

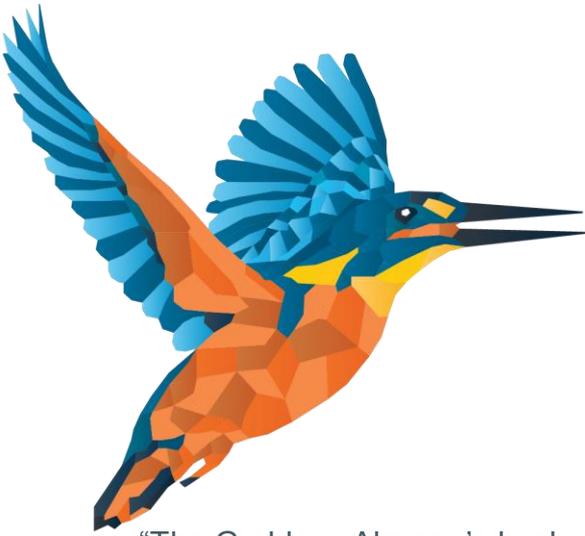
“Moog’s Halcyon Days”

©Simon Howard

E: natspeak@btinternet.com

 @Dwarven_King_SH

Blog: <http://thedwarvenking.com>



“The Goddess Alcyone’s husband, King Ceyx, perished at sea and she chose to follow him to the other life of her own free will. According to the myth, the couple were transformed into kingfisher (or halcyon) birds and for two weeks every January, Aeolus, father of Alcyone, calms the winds and the waves so that she can safely make her nest on the beach and lay her eggs. Hence, the term "halcyon days" comes to signify a period of peaceful, happy times.

Once upon a time there was a prog rock band called Halcyon...

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MOOG’S HALCYON DAYS

by Simon Howard

Chapter 1

“Happy Birthday, Moog!” said Dad, as he ruffled Morgan’s hair.

“Fourteen years of age, eh? What I’d give to go back there!”

“Thanks, Dad,” said Morgan, perching himself at the breakfast bar,

“Can we pop into town this morning and pick up my new guitar?”

“Sure you can,” his mum butted in, “But first, you can come over here and open up this present of mine before you both disappear.”

Morgan smiled, hugged his mum, then unwrapped the gift she held.

“The A to Z of mythology, Mum, what an awesome present!” he yelled.

Morgan loved his mythology and always had from an early age.

Whether Celtic, Norse or Classical books, he’d devour every page.

It shared his top spot with music, or Prog Rock to be more precise.

“I blame Dad,” Mum always said, “Brought up on Genesis & dry ice!”

Hence Morgan’s nickname was ‘Moog’, bestowed upon him by his dad.

(The Moog produced a synthesised sound every 70s prog band had.)

“There’s something else for you” said Dad with a conspiratorial smile.

“It’s something a little bit special that I’ve been working on for a while.”

“What is it, Dad, spill the beans!” Moog’s curiosity had been awoken.

“All I’ll say is it’s a blast from the past but not another word spoken.

C’mon, Moog, it’s time to head off, we need to pick up your electric guitar.”

He laughed and said “It could be the first step to you becoming a rock star!”

Moog had learnt some chords on an acoustic, the one his dad used to play. It was time to upgrade to electric, get some proper lessons underway. The guitar was a Les Paul copy, its sunburst finish was iconic, and regarded as a design classic, beautifully shaped and ergonomic. It was love at first sight for Moog, his dad wanted him to have it too. It had been a tough time for his son after the heartbreak they’d been through. Just a couple of months ago, Moog’s dad received a terrible call. Whilst his father was alone at home, he tripped and had a fatal fall. Moog had been close to his grandad and thought he would always be there so losing his ‘Gramps’ so suddenly was difficult for him to bear. Moog’s dad, who was also grieving, watched his boy’s world fall apart. He hoped the guitar, and his ‘project’, might mend Moog’s broken heart. They took off to collect the instrument, Moog returned with the broadest grin. “Take your new axe in the house,” said Dad, “come to the garage in a min!” Moog put the guitar in his room, entered the garage through the kitchen door where his dad stood by a large object covered in sheets down to the floor. “Recognise this?” Dad said to Moog, “Prepare yourself for a wondrous sight!” To Moog’s surprise, before his eyes, a sideboard with grills left and right. “Is that Gramp’s ancient record player,” said Moog, “that hasn’t worked in years?” “It is,” cried Dad, “it’s his old stereogram!” Moog’s dad looked close to tears. “When the house was cleared they found it, intended to throw it away. I said ‘bring it back here, I’m no engineer, but it might be worth having a play?’ So I spent some time researching online, found out how to replace and repair. Got parts to match, built the deck from scratch, it’s as good as new I swear! “Wow”, said Moog, “ it looks really cool.” He lifted the cabinet’s wooden lid. Peering inside, there were albums to one side, next to where the turntable hid. “Your Gramps was given this unit when he was probably around your age. The records he’s kept, all these years, are from the early Prog Rock stage.

There’s Floyd and Yes, Focus and Heep, he loved cranking them up so loud. They’re yours now, son, and if he’s looking down, Gramps would be very proud!” “Dad, I don’t know what to say,” Moog replied, feeling a lump in his throat arrive. “It’s the best thing that I’ve ever been given and it’ll keep Gramp’s memory alive.” “I know,” smiled Dad, “Now help me lift, you’ll be surprised how much it’ll weigh. When it’s in your room you can pick a band, see how they sounded back in the day.” They heaved the unit up the stairs, found a spot in Moog’s room right away, then popped down for birthday cake with Mum, Moog was having an excellent day!

Chapter 2

As darkness fell Moog returned to his room feeling a few shivers of anticipation. The question then was which album to choose for the stereogram’s initiation? He popped on the bulky headphones which were heavy but comfortably loose. His decision made, the record Moog played, was Camel’s “The Snow Goose”. He took the album out of its sleeve, placing it on the spindle of the turntable. Next, he pulled the metal arm across, to hold the record nice and stable. Pushing the switch to ‘Auto’ on the deck, it began to spin and the record fell. Across came the stylus, the needle touched down, and the music began to swell... The vinyl had a hiss and some crackle which gave the music a raw, live sound. Moog drifted off, only to find, he was in a concert hall when he came around...

Thanks for reading the opening to “Moog’s Halcyon Days”. If you enjoyed “Moog” and would like to read more please email me or send a DM on twitter.

Many thanks indeed, Simon

@Dwarven_King_SH