

Venice Beach Photo #5

This photo was used as an album cover for the CD single, “2 Weeks Ago In Istanbul” by the band *Full Metal Piercing*. With a sound that is a mixture of The Residents, DJ Spooky, and a dash of The Boredoms thrown in for flavor, some of you may recognize *FMP* from a few years ago, when they were staples of the San Francisco “Noize-light” scene. They would always have a gig at some of the well-known Bay Area underground clubs such as The Basement, Black Door, No One Gets In For Free, and The Sweat Box. Comprised of the band members Aurical and Chris-Tal, they created the concept for this photo along with the photographer.

When I asked them how they each chose their names, Aurical told me that his name signifies that he’s “a modern-day Oracle, because their music is all about your ears, and also because he’s valuable- like gold.” Chris-Tal- who’s real name is Chris, said he goes by the name Chris-Tal because “he’s classy, and because he always goes down like a smooth champagne.” He said all the ladies would know what that meant.

After signing to Fulton Records, the band was released from their contract before their first album was even recorded- citing “artistic differences with management”. Six months later, *FMP* scraped together enough cash to self-release their CD single “2 Weeks” on their own label, which they called Fulton Records Can Eat a Bag of Dicks.

With a running time of about a minute and a half, *FMP* continued talking about that one single a lot longer than it takes to listen to. As a matter of fact, it was playing on a loop in the background and we must’ve heard it about 70 times during our interview. Aurical said that it came about after spending a whole night discussing the future of music in a digital age with Chris-Tal.

“The future of the music industry today lives and dies by the Web,” he continued. “And since Web 2.0 is about creating an international meeting ground, the music’s got to be there, too. That’s why we got that dial tone in there- it’s the blood of communication over wires and telephone lines.”

“Yeah,” Chris-Tal added, “and we got that pulse tone in there, too. ‘Cause it’s like a heartbeat. And when that dude (a sample of James Canton) keeps saying “2 weeks” over the phone at the end, he’s just reinforcing that.” Aurical jumped in to add, “He saying it into a phone as a way to evince the materiality of the telephone lines- like it’s all just one big, universal, international conference room.”

Given their technological mindset, I was surprised to learn that the concept for the album cover had its origins in Ancient Greek philosophy- Plato’s *Allegory of the Cave*. When I asked Aurical “What’s the idea behind the cover for *2 weeks*?” he answered my question with one of his own- “Think back, what does 2 weeks mean to you?” I said I didn’t know- other than it was 14 days before he asked me that question. “2 weeks is a hypothetical,” he told me. “It’s a memory. It’s what you bring back from any trip you go on. It’s the experience that changes you. That your knowledge is your souvenir.”

Chris-Tal chimed in to finish the thought, “That’s why we wanted the photographer to have us re-enact the *Allegory of the Cave*. We found the perfect place down at Venice Beach and shot it there.” I asked if that’s why the photographer shot Chris-Tal crouched in the corner, staring near the wall, while Aurical is walking away.

“Exactly!” Aurical shouted. “The idea of me walking away from Chris-Tal means that man has come out of the cave and into the light. The two of us are portraying the same person. Before- when he’s in the cave, and afterwards- when I walk outside and into the light.” I told Aurical that I didn’t really see that because if he’s walking into the light then he should be walking toward the beach, where the sun is setting, rather than away from it. “Fuck you, man” he said. “It’s Plato’s idea, and that shit’s Eternal. Don’t you know that?” I confessed that I didn’t. Fuck me, indeed.

Michael Schuster