

News

UP TO 30% BETTER

Merchandisers Say Albums Gain

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based on a Rainbow vacation contest, where we bleep out the four vacation sites. Before that we had the annual 7-Up tie-in, our free record coupons and the actual \$1 check rebate for prerecorded tape."

"Video games are way, way down, so we made up the deficit with much greater emphasis on albums," Carl Rosenbaum of the Flip Side chain in Chicago says. "As a result we are up 8% to 10% in albums. We have some real music to sell this year. Soundtracks have been especially helpful. We didn't have the good music consistently the last couple of years."

Joe Andrules, vice president/general manager of Spec's, Miami, is "elated" because he had seen album volume fall off since 1979 and "it's up somewhat this year." He says that cassette sales are up 20% for the Florida chain and that the increase comes in selling prerecorded tape hits. He finds catalog albums sales off, with hits accounting for 70% of the sales.

Record & Tape Collector's nine stores in the Baltimore vicinity are up 3% to 5% over 1982, Mort Barnett reports. He suggests the increased sales figure may be partly inflationary, and sees his stores in blue collar areas still behind. He describes his stores as "full catalog," noting that 40% of his album volume is in current bestsellers and 60% in catalog.

Another longtime full-line album chain, Laury's in Chicago, is up about 6%, according to Art Schul-

man. Compact Disc has been a strong contributor. Laury's album sales are 92% catalog thus far in 1983, compared to 94% in the same period last year.

The nationwide Musicland chain, with about 450 stores, is up about 5%, Jack Eugster reports. He's found the album surge began about three months ago. He, too, is bullish on Christmas prospects. Currently, the Musicland stores' album sales ratio is 45% LPs and 55% cassettes.

Paul David of Camelot Enterprises' 140-odd outlets cites MTV and other tv music exposure for a lot of the 15% to 20% increase in album sales this year over last: "Acts like Duran Duran, Stray Cats and Men At Work break quickly and stay on

the top of the charts. Look at Michael Jackson; would he have achieved 15 million unit sales without those great video promo clips? Customers actually comment to our store clerks that they are coming in and buying 'Thriller' because they saw the clips." David says his cassette-to-LP ratio is 50-50.

Album sales were down for the Record Factory until two months ago, Bob Tolifson says. "We decided to put more albums on sale. We dropped prices. In doing so, we created more traffic and excitement for the customer. We also brought the lagging sales to the attention of our managers on a regular basis, which seemed to stimulate them on an individual store basis," he says.

Top 40 Policy Outlined At 'SuperStars' Stations

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Rick Springfield ("Human Touch"), Eddy Grant ("Electric Avenue"), Irene Cara ("Flashdance"), Prince ("Little Red Corvette"), Thomas Dolby ("She Blinded Me With Science") and Stevie Nicks ("Leather And Lace").

The memo concludes that "When we start to understand that every record must be perfect, we'll be looking at better ratings."

The repositioning of the "SuperStars" stations is seen as an attempt to rectify the firm's fabled "new music" edict, handed down last winter, according to a former "SuperStars" programmer who now handles album promotion for a major record label.

"If they were really being honest, they would admit that the pronouncement didn't work, and that this is their way of rectifying the 'new music mistakes' they made," the source states. "They tried to formalize new music, and it backfired."

Sneed of WKLS says he believes that the industry "hyped itself" into thinking that "the new music phe-

nomenon had more of an impact on the average listener than it really did." The station dealt with "a ton of techno (pop)," he adds, "and while I'm glad I did, I'm proud that mainstream acts like Journey, Foreigner and Lynyrd Skynyrd remained in our rotation."

A second "SuperStars" programmer, who requested anonymity, dismisses the directive as "a grain of salt." "We use the firm so that our competitors won't," he states. "The 'horizontal' concept only has meaning for stations doing battle with hit-oriented outlets. Otherwise, it's absurd, straight from left field. It shows me that they've stopped listening to music."

"Horizontal music," concludes the former "SuperStars" programmer, is the same concept stressed by Burkhardt/Abrams when the firm pushed its "compatible hit single" theory in the mid-to-late 1970s. At presstime, however, both Lee Abrams and Douglas were unavailable for comment.

OCTOBER 22, 1983, BILLBOARD



ENTIRELY MCA—Reba McEntire and company make a toast to the country singer's recent signing with MCA Records. Pictured from left are McEntire and her manager Don Williams; MCA Records Group president Irv Azoff; and the singer's husband Charlie Battles.

Court Allows Boardwalk Chapter XI Reorganization

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claim against the label exceeds \$2.2 million in pressing costs, filed an involuntary bankruptcy suit against Boardwalk in State Supreme Court here.

Boardwalk, in its attempt to distribute liquid assets totalling approximately \$230,000, excluded RCA as a creditor based on its claim that RCA's acquisition of Arista Records in May terminated an important source of product flow for the independent distribution pipeline.

The deal, which Boardwalk claims violates antitrust laws in a discovery motion currently pending in State Supreme Court here, is tied in court papers to the departure of Joan Jett and the Blackhearts from the company. The papers state that Jett refused to deliver her third album because Pickwick, which distributed Boardwalk in California, the Midwest and the Southwest, had gotten out of the distribution business.

At an evidentiary hearing on Aug. 18 in Federal District Court here, it was revealed that Jett's release from her Boardwalk contract cost \$2.3 million, \$1.5 million of which was de-

livered in a certified check on May 23. The label also recouped \$727,500 against her royalty account and received \$60,000 as reimbursement for recording costs spent on the third album, which was subsequently released in June by MCA Records.

Jett, according to the pact, also agreed that Boardwalk would establish an escrow account with \$250,000 to guarantee her receipt of royalty income on the continuing sales of her first two albums, whose ownership will revert back to Jett on Dec. 31, 1984.

Boardwalk, which has retained Skadden, Arps, Slate, Meagher & Flom as its bankruptcy counsel, lists its other principal creditors as the Harry Fox Agency (\$223,663), M.S. Distribution (\$107,343), Alpha Distributing (\$190,930), the Music Performance Trust Funds (\$60,000), and the Phonograph Record Manufacturers' Special Payment Fund (\$60,000).

Boardwalk president Irv Biegel, through a spokesman at the offices of American Talent International here, declined to discuss the status of the artists still under contract to the label.

Bubbling Under The Top LPs

- 201-DANNY SPANOS, *Passion In The Dark*, Epic 85E-38805
- 202-AL DEMEOLA, *Scenario*, Columbia FC 38944
- 203-DEPECHE MODE, *Construction Time Again*, Sire 1-23900 (Warner Bros.)
- 204-KID CREOLE AND THE COCONUTS, *Doppelganger*, Sire 1-23977 (Warner Bros.)
- 205-THE BREAKS, *The Breaks*, RCA AFL 1-4569
- 206-ANITA BAKER, *The Songstress*, Beverly Glen BG 1000Z
- 207-SOUNDTRACK, *Easy Money*, Columbia JS 38968
- 208-TOM WAITS, *Swordfish Trombone*, Island 9005 (Atco)
- 209-THE ELVIS BROTHERS, *Movin' Up*, Portrait BFR 38865 (Epic)
- 210-MICHAEL FRANKS, *Passionfruit*, Warner Bros. 1-23962

Bubbling Under The HOT 100

- 101-LADY, *DOWN ON LOVE*, Alabama, RCA 13590
- 102-PARTY ANIMAL, James Ingram, QWest 7-29493 (Warner Bros.)
- 103-TAKE IT TO THE LIMIT, Willie Nelson & Waylon Jennings, Columbia 38-04131
- 104-NEVER SAY NEVER AGAIN, Lani Hall, A&M 2596
- 105-JULIET, Robin Gibb, Polydor 810895-7 (PolyGram)
- 106-DANCING WITH MYSELF, Billy Idol, Chrysalis 4-42723
- 107-SO MANY MEN, SO LITTLE TIME, Miguel Brown, TSR 828
- 108-HOLIDAY, Madonna, Sire 7-29478
- 109-I.O.U., Freeze, Streetwise 2210
- 110-DON'T COUNT THE RAINY DAYS, Michael Murphy, Liberty 1505

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