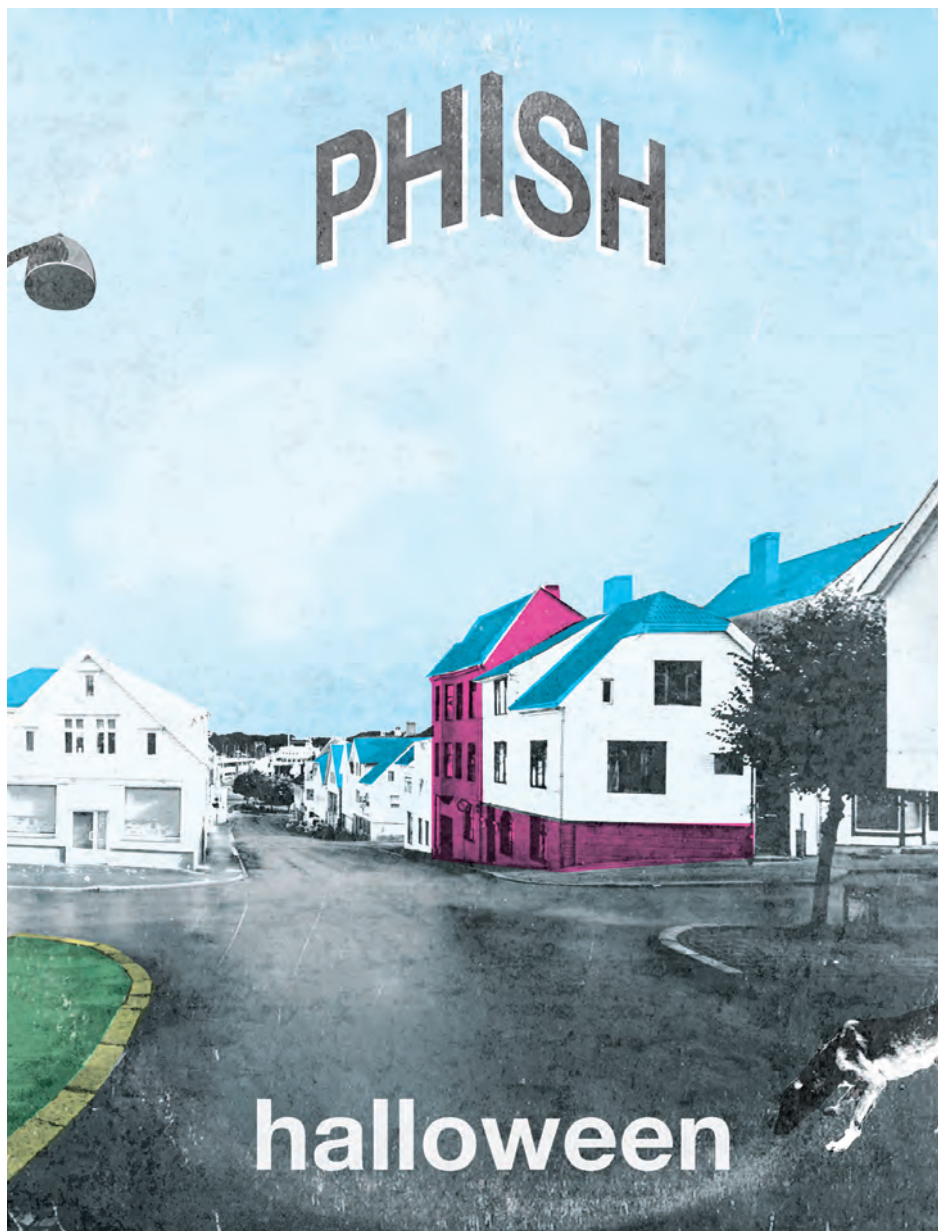


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PHISH

in

KASVOT VÄXT

í Rokk

with

**TREY ANASTASIO
MIKE GORDON**

**JON FISHMAN
PAGE MCCONNELL**

PROGRAM ORDER

Set One: PHISH

Set Two: FACEPLANT: INTO ROCK

- 1) TURTLE IN THE CLOUDS
- 2) STRAY DOG
- 3) EVERYTHING IS HOLLOW
- 4) WE ARE COME TO OUTLIVE OUR BRAINS
- 5) SAY IT TO ME S.A.N.T.O.S.
- 6) THE FINAL HURRAH
- 7) PLAY BY PLAY
- 8) DEATH DON'T HURT VERY LONG
- 9) COOL AMBER AND MERCURY
- 10) PASSING THROUGH

Set Three: PHISH

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YOU ARE READING A *Schönce* PUBLICATION

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WE ARE VAPOR, The mystery of Kasvot Växt's forgotten classic *í rokk*

WE ARE LOST...

It is as if Kasvot Växt never existed. But Halloween is about ghosts, is it not? And who better to tell us the story of a ghost than Phish? Phish has chosen the obscure Scandinavian band Kasvot Växt (translating to "Face Plant") and their only recorded album, 1981's *í rokk* [into rock], as their 2018 Halloween musical costume.

The hunt for this near-forgotten band takes us on a journey to Norway, Greenland, Finland, possibly Sweden, and beyond... down frozen paths not trod in decades. When searching for clues about this Nordic masterpiece, the trail can grow cold quickly, literally and figuratively. Follow one promising lead and you'll think you're tracking down the real story but then... faceplant. Into rock.

"It's weird that so little is known about them," Page McConnell admits during a recent run-through of the album in preparation for Phish's Halloween performance. "If people discover this album because we play it on Halloween, I'll consider that a huge success."

"Every time the Halloween discussion comes up, we talk about Kasvot Växt," Trey Anastasio confesses. "We honestly were worried we wouldn't have the chops to pull it off or to do justice to the sound, but when it came down to it, we just couldn't resist any longer."

"Someone lent me the album in the mid-'80s, and I made a tape copy," Mike Gordon recalls. "I think it was one of our friends from Goddard [College]. I can't totally remember, but it had such a big influence on me. The bass is so funky and the synth sounds were unlike anything I had heard. It was one of those things we listened

to over and over in the tour van in the early '90s."

"I was like 'what is this music?'" Jon Fishman recalls. "Some of the sounds on the record are bizarre in the best way, and a few of the rhythms are just totally inside out. I'm pretty sure it's a human drummer, but I'm not totally certain. I still don't think we know what all the instruments are. Who were these guys?"

Much about Kasvot Växt seems unverifiable -- lost to time. One thing is clear: this Nordic band made one underground classic together and then disappeared into the mist. It seems Face Plant: *Into Rock* received only a single pressing from the small Norwegian record company Elektrisk Tung. Reputedly the operation of a single fan/enthusiast, Frode Høgset, Elektrisk Tung may or may not have reached its terminus when Høgset joined the Lutheran church and tossed many of the remaining LPs off--and also into--a fjord. A warehouse fire in 1983 destroyed the remaining stock. There is no record of the band ever playing live.

More a phantom than an album, actual copies have eluded even the most dogged obsessives for years like a spirit squirming away from an PKE meter. In terms of music collector rarities, it scores a rare trifecta: absent from both volumes of Patrick Lundborg's comprehensive psychedelia compendium *Acid Archives*, never mentioned in Paul Major's legendary catalogs of private press LPs, and not even warranting an entry on Discogs. One would-be collector followed up a lead suggesting that, before the fire, copies had been picked up by underground Norwegian music distribution service Agitasjon, but

former Agitasjon employees denied any knowledge of Kasvot Växt's existence.

So what do we know for sure? Horst Guomundurson and Georg Guomundurson of Iceland, Jules Haugen of Norway, and Cleif Järvinen of Finland all met as either scientists or subjects while living briefly in a remote research bunker in Greenland in the late 1970s under the auspices of the 'Niu

Teningur' project. With typical Kasvot Växt blurriness, it remains unclear if Horst and Georg are brothers or if they just share a common last name. Translating simply to 'Nine Cubes,' 'Niu Teningur' is perhaps the greatest Kasvot Växt mystery of all.

"To anyone asking about 'Nine Cubes,' good luck," reads a lone posting from a

BELOW: Horst Guomondurson (or possibly Jules Haugen) with Georg Guomondurson and an unknown man (possibly Haugen if the other man is H. Guomundurson). Exact date/ location unknown.



message board dedicated to Greenlandic research installations, translated via Google. "You will only get denials and great confusion. It was the Cold War and many countries were trying to find an edge so they tried crazy things. But it never led anywhere. You want me to believe a man can divide boxes with his mind? You'll have better luck teaching a rabbit to read his carrot before he eats."

In an age of conspiracy theories and misinformation, Kasvot Växt place as a strange and slightly unsettling footnote to a project whose truth remains buried behind kilometers of governmental red tape and multiple language barriers. If even a fraction of the rumors about the 'Niu Teningur' project are true, it's perhaps for the best that the wider world hasn't discovered Kasvot Växt just yet, a narrative requiring more nuance than a hyperbolic reissue campaign could muster.

Were the men who would make this record involved in a top-secret perception-enhancing government experiment? Whatever happened in that bunker, Horst, Georg, Jules, and Cleif certainly formed a bond over music. Upon return (release?) from the Greenlandic bunker, the four men gathered at the loft of Jules' girlfriend Heidi in Stavanger, Norway and recorded the songs that would come to be known as 'Face Plant: Into Rock.' With songs recorded in a bizarre combination of Norwegian, Icelandic and Finnish languages, sometimes switching mid-sentence, the lyrics have proven nearly impossible to translate and inscrutable for even native listeners.

"The language was the biggest barrier for me, or languages," laughs McConnell, correcting himself. "I loved the music, but I had no idea what they were saying."

**"As soon as
I saw Glav's
words I knew
we had to keep
them. There's
such poetry
in the rough
translations."
-- Anastasio**

"But let's be honest," Fishman quickly chimes in, "that's how a lot of people describe us."

For this Halloween performance, Phish turned to Nordic linguist Glav Guttormson. After spending only a day with the record, Guttormson emailed back a crude translation. He offered to finesse the language, but the band dove in, learning the words as they were.

"I just needed to be sure we weren't, like, singing about torturing animals or something," Trey smiles. "But as soon as I saw Glav's words I knew we had to keep them. There's such poetry in the rough translations."

"We've paid tribute to so many legendary bands over the years, it felt right this time to do something that's iconic to us but that most people won't have heard of," Mike adds, "and with these translations we're really performing songs that have never been sung in English before."

The record is not totally unknown. It has circulated for years as a favorite of underground rock stations, and became a common reference point

for many of the influential bands that populated the British free festival circuit of the early '80s.

And yet so much is still shrouded in mystery. No member of Kasvot Växt was successfully contacted in preparation for this performance, however a few primary sources sketch out what became of the band's four members, and suggesting that at least three are still alive.

In 1987, Cleif's then ex-wife Heidi described his struggles with mental illness in an poorly translated interview published in a British fanzine. "Madness hangs on Cleif. His mind is in the waves with no boat," she described. "Cleif is a loving person, but

The original vinyl sleeve from *i Rokk*, released circa spring 1981.



he always wore a hat. It was sometimes impossible to know who was behind the hat." It is likely that she meant to say "mask."

In an email interview with a Norwegian fan site, Horst recalled visiting Cleif in the late 1980s, and found Cleif uncommunicative, the mood only lifting slightly when Cleif played some of his newest music for Horst.

"I think he was the only one of us who kept recording," Horst said. "He was somehow recording the music onto the giant video tapes that were already obsolete by then, and even if they still exist you probably couldn't even play them now. It was like disco-polka except he had sung all these vocals on top with very involved harmonies so it sounded like robot angels. I remember he tried to explain some of the math of the harmonies to me but I couldn't understand it at all." It looks as though Horst went on to marry Heidi shortly after that visit.

In a separate email interview with the website *Perfect Sound Forever*, Georg said that he stayed in Norway after the band's sole recording session, and has stayed in sporadic contact with his bandmates.

While declining to discuss his participation in the 'Niu Teningur' project, he finds the interest in Kasvot Växt to be slightly mystifying and perhaps even a bit embarrassing. One wonders what he would make of tonight's homage.

Even if the band's entire backstory turns out to be a hoax perpetuated by the musicians of Kasvot Växt themselves, the music's unique sensibility trumps any creation myths that may have accumulated over the years.

"I love the mystery surrounding this whole thing," Page says. "If those guys ever hear we did this, I hope they're excited because we absolutely intend it as a loving tribute."

"We're Kasvot fans! If you ever read this, we want to meet you!" shouts Trey. "And our fans are going to love this music."

So what can Phish fans expect? "A weird, funky Norwegian dance album!" laughs Fishman, "Get out there and put your down on it!"

Essay written by C.M., October 2018

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