



SORBET

Life Variations EP



12" / CD / Digital

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SORBET is a new project from producer, drummer & vocalist Chris W Ryan (**Robocobra Quartet**). The first release via Bureau B *Life Variations* is a suite of three tracks borne from the same musical seed. "Every time I sat at the piano I played that same chord progression and it felt never-ending. It felt like I could play the same two chords for a lifetime".

Life itself is the subject of this EP, which precedes a full-length album in 2021. A presumptuous thing to tackle across 20 minutes, *Life Variations* negotiates Birth, Death and that part in between. "Not just human life, but the life of planets or our environment -- and the death and birth of personal identity; of sexuality or gender".

Lead single *Birth (My First Day)* is an celebration of beginnings. Explosions of reverb and breakbeat drum kits are all borne out of manipulations in ProTools, an audio software traditionally for recording and mixing studio performances. Working predominantly as a producer in recording studios and concert halls across the country, Ryan opts to use a tool he knows and re-imagine its usage. Pushing a software like ProTools to its limits and making it a creative tool instead of a utilitarian one is at the core of the palate-cleansing sound of SORBET - a place where electronic and acoustic sounds have equal weight. "I'm interested in following my own path instead of contributing to the din of Ableton-style electronic productions entrenched in the classic dance music idiom of 808 and 909 drum machines".

Death (This Year I Died) is the shapeshifting centrepiece of *Life Variations*. Recorded in São Paulo when Ryan was there as the PRS Foundation Musician in Residence last year, it distills the cyclical essence of Life Variations to twelve beatific minutes. Melding scorched synth arps with hypnotic patterns that traverse the flux and form of noise, post-classical and contemporary electronica, it's a triumph of heady, Technicolor experimentalism from a kind of musical auteur: "For me the choice of lyrics and vocal inflection is just as important as the frequency I'm boosting with EQ; as is the instruction on the sheet music for an ensemble. They all affect one another, they are all related."

While artists such as **Laurie Anderson**, **Dan Deacon**, **Oneohtrix Point Never** and **Björk** make their imprint both musically and conceptually, Ryan fares a singularly self-referential sound-world in his savvy for magpieing: borrowing musical ideas from the likes of classical music and making field recordings of street preachers in São Paulo. Ryan even goes so far as to steal a stray snare drum or cymbal hit from his own vault of the hundreds of recordings he has done as a recording engineer and producer for the likes of **Just Mustard**, **exmagician** and the **Ulster Orchestra**.

Life Variations ends with a type of coda in the form of *Living/Dying*. One last presentation of that same chord progression, this time paired with a kind of Voice-of-God in the form of Mark McCambridge of **Arborist** - with the words "If this is to be the last time I bathe in soft silver light then I'm satisfied".

Tracklisting

1. Birth (My First Day)
2. Death (This Year I Died)
3. Living / Dying (feat. Arborist)

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