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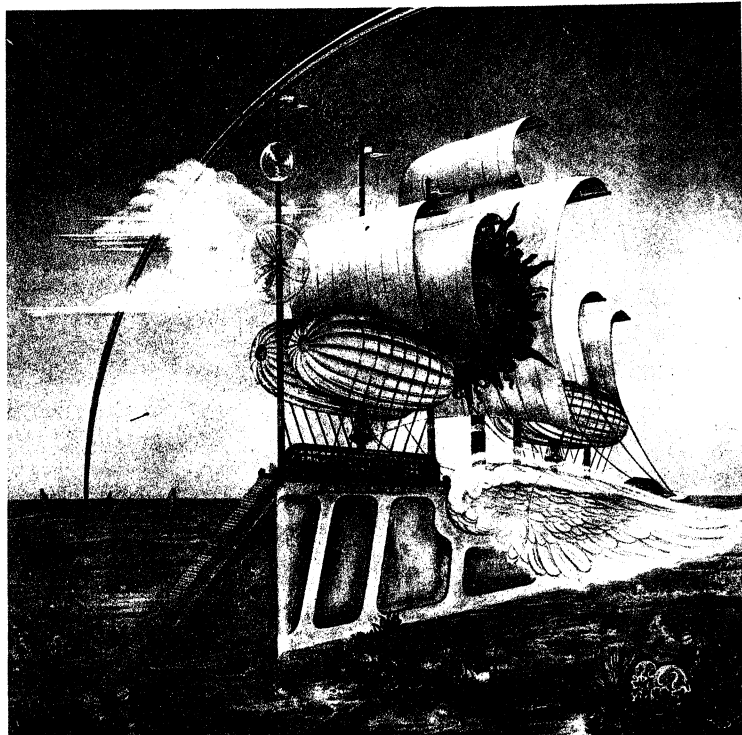
Magentalane

A Critical Review

By Frank Davies

"MAGENTALANE" is KLAATU's fifth album and having had the pleasure of hearing it for the first time in its entirety, I'm, sure it will be hailed as one of their best. "MAGENTALANE" contains several of the finest crafted pop songs the group has written to date and although the overall production quality of the album would be considered to be well above-average for most, it is what we have come to expect from this band who have spent the better part of their career in the recording studio.

"MAGENTALANE" was recorded and produced entirely by the members of KLAATU at a new studio co-built by the band outside Toronto. It is housed in a beautiful antique barn and has been jokingly nick-named "SHABBY ROAD". Now to specific tracks of the album itself.



A MILLION MILES AWAY

The album opens with this mid-paced pop rocker about the art of daydreaming at school, a subject I'm sure many of us have excelled in! The song's bridge drifts into a beautiful and typically KLAATUESQUE spacey half-time segment that is reminiscent of parts of the "HOPE" album. The climactic build-up at the end of the song is terrific - complete with lead vocals thrown out to the star stinging guitar lines and a big pounding drum sound.

THE LOVE OF A WOMAN

This song follows the opener and is a fabulous string arrangement in the best traditions of the Electric Light Orchestra. The group asked me to mention that they enlisted the musical services of Jack Lenz in putting together the string arrangements. The title of the song is self-explanatory. A seering instrumental break features a hot saxophone solo that will certainly stand up as one of the best of the year. This track is one which exemplifies the grandiosity that has become a KLAATU trademark. Listen to the scorching rhythm guitar that leads into the final choruses towards the end of the song - just a taste and then its gone. So many other nice arrangement ideas in the song.

BLUE SMOKE

This cut opens with a satiric touch of Ravi Shankar followed by a rhythm guitar riff that would make Randy Bachman smile and then into various delightful and sometimes zany arrangement and production touches that are typical of what separates KLAATU from the majority of contemporary bands recording today. Essentially this is a rock n' roll song which incidentally was written originally as the title track for the "ENDANGERED SPECIES" album but shelved at the last moment for various reasons known only to the band. If you can imagine a combination of vibes, raunchy "stripper" horns, Sgt. Pepperish guitar sounds, Jerry Lee piano, bar-room vocal back-up, sitar and assorted coughing fits set to a Chuck Berry style rocker then you've got this track all figured out!

I DON'T WANNA GO HOME

This is one of those songs that makes record business people and music publishers do strange things like take the day off or open their office window and invite whoever is standing in the street below out to lunch. In short, it is a "smash", a "hit", a "killer", a "monster" or whatever currently used expression that signifies a song that will have enormous commercial appeal. It is skillfully laden with what the industry likes to call "hooks" and it's likely to be recorded by a dozen other artists from L.A. to New York to London over the next few years. So just remember you heard it here first!

DECEMBER DREAM

Side one of the album closes with a beautifully haunting and very grand ballad that reminds one of the finest work of the Moody Blues in their heyday. There is an urgency and pathos rolled into this song which also takes me back to an early KLAATU masterpiece, "CALLING OCCUPANTS OF INTERPLANETARY CRAFT". The song ends vocally with what may be interpreted as a subtle salute to the late JOHN LENNON.

MAGENTALANE

Magentalane opens side two of the album and coincidentally happens to be the title track. What does Magentalane stand for, you may ask? Well according to sources close to the band it is a simple allegory symbolizing in words and music the group's own return to their original musical roots so prominently displayed in earlier KLAATU albums. Having come through several periods of change, both musically and otherwise, KLAATU has finally returned "home" from whence they came. Apparently, the actual writing of the song occurred during the final weeks in the recording studio as an afterthought and was completed just in time before the "string" sessions were due to end. The track itself exudes a happy feeling with its lightly textured orchestration and positive lyrics and frankly makes you feel as good as the band must have done recording it. It's permeated with the sounds and production concepts that are unmistakably KLAATU. A definite up!

New Klaatu Album Release

Klaatu's fifth record album, enigmatically entitled, "Magentalane", will be released by Capitol Records of Canada on October 7, 1981. (Record #ST6487).

Although as of the writing, arrangements have not yet been finalized for its release in any other country, plans are currently well underway to secure releases outside Canada in the very near future. The album artwork was again scribed by that artiste extraordinaire, Ted Jones, and is an exquisite visual representation of the musical content contained in the album. Ted has graciously allowed us to reprint the front cover artwork below so that our fanship can get a sneak preview. This is the first album to be produced and engineered entirely by the band members themselves and they are understandably a bit anxious that it meets with the expectations of their fans.

We hope you like it.

NOTICE TO SUBSCRIBERS

This issue marks the fourth and final issue of our first year of publication of "The Morning Sun". We'd like to take this opportunity to thank all of our subscribers for their interest and in addition for their patience regarding late mailings caused by the recent Canadian postal strike. We apologize for any delay in getting some of the issues out to you but as you can well imagine, Klaatu's members have had enormous time demands imposed on them in the production of their new album and also in ongoing preparations for a Canadian fall concert tour, yet they still insist on being directly involved in the preparation of each quarterly issue.

We now invite you to re-subscribe to receive the next four issues of "The Morning Sun" beginning with the 1981 Fall issue and receive free the all-new KLAATU photo personally autographed!! To re-subscribe, simply send a cheque or money order for \$8.00 payable to Klaatu to the following address:

"The Morning Sun"
P.O. Box 1030
Oak Ridges, Ontario
LOG 1P0

Please remember to enclose your name and address and do NOT send cash. Thanques.

P.S. In the first issue of the new season, there will be an itinerary of the first Klaatu concert tour ever.

...A Critical Review Con't

AT THE END OF THE RAINBOW

This track is probably the most Beatles oriented track the band have recorded in some time. From the drum pattern on the intro all the way through to the vocals and guitar sounds throughout. Another pretty and pleasing song.

MRS. TOAD'S COOKIES

In the tradition of Sir Bodsworth Rugglesby III and Perpetual Motion Machine, this is yet another KLAATU cartoon set to music. A children's song full of nursery rhyme and fantasy whose thematic message is "moderation in all things". I understand that the band brought in three girls off the street to sing background vocals to emulate the sound of children. Perhaps this track might one day appear on a Sesame Street album

MAYBE I'LL MOVE TO MARS

This is the story of a friend of the band who decided that he wanted to move to Mars (one step closer to the stars). No joke! He was deadly serious. They never saw or heard of him again except for a solitary postcard. The lyric of the song is conversational dialogue between the band and their friend. Musically, it has a lovely drifting melody in the chorus with suitable spacey vocals and seems to float by and away to the end of the album in which we hear a half minute version of the title track and just enough lyric to give us a good idea of how the members of KLAATU felt in making this record.....

"It feels so good to be at home".

P.S. At the very closing of the album, I detected what appeared to be the sound of a mousetrap snapping shut. After listening to the masterful music of MAGENTALANE, I can only hope that the mouse got safely away. I guess we'll have to wait till the next album to find out.