



65918

THE BEST OF
BLUE ÖYSTER CULT



Don't Fear the Reaper

1. Cities On Flame With Rock And Roll

-S. Pearlman-D. Roeser-A. Bouchard-
From *Blue Oyster Cult* (Columbia KC 31063)
Produced by M. Krugman & S. Pearlman
Recorded 1971
© 1972 Sony Music Entertainment Inc.

Blue Oyster Cult debuted on the Billboard album chart on 5/20/72, reaching the #172 position and remaining on the chart for 8 weeks.



31063

2. The Red & The Black

-D. Roeser-E. Bloom-S. Pearlman-
From *Tyranny And Mutation* (Columbia KC 32017)
Produced by M. Krugman & S. Pearlman
Recorded 1973
© 1973 Sony Music Entertainment Inc.

Tyranny and Mutation debuted on the Billboard album chart on 3/17/73, reaching the #122 position and remaining on the chart for 13 weeks.



32017

3. Flaming Telepaths

-A. Bouchard-E. Bloom-S. Pearlman-D. Roeser-
From *Secret Treaties* (Columbia PC 32858)
Produced by M. Krugman & S. Pearlman
Recorded 1973
© 1974 Sony Music Entertainment Inc.

Secret Treaties debuted on the Billboard album chart on 4/27/74. The album peaked at #53 and stayed on the charts for 14 weeks.



32858

4. Astronomy

-S. Pearlman-J. Bouchard-A. Bouchard-
From *Secret Treaties* (Columbia PC 32858)
Produced by M. Krugman & S. Pearlman
Recorded 1973
© 1974 Sony Music Entertainment Inc.

5. This Ain't The Summer Of Love

-M. Krugman-A. Bouchard-D. Waller-
From *Agents Of Fortune* (Columbia PC 34164)
Produced by M. Krugman, S. Pearlman, D. Lucas
Recorded 1976
© 1976 Sony Music Entertainment Inc.

Agents Of Fortune debuted on the Billboard album chart on 6/19/76, reaching the #29 position and remaining on the chart for 35 weeks.



34164

6. (Don't Fear) The Reaper

-D. Roeser-
From *Agents Of Fortune* (Columbia PC 34164)
Produced by M. Krugman, S. Pearlman, D. Lucas
Recorded 1976
© 1976 Sony Music Entertainment Inc.

(Don't Fear) The Reaper (Columbia single # 10384) debuted on the Billboard Hot 100 chart on 7/31/76. It climbed to #12 and stayed on the chart for 20 weeks.

7. I Love The Night

-D. Roeser-
From *Spectres* (Columbia JC 35019)
Produced by M. Krugman, S. Pearlman, D. Lucas, Blue Oyster Cult
Recorded 1977
© 1977 Sony Music Entertainment Inc.

Spectres debuted on the Billboard album chart on 11/12/77. It peaked at the #43 position and stayed on the chart for 14 weeks.



35019

8. Goin' Through The Motions

-E. Bloom-I. Hunter-
From *Spectres* (Columbia JC 35019)
Produced by M. Krugman, S. Pearlman, D. Lucas, Blue Oyster Cult
Recorded 1977
© 1977 Sony Music Entertainment Inc.

9. Godzilla

-D. Roeser-
From *Spectres* (Columbia JC 35019)
Produced by M. Krugman, S. Pearlman, D. Lucas, Blue Oyster Cult
Recorded 1977
© 1977 Sony Music Entertainment Inc.

10. In Thee

-A. Lanier-
From *Mirrors* (Columbia PC 36009)
Produced by Tom Werman
Recorded 1978-1979
© 1979 Sony Music Entertainment Inc.

Mirrors debuted on the Billboard album chart on 7/7/79, reaching the #44 position and remaining on the chart for 17 weeks.

In Thee (Columbia single # 11055) debuted on the Billboard Hot 100 chart on 9/8/79, reaching #74 and staying on the chart for 4 weeks.

11. The Marshall Plan

-D. Roeser-A. Bouchard-J. Bouchard-E. Bloom-A. Lanier-
From *Cultosaurus Erectus* (Columbia JC 36550)
Produced by Martin Birch and Blue Oyster Cult
Recorded 1979-1980
© 1980 Sony Music Entertainment Inc.

Cultosaurus Erectus debuted on the Billboard album chart on 7/12/80, reaching the #34 position and remaining on the chart for 16 weeks.

12. Black Blade

-E. Bloom-M. Moorcock-J. Trivers-
From *Cultosaurus Erectus* (Columbia JC 36550)
Produced by Martin Birch and Blue Oyster Cult
Recorded 1979-1980
© 1980 Sony Music Entertainment Inc.



35019



36009



36550

13. Joan Crawford

-A. Bouchard-D. Roter-J. Rigg-
From *Fire Of Unknown Origin* (Columbia FC 37389)
Produced by Martin Birch
Recorded 1980-1981
© 1981 Sony Music Entertainment Inc.

Fire Of Unknown Origin debuted on the Billboard album chart on 7/11/81, reaching the #24 position and remaining on the chart for 31 weeks.

14. Burnin' For You

-D. Roeser-R. Meltzer-
From *Fire Of Unknown Origin* (Columbia FC 37389)
Produced by Martin Birch
Recorded 1980-1981
© 1981 Sony Music Entertainment Inc.

Burnin' For You (Columbia single # 02415) debuted on the Billboard Hot 100 chart on 8/15/81, reaching #40 and stayed on the chart for 14 weeks.

15. Shooting Shark

-D. Roeser-P. Smith-
From *The Revolution By Night* (Columbia FC 38947)
Produced by Bruce Fairbairn
Recorded 1983
© 1983 Sony Music Entertainment Inc.

The Revolution By Night debuted on the Billboard album chart on 11/26/83, reaching the #93 position and remaining on the chart for 16 weeks.

Shooting Shark (Columbia single # 04298) debuted on the Billboard Hot 100 chart on 2/11/84, reaching #83 and stayed on the chart for 3 weeks.

16. Take Me Away

-E. Bloom-A. Nova-
From *The Revolution By Night* (Columbia FC 38947)
Produced by Bruce Fairbairn
Recorded 1983
© 1983 Sony Music Entertainment Inc.



37389



38947



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Blue Öyster Cult has long been one of rock's most uncompromising and most widely misunderstood bands, sporting an unpredictably iconoclastic streak that's been deeply embedded in the group's creative DNA since its embryonic origins at Long Island's Stony Brook State University in 1967. It was there that Donald "Buck Dharma" Roeser (lead guitar), Allen Lanier (keyboards and guitar) and Albert Bouchard (drums), formed the Soft White Underbelly with singer Les Bronstein and bassist Andrew Winters. "The whole thing was real experimental, and we weren't really emulating anybody," recalls Roeser. "If it had been done before, we pretty much automatically rejected it."

Though its eclectically cerebral sensibility was off-kilter even by free-spirited late '60s standards, the Soft White Underbelly gained notoriety on the New York scene and won the attention of Elektra Records, for which it recorded a never-released album. By 1969, singer/guitarist Eric Bloom and Bouchard's bass-playing brother Joe had replaced Bronstein and Winters. The new lineup, which performed as the Stalk-Forrest Group and Oaxaca, recorded a second unreleased LP for Elektra, before spending a dispiriting year and a half playing Beatles and Stones covers in local clubs.

Re-christened Blue Öyster Cult, the combo landed a deal with Columbia Records after auditioning for label president Clive Davis in a conference room in the company's New York headquarters. BOC's eponymous debut effort—produced, like the band's next six LPs, by co-manager/sometime lyricist Sandy Pearlman and Columbia exec Murray Krugman—caused a substantial critical buzz when it was released in January 1972. The ten-song album was truly unlike anything that had come before, an alternately harrowing and hilarious blend of sci-fi mythology, pop-culture satire and serious social comment, with twisted anthems like the Pearlman/Roeser/Albert Bouchard number "Cities On Flame With Rock And Roll" balancing surrealist subversive lyrics, insistent melodic hooks and an aggressively rocking sonic attack.

The quintet further honed its punchy yet sophisticated musicianship and fevered lyrical imagination on the subsequent LPs *Tyranny And Mutation* (featuring the iconic opener "The Red And The Black") and *Secret Treaties* (featuring such memorable epics as "Flaming Telepaths" and "Astronomy"). Those albums augmented the band members' own song writing with lyrical contributions by Pearlman, renowned rock critic and longtime BOC associate Richard Meltzer, and Lanier's then-girlfriend Patti Smith, at the time a prominent underground poet who'd yet to take the plunge into fronting her own combo.

Initially, Blue Öyster Cult's dynamically transgressive aesthetic, its intentionally faceless image and the tongue-in-cheek menace of the band's darkly cinematic lyrics set it far apart from

(left to right) Allen Lanier, Albert Bouchard, Joe Bouchard, Donald "Buck Dharma" Roeser, Eric Bloom

its contemporaries. But, Bloom insists, "I don't think we were particularly aware of being different. We were just happy to have a record deal. In the early days, we all lived together in a house in Great Neck. We'd all set up in the living room and jam, and that's how a lot of the songs on the first couple of records came together."

"It all came together very naively," adds Lanier. "It went in so many different directions because it incorporated a lot of different points of view. The songs may have come dressed in different kinds of metaphors, but I think they're pretty much about the same things—love, loneliness, fear—that all songs are about. I always felt that rock music could encompass anything, but that it's not really worth anything if it isn't personal."

"We always tried to make the lyrics epic and visual, in that they told stories with strong imagery," says Roeser. "The albums were conceptually coherent, but the concept was always fashioned after the fact, around the songs."

"We just did it and did it and did it, and didn't think too much about it," says Bloom. "The first four or five records were done in such a whirlwind."



We were always either in the studio or on the road, so we wrote a lot of these songs on tour. We'd bring an amp and guitars up to somebody's hotel room and bash around ideas until we had enough material for an album. Then we'd get back, run into the studio and record, and then we'd go out and do the same thing all over again."

On stage, Blue Öyster Cult quickly grew into a force to be reckoned with. The band's darkly theatrical live spectacle—documented on 1975's *On Your Feet Or On Your Knees*, 1978's *Some Enchanted Evening*, and 1982's *Extraterrestrial Live* found leather-clad Bloom emerging as a compellingly sinister frontman and Roeser breaking out as a riveting guitar pyrotechnician. "We knew we were never gonna make it as teen idols," admits Roeser, "so we went after that sort of dramatic presentation. But we weren't really particularly dark personalities."

"It was kind of a pose," Bloom acknowledges, "but we had a lot of fun with it, and the material we were writing really lent itself to that kind of stance. We must have been pretty convincing, because over the years I've met a lot of people who've said, 'I always thought you were taller, I always thought you could kick my ass.'"

1976's *Agents of Fortune*—which would become Blue Öyster Cult's first platinum release—spawned an unexpected but



indelible smash single in the lushly seductive Roeser composition "(Don't Fear) the Reaper." The album's success allowed BOC to unveil a technologically advanced—and quite controversial—on-stage laser extravaganza that would be further upgraded in time for the next LP, *Spectres*. That disc featured the imposing Roeser-penned "Godzilla" and the infectious pop song "Goin' Through The Motions," which Bloom cowrote with ex-Mott the Hoople leader Ian Hunter.

1979's *Mirrors* found the fivesome working with a new producer, Tom Werman, and scoring substantial airplay with Lanier's yearning, harmony-laden "In Thee." The following year's *Cultosaurus Erectus* introduced English hard-rock producer Martin Birch, who stayed on for 1981's *Fire Of Unknown Origin*. The latter boasted the catchy Roeser-Meltzer tune "Burnin' For You," Blue Öyster Cult's first Top 40 single since "(Don't Fear) The Reaper." The Bruce Fairbairn-produced 1983 release, *The Revolution By Night* was the band's first without departed co-founder Albert Bouchard, while 1986's Club Ninjare-teamed BOC (temporarily minus Lanier) with producer Pearlman. 1988 saw the release of the long-gestating, ill-fated *Imaginos*, an ambitious conceptual work that briefly reunited (at least on record) the original Blue Öyster Cult lineup.

More than thirty years down the road from its formation, Blue Öyster Cult—with Bloom, Lanier and Roeser still on board—is still a going concern, recording, touring and maintaining an exceptionally devoted and well-organized international fan base.

"Frankly, I was always quite surprised that we found an audience as big as we did in the '70s," Lanier reflects. "We never got monstrously big, and we



played with a lot of opening acts who ended up selling a lot more records than we did. But I don't know if we ever could have molded ourselves into a bigger kind of band with a more orthodox approach."


"We've always stayed true to the stuff we liked," asserts Roeser, "Maybe it was a weakness that we stuck with what we liked, but maybe that's also the thing that's allowed us to continue for this long. I think we're still doing something that's different from what anybody else is doing."

As is so often the case with ahead-of-their-time visionaries, Blue Öyster Cult have had to wait for history to confirm their seminal status. Viewed from today's perspective, the impressively varied BOC catalogue demonstrates the group's immense influence, both for their musical innovations and for their introduction of conceptual elements that would subsequently become part of our pop-culture vocabulary.

"It surprises me sometimes when I realize how pervasive our influence is," Roeser concludes, "We blazed a few trails."

—Scott Schinder

New York City, June 1999



Blue Öyster Cult:

Eric Bloom - lead vocals, guitar, keyboards
Albert Bouchard - drums, vocals
Joe Bouchard - bass, vocals
Allen Lanier - keyboards, guitar
Donald "Buck Dharma" Roeser - lead guitar, vocals
Rick Downey - drums on "Shooting Shark," and "Take Me Away"

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Booking: Paradise Artists - New York, NY, Ojai, CA
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www.legacyrecordings.com

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