

AM's 12-Vol. 'Zodiac' Set Moves in 'Heavenly' Groove

NEW YORK — Astrologers tell us this is the age of Aquarius, but what it really appears to be is the age of the Zodiac, or more precisely, the age of Zodiac albums. A&M Records, in an attempt to take advantage of the renewed interest in the subject, has released a 12-volume set of Astrological album SP 4211/22) entitled "Signs of the Zodiac." This follow, almost immediately, a similar release by GWP Records.

The two series are com-

pletely different in their approach. The GWP series is a collection of instrumental albums, while the A&M offerings are narrative works, with the astrological explanations more than capably handled by Nancy Priddy, John Erwin and Michael Bell, and the accompanying electronic music composed and expertly performed by Mort Garson. The narrators are dramatically effective in their readings of the Jacques Wilson scripts, which cover a variety of aspects, such as "Planetary Motivations," "Numbers, Gems and Colors," and "Where Was Your Moon." In order to better understand this last topic, each album comes with a moon chart, which enables the listener to determine the position of the moon at the time of his birth.

The album covers are smartly designed, featuring a modern approach to the various Zodiac signs, and credit is due Allen Stanton for this outstanding production. **JOE TARAS**

Fipco Forms New Disk and Music Cos.

NEW YORK—Moneta Records, a disk and publishing company, has been formed as a wholly owned subsidiary of Fipco Productions, which recently completed filming of "A Time for Dying."

"Just a Dime" and "We Cry All the Way," arranged and sung by Ray Welton, is the label's first release. Lyrics are by Audie Murphy, president of the company.

Queen City Album Adding to Plant

NEW YORK — Queen City Album, Inc., Cincinnati-based firm, has an expansion program under way. Some 9,000 square feet of building has been added to the present plant and is ready for use. It will house the art and printing departments, plus packaging, shipping, and warehousing of records. Queen City Album stocks for many of the custom label customers.

Queen City Album has also added new stereo mastering equipment consisting of Neumann lathe and a Westrex cutting system. A new automatic high-speed fabricating line will start with the printed sheet and the cardboard and will come off the line completely trimmed and ready for the record.



MAP CITY RECORDS signs TK Productions to a production deal for a new group called We The People. First single will be "If We Can Fly to the Moon." From left, front row: public relations man Bob Gray, Pete Anders of Map City, Landy McNeal and Thano Karris of TK Productions, and president Frank Mell of Map City. From left, back row: Vini Poncia of Map City and Ed Mathews Jr., Sherrie Graddie, Mary Anderson, and Willie McEachren of the group.

Blue Thumb and GRT In Disk and Tape Tie

LOS ANGELES — Blue Thumb has achieved simultaneous status for its tape and LP product. The company's recent four LP release is its first coordinated LP and tape program.

In the past, there has been a 30 to 60-day time differential between records and tape, notes Bob Krasnow, Blue Thumb's president.

The simultaneous status was achieved through careful planning between the record company and GRT, its duplicator. "GRT showed us how to close the gap," Krasnow says. If there is a two-month spread between record and tape, the initial im-

pact for the tape is lost, the executive feels. "So many tapes get bootlegged because of this time lag, that you have to be right on schedule otherwise you lose sales."

The four new tapes bring Blue Thumb's cartridge representation up to eight titles. The product is by Ike and Tina Turner (two LP's), Love, Southwind, Anysley Dunbar Retaliation (two titles), Tyrannosaurus Rex, Albert Collins and the two-tape package of "Memphis Swamp Jam."

Surveying the market, Krasnow feels that after Jan. 1 all companies who control their own tape marketing will have simultaneous releasing.

Vault Is Adding O'seas Licensees

LOS ANGELES—Vault Records has assigned its line to Metronome in Scandinavia and will use Liberty/UA in Italy, Asia and South America.

Liberty/UA also handles Vault in England. Jack Lewerke, Vault's president, plans signing additional licensees at next year's MIDEM gathering. He already has Byg in France and Hispovox in Spain.

Liberty/UA has just released two LP's in England from Vault, the Floating Bridge and the Chambers Brothers.

Billboard BEST BETS FOR CHRISTMAS

Below is a list of the best-selling LP's and singles to date. As the sales of Christmas product increase, so too will the number of best-selling Christmas LP's and singles reported in these special charts—in accordance with sound research practices in terms of sufficient retailers reporting significant sales on specific records. These special charts will run for the next four issues as a special buying and stocking guide. NOTE: Many new Christmas releases have not yet had the full opportunity to be reflected here.

CHRISTMAS LP's

Pos. TITLE—Artist, Label & Number

1. GIVE ME YOUR LOVE FOR CHRISTMAS—Johnny Mathis, Columbia CS 9923
2. ELVIS' CHRISTMAS ALBUM—Elvis Presley, RCA Victor LSP 1951
3. MERRY CHRISTMAS—Bing Crosby, Decca DL 78128
4. MERRY CHRISTMAS—Andy Williams, Columbia CS 9220
5. LITTLE DRUMMER BOY—Harry Simeone Chorale, 20th Century-Fox TFS 4100
6. SOUNDS OF CHRISTMAS—Ramsey Lewis Trio, Cadet LPS 687
7. JIM NABORS' CHRISTMAS ALBUM, Columbia CS 9531
8. SOUL CHRISTMAS—Various Artists, Atco SD 33-269

9. HERB ALPERT & THE TIJUANA BRASS CHRISTMAS ALBUM, A&M SP 4166

10. THE DEAN MARTIN CHRISTMAS ALBUM, Reprise RS 6222

11. CHRISTMAS SONGS FOR CHILDREN—Do Re Mi Chorus, Kapp S 3037

12. THE SINATRA FAMILY WISHES YOU A MERRY CHRISTMAS, Reprise FS 1026

CHRISTMAS SINGLES

Pos. TITLE—Artist, Label & Number

1. WHITE CHRISTMAS—Bing Crosby, Decca 23778
2. BLUE CHRISTMAS—Elvis Presley, RCA Victor 447-0647
3. LITTLE DRUMMER BOY—Harry Simeone Chorale, 20th Century-Fox 429
4. PLEASE COME HOME FOR CHRISTMAS—Charles Brown, King 5405
5. THE CHRISTMAS SONG—Nat King Cole, Capitol 3561
6. SANTA CLAUS GOES STRAIGHT TO THE GHETTO—James Brown, King 6203
7. ROCKIN' AROUND THE CHRISTMAS TREE—Brenda Lee, Decca 30776

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