

Morning Final No. 9



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A sort of BÖC family reunion took place on nationwide radio as Howard Stern once again received cousin Eric Bloom on the air for his famous morning show, and Eric brought along Buck Dharma for the ride.

Howard Stern, the nationally known New York shock jock, has had Eric Bloom on his show a few times before about six years ago, when Stern became aware that Eric was his cousin. Stern phoned up his reluctant cousin and put him on the air with hilarious results. Subsequently Eric was a phone guest or a live studio guest on Stern's show several more times.

This time around Stern had a lot of fun at the guys' expense, being his usual outrageous and hilarious self. They talked about Eric's relation to Stern, the Bad Channels movie, who sang which song, and what BÖC was up to these days. Buck scored big with numerous witty cracks, and Stern "adopted" Buck Dharma as cousin, too! Finally Buck and Eric played a bit of Reaper and Godzilla live on the air.

It was extremely funny, and great to have the guys on the Stern show, and considering how well they came off, and who they were up against, perhaps they ought to consider joining the morning show crew for good!



The Italians have struck again! This time they have CD'd the 1983 Captured Live five-sided 3-LP-set of the Perkins Palace show in Pasadena. I assume that this new Bootleg CD called "Nail You Down" holds at least the majority of this broadcast. In terms of sound quality, it sounds promising but until I get a copy I can't really tell you much more about it.



In May of this year, 18 years after the initial release, "Secret Treaties" was certified Gold in the United States. Funnily enough at this very point in time, Secret Treaties now has the distinction of being their very first as well as their latest gold record award. In 1975 it was awarded a Gold Record in Sweden, after selling 10,000 copies, which helped inspire the band to open up their first ever European Tour in Scandinavia. Congrats for sales of 100,000 units, even if it took 18 years!!!

Always keeping his ears to the street, Albert Bouchard has another new find. The band is called Kablamachunk, named after the sound of a car breaking down in the "Flaming Carrot Top" Comic.

The night Albert encountered this band he developed immediate production notes in order to improve and help focus the guys' presentation of their apparent clever song writing and performance. In Albert's own words: "When I saw Kablamachunk live, I was astounded. Their good humour, great songs, incredibly high degree of musicianship, amazing harmony singing and absolute matinee idol charisma of frontman John Rarrick were all simply undeniable. They sing like Crosby, Stills and Nash and play like the monsters who decipher Zappa's 'black chart' — it's kind of scary."

He knew he just had to give them a chance at recording a serious tape in a professional studio with people who really enjoy their stuff and can help bring that out on a tape.

Albert talked to the guys and they decided to record a demo together with Albert as Producer as well as lending his talents on the drums for the sessions.

The result was a four song demo recorded earlier on this year and coproduced by Albert and Paul Special. Since then they have recorded a second demo, this time with Albert only producing, as they have found a permanent drummer.

Albert made an appearance with FIREHOSE when they played in New York on May 23. As you know, or will after reading this issue, FIREHOSE includes the Red and the Black in their set list, so it's only fitting that Albert would turn up and jam with them! Albert played guitar on the song, proudly sporting the proper colors in his official BÖC fan club 'Lots ö Logos' tshirt!!



Jammin' with FIREHOSE in New York before the show, L-R Mike Watt, George Hurley and our own Albert Bouchard!

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Morning Final: How did BÖC get involved in the *Heavy Metal* movie? Most of the songs on the *Fire* album (“Heavy Metal,” “Sole Survivor,” “The Pact,” “Don’t Turn Your Back”) were written after the vignettes of the film. “Veteran of the Psychic Wars” was one of the few that seemed to not relate to any, yet that one was used in the film. How was the choice of that song done?

Buck Dharma: “I think that BÖC was invited to submit tunes for use in the *Heavy Metal* soundtrack. We wrote several tunes with the film themes in mind. *Veteran* was chosen by the film people, even though it was not directly related to the film content. I don’t think the film makers were looking for literal interpretations of the animated action. We had no say in that decision, other than to publish the ignored material on our own album. We realized from the beginning that they would choose only one song from BÖC, we just had a flurry of creativity, so there was a large choice of tunes.

How did you get involved with Full Moon and *Bad Channels*?

“The VP in charge of Music with Full Moon was with CBS in the 80’s and has known the band for a long time. The film company was looking for involvement with musical talent such as BÖC to provide score music as well as creating name sales potential for the soundtrack CD. Given the music emphasis of the movie *Bad Channels*, we were contracted to furnish songs and underscoring for the picture. Film score work is something that I have been actively seeking and the band as well welcomes the opportunity to do this kind of music. Of course the band would like to see its music used in films

as much as possible, but I don’t think there is any way to campaign for that unless we had an aggressive publishing company with Hollywood connections. The songs used in the *Bad Channels* movie were not written with any filmic content in mind. In fact, the producers asked for a lyrical rewrite on *Horsemen Arrive* because they intended it for the final credit roll, but wound up using another tune anyway, and the Horsemen Lyric was restored. The alternate version of *Horsemen* will be an obscure collectable, because we have no intention of letting anyone hear it! The rewritten words are far inferior.

Both BÖC songs on the *Bad Channels* soundtrack are credited to yourself, Eric and John Shirley. Who is John Shirley, and how did BÖC come to work with his lyrics?

“John is a published Science Fiction and Horror novelist, and had been a fan of the band for some time. We first saw his lyrics after the Roxy show in LA two years ago. When it came time for creating what would become the material for the movie and the new recordings that would get us a new major label deal, John’s lyrics became the key to my renewed collaboration with Eric Bloom. We have co-written five or so Shirley songs so far. I think John’s lyrics will provide in the 90’s much of the conceptual grist for the band, in the same way Sandy Pearlman and Richard Meltzer’s lyrics did in the 70’s.

How did you get the job as scorer?

“I wound up doing the underscoring for *Bad Channels* for several reasons. First, I really wanted to do it, and was willing to take responsibility for its creation and completion. Second, I am the only current band member with enough experience and facility with computer based composition and instruments to do the job in the short time required. The other members wanted to contribute and undoubtedly will in future projects. Third, the nature of this kind of music discourages committee or consensus composition. The underscore benefits from a stylistic consistency. With the exception of Hawkwind (and I don’t know how that music was done), I can’t think of score writing that involves more than two people. It’s just easier this way.

Did you find it difficult to score a film?

“It is hard work writing music for film and it requires a different mentality than writing for a rock band. Besides the instrumental nature of underscore, you are writing to support a specific action on the screen. In a

band, if you write a tune about a certain emotion or topic and you end up not liking it, you don't use it. In this work, you keep going until you've successfully scored the emotional or topical idea, because the film calls for it. The other main difference compared to songwriting is having to please several different people involved with the production of the film, who may or may not know anything about the production of music, or agree with each other, but they know what they like (sometimes). I have no problem trying to give people what they want but the process can be convoluted and frustrating.

What techniques and tools did you use to create the score?

"The Bad Channels score was written on Macintosh computers, using Opcode Vision Sequencing software. I did a couple of weeks work at my home studio using a VHS copy of the movie with SMPTE time code striped on one of the channels of audio. The VCR could then drive my sequencer so I could sync the music to the picture. The sound modules used were from Korg, Roland, E-mu, Yamaha and Oberheim. When we moved to San Rafael (California) to finish the writing and recording (the Movie and demo songs were finished during this time also), I switched to a 3/4" U-Matic video machine with a jog wheel for shuttling and made for heavy duty use. I used the engineer's Mac and rented gear. When the tracks were laid to tape, we drove the sequencer with timecode from the 2" machine, then, synced the 2" on playback from the video recorder to check the finished product. However, when the soundtrack was put to film in Hollywood, The sync was done manually and there are several places in the movie where the cues don't line up the way I intended.

Can you describe how film scoring is done?

"The general method of composing a cue for a specific section of a film is to view the section repeatedly until the natural rhythms of the scene become apparent. In certain cues in this movie, I found places where I could plug in or adapt music that I had written previously to 'practice' cue writing. The orchestral cue when the door to the radio station blows at the end of the movie was adapted from a theme I'd previously composed. The second step is to map the tempo, and start and finish points for the cue, and to make sure that any 'hit points' in the action are punctuated with musically significant moments. It was a learning process for me, and I think I became better at it at the finish than I started out. If I'd had more time, I'd have gone back and looked at some of the stuff again.

How do you choose which segments to orchestrate and did you have to follow certain set parameters for the music, or were you free to express yourself?

"I saw a work print of the film in LA in a screening room, and then the Director, the Music supervisor and I went over it again reel by reel on a movieola editing desk. I took notes on where they wanted music and made some suggestions for music also. Then I created a cue sheet to organize the music. This movie has much more music than most films, with the songs and underscore. There are long segments with sparse dialog, and action scenes that needed punching up. I have heard it said by a veteran film composer that any more that 1/2 hour of music in a typical feature is too much, and indicates a deficiency in the film itself if more music is needed to make the picture work. The director, Ted Nicolaou, criticized some of the stuff that I initially thought was good. I learned that the filmmaker generally does not want you to emphasize actual cut points, that the music helps mask editing and smooth visual transitions as well as adding tension and energy to the onscreen action. Also, while much of film music is sparse and moodily legato, over half of it is percussive and jangly. There is not much call for standard pop music structures outside of deliberately inserted "production music" cues.

"I had a great deal of freedom composing cues, but they were always subject to the thumbs up or down by the filmmakers. That lack of freedom comes with the job, since you ultimately have to please the filmmakers. I look forward to doing more of this work, because I am a fan of film and enjoy doing instrumental composition.

Would you like to do another film?

"BÖC is pursuing more score work now, and I will continue to promote my own talents in that area as well.

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It's Here! A new CD of Blue Öyster Cult music! Well...almost! This is the CD Soundtrack Music for the "Bad Channels" movie.

At first glance the package really looks good with the band's name larger than the title of the movie itself...(Which actually describes the reality of the situation). On the back it boasts "Killer Music - Alien Airwaves" (What is this? a truthful observation of BÖC's Radio/FM history?)

The CD is a product of Moonstone Records, the record department of Full Moon Entertainment. Their only releases are the sound-

tracks to their series of horror and sci-fi movies. They always incorporate a lot of rock and roll music in their films, and often have the songs recorded specifically for these movies, which makes these soundtracks a hot item for collectors.

The liner notes of the CD have a few errors, some spelling problems what with our Mr. Steve Schenck spelled both Shenck or Schenk, Chuck becoming "Burgie" instead of Bürgi, and Jon acquiring a stray 'H' in his name. Proofreaders on vacation? They also neglected to credit the score arrangement to Buck Dharma. However nobody is faultless and life goes on.

Luck gave our boys a chance at not only contributing two hot rock tunes for this movie but also the opportunity to score the entire soundtrack background music. Without a doubt, this CD is both better and more interesting than the movie. The CD is arranged so that there are two distinct sections, a rock and roll portion, followed by the incidental score.

First on the disc is five bands doing two songs each, almost like a compilation of five artists and their latest singles, A and B-sides, which works well, since you get a much stronger look into these bands by two songs as opposed to just one.

It starts off with Blue Öyster Cult's pair of tunes. "Demon's Kiss" which sounds fine, nice energy but as always in the case of BÖC, the live versions are tougher and hold more bottom end than the recording, which suffers from a high end sibilant unevenness on the cymbals. Apart from this, I think "Demon's Kiss" is about the heaviest song from this band since 1976 and Tattoo Vampire, almost a perfect Heavy Rock tune.

The second song is "When Horsemen Arrive" but here entitled "The Horsemen Arrive." In the end titles of the Movie, though, this song is mistitled "Out Of The Darkness," which was

actually another version of the same song with a different lyric.

Unfortunately you can hardly hear either of these songs in the movie. "Demon's Kiss" sails by for a few seconds, and that's it..I have yet to hear Horsemen in the movie.

Joker is the next group, and their songs go by as just any other AOR FM oriented band.

Fair Game is a group of four chicks (one of them Tommy Lee's (Mötley Crüe) sister Michelle (Also a drummer, of course) fronted by Ron Keel (the guy who massacred Patti Smith's Because The Night some years back), and they continue in the same AOR vein.

Then comes the happening stuff from my favorites of this movie (after BÖC of course), the wacky L.A. band Sykotik Sinfoney with their very crazy sounding tunes "Manic Depresso" & "Mr. Cool." They sound like (if you can believe it) a cross between Devo , Oingo Boingo, Metallica and Primus.

The next group is DMT, a Sandy Pearlman discovery, that opened up for Blue Öyster Cult a few times this Spring in Northern California. They have that alternative/grunge Seattle sort of sound.

Ending the rock band section is the very funny and clever "Little Old Lady Polka"

by the Ukelaliens, which if you ask me is most likely a pseudonym for Sykotik Sinfoney. but then again, I could be wrong.

The remainder of the CD is made up of the score for the movie, which starts as track #12 and runs through nineteen short titles in just about 25+ minutes. Written, performed and arranged by Buck Dharma, and produced by Buck with Steve Schenck and E.Bloom, it still gets Blue Öyster Cult billing here, for simplification.

Actually it's all Buck with his Macintosh computer and his Steinberger guitars. He programmed and played all this music and it sits just fine by itself as neat little ideas from the complex and magical minds of the Donald Roeser/Buck Dharma personae.

The music on its own is so much better than the movie I feel like it doesn't fit with the movie because of the thought provoking pictures he provides in his intensity and communicative performance. In fewer words, this music is too good for Bad Channels, it holds its own candle, no problem.

Starting off with the "Bad Channels Overture," Buck soars into some great guitars after an almost detective story like opening, he smooths it out with a great tone on the guitar in the same vein as that on "Summa Cum Laude," a song that was written for but unfortunately never used on the *Teachers* movie soundtrack.

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“Power Station,” a Synergy like composition has some neat guitar licks à la Neal Schon on his *Tron* movie work. “Power Station II” sounds more like *Bladerunner* meets Bowie *Low* stuff. Excellent composition and execution, possibly my favorite track. “Shadow” basically symbolizes a Helicopter hovering above. “V.U.” is like some old Star Trek red alert taking off into Top Swing mode with a frantic siren sounding motif. “Cosmo Rules, But Lump Controls” is more Heavy Metal inclined with a slight reference of Twilight Zone theme. “Battering Ram” has a Dance feel to it with neat Guitar licks, again, great tone there, Buck. The theme ends with a Pop Bass on top of an ‘Ommm’ sounding feel. “This Dude Is F****d” is the longest track with cool juxtaposed rhythms leading into a James Bond type of chase and makes it another favorite of mine. “Pick Up Her Feed” is almost a continuation of the last track with some reference to Eddie Van Halen’s Elephant chord. “Spray That Scumbag” is another neat driving rock tune, with ascending chord progression. “Out Of Station” sounds like it could have been written by Kerry Livgren of Kansas fame—very pretty with a big horizon sunset/sunrise feel, my second favorite piece of the score. “Tree Full Of Owls” is reminiscent of Indiana Jones as he opened the ‘Pandora’s Box’ with all the ghosts flying all over the place, very 5th dimensional sounding effect.

“Cookie In Bottle” is just a spooky layer of strings and a smooth line of notes. “Corky Gets It” is an ominous sounding dramatic feel emerging into a Kraftwerk/Station To Station feel, but yet somehow more metallic. “Eulogy for Corky” is just a choir of hollow voices. “Spore Bomb” has a the 2001 Zarathustra feel of post Atomic War or pre-dawn of man: that futuristic Sci-fi feel. “Remodeling” is Enoesque music taking me to the disillusioned abandoned city image of the movie *Escape From New York*. “Ginger Snaps” has a more Bowie feel, a very pretty layer of strings in solitude. Definitely one of the best pieces too. The soundtrack ends with “Moon Gets It,” echoey guitar lines on top of a roaring bass line makes for a very weird ending of this disc, and makes you wish for more. Buck really captured a great sci-fi feel in this music, and gets a high rating on this, his very first official movie score. Let there be many more!

Marching to the beat of a different drummer

while Chuck's away...the throne is replaced by a John!
John Miceli, that is!



Another addition to the growing history of BÖC drummers was added to the list during May and June. From May 15th through June 14th, we were introduced to the talents of New York drummer John Miceli, who was recruited by Chuck to fill in for a month while Chuck was busy recording an album.

John Miceli is known for his work with Meatloaf and The Good Rats spin-off bands, Marchello and the current version of that band, The Rat Bastards.

When not playing in either of these projects, he teaches drums at Long Island Drum Centre, and currently enjoys handling up to as many as 40 happy young students. John is sheer talent at its utmost, and Chuck knew this when he recommended John to fill in for him during his absence.

Chuck went to John’s place and worked with him for a full day to teach him some of the special traits Chuck himself uses during the trickier parts of Cult tunes. Evidence of all of this was brought to me via fellow fan Tom from Ohio who kindly sent me a tape of their show at Bucyrus’ Mad Bull Club.

Here I heard an excellent drummer not only filling in all of the parts Chuck would normally play but also some more daring fills and rolls than he would have normally been asked to play. I think John deserves a standing ovation for his short but yet very intense and fulfilling input.

While the Cult has been at play with John in the hot seat, Chuck has been recording an album with ex-Rainbow sideman and keyboardist David Rosenthal, a project for a Japan-only release CD/Album by the Toshiba/EMI Japan Company. The results are set for a September release, and although there is no name for the album yet, the project was named “Red Dawn.” Chuck said it was both an interesting and challenging piece of recording, and continued that there will most likely be further sessions like these in the future.

Moscow and beyond!

a tour chronicle by Jessica Livingston

Day 1

Great Falls, Montana.

This is the first rock concert ever staged in the historic Rainbow hotel in downtown Great Falls. When sound tech George Geranios checks into the hotel, a hotel staff member realizes that she is his cousin, and so several other Geranioses whom George has never met turn up at the show that night. Photos from the last west coast tour are passed around the dressing room. Jon Rogers points out the striking resemblance between Drum Tech Mick Gormally's eyes and Chucky from the *Child's Play* movie series. Blue Öyster Cult has never played this part of Montana before and everyone is impressed with the friendly crowds, the perfect weather and the lenient speeding laws.

Day 2

Kalispel, Montana.

Everyone is a little worn out by the 200+ mile drive, an especially tortuous trek for Allen Lanier, a.k.a. The Fishin' Musician, since they passed Flathead Lake, a first class fishing spot. We're only a one hour drive from Canada. Backstage, the need for a fill-in drum tech for the summer is discussed. Rick Downey's name is mentioned. It's then pointed out that in his years of working for BÖC he had been drum tech, lighting tech, drummer, tour manager, and he could drive a truck. If a remote light board could be rigged up near the drums, several people could take the summer off. Steve Schenck jokes about maybe becoming Mick's drum tech at Action Park. Allen briefly ponders dropping off the tour to stay in Kalispel and fish. Bob and Chris are kept busy by the many over zealous fans that climb on to the stage and wander around the equipment just before the encore.

Day 3

Bozeman, Montana

Cold rainy weather doesn't help the sore throat that has plagued Eric Bloom on this tour, so some song revisions in the song list are made to accommodate. This show is held at the Cat's Paw, a casino/bar/night-club. Somewhere along the way the need for a dressing room was overlooked, so the band is ushered to a plush storage closet. Needless to say, no one lingers for long after the show.

Day 4

Moscow, Idaho

A perfect sunny afternoon, with weather in the 80s finds hundreds of fans lined up outside the club several hours before the band is scheduled to play. Big points to the resourceful staff at Mingles. This club is usually a pool hall, but they shoved several tables together and built a stage on top for

the band. BÖC played another sizzling set to a capacity crowd. John Miceli's drum solo was haunted by flying fruit, not from the audience, but his fellow band members who were having fun with the backstage fruit basket. A moment Chuck Bürgi is probably not sorry he missed.

Day 5

Yakima, Washington

A 250 mile drive, in which John Miceli nearly adopts a puppy dog along the way. Airline red tape foils his plans. There is no show this night, so everyone can actually sleep.

Day 6

Yakima, Washington

Yet another awesome show—the band is playing hot this whole tour. The indisputable tour highlight comes after the show, in the hotel bar. With the Rollin' Free bike club in attendance, as well as a few fans, we are treated to a rare Karaoke performance of Buck, Jon and Eric. So popular were these Cultsters that the emcee called them back up for an encore later in the evening. As luck would have it, this was not the Karaoke system that Don't Fear the Reaper is licensed to, so the guys had to settle for a couple other classic tunes. Allen and John Miceli declined this Karaoke opportunity, although rumour has it that Allen has since been seen on a Karaoke stage somewhere in the midwest.

Day 7

Weanatchee, Washington

Last show of the tour, and the band didn't disappoint anyone. Like so many venues on this tour, the Weanatchee Convention Center is not used to having rock concerts. There was some juggling to be done before we got to town, but in the end, BÖC got the large hall, and bingo was held downstairs. This crowd, like audiences all along the way, were so appreciative that the shows had a great energy. I've seen nearly a hundred BÖC shows, and this tour was one of the best.

The Öysters on Tour

with John Miceli
(seated) and L-R

Buck Dharma

Allen Lanier

Jon Rogers

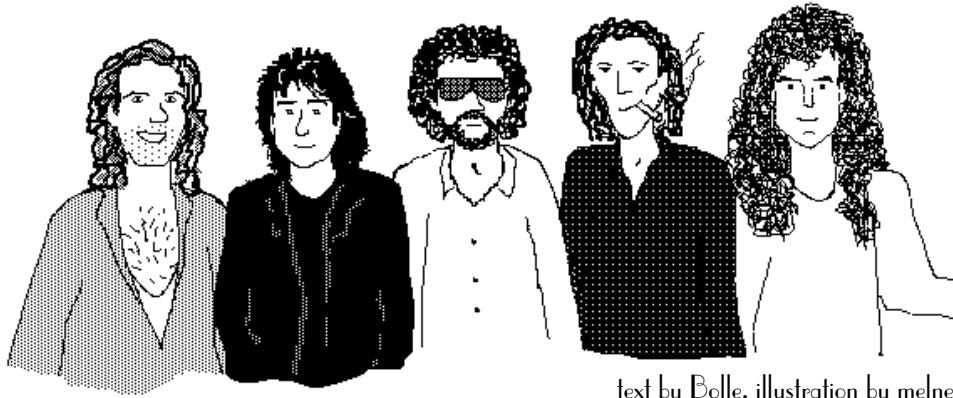
Eric Bloom

photo by

Jessica



BÖC brings a six-pack of new tunes to California Spring Break



text by Belle, illustration by melne

Ahhh Springtime when both the swallows and Blue Öyster Cult return to Capistrano, (and other places in California). This time two tours cover both the Northern and Southern parts of the state. Also this time they descend with brand new material! Six new tunes have been added to the set, and that is very exciting! Four of the songs were composed by Buck and Eric with lyrics from John Shirley, one by Jon Rogers and Buck, and one by Buck with a Richard Meltzer lyric.

Around Halloween of last year they began rehearsing three new tunes for the live shows. One more tune was added around January and by the time they arrived on the West Coast a staggering half dozen new tunes were to be presented. Recalling how they only played at best three tunes from the *Imaginos* album during that tour, this is the best treat we could possibly ask for.

The shows still start out the same way now with "Stairway To The Stars." Next is "Dominance & Submission" and "Before The Kiss (A Redcap)," which has squeezed itself in before ETI during most normal shows. Then Eric tells us of their new material that we are about to be treated to.

The first new tune is the current heavy metal chart top 10 'most added' tune, "Demon's Kiss," straight off the soundtrack for *Bad Channels*. It's good to see that some folks have actually taken notice for a change. This tune leans toward the heaviness of "Tattoo Vampire" and if you wish to interpret it that way, a Demon's Kiss just might be blood sucking... The lyric comes straight out of the new John Shirley collection, revised and made fit to fight by Eric, who does a great vocal on this tune with Jon Rogers giving his best bass line delivery to date, with real raw pumping thrust. Only flaw in my book on this tune is that the words of the chorus

are hammered into our brains too many times, and that takes away from the energy and aggression this song otherwise delivers.

The second new tune continues in perfect Öysterism. "Power Underneath Despair" boasts real science fiction music with the coolest off-meter chorus — the drums keeping straight time while the vocal/melody phrase is 1/2 beat less. This juxtaposition against the vocals makes this song a candidate for the best of the new tunes. The Buck/Eric shared choral works actually makes this tune so majestic I can see all kinds of wizards and magicians at work. Lyrically it's a bit of thumb nail philosophy I would say, about a guy who gets outta jail and seeks his revenge. The change in song structure between the verse and the chorus really makes this one the winner of all the new tunes.

Their sets continued with "Take Me Away" and "Cities On Flame," and on some special nights "Flaming Telepaths" would be thrown in for extra spicing. Some like it Hot...

"When Horsemen Arrive" or "The Horsemen Arrive" (both accepted titles), is the song they were forced to re-write for the soundtrack, but the results were so bad, it was decided that anybody who ever heard this would be eliminated... The details remain somewhat obscure, and complicated by the fact that the few unlucky chosen ones are no longer here to testify to the shameless horror of the alter ego known as "Out Of The Darkness." I assume we will never learn the real truth behind this scary and sordid tale. Instead we mortals are to be entangled by the Four Horsemen and their tales of the Apocalypse, via the soundtrack and the shows when they play this one. It was nice in its produced format, but had some limitations and failed to provide the biblical intimidation needed to persuade its listeners of the wrath of God. Live, it's another tale. The presentation of this Presidential election campaign destroyer comes at you as mean and deceitful as Bush lips in the promise of No New Taxes. Nightmares of our civilization put forward in a most effectively Deep Purplesque feel. A nasty solo from Buck, but the King of this tune is Chuck with his hooves banging out the truth of lies. This is followed by "Then Came the Last Days Of May" some nights or "Astronomy" on the others.

The next new one is "Still Burning," a Jon Rogers tune co-written with Buck. It has more of a later 80's sound, and sits quite nicely in with the other new compositions. Buck sings this song that has an almost Beatles sounding riff. Nice double bass drumming makes this song fit in with those traditional Cult variations. A great catchy chorus with the breaks in the right places and a fiery solo to put the flames in place complete this song. I am really looking forward to hearing this properly recorded for the next album. "Still Burning" is not a sequel to "Burning For You," but if you'd like that to be the issue, I'm sure Buck and Jon would have no objections. Hopefully it will fare as well on the charts!

"Harvest Moon" is a song that stood out from The Red and The Black group's repertoire and is built around a great lyric by Richard Meltzer. Here in the context of The Cult it becomes quite a highlight of the show

as Allen Lanier steps up front and takes a full battle charge guitar solo à la "Highway Star" and kicks ass the real way. Buck takes the second lead as the song returns to the original feel.

Allen had a solo spot in "I Am The One You Warned Me Of", but there it wasn't a 'duel' going on, they were just taking turns. Here Allen proves to us why we missed him so much during the year of the Ninja. A special note is the fact that Allen plays guitar in all of the new songs. It puts our band into a new feel with more guitar oriented strength. I still hope there will be a return of the token Allen Lanier composition on the next album, because his tunes signify that original fulfilling band effort these guys used to deliver with each of their albums before the exits of the Bouchards.

The end section of the shows still showcase the Triumvirat of Buck Dharma's Hitsville and the casual Öyster listener's reason for coming to the show, while some of us pre-Agents of Fortune fans who've already seen this part of the show, (that actually has remained intact the same way since 1981 with very few changes) can relax a bit and concentrate on any eventual surprises in the encore.

I am still baffled about the inclusion of the 10-15 minute drum solo in Godzilla. When they played the song on Rick Dees "Into The Night" show last spring, I felt it took a new meaning with its wonderfully short three-minute version. It was back to magic again. Ten minutes of drum solo is tiring, especially since we could be blessed with almost three more cool tunes in its place.

The last of the new tunes, "In The Cold Grey Light Of Dawn" is saved for the encore. In search of truth, 'You can't lie to yourself anymore,' Eric informs us of the time to own up to our destined realities and take full responsibility of our acts because anything else is useless. The music here is a heavy laid back feel with a smooth vocal caressing the chord progressions. It's a cool piece and well written, although in most of the performances Eric had to force his voice too much, so perhaps a doubled voice or harmony vocal would be the perfect assistance when they record this in the studio.

The rest of the encore is up for grabs, and a wider selection of tunes makes it quite the pleasure to hang around to see if one of the favorite tunes would show up. Among the selections we got to hear were "Unknown Tongue," "O.D.'d On Life Itself," "This Ain't the Summer Of Love" and even "Astronomy." The last song of the show is always "The Red and The Black," a perfect ending to the show. A spunky uptempo rave to leave us all worn out and perfectly satisfied.

Over the summer the new tunes seem to have dropped out of the set one by one. There have been fewer occasions with "Cold Grey Light of Dawn" and "Power Underneath Despair," and even "Demon's Kiss" is played only now and then. Hopefully these songs will appear frequently in future setlists, along with even more new songs from the renewed joint songwriting effort from Buck and Eric. Keep this stuff up, we want it all and we want it now!

SOFT WHITE UNDERSTUDY

Acquiring a taste for Öysters — covering the covers by melne

Ever since the punk rock explosion of the late 70s, it has been very fashionable for newer bands to pay tribute to their inspirations by releasing a select cover song on their albums. Nowadays more and more bands are doing this on whole tribute albums compiled of different bands doing a certain artist's songs. (like the recent Elton John, Grateful Dead and Ramones compilations). Blue Öyster Cult has inspired quite a few people to record covers on their albums, and although there isn't a Cult tribute album (why not?!?), you may be surprised by the variety of artists who have included Cult covers on their LPs.

For the most part, all the different artist's versions are done very true to the originals. Not surprisingly, the most often covered song is "(Don't Fear) The Reaper," for the obvious reasons of it being a classic hit song and a very influential and inspiring song.

"Reaper" has been recorded as a dance version (Rose McDowell), a speed-punk version (The Goo Goo Dolls), and a gothic/industrial version (Lydia Lunch and Clint Ruin). Of these the Lunch/Ruin version is the best of the three. The spare arrangement and spooky vocals suit the song, and in their treatment of the middle break, they change a couple notes in the bass line to give it a haunting quality that really suits the thrust of the lyric.

Contrastingly, The Goo Goo Dolls have the worst version of the song. Sped up to almost twice the tempo of the original, the song loses all its tonal subtlety, and the main riff is transformed into a barely recognizable din. The vocalist has a whiny voice, and has altered the melody line on the "la-la's," which doesn't sound good at all.

Falling somewhere in between is Rose McDowell's version. McDowell was a member of the obscure English post-punk group Strawberry Switchblade. This cut is the most different of the three. Opening with a flourish on the harp, (and I don't mean harmonica) this version throws in a twist to this definitive guitar song by using



Lydia Lunch and Clint Ruin's *Reaper* sports two great "covers," artwork and song.





very little guitar at all. The body of the song is synthesizer and drum machine, with wispy harmonized vocals on top. McDowell's interpretation is "Reaper" at its most hopeful. The B-side of this English 12" is an instrumental version, more like a Karaoke version, since the only difference between the two is that the lead vocal is missing.

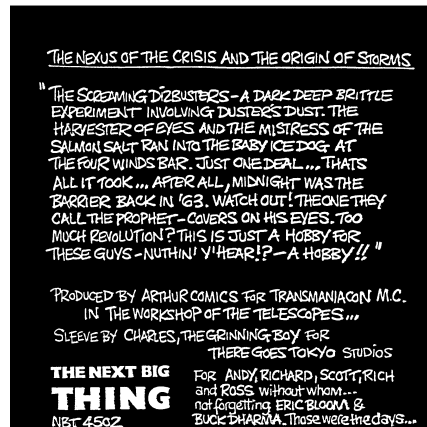
Eric Bloom's Spectres collaboration with Ian Hunter yielded a song that Bonnie Tyler included on her album *Faster Than the Speed of Night*. "Goin' through the Motions." makes an appearance on side two of the album. It is initially shocking to imagine a mainstream artist such as Tyler choosing a Blue Öyster Cult song to sing, as most other groups that have covered the band have been of the same "cult" status as the band they honor.

Tyler's rendition of the song sounds more Ian Hunter-ish than the BÖC version of the same tune, more like "Just Another Night" than that Spectres-feel. She inserted a cheerleader-like chant which acts as both an intro and an outro. There are some changes to the lyric as well.

"The Red and the Black" seems to be a talisman for the bands The Minutemen and FIREHOSE. Both groups recorded versions of the song. Common to both bands, too are long-time BÖC Fan Mike Watt (bass), and drummer George Hurley. "The Red and the Black" first surfaced on the Minutemen's *Three Way Tie (For Last)* LP, as a studio version, which includes an amazingly cool bass section in the middle. Later the song was released in a live version on their *Tour Spiel 7"* EP. The tragic death of guitarist/singer D. Boon led eventually to the formation of FIREHOSE, whose first song ever played with new singer/guitarist, Ed (fROMOHIO) Crawford was "The Red and the Black." This song been with them through thick and thin, and another live version is included on the latest FIREHOSE release, *Live Totem Pole*, recorded at the Palomino, the famous North Hollywood, California nightspot.

Aussie Rockers The Radio Birdmen have an almost Stalk-Forrest sound to them, and on their 1976 single, *Surfin' at 2 JJJ live EP*, they recorded "Transmaniacon MC." (They also had an album suspiciously entitled *Radios Appear...* hmmm...

New York hardcore/metal/punks White Flag released both a live and studio version of



The Screaming Dizbusters don't wear their influences on their sleeve

"Hot Rails to Hell." The live version appears on their *Feeding Frenzy* album. Hardly better than a boombox recording, the version ends with the same ending of Cheap Trick's "Hello There." This album is mildly interesting as a 'three-sided album.' On one side the grooves are nested, so depending on how the needle is set on the record, you get either of one or another song. Other than that, not a particularly memorable "Rails," or record for that matter! The studio version appears on their *Wild Kingdom* album.

The Screaming Dizbusters (an alias for the Swedish band the Nomads) released an "alternative rock" version of "This Ain't The Summer of Love" in 1986 on a 7" single. They went on to release at least one more single under "The Screaming Dizbusters" moniker, and although the second single didn't contain a BÖC song, the sleeve attests to these guys dedication to their favorite source of inspiration.

College faves REM and The Dream Syndicate have both covered "(Don't Fear) The Reaper," but in their live sets, not on record.

Although not cover versions, two other records merit mention here, for being BÖC-related interesting oddities. One is yet another Minutemen record, Project Mersh, and the song from that LP "Tour Spiel." Part of the song's lyric reads "I dreamed I was E. Bloom but I woke up Joe Bouchard in some town out on the road, with patent leather boots on (just like Richard told me) another hack on the Spectres tour." A parenthetical note appears at the end of the lyric and says "Context of verse two has changed since viewing BÖC 2/7/85 at the Waters in San Pedro. Should read: 'I dreamed I was E. Bloom but I woke up E. Bloom)." Another oddity is the Japanese female trio Shonen Knife, who have a song called "Blue Öyster Cult." Obviously charmed by the band's name, their song has nothing to do with the group BÖC, but when translated is about attending a party and becoming ill with food poisoning from consuming the raw marinated oysters that were served. The only part sung in English is their chorus, "Blue blue blue oyster, blue blue blue oyster, blue blue blue oyster, oyster poisoning..." (however they pronounce that word 'broo'). The sleeve is cool with a cartoon of the band with prominent BÖC logos displayed.



Japan's Shonen Knife has a song called "Blue Öyster Cult - about botulism!!!

