

Disco Business



Billboard Photo By Oscar Rivera

SEXY LADY—A sellout audience at Melons discotheque surges forward enthusiastically as Taana Gardner, West End Records artist, goes into a sensuous rendition of her popular hit, "Heartbreak." Gardner was so popular with the crowd that she had to be spirited in and out of the club by way of the fire escape. According to club officials more than 1,500 people had to be turned away from the sellout concert.

Disco Mix

By BARRY LEDERER

NEW YORK—Boris Midney has returned to the club scene with a surprise package of creative sounds for dancing and listening with an album titled "Companion" on Barclay Records. Midney has maintained the same haunting and melodic qualities of his earlier works. The album contains two surefire pleasers, "This Is A Test," and "Living Up To Love." Both feature an electronic pop/disco sound with emphasis on guitar and brass instrumentation. Staccato vocals pulsing in and out of the arrangements provide excitement. A certain lightness is maintained with easy percussion and refreshing cowbells. The production has a whimsical musical feeling that is unlike any material around. Side two contains three standard disco selections that still warrant the deejay's attention.

The seven inch 45 r.p.m. and promotional 12-inch, "Stars On 45" is a favorite with DJs. The studio group, Stars On, has released an album on Atlantic titled "Stars On Long Play." Side one is an extension of the 12-inch with a medley of 29 Beatles' tunes. The flipside digs deep into rock'n'roll vaults with three separate cuts containing the group's own renditions of such favorites as "Lucille," "Birdog," "Wolly Bully," and "At The Hop." Two of the cuts are performed by a group called Long Tall Ernie & The Shakers. What is exceptional about this release is the closeness that the group comes to the original recordings yet with a definite sense of today.

Pavillion Records has cleverly taken four of the cuts from Fantasy's album that contains the hit "You're Too Late" and provided reworked instrumental tracks of such favorites as "Hey Who's Gotta Funky Song," "You Can't Lose What You Never Had," "Too Much Too Soon," and "Love Explosion." These instrumental versions easily stand on their own as well as being mixed with the original vocals.

Archie Bell takes on a contemporary sound with his Becket 12-inch release "Anytime Is Right." This uptempo r&b mover places emphasis on the percussion and a hand-clapping backbeat. A slight break midway through adds to the intensity of the record. This release is an extended version of the single available from the artists album, "I Never Had It So Good." Running 5:25 minutes the mix is by New York deejay Tee Scott.

Most deejays will never tire of Candi Staton and her sultry, emotional vocals. This certainly is the case with her new release for L.A. Records, "Without You I Cried." Coming in just under five minutes, this 12-incher, produced by Dave Crawford, is soulfully powered with strong instrumentation and arrangement. The artist always maintains a sense of urgency and intensity in her work and this gutsy 12-incher should bring Staton back to the forefront of disco play where she belongs.

The professional deejays association in Mt. Laurel, N.J., reports the following as chart bound in its area: "If You Feel It," Thelma Hous-

ton, RCA; "Groovy Freaks," Real Thing, B.I.D.; "Hurry Up And Wait," Isley Brothers, T-Neck; "Hit & Run Lover," Carol Jiani, Ariola; "Try It Out," Gino Soccio, Atlantic; and "The Na Na Song," Skylite, Rampart.

The T.O.P. Record Pool in San Francisco shows the following receiving the most response on its top 25 list: "Get Up (Rock Your Body)," 202 Machine, Firesign; "Goose Bumps," Debra Dejean, Handshake; "Nights (Feel Like Getting Down)," Billy Ocean, Epic; "Turn It Out" Jerry Knight, A&M; "Dyan' To Be Dancin'," Empress, Prelude and "Looking Out For #1," Sara Branigan, Atlantic.

Indiana record pool playlist, compiled by Johnny George, shows the following 12-inchers receiving increased play in that area. Ronald Benjamin, "Living Again," Tune Wizard; Adam & The Ants, "Don't Be Square," Epic; "Now Baby Now," Kano, Emergency; and "Stars On 45," Atlantic. It is heartening to see a playlist that includes ballads. The Indiana pool's favorite ballads are: Controllers, "If Tears Were Pennies," Juana; Brenda Russell, "If You Love," A&M; Woods Empire, "In The Night Air," Tabu; Sharon Redd, "Leaving You," Prelude; Diana Ross, "One More Chance," Motown; Yarborough & Peoples, "Come To Me," Mercury and Stephanie Mills "Two Hearts," 20th Century.

TV-Size Video Gaining Popularity In France

PARIS—Despite early theories that television-size video would be useless in French discotheques, and that it had to be big-screen or nothing, small-screen presentations in smaller clubs are becoming increasingly popular and effective here.

Jacky Gaillard, a promoter who selects video material for 350 clubs, says much depends on the layout of the rooms involved. Given the right venue, he says, the picture images on tv is clearer and cleaner than on the large screen which tends to become hazy.

There were strong doubts expressed about video from disk jockeys, who felt their jobs could be threatened. Now, most of them accept video as an addition to the evening's entertainment.

Favorite presentations here inevitably include disco acts, but there's also a big following for 45-minute presentations of jazz, mostly recorded live at festivals.

Now the disco business here sees no reason why the clubs should not be as effective promoting video material as they are in pushing audio disks.

Sound Muffled By Roller Disco

NEW YORK—Can a roller disco and a temple be just 20 feet apart and yet remain friends?

This was the challenging problem that confronted the GLI sound company recently when it was retained to design and supervise the installation of a sound system for the Laces roller disco of New Hyde Park, New York.

According to officials at GLI, a division of Integrated Sound Systems, Inc., not only was the roller disco located a mere 20 feet away from the area's Temple Emmanuel, the sound designers and installers were further confronted with stringent local ordinances governing noise control.

To combat the problem and maintain harmony with the Temple and the community as a whole, GLI paid careful attention to the placement of the rink's speakers. It also concentrated on double-wall construction for the room, used shock mounts on some walls, and designed a special, free-floating multi-layered floor to reduce internal ambient noise.

The installation strategy worked, and GLI officials boast proudly that since the rink opened in January, there have been no complaints.

The Laces sound system was installed by Sports International, under the supervision of Steve Emspak of GLI. Components include 14 GLI model 1.3-way speakers, seven GLI model SA2130 dual channel power amplifiers, GLI MPX 9000A preamplifier/mixer, GLI model EQ1500 octave equalizer, a model EG Pro-16 expander and two Technics turntables.

P.O.P.S. Disbands In Philadelphia

PHILADELPHIA—Bob Pantano, WCAU-FM deejay who created P.O.P.S. (Philadelphia Organization of Professional Spinners), has disbanded that group and formed a new organization, the Philadelphia Spinners Assn. (P.S.A.) whose membership represents the key dance clubs in the Philadelphia market. Another group of P.O.P.S. members, headed by Billy Graham, formed their own Philadelphia Dance Music Assn.

Pantano's new group, which meets fortnightly at Fran O'Brien's, is dedicated "to the perpetuation of the discotheque/dance music industry." Coordinator for the new group is Frank Cerami, spinner at HB's.

Skaters Broadening Acts Beyond Disco

NEW YORK—Roller disco entertainers in the New York area are demonstrating that they are capable of growing, changing and broadening their outlook, even as the industry changes and broadens its outlook.

A by-product of the roller disco boom that grew out of conventional roller skating and disco dancing, roller disco entertainers emerged in force about four years ago. They brought their inimitable brand of razzle-dazzle to the already sizzling discotheque environment.

Today, although retaining their disco roots, the groups are working toward broadening their creative appeal in a move aimed at ensuring long-term public acceptance of their craft.

One such group is the Wizards, formerly known as the Village Wizards, a four-member skate entertainment team that had its beginnings in New York's Greenwich Village in 1978.

Having established themselves as wizards on skates in the disco field, the group—two men and two women—is branching out into other areas such as classical, jazz, tap, rock dancing and even some singing, all on skates. They perform under the creative direction of Otis Sallid, who also functions as choreographer.

According to Marion Green, 36, one of the founders of the Wizards, the aim is to do for roller skating what John Curry has accomplished in ice dancing.

That the Wizards is already on the way to achieving this goal is evidenced in the success of their first New York Theatre performance held not long ago at Manhattan's Symphony Space Theatre.

The performance, sponsored by Dancemobile, featured four original works. They included:

- "The Awakening," performed to a collage of music by Miles Davis and the electronic music of Pierre Henry;

- "Black, Brown, Blue & Beige Suite," set in a nightclub in the 1940s and performed to music by Fats Waller, Linda Hopkins and Benny Goodman as well as the poetry of Langston Hughes.

Other segments included interpretive dances to "Too Shy To Say," by Stevie Wonder; "I Need You," by Sylvester; "Summer Madness," Kool & The Gang; "Love Me By Name," Patti Austin; and a closing

work danced to the music of Chaka Kahn.

To date, the Wizards have appeared in concert in Chile, Ireland and Germany. In Germany, their concert was televised to several other European countries, reaching an estimated audience of 30 million. Concert appearances to Brazil and the island of Trinidad are also in the works.

Locally, the Wizards have appeared on tv's Soap Factory, Midday Live and the Good Day Show. They have also appeared in performance at the Roxy roller disco, Roseland, the Felt Forum and Avery Fishers Hall; have been the opening act for concerts by Ullanda and have appeared at a number of fashion shows. They also made a cameo appearance in the movie, "Can't Stop The Music," featuring the Village People

Club Planning Fele For DJ

NEW YORK—The Underground, one of New York's newer and more popular discotheques, will host a dinner/dance May 29, to celebrate Frankie Crocker's 25 years as a radio personality.

Crocker is one of New York City's better known radio executives, and has worked with WWRL-AM and WMCA-AM, and is now music director for WBSL-FM.

The Crocker party is part of a series of celebrity parties inaugurated by the Underground since its opening more than one year ago. The room has also hosted parties for such well-known personalities as Henry Mancini, Donna Summer, Peter Allen and Paul Jabara. A party for Dolly Parton is scheduled for June.

Among those guests invited to the Crocker party are Diana Ross, Michael Jackson, Stephanie Mills, Grace Jones and Smokey Robinson.

Under the format of the celebrity party series, the Underground provides dinner and drinks for the celebrity being honored and about 140 specially invited guests. Following the dinner, the room is opened up to the public at an admission charge of between \$15 and \$20 per person depending on the stature of the celebrity.

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