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COULD KLAATU BE BEATLES? Mystery Is A Magical Tour

RETROSPECTIVE; IN THE BEGINNING

Many words have been committed to paper and much ink has been spent in various reviews and articles over the past several years concerning the music and membership of the group. KLAATU, in fact, since the band's career officially got underway during the summer of '76 with the release of their debut record album entitled, "3:47 E.S.T." (in Canada only, in the United States and elsewhere the same album was simply called, "KLAATU"), it has become an inescapable truth that, almost without exception, everyone and anyone who has come in contact with the name, KLAATU, or been within earshot of Klaatu's music is equally, if not more, familiar with the group's controversial, albeit unintentional, association with a certain mop-topped quartet from Liverpool. Even today, when attending press or radio interviews, the members of Klaatu invariably encounter one or more well-aimed questions about the so-called "Beatle Hoax" of 1977.

"How did it all begin?" you may ask yourself. Well to answer that and other questions for the benefit of its readership, The Morning Sun has obtained a reprint of the original "Steve Smith" newspaper article first published in February of 1977 which sparked off one of the most widespread avalanches of world-wide press coverage ever afforded an unknown musical group and which later became the most bizarre and hotly debated music-business controversy of the 1970's. Like a pebble innocently tossed into a still pond the news article first appeared in The Providence Sunday Journal on the 13th of February but within days of that initial publication the repercussions were to be felt across North America and indeed as far away as Australia where the crest of the "rumour" reached its highest point.

The final irony of this newspaper article and the subsequent chain of events arises from the knowledge that from the very beginning, Klaatu had been a band which consciously sought to avoid all publicity and did so at any cost, hence their self-imposed anonymity for so many years. But, as a direct result of the "Could Klaatu Be Beatles?" article and the deluge of press that followed, the band was to become the unwitting subject of a tidal wave of "hype", the likes of which would have far exceeded the wildest dreams of even the most ambitious of press agents. As bandmember John Woloschuk recently explained, "In retrospect, I guess we were all a bit naive in the beginning... flatly refusing to relinquish our musical principles under pressure from the outside. Instead we insisted that our music could and should speak for itself because apart from the music there wasn't much else to talk about. Perhaps it spoke a little too loudly afterall."

So without further ado, ladies and gentlemen, we respectfully submit below for your perusal a reproduction of the infamous article in its entirety and we trust you will find it entertaining and interesting reading at the very least.



By Steve Smith
The Providence Sunday Journal ARTS and TRAVEL
February 13, 1977

Just before Christmas I listened to a refreshing new album that sounded incredibly "Beatlish." I checked the album, entitled *Klaatu*, for names or pictures of the musicians but there were none. All credits were given to Klaatu. Curious, I called Capitol Records and was told it was a "mystery group."

Who are Klaatu? That is the mystery. Their names are being kept secret by Capitol Records and Frank Davies, who handles the group's so-far clandestine affairs. The band will not submit to any publicity pictures (Capitol press release says that "they want to be known for their music and not for whom they are"). They are rumored to be independently wealthy. Capitol claims to have no knowledge of the identities of the band members, but this raises a question: Why would Capitol invest in an "unknown"?

Klaatu's album brings back memories of the Beatles on every song, especially *Sub Rosa Subway*, a song about the building of the New York subway system, and *Doctor Marvello*, about a man with mystical powers.

Sub Rosa Subway sounds like 1968-1969 Beatles. The vocals are exactly like Paul McCartney's, the drumming like Ringo Starr's, and the guitar work like George Harrison's and John Lennon's.

Doctor Marvello sounds like George Harrison's *Blue Jay Way* with the rest of the Beatles backing, complete with sitar and reverse tape effects.

Other songs have digs from the Beatles' past such as singing through fuzztones, "Yeah, Yeah, Yeahs" and unmistakable harmonies.

Capitol's stonewallers did disclose that the word Klaatu was taken from a 1951 science fiction movie. *The Day the Earth Stood Still*. In it Michael Rennie played a peace emissary from outer space named Klaatu. In Canada the name of the album is called *3:47 EST* which is the time Klaatu arrived on Earth in the movie. (On the cover of Ringo Starr's album, *Goodnight Vienna* Ringo is standing in the doorway of the spaceship next to the robot from that same movie).

According to Klaatoons, the band's publishing company, Klaatu can also mean "been here before" (return?).

Looking up many words from the lyrics, I discovered they concerned secrecy, underground, renewal and revival.

A song on the album, *Bodsworth Rugglesby III*, is misspelled on the back of the album cover so that it says Rubblesby. Defining bods, worth, rubbles, and by, Bodsworth Rubblesby could mean: "persons of importance born of quarrying." The Beatles were first known as the Quarrymen.

In *Sub Rosa Subway* there is a mention of, first, New York City and then, Washington. The Beatles first arrived in the United States in New York City and played the Ed Sullivan Show and Carnegie Hall, then they played the Washington Coliseum.

The whole album is about magic, mystery and touring, and true Beatles freaks know that *Magical Mystery Tour* was the only album the Beatles considered a failure. Could *Klaatu* be their answer to that?

I finally reached Frank Davies, Klaatu's "sort of manager," in Toronto. He said he could not tell me who was in the band. I asked him if it was the Beatles or whether they had anything to do with Klaatu. First, he gave me a flat "No" and said that the only Beatle connection was "inspirational." But when asked if any of the Beatles played on the album, he hesitated, laughed quietly, hesitated again and then said that "everything you've summarized is really pretty accurate all the way around" and that "everything that is there, can and will be identified even without, perhaps them, the people, being seen."

To add a final note of intrigue, Davies said there are many clues on the album about the band's identity, the biggest clue being a morse code message at the end of *Sub Rosa Subway* telling a lot about the band, the album and that song. (Davies has offered to give a Klaatu album and/or posters and buttons to the first person who can decode that message. Entries can be sent to Steve Smith in care of this newspaper). Davies said that "when it is finally let known as to whom they are, your story will be interesting to look back on."

The album's musical and lyrical clues left four possibilities as to whom this mystery band could be:

1. The Beatles.
2. A couple of the Beatles with other people.
3. A Beatle-backed band.
4. A completely unknown but ingenious and talented band.

A single by the band was scheduled for release this week. The "A" side is *Calling Occupants of Interplanetary Craft* backed with *Sir Bodsworth Rugglesby III*. Also, their second album is due out in April. Their first album is hard to find, but may be ordered from record stores. WBRU-FM is the only radio station giving it any airplay so far. Whoever Klaatu is, their album was well worth waiting for.

Is it the Beatles? You are welcome to draw your own conclusions — and if "Yesterday" is here, "Let it Be."

LYRIC REPRINT

For the second in a continuing series of Klaatunes lyric reprints in The Morning Sun, we have selected the title song from the "Hope" album which was originally released in September of 1977. If you wish to see a particular lyric reprinted in the next issue (Summer 1982) of The Morning Sun, please send in your selection prior to July 15, 1982 to the Box 1030 address. We will pick one of these selections and will publish it along with the sender's name in the next issue.

HOPE

Hope is like a lighthouse keeper's beam
Hope . . . the master cobbler of our dreams
For hope believes in desert streams
The mightiest of stars, the microcosm in a jar
Vast or small they all revolve on Hope.
Hope . . . the guardian angel of the dove
Hope . . . a gift of guidance from above
And hope is the heart in Mother's love
No plans could be conceived
No ships could fare the seas
For there would be no courage were it not for Hope.
Now the path before us lies
Before our very eyes, don't you see?
And it leads up to the gateway
Lead me through
Don't you see?
Then come and take my hand, raise up your head
And dry your eyes for up ahead I see
Woh yeah
A ray of peace shining on me
So let us feel hope and feel the sunrise in our minds
To give hope is to enlighten all mankind
Ah but lose hope and life seems black as blind
When faith gives way to fear
When motivation disappears
All is lost if one abandons hope
All is lost if one abandons hope.

you asked us . . .

Q. Who is Dino Tome?

Keld Teleu, Grindsted, Denmark

A. Although Dino is not an active member of Klaatu, he and John have co-written several songs which have appeared on various Klaatu albums including: *Sub Rosa Subway*, *California Jam* (which was originally entitled, "The Great San Andreas Misfortune"), *Knee Deep in Love*, *Blue Smoke*, and others. In the early days of Klaatu, Dino and John collaborated under the pseudonym, *Chip Dale*, which did appear as a writing credit on a few Canadian singles released prior to 1976. Dino was born on April 3, 1948 in a town called Cordenons which is situated in northern Italy. He emigrated to Canada in early 1967 where he and John first met and became friends. They began writing music together about a year later and have continued their writing partnership for the most part of fourteen years. It is, I think, worthy of note that Dino's six-year old son is named . . . Dale.

Q. What is the translation of the morse code in the song, *Sub Rosa Subway*?

Phredd L. Holtz, Bayshore, New York

A. Well it took a lot of "digging" (get it?), but according to Klaatu member, John Woloschuk, who co-authored the tune, the morse code message at the end of *Sub Rosa* decodes as follows:
From Alfred, heed thy sharpened ear
A message we do bring
Starship appears upon our sphere
Through London's sky come spring.
Just remember. You read it here first.

GOT A QUESTION? SEND IT IN!

