

## *"Blue Oyster Cult Secrets Revealed" by Martin Popoff: Cultosaurus Erectus review*

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### **BLUE ÖYSTER CULT - Cultosaurus Erectus**

(Columbia '80, JC36550)

This particular installment of Ye Olde Metal will undoubtedly strike you as longer, louder, richer in detail, different in style, and more plain ol' more ambitious than the others and for good reason. It was originally written five years ago (and I haven't bothered to update tense, career advancements etc.) for a little book-ella I was going to do - and still might do one day - on Blue Oyster Cult's catalogue. I've got one of these on every album except the recent two CMC'ers. Sick, eh? Anyhow, here goes. Read it like it's a chapter of what I believe is about 120 pages of text on the band and their highly interesting albums, track by bloody track.

With the relative commercial and fairly sweeping critical failure of **Mirrors**, Blue Oyster Cult were looking for answers. The one thing they had decided was to return to their roots, to make a heavier record again. Drummer **Albert Bouchard**: "I think Cultosaurus Erectus was an obvious return to scary sounds. I remember myself lobbying very hard to not make a commercial record, not worrying about it, just getting back to writing those weird songs again. That's when we thought, we've turned off all these people, and we have to get them turned on again. We have to show them that our hearts are pure and that we're going to stick with our image and that we can do a scary mysterioso, and just be odd and quirky, make the kind of music that would make you think. And I guess after the disaster that was Mirrors, one of the first steps was getting somebody heavier in to produce."

It was a strange time for the band. Tensions with Albert were at an all-time high. Some chalked it up to his artistic temperament, his incessant arguing of any and every point, and some concede that it had much to do with feuding between the wives and girlfriends within the band. There was also a malaise caused strangely enough by geography, which sets in motion Albert's second and third collaborations with his wife at the time, Caryn.

Albert comments on the move out of the city, which has its seeds back around 1977's Spectres. "As far as my writing with Caryn, I think that was a product of the fact that I had moved to Connecticut, actually to be close to my brother, Joe. He and Donald both lived in Stamford. They were there, and I was in the city and I wanted to be close to them, so I moved to Stamford in early '77. 'Reaper' was a hit and I had moved out of my apartment. And once I got there, man, there were all kinds of problems. The wives started fighting; there were all kinds of petty jealousies. It was just a very strange. Well, put it this way, within a year I really didn't have too much to do with either of Joe or Donald, although Joe being my brother, I've always maintained a relationship with him. But anyway, they were at least there, and I needed lyrics. Joe didn't really do lyrics, and Donald was very stingy with his. He's not really a team player when it comes to writing. If you're working on something, he might throw an idea in. If he's working on it, forget it. But anyways, I wasn't around Helen Robbins, Helen Wheels, and I wasn't around Patti; they were still in the city. And I think we were trying to break the hold Sandy Pearlman had on us at that point. The break came earlier than Mirrors and Cultosaurus, like around Agents Of Fortune, but at that time there were all these people around, all these resources that I had, in particular, Patti and Helen. And once I moved to Stamford, I could work on old Patti songs but I had really gone deeply into it in '75, using a whole bunch of Patti Smith songs. I don't know, basically I had tracks, I had ideas, songs, I didn't have any lyrics. So I went to Caryn, 'Would you write something?' She was very much into music and had fancied herself a writer and came up with 'Monsters' and 'Hungry Boys'."

The first step towards making Cultosaurus Erectus a heavier record was the ushering in of Martin Birch as producer, who cut his teeth on such Deep Purple classics as In Rock, Machine Head and Burn (although officially only getting engineer credits), more recently conjuring great results on Black Sabbath's thrilling Heaven And Hell record (Sandy had recently signed a management deal with the band), which, with the help of ex-Rainbow belter Ronnie James Dio, produced a renaissance for BOC's old rivals, and in some ways, heavy metal as a viable genre. Sandy had this to say about his experience with the Birmingham bashers. "Management is horrible. It's a necessary evil. When I took on Black Sabbath, I thought I was gonna make a lot of money, but it didn't work out that way. It was no fun at all. It was very difficult to make money with Black Sabbath - they developed an ability to consume large amounts of money! My favourite thing is writing. I like producing, sometimes, but it can be really horrible because people can't sing anymore or they're psychologically crippled for a couple weeks for one reason for another."

Plus it was back to the grit and history of Long Island for recording, the band first producing about a dozen demos with George Geranos, which then went to Birch for his comments and input, the songs slowly but surely metamorphosing into what is arguably the band's most self-assured record.

Joe on Martin Birch: "I loved Martin. He was a great guy. He had a different approach than Tom Werman, who makes nice records, but is very polished and planned-out. Martin's approach was the total opposite: spontaneity, feeling, emotion. Even though there may be parts with mistakes in them, he'd leave 'em on, just because he felt impulsive about it. And also he was a producer/engineer. He really became part of the console. He knew what he was putting on tape, in every aspect, and he would know what would come out the other end. It was actually quite simple, but inspiring."

The cover art also edged the band back to their original premise, offering a humorous sci-fi portrait of a "cultosaurus erectus," actually a pre-existing, quite famous Richard Clifton-Dey painting (occasionally spotted as a jigsaw puzzle!). The ever-present BOC symbol gets its smallest billing ever, crudely etched onto the hull of the rocket ship speeding past the unwieldy monster. The back cover offered further fun and fake archaeological info, making inside references to Stalk-Forrest, Diz-Bustology, Professor Victor Von Pearlman, Stony Brook, The Underbelly Institute, Oaxaca and the Horn-Swooped Bungo Pony.

But it is the music inside that really signals a proud re-tooling of the BOC legacy. Contrary to stated goals, the record is not considerably heavier than past, post-On Your Feet documents, but it does make a healthy return to the land of strange. The record is pretty much this author's favourite of the catalogue, and also the favourite of Bolle Gregmar, the foremost expert on the band. But one has to agree with the following opinions of Sandy Pearlman. "I just hate Mirrors. That was really the first time I got the notion that they could really make a record like that. That was really disturbing. I had nothing to do with it. Cultosaurus, I don't like it, some people do. I just don't like it. It doesn't do much for me. Fire Of Unknown Origin has some great songs on it and so does Revolution By Night. But none of these have this aggregate kind of overwhelming impression. Which may be one reason they didn't sell as well as they should have. Because at the end of the day, on the earlier records, there really is this cumulative aggregate impression which is synergetic in quality, yielding a lot more than the individual components would suggest it would yield. And it sort of requires you to play the whole thing. And so the record becomes a more addictive experience. With these other records you could just kind of random access it and you know, get away with it. It's really two or three songs deep and that's the end of it."

Pearlman has a point. Where you might disagree that records like Cultosaurus are only "two or three songs deep" (I tend to think it's more like six to eight, and maybe a bit less for its successors), the lack of synergy, or put another way, the loss of innocence and of confidence, is palpable. Cultosaurus is a series of great, individual songs, songs that demonstrate (betray?) a level of work, craft and showmanship not seen on past BOC records, even if the intellectual levels are lopped short by a couple or few.

And perhaps opening track 'Black Blade' personifies all of the above. The song shoots into view with heart-stopping space ship sounds, then proceeding to showcase the band's writing polish, the tune mirroring 'The Vigil' as one of the band's modern day "everything but the kitchen sink" mini-epics. Again Bloom works with his technical partner John Trivers (Eric stakes claim to "melody and music"), adding another Michael Moorcock lyric which is signature swords and sorcery, perhaps too self-consciously and self-evidently BOC, exactly what Sandy was lamenting. Note: Moorcock's main lyrical (and vocal!) vehicle Hawkwind, has an entire album called The Chronicle Of The Black Sword based on the same theme as 'Black Blade', the Elric stories, Elric Of Melnibone being a main character in many of Moorcock's books. Elric is an albino king who receives power from the supernatural black sword, a sword that actually rules its master, and eventually the universe. Hawkwind's album also contains a song called 'Sleep Of A Thousand Tears' which was a Moorcock lyric originally intended for use by BOC, on what eventually became 'Feel The Thunder'.

But musically and production-wise it's a tour de force, full of memorable passages that are not without humour, perhaps undercutting the Dungeons and Dragons Trek-iness of the lyrics. Joe defends the tune. "Cultosaurus, I heard that recently and I thought it was a damn good album. I forgot how good 'Black Blade' was. That's a song that has different layers. You can't get it all in one shot with that song. That took some work." The song's slow fade-out contains the "voice of the Black Blade" muttering almost sub-audibly "you poor fucking humans."

Next up was another heavy rocker, one of the unsung and under-rated songs in the BOC canon, 'Monsters', co-written by Albert and Caryn, valiantly vocalized by Eric. Indeed Albert stated at the time, "I wrote most of these songs with Eric in mind as the perfect vocalist." 'Monsters' stomped with a heavy two-note riff, countered by a hilarious transition into jazzy blues and then back out again, sax work courtesy of Mark Rivera. The staccato stop/start section near the end recalls a similar section in 'Cities On Flame', the latter inspired by '21st Century Schizoid Man', this one sounding even more like the King Crimson classic. It is of note that Albert had brought an entire record's worth of demos to the Cultosaurus sessions, most of them quite heavy, Albert perhaps most determined to reverse the pop trend Mirrors started.

Al was experimenting and learning much during the Cultosaurus era. On 'Monsters': "Well, around that time, I managed to get a hold of a big book, the Steely Dan songbook, every song up until that point, transcribed, the chords, explanations. And I had felt for many years that I was like a second class citizen as a musician, that guitar players spoke another language which I didn't understand. So I made a very concerted effort to learn a lot about guitar and one of the influences was Steely Dan where they play a lot of these impossible chords. That was a good education. And I also transcribed some Django Reinhardt stuff and a lot of mysterious guitar music that interested me. And so I actually did like a zillion demos using all these chords and stuff. None of them have ever seen the light of day. You know they're sort

of like predictable jazz tunes, because it's one thing to know it, and it's another to live it, to have it in your soul. But anyways, that was an outgrowth of that and I felt that the sax was always a burlesque kind of thing, and I always wanted to work with Mark Rivera. I think he's one of the greatest sax players around, really. And I had just called him up and he said, sure!"

Track three was Buck's 'Divine Wind', an enigmatic gothic, doom-laden blues about the whole Ayatollah Khomeini of Iran controversy of the early '80s, this new fundamentalist leader reversing the previous Shah's friendship (some say puppetship) with the U.S.A., in fact entering a war of words, calling America "the devil" and "the great Satan," breaking all ties with the U.S. government and western society in general, and most importantly holding a group of Americans hostage for many months. Bolle: "The difference between Buck's original demo and the final recording is night and day. Buck's vocal presentation made it more of a sincere 'who the hell does he think he is?' type of song, not overreacting. He was very calm. And then Eric came in and sort of shout-sang it 'then let's send him to hell!' It's heavy and it's really cool. But what you sense in Buck's version is the indifference. He doesn't care. The same way the Ayatollah dismisses America is just reversed. It was quite clever." All in all the song was simple but effective, very gloomy but deflated, laid-back and well, indifferent. When performing the song live, roadie Joe Lauro would join the band onstage playing guitar, complete in rubber Ayatollah mask.

Closing side one was 'Deadline', a terrifying true tale, concealed in a sort of effervescent but still mysterious pop. Again this could be construed as Donald operating somewhere between 'Reaper' and 'I Love The Night', although more uptempo. Albert explains that the song is about Phil King (also known as Phil Friedman), a booking agent who used to book gigs for the band in their pre-Columbia days. Phil was apparently trying to collect on a gambling debt and was shot. Allen once described Phil as "a big dude in a cheap vinyl leather jacket, two-tone blue '64 Lincoln Continental, who wore a Fu Manchu moustache, combing his hair at all times. He had a perfect Shaft hairdo and chrome shades he never took off, wore 'em to bed . . ." Rumours that it was a Mafia hit turned out to be unfounded. King is also mentioned in 'Hot Rails To Hell' in the line "The king will not know."

Side two opens with one of those true Blue Oyster Cult oddities, strange on this record, and strange given the rest of the catalogue. 'The Marshall Plan' is a cleverly titled, humble little pop metal epic, somewhat reviled by BOC fans as innocuous in the insipid spirit of 'Let Go' and 'Beat 'Em Up'. The Marshall Plan was an economic plan for the rejuvenation and reconstruction of post-World War II Europe, here resonating with an ironic double meaning, referring to a young gentleman's plan to make it big in rock 'n' roll, i.e. as in Marshall amps, the young hopeful possibly envisioning his own economic renewal. The song sports an uncharacteristically plain and uncryptic lyric, really piling on the cheesiness with a cameo from Don Kirshner himself announcing 'Here's Johnny!' (Note: Don can be seen doing his bit on the infamous Black And Blue tour video, which documents the celebrated Sabbath and Cult co-headline jaunt). Credit goes to the entire band, no surprise given the friendly, collaborative feel of the thing, the tune sounding anything but the work of any one member. Even Martin Birch did much of the work, pulling much of this very "quilted" song together in the studio.

Al explains the unique process of putting together this light, likable ditty. "That was almost like an exercise. We decided we were going to write a song all together. I got this idea because there was so much squabbling about royalties. I figured we'd write a totally democratic tune, share the wealth, improve morale, bond artistically. It was like, after 'The Reaper', it was kind of a difficult thing, in my opinion. I would have to say that I was responsible for organizing that disaster. But, I really wanted to see if we could write a song all together, everybody contributing something. And so that's probably the most democratically written song we ever did. I can't remember who contributed what, but that was it. I know that Allen did the lyrics, with input from Donald. Joe and I did most of the music and Eric did a little bit of everything."

Bolle: "While recording the song, Eric tried some alternate lyrics on the break where young Johnny talks to himself in the mirror. On one take for example, instead of dreaming of stardom and getting his girl back, he speaks of this tough record executive telling him to get real guitars, real amps, growling 'Hey kid, come back when you have a real band. Don't call me, I'll call you!'"

Albert continues: "We all knew that there wasn't anything commercial on the album, and that's the way we planned it. So Columbia decided to make a video out of this song so it would be played on Don Kirshner's Rock Concert. It was fun making a video although I was disappointed with how it came out. It was a silly song that was as tongue in cheek as anything we ever did. Then the next year I heard 'Jukebox Hero' and six months after that, 'Summer Of 69', and I thought wow, this idea might have been good if we had been sincere about it. I was thinking about if I had written the lyric, it wouldn't have been anything like that, but more open-ended. I like open-ended songs. I usually don't feel the need for closure in a song, whereas Donald always felt the need for closure. Most of his have a definite ending, like a short story, starting with 'Last Days', but excepting maybe a few on Flat Out and the songs he wrote with Meltzer. Those are all open-ended."

But all smirks are wiped off collective faces with track two, Albert and Caryn's fast-paced rocker 'Hungry Boys' (originally 'Hungry Boys In Brooklyn', sung by both Joe and Al), a song that takes a twistedly black humorous look at, well, looking for and craving drugs. Albert: "'Hungry Boys' was inspired by Kasim Sulton in the summer of 1977, when we were on tour with Utopia in Canada. I believe we were in Winnipeg, and Kasim came to my room and said 'I am starved! I can

really use something to eat. Is there anything to eat?' And I said 'Well, I brought some apples back from the gig and I've got some beers.' And he went 'Ugh! But I'll take an apple,' so he did and he left. Caryn was there with me at the time. She was pregnant with my oldest son, and I said, you know that gives me an idea for a song, 'Hungry Boys', listen to this! And originally it sounded more like Utopia and it was really dedicated to Kasim. But she said 'This is a terrible idea, but we can make it into something else.' It was her idea to make it about a drug deal, people from Queens that she was familiar with." Sidenote: One of Buck's rare non-BOC sessions was for Sulton's solo record, on which Buck can be distinctly heard on three tracks.

Following 'Hungry Boys' was another one of Joe's subversive pop tunes, 'Fallen Angel' (originally 'Fallen Angels') pumping along with one of those signature, buoyant light metal arrangements with an oddly histrionic Joe vocal, lyrically loosely fitting within Joe's usual portfolio of good versus evil stories, mixing with considerable aplomb, biker imagery, the story of Lucifer, and transformation at the hands of a captivating woman, the character resenting feelings of love as he pines for his outlaw days.

There's a great sense of motion, due in large part to this succinct lyric provided by Helen Wheels, Helen recollecting that "That was due to my many years of motorcycle experiences with Harley riders and various types of outlaws; just something that erupted out of the middle of all that." Joe offers this chain of events. "That actually started as a Pepsi jingle (laughs). It's actually true. We were asked by David Lucas who was a jingle guy in New York, and he said 'Hey! I want you to come in and do a Pepsi tune. And after we did it we thought it was stupid. Luckily it didn't catch on, although you know, I'd probably be driving a nicer car today if it did catch on (laughs). So I came back from that session with the thought that hey, let me write something jingly. Also, I was thinking in terms of a Todd Rundgren song, so that's where that came out. I was thinking, well, what would Todd do in a situation like this? Helen re-wrote the lyrics several times to that. But the real key was when I had gotten into the studio, I sang one line of the song, and Martin, our producer said that was great. He said 'Well, why don't you sing the whole song like that?' It was in this high voice. I ended up sounding like Roger Daltrey but actually in my mind, I was trying to sound more like Bon Scott, because I really liked his singing with AC/DC. I tried to nail it, but I don't know, maybe I didn't have enough whiskey in me (laughs). Then again, I probably wouldn't be alive today. But that was the idea with that."

Joe then goes on to express considerable fondness for the record as a whole. "This is an album that has a lot of layers. You've got your 'Black Blade', your 'Divine Wind'; that was a pretty intense song, 'Hungry Boys'. I'm not crazy about 'The Marshall Plan', but 'Hungry Boys' is a bizarre tune, 'Unknown Tongue'. That's a pretty good album and Martin was great, a real producer. You could tell that he just knew what sorts of sounds he would get on tape. It was a pretty simple process but it was inspiring."

Next up was 'Lips In The Hills' which stands today as one of the band's heaviest metals, amongst a catalogue which, let's face it, usually didn't dabble too deeply in heavy metal on a purely musical level. But 'Lips In The Hills' is a fast-paced tune with a considerably aggressive riff and some nice textural soloing from Donald. Writing credits go to Donald, Eric and Richard Meltzer. Bolle: "Buck's third submission was called 'Hold Me Tight', a great riff but certainly not a very Cult-sounding lyric. During rehearsals, this was mainly referred to as 'Track X' as they tried a few alternative lyrics, before settling on Meltzer's 'Lips In The Hills'."

The lyric had a nicely enigmatic quality to it, fusing BOC's two favourite worlds of sci-fi and the supernatural, delivered in their usual cryptic manner, with a great, dramatic vocal from Eric. Bolle on Richard Meltzer and this song: "'Lips In The Hills' is another Meltzer song about feeling entrapped by people. But I think it's another male/female love story. I can't quite remember what Richard told me. We talked about quite a lot of his lyrics and he just goes 'You know, I was on acid when I wrote this.' But, he always has an explanation with it, which is cool. He was such a weird, wild guy. You have to know that Meltzer is no taller than Albert. He's 5'2" as well. Buck, Albert and Richard, the short midget guys in the band. 'Lips In The Hills' is definitely about sexual frustration, which he felt he could write in terms of Blue Oyster Cultology. Meltzer felt he could mix these messages with scientific aspects, even though they were the ones that had read all these HP Lovecraft books and Meltzer didn't. He was more into discovering everything for himself. So he tried everything. His latest book, *The Night (Alone)* has some fantastically funny anecdotes about Blue Oyster Cult, but it's hidden, veiled. You'll find them when you read it." 'Lips In The Hills' may also be interpreted as a second, more opaque reading on the Roswell Incident (see 'The Vigil').

Closing the record was 'Unknown Tongue', another metaphysical pop song, mysterious but served with hook, slightly tough in arrangement, but melodic and smooth, captivating lyric courtesy of David Roter, a friend of Albert's and Sandy's from way back. David explains. "I went to Stoney Brook, and lived in a house with Pearlman and Meltzer and Andrew Winters. Andrew's the guy they threw out; the most bitter man alive. Maybe Pete Best is more bitter. And Donald was Andrew's best friend. Of course they hate each other now. So they started getting together. Andrew was playing lead guitar, but then Donald came around. You know the story; they picked up Allen hitchhiking. That's how they met. And Albert was Donald's friend. So Albert was dropping out and they all found that house. I was just about to graduate, and I was like a folk singer there, and they actually backed me up for one show. But the year they actually started happening, I went off to grad school in California, sociology at Irvine. And then that next year, everybody was trying to get out of the draft and everything. Then I came back and they were living in a different house. They were just starting to gel. And

Pearlman was like a big deal writer, with Crowdaddy, and so was Meltzer, so they got the band gigs. They actually backed Jackson Browne."

Which begs the question: why aren't there any David Roter lyrics on earlier BOC records? "I think they thought I sucked (laughs). I don't know exactly what they thought. No, they thought of me as a folk singer. Plus I wasn't really around. And Pearlman and Meltzer were actually writing words then. But they didn't actually think that they could write. I think the whole thing was really run by Pearlman at the time. I think they were in awe of him intellectually. And it's funny, because anything even close to becoming a hit was written by Donald. And in my opinion, he wrote the best lyrics."

Albert gives this profile of Roter, with an interesting digression into his daily routine these days: "We team up regularly. But actually, I have a day gig. I teach in a high school now, and this job was provided by him who encouraged me to take this gig when I was completely broke. Actually I was driving a cab to be honest. And David was working as a teacher. I've known him for over 30 years now, and for most of that time he's been a school teacher. And now I'm a teacher. I teach music and supervise the school newspaper. It's actually a lot of fun. My problem is that I just don't have enough hours in the day. It's terrible, because every time I go on vacation, I come back to work and I'm totally into the band (ed. Brain Surgeons, with wifey Deb Frost), and I've got to do school. And as the year progresses I get all these great ideas on how to make classes exciting. I've been doing it eight years now, so. But anyways, so I see David every day. Actually, what we have collaborated on without fail is every graduation we sing a song, and we always do a different one, never two the same. We do little songs for our friends and for our students. David is currently working on a record for Andy Shernoff, and so I did a song with him and Andy for his record." Of note, David co-wrote '(666) Devil Got Your Mother' on the first Brain Surgeons record, and Albert has returned the favour, producing on David's own recordings.

David explains how the link up with the band finally happened. "Well, Albert dug what I was doing, and at one point, Sandy Pearlman and Murray Krugman were going to sign me to Columbia. But it's the way they are you know, how they dicked around with Imaginos and everything. It was like a year or so of 'Oh, we've almost got it'. And in truth I really had no idea how to put things together. So I started working with Albert, recording some things. Then actually it hit me: how do you get these guys to record a song? You offer them something. So I said to Albert, 'Hey man, I'll give you 50% of this 'Unknown Tongue'.' We made a demo of it, and I said, you get the Cult to do it, I'll give you 50% of it. And he said, 'Aw, I'll take 25%.' And that's when I realized that's how rock 'n' roll is done. When you really think about it, that's all rock 'n' roll is; it's arrangement. And Albert was really responsible for the arrangement. So anyways that's it. It came down to if Albert didn't do one of my tunes, he could get maybe one of his tunes in. Man, I remember one night, we were working on a song, about 3:00 in the morning. This is when he was living in Connecticut, when he was totally fucked up! And I said, 'Hey man, why are you doing this? Why are you working on my stuff so late?' And he said, 'Because I think you should be heard, man.' And then I decided, man, that guy was going to be my friend for the rest of my life."

David sheds some light on the lyric. "Well, see, I'm a Jew, and it's about my fascination with gentile chicks. I was going with my first one, and when we'd have sex, she would say stuff like 'Mary Mother Of God!' And that just drove me nuts, man. I thought that was just great. So yeah, I wanted to write something like that Billy Joel thing, 'Only The Good Die Young'. I wanted to write something like that, but only a little darker. So it's really a Jew's misconception of what gentile chicks are all about. Because the thing I really dug about Catholicism was how the blood and the sex came all together. So that was that."

Bolle has this to say about the specific story line of Roter's mysterious lyric: "How do I explain 'Unknown Tongue'? This girl's trying to find out what life's all about, she's like 12, 13. Anyways, her first menstruation comes about. And she tries to discover what it was all about. She probably was shocked, because nobody had ever told her. She doesn't speak to her mom about it. But it becomes obscure, because the song begins in the middle of the story and ends several chapters later, in the middle of the story. We don't get the beginning; we don't get the end. David Roter is that kind of a character. So it's about awareness of life from a female point of view. And the part about here cutting her palm and watching the blood, I think that's just his imagination, adding a fictional element." Whatever one's interpretation, the song skillfully bridges the physical world with the spiritual, Roter wrapping an everyday occurrence in the language of mystery, telling the tale with enough obfuscation so as to allow a straight supernatural reading if one wishes.

Cultosaurus turned out to be a real frustration for the band sales-wise. All felt that it was a really strong album. Indeed a surfeit of material was provided and possible for inclusion, including 'Lover's Loan' and 'White Hot Star' from Helen Wheels (the former, originally a Patti Smith lyric called 'Soul Jive', and then 'Jungle Fever'). Ronald Binder had offered 'Operation Stardust', 'Undying Flame' and 'Alpha And Omega', none of which ever made the cut, leaving 'I Am The Storm' as the only Binder song to ever appear on a BOC record. Two additional Meltzer/Al Bouchard songs, 'I Need A Flat Top' and 'Adopt Me' weren't used, along with 'Lucy (Love's Lost Legend)' (Al and Caryn), 'Hell Bustin' Loose' (an Al tune, about Cozy Powell drumming with a dildo thrown on-stage during a BOC tour with Rainbow), Joe Bouchard's 'Gun' (fully finished twice, for this record and with Tom Werman for Mirrors), 'Hot Desert Sand', 'Anyway You Want It' and 'Infinity Machine', also from Joe, and finally a novelty track by Eric called 'Showtime'.

There is a noticeable lack of contribution from Allen Lanier, who indeed receives no writing credits on the album whatsoever. This can be chalked up partially to the fact that much of his writing and indeed keyboard work was going

elsewhere. Sandy, when asked about Allen's diminishing songwriting role had this to say: "Well (long pause), not much of what he did came to the band, so I'm not one to judge. I'm not sure where they wound up, Patti or Jim Carroll or whatever, which is fine. So that's an interesting question. But like I said, from 1979 on and precious little between '72 and '79, not much was coming to the band from Allen." Lanier contributed to most of girlfriend Patti Smith's records, songs to two of Jim Carroll's records '80's Catholic Boy and '83's I Write Your Name, John Cale's brilliant Music For A New Society from '79, while also (ironically) helping out Sandy Pearlman's stable of bands over the years, including Pavlov's Dog, the Dictators, Shakin' Street and The Clash, those honky tonk keys on 'Julie's Been Working For The Drug Squad' being Allen's time-everlasting contribution to that classic tune.

So quite evidently, there was no shortage of good material. But commercially speaking, the record was considered a bit of a non-starter, given the lack of label promotion, especially overseas, save for a successful mini-jour through Britain in November '79, which included four nights at the venerable Hammersmith Odeon. Cultosaurus was the first BOC record to break the Top 20 in the UK, entering the charts at #14, reaching #12 (highest UK position ever for a BOC record), and staying within the Top 40 for six weeks, Britain in the throes of the New Wave Of British Heavy Metal, hard rock surging like never before with such acts as Motorhead, Saxon, Iron Maiden, Def Leppard and a rejuvenated Judas Priest, doing brisk business, causing the biggest spike in metal sales since the beginning of recorded time. So BOC's heavier material seemed poised and positioned for success, if only the record had been properly marketed. In the U.S. the album peaked at #34 on the Billboard charts, staying there for only two weeks. Sales are estimated to be 200,000 to 250,000, a slight reduction from the 300,000 racked with Mirrors. Albert adds this final note. "The record sold even less than Mirrors, but at least the fans and the critics were saying 'This is more like it.' So at least we still had our pride. And I still happen to like that album."