

MUSIC REVIEW

Kiko, Los Lobos

Monty Shakes His Cerebellum — Or, Ain't Nothin' But a Rx Thang

Long has Monty held that music, like any art, should take you somewhere. If the work by its nature brings you to brood in the familiarity of your own internal self-talk, it's sure to be embraced and will tend to be popular owing to the lust of identity for reinforcement. Such a work, as Monty sees it, takes you precisely nowhere—or, as the title of a tune in the Los Lobos album under review expresses it, it leaves you on the Short Side of Nothing, a place which, as the song suggests lyrically, is the source of your despair even as it tends to be the place of majority preference owing to its accustomed character.

Since most music put out by most artists is catalyzed in conformance to the common criterion of self-substantiation (for exactly the sake of that popularity attending easy acceptance) it all seems like the same tootsieroll confection suitable for chewing absentmindedly in order to extract just the expected flavor. Therefore Monty has been quietly waiting upon that music which will actually take you some-where—this accounts of course for the utter absence of musical reviews of any kind appearing in the Chronicle, up till now.

Having penned the above paragraph, Monty realizes the potential for misunderstanding amongst readers unfamiliar with the T-Bird's peculiar yardstick, that always measures on the perpendicular. Without fully recognizing that MT invariably gauges advance, progress, acceleration of excellence or degree of development according to the "hidden" ratio existing in the relationship between the familiar, horizontal timeline (the one in which we think we're participating where everything occurs sequentially on a flat plane of equivalent moments) and the less familiar, "vertical" spiritual timeline (the perpendicular plane of which is notched in progressive plateaus of mind/body integration, correlated with ascendingly subtle "densities" of real soul advance) there's liable to be some parallax correction required in order to focus this criticism properly.

Therefore Monty certainly doesn't imply that "nothing has taken place musically since the '60s". There has been good music, even great music in the accepted sense of exemplifying a genre. We'd say for example that the reggae of Bob Marley has contributed some really immortal and mighty work; we'd swear that, otherwise, Led Zeppelin virtually held up the '70s all by itself; and we'd suggest that the "earlier" Fleetwood Mac with Nicks and Buckingham generated durable first-rate songs and songwriting (no band-wagon hindsight here, so to speak, since this was written ere word was heard of FM's honored a.m. Inauguration-appearance). We response-shout by the same popular gospel that hallelujahs right over the little lapses and occasional dumb-notes critics make overly-much-of in misbegotten justification of their job description, singing proper praises of Prince and U-2, Springsteen and Neil Young-paying deserved respect to the power, ambition and frequent creative prodigy that has brought each in a way to a seat on the same Express carrying the cream of any musical genre, of any era.

There's that which isn't so well-known—the various permutations of Mahavishnu and Sun-Ra.. or what's well-known but seldom really listened-to (e.g. Miles Davis) amounting to the same thing—nonetheless serving to sustain, advance and at times exalt the medium of music in the classic sense right through the popular doldrums...

We maintain that if, in the British glam-rock sweepstakes a better U.S. promotional junket had been accorded Mark Bolan/T-Rex in the early '70s the late glitter-lord would possess more than minor cult status, would have prevailed perhaps over what became almost by default the "Bowie" era, and— who knows— a whole chunk of history might have been considerably changed seeing that, what T-Rex was "up to" was quite cosmically distinct from the Ziggy Stardust/self-theatricalization ultimately gaining the ascendancy in the memory-record of our shared timeline...

The early Police made some impressive collars, indeed came close to climbing a significant notch in that vertical lineup through a kind of music doing real "inner" time; the Motels produced some excellent if overnight stuff; the Pretenders came close to the throne; and of course the Cars shouldn't be left to languish in the lot, as there's a lot of pleasurable mileage left in their material...

No, Monty doesn't mean there hasn't been good stuff, or even great stuff; but something else was begun in the late '60s, something that seems to have got short circuited, and, being so far from the familiar field of focus, forgotten altogether— vanished to the invisibility of an eclipsed dimension so that when we look back collectively toward that time what we see is the Life magazine/photo album version, the empty residue of images which by itself maintains the whole Happening on a plane quite parallel with our own, and by that measure no more "distinguished".

This said, it may be possible to approach what's implied in the above remark re the reason for the utter absence of T-Bird music-reviews, up till now...

Of a sudden, we have such a review; the extraordinary character of this fact, given Monty's august criterion, perhaps says something significant with regard to the '90s into which we're just now rolling with a building head-of-steam (it's been long noted by many that a decade doesn't seem really to begin, by showing its specific style or disclosing its particular mood, until the third year-mark).

If we consult Monty's non ordinary guideline, then, we can provisionally accept a couple premises that make the following review easier to "place".

Without Prejudice (and Without George Michaels)

First of all we've come to understand how Monty can say that he's been waiting, for the most part, since the proverbial '60s; although there's been a lot of music and musical development (even if we stick strictly to the popular culture) through the '70s and '80s, the opera-live criterion allows us to lump most of it into the same tootsieroll genre, whether we're talking about metal, punk, rap, disco, glam, glitter, reggae, post, alternative, wave, neo or Broadway—to wit, it all tends to take you in a loop along the same horizontal plane back and back upon your own mindset, provoking just the kinds of personal substantiations and subliminal reinforcements that—in quainter times—might have been termed ego identification-patterns.

The punker punks, the rapper raps, the neo neons and the disco ducks, all neatly grooved, catalogued according to strict expectation (so that a mild deviation from dead-center automatically dethrones the genre-god who's then dismembered and plowed under in a fertility rite coercively ensuring the strict predictability of the next yield).

If however Monty claims he's been waiting virtually since the '60s, this must mean there was something in the character of the music produced then, particularly through the latter part of the decade, which exemplifies his exotic standard and shows some significant divergence from everything we can otherwise gnaw in the corner of one cheek despite the diversity of musical ingredients.

Can whatever "this" is, however, show some authentic contrast of a qualitative kind which would make of it more than just the personal preference of another, hoary '60s identification-pattern (thus placing Monty's "musical taste" in the class of irrelevant nostalgia)? We've heard so often, after all, how that excessive looking-back, pining for or glorification of the '60s and its music is just the familiar rut visited upon any generational mindset once rendered passé by the inevitable passage of time; and of course this kind of dismissal is styled so as to bleed the uniqueness, precisely the uniqueness, from the targeted era.

But is such write-off universally applicable? Does it really stuff into one convenient razor dispenser the used-up blades of every bygone era, so that grandpa's arrested development at tin-pan alley is the equivalent of pop's cycle with the frozen past of swing, and all equal to the apparent obsession of old ex-hippies with the 8-track lemniscate of hippiedom...?

Some would say "absolutely", of course—but ol' Monty is not so sure—not so sure. If we were to say he's been waiting for something that sounds like the '60s, something that succeeds note-for-note far better than Inspiral Carpets or Soup Dragon for example, the dismissal might be justified—and Monty would have to conclude this column in sober conciliation with his typecast.

But lo! we have an artificially-restyled "'60s"-sort-of-president of a sudden—precisely the exemplification of some loaded effort toward pop-cultural resuscitation "note-for-note", and therefore furnishing in the public arena a fine model of what Monty's consideration most certainly is not. Monty is exactly not looking for some redux of the embalmer's art, some preservation of the misremembered past in molded aspic so as to befool the mass imagination with mummer's masques of the "good-old-days", bobbing above the crowd being herded in pseudo-carnival toward conditions and legislative acceptances never suffered under more somber executive countenance.

No, along with Paul, Monty has been looking all this time for the spirit as opposed to the mere letter. If he's been looking for a music that takes you somewhere, he intends this in contrast to the tune that confirms you where you are, on the horizontal plane of your usual limited ego-vocabulary with its subject/object diagram locked in place. If, all this time, he'd simply kept vigil for a consonance of style or similitude of content, we could say that Monty had justified the write-off classification accorded all such '60s-oriented souls looking to hear Country Joe again "for the first time", like it was before, or to "discover" in the induplicable thrill of immediacy the creative liftoff of the Airplane once more. Then we could say that your

dear critic Monty was subject to the pre/trans fallacy of generational musical taste perpetually looking to discover anew only what's ever in the past.

However, we would then be admitting that Monty was not looking for what was truly distinctive about late-'60s music; we would have to confess that the character of his vigil missed the real uniqueness of what's to be found, ever anew, in that "style" of musical exploration. For what he's identified (in an uncommonly large amount) from that musical era is the power belonging to all real art of whatever genre, of whatever time, and which by that very token is seldom found, era to era, in large pop cultural quantities since adherence to the habituated letter of the ordinary ego-grammar is precisely the norm that advises the "product" on so grand a scale.

This then is why Monty identifies something uncommon in what occurred through the musical genre of the '60s, something paralleled in the poster art and hand craftsmanship of that day; to find any art-form of that magnitude on so great a scale against all the norms of popularity-assurance, exhibiting precisely that power to take you somewhere—thus necessarily operating outside the expected syntax enforcing the monologous self-description holding "the world" in place—immediately distinguishes its presence in the timeline and sets it apart from the tuneful signatures always enough to cinch generational adherents.

But wait, Monty (we hear certain, stickly readers instantly challenge)—if you've found something which truly transcends personal preference, the idea of musical taste alone or affinity for mere genre and which therefore really participates in the spirit of some "higher value", you should be able to show an example; you should be immediately prepared to cite a current piece which either justifies the definition, or may be in some way uniquely interpreted by such definition.

And on this reasonable point Monty certainly concurs, indeed wouldn't have brought the subject up at all if he wasn't prepared to produce an epitome which didn't just draw its vague allure from rephrased '60s refrains, Hendrix riffs or old-style Clapton bone-conduction... It's for this purpose of producing the clearest example of the ideal case, however, that Monty begins with a review of the Los Lobos album Kiko (do they still call them "albums" as a generic reference?) rather than with another close candidate for exemplification such as Temple of the Dog—the Soundgarden/Pearl Jam production—since the latter may well present the proposition in less "pure" form considering its obvious overtones.

KIKO

All you need do, is cue the Wolves' recording to its very first track to begin feeling what Monty means when he claims that music—as all other art—should take you somewhere. (And didn't the '60s state this aesthetic minim of the New Criticism rather succinctly, in the omnipresent evaluation "it was a trip"? —isn't "a trip" really what Monty means when he declares that a work of art ought to "take you somewhere"?)

Listen then to the very first cut of the Kiko album, headset glued to your ears in a good dark place, and realize that the implicit sense of our nouveau-requirement clings to what's accomplished here as if they'd tacitly absorbed the idea and converted it to illustration.

A Little Drumroll, Please

Indeed the album opens with a tune titled "Dream In Blue", and in faithfulness to the title the Night-Lopers take us musically away from the shared space of conventional expectation into recording-studio Dreamtime.

From this very first track, and consistent through the album, they tread the ambiguity that dreams tread, and hold it deftly together the way dreams hold together even while bringing the familiar into continuously unanticipated relation with the unfamiliar, the unknown...

Thus we hear, first and most importantly, what our ears wish most to hear—speaking strictly for Monty, being of the '50s breed what one wishes to hear is "only rock 'n' roll", deep down past any cultured tolerance for Stravinsky—and what we get is just that instant gratification of the familiar, expertly served. Then, as we listen, we flow smoothly down the dreamtime course of what's meant in the more ancient psychic strata when we've held that "rock" is all we like—for frankly, we've also found affinity for samba, for marimba and maracas and all the range of basic percussion, we find ourselves responding to batteries of congas from Cuban dance rhythms to Santería and Macumba... Indeed as night wears on, the rhythm of the rattle keeps us moving in time to Rada rites and Petro high voodoo, calypsoing on the isles and writhing to the couleuvre noire (no? doesn't this describe you, too?)

Indeed we've floated into the zone of a common realization, feeling—if not reflectively noting—that it's the beat after all that makes the rock roll, and makes it kin therefore to every savage forebear of insistent

rhythm and unapologetic percussion—makes it indeed what the fundamentalists fear, the repressed-and-repressive warn against... for what such fearful souls dread (or dreadful souls fear) is the song of their own heart, the lifesbeat of the biological drumkit. (Hey! this isn't a review in Rolling Stone—what may be taken for granted there, as a luxury of writing for aficionados, may require more explicit and primary expression here, backing up to the doorstep of minimal beginnings to make sure we've collected the readership in a shared vehicle).

So we link to the subversively-synchronous drumming of our own deeper being through “rock 'n' roll” inclusive of all ancestors and cousins, and it's by Way of this long route that Monty brings you back to the sense of assuring familiarity with which Kiko begins— from that required point of departure in good ol' rock radio (instantly gaining allegiance of our ear with the presentiment of a power-pulse) we're shown straightway why the lead tune is titled “Dream In Blue”, and why also the album is a triumph of the critic's request for taking you somewhere.

Down the Rabbothole (How Thumper Became the White Rabbit)

We're hooked by the expected, dropping on the downbeat as naturally as we drop into our own inner monologue, then are immediately introduced to some subtleties of the unexpected—a richer texture of rhythms, interweaving influences of neighboring, close, but distinctly divergent styles...

As in a dream, the pattern of our waking impressions is used to draw us toward consonant but less precisely-identifiable forms, then into a whole other world of our being ordinarily not confronted in any direct way but left to murmur below the line of focus, now as abruptly-present as Wonderland to Alice where all the symbol-script of our daylight knowledge is turned to some other purpose—fitted to an unfamiliar context creating unique juxtapositions, novel counterpoints never completely decayed to nonsense but rather metamorphizing to a strangely different and enlarging framework.

We know it and we don't know it simultaneously.

As if to shake our shoulder and confirm from the beginning that we're drifting below the border (so that, forewarned, we may keep one Eye open along the way thus gaining an edge on the usual anesthetization descriptive of siesta-time), the very next track is titled “Wake Up Dolores”. Now, we have no idea whether any of this bears the stamp of design, or whether it fell together without premeditation—even were we to hear that the band molded it all methodically, the utter lack of affectation or backstage manipulativenness marks the whole as a very successful homunculus, inspired to independent life by a ripeness of the artist's alchemy that can't be achieved just by deciding to achieve it. All we can do is point out the adroitness, planned or no. which finds the very next track urging an awakening of (from) our sadness (Dolores/dolor); and, we might say, doing so implicitly by awakening from the perplexing dream of “conscious” life, our source of sadness, precisely by a slide down this proffered sluice of dreamlife where one's images have a chance of being enriched to the metanoic point of popping that membrane tending to part the potentially-illuminative light of waking mind, from the resolving depth ordinarily given over to the dispersal of mere sleep.

This deft dreamweaving of different styles and genres into a single track is a consistent power of the album; it's enabled by the sheer versatile musicianship and technical mastery that distinguishes the Los Lobos personnel. Had you not been sufficiently familiar with the group, the common wisdom might previously have prevailed that they were a “competent Tex-Mex band” etc.; on Kikoit's clear they're adept at a diversity of styles, and are as brilliantly at home in jazz, blues, bop and merengue as they are with rock or lambada. Thus they're able to use every and any style as one would use a learned range of language, producing a prodigious musical literacy as the basis for enlarging the general psychic space over which they may map their emergent dream-vision.

In the Country of the Spellcasters

Moreover, all this is accomplished in a special way. We stated above that they manage to hold together each such expedition into unaccustomed musical territory the way a dream holds together (even though a dream will throw into the same soup such a surprising mix of elements that logic would demand continuous disruption, a constant disintegration into parts). The Wolves do this musically by never departing from the overall grip of compelling percussive rhythm, whether through drumming or guitar thrumming, so that we stay as locked into the given track as we stay locked into the fascination of the dream. Regardless, then, where Los Lobos take us in their rhythmic enweaving of complex motifs, we're as satisfied by the consistent hard-rocking undercurrent as we're charmed and held by the deceptive verisimilitude of the dreamscape... Indeed, as we all well know, even after waking from a dream it takes a while to shake the lingering conviction we were present at a real event—this of course is owing to the fact that we really were somewhere, actually were

participating in something every bit as real as waking reality only seemingly less-so owing to progressive dispersal around the fixed unilateral focus of daylight consciousness.

In the same way, we're thoroughly involved by the given track, never once having to relinquish the satisfying thread of our own rhythmic requirements nor feel it fall away from us; yet, when we've followed its ariadne course through the musical labyrinth and look back upon where such effortless adhesion to our own heartbeat has taken us, we're amazed at the apparent distance crossed from the "norm" to those extraordinary scapes over which the faithfully-followed trail of our own rhythmic wants still winds like a ribbon.

But this power to hold us in a kind of oneiric fascination while taking us over decreasingly-normative ground, is nothing less than a spell. Los Lobos succeed in the advanced artistic process of producing an enchantment, so that the musical craftsmanship, competency and Catholicism of their technical achievement is raised to a higher power.

We may suspect, in fact, that the Los Lobos personnel are not unaware of their collective role here as night-side tourguides; in keeping with their technical sophistication, it's impossible to perceive them as just diamonds-in-the-rough, as instinctive primitifs of the painterly note needing to be discovered by some missionary musicologist. We needn't presume on the exact baker's measure as to how much of the album is design-by-intent, and how much the product of that magically-happy synchrony that just "occurs" when the artist is in full command of the medium—but the clever wolfseye glint of sorcerous seed-sowing is everywhere in evidence, traces of their crafty conjuration strewn all over the ground yet so blended with beautiful/artlessly compelling music that you have to find it by a second look, reflectively combing the contents the way one finds additional jewels embedded in dream-notation apparently plain at first glance.

They lead us into the deeper, symbolizing strata of the psyche straight off by taking us lyrically to the same side of the brain that's listening to the mesmerizing music: "Bright blue mystery/Lights shining 'cross/Piano lid wings..." ("Dream In Blue"); "Oh sacred night/On quetzal plumes/Of dying suns/And purple moons/Oh sacred night" ("Wake Up Dolores"). Again without speculating on the proportion of design to guileless synchrony, the progression of songs takes us remarkably through that stratified order of states actually characterizing psychic submergence on the brink of dreams.

From the crystal-pattern of coherent imagery in the first two songs saving a lyrical spark of waking consciousness, we move into "Angels With Dirty Faces" (itself an oxymoron of dream-coinherence, stirring old movie title memories) where we catch mind beginning to murmur about "Broken window smile/Weeds for hair/Strolling 'round the corner/Like a millionaire", and because this sounds perfectly all right, indeed revelatory in some way, we know we're down in dreamtime proper where the last lingering light of concentrated consciousness is now diffusing, shimmering like the sequined scales of moonlight over water.

Only alert now thanks to the song-sorcerer's art we're present and attentive through this normally-subconscious field, and notice how such imagistic fragments—precisely from that "broken window" looking out over nocturnal shores—instill the soft elation of a kind of super-meaning, where they'd hardly have meaning at all in their form as random shards too scattered for the logical linkages of daylight focus.

Overheard at 40,000 Fathoms

This "effect" is in fact one of the identifying characteristics of the album as a whole; listening to the lyrics of each song we're moved by the magnitude of meaning, the leagues of dream-profundity behind each simple phrase—and yet, consulting the accompanying lyric printout we're equally intrigued that, fit in form as they may be laid flat across the sheet they seem so spare, certainly less remarkable on the whole and, in retrospect, apparently only serving as incidental/verbal accompaniment to the music. But they're not just verbal accompaniment, when the headphones are back in place! They spring to life again, like dehydrated granules that only grow back to organic form when immersed in the musical waters.

Now, this may be an effect which the reader finds rather...familiar. It is certainly a phenomenon to be noted in relation to other albums, works of the past in which the lyrics somehow linked synergistically with the song so that they just weren't the same words when listened to. Indeed such an effect most probably finds its archetypal expression in an ancient custom, long eclipsed before the quoits and dolmens were set in place, i.e. that quaint rite of prehistory known as pot-smoking which is said to have generated the phenomenon of making instant poetic geniuses under its influence, whose works however—found jotted on paper scraps or juice cartons the following morning—were never identifiable in the cold light of day as the profound utterances they seemed the night before. And just as the ancients discovered the reason why such lines as "saint behind the glass/smells coffee in the air" didn't hold for left-brain consciousness the key disclosure of universes the way it did for the intoxicated right-brain, we may reasonably understand how the lyrics of the

Los Lobos album are inextricably part of the total musical impression, and the total musical impression is much more integrally oriented with the Whole Enchilada inclusive of its deeper folds.

For indeed the ancients, as they became alchemists, at the same time learned that the simple words recovered on the back of the cornflakes box generated their original profound impression as integral elements of an immediate gestalt involving strata of the mind, the interconnections of percept-phenomenology belonging uniquely to the moment, and accompanying incidentals of the thought stream all ordered in altered ratios of cognitive grasp “under the influence” so as to embed the highlight words in a matrix of mutual transparencies imparting values of the whole to any and every contributing element. Arbitrarily segregate a given element from the web of that psychic moment, however, and an effect occurs very similar to the isolated exposure of living organisms to the probe of an electron microscope: the segregated specimen is mysteriously drained of life.

In the same way, the lyrics of Kiko are indeed fledged with wings of the Psyche’s Genius just as we felt when listening to them; but, such is the artistic unity of the album as a whole, that the discerned quality of subterranean Oracularism derives distinctly from their compositional place just as if they were jots of a musical notation writing-in an instrumental adjuvant.

This effect is indeed much more pronounced in the case of Kiko than it is in most other works, even where the effect is quite noticeable. The reason must certainly center on the fact that a superior artistry is at work here, one which weaves a unity of spirit and coherence of feeling through every element so that even the apparently dissimilar quality of verbal content is coopted through the common denominator of meaning shared with non-verbal grammars of the musical speech pattern. When we listen to the words in their intended context, they immediately resume the resonance, depth and multidimensional character they had before they appeared on the printed page as cutout puzzle-strips to a verbal jigsaw without all the logical pieces present; the verbal content fuses with the musical form so that “Saint behind the glass/Smells coffee in the air” resolves for us once more, in the deep psychic strata where dwells our greater being, the whole paradox of God and man, Spirit and creation—or, if it doesn’t stretch from the profounds of the subconscious quite that far toward the receding conscious shoreline, it may at least be said on hearing such things: “that was a trip!”

(Another instance of lyrical anomaly on the album is just as striking, if of a different kind; on the opening track of side two, “Arizona Skies”, we find six lines of printed lyrics—with dedication appended; on the actual recording, however, it’s rendered simply as an instrumental, as if in the end no one could be found who could bear to sing the words; in this case, the poignancy speaks for itself.)

Train Keeps-a Rollin’...

Resuming our tour of descending dream-mind conducted by the hispanic Anubis of side one, we find following “Angels” it’s as if we’re being drawn on the rhythmic backwash of psychic low-tide, the waves of diffracting consciousness spreading deeply in the trough only to crest toward comparatively-clear light—discovering as they do so however that they’ve been carried progressively further-out. For the next song seems to rebound, musically and lyrically, from the inflected stream-of-consciousness in resumption of pop-conversational elocution and a straight, bebop melody as if to evoke not only a plain style but a whole plain era of daylight patois, the jazz-phraseology and blues-cuisine that resonates in suggestive overtone right through Butterfield to the masters of scat in the heyday of radio—only it’s just this fact that lets us know we’ve struck another dream-stratum, now backward floating in a confluence of personal and collective time through layers, psychic levels of memory-within-memory as if a foam of self-contained bubbles were streaming up before the inner eye each enclosing some perfect miniaturization from the past, quick little blue-dots flashing imagistic source-references of all those hybrid beasties forming phosphorescent infusoria and symbolic anemone of the deep-sea dream, the domain of the Kiko-moon proper (once past the deceptively “wakeful” interlude in the bop-recollection of “That Train Don’t Stop Here”).

Indeed the next track-stop is “Kiko and the Lavender Moon”, and it’s everybody out, destination reached—the deep-dream station of the Astral proper, self-evidently the intended port of debarkation—for the honor of album title is reserved for this very number. Here then is our protagonist Kiko, the dreamclown of consciousness, full-out and projected in his astral body (“Out-playing-makes believe/Nobody can see”—“and then he flies/up to the wall/Stand on one foot/doesn’t even fall”)—indeed we “Dance and Dance” along with Kiko now on the conducting current of some Amazonian estuary where, from flanking black jungles of night eerie antiphonal choirs of rainforest timbrels quiver on air, playing the punctuating notes of intermittent fires glowing through the overgrowth in accompaniment of minor-key strains from some ghost broadcast of the big band era, Paul Whiteman plays the Shining dance floor...

One can’t help but feel in fact that it’s the uncommon power possessed by this pivotal track, tapped through a real vertical move in the psychic timeline courtesy of your jackal-headed tourguides, which must

have inspired “whomever” to turn out what—in our estimation—is the greatest all-time music video (whomever!? wait a minute, Monty—as a crypto-professional critic, isn’t it your responsibility to find out and properly credit “whomever” stands behind the work? Well, yes—but as far as Monty can tell, only VH1 seems to show the Kiko video, at least with any regularity, and unfortunately only MTV has seen fit so far to properly cite the videomaker along with other relevant data of the given production—we’ll just have to draw on the resources of our enormous T-Bird staff to track down the wunderkind responsible...)

So evident is the overall spirit of this track, indeed, that the videomaker is in this instance right on track and responds with a truly complementary vision; as should be the case where inspiration serves to reinforce itself amidst a range of artists and media, the Kiko tune furnishes proper point-of-departure for an extension of its spirit into a visual portraiture organically viable in its own right. One meister-work gives birth to another, legitimate and independently alive in its own domain, in a world where art is real and artists are the noble handmaidens, the midwives and minnesingers of consciousness.

This instance of visual and audible media working in such gracious counterpoint to each other is, then, auspicious, and gives intimation as to why Monty was so sanguine to present these particular jewels as thematic keys of entrance into the ’90s.

Let’s look then, more closely at the video.

A Video Clinic

Afire with glowing sigillae, dancing geometries and odd planes peopled with phantasmagoric nightside-fantasies of the bygone mechanical era dreaming on the twilight border of the spaceage, the depiction is clearly and consciously an Astral one. We are knowingly in the presence of the dream-mind, at a depth which dredges a whole other body belonging to consciousness: the lingasarira of theosophy, the Ka or astral-double of Egyptian symbology...In the presence of art which owing to the intuitive clarity of the artist correctly renders such alternative states of consciousness, the result isn’t merely a depiction (in translative terms of the conventional symbol-grammar) but constitutes in itself a vehicle, a kind of body or astral double so the experience of that state can be empathetically approximated or even duplicated in consciousness rather than witnessed as if at an unbridgeable distance—this is the genius of both the song, and the video. And they do act synergistically to accelerate the psyche which yields toward while experiencing them.

That fact accounts for the unanimity of astonished approval issuing from everyone with whom Monty has spoken about this remarkable media “incursion”—and yet, predictably, it seems destined to be ignored by those who “award” (thereby reinforcing that same soporific of the cultural norm comprising the sarcophagus-of-standard-inscriptions in which the astral body lies buried); for already certain good but not transcendently great videos contemporary with this are garnering the lion’s share of praise, while nary a peep is heard on behalf of the only real Lion in the park.

Note then that the Kiko video generates a multidimensional resonance of consciousness, rather than just dragging the mind over a lot of cleverly distorted objects in a kind of gamepage identification-hunt; and just as the Kiko album issues resonant-overtones that take us by juxtapositions into the suggestive states of musical history, so the video echoes in its phantasmagoria of images back to the Nickelodeon beginnings of the animated tintype, and the hallucinatory visions of Melieres. In these earliest of movies and in the fantastic postcards prevalent at the time, the Vernesque speculations of a mechanical era dream-lapsing upon the atom age took form in just such absinthe images as Georges Meliere and similar pioneers could conjure, so that disembodied heads, drifting like Wrightbrother contraptions of ratchets, bicycle gears and bizarre flywheels elaborately enmeshed into Goldberg gizmos gave astral intimation—from the correlative, imaginative faculty—that all Icarus-aspiration moving out toward space was ever at the same time, secretly and subversively, a relativistic movement inward toward the depths of conscious space...

Encrucijada de la Bruja Barbarasa

Speaking of spacetravel, the pelicula by which Melieres is particularly well known to this day is “Trip to the Moon”, so again we can’t feel it’s just an accident (at least not just an “accident” of consciousness) that Kiko radiates overtones toward the inceptional imagery of that time; the moon is what this album’s about, from the cardboard-cutout moon of the cover done in dreamtime mauve-and-puce, to the purple moons of “Dolores” and of course the lavender moon of Kiko, with echoes of an uncanny lunation all the way through.

The moon is the perennial occult symbol of the Astral threshold itself, the semi-sacred/half-daemonic World within the dream-mind more real than “reality” populated by prototypes of everything imaginable in waking life and much that isn’t imaginable, where nightly we’re tutored by sentient symbols of our deeper being in the personal “miles to go” before that Greater sleep, where beings real-in-their-own-right nonetheless present—at the same celestial time—all the transpersonal cuneiform of cosmic siesta-time in

their stylized features and apparel, their gestures and quixotic modes of “travel”; it’s here on the moonscape of the astral that the things hidden to waking consciousness are “revealed”, only revealed on the dark side of the moon in the occulted penumbra of our chronic unconsciousness just beyond the perceptual margin, just in the shadowed corner of daylight vision no longer susceptible to double-eye focus but potentially lit by beaconlamp of the cyclops Eye shining beams from a higher Angle.

When once that Eye is opened, its lid like a languorous window-shade letting in unaccustomed rays a little at a time on sparkling shafts, there may presently appear a veritable circus-parade of which the quixotic Kiko of consciousness is the three-ring clown, pretending to be the ringmaster for the amusement of the Audience; and “When”—as it will to the practiced Eye—“the Circus Comes”, an endless stream of Felliniesque personae or anthropic things will pass in turn and speak, speak as one would have the silken murmur of Tenampa River speak, will intone each separate secret of the psyche of which they’re nocturnal keepers so that the soul may know in terms of its own symbol-script what deeps of itself need still come to light and be wed, with waking Resolution, to the daydreaming heart.

It might here be noted also, by way of helping the hearer slip into his astral long johns, that various passages in Kiko make use of that symbiotic word/tune relationship in ways appropriate for this particular point-of-passage into the nightside proper—for we’ve long noted, since the acceptable slur of real rock diction began, how the mind will manufacture fanciful versions of lyrics half heard under a Jerry-Lee lisp or delta blues grumble (a regional accident so integral to rock that British, German and Swedish warblers of the genre all come out sounding like Lightning Hopkins through a phonetic wah-wah). Again, whether by design (whose design?) or not, the mind properly relaxed and floating down the Kiko stream tends irresistibly to conjugate lyrical whispers in the murmuring vocal waters as portmanteaus, suggestive subtone compounds of dreamlazy syllables coupled as much by ripples of rhythm as by any meanings which may drift by, so that, when the lyric sheet is again consulted we’re as bemused as anyone ever was with a private version of “Louie Louie” to find some convincing construct of our own undone in the innocent assemblage of clearly-printed words declaring what they always were, while we imagined universes between.

In this case the mistranslations are mysteriously consonant with the type of ride on which we find ourselves; a certain allusion, caught on-the-fly as we shake, fake, bend and play with Kiko, most certainly an allusion to that witch-goddess of the lunar crossroads Hecate herself, turns out to be “Haircuts and cake” on the printed page—but “haircuts and cake”?! Dreamwords, subconscious murmurings lisped from the aircushions of our “green shoes” as we glide the lavender ethers, no more compelling for all that they’re written on the page than the subtle sound of Hecate which, indeed, posts more of the real nightside logic of the song so that we can as easily feel that the lyricist misheard “haircuts and cake” when he penned it by phonetic approximation in the morning!

Here then the accepted rock-diction, which always subordinated lyric to rhythmic spell and hypnagogic tunecasting, magically comes to serve the present theme—functions “on the perpendicular” as vehicle for conveying an altogether-deeper dimension through the pun-making part of the brain, the “playful” manufactory of the mind that deals freely in the make-believe collateral of metaphor and ambiguous likeness. “He plays and plays/Still playing till he/goes off to sleep”.

What follows is, in Monty’s moonstone estimation, the most impeccable song-juxtaposition in recent rock-album history, for “Saint Behind The Glass” trips in right on “Kiko’s” heels and, amongst many other ineffable/magick things, continues the thematic assurance: “Night upon my head/Night upon my head/Saint behind the glass/lays night upon my head”. We’re further secured in the uncanniness, the disturbing nightside atmosphere (so subliminally unsettling that it jerks us half-awake within—rather than from—the dream) when, in “Reva’s House”, we hear “The dogs were barking late last night/There’s something going wrong”. And are we not precisely in the presence of that midnight struggle of consciousness, to kindle and conserve a spark of daylight awareness through the chthonic groping of sleep-and-dream, when in the corridors of Reva’s place we hear: “Didn’t find the matches/Couldn’t light them in the dark/Could only hear the sound/Of the breaking of her heart”?

Step Right Up for the Magickal Mystery Tour

This, then, should give the reader an extended idea of what Monty means when he states that music—like all art—“ought to take you somewhere”. Now we can understand that it isn’t just any, arbitrary place to which Monty would have the music lead you. There are any number of arbitrary and equivalent “places” on the track of our ordinary attention, the pictures and travelogue-paragraphs of the droning inner narrative keeping bookmark at our particular reality-page; and all of these stops together don’t amount to “going anywhere”, but just the opposite—they keep us curving back-and-back upon the same self-reference held in place by ceaseless circulation of all its familiar predicates.

But this is the horizontal axis of our too-familiar territory. The vertical axis of the being doesn’t stretch

across the same plane, but transects many self-consistent planes nested like onion-skins within our deeper nature—that axis penetrates the more deeply through the whole-of-our-being with each successively layered plane so that, like its 3-d “cross-section” (the spinal column) it’s apparently notched with a distinct scale of dimensional “vertebra”, integral stops comprising a real hierarchy of ascending levels or conscious stages. If you’re to be “taken anywhere” in a true rather than arbitrary sense, you must be taken to the threshold of an authentic psychic shift, a potential change expressive of some altogether-deeper integration of the being; there’s a very specific station to which the mind must ultimately be drawn—not at all equivalent to the plane of interchangeable perceptions and substitute-objects enforcing common ego-proportions of the 3rd-density state.

There’s a distinct sequence of progression, always known and ever in keeping of the Mystery Traditions—a sequence which inevitably includes a stage that is, indeed, a “walking on the moon”, variously expressed through perennial initiatic teachings as in the Manichean “Column of Completed Man”, said to have been fashioned by the Third Messenger and affixed with “sun” and “moon” whereby the Primordial Adam may be furnished a workable mechanism for returning to the original/paradisiacal perfection first through the lunar gate, then on to the Empire of the Sun... and similarly with the Tikun—restoration—of Qabalism, in which the Middle Pillar or pleromatic Column of Resolution (susumna, the spine) comprising the locus of individual/cosmic principles serves first-of-all as pneumatic platform for breath-held entrance into the lunar module of the mind, the classic subconscious from which buried psychic parts may be progressively reclaimed—parts absolutely necessary for that greater integration-of-the-being toward a threshold wholeness commensurate with the intensity required for securing the next phase, the state of “solar consciousness” itself—the penultimate glory of that direct/unmediated awareness comprising the first degree of Adeptship.

So first of all: “destination moon”, the pylon-gate of the subconscious, before ever opening out upon the Sun of one’s own being as personalized expression of a truly Awakened consciousness—that’s how it’s ever been, through secret keys of the Mystery Traditions and in the naturally-unfolding processes of your own being... for the ancient alchemists were foremost students of nature in the respectful, not the interferential, sense.

Since it’s ever thus, all art must recapitulate the same disclosure of steps, in the same general sequence, the way folds of a flower or petals of an artichoke envelop the heart in orderly turn. This is only to be expected, as art is the revelation of consciousness through instrumental objectification every bit as much as yoga is the revelation of consciousness through instrumental immediacy.

It seems that there’s never been an artist more instinctively attuned to such structural restraint and inner consistency-of-being than the perennial tunesmith, from wandering minstrel to Motown, for how often does the pensive motif of the moon appear, lyrically and by musical evocation ancient and modern? We receive intimation of the potentially-resolving numen nestled in the crescent crook of the mind by “the silvery-light-of”, “over-Miami”, in numerous shades of blue... that potent moon/astrol equation seems almost tangibly evident to the tuneweavers who take us there, compulsively, time and again—and observe with what frequency we’re moon-crooned or fed by spoon in June even up to the present rasp of this pen across the page: there’s R.E.M.’s “Man on the Moon”, Neil Young’s “Harvest Moon”, and some moon-minded lyrics in Killing Moon by Echo and the Bunnymen, as well as Ozzy Osbourne’s Bark at the Moon. The Psychedelic ’60s of course seemed to understand this astral equivalency, this entranceway to the chthonic dream-mind most directly as befitting an era dubbed “mind-manifesting”, for in the album-titles of a single artist alone we find overt homage to the principle, the Plan laid out in plain sight: Astral Weeks, Moondance (not to mention the other Morrison who took a face from the ancient gallery and went on a “Moonlight Drive”).

It’s the moon toward which the haunted psyche must first appeal.

The Snake in the Overstuffed Basket

Indeed the inevitable, “atavistic resurgence” of the basal brain-lobes—and corresponding gut—out of which rises the guttural growl of wolf (along with every other unrequited call of the nature-instinct toward greater sentience, more deeply-resolving awareness) is mind/body spoor for that general Return-of-the-Repressed, evoked to ideally-regulated frenzy by the suggestive shaman-masks of the more magical spirits of the culture. It’s this plaintive moan of sexual abyss, longing and the dream-of-death against which most standard yogas, theosophical and patriarchic spiritual practices stop their ears—far from honoring the inner requirements of this “lunar” level (the astral menstruum of psycho-emotional and symbolic types lurking in undersea grottos of the “occulted” being), such schools and perennial practices build barriers against its hymeneal penetration, the thin-subconscious membrane being preserved intact by a tissue of countervailing symbols and exorcist cant that foil to caulk a balanced vessel for plying such waters, but rather act as locks to dam them in production of progressive blindside pressure.

This indeed is why we have had art all along, and not just religious or even esoteric spiritual practices to serve the progression of consciousness. Art has not simply been an adjunct; it hasn't been superfluous decoration. It has in fact compensated, in many instances, where a drastic deficiency in the existing spiritual worldview would have so estranged the deeper strata of the psyche as to trigger mass lunacy (while creative enrichment from forms of the psychic moonscape might otherwise have occurred).

Where art under coercion becomes mere, servile illustrator of the institutional pietism, such incidents of moon-madness on a mass scale do show up in evidence—witness episodes of the Middle Ages, of the Inquisition and New England witch-hunts...

As much as such repressive spiritual cultures have tried to “shine” the Moon in direct adoration of the Sun, they've only succeeded in a self-division that severs the nourishing/subconscious root leaving the surface-mind burnt, brittle and bitterly lifeless. Such is the chronic fear of the dark within the terrestrial maze, and of the uncanny glow which is the only light that dark itself brings, even high-spiritual practices of an “advanced inner technology” traditionally venerated and consulted philosophically to this day show signs that they're not unaffected thereby (and, indeed, that the distortions and topographic anomalies in their overall architectures perceived from a hawkseye view, are precisely the result of having laid foundational detours and rerouted whole walls and wings in attempted avoidance of the gulches pitting the Ground like a lunar landscape).

Thus we have half-usable legacies of “yogas” and “alchemies”, theosophies and thaumaturgies comprising the only biotechnic Way we know, each in their “way” superposing the lambskin Apron in chaste preservation of those very vital parts wherein the deeper dreams are coded—the abdominal centers and corresponding basal brain-lobes into which all the unwanted matter of the mind is stuffed like a springload cartridge. In this way the emotional debris dumped in unincorporated areas of the general, cultural identification-zone (unclaimed psychic refuse accumulating on the outskirts of the rigid focal frame) contributes to the implicit pressure-buildup in the nuclear coil of kundalini locking all cognitive patterns in place as a function of subconscious processes.

It's for this reason that, when visiting night-realms of such psychic centers and self-symbolizing streams (serving to contour-structure the characteristic mind/body field as qualified through daylight identification patterns) the astraling dream-traveler will chance upon half-crazed closet relatives of the waking mind, the “institutionalized” members and disowned kin of the daily family of ideas locked away in the lower lobes, ranged with electrified wire of deep-theta and delta-charge... in the lunatic glances and frenetic grins of such dream-time creatures may be found all fears and phobias generated in the moment of their subterranean interment, and accounting for the occupation of otherwise-creative waves employed to guard against embarrassing breakout.

If creativity crucially-dependes on the noticeable coinherence of complements, the supple identity of opposites and intercourse of countercharged things then the effectual segregation of such terms renders a flat patchwork of opaque identification-patterns, in which the mirror complement of each (one-sided) element is locked away below the divisor so as to effectually mask the creative common denominator of consciousness through which they're resolved in Identity. Where such segregation takes place, as it inevitably does in the 3rd-density enculturation process to one rigid degree or another, the basis of both a creative resolution and exponential magnification of the being is critically undermined, and all residue of one-sided terms marooned above the subconscious watermark is employed in the essential anti-creativity of inert ego-validation (for “one side” of anything is just a static presentational “face”, suitable for the imprimatur of “approval” or “rejection” but by that token stranded on a contingent display shelf of Other-acknowledgment without the elasticity or self-actualizing power to change toward greater magnitudes of integration—toward any greater quotient of Balance the pivotal point of which is internal to the system rather than vulnerably “external”).

At the same time as this essentially anti-creative process takes place, the fuel of its exteriorizing motivation derives from building pressure of all the repressed contents on the obverse (nightside) of the opaque ID-divide, all that un-claimed closet kin jammed below the—brainlobe—border and herded into leydig cells of ostracized abdominalism where they seethe and stew, bubbling toward boil.

This loaded coil of the psyche's own bedlam, gives us the characteristic tension classically descriptive of kundalini and identified in the perennial/esoteric traditions of the Patriarchate as the suitable source of psychic propulsion into higher zones of the Being. Thus the traditions have—in effect—counseled employment of that very pressure and unresolved tension belonging to the buried/unclaimed complements of the psyche's own strata, so as to launch the locus of attention clear of those contiguous domains in an inward- and-upward avoidance-pattern known to this day as the distillate of everything the arcane colleges have to offer.

Tips from an Old Snakecharmer

Such an inner launch on the kundalini-spring itself, or from the raised limit of its pelvic dolmen depending on the tradition and technique, might seem analogically appropriate since—on its successful occasions—it can demonstrate propulsion from negative/physically-focused polarity to positive Skyrealm polarity, through the brain/mind locus; yet the analogy would only hold good if the mind-body spiritual complex were exactly like a three-stage rocket with dispensable booster sections able to get the psychic landing module where it wanted to go by sacrifice of any further useful existence of their own; however, since every form of spiritual repolarization-alignment necessarily has to achieve inclusion of the higher zones (correlative with forehead, fontanelle and the inner cerebral centers) from the common standing-ground of the R-complex and parallel abdominal centers, the analogy collapses—no corresponding real truncation occurs even if an effectual tetany of the lower extremities takes over temporarily to make it seem so; the enraptured mind, aligned with its inner nests of subtle vehicles and enjoying its Skydome interlude, is still coupled to imprints and energy-agencies encoding the transdimensional mind/body structure in extenso, and in fact enjoys its exclusive/upward focus as dependent extension of the indivisible Whole. Its insular sojourn is financed on the energy-capital of the basal centers, has in effect taken out a loan on their reserves of springboard tension and therefore trails a lingering debt which eventually—inevitably—draws it back into alignment with the persistent vital-impressions locked away, unchanged, in the vaults.

Indeed our modern renewal of the Mystery Traditions testifies to the fact that the “debt” can’t be “paid in full”, until those locked-away impressions and disowned psychic relations are properly identified and accepted, released from their languishing storage where nothing creative can be done with them under alienation of their “otherness” labels—until they’re accepted and properly integrated into those higher Values the very accomplishment of which they’d traditionally financed by their unacknowledged labors, discreetly veiled in the background.

...Who Do Ya Call?

We may now be in a position to understand how it is that the classic schools and initiatic traditions have, despite the occasional production of prodigies, on the whole fallen short outside the fullness of time; and, in their own unripe (historical) contingency have borrowed from the larger culture just those modes of repression and avoidance they should serve to redress, so that they themselves have contributed as much in the way of malaise and misunderstanding as any other aspect of the social whole. And it all needs to be noticed now, identified for what it’s been and amended according to the suggestive outline of our greater Art which hasn’t historically failed to pick up and employ what the Spiritual traditions themselves have left by the wayside.

Going deeper and further-back than the patriarchal traditions, following our artists far back into shaman-territory and dreamtime, we come progressively to see how it’s really required to return to the night side of consciousness with Eye-open intent, how it’s irreducibly necessary to gather in those psychic pieces and personality-fragments floating randomly around the inner environment, reclaim all drifting unconscious debris of our own greater being before presuming possession of a sufficient degree in the intensified toality-of-ourselves to open toward the unblinking light of whole-being consciousness, the truly awakened state of spiritual adeptship steadily corresponding to a deeper density-level. Otherwise, we come to discover, there just isn’t enough of us present at any given time to parlay into the required quotient of energy-intensity and creative ecstasis necessary for lifting that djed-pillar upright, all-in-one-piece, as cerebrospinal Pole staking the definitive flag of Spiritual Conquest upon the ground of paradisiacal/new-world territory.

But if that millennial task has seemed so impossibly-difficult, in retrospect, even for the traditions, how may it fall to our poor part to effect such a heretofore-elusive Transition? It’s in light of just such a question that ol’ Monty has proffered this slight record-review in the first place, don’t you know—why Monty alerts you now to signs of that very Work pushing up through rain-wet ground, first buds of that accelerated species taking cue from the quickened tempo in our planet’s parturitive throes. (Just as in the days of Mechanism we used to say: “Quantity changes quality”, so now we may rev that saying up to contemporary velocity and restate it as: “Acceleration changes type”.)

What’s organically necessary, will show itself organically, over-and-above any reasoning or explanation as to why it should be so. Therefore, although any verbal exposition of the requirement, such as this present one, may seem deceptively formal we needn’t be fooled into supposing that what it refers to, in this case Kiko, is the product of some corresponding calculation or self-conscious rigor deliberately raising a crossroads colossus. (Isn’t that supposed to be the pitfall of critically analyzing what’s often spontaneous and innocently-unaffected on the part of the artist? that the arch intellectualization of the analyst renders clunky what’s listenably-elegant, and imposes a ponderous air on what’s simply a soufflé before-the-fact? Worse, isn’t such analytic verbalism supposed to wreak corruption on otherwise-unaffected artists by giving them

pretensions toward immortality they didn't have before?) At least Monty is grateful to have been recently apprised, through an MTV interview with the Petshop Boys, that there's probably no stigma left to loading some disproportionate intellectual burden on the frail shoulders of what—after all—is a rock group... probably no need to suffer the self-consciousness of those “pioneer” pop-critics who must often have stuttered and stopped mid-sentence thinking to themselves, rhapsodizing over Sgt. Pepper, that this isn't after all Brahms, Bach or Beethoven...

Thanks to the PB spokespersons, we're apprised of a whole post-modern classification of the music business resulting directly from the shift of critical seriousness toward pop-culture in the '60s— we come to find out it's inferentially more difficult now for the critic to suppose himself unduly “weighty” when the groups themselves have consciously assumed the noblesse oblige—indeed according to Petshop analysis, the industry now divides neatly down the middle into pop-tunesters such as the Boys themselves only interested in crafting the quickie without reference to a Higher Ground, and the largely over-40s (hmmph) who, according to this Pet thesis, aspire so self-consciously toward real greatness that they've turned the very category of Rock into the New Classicism! Thus (according to our PB spokespersons) “rock” is now the province of those reaching toward longevity, even listenable immortality in that they calculate some operatic opus aimed precisely at critical deification so that they'll be played and “seriously studied” in times to come—which, of course, according to the Petshop brand of cracker-barrel wisdom is the pitfall of celebrating over the merely momentary, the production of popular entertainment... whereas the now-wholly-separate category of pop into which they themselves sort, while deliberately (?) not aspiring toward anything greater than a top-10 hit, more often succeeds through the very “modesty” of its sights in generating tunes that do continue to get played, and are really hummed decades afterwards (as opposed to the over-40s rocker-requiems that pique the momentary palate of critical pretension and then lapse into dreary desuetude).

Now this is something of a happy revelation to Monty, in an odd sense, since it means there's been developed a formal “market” for the serious consideration of what was, before, “only rock-'n'-roll”... As far as the idea that “serious” rock-works lapse to obscurity while the Archies remain eternal, however... well, we personally know a good number of people who've never stopped listening to Sgt. Pepper. After Bathing at Baxter's, Bitches Brew, even know a good number of teenagers who like listening to old ELP LPs, early Who or even the Yes every bit as much as they enjoy Jane's Addiction... on the other hand, we don't know of anyone who goes around humming Petshop Boys tunes...

No need to worry, though; hasty comparisons of the next promising rock-quarry to “Sgt. Pepper” may have mounted critical overkill ere now, but we're not of the school that believes Pepper stands that far apart-and-above as to serve some cliché yardstick in any case; the aforementioned After Bathing at Baxter's and Bitches Brew as well as Electric Music for the Mind and Body (Country Joe), Between the Buttons and a Fugs/Velvet Underground/13th Floor Elevator album-or-two pioneered enough psychedelic invention and pushed enough musical frontiers to lend legitimacy to the term renaissance; in a real renaissance you don't expect a repeat of the Mona Lisa, but look rather toward what greater territory it opens up. Kiko keeps company with the classics because it partakes of their spirit—and spirit is something that can't be emulated, redone, paralleled or captured by any kind of calculation that hasn't equal-parts genius. For that matter, Sgt. Pepper, great-as-it-is, has very much of the sense of deliberateness and over a dram of calculation in its parts—nor is this a criticism of it at all, since such conscious aspiration may prove as productive, and as adroit in dream-catching, as the less mannered accomplishment catching fire from sheer-unpremeditated inspiration.

So for all that, Kiko has much less the quality of artifice than Pepper or any number of the acknowledged classics; it needn't creak under the strain of this present appraisal since its music sings pure like an Arrow from a Bow, and doesn't rely on studied contemplation at all. Because, in fact, it thus captures the listening consciousness so quickly, so naturally and so completely, we can begin right here to answer the question raised a couple paragraphs back, i.e. how may the millennial transition in consciousness occur, from what angle— incorporating all its necessary elements—can it be approached when the great traditions themselves have chronically missed the mark? How may we take the Whole of our apparently-misbegotten selves into the Light of a new Day when so much dwells below-the-line, in the foreboding blackness blind with treacherous pockets of reaction, holes of psychic involution and emotional lacunae like pitted patches on the moon?

In the American Indian tradition, whenever there was a task that was considered difficult, even impossible, the necessary skill and valor to accomplish just that impossible task was summoned in the form of the Wolf Society warriors. In just that way, we could do worse than take our cue for the conquest of the perennially “impossible” from our own Wolf Society warriors, literally Los Lobos— “children of the night” (as the Count would say) whose “sweet music” is now so woven of the spirit-dream that indeed it begins to...take us somewhere. And this, as Monty would insist, is what we need— along with a truly renewed and universally-efficacious spiritual Philosophy-and-Practice—to begin moving in the obligatory direction, this time in

progressive alignment with the vertical Axis-of-being leading through Mountains of the Moon inexorably to the mighty Empire of the Sun.

*Renewed Art, and a Philosophical Practice: RAPP—the Urim and Thummim of a NewArcanum/
Proclaimed by the Adepts! Pointing out to all with the musical ears-of-the-spheres to hear! Those minor and major keys in which the RAPP of a real world Rapture is potentially written. Yo.*

(The following is a freely-rendered translation of the only Spanish on the album, the four lovely lines of the mariachi-style elegiac raveup “Rio de Tenampa”, that closes Kiko): Speak to me River Tenampa/Sing me brave songs of above/In this little part of the sky/I leave my affection and love.