



Welsh Connections - Michael Kennedy

There's no way on earth you could have missed this release - their first studio album of original material in 30 years has been hyped on every social media platform as well as radio interviews, filmed Karpool shorts, magazine features and music videos. But does the album live up to the hype?

Anyone that loves 'Everybody's Got To Learn Sometime' or 'If I Had You' is in for a bit of a shock because this album is different - the melodies are still there, plus the clever wordplay, but this is a harder edged album. Quirky, progressive and conceptual - more like a Stackridge (James Warren's other band) album than a traditional Korgis outing. Yet for all that it is still very much a Korgis album, and an album of some note. The album flows and ebbs, it draws you in and in places is possibly one of the most beautifully written and recorded albums I've ever heard.

It's an album filled with love and hope - with a few sideways swipes at the establishment - and despite his 50 years making music, James Warren has written some of his finest tunes for Kartoon World and that in no way lessens the importance of the songs written by John Baker & Al Steele which are sublime.

The Korgis in 2021 feature an impressive line-up of Welsh artists including drummer Paul Smith, Ava, Emmy & Jay from Born To Win and keyboard maestro Nigel Hart - and a few guests pop up on the album too: Peter Karrie, Darren Parry and The Welsh Television Orchestra to name just a few!

Every detail has been thought of for the release - we have downloads, CDs, Deluxe CDs, Vinyl - it's a collector's dream (or nightmare depending on your view) but it definitely makes for a sumptuous package and says something about the confidence the band feel about this release - a confidence that is well placed because Kartoon World is an instant classic. Every track is a winner, perfectly born and grown in the studio and minds of The Korgis - now, let's see you do it live guys!

5/5 from us!



Get Ready To Rock - Pete Feenstra

Korgi Music

'Kartoon World' is the first proper studio album since 1992. And it marks a quantum leap forward in terms of the band's musical and lyrical scope.

It's a significant release, in as much as it was recorded remotely and re-states the qualities of an enduring song-driven pop outfit, while extending its reach into the realms of a concept album.

This is organic hand made music, forged by years of experience and technical know-how, but sparked by renewed creativity and an idealistic thread that spans the 3 decades of their career.

Overlooking the slight irony of an 80's band delivering their latest opus in archetypal 70's concept format, they warm to their task with 12 songs that are as coherent as a film storyboard, save for a few quirky Stackridge style eccentricities.

The new creative surge stems from the catalytic collaboration between founder member James Warren and Welsh based Australian multi-instrumentalist/singer-songwriter Al Steele, who has been in Warren's orbit since the 90's.

And it's Steele's sense of drive, enthusiasm and effortless abilities that appear to have sparked Warren's own creative fuse.

The album title and lyrical inspiration also comes from Steele's daughter, an illustrator whose series of cartoons provided the unlikely catalyst for some of the songs.

There's also the lyrical and vocal input of John Baker – a Korgi since the late 80's - who notably contributes a lovely lead vocal on the title track.

The band also benefits from the remotely recorded creativity of Chris Hopkins and a one off ballad called 'Broken', co-written by Warren and Darren Parry, which features an enveloping Jeff Lynne style melodic chorus.

In sum, 'Kartoon World' is a career high for a band that started out as a studio bound duo in search of pop hits. This album successfully aims higher with a sense of adventure and greater lyrical depth.

It's built on heartfelt conceptual themes and is glued together by a layered production. The unique Korgi aesthetic extends right through to the thematic art work and of course Warren's enduring fascination with the Fab 4.

The Beatles influence arguably goes back to Stackridge's 1974 album 'Man With the Bowler Hat' (produced by George Martin), while a late 90's song 'Something About The Beatles' reaffirmed the Beatles influence on both band's.

get ready to ROCK!
THE WEBSITE FOR CLASSIC, METAL & PROGRESSIVE ROCK

It's a pivotal song in Warren's career and here he continues to explore a unity of purpose that taps into the 60's ideal of the healing power of love to overcome social divisions.

So while The Beatles sang 'All You Need Is Love' The Korgis beguile us with 'Bringing Back The Spirit Of Love.'

Al Steele, with tongue firmly in cheek, tells us it's about: "The Growing movement of love and the world has chosen us to be that conduit to funnel that love back to the people in one movement."

So while the band continues to dip into 60's musical antecedents, 'Kartoon World' is very much a 70's style concept album with significant 80's style pop trappings and what we now call electronica.

Everything is finally refracted in a post-Beatles meets Oasis 90's prism, with John Lennon remains the musical and political focal point. Warren's phrasing eerily captures Lennon in his pomp, while his 'can do' sensibility and 'power to the people' politics gives the album's 'love' theme a potential bigger impact.



'All Roads Lead To Rome' is a good example of the Lennon fixation. It starts in a slow bluesy vein, but subtly reveals itself as influenced by Lennon's 'Like Starting Over', via a 'Walls and Bridges' era production, complete with a George Harrison slide guitar line.

More specifically the band helpfully comments that: "It is like John Lennon sings gospel, produced by Phil Spector, and George has dropped in to lay down some slide guitar!"

The combination of Lennon's style phrasing and Fab 4 style harmonies make for quintessential Korgi music. It's the work of Warren's enduring glorious pop sensibility and 60's musical values which he's continually channelled back and forth between Stackridge and The Korgis and has now updated and reinvigorated with Al Steele by his side.

At times there's a thin dividing line between nostalgia and a contrasting forward-looking imperative which the central concept of love demands.

So when the band unveils 'Bringing Back The Spirit Of Love' (beautifully reprised by a string section deep into the album), they put their concept on the line as a broad based repost to contemporary social divisions.

Al Steele's orchestrated 'Kartoon World Overture' sets a high standard for the album as a whole, as the memorable motif levers us into a coherent musical journey like all great albums used to.

The title track is pure pop, with a Byrds Rickenbacker sound and poignant lyrics that could be Squeeze.

Steele is a man of many talents, not least his inherent rhythmic ability which is self evident on the funky and percussive electro-pop of 'Magic Money Tree'. The latter is anchored by drummer Paul Smith's light percussive touch and also features Chris Hopkins spacey bridge with ethereal 10CC style harmonies.

There's also a sense of chronology as evidenced by the snappy keyboard and synth driven 'Back In The 80's', one of several highlights. The song benefits from glistening bv's and an uplifting stop-time hook, to which John Baker cleverly fits his humorous lyrics.

They explore the same 80's era on the string-led and didgeridoo intro of the wryly observed 'This Is The Life'. It opens as another electro piece that could easily be Rupert Hine's solo work and features Al Steele's vocals on the verses, Warren's vocals on the hook and an unexpected animated rap from special guest Peter Karrie (from Phantom Of The Opera): "Staring at our mobile phones, buy it now on your credit card" etc.

Suddenly the 80's are juxtaposed by an updated barbed political satire called 'Time (Song For Dom)', which calls out Dominic Cummings and Boris Johnson over a harpsichord-driven waltz style piece.

The sumptuous glorious harmonies could be 10cc's take on The Beatles, before a sudden Keith Emerson ELP style Hammond break in a brief '80's flashback.

They rock out on 'La La Land' which sounds almost like a shoe-in: "La la land, la la land, it's another perfect day and there's nothing planned, maybe rock and roll for you, but it's not so rock and roll for me."

It's a social commentary on LA in particular and the States in general, as we're suddenly transported Korgis style into a Turtles meets The Beach Boys vocal block and a resolving sax break.

'Space' interestingly offers two different perspectives on things from the outside looking in, while 'This Is A New Low' initially evokes Supertramp then heads for Pink Floyd on a big production.

'The Ghost Of You' has an archetypal 80's electro intro, before a funky bass line gives it a lovely dance-floor friendly groove which is almost compromised by a cheesy Asia style synth riff.

'Kartoon World' flows like a river in purposeful pursuit of the sea. The undeniable swagger and ebullience is tempered by the veracity of its lyrical themes and Warren's clarity of diction.

They round off the album with a full blown anthem that defines everything that has gone before.

'The Best Thing You Can Do Is To Love Someone', features special guests Seye Adelekan (bass player with The Gorillaz) and French jazz artist Laura Prince.

It's one step away from being too sugary and could easily have come the 'Live Aid' era, but you would have to be a cold fish not to be caught up in it's emotional slipstream.

'Kartoon World' stands proudly by its optimistic themes and lingering melodies. We may indeed live in a 'Kartoon World', but this album is a monument to the enduring power of love and music, Korgis style. ****½

Review by Pete Feenstra



Link to online review: <http://getreadytorock.me.uk/blog/2021/08/album-review-the-korgis-kartoon-world/>



LET IT ROCK

Dmitry M. Epstein (DME)

THE KORGIS – Kartoon World
The Korgis 2021

Stating that “reality sure leaves its mark” and making sure this mark has a soundtrack, British pop veterans deliver a concept epistle to the world.

Here’s a blast from the past – an album that, with its lambasting of our times and learning to love the progressively corrupted global population anew, is able to blow the present straight into the listener’s face, and this is quite a flabbergasting effort from the off – from the outside in, from the cover artwork to the music underneath. Unlike their predecessors STACKRIDGE, THE KORGIS have never really been known for their humorous streak, and tracks of the “Dirty Postcards” sort were always rare in the English ensemble’s repertoire, yet here they are, offering the collective’s first full-length record in almost three decades – a belated successor to “This World’s For Everyone” – and informing it with acerbic wit and good-natured attitude. James Warren, John Baker, Al Steel and their coterie of kindred spirits couldn’t find a better moment to serve it up.

Never pulling any pastiche strings to win favor with their audience while keeping the flow playful, the group may quote, half-quote and quarter-quote some of their pop heroes – whether injecting a Billy Joel line into the ebullient “LaLa Land” and placing Brian Wilson’s vibrations here and there, casting a sci-fi Bowie shadow on the platter’s titular cut or alluding to The Fabs whom this ensemble claimed to know something about. However, once you’ve heard the words “heart” and “change” soon after “Kartoon World Overture” (which is a grandiose orchestral take on the title track rather than montage of the album’s main themes), there’s no doubt as to what universe we’re in. It’s the same continuum where “All The Love In The World” and “Everybody’s Got To Learn Sometime” envelope one’s soul, even though “Bringing Back The Spirit Of Love” harks much further through the years, marching all the way to the flawed idealism of the ’60s and unfolding the sweetest, lightest tune one can bask in in the gloomy 2021, over the infectious piano-and-bass bounce and heavenly vocal harmonies before radiant guitar solo and magnetic sloganeering cast doubt on the dream yet instrumentally revisiting the reverie. And if “Back In The Eighties” and “The Ghost Of You” tighten the sonics and lyrics into a synthesizers-driven knot, the results of such a nostalgically lysergic, effervescent exercise are not as patinated as one could imagine – a few fiery riffs and moving groove will burst the temporal bubble soon enough.



So while the magnificently funky, pandemic-inspired psychedelia of “Magic Money Tree” displays the band’s bold front, “All Roads Lead To Rome” bares their inherent vulnerability by disrobing gospel uplift and letting pure emotions pour onto the number’s organ-oiled and choir-caressed surface. Still, the effects-ridden rap of “This Is The Life” – which features Peter Karrie’s blame-laying voice in the middle – wraps soft melody over angry call for perseverance, passes controlled chaos to the piece’s bombastic coda, and sets the scene for “This Is A New Low” which is destined to dissolve didactics in heavy disco. It requires a lot of nerve to render a baroque ballad acidic, yet “Time (Song For Dom)” does just that, with harpsichord and woodwind emphasizing the song’s sarcastic angle until, incited by the roar of Hammond, the drift swaggers forward and gains a belligerent momentum – only to slow down to a waltz again (listen to its demo) and logically evoke the ethereal, out-there “Space” later on to suspend anxiety and chase away the worry.

That’s when the silver tears of “Broken” can flow freely from tender bows and ivories and evaporate, its delivery especially touching in a mix which has the pocket symphony stripped down – which must also be said about “Cartoon World” that sounds most natural in the acoustic version, restoring the specter of the ’70s. So if the folk-informed “The Best Thing You Can Do Is Love Someone” seems a little bit anticlimactic as an album’s finale, this singer-rotating hymn’s translucent lace is bound to make THE KORGIS’ entrance into the twenty-first century a memorable event.

Link to online review: <http://dmme.net/the-korgis-kartoon-world/>

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SHINDIG!
MAGAZINE

Dystopian Love

MICHAEL BJÖRN talks to popsters **THE KORGIS**, whose new album spins a dark tale that begins and ends with love

Fittingly, the impetus for the return of The Korgis, most famous for their 1980 hit 'Everybody's Got To Learn Sometime', came from a fan. Back in the lockdown summer of 2020, Chris Hopkins from the Liverpool band Exhibit-1 was chatting with Korgis guitarist, singer and producer Al Steele on Messenger about writing an album through relay. Chris offered up an idea that eventually became album track 'This Is A New Low'. Reflecting our grim times, a voice on it repeats "This is not a high / This is a new low" over a lyric warning against misinformation.

Soon everyone in The Korgis – including founding member James Warren – was sharing ideas. "Creativity flowed, and rather than being a nostalgic trip down memory lane from old geezers brought down from

the attic by fans, *Kartoon World*, The Korgis' first album in 30 years, is not a career low." Instead, it is a new high.

"I would happily put this at the top of the list for Korgis albums," says James. "In the past that sort of positivity wasn't there." A perfect example is Beatlesque opener 'Bringing Back The Spirit Of Love' which is so joyful and catchy that you immediately want to sing along.

"A song like that would have sat quite nicely on most radio stations back in the day," says guitarist and singer John Baker. "But it is very difficult for heritage bands to get any radio play at all now." And even if you get played on the radio, it no longer has impact, since everything is so fragmented. Which brings us to the dark heart of *Kartoon World*.

"On Facebook you can't even tell if it is a real person posting," exclaims Al. "Misinformation is given to achieve a desired effect. That has probably always been the case with politics, but now it is coupled with technology. What is real? It is all like a cartoon to me."

So Al asked his daughter Leah Darknell to do a series of cartoons. "It was just very random off-the-wall-things, like James Warren being on his way to Tibet to reinstate the Dalai Lama as the rightful leader," chuckles Al. The Facebook world we are living in is as fake as a cartoon.

The Summer Of Love might be viewed as this crazy era when irresponsible hippies did drugs, but *Kartoon World* posits that summer as the epitome of human sanity. Since then, society has grown increasingly tribalistic. For this reason, the album ends with 'The Best Thing You Can Do Is To Love Someone', a direct appeal to the listener. "That is the *only* thing you can do," emphasises James.

Following Brexit, COVID, Trump, the climate crisis and more, there are lots of bands spinning dystopian tunes. But nobody else takes all of that and wraps it up in a brilliant call for love. We repeat, for The Korgis, this is not a low. This is a new high.

"I would happily put this at the top of the list for Korgis albums. In the past that sort of positivity wasn't there"



 **Kartoon World is out now on Korgis**

Animated music. The Korgis, 2021 model. L-R: John Baker, James Warren, Al Steele





Full review available:

<http://www.themidlandsrocks.com/the-korgis-kartoon-world-2cd/>

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The Korgis – Kartoon World (2CD)

15 November, 2021

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Formed in 1978 as an offshoot from legendary band Stackridge, **The Korgis** streamlined their progressive roots and birthed a more radio friendly (but equally intriguing) sound. Almost three decades since their last album they've returned with a fully realised concept record and **Kartoon World**, vast in scope, stands as a career best.

CD1:

After a brief overture (with shades of *Days Of Future Passed*) things really kick up a gear with opener 'Bringing Back The Spirit Of Love'. In four-and-a-half blissful minutes it succinctly encapsulates all that's great about The Korgis; it's luscious, warm and flows like a river of silk. Delicious harmonies nestle next to sublime melodies and float over a solid back beat. A balm to sooth our troubled times this could quite easily be The Beatles in '67 and The Korgis swing with a similar confidence. By way of a musical time machine 'Back In The Eighties' transports us to '87 with some suitably spiky synths and captures some of the vapidty of the Regan-era by referencing Madonna, Rubik's Cubes and VCRs. On an album that's constantly shifting gears 'All Roads Lead To Rome' takes a slower, bluesy route and ensures *Kartoon World* ebbs and flows perfectly.

Kartoon World links its songs thematically and with an arcing storyline is an enticing concept album. Writing such a record can be a risky business; often a band can get bogged down in a complex story, and at the expense of songs. However, this album is obtuse enough that listeners can infer their own meaning (as all good art should) and *Kartoon World* can be (preferably) enjoyed whole or consumed piecemeal. 'Time (Song for Dom)' contains several suites and explores some prog roots while 'La La



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Roots, Singer-Songwriter, Folk, Rock, World and blues

ROCK

THE KORGIS

★★★★★

Kartoon World

(ANGEL AIR) www.thekorgis.com



You can speculate that, with a less 'stop-start' career, The Korgis could have been a much bigger band than their solo hit 'Everybody's

Got To Learn Sometime' implies. The latest incarnation of the band is no different. Led by founding member, James Warren and aided by long-term collaborator John Baker, they have produced a hugely entertaining and hummable collection of tunes. However, each one has something intelligent to say, too, albeit often with tongue placed firmly in cheek.

Taking the conceit of an imagined history of the world from 1980 to 2030 (yes, you read that correctly), *Kartoon World* explores a diverse range of subjects, reflecting how our lives have changed over that period. Consumerism, the vacuous nature of Hollywood and celebrity culture, how capitalism and globalisation have polarised society, and political and corporate corruption. Throw in some less topic-specific songs and you've got an interesting mix.

One thing that unites all the material on the album is James Warren and his compatriots' way with a tune. Some songs pastiche era-appropriate genres, like 'Back In The Eighties', which is suitably electropop in its orchestration, but overall the songs adopt an accessible, fairly middle-of-the-road rock/pop sound. However, that shouldn't be taken as damning with faint praise. This is quality writing and performance, easy on the ear

yet with enough depth to repay repeated listening.

Trevor Raggatt

NOVELTY ISLAND

★★★★★

How Are You Coping With This Century?

(TOWER OF RECORD) www.noeltyisland.com



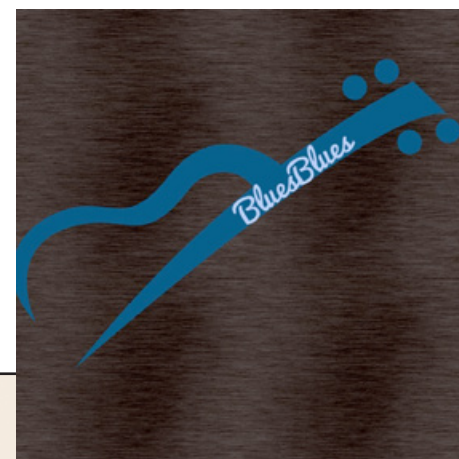
How relevant? The self-described 'humorous, analogue pop workshop', Novelty Island is the band, after all, and creative vehicle of songwriter and producer, Tom McCormick, who plays his craft in the walls of Abbey Road whose most famous previous inhabitants' influence is evident immediately on opener 'This Bird', and throughout the rest of the album.

Whether that is deliberate or not is for McCormick to know and us to speculate. His vocal is at times hybrid Lennon and McCartney, the lyrics throw up many matching themes, the instrumentation is identical and even the chord structures eerily familiar. Two thousand words would not be enough to describe the similarities, never mind two hundred.

The fact is, there's not a track here that would be out of place on a late- or post-Beatles (or indeed late-period Sydny) album. 'Don't be ridiculous,' I hear you say. 'Listen for yourself,' I return, 'and then tell me I'm wrong.' I'll wait. Only very rarely does an album keep at you from the review pile and say 'I'm different, I'm brilliant.' This is one of them. How Are You Coping With This Century? is already my album of 2022.

Sam Taylor

Online review (quite a long way down on the page): <https://www.bluesblues.co.uk/reviews>



The Korgis – Kartoon World

Those of us of a certain age will remember The Korgis big hits of the late 70s, early 80s, *If I Had You* and *Everybody's Got To Learn Sometime*. Well, they are back with their first album in 30 years in the shape of *Kartoon World*, which is subtitled *The History Of The World According To The Korgis 1980 – 2030* and comes in a 2 CD package. They didn't set out to write a new album when lockdown happened and they didn't set out to write a concept album, but one year later it arrived. A short orchestral piece, **Kartoon World Overture**, leads into the first full length track, **Bringing Back The Spirit Of Love**, which is unashamedly Pop. This takes us back even further than their original heyday with sounds of Pilot and such. Tenor vocals from James Warren and John Baker, synths from Nigel Hart and it sounds young and fresh. There are punchy guitar fills from Warren and plenty of Beatles and Tears For Fears influences. Next up is **Back In The Eighties** and its back to the synths sounds of that era too. This is up-tempo Electro Pop and all part of the concept of the album, looking back from the future. Big 80s bands, songs, films and toys are all getting name checked and the backing from Born To Win (Jay Marshall, Ava Volante and Emmy Rivers) in the mid-section is very good. **All Roads Lead To Rome** is a ballad which shows that they have not lost any of their vocal presence in their absence. The song is not out of place nowadays and has a nice slide guitar interlude by Warren and some lovely Gospel style piano from Hart. The verses of **This Is The Life** area all fuzzed vocal and modern drum patterns (Paul Smith) with prominent bass. The chorus is light and airy and they throw in a key change in keeping with 80s Pop. Peter Karrie, best known for being the longest serving 'Phantom' pops up as a ranting New Yorker, complaining about everything. It sounds like a harpsichord on **Time (Song For Dom)** and this could be Al Steele adding a Baroque feel. It also sounds like a clarinet in the chorus but could be further keys, there are lots as there is a Hammond in there from Hart too. It's all very melodic with changes of style from verse to chorus and a further change to Prog Rock in the mid-section. It's not the same, but do remember John Miles and his singles that were like little Rock symphonies, well it's a bit like that. A tale of excess, **LaLa Land** is middle of the road Pop Rock and very frivolous as you would expect from the title. The Beach Boys harmonies add to the overall feel.

Magic Money Tree has a strange wispy intro and then goes into an 80s smooth Funky beat. If you listen to the lyrics of this and the others then you'll get a certain feel of their sense for social justice and cynicism. The very mellow and thought-provoking **Space** is like their 80s hits in that it is a melodious and heartfelt Torch song. It does feel at times that you are floating through space. The two of them sing well together and on **This Is A New Low** they make it feel as if they have never been away. It's a bit grittier musically and the changes in style and tempo serve them well. This is very good and will grow on you. **Broken** is very much in the style of the songs that brought them success; a harmony laden Pop ballad with Warren's piercing guitar cutting through the harmony. They do have some upbeat rhythms on the album and **The Ghost Of You** brings some of those. There's a soaring vocal and is another example of their ability to construct well written Pop songs. You'll probably be whistling this within minutes. There's a very short, orchestral **Bringing Back The Spirit Of Love (Reprise)** before they go off to their **Cartoon World**. This is instrumentally reminiscent of the 60s in parts and very contemporary elsewhere. It's another slow-ish one which takes a darker, wistful look at life. They haven't put a foot wrong so far and I don't expect they will now. It's a gentle acoustic finish for **The Best Thing You Can Do Is Love Someone** with Warren and Baker taking turns at lead vocal. They are both strong singers as is Steele and the three of them also contribute acoustic guitar as they have done throughout. Born To Win provide excellent backing vocals again with the whole thing taking on an airy feel. The concept of the album is that love, not technology, will save the world. It may take a little of both but I get the sentiment.

The second CD is a vinyl mix of the first CD to give us the full retro dynamics plus the original demo of *Magic Money Tree*, *The Dark Matter Mix of Space*, *The Total Breakdown Mix of Broken*, *The Dancing Spirits Mix of The Ghost Of You* and *The Budget Hollywood Mix of Cartoon World*. So, they've been busy boys!

thekorgis.com

THE KORGIS – Kartoon World
Korgis Records / thekorgis.com

‘The world is heading for a colossal fall and it’s the power of love .. not technology .. which is the one indisputable answer.’ This is the manifesto of The Korgis and it’s the theme which permeates the whole of Kartoon World, the band’s first new album release since 1992’s *The World Is For Everyone*. As of March 2020 the band had no plans to make a new album and, when they began, they didn’t realise it would become a ‘concept album’, striking a rich vein of creativity along the way. It’s a double album, with the first disc the regular album, and the second disc being alternate versions and surprises, plus also folded poster sleeves with cartoon drawings depicting the songs.

The Korgis emerged from the loveably quirky Stackridge, a prog/folk band but one ‘without the pomposity of Prog and the high mindedness of Folk’; their *raison d’être* has always been writing songs which could be hits, and in 1980 they had their biggest hit with *Everybody’s Got To Learn Sometime*, a song which captured the ethereal sounds of John Lennon’s early 1970s output, though since then they’ve lain very much below the radar. But this new album captures the era of ‘all you need is love’ succinctly with a collection of songs which radiate messages of peace and harmony, with the influence of The Beatles so clearly alongside them. *Kartoon World* is an exercise in nostalgia, but one with a sense of purpose and direction.

This is highlighted in the two tracks which bookend the album. The McCartney influenced *Bringing Back The Spirit Of Love* begins with a short intro speech clip from John F Kennedy and then the song begins, telling us we’ve got to ‘lay down our hate’ and how they’re ‘armed only with a red Stratocaster, one voice one love is our weapon’, employing harmonies straight out of *Abbey Road* and a guitar break sounding like George Harrison played it, and ending with ‘we’re tired of the lies and spin, let’s talk about love’. And the album concludes with the gorgeous soft vocals of *The Best Thing You Can Do Is To Love Someone*, where we’re told ‘we can’t lead the blind with dark shades on, so the best thing you can do is to love someone’.

In-between are a series of songs with copious Beatles references and imagery making the same points and pointing to the same ideal. *La La Land* is a savage indictment of the phony culture of LA, a song which later period Lennon could have written. *Broken*, a mawkish piece about a relationship breaking down, is pure McCartney, and *All Roads Lead To Rome* sees The Korgis’ inner Lennon, circa early 1970s, coming well to the fore.

There are also comments about the current state of the country. *Magic Money Tree* is a dig at current political philosophy ... ‘I made my millions stealing from the poor man’s purse’ ... while *Time (Song For Dom)* is a take on the recent spat between Cummings and Johnson where it’s said, ‘there’s nothing more sad, than a clown who’s gone bad’. *Kartoon World* is a superb pop album, drenched as it is in the spirit of The Beatles, whose influence they gratefully acknowledge, with a fine collection of meaningful tunes, and it comes with a pledge – one which begins and ends with love. Unashamedly naïve sentiments, true, but who could disagree with them? It’s what the world needs ... now.

VELVET THUNDER

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THE KORGIS – KARTOON WORLD (KORGI MUSIC)

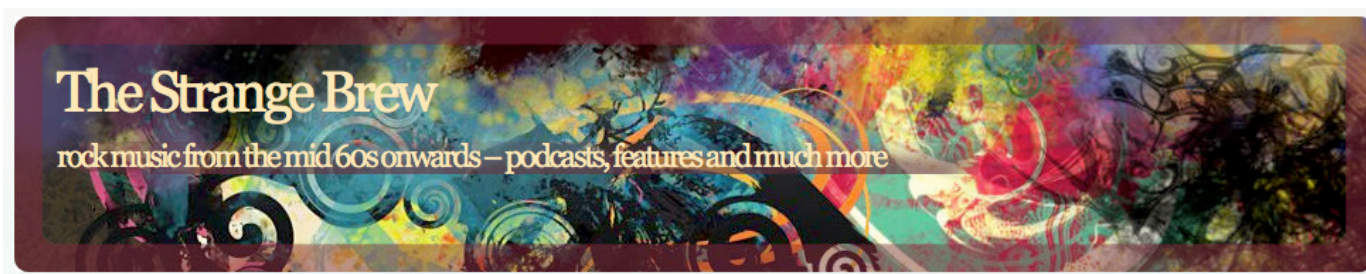
VELVET THUNDER > REVIEWS > THE KORGIS – KARTOON WORLD (KORGI MUSIC)

November 7, 2021 • Reviews

‘The world is heading for a colossal fall and it’s the power of love .. not technology .. which is the one indisputable answer.’ This is the manifesto of The Korgis and it’s the theme which permeates the whole of *Kartoon World*, the band’s first new album release since 1992’s *The World Is For Everyone*. As of March 2020 the band had no plans to make a new album and, when they began, they didn’t realise it would become a ‘concept album’, striking a rich vein of creativity along the way. It’s a double album, with the first disc the regular album, and the second disc being alternate versions and surprises, plus also folded poster sleeves with cartoon drawings depicting the songs.

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This is highlighted in the two tracks which bookend the album. The McCartney influenced *Bringing Back The Spirit Of Love* begins with a short intro speech clip from John F Kennedy and then the song begins, telling us we’ve got to ‘lay down our hate’ and how they’re ‘armed only with a red Stratocaster, one voice one love is our weapon’, employing harmonies straight out of *Abbey Road* and a guitar break sounding like George Harrison played it, and ending with ‘we’re tired of the lies and spin, let’s talk about love’. And the album concludes with the gorgeous soft vocals of *The Best Thing You Can Do*



Jason Barnard

James Warren – The Korgis Kartoon World

James Warren, singer songwriter for The Korgis, talks about the group's first album in 30 years, the brilliant, Kartoon World.

Would you describe Kartoon World as a concept album, if so what are its themes?

Yes, I think it is a bit of a concept album. This time it was AI who who mainly took care of the lyric-writing and I would say the songs are a kind of meditation on our collective lockdown experience – our new appreciation of the need for love and kindness alongside a disenchantment with the superficiality of all the old-school political posturing.

Some of the tracks are very positive like 'Bringing Back the Spirit of Love'. Was that important for you given the turbulent times we're in?

Definitely very important. It's a 21st century update on "I need your loving like the sunshine.."

How have you and the group been in the pandemic?

Luckily everyone in the band seems to have escaped unscathed. We all tend to live pretty socially-distanced lifestyles anyway – none of the band tend to congregate with bunches of other people in the everyday scheme of things, so lockdown didn't impinge too much.



One of the album tracks is 'Back in the Eighties' which was a very successful time for you. What are your overarching memories of that period?

On a personal level it was very exciting and life-changing. Suddenly we were a "chart act" after ten years of being decidedly "niche" and eccentric. It was tremendous fun, very confusing and decidedly scary all at the same time and I didn't handle it very well. If only I knew then what I know now!

'All Roads Lead to Rome' has an early John Lennon solo feel. Do you remember writing this track?

Yes I do remember writing it; it was a co-write with John Baker actually. Oh and AI Steele wrote the words. I think John and I started off trying to write a kind of gospel, soul-flavoured

thing but that short, rock'n'roll echo on my voice instantly gave it a Plastic Ono Band vibe.

The Korgis' outstanding album Kartoon World is available to order directly from thekorgis.com

This is an extract, full review available: <https://thestrangebrew.co.uk/interviews/james-warren-the-korgis-kartoon/>

The Ledge (Fairport Convention Fan Magazine) - Ian Burgess

The Korgis – Kartoon World

I have the 2cd deluxe edition. The first thing of note is the bulging cardboard sleeve, containing not only the two discs but also two large posters. The first has a photo of the band on one side and the sleeve notes on the other. The second has a cartoon and piece written about each track on one side, and the full lyrics on the other. A good start before the discs even reach the player.

The album starts with a short instrumental fanfare introduction which I am sure will work very nicely as walk on music for live shows. That segues into the first song, the pre album single ‘Bringing back the spirit of love’, undeniable the Korgis sound from the first few notes. I will say this here, and once only though it applies to every song on the album, there are more hooks than in a fisherman’s pouch. Often more than one to a song. La La Land is the spirit of seventies pop, though the middle section is sixties Beach Boys. ‘Back in the eighties’ sounds like the eighties, no other song or artist in particular, but the synth solo tells you this is the eighties, before you hear James vocal, storytelling the band’s ride through the decade.



‘Magic Money Tree’ was another single that deserved to be a hit. But it’s too good and individual to make the charts these days. Another great song. The group are an eight piece these days, with a front trio of James Warren, John Baker and Al Steele. James and Al are credited as writers on every song, with John, and others added on different titles.

The album differs in styles from track to track, yet as a piece of work it all sits together so nicely. One of the strong points throughout the album is James voice, uncannily John Lennon like at one point. The other really strong point is the vocal harmonies. I have already mentioned the Beach Boys, but many of the massed vocal harmonies come from The Korgis, influenced from their founding to date. The musicianship throughout is absolutely top of the class, with a warm, rounded sound that is easy to sit and listen to. Or turned up loud in the car.

I did say I was listening to the deluxe edition. The second disc contains the same album with a different mix. The requirements for CD and vinyl are different – up the bass too much for vinyl and it will skip, or you have to suffice quantity of music on the disc. The vinyl mix on this disc is also has other differences to the first disc. Personally I prefer the first version, I like the bass higher in the mix, but either is enjoyable. Disc two also carries five bonus tracks. The original demo of ‘Money Tree’ and tastily done different mixes of ‘Space’, ‘Broken’, ‘The Ghost Of You’ and ‘Cartoon World’. A couple of them being a little extended.

I have it in my sights as album of the year. I know there are plenty more I will hear, but this has set the bar at a great height.

The best place to get your copy is directly from the band’s website <https://thekorgis.com>

Ian Burgess / The Ledge / September 2021



Strutter’zine, The Netherlands

“a great comeback of a legendary band. If you’re interested in a poppier version of CATS IN SPACE, then this might be right up your alley as well, although of course if you’re familiar with THE KORGIS, then you know what to expect here. 8.4/10 “



Radio Caroline - Stephen Foster

“Really like the album. High quality pop. They’ve not lost it!!”



Nova Radio - Chris Black

Every now and then a new album comes along and just makes you listen carefully to the songs and lyrics, which touch the musical soul inside you.

Songs that make you smile and have you singing along within a few moments, alongside the tracks that you just sit back and let the music do their magic inside your head.

This is a stunning comeback album, after 30 years, from this band. Highly recommended by me and one that should be in your music collection as soon as possible.



Radio Marabu, Germany - Lord Litter

“The Korgis CD is a *monster!!! They don’t do music like this anymore ...! “



CBC 106.6FM - Tim Moon

“Loved it profusely”



White Cliffs Radio - Steve Morris

“Its a fine record. Lots of great pop songs”



Sedgemoor FM - Dave Englefield

“ Absolutely love the album, They’re going to sound brilliant, ‘live’ “



Heritage Musicians in Conversation (Australia) - Joe Matera

“THE album of 2021”



‘Unchained’ on WCRFM - Garry Foster

“It is a fabulous album from start to finish”

