

R.E.M.— Dead Letter Office

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 by A. Thomas Marnaux
 Collegian Staff Writer

R.E.M. is cult. Being in a cult band is like having a hole in your head. Luckily for R.E.M., out of that hole pours originality and non-conformity. If they do a remake of a song, they do it well if not better than the original band. They will pervert other's songs and make them genuinely their own. Examples of this can be seen on *Dead Letter Office*. D.L.O. is a combination of B-sides and songs that did not make their other albums. Whether R.E.M. released this fifteen song album to pick up a few dollars, clean house or satisfy the needs of R.E.M. heads, I don't know. I'm inclined to believe the latter because this album is really off the wall. You have to have naked eyes and naked ears to deal with R.E.M. If you want to experiment with R.E.M., try another of their albums. Wait until your a hard core R.E.M. fan to try D.L.O. The first song on the album, "Crazy," is hot. It's a remake

of a song by a group called Pylon. Pylon was around the same time R.E.M. came out with their first album. R.E.M. redid Pylon's song with their own flavor. Today no one has ever heard of Pylon. If a reader comes up with Pylon's original album, I'll give him or her ten dollars.

"Crazy," sets the pace for D.L.O. It is acoustically based (Peter Buck) and sung by Michael Stipe. The second song is the first of three Velvet Underground remakes by R.E.M. "There She Goes Again," makes my mind race back to the summer. All I can see is sand, sun and bikinis. This song is a killer because it is loaded with sexual innuendos.

Sometimes a group can get tired of a song and "bury" it. Such is the case with the next song, "Burning Down." However, parts of it are reincarnated from the R.E.M. album, *Reckoning*. D.L.O.'s fourth song "Voice of the Hand," is an R.E.M. remake off the album *Reckoning*. As the song says, recording an album can be like a "splinter in your eye and you gotta react." Their reaction is the remake of

"Seven Chinese Brothers," which is fueled by R.E.M.'s alcohol consumption. The resulting product is new and improved.

"Burning Hell," is the album's sixth song, enough said on that song. Next, we get "White Tornado," the only song on the album that was not performed by R.E.M. The souls of a disbanded punk—tamburitzan band invaded R.E.M.'s bodies and made them put his song on D.L.O.

R.E.M. grew up under the influences of heavy metal and punk, when those influences were just coming around. "Toys in the Attic" is the result: The guitars will drive you out of the room and the lyrics out of your mind. It can be loud and obnoxious, but then again this is R.E.M. you're dealing with. End of side one.

Side two opens with "Windout," which was originally used in a nameless movie soundtrack. But it is not the same old song and dance routine usually used in a movie song. "Ages of You" follows; it was left off the *Reckoning* album. Why it was left off is a mystery. It fits perfectly with the theme of that

album. Probably it was left off because it showed up in parts of the song "Harborcoat" on *Reckoning*.

"Pale Blue Eyes" is the second Velvet Underground. It is good; it too was left off *Reckoning*. If it had made that album R.E.M. probably would have been discovered long ago. If that had happened, they might have quit a long time ago. "Pale Blue Eyes" is slow and built on one chord played over and over. This song verges on the edge of country music. As a matter of fact, all throughout the album you barely get a taste of anything except vocals and guitars. It is an acoustically loaded album.

You gotta get hip to the next song, "Rotary Ten," which is a hybrid of the big band sound and The Stray Cats. "Bandwagon," which follows could double as Roy Rogers' theme song for life: Come on aboard, we won't hurt the horse, we'll treat him well, we'll feed him well. The song is an obvious parody of country music and it's never been done better.

Probably the best song on the album is "Femme Fatale." It was mixed and produced by Liz

FitzGerald, who worked the original Velvet Underground version, slow and built on melody, "Femme Fatale" is elegant, fluent, and meant to be played over and over like a favorite 45. The next two songs, "Walter's Theme" and "King of the Road" go hand-in-hand. They are both based on alcohol consumption. "Walter's Theme" is a commercial for a Bar-B-Q restaurant: "I'll put on my boots, go down to Walter's, get me some wings, there ain't no better catin' in the whole world." In "King of the Road," totally improvised on-mic, Buck lets go with a monstrous guitar lead (the only time on the album). Improvised songs like this show R.E.M.'s true strength as a talented thinking band, not like those bands only concerned with hairspray and lipstick, like the bands Poison and Cinderella.

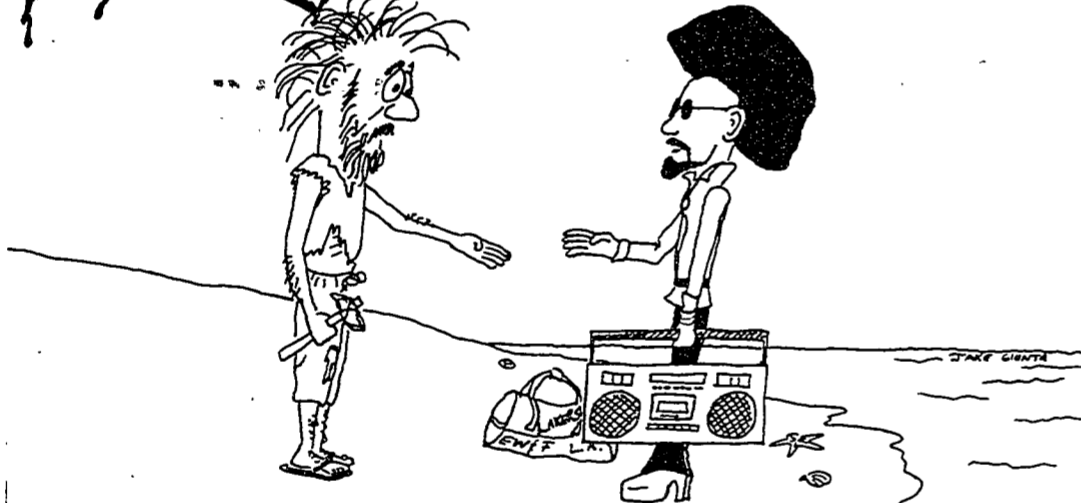
D.L.O. does not have the great lyric quality usually present on an R.E.M. album. But R.E.M. had fun with this album. D.L.O. shows R.E.M.'s versatility because they do a little heavy metal (without the makeup), a little polka, some com-

mercials, some Big Band Sounds, and none of the music aims at Top 40. R.E.M. remains cult and is better off that way.

Music Review

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M.L.K.: May His Dreams Be Realized

by John P. Downey
 Asst. to the Dean
 Student Services

On April 4, 1988, twenty years will have elapsed since the assassination of The Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King. Unquestionably one of the greatest leaders in American history, the Reverend King was a self-proclaimed "Drum Major for Justice." In his honor, the President of the United States has set aside January 18 as a holiday and day of celebration. Unfortunately, I have seen three major problems with this day and the MLK celebration in today's society. They are as follows:

First, the majority of people in this nation do not seem to fully understand the teachings or work of Dr. King. Martin Luther King was not a man who fought solely for the liberation of the "Black" man. He fought for the rights of all people. As long as one person is oppressed, nobody is truly free. Dr. King talked of "geographical togetherness" in which all people would rise above the "narrow confines of our individualistic concerns to the broader concerns of humanity." For his efforts to bring justice to all of humanity, his dedication to non-violence, and his ability to combat hate with love, Dr. King was presented the Nobel Peace Prize on December 10, 1964. I can say no more except to point out that the Nobel Peace Prize is not presented to a person who raises consciousness for one group of people, but rather to that person who preaches for all the people.

Second, I am disturbed to read that Martin Luther King Day is not celebrated throughout the U.S. A recent article (*Ebony*, Jan. 1988) pointed out that only 38 states officially observe January 18 as a holiday. I am saddened that a man would give up his life for a nation that oppressed his race for over 300 years, and this nation would not react in a responsible manner by celebrating his official national holiday. Dr. King irreversibly changed the moral fiber of this nation. He taught the oppressed to "love your oppressor for he is your brother," however disillusioned he may be. The preacher from Atlanta never lived to see the age of 40. He knew that this would be his fate and only days before his death gave his own eulogy, saying that he was ready to die, for his life was "one of convictions, not conformity." He wished to be remembered as a "Drum Major of Justice," but I see no justice in a nation that allows states such as Arizona and New Hampshire to ignore a man who gave up his life for his nation. King gave his life so that others could live with dignity, respect and equality. This nation has a moral obligation to recognize the profound changes which this humble preacher has bestowed upon it.

Finally, I am troubled about the ease with which this nation has moved from overt, often times violent, forms of racism into a covert form of racism. It does not seem to bother some people that individuals are judged by the color of their skin, as long as it is not done overtly so as to offend their conscience or force them to confront the issue. Apparently racism does not exist in the eyes of some unless hooded vandals beat a black man on national T.V. for all to see.

This semester at Penn State Behrend we are celebrating the Reverend Martin Luther King. In doing so we will be bringing in national speakers, showing movies, presenting workshops, and asking the Behrend and Erie communities a complex, yet simple question: "Have Dr. King's dreams been realized?" You will not find the answer to such a question by attending one lecture or one movie. You may attend an entire semester of activities and still not find an answer. The answer can only be found through much soul-searching. Lectures, speakers, workshops and movies only ask the questions; they do not provide the answers.

Dr. King's dream was not only a message for Black people, but one for all people. An institution of higher learning would be doing a disservice if it did not convey that message to the leaders of tomorrow's world. I hope that you share in the activities planned for this semester. Together let us celebrate the teachings of Dr. King, ask ourselves the consciousness-raising questions we need to ask, and grow as a community and an example for the entire nation.



M.L.K. Relived

by Kevin Trenny
 Collegian Staff Writer

Did you hear Dr. Martin Luther King speak last night? Well, it wasn't exactly Dr. King. It was the Rev. Arthur Langford who gave a dramatic portrayal of Martin Luther King, Jr. Rev. Langford, who was only a college freshman at the time of Dr. King's death was himself, very active in the civil rights movement. The University of Atlanta graduate had been shot once and jailed ten times for simple, peaceful, protests.

I had the distinct privilege to speak with the Rev. Langford. Through my conversation with him, I gained a greater understanding of what the civil rights movement was all about. "It was a fight for freedom, peace, justice, and equality," said the Rev. Langford. It was something that was so deeply engraved into the hearts of those involved, that they were willing to die for its cause — Freedom. This is the impression that I received.

I asked Mr. Langford what he thought were Dr. King's most significant contributions to the cause of freedom: "He gave his life for peace, justice, and freedom. He helped to inspire and motivate people to believe in the cause of freedom and he gave a sense of

hope — Hope that things would change."

The former state senator and Atlanta City Council member said that Martin Luther King Jr. Day was very special to him. "Most people will begin to realize how important Dr. King's works were."

The Rev. Langford feels that many people have a misconception of what Dr. King stood for. "He fought to protect the rights of all people, not just black people," said Rev. Langford. I told him about a few people I know who fail to believe that Dr. King was important. He said that "Many kids have never seen real racism. American schools feel no need to discuss Dr.

King and his works. They say that Dr. King is dead — let him rest."

The Rev. Langford gave a touching performance both of Dr. King's "Dream" speech, as well as the last speech M.L.K. ever delivered. This moderately attended performance sent chills down my spine: just the simple beauty of the words.

This performance was a fitting tribute to a Great Man. The Rev. Langford is a man who helps realize part of Dr. King's dream. Through the efforts of people like Arthur Langford the dream can survive.

Thank You Dr. King!

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