

The Klaatu Conspiracy

by Joan d'Arc



On August 3 1976, Capitol Records released an album by an anonymous group called Klaatu, which featured a song called "Calling Occupants of Interplanetary Craft" (subtitled, "The Recognised Anthem of World Contact Day" (covered in 1977 by The Carpenters). The album contained no names or pictures of band members, no songwriter credits, and simply said, "Produced by Klaatu." Among other song titles were Anus of Uranus and Sub Rosa Speedway. The psychedelic album contained references to Sgt Pepper.

Klaatu remained in obscurity until the following year, when a DJ from a Hartford radio station played a track from the album. The vocals sounded uncannily like McCartney & Lennon. The DJ, Charlie Parker, asked, "Who are Klaatu? Are the Beatles really back?"

Callers swamped the phone lines. Capitol records had to ship another 20,000 copies to the Northeast.

Following suit, on February 13, 1977 Providence rock music critic Steve Smith wrote an article for the Providence Journal entitled, "Could Klaatu be the Beatles? Mystery is a Magical Mystery Tour." The article began:

"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.'"

The whole album, Smith wrote, was about "magic, mystery and touring," and Beatles freaks all know that "Magical Mystery Tour was the only album the Beatles considered a failure." Could Klaatu be the Beatles' answer?, he asked.

Smith's article "sparked off one of the most widespread avalanches of world-wide press coverage ever afforded an unknown musical group." Smith wrote: "Who are Klaatu? That is the mystery." In the spirit of a true conspiracy buff, he confirmed the following details:

"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"?"

Smith concluded that there were only four possibilities as to who the mystery band could be: "The Beatles; a couple of the Beatles with other people; a Beatle-backed band; a completely unknown but ingenious and talented band." In response, a British music magazine, *The New Musical Express*, ran an article entitled, "Deaf idiot journalist starts Beatle rumour." But rumors persisted, and within 8 weeks the album had sold 300,000 copies. Among the rumors were the following:

- ◇ Insect sounds (beetles?) are heard chirping and buzzing at the beginning of "Calling Occupants."
- ◇ A University of Miami voice print test on Klaatu and McCartney recordings proved the lead vocalist on both recordings was the same.
- ◇ An Australian disc jockey claimed to have evidence

that the Klaatu album was an unreleased Beatles album called Sun. On *Abbey Road* the Beatles sing about the "Sun King". All Klaatu album covers contain a sun.

◇ If you played the song Sub Rosa Subway backwards, using a low speed frequency oscillator and filters, you would get the message "Its us, its the Beeeeetles!"

◇ On the cover of Ringo Starr's *Goodnight Vienna* album (1974), Ringo's head is superimposed on the body of Klaatu, the main character in the film *The Day The Earth Stood Still*.

◇ The promotional material released by Apple stated, "Don't Forget - Klaatu Barada Nikto."

On the liner notes to their 1980 *Endangered Species* album, Klaatu finally identified themselves as Canadian session musicians John Woloschuk (also known as L.M.Carpenter and Chip Dale), Terry Draper, David Long and Dino Tome, but the Klaatu Conspiracy went on to reach its zenith in Australia, where Beatle fan John Squires published a booklet called "Under An Assumed Name: The Beatles Secret Reunion."

References

Steve Smith, Providence Journal article: www.klaatu.org/fanclub/mornsun7.html. See also, <http://beatles.ncf.ca/klaatu.html>

More Klaatu conspiracies at: www.klaatu.org/klaatu1.html

Youtube, search "Calling Occupants" for The Carpenters version. (Carpenters = Mr. Carpenter, did anyone get that one?)

