

Jazz Disks Give Key Dealers \$\$

• Continued from page 33

succinctly. "People won't buy what they can't see. Full-line record stores must be careful to stay away from the rack type of operation and include good catalog inventory."

Noting that his sales of jazz have increased 10% in the last year, Bob Myers of the Record Theatre, a non-specialty retail outlet in Cincinnati, says, "Jazz accounts for 30% of our total sales, especially since we initiated a weekly in-store jazz airplay program. Every Thursday night we play 90 minutes of jazz featuring five new LPs received that week. We move between 40-50 pieces of product just from this in-store airplay and we've generated steady return traffic as well."

Additionally, crossover artists such as George Benson, the Commodores, Rickie Lee Jones and Spyro Gyra are regularly cross-cataloged in the Record Theatre's bins to facilitate quicker location by browsing customers.

Trained, informative and knowledgeable floor personnel rank as a highly valuable sales tool to boost jazz flow at the retail level, both labels and store executives agree.

"The quality and helpfulness of a store's sales staff is a central issue in retailing jazz," believes Polydor's Orr. "The right sales clerk can triple sales of jazz. The whole nature of jazz is structured around the one-on-one contact, whether it's in developing an artist's public image, the individuality of his particular music or the consumer's rapport with his records."

Noting that numerous potential

jazz sales are lost by lazy or uninformed clerks who don't take the time to special-order product, longtime jazz retailer Ira Sabin says he personally trains his floor staff to handle jazz in an in-depth fashion.

"You have to go beyond the surface when you're talking about jazz," he states. "We've found that 95% of our customers are happy to let us special-order an album for them. The right attitude and helpful suggestions of record clerks is a major asset in encouraging sales."

Another hint for sparking jazz sales from the radio level comes from Myers, who wonders why stations who regularly program jazz don't make a point of identifying the label along with the title. "That way, it would be much easier for people to know how to ask for hard-to-locate albums," he says.

Discount Records in Nashville ranks as one of that chain's biggest movers of jazz product. The store de-

votes nearly 30% of all in-store airplay to jazz artists, an impressive and substantial ratio when stacked up against the 60% given to in-store rock and pop airplay. Discount tries to feature floor- and wall-space displays for new jazz product, stocks an extensive jazz catalog inventory, cross-catalogs fusion LPs in different bin areas, and willingly offers to special-order for its clientele. Its jazz sales reflect its efforts.

On the other side of the coin, retailers ask for more communication and cooperation between themselves and the jazz departments of major record companies. They would like to see labels be more cognizant of the dormant sales volume of their own jazz product. And they want the record companies to infuse bigger shares of their promotional budgets into the jazz market.

Says retailer Myers, "I want to go after the labels for more dollars to promote jazz. After all, they're sitting on a potential gold mine."

Tom Semmes of Audio Directions, a Nashville-based audiophile jazz label, points out problems in the area of communication between some distributors and their retail outlets, noting that "sometimes it's easier to hand-carry product yourself into stores just to make sure they're properly stocked."

Semmes has used computerized direct mailings and print to advertise his label's catalog but says, "Except for the well-known national jazz retail watering holes, it's nearly impossible to get stores to carry jazz unless the album's already established as a hit."

Bee Gee's Month

LOS ANGELES—RSO is calling March "Bee Gees Month" with retailers being offered a 5% discount on the entire Bee Gee catalog including "Saturday Night Fever" and "Bee Gees' Greatest."

Posters and co-op advertising will be available to dealers who take advantage of the special offer which is effective March 1-21.

The 5% discount is good for one order per retailer. Local Polygram sales representatives will be handling RSO's limited offer.

Lifelines

Marriages

James Gangwer, production manager at Beserkley Records and songwriter for the Rubinos, to Patricia Mizuhara at Lake Tahoe, Calif., Feb. 16.

Steve Levine, concert agent at the William Morris Agency, to Joanne Baron Feb. 24 in New York.

Deaths

Clarence "Shorty" Sherock, 64, in Los Angeles Feb. 26 after a brief illness. One of the most celebrated trumpet players of the big band era, he became prominent in Jimmy Dorsey's brass section and worked with numerous other topflight orchestras through the decades. He led his own band for a time and in recent years performed in radio, television and motion picture studios. He is survived by his widow, Elaine, and a son, Robert.

Lukas Martin, 38, owner of the Lava Lava Cabaret disco club in

Honolulu, Feb. 20. His body was found trussed up in a sheet, nude, in his penthouse home. A Swiss, he emigrated to Hawaii in 1969. Police are investigating his murder.

Howard K. Morris, 67, former executive vice president of the Hawaiian Songwriters Society and former entertainment director for the Matson liner S.S. Lurline, Feb. 11 in Honolulu.

Irene Beasley, 76, singer and producer of numerous network radio shows, Jan. 7 in Ardsley, N.Y. She was voted "Queen Of Radio" in 1934 by a national magazine and made numerous records.

Hal Gordon, 62, for many years a music director in Detroit and affiliated with disk jockey Ed McKenzie, in Farmington, Mich., Feb. 15.

Johan Hoogenhout, 65, former Billboard sales representative in Holland, Feb. 22 in London. He spoke nine languages, and is survived by his widow.

Studio 54's Liquor License In Jeopardy

NEW YORK—Lawyers for Studio 54 here are scrambling to file appeals, in the wake of an unexpected move by the New York State Liquor Authority to revoke the controversial club's liquor license.

Unless lawyers Frank Thayer and Howard Squadron were able to beat the clock and file a last minute ap-

peal staying revocation of the liquor license, the club was expected to go "dry" Friday (29).

The Liquor Authority's move comes as Steve Rubell and Ian Schrager, owners of Studio 54, languish in a Pennsylvania prison following a recent conviction on charges of federal income tax evasion.

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