

Voyager

The MagellanMusic Newsletter

Summer 2014

"And the beat goes on..." Good news lately is the amazing resurgence of 'retro' music. The **Voyager** staff has been observing how widespread it's become in recent years, and it's almost beyond belief. **MagellanMusic** originally felt odd about use of the word 'retro' when online music erupted, but it had to be 'retro' since **MagellanMusic** really is a 1970's band. Today they don't mind because we've discovered that there have been so many re-releases, literally hundreds of them (mostly from the 60's), that Rock music - with all genres combined - accounts for nearly 50% of sales in the American market. And all this started at a time when the music scene was in the worst slump it had ever experienced. After the turn of the century CD sales were so bad that BMG and Sony merged, which was just as shocking as if Ford and GM merged. Even the infamous Big Six record companies shrunk down to the Big Three (Universal, Warner, and Sony/BMG if you're keeping score). But why did this big resurgence happen? Downloading. With the PC boom it was suddenly very easy to shop at home and have music instantly, plus buyers were finding numerous great old classics they had forgotten about. The demand was so great that recordings not even released at the time were finally made available. Plus, we discovered there's an amazing retro movement not only in America but Europe as well. There are so many that when you shop online there is little distinction between a real oldie and a contemporary retro band. Does that mean **MagellanMusic** was faintly ahead of their time or just stuck to their guns from the start?

So here are a few tips for dedicated music freaks looking for rare classics; **Amazon** and **iTunes** have a great feature of posting artists 'similar' to what you're looking at. After viewing known albums of interest, keep viewing the suggested artists and it'll continue to uncover still more. It may get to the point where you'll need a pad and pencil to note each artist. For Prog Rock and 1970's fans, www.auralmoon.com is simply superb. There's no other online radio site quite like it. Two other music sites geared more for 1960's aficionados are www.psychelicjukebox.com and www.psychedelized.com. Both are renowned for featuring little known artists. Another that goes still further back to include 1950's tracks is www.kyaradio.com. There is also the music website www.live365.com that actually features genres, each offering a number of stations that specialize in the music genre you pick. Again you will hear and re-discover artists you haven't heard in ages. So make use while interest is still hot, you'll love it.

Newsflash: Sadly, the **Voyager** staff has learned that **AAA Marrs** will probably reside at the Sunnyvale Home for the Deranged for several years. When psychologists at the Sunnyvale facility learned that **AAA** joined a religious sect - the Delusional Disorderists - he was quickly taken into custody. **AAA** will not be allowed visitors. He is considered dangerous from incessant spewing of verbal

Bovine Excrement and will probably be given massive doses of LSD. **Per Jensen** asked our staff to pass on a message wishing him well, "May the Farce be with you!"

In the spirit of retro resurgence here are a few rare bands from both yesterday and today:

The United States of America – was unfortunately a one-album wonder initially put together by Joe Byrd, most known as a music insider. They were a psychedelic/experimental band to a T. This album has a strong taste of neo-Art Rock/Avant-garde, but it's still accessible to the average listener and has that unmistakable 1960's sound. They even followed the testy example of Sweetwater by not including a guitarist. But while complimented in the press the album was a bomb (in sales) and they soon went their own ways. This is definitely a keeper for groove-heads.

Joe Byrd and the Field Hippies – That name sounds familiar doesn't it? That's because Joe, fresh from The United States of America, wanted a band more to his liking. In this case he hired studio musicians for recording, called the album "**The American Metaphysical Circus**", which went a few steps further into Avant-garde than his former band, but no live band could develop from it. The music was just too weird and far out and no way to do it onstage. This effort was a creative boom but died fast and is today considered a classic cult album. A big plus for any collection.

H.P. Lovecraft – wasn't quite a one-album wonder but they could never break through. The band name was obviously taken from the famed writer, their lyrics thought to be 'dark', but the overall effect was very upbeat. The first self-titled album was their best, a nice mix of Rock, Folk, and Psychedelia, with a very original sound. Best of all, their vocals were a standout, which is the mark of any good band. Their second album didn't do very well, and afterward the band fractured. So long to yet another hopeful. This first one is a great little treasure.

Melody's Echo Chamber – This is possibly the best example of the resurgence of Retro rock. When you hear it, especially on headphones, you'll have a hard time guessing what year it came out. 1969? 1976? Somewhere in between? It's so dreamy and psychedelic that it sounds as if it was dipped in LSD. Every aspect from drums to vocals is treated with various processors giving the entire sound a wavering, shimmering effect. Most astonishing, this is a rare album with every song a good one. Just as unbelievable, this is Melody Prochet's debut album. Even many of the greats didn't open with such a classic. **Melody's Echo Chamber** isn't just a good one, it's a must.

Midlake – is another retro band who fits nicely into the groovy Pink Floyd/Alan Parsons Project mold. This is odd because they began as a Jazz/Funk band, then converted to Folk/Rock, which gained them fame in Europe before their home region around Dallas. And now this 4th album, called "**Antiphon**", is so good they

could mistakenly be considered career Prog rockers. It's so smooth and floating at times that Dave Gilmour could include a few tunes in his show and no one would know the difference. Again, it's one of those rare albums where every song is good. **Antiphon** is most definitely a keeper.

Newsflash: word has it that **Vlad Zsoerbin** is finally releasing a series of books that he has been unable to publish. It is murder mystery fiction featuring a hard-nosed 1950's New York private eye named Dick Rasch. It is reported that other continuing characters are Gail Storme, his sexy personal secretary; Justin Case, a good friend and clever sidekick; Doug A. Hole, a smooth operator good at undercover jobs; Frank Einstein, a grizzly homicide cop but tolerable; Anna Conda, a sexy bartender who hears lots of scuttlebutt; Dan Druff, a pesky newspaper man glad to do good favors for good stories; Stan Still, a shoeshine guy who gets word on the streets; Jonah Vark, a beatnik defense lawyer privy to the grapevine at City Hall. There is no confirmation on when the novels will be published, but these are titles hopefully to appear soon:

Mystery of the Decrepit Dork
Mystery of the Lecherous Lamebrain
Mystery of the Contemptible Cretin
Mystery of the Disgusting Dimwit
Mystery of the Reprehensible Wretch
Mystery of the Tempestuous Twit
Mystery of the Nauseating Nincompoop
Mystery of the Hideous Halfwit
Mystery of the Malodorous Moron
Mystery of the Despicable Dipshit
Mystery of the Insidious Slimeball
Mystery of the Malicious Malfeasant
Mystery of George Bush Being Elected Twice

Voyager wishes **Vlad** great success in his efforts.

Now for some bad news – the fantastic digital **Minidisc** is going out of production, everything from machines to music titles to blank discs. When **Minidisc** first appeared it was a potential revolution because they were the digital equivalent of cassettes. They could be re-recorded endlessly with no loss of sound quality, album and song titles could be added, songs were easy to edit, playlists were easy to change, and the disc was much smaller than the CD. Most astonishing was the **Minidisc** provided the surest, most sturdy recording format of all. **Per Jensen** tells us, *"We have used **MD** for years. Even the more complicated **Data Disc** has been one of our primary recording tools. And in all this time we've only experienced two bad **MD** discs. In contrast, recordable CD's, whether using PC or an outboard burner, can lose as many as 10%."* Will **MagellanMusic** continue to use **Minidisc**? **Jensen** says, *"You bet your sweet bippy we will!"*

Newsflash: it is reported that **Derek Story** is assembling a photo book of vivid insect pornography. After witnessing a female Praying Mantis eat her mate after indulging in nature's calling, his rumored comment was, "*Holy boil my buns, Batman!*" Derek may also be publishing a monthly magazine called "**Insex**", but this is not confirmed. As we receive updates we will keep you informed.

Voyager has recently learned that a new music player, called the **Pono**, will be able to restore full aural fidelity to downloaded music. **Neil Young** has been the primary proponent of this technology by being a long-time fan of the superb digital sound quality of compact disc, but a critic of sound quality loss when downloading. It doesn't compare to the old days of original studio masters pressed for vinyl LP's, but subtle nuances can be lost digitally, mostly noted on portable players like iPod and Smartphones. A computer program called **FLAC** can restore full sound quality, but only when burning CD's. **Pono** is an actual player like iPod. Your downloaded music can be uploaded into **Pono** and it plays back at full audio fidelity. It has generated excitement for audiophiles, and will hopefully help buyers understand that quality listening was the whole point of digital recording in the first place, not mass sales for lousy sounding portables.

And with that thought in mind, "*A long time ago, in a galaxy far, far away, a great adventure took place!*" It was called Listening. The 1950's and 60's brought too many changes to count, one of which was the day when 'concept album' and 'album rock' were new terms. LP's had taken on a whole new role in music. Singles no longer ruled the day, and artists learned to compose much better, as well as more thoughtful. College radio stations avoided the typical Top 40 songs and played album tracks instead. Plus they broadcast on the FM format, which sounded far better than the tinny AM. And with "Sgt. Pepper" in 1967 the advent of 'concept album' was a reality. "Days of Future Passed" followed soon. "Tommy" and "S.F. Sorrow" by Pretty Things followed in 1968, with many more soon to come. It gave Rock some real meaning for a change, stories and messages, which is how listening became an event. It became a tradition to turn down the lights, with incense and candles, get the LP out of the sleeve, put it on the turntable, clean it with disc washer, plug in the headphones, then drop the needle to sit back and completely forget the world for a while. It became a musical movie, your imagination giving all the images you cared to dream. But today, the so-called advances in electronics, as well as downloading, favors songs instead of albums. It's like a step backward in time to the AM radio days. The music experience isn't listening, it's just hearing. Sound quality is lost on the new players, giving music the warmth and personality of a TV dinner. "*Concept album? What's that?*" But thankfully there are still many who haven't forgotten. Sometimes we have to hear music to accompany our day, but sometimes we must indulge in the art of listening. It is medicine for the soul, and food for the mind. We must always enjoy the flavors of creativity at its best.

Speaking of which, that calls to mind a band called **MagellanMusic** we haven't mentioned lately. (*ooops!*) There is no word on their next album, which gives a sense of no rush in doing it, but the **Voyager** staff keeps hearing rumors of a new video. We asked **Ellis Dee** about it and his response was, "Yeah, I know, I've been shopping for new tires too, three, four, five, six!" Okay **Ellis**, message received and understood. We will leave it at that but keep pestering them to keep us up to date.

Don't forget that all **MagellanMusic** albums and downloads are available at these sites:

CD Baby - www.cdbaby.com/all/magellanmusic

Amazon - http://www.amazon.com/s/ref=nb_sb_noss?url=search-alias%3Dpopular&field-keywords=MagellanMusic

(with "**A Strange Traffic of Dreams**" at a different address -

http://www.amazon.com/Strange-Traffic-Dreams-Magellan/dp/B000CACYC0/ref=sr_1_sc_5?s=music&ie=UTF8&qid=1400689877&sr=1-5-spell&keywords=MagellanMusic)

iTunes - <http://itunes.apple.com/us/artist/magellanmusic/id6792085>

Facebook - <https://www.facebook.com/perjensen01>

Always remember -

"Music is like the brightest Moon on the darkest night. A time to wonder, to think, to imagine, and to dream."

- *unknown*