

Blue Oyster Cult – Tyranny And Mutation (1973)

Written by bluesever

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- 01. *The Red & The Black* (Albert Bouchard, Eric Bloom, Sandy Pearlman) – 4:24
- 02. *O.D.'d On Life Itself* (Bloom, A.Bouchard, Joe Bouchard, Pearlman) – 4:47
- 03. *Hot Rails To Hell* (J.Bouchard) – 5:11
- 04. *7 Screaming Diz-Busters* (A.Bouchard, J.Bouchard, Donald Roeser, Pearlman) – 6:59
- Side two - *The Red*
- 05. *Baby Ice Dog* (A.Bouchard, Bloom, Patti Smith) – 3:28
- 06. *Wings Wetted Down* (A.Bouchard, J.Bouchard) – 4:12
- 07. *Teen Archer* (Roeser, Bloom, Richard Meltzer) – 3:57
- 08. *Mistress Of The Salmon Salt (Quicklime Girl)* (A.Bouchard, Pearlman) – 5:05
- 2001 CD reissue Bonus Tracks:
- 09. *Cities On Flame With Rock And Roll (Live)* (Pearlman, Roeser, A.Bouchard) – 4:41
- 10. *Buck's Boogie (Studio Version)* (Pearlman, Bloom, A.Bouchard) – 5:19
- 11. *7 Screaming Diz-Busters (Live)* (A.Bouchard, J.Bouchard, Roeser, Pearlman) – 14:00
- 12. *O.D.'d On Life Itself (Live)* (Bloom, A.Bouchard, J.Bouchard, Pearlman) – 4:51

Personnel:

- Donald Buck Dharma Roeser - guitar, vocals
- Eric Bloom - vocals, stun guitar and all synthesizers
- Joe Bouchard - bass, keyboards, and lead vocals on *Hot Rails To Hell* and *Wings Wetted Down*
- Albert Bouchard - drums, vocals
- Allen Lanier - keyboards, rhythm guitar

On *Tyranny and Mutation*, the Blue Öyster Cult achieved the seemingly impossible: They brightened their sound and deepened their mystique. The band picked up its tempos considerably on this sophomore effort, and producers Sandy Pearlman and Murray Krugman added a lightning bolt of high-end sonics to their frequency range. Add to this the startling lyrical contributions of Pearlman, rock critic Richard Meltzer, and poet cum rocker Patti Smith (who

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was keyboardist Allen Lanier's girlfriend at the time), the split imagery of Side One's thematic, The Red and Side Two's The Black, and the flip-to-wig-city, dark conspiracy of Gawlik's cover art, and an entire concept was not only born and executed, it was received. The Red side of Tyranny and Mutation is its reliance on speed, punched-up big guitars, and throbbing riffs such as in "The Red and the Black," "O.D'd on Life Itself," "Hot Rails to Hell," and "7 Screaming Diz-Busters," all of which showcased the biker boogie taken to a dizzyingly extreme boundary; one where everything flies by in a dark blur, and the articulations of that worldview are informed as much by atmosphere as idea. This is screaming, methamphetamine-fueled rock and roll that was all about attitude, mystery, and a sense of nihilistic humor that was deep in the cuff. Here was the crossroads: the middle of rock's Bermuda triangle where BÖC marked the black cross of the intersection between New York's other reigning kings of mystery theater and absurd excess: the Velvet Underground and Kiss -- two years before their first album -- and the "it's all F#\$%* so who gives a rat's ass" attitude that embodied the City's punk chic half-a-decade later. On the Red Side, beginning with the syncopated striations of "Baby Ice Dog," in which Allen Lanier's piano was as important as Buck Dharma's guitar throb, elements of ambiguity and bluesy swagger enter into the mix. Eric Bloom was the perfect frontman: he twirled the words around in his mouth before spitting them out with requisite piss-and-vinegar, and a sense of decadent dandy that underscored the music's elegance, as well as its power. He was at ease whether the topic was necromancy, S&M, apocalyptic warfare, or cultural dissolution. By the LP's end, on "Mistress of the Salmon Salt," Bloom was being covered over by a kind of aggressively architected psychedelia that kept the '60s at bay while embracing the more aggressive, tenser nature of the times. While BÖC's Secret Treaties is widely recognized as the Cult's classic album, one would do well to consider Tyranny and Mutation in the same light. ---Thom Jurek, Rovi

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