

COMPETITION SHARPENS

Labels Gird For U.K. Mart Thrusts

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tor Dick Leahy also tagged disco star Georgio's album and single, both entitled "From Here To Eternity" for success. Both will be released via a deal with Georgio's own label, Oasis.

• TV merchandisers Warwick Records plan to release up to 10 albums before Christmas via its links with CBS. Funded by a tv advertising budget likely to reach \$2.16 million this year, the product includes compilation albums by Brook Benton, Bert Weedon, Ray Stevens, Frankie Laine, and Little Richard (on the Speciality label).

Warwick managing director Ian Miles likened his company's product to "a musical can of beans" and stressed that the heavy advertising campaign behind it was aimed at a narrowly defined audience of adult impulse buyers.

In the light of this marketing strategy it is essential that covering stock was large enough to last until tv activity burned off—usually after three or four weeks.

• CBS U.K. managing director Maurice Oberstein's conference speech emphasized a conviction borne out in his company's new releases for October: "When talent comes our way we are open to buy," he said. "We try as you have seen with Creole, to take on specialists who measure up to our standards in every way.

"We do entertain license deals, such as our new relationship with Oasis via Creole, and we have to be able to accommodate more product running through our sales force."

Thus product premiered at the recent CBS conference included acts from Australia (Sherbet's second

Epic album "Photoplay"), Canada (rock act Trooper's LP "Knock 'Em Dead Kid"), plus a broad range of material from the company's U.K. and U.S. rosters.

October releases here on CBS and Associated Labels include albums by Chicago, Aerosmith, Swingle 11, Ram Jam, Moe Bandy, Lynn Anderson, Tom Scott, Bobby Goldsboro, Liza Minnelli, Nona Hendryx, Patti LaBelle, Archie Bell & the Drells, Isley Brothers, the Jacksons, Tom Scott, Emotions, Santana and U.K. acts Cafe Jaques, Sparks and Dead End Kids.

CBS has also entered the Star Wars battle with yet another version of the main theme—the 17th—this time by Maynard Ferguson.

Oberstein warned his sales force that "nobody owes us anything. The only way to be successful is by always thrusting forward."

• The EMI Group repertoire division's bid for the lucrative Christmas market will be spearheaded by its sixth tv-promoted compilation album—a double Cliff Richard set entitled "Cliff Richard's 40 Golden Hits." Released on Sept. 30, the album will be surrounded by a massive promotional push including \$465,000 worth of television advertising.

In all, the commercial development division will be spending a giant \$582,000 on promotion, it was announced at the first sales conference of the group repertoire division since its split with the licensed labels earlier this year.

Presentations at the conference were full of humor and extravagance, including a 3-D Hammer Horror pastiche from the commercial development men and a wildly expensive hook-up between key dealers and the conference room.

Product premiered included two tracks from the forthcoming Queen LP "News Of The World," which the band has guaranteed will be ready in time for an adequate Christmas campaign.

The pop division promised strong product from new signings Kate Bush and Peter Straker, both with heavy backup.

Harvest is launching a push on its budget Nuts and Heritage series, to be expanded to 20 albums and 10 EPs in the near future, with albums selling at about \$4.25 and EPs at about \$1.39.

Following the general theme of

the conference, sales and marketing general manager Peter Hulme stressed the challenge of the American majors CBS and WEA and said new methods would have to be found to fight them. Then, taking up a note struck by Leslie Hill at an earlier conference about talking with and listening to the dealer, he proceeded to do just that.

All the independent dealers he spoke to were pessimistic about the future of the trade in the face of heavy discounting by the multiple chain stores, with several bringing up the idea of a minimum price for records and the scrapping of the recommended retail price system.

• The sound of Bread, Bruce Forsyth and Alf Garnett will dominate the tv airwaves this autumn and winter, according to the WEA marketing blueprint unveiled at the company's 1977 sales conference.

The major is making its biggest tv commitment to date—a \$330,600 national campaign for a Bread LP in the 20 Golden Hits mold, and test marketing for albums by Forsyth and Garnett (Warren Mitchell) with an eye on national advertising for both.

It is WEA's avowed intention to pursue, and, it hopes, eventually vanquish its competitors in the com-

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Police Hit Dutch Importers Of Belgian Pirate Product

AMSTERDAM—Dutch police, working in collaboration with STEMRA, the Dutch mechanical rights society, have uncovered a major source of pirate albums emanating from Belgium. Four Dutch nationals have been arrested—two record dealers, a gas station employee and a soldier. Arrests are also expected in Belgium soon.

The police have confiscated more than 1,000 illicit albums, including "Arrival" by Abba, the Greatest Hits LP of Dutch singer Jack Jersey, and the K-Tel compilation, "Dynamite."

According to the four men in custody, the albums form part of a consignment of 50,000 albums which were illegally pressed in Belgium. This product, with a total retail value of around \$400,000, was brought into Holland in the summer of 1976. Most of it has already been sold.

Sound quality of the albums, according to a STEMRA spokesman, is good. "On average equipment it is hard to tell the difference between the pirate product and the original albums," he says.

The four Dutchman have been under arrest since the beginning of April, but police have only just released information to the press. Prior announcement, they say, would have hampered the investigation on the Belgian side of the case.

The first lead in the case came from the province of Noord-Brabant in the south of Holland when a

record dealer tried to get a refund by returning pirate albums to the K-Tel company. K-Tel informed STEMRA and that organization contacted the police.

Pirate material discovered in record shops in the south of Holland were compilation albums featuring Chubby Checker, Roy Orbison, the Everly Brothers, the Shadows, the Crystals, Stevie Wonder and Curtis Mayfield.

Indie U.K. Dealers Join In Co-Op Discount Campaign

BY TERRI ANDERSON

LONDON—More than 20 independent retailers, with outlets totaling twice that number, have joined in a plan set up by a South Eastern dealer to organize discounting on selected product and to promote the merchandise and the stores via advertising in the national music press.

The man behind the scheme, Steve Melhuish of Bonaparte Records, claims he has been prompted by the failure of previous independent dealers associations to get past the initial discussion stages. He has formed Noise Box Promotions Ltd. to implement the plan, including the purchase of joint full or double-page advertisements in the music papers.

The first promotion involves Island product, and sales manager John Knowles comments: "I think it is an excellent idea. The sort of shops involved in the scheme are the go-ahead ones who really want to get behind new product.

"But the promotions will also involve catalog. I'll be liaising closely with Steve Melhuish and anything those dealers need in the way of stock we will back them up with."

Knowles confirms that Island will be contributing toward the cost of the advertisements.

Melhuish has approached several other record companies, and reports: "They thought it was a very good idea. In fact, everyone was asking why nobody had done it before."

Melhuish believes that, with a plan of promoting different companies' product on a rotation basis, they will all be willing to help with advertising costs. "After all, we are prepared to put ourselves out for them, and we independents are the dealers who care enough about their product not to treat it like baked beans."

He promises that dealers will pay no more than about three percent of what it would cost them to take an

UA Exec Attacks Soaring Costs Of Prime TV Time

LONDON—Dennis Knowles, United Artists Records marketing manager, has launched a blunt attack on the advertising policy of British television companies.

Speaking at UA's annual sales conference, Knowles said lack of air time was forcing advertisers to pay 30% above the rate card cost in order to secure spots in selected time segments. He called for the creation of a fourth tv channel to ease pressure on existing advertising time.

"The problem is that there are more manufacturers who want to use commercial tv as an advertising medium than there is time available," said Knowles. "This autumn and winter, tv companies are having to ration time.

"This leads to escalating costs. Not only have card rates increased by an average of 15% since the beginning of the year, but because of competition for available air time, we are having to pay extra to secure the spots we want. If we don't fix these program spots, we'll end up paying peak time costs for programs which have very low viewing figures.

"This can best be illustrated in the cost-per-thousand rate. Slim Whitman's "Red River Valley" album cost us around \$1.70 per thousand homes when we advertised last December and January.

advertisement on their own. Once the company is running the promotions on a regular basis, the surplus from each month's income and record companies' contributions could mean that some promotions cost the dealer nothing at all.

Noise Box will ensure that the dealers involved in any promotion are geographically separate from each other to avoid competition, and new entrants will be admitted at the discretion of the founder members only.

"The business has gone through turmoil in the last year, and even efficient dealers are finding things difficult. We don't want to take over the world, we just want to be able to compete with the multiples," says Melhuish.

Power Exchange Signs Pact With April Blackwood

LONDON—Power Exchange has signed a long-term worldwide publishing and production agreement with April Blackwood Music, the CBS publishing subsidiary.

Under the agreement, concluded by Power Exchange's Paul Robinson, and Jimmy Bishop, vice president and general manager of April Blackwood, Power Exchange will produce for April Blackwood a number of artists to be released worldwide on the Power Exchange label.

Exploitation of the Power Exchange stable of writers will focus particularly on George Hatjanassios, writer of Greece's entry in the Eurovision Song Contest. He is working on an album and Bishop has assigned April Blackwood lyricists to help him.

ONLY ONE IN RAH BAND

LONDON—The identity of the "mysterious" RAH Band, which hit the U.K. Top 10 with the single "The Crunch," has finally been revealed. It is a one-man operation involving Richard Hewson, long-established musician, composer and producer.

When the "band" hit the chart and was invited to appear on BBC-TV's "Top Of The Pops," four session musicians were called together and they also made personal appearances in support of the single.

Now Hewson says: "I am the RAH Band and wrote, produced, arranged the single as well as playing most of the instruments on it. From now I'm following a solo career as the RAH Band.

RCA Resolves Dispute With Union

LONDON—The labor dispute which paralyzed RCA's factory and cast doubt on the company's ability to meet the upsurge in demand for Elvis Presley product has been settled.

According to RCA personnel manager Stan White, there is still some disagreement with the technicians and supervisors union (ASTMS), although the dispute with the main body of workers and its union, the GMWU, has been resolved. From Sept. 5 the factory has been back in full production, with some workers working overtime and 12-hour shifts.

The problem arose because 90-plus press operators and clerical staff had been due for redundancy until the death of Elvis Presley and subsequent huge demand for all his records caused RCA to withdraw its notice (Billboard, Sept. 10, 1977).

With the presses back in production, White has stressed that RCA is

free to press extra product elsewhere if its own factory cannot produce enough—"and at the moment we could not do so even working a seven-day week."

Paris Dates Launch Gospel Show Junket

PARIS—"Gospel Caravan," starring Marion Williams, starts a season at the Paris Olympia music hall Jan. 1, prior to a European tour.

"Gospel Caravan" was "sold" to Olympia by Jerry Williams, who pointed out that it was pure gospel singing, not a show business musical, and as such would be a unique attraction for the hall.

Marion Williams, known in France for her record "Save The Planet," will head a cast including the Davis Sisters of Philadelphia and James Cleveland, of Stars of Faith.

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