

Voyager

The MagellanMusic Newsletter

Fall 2023

Age:

It's a frightening word. All of us remember the great old days when we were young and dumb going through elementary school into high school then into college with tomorrow a vast, unknown land just waiting to be conquered. But now, all these years later, it's a whole new story. We keep seeing the old great names disappear. As of this writing we've lost the following:

Tina Turner
Jeff Beck
David Crosby
Gordon Lightfoot
Burt Bacharach
Harry Belafonte
Wayne Shorter
Tim Bachman
Robbie Bachman
Gary Rossington
George Winston
Daniel Ellsberg (Pentagon Papers)
Astrud Gilberto (singer, "The Girl from Ipanema")
Richard Belzer, comedian
Al Jaffee, Mad Magazine cartoonist
Racquel Welch, actress
Gina Lollobrigida, actress
Melinda Dillon, actress (Close Encounters, Absence of Malice)
Stella Stevens, actress
Cindy Williams, actress (Laverne & Shirley)
Chaim Topol, actor
Tom Sizemore, actor
Barbara Bosson, actress (Hill Street Blues)
Lisa Loring, actress (Wednesday in Addams Family)
George Maharis (actor, Route 66)

There will be more added to this list soon enough, which is becoming so frequent that we must be prepared for daily announcements. So keep those albums, CD's, movies, and books handy that you once thought of selling to make room for new ones.

New music releases:

It's always good to know that our grand ol' favorite bands keep releasing new

albums or remixing old ones to get as much mileage as they can from them, such as the recent release of "**Revolver**" by the **Beatles**, but sometimes it goes a bit too far. I think that's what has happened with classic Beatle albums in recent years. In 1987 the music world reeled once more when the Beatles released all their albums on CD throughout the year, each of them identical to the original British release. Also included were two additional CD's containing all singles, B-sides, and EP tracks that didn't appear on the albums. The upgrade from vinyl to CD was so profound that there aren't enough words to accurately describe it, but one thing was certain, the Beatles releases were confirmation that the digital age had arrived. Then in 2009 the Beatles released a newly remixed/remastered version of each album combined in a boxed set. They were the same format as the 1987 CD's except in a lush box in elaborate paper sleeves with a CD containing a short biography of each album, but the main attraction was the advanced technology that allowed the remix engineers to spread the instrument wider in the sound spectrum and give it a 'warmer' feel. But since 2017 re-releases have happened yet again. "Sgt. Pepper", "The Beatles", "Abbey Road", "Let It Be", and now "Revolver". The big question is, "Is it really worth it?" In my humble opinion, no. It was the same songs that were now mixed differently, again, and another reason to buy the same album, again. But all it amounts to, essentially, is an alternative listen. The only one worth having is "Sgt. Pepper". Instead of drums and bass in one channel, guitars in the other, and voices center, it was drums center with instruments and voices all around it. A very intriguing, worthwhile listen, but the other titles aren't the same. If you don't get them, don't worry, you're not missing anything.

The recent death of **David Crosby** just happened to come after his latest and final release called "**David Crosby & The Lighthouse Band Live at the Capitol Theater**". The Lighthouse Band were a group of people young enough to be his grandchildren who Crosby had met during the recording of his album "Lighthouse" in 2016, a very unlikely combination but had a certain chemistry despite their ages. They worked together again in 2018 on the album "Here If You Listen", did various live appearances, and even did a short tour together. It was during that tour that they professionally recorded and filmed it at least for posterity's sake, but when the four of them got together one more time for another project in 2022 the live concert from 2018 was completed and released in a two disc set of CD and DVD. It is, shall we say, priceless. Even at Crosby's age with a failing body he still sounded good, his wit was sharp, and the three first class comrades gave it an undeniable, evocative charm. Proof positive that no matter what generation you're from it's the magic of music that brings it all together.

Yes seems to have turned into a rock 'n' roll Frankenstein. They began in 1968 when the hippie generation was at its height, the Establishment declared a vendetta against hippies, those same hippies declared the Vietnam War a cancer of the world, they continually held events for civil rights, LBJ had lost all popularity, Nixon was on the campaign trail to run for president, the average household income was \$7,700, minimum wage \$1.60, bacon .99 cents a pound, a

loaf of bread .21 cents, a gallon of gas .34 cents, and a new VW Beetle was about \$1500. Now, 55 years and 10 presidents later, we are about to be graced with Yes' 23rd studio album. It is called "Mirror To The Sky", and thanks to YouTube and other online sources we've been able to preview it before various hardcopies are available in October. As feared, it's not the standard that Yes established for itself decades ago. Their most adventurous, groundbreaking, earth-moving days were the 1970's, their most successful commercial days were the 1980's, and since then virtually every album, with the possible exception of "Fly From Here" from 2011, has fallen short of what made them the standard by which all other progressive rock bands are measured. Their audience became a very dedicated niche not unlike others such as the Grateful Dead, and that's how this new album, "Mirror To The Sky", applies. Good instrumentals and voice, but rather forgettable. If you're a heartfelt fan you'll love it, but the average listener-on-the-street will probably comment, "Hmm. Nice." That about sums it up and all that needs to be said.

But with **Yes** in mind, there came a day of surprise when **Jon Anderson**, the former lead singer of Yes, announced a short tour with a little known cover band with the unlikely name the **Band Geeks**. The Band Geeks had gained fame online with cover songs by other artists that were amazingly accurate, but most notable was music by Yes. The Band Geeks were so good that even Jon Anderson was blown away by it. Enough that Anderson arranged a short tour from April 14th to May 16th and much of it available to see on YouTube. As of this writing there are no announcements for future plans, such as a live or possible studio album, but perhaps luck will deal a good hand to bet on.

Another band who refuses to die is **Jethro Tull**. Or more accurately, the Ian Anderson Band. The reformation of Tull with two releases in recent years, "The Zealot Gene" from 2022 and "RokFlote" this year, has been a surprise in itself. Mostly that it's an entirely new band. Even Martin Barre, the seeming life-long partner to Anderson, wasn't invited to join. It does give an odd refreshment to the effort, but one begins to miss Barre's ever present, peculiar guitar sound that was their trademark for so long. Still, both albums are much like Yes in that it's not the Jethro Tull of old, but not bad. It's good to know that both bands keep on truckin' since it's what they've done all their lives.

Another notable new release is "Crime Scene" by **RPWL**. When RPWL formed in Germany in the late 1990's they were criticized for being a Pink Floyd cover band, but after their first two releases, "God Has Failed" from 2000 and "Trying To Kiss The Sun" from 2003, they have been described as the best progressive rock band since the 1970's. Two decades later, "Crime Scene" continues the legacy. The only downside is the long-time keyboard player, Markus Jehle, left the band and no one was brought in to replace him, but the explorative, catchy, memorable lyrics and sounds that only they can produce goes on.

A nice surprise for those who have followed the resurgence of psychedelic pop in

new century was the release of "Emotional Intensity" by **Melody's Echo Chamber** in 2022. In the frenetic, unpredictable world of indie music one isn't sure an artist will survive month to month much less year to year, but hope was given on Melody's self-titled debut album in 2012. In a word, it was a bombshell. It was soaked in 1960's special effects, each song was memorable, Melody's inimitable, breathy vocals encircled the sound like wind, an album that easily captured a spot on your Top Ten Favorite Albums list. But would there be more? Thankfully, yes. "Bon Voyage" came in 2018, and "Emotional Intensity" in 2022. They may not have had the impact or the same level of psychedelia of her initial album, but she never seems to run out of memorable melodies, unusual arrangements, classy musicians, and her high, breathy vocals are forever unmistakable.

As of this writing there are no exact plans for a new **MagellanMusic** release except a live album has been under serious consideration. They released two such albums in their time together, and it's believed that a combination of the two is likely to be the eventual compilation. It's also believed that the songs picked will be those that have never been released before, which were the biggest surprises at the original events. It's rare when little known bands like MagellanMusic, who rarely played live, don't play their most popular songs for the benefit of the audience. But not MagellanMusic. Some believe rules should be broken and they were legend at it. We will pass on any new information as we hear of it.

For the first time, **Per Jensen** has admitted that the rumors are true – he is writing a book. He was somewhat vague about it, as to whether it is a biography, commentary, or fiction, but did mention that writing is nothing new. He comments endlessly on various social sites, he's added numerous writings to the MagellanMusic newsletter, submitted two biographies to the Baseball Hall of Fame, and "The Myths of Charles Manson" was released in 2019. If anyone cares to read the latter, this is the online address: booksie.com/610716-the-myths-of-charles-manson. None are book length, but the new project, which began in 2019, is without any doubt a book. **Per** tells us, "It is an autobiography, sort of, but the setting occurs under very unusual circumstances. Even the inspiration to write it came to me under very unusual circumstances. It's too hard to explain here, best described as borderline metaphysical, but at least it's being written and preserved no matter how good or bad it is." We will keep you informed as we learn more.

"Without deviation from the norm, progress is not possible."

- Frank Zappa

Jeff Youngblood

June 25, 2023