

February 25, 2009

Hi John, Here's the full-blown text of the Cosmote article. Looking for a picture to send now.

Whoa Baby! A Little Knowledge Really is a Dangerous Thing!

Cosmote vs. Classic Rock

My job, at Athens News, mostly, is to talk about music. Sometimes, however, I'm asked to write about just stuff in general. This article is about music and stuff in general, so everyone wins. I suppose it's every writer's dream to try and corrupt the youth of Athens in his own way and make people look behind the thin curtain of civilization at the rancidly corrupt bs that goes on while we sleep. I kind of enjoy that type of stuff and I kind of don't. I was raised an assembly-line American kid on Superman comics and Walt Disney movies and only recently have I learned, in my middle years, that I can't beat the system. Any system. But I can comment on one's approach to things in general. The system I'd like to take a look at in his short article in the communication giant Cosmote. In particular, their advertising department.

So, everybody knows the old saying "a little knowledge is a dangerous thing," but do any of you reading this paper right now know the second part of that saying? The really important chunk of that old chestnut is "so drink deeply from the Hyperion spring." It means, in a nutshell, don't be stupid. The clever people at Cosmote have recently licensed the use of the Alvin Lee/Ten Years After classic song, "I'd Like to Change the World," for their advertising purposes. Lee is one of the most underrated guitarists in rock history, who combined blues-based flash and pathos in his work which should have put him in such pantheon-musical company as Eric Clapton, Jimmy Page and Jeff Beck. I'm very glad his work is finally reaching a larger, European audience through this advertisement for mobile phone services. However, there have been some major edits in the song's libretto that should be mentioned to the viewer of the commercial.

Amid swirling, fiery, high-end guitar phrasing and galloping tempo of the song, the audience is treated to the lyrics "I'd love to change the world," "life is funny, bees make honey" and snips of neo-hippiesque, prose-grooviness. Scores of cute kids are jumping around, dancing, and looking young, sexy and generally well-fed and happy. Although the song is a major-chord, musically feel-good piece, Lee added elements of doubt, inability and lack of personal direction in the lyrics of his piece that are nowhere to be found in the Cosmote advertisement. The real lyrics to the song are as follows: "I'd love to change the world, but I don't know what to do, so I leave it up to you." This element of doubt and insecurity, is pure anathema to marketing division personnel. I'm sure the decision to cleanse this verse from the commercial was made in a

nanosecond. I'm also sure I'm not the first aging rocker in Athen to sit up from his comfortable chair in front of the TV and cry out "what the hell is going on here?"

Cosmote is trying to appeal to trendoid kiddies by selectively editing a classic rock song that was big when their parents were little teeny-bopper guys. Would they dare try such an editorial ruse with current songs by Rhianna, The Ting-tings, or Jonas Brothers? I imagine not. So, kiddies, drink deeply from that Hyperion spring, ask questions, blow whistles, and don't take anything for granted by an advertising giant who simply want to run through your pockets to get your last dime. You never know what else they might simply choose to edit in the near future.