

Backward music unmask meaning

By Michael Markle

"You can hypnotize people with music and when you get people at the weakest point you can preach into the subconscious what we want to say."
—Jimi Hendrix

Joel Landis, speaking before a capacity crowd in the Gallery Lounge on Wed., Feb. 2, used this quote to emphasize what he felt was one of the evils of modern popular recorded music—"Backward Masking."

Backward masking involves recorded messages in music that can be heard by playing a record backwards. According to Landis, a minister at Harrisburg's Word Fellowship, groups such as the Beatles, Electric Light Orchestra, Led Zeppelin, and the Blue Oyster Cult employ backward masking on their albums.

Using a reel-to-reel tape player, Landis played an Electric Light Orchestra song "Fire on High" (from the "Face the

Music" LP) the normal way and when played backwards, the song clearly said "The music is reversible, but time is not; turn back, turn back, turn back."

Landis played other such backward messages, most of them not nearly so clear-cut as "Fire on High." Other songs demonstrated were "Stairway to Heaven" by Led Zeppelin and "Revolution #9" by the Beatles. One part of "Stairway to Heaven," when played backwards, supposedly states "There's no escaping it, my sweet Satan."

Landis also showed slides of various album covers, pointing out the various death imagery that many rock groups use to sell their records. Death imagery and occult symbolism were pointed out on such album covers as Molly Hatchet's debut LP, Ozzy Osbourne's "Diary of a Madman," The Eagle's "Hotel California," and Judas Priest's "Sad Wings of Destiny."

The most frequently used oc-



Photo by Michael Markle

cult symbol was the letter "S" shaped like a lightning bolt. Bands such as AC/DC, Kiss, and Black Sabbath use the lightning bolt "S" in their logos. Landis referred to Luke 10:18 as an explanation of the lightning bolt symbol—which states that "Satan fell from heaven as lightning."

Landis stated that the purpose of the talk was not to scare

people, but rather to inform the public about the relationship between rock 'n' roll and the occult, allowing the Christian audience to decide for themselves what records they should avoid.

Landis' talk, co-sponsored by Chi-Rho and the Resident Assistant Program, was a very informative two hours that provoked much discussion among the audience.

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