel like I'm in a fever dream," says Caruana. "I always wanted to have an instrumental on a record and the freedom of making a solo record gave me that opportunity. This song is that fever dream."

Although *Survivor's Guilt* ends on that bitter note, the album as a whole is full of hope and positivity, of the spirit, commitment and passion that drives Caruana to do what he does, as he always has. His perseverance and talent are perhaps best exemplified on the title track "Burn It

Down", which veers between extremes: it's uplifting as well as melancholy, defiant as well as fatalistic, bruised and yet also unbroken.

"I feel lucky to be here," Caruana says, "and I want to live life completely. I want to respect the dead by doing the most with my life. Every time we lose somebody we must be thankful to still be breathing and have a chance at anything. Life's not always a picnic, but it's all we have." This sentiment, perhaps more than anything else, is the essence of *Survivor's Guilt*: Caruana, seizing what life has given him, and making the most of it. He's certainly expressed himself powerfully in the past as a founding member of The Movielife and I Am The Avalanche, but the songs he's crafted on *Survivor's Guilt* are striking evidence of Caruana pushing himself creatively far beyond anything he's written before. As Caruana himself says, "This is my debut full-length record, so it's a huge thing for me. This has been a goal of mine for my entire career, but I'm really happy that I waited this long to make this record, because I had to live life for a while before I was ready to write these songs."