'Serious situation' as hopes fade of mechanical royalty solution

HOPES THAT an early agreement will be reached between record companies and music publishers over a formula for payment of mechanical royalties are rapidly fading.

Negotiations for a new deal have been running for almost three years, but the latest dispute has been sparked off by the decision of various major record companies to abolish rnp — the figure upon which the 6.4% percent royalty was negotiated.

The MRS, representing publishers, has now proposed that the 6.4% percent royalty should be paid on wholesale price plus 43 percent. However the BPI is understood to be insisting that it should be paid on wholesale price plus 30 percent.

Ron White, MRS vice-chairman and md at EMI Music, told Record Business this week: "The recent dealer survey we carried out showed that retailers make an average profit of 30 percent. This is the equivalent of wholesale price plus 43 percent. The BPI proposal is totally unacceptable and it’s becoming a very serious situation.”

Polygram legal affairs director Michael Kuhn, for the BPI, said that he was unwilling to comment on the issue when negotiations were continuing. But he added that the PolyGram dealer survey showed that in many cases dealers were making less than 30 percent profit on product.

The MRS now plans to hold a special meeting on November 11 to discuss the BPI’s proposal and canvass opinion among publishers. Another meeting with the BPI will then be set up.

Industry anger at secrecy of BPI chart-hype report

WIDESPREAD DISSATISFACTION with the way the BPI handled the recent report of its committee of enquiry into chart hype findings was being voiced around the record industry last week by companies not represented on the Council.

The legally-vested press statement — the only document non-council members of the industry watchdog are likely to see — was condemned for failing to name specific culprits in the chart manipulation game, while several companies thought they were entitled to see the full report.

Cherry Red Records boss Iain McBay told RR: “There were no firm sanctions against major companies which breach the code of conduct mentioned in the statement, but it is obvious that none of the majors would ever be expelied.”

“I have contacted BPI director general John Deacon in an effort to get the chairman Chris Wright who chaired the investigation committee’s full report circulated to all members,” he added.

Chrysalis Records joint chairman Chris Wright who chaired the BPI meeting which discussed the report answered: “There was nothing we were trying to hide, but it was felt in the best interests of the industry that it should

Mohammed’s £1.4m spend on unknown UK busker

NO DOUBT reflecting upon his recent unpleasant experiences in Las Vegas, the Louisville Lip appears to have decided that the music industry may provide a more secure income than pugilism.

The former world heavyweight champion is currently investing an estimated £250,000 to launch a one-time London busker known as Michel, whose debut LP First Flight Of The Gizelda Dragon (ALI 101) is now available via Spartan on the Camelion label.

According to his London-based PR, Michel jetted to Los Angeles and buffed his way into a meeting with Mohammad Ali, who, overcome by his talent, decided to employ his own talents launching Michel’s recording career.

In the UK, the campaign for the album is to feature TV commercials on Thames and LWT, advertising on Radio Capital, posters on 1,000 bus and underground hoardings, trade, consumer and national press advertising, commencing next month and running through to January.

Selected record dealers are also apparently now being sent personal telegram by The Greatest — although it appears many seem to think it’s a hoax, and a one hour TV special titled ‘From Mohammad Ali With Love’ is currently being touted around by Ali’s UK representative Gordon Steel for a UK airing. It naturally features various numbers by Michel.

A single titled ‘Open Door’ (ALI 105) by Michel will also be released via Spartan in the near future.

Asked to describe the album, a spokesman for Spartan said: “It’s late 60s psychedelic country rock.”
That BPI chart report: where is the sting?

WHAT IS to be made of the statement released to the press by the BPI purporting to be a resume of the findings of the committee of enquiry into the allegations of chart-hyping disclosed by the World In Action programme?

'The simple answer is — not very much. Predictably, the BPI Council has closed ranks with an adroitness which the legal and medical professions could scarcely have bettered. If there was real evidence adduced, then the 14 good men and true are keeping the details to themselves. The rest of the BPI membership are denied access to the report. Press enquiries for further information on chart-altering have been discouraged at the Regent Street hq.

The barest minimum of information has been disclosed. Certain companies, says the statement, have "allowed a situation to develop where there has been widespread infringement of the Code of Conduct".

"Certain paid independent agents" are also blamed for "skilfully" pulling the guilty ones identified. Not on your life. Why not? Well, admits the statement in the lamenst of cop-outs: "It is not possible to state firmly that it has been a firm corporate policy of some companies to manipulate the charts."

It came as no surprise to learn that no company is willing to accept responsibility for chart-hyping. Why not? Perhaps the guilty ones identified? Not on your life. Why not?

There is no evidence that a single company has been involved in chart manipulation for the benefit of a single artist. There is no evidence that a single company has been involved in chart manipulation for the benefit of a single record company.

Even the licence to print money, according to the BPI, has been withdrawn by the company policy to be laid down before the continued hoodwinking of the retail trade, the public and most of all the BPI's partners at the BBC, for whose benefit it seems the singles chart is produced, meets with official disapproval.

The statement even seeks to excuse the exposed transgressions of WEA. The attention paid to the company, it is suggested, was due to John Fruin's BPI chairmanship and the availability of redundant personnel. Would similar palliatives have been sought if the programmes had lasted for 68 minutes instead of 30 minutes and the time had been available for more detailed investigation of other companies?

It is a pity that nowhere in the BPI's statement is there a phrase, a word even, which can be taken as an expression of regret for or condemnation of what has been going on. There is scarcely a statement of intent that there will be a real effort in the future to stop chart-hyping. The industry's own house is in order. To be sure there are limp recommendations about reminding members of their Code of Conduct obligations. This is even a suggestion that the Code should be strengthened to include "substantial sanctions" against infringing companies. Unfortunately, these are not defined. But, shadles of Belfast, the new chart contractor will have to provide as Freepost for trade and public to report any unethical practices.

If the BPI is really serious about stopping chart manipulation then it must have done rather better than this. But then, when you are your own judge and jury, the quality of mercy certainly won't be strained. In the meantime, of course, the industry could always recognise the limitations of a one-chart monopoly.

The Growing independent distribution network established another important link this week with the news that Edinburgh's Fast Records are moving into handling outside labels. And WEA acting chief executive, Steere Gunn added: "It was certainly shown that our company never broke the code of conduct wilfully. Now I am making sure our people adhere to it 100 percent and I think other companies will observe its last comma now."

Fast joins indie network

THE GROWING independent distribution network established another important link this week with the news that Edinburgh's Fast Records are moving into handling outside labels. Fast has two basic aims for the step — to fill the gap which currently exists in Scottish shops and to provide an unexpected back door to offer Scottish independent product to the now well-established network South of the border. Heavy delivery charges have prevented this in the past.

"We don't know whether price is a factor where TV-motivated purchases are concerned, but this will give us the information we need. If it works, then we will be looking to more mid-price releases next year," he said.

A late addition to Ronco's Autumn product line-up is The Diamond Symphonies by the London Philharmonic Orchestra. This comprises symphonic treatments of Neil Diamond's best known material and TV promotion is scheduled to begin nationally from November 19.

Pinnacle in Criminal link

CRIMINAL RECORDS has terminated a two-year distribution arrangement with Spartan in favour of a year's association with Pinnacle — and the tiny independent is on the point of clinching a major deal to market a well-known catalogue.

The deal comes at a time of heavy activity for Criminal with large-scale promotion going on around new signing Susan Fassbender's debut single 'Twilight Cafe', and the latest album from Supercharge. Criminal is one of the first small labels to leave the successful Spartan stable.

Plans are already far advanced to exploit the catalogue material due to come Criminal's way, but legal complications have delayed the announce-ment of marketing plans and artists involved.

Jeans tie-in for Rod's new 'Foolish Behaviour' album

RIVA RECORDS has confirmed the release date for Rod Stewart's new album Foolish Behaviour as November 21 with a single 'Passion' readied for October 31.

It is Stewart's first studio album for two years and is self-produced with entirely self-penned material. It has already come in for two weeks of TV advertising at a cost of £250,000 via a link with Gloria Vanderbilt jeans in the London, ATV and Granada regions with radio commercials to coincide.

The jeans commercials are based around Stewart's forthcoming UK tour and offer tickets to customers buying Gloria Vanderbilt clothing. The company has purchased 8,000 tickets for the shows and will be providing in-store displays for the tour and album in all its outlets.

For its part, Ria Records is inserting a two feet by three feet colour poster in every album, while tape buyers will hear an extra track and a special long version of the single not included on the LP version, and can also send off for the free poster by mail.

Fast joins indie network

Said Fast's Bob Last: "We have been finding that people are looking around for early singles by Spitz, for example, and finding they can't get them.

"We would also like to cut out the ridiculous situation where people are hitch-hiking down the motorway with boxes of records for a Roy Orbison Trade." The company has already made up on Scots bands and labels like TV21, Metropak and Groucho Marxis, and Fast is inviting calls on 031 661 5811.
MULLINGS

AFTER DISPOSING of the historic collection of vintage gramophones for £137,000 recently, economy-conscious EMI added another £100,000 to its income at the Abbey Road Studios Sale Of The Century. In conjunction with the masters of second-hand equipment the Jackson brothers, EMI proved that the legend of the Fab Four lives on. Mike Oldfield bought a Mellotron and original tapes used by the Beatles for £1000, a brass ashtray into which Ringo Starr actually stubbed a ciggie went for £130, while a toilet roll which they rejected as being a touch rough on tender areas went for £85. Unfortunately, more expensive hardware like studio consoles was left unsold, despite its historical associations with yesteryear's greats . . . well, the WEA topjob is still unfilled, although some of our runners of last week are still not short of support. Two outsiders who came into the reckoning last week were Sire's Seymour Stein, whose ear for British talent is well tuned, and Paul Turner, boss of WEA's Australian company. In the meantime, Turner's number two Peter Ikin is on route for London to take over the marketing function . . . and if deputy chairman Chris Wright now willing to stand as chairman if invited to do so when the job comes up for voting at this week's council meeting. UNEXPECTEDLY SPEEDY parting of the ways between Multiple Sounds and Tony Hamlyn, recruited from Relay to run the company's independent distribution operation . . . all music journalists will wish Tony Barrow well and a return to full health as he leaves with his wife Corrine and family to live in Morecambe. The last assignment of a distinguished career was to let Fleet Street know of the birth of a son to longtime client Cilla Black . . . . personal statement awaited from CBS a&r man Chas De Whalley . . . new addition to Ariola/Arista press office will be Record Mirror writer Ronnie Gurr . . . . BBC Records hosting a party for Motown's O'Clock News . . . . album, supported by all the cast, reckon the buzz is greater than anything previously experienced and predict the album will go gold on initial orders . . . . a new Laserock show opens at London Planetarium on October 30, with the laser projection system at the Planetarium much improved and a new sound system installed . . . CAN HISTORY repeat itself - Clive Epstein, brother of the late Brian has entered an outfit called The Sneaks in the Battle Of The Bands talent contest, having failed to persuade a&r men to leave London to hear them . . . with Polydor press officer Roger Easterby producing, Peter Shilton and Ray Clemente have recorded a new version of 'Side By Side' - on which Polydor has first refusal . . . . one TV merchandiser, unable to find UK pressing capacity pleasantly surprised to find that he was able to arrange for the work to be done in France - at fourpence per album less than he would have paid in the UK . . . .

USUAL PRE-RELEASE hiccups for Stevie Wonder and his new Hotter Than July album. Motown advised licencees to delay release while Wonder made last minute improvements to the cassette. Everybody responded - except Holland. As a result import copies arrived in the UK, which a few stations started using and forced Motown office to release promotion copies earlier than planned . . . . Hope & Anchor landlord John Eichler and booker Roz Bea of the Albion agency have organised a two-week festival at the pub from October 30-November 14 to raise money to buy duvets for elderly Islington residents. It's called Blanket Coverage & Anchor and Skids, Only Ones, Pauline Murray, Damned, Tom Robinson's Sector 27, Madness, Bad Manners, Revillos, Rumour, Selecter and Ian Dury to name but a few are already committed to play . . . STIGWOOD GROUP president Fred Geresh has been telling Variety that for writing and producing the title song for Grease and producing Frankie Valli's recording, Barry Gibb received $3 million as a result of a "gift" from Stigwood of one percent of the film's gross. Group also received 3 percent of the take from SNF plus $2 million cash bonus. He estimated that since 1967 the BeeGees have earned $65-$70 million from USO-related activities . . . opening above the Comedy Store at 69, Dean Street, will be the Rock Store, which aims to do for aspiring rock bands between 8pm-11pm nightly what the downstairs room has done for comedians.
Kaufe to Magnetic Video

ALAN KAUF, managing director of EMI LRD until its closure earlier this year, has been appointed general manager of Magnetic Video UK, a subsidiary of 20th Century Fox and a leading distributor of pre-recorded video cassettes.

National ads for new Oldfield LP

THE NEW Mike Oldfield album QE2, due to be released by EMI on October 31, will be backed by national and consumer press advertising and in-store displays. Also lined up is co-operative advertising with the Virgin retail chain, Our Price Records and Woolworth.

Additionally, Virgin will be releasing two compilation albums in October. They are a 13-track sampler titled Cash For Cassettes, available at Woolworth retailing at £3.99, and a limited edition picture disc featuring LKW In Dub is the Union Kwesi Johnson LP (ILPS 9650) to be released on Machines. Retailing at £3.99, this will feature numbers by Tubeway Army, John Foxx and The Human League.

Kaufe will report directly to Andre Blay, president of the Magnetic Video Corporation, and will be responsible for all the UK subsidiary's activities and for liaison with the companies European licensees and distributors.

Merchandising

November 10, featuring mixes from LKJ's two Island albums with dub treatment by Dennis Bovell.

ARISTA RECORDS has launched a full scale marketing campaign to support the new Alan Parsons Project LP The Turn Of A Friendly Card, released last week.

It will be spearheaded by TV advertising on LWT from October 31 to November 2 and November 7 to November 9, national, consumer and trade press advertising and a joint radio advertising campaign on Capital with Our Price Records.

all the UK subsidiary's activities will also be turning its entire window over to the album between November 4 and 11.

NEVER ONE to do things by halves, Pete Sinfield decides to sign two big contracts at the same time. With one hand he inks the marriage register to wed ex Miss Spain, Mariona Rosell, with the other an exclusive songwriting contract with Paper Music for the world. Both were witnessed by Paper Music executives Billy Lawrie and Lawrence Ronson.

FOLLOWING STRONG airplay and heavy initial demand, CJMO Records has drawn up promotion plans for the LP The Ovaltineys Sing Your All Time Favourites, distributed by Spartan Records. The campaign will include trade press advertising, advertising in the TV Times and posters. Window displays are available from Spartan.

EAGLE RECORDS releases a follow-up single to Ginger's 'Blind Date' next week. Titled 'Something Wasn't Quite Right', the first 10,000 copies will be available in full colour picture bags.

ENSIGN RECORDS is lining up a full marketing push for the debut album from hit reggae band Black Slate called Heart Transplant Trust. The band has been signed to Island Records, Island is also scheduling two dub albums in October 31. They are a 13 track sampler titled Cash For Cassettes, available at Woolworth retailing at £3.99, and a limited edition picture disc featuring LKW In Dub is the Union Kwesi Johnson LP (ILPS 9650) to be released on Machines. Retailing at £3.99, this will feature numbers by Tubeway Army, John Foxx and The Human League.

TO BACK up release of Utopia's new album Deliver the Music on Bearsville, Our Price Records and Virgin are putting together a joint promotion package. The cover of the LP is said to contain a hidden message which played backwards on a record deck. In addition, Island is re-releasing the two Todd Rundgren solo albums A Wizard, A True Star, and Hermit Of Mink Hollow which have been unavailable in the UK for 18 months. They will be issued on the ISPR at a £3.45 list price.

Island is also scheduling two dub albums by current signings Basement 5 and Linton Kwesi Johnson.

BASEMENT 5 in Dub (IPR 2038) is the first dub production by Martin Hannett and comes in a limited edition of 1,000 copies at £2.50, to be followed by the band's official debut album in the early New Year. The group is now managed by Kris Needs.

LKW In Dub is the Linton Kwesi Johnson LP (ILPS 9650) to be released on November 10, featuring mixes from LKJ's two Island albums with dub treatment by Dennis Bovell.

SECRET RECORDS releases a new Brian Brain single mid-November in 12-inch format and titled 'The Fun People EP'. The single will be available in an "unusual" picture bag and Brain begins a short UK tour in December.

DECCA RECORDS is releasing four maxi singles on October 31 featuring hits from the 60s. All will be available in full colour picture bags. The four singles are A Must Of Love from the Kinks, 'Ain't No Sunshine' by Aretha Franklin, 'The Day the Gypsies Came' by The Byrds and 'The Mercenaries' by John Lennon and Yoko Ono.

TO PROMOTE the current Bad Manners single 'Special Brew', Magnet Records have released 10,000 copies as a limited edition picture disc featuring Buster Bloodvessel locked in an embrace with some poor female.

SECRET RECORDS releases a new Brian Brain single mid-November in 12-inch format and titled 'The Fun People EP'. The single will be available in an "unusual" picture bag and Brain begins a short UK tour in December.

ACTRESS SIAN Phillips has signed with Chrysalis Records to release her debut single 'Bewitched Bothered and Bewildered' (CMS 2470) on Friday in a picture bag.

EPIC RECORDS has signed Garland Jeffries worldwide. He was previously with A&M and Warner Brothers. An album is planned in the New Year.

THIRTEEN, a five-piece Oxford band has been signed to Island Music's Square Records and plans a debut single 'So Hard' c/w 'It's About Time' on November 7.

TV PERSONALITY Isla St. Clair has signed a deal with Anola Hansen. Her first release will be the Fleetwood Mac song 'Song Bird' (AHA 566) packed in a picture bag.

NEW PROMOTION company Twilight Promotions by Brian Jacobs and Dean Guinane to concentrate on helping up and coming bands from West London. The company is based at 01-749 4717 and is staging regular Monday nights at Acton's White Hart.

SWISS/ITALIAN new wave duo Krisma has signed a worldwide publishing deal with Intersong Music.

HEAVY METAL specialist Neat Records has signed six-piece Teseeside combo Axis to its Metal Minded label. 'Lady C/W Messiah' is the first 45 (MM1) available in a picture bag with distribution through the indie network.

INDEPENDENT PROMOTION company Ruth Release has been retained by Secret Records to handle 'Rubber Ball' by Zoe Nicholas - the record which will be raising money for the Harefield Hospital Heart Transplant Trust.

VICTIMS OF Pleasure have formed their own label P.A.M. to release a debut EP of three original compositions 'When You're Young', 'If I Was' and 'Sporting Pastimes' (VOP 1) which is available direct from Steve Flack on 01-606 6262.

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Pioneer Benjamin bows out after 21 years

WHEN LOUIS Benjamin left Pye after 21 years, he left a legacy of innovations which are all too readily taken for granted in today's industry. BRIAN MULLIGAN reports.

LOUIS BENJAMIN: a habit of not conforming

those days that there was a clear reluctance on the part of the trade to support Pye's initiative, for fear of compromising existing sources of supply.

It looked like a stalemate situation — limited access to existing distribution outlets and traditional dealer apathy in face of any move likely to rock the boat. The answer was provided by a fast-talking American, Dave Miller who enjoyed a battle just as much as Benjamin himself. At that time there was nothing like a budget operation on the lines of today's MFP or Pickwick. Decca came nearest with its Ace of Clubs line, but that was reserved for reissues of classical catalogue. Miller offered Pye access to his 101 Strings easy-listening orchestral concept, but wanted to see Pye pricing the albums low enough to react a mass market. "The average lease tape deal in those days was 8-10 percent of the retail price, but Dave agreed to accept 4 percent of 85 percent if we would bring the LP out at a budget price. Since business couldn't have become much worse we agreed," says Benjamin.

The outcome was the launch of the Golden Guinea label — "a magic price" — but not without some further hassles with the wholesale and retail trade. Pye reduced the wholesale discount from 17/2 percent to 15 percent and not surprisingly the companies declined to help the line. "But Pye was the only one to help respond with much enthusiasm to the prospect of being able to sell LPs for £1.1s. The drastic remedy was to go on television, a move which Benjamin can claim was in this country that the medium was used to promote records.

Weekend spots on the ATV network worked spectacularly. On Monday morning, as Benjamin remembers it, shops were besieged by customers demanding copies. "They were obliged to come to us with their orders," he recalls.

The distribution stranglehold was broken once and for all. It was the beginning of direct selling and it was a marvellous time for Pye.

It was indeed a glorious time for the buccaneering young company which paralleled the majors in a run for their money as the sales boom triggered by the Beatles got underway. Pye scored impressively with acts like the Searchers, the Kinks and Sandie Shaw, with the association with the 18-year-old producer writer Tony Hatch pro-\n
vided new impetus for Petula Clark, with his like 'Downtown' and 'Don't Sleep in the Subway' gaining international acceptance. Pye also moved strongly into the licensing market, picking up the Chess-Checker catalogue at a time when Chuck Berry was providing cutting-edge British pop fans with their first taste of R&B. When Frank Sinatra ended his prolific association with Capitol and parted the EMI fold, his new label Reprise was launched in Britain. "I felt that with Warner Bros Records took place, the new owners switched their own business to Pye rather than taking Pye to Decca. Pye also launched the A&M label in the British market. The conservative approach of the era was to soft pedal on giving label identity to new American licenses, in the belief that such generosity would only help them gain a foothold in the UK market, at the expense of the Britishlicensor. Benjamin suffered from no such inhibitions. "In those days there was no shortage of American labels wanting licensing deals in Britain. The problem was to be selective. I was criticized for giving label identity, but it was like giving them a leg up. In fact, I was able to acquire labels from the competition because of this," says Benjamin, wondering whether the current industry recession might force some of the American independents to look once again at the advantages of licensing.

Another outstanding example of Pye's forward thinking was the establishment, under Walter Wyoda, of the Precision Tapes subsidiary. It was timed perfectly to take advantage of the new awareness of tape being created in Britain in the early-70s. A tape duplicating factory was opened and until the market expanded to the point where licensing became unprofitable to the require owner, and the companies sought to repossess their tape business, Precision was in a dominating position.

There have, of course, been disappointments as well as natural highs. During the halcyon days of worldwide demand for British music in the 60s, Pye was not to establish companies of its own in key territories, relying on catalogue deals or, in the case of America, individual artist arrangements with sub-tal labels. It was a profitable position to be in and, Benjamin feels, the best way of maximising opportunities, bearing in mind that Pye, unlike EMI Records was not the dominating contributor to ATV's corporate profits. "With hindsight, if the company had invested more in those days, it could have rued it in today's marketplace," he observes. When the time came finally to make a drive into the American market it was in the form of a joint-venture with GRT-Janus, a partnership not destined for longevity but which allowed Pye to establish the Precision Tapes operation, as the British end of the deal. On balance, it is likely that Pye came out with the better part of the bargain.

In recent years, Benjamin has combined the dual role of chairman of Pye RCA and ATV and director of the Hammer and Decca joint-venture company. He has been a driving force behind the merger of MFP, Pickwick and Pye Decca.

When Louis Benjamin left Pye, the company concentrated its attention on the small independent record company which had grown out of a small classical label, Nixa, formed by Hilton Nixon, whose first secretary was Madeleine Halkyard, PRT's long-serving company secretary. Along with Mike Cambridge, the electronics firm had taken an interest, which ATV subsequently bought out. When Benjamin arrived the company had formed an association with producer Alan Freeman and had an artists roster featuring such names as Marion Ryan, Gary Milner, Dick James, Dave Dee, Ronan Donnelly. But Pye was suffering because of distribution problems. Wholesalers like Lugion and H.R. Taylor existed, but the main sources of distribution were firmly in the hands of EMI and Decca and the presence of a third company with ambitions was not exactly welcomed by the reigning incumbents. With Pye fearing commercial strangulation, a drastic remedy was called for. Before Benjamin had arrived, the decision had been taken to cut on existing wholesale arrangements and to direct. It was a reflection of the grip the market leaders had on the retail trade in the face of any move likely to rock the boat. "The conservative approach of the era was to soft pedal on giving label identity to new American licenses, in the belief that such generosity would only help them gain a foothold in the UK market, at the expense of the Britishlicensor. Benjamin suffered from no such inhibitions. "In those days there was no shortage of American labels wanting licensing deals in Britain. The problem was to be selective. I was criticized for giving label identity, but it was like giving them a leg up. In fact, I was able to acquire labels from the competition because of this," says Benjamin, wondering whether the current industry recession might force some of the American independents to look once again at the advantages of licensing.

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Precision hits the big time

A FAMILIAR name from the tape market but now making a lot of noise in video, Precision Video's first batch of feature film releases and music concert videos will expand interest in the genre enormously.

WITH THE first titles from ITC's impressive movie catalogue now in the shops, Precision Video has been transformed overnight from just one of numerous video distributors into a major force in the UK software market.

Drawn from Lord Grade's ITC feature movie and TV film company, many of the Precision titles have sales potential equal to the catalogues announced recently by WEA's Warner Home Video, CIC Video and Intervision.

As already reported, they include The Muppet Movie, Porridge, Jesus of Nazareth (on four cassettes), Return Of The Pink Panther, The Boys from Brazil and To Russia With Elton and carry retail prices of between £29.95 and £39.95 with distribution via PRT.

Precision Video managing director, Walter Woyda, enthused: "Now that we've got these titles out we are finding that dealers are beginning to take really significant quantities, usually between 25 and 50 units per title. The advance orders on The Muppet Movie have been well over 1,000."

The metamorphosis towards Precision Video's current status in the UK video market began back in January this year when the company was officially launched, originally as a subsidiary of Pye/PRT and now, since the upheavals at PRT, a direct subsidiary of parent company ACC.

Under the direction of Walter Woyda, Precision Video steadily built up its turnover via distribution of a growing range of video catalogues — among them Derran, Mountain, IPC, Electric Picture Palace, Video View, Vampx and Video Media, which in total gave the company over 300 titles.

The continuing experience has subsequently created a perfect launching pad for Precision/ITC's own video software catalogue with a dealer network established of over 500 video specialists and about 100 record retailers who are fully committed to video product.

However, despite the fact that Woyda has built up a respectable retail network, he remains highly critical of the record retail trade's response to the video software market.

Woyda told Record Business: "Bearing in mind the proliferation of specialist video shops in many areas, and the interest now being shown by photographic shops and the TV rental chains, the record retail trade is going to miss out completely if it doesn't start stocking in depth very quickly."

Woyda ascribes the record retail trade's reluctance to move into video to pure economic considerations — the heavy initial investment that is required. In the meantime, Precision is being realistic by concentrating on other outlets.

With this in mind, Precision has just finalised a deal with the Thorn-EMI and Rediffusion TV rental chains for its own product to be available on a rental basis at about £5.00 for a three-day period. It will only be available on a direct sales basis to other outlets.

Woyda commented: "Although we have done these rental deals our philosophy will very definitely be on direct sales. I firmly believe that there is a magic about owning a film on video tape. In real terms buying one cassette is no more expensive than a night out and a lot of the movies have an enormous repeatability potential."

Looking to the future, Precision will be releasing three new titles in November — Moses, Alien Attack and Cassandra Crossing — and a further ten titles during January which will include the new movie All Quiet On The Western Front. And on the music side, Precision plans to release various ATV music programmes in the Spring, including concerts by Sad Cafe, the Average White Band, Selecter and Elkie Brooks, a move that is facilitated by the current temporary agreement between ITV and the unions over release of programmes on video cassette.

A SELECTION of top ABC feature films are released in the UK this month — among them the Dustin Hoffman/Susan George movie Straw Dogs.

It follows the conclusion of a deal between ABC Video Enterprises and the Peterborough-based operation of Guild Home Video, which is exclusively handling distribution in the UK and Eire.

The agreement covers 45 titles. They are available for both rental (£5.00 for three days) and direct sale at a retail price of £36.95.

In addition to Straw Dogs, titles include Ring of Bright Water, starring Jill Travers and Virginia McKenna, Hitchcock's Rebecca with Laurence Olivier, Spellbound, Nortons, Kotch, Suppose They Gave A War And Nobody Came and Hell In The Pacific.

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At Toshiba's trade show last May, some elegantly minaturised (not yet micro-minaturised) Hi-fi units were on display. They looked great, they made sweet music - and were impressively smaller than the cumbersome machines most of us have got used to. Without apparent loss of quality, a smaller unit can replace, and in time could well outperform. Sony, for instance, is working on a 4-inch digital audio disc.

The same trend is clear in video. Within weeks, JVC is introducing an elegant portable, the HR-2200, which claims JVC out of Kurt Lowy (from whom we may be heard in a later article) "will be the smallest and lightest portable on the market. It's got all the facilities the mains machine has, yet it weighs nearly 1 lb less than the lightest now available. Its matching tuner, the TU 22 is also a charger and mains unit. The HR-2200," he adds, "uses a nickel-chrome battery which has three times the life, and also, I think, five times quicker charging time." Studying the portable's glossy-than-glossy brochure, one reads that "now... the age of true "in-hand" video has arrived." It claims that the "New Portable is fully comparable to any deck-type recorder with it playback facility. That is, in the comfort of one's living room, its variable-speed playback capability will freeze the image on the screen, slow down the speed... view the picture frame by frame." It's "incomparably small in size" - 28.8 x 10.3 x 26.7 cm, and weighs only 5.2 kg. Shuttle search, remote control unit, and all the optional accessories you could possibly dream of come with this new small marvel. Compare the dimensions of the Philips 2020, which are 540 x 365 x 152cm and its weight, all of 17.5 kg (admittedly, this goes with an extremely sturdy machine) and consider that these two very different animals have been launched within, at most, four months of each other.

This is not to disparage the Philips at all, or to overpraise the JVC, but simply to emphasise that size and weight are increasingly going to be factors manufacturers cannot afford to ignore, and buyers will take seriously when they choose a video. Sony's Trinicon camera, for instance, is beautifully light and small, as delectable to handle as a Pentax camera - another field where, apart from professional usage, size has continuously come down and flexibility of equipment and film endlessly improved, a revolution started by the Leica) and the Trinicon also produces pictures of superior colour quality. Thus, these days, small isn't just convenient, it delivers the goods as well.

A clear sign of the times about videotape comes from Intervid, whose new Universal Artiste titles are not to be copied from U-matic, but from one-inch broadcast-quality film. The statement by Sony's David Hamid (this column, September 1) that "while the ½-inch video remains the prevalent system, Beta is absolutely safe, and we are 100 per cent committed to it" is commented upon by American contacts, who ask "is the end of the ½-inch VCR format at hand?" Not for a couple of years at least, they reckon, but see several portents to indicate that ½-inch may not continue its dominance of the video consumer market much longer than that. "Scorn if you will, but recall how ½-inch was scoffed at by ¼-inch buffs just four years ago."

They then instance Sony's "Video Movie" system, whose prototype has attracted - deservedly - a great deal of attention. It's a one piece single chip CCD colour camera/VCR combination that weighs only about 4.4 lb... and uses 8 mm tape. Sony Chairman Akio Morita is quoted as saying that Sony does not want "confusion in the future", which is a Japanese way of emphasising that he would like to see standardisation. Sony, while stressing that it is not looking into this system, is in touch with other video manufacturers - and major photographic companies - to try and establish a single standard system, so that Video Movie will just be one among a horde of incompatible formats. Standard is beautiful, too. The Video Movie system records a 20 minute tape, which you can then edit in the companion Home Editor. The ultra-small cassette - it looks bulkier but not that much larger than an audio cassette - will only cost, in the States, around $10.

As for ¼-inch tape, Funai will be bringing out a ¼-inch model in the U.S. anytime now under the Technicolor brand name. Initial shipments will go to some 100 dealers in about 30 markets. This machine weighs only 7 lbs, and an $8.95 cassette (also sized like an audio cassette, small enough to put six in a cassette box) will play 30 minutes. Conventional cameras have to be used at the moment, but Funai is said to be working on an "evolutionary" small camera - as well as one piece camera/VCR, which would be incompatible with Sony's Video Movie. Funai hopes, too, in the new year, to market a combination VCR/TV set, with a 7-inch screen, and expects to have a 60 minute tape on sale in 1981.

Remember Toshiba's LVR ¼-inch system, the one that runs at enormous speed and changes tracks every 24.6 seconds? Brilliant idea, dreadful picture quality, when last observed. But apparently the picture is better now, the system has not (yet) died the death, and Toshiba has announced that it intends to bring out a recorder which can record two shows at the same time. This is to be offered to the industrial and educational markets in 1981. Implication, does it? Toshiba's has a ¼-inch system, the one that runs at enormous speed and changes tracks every 24.6 2 seconds? Brilliant idea, dreadful picture quality, when last observed. But apparently the picture is better now, the system has not (yet) died the death, and Toshiba has announced that it intends to bring out a recorder which can record two shows at the same time. This is to be offered to the industrial and educational markets in 1981. Implication, does it mean two ¼-inch tracks?

Further implication: if the omens mean anything, big efforts are going to be made to make ½-inch tape of broadcast quality. Indeed, ¼-inch tape shot on Mount Everest was televised this summer in Japan. They say communication is the world, but how incredibly shrinking, too, are the instruments of communication.
ALL DAMONTS P.V.C. IS UNTouched BY HUMAN HAND BECAUSE THEY BOUGHT AN AUTOMATIC HANDLING SYSTEM FROM...
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STREISAND DOMINATES the chart this week (her first No. 1 and the fifth penned by a Gibb), despite severe stock shortages for some unlucky dealers. Watch Blondie move this week, and Geraldine Hunt (chantbus- ter at 44) live up to her promise with a big Top 20 crossover. DJM have the exclusive six. Promised three disco hits up and running this week (46, 61 and 83), and Champagne may score a hat-trick with 'You And Me' from top Dutch band Spargo, a big Eurohit. See the New Singles lists for details.

Pic discs are aiding strong moves by Bad Manners and Dollar. A Skids pic disc is doing well in America, and the same VS 373 number as the normal version and can be ordered specifically. 12-inch bootlegs have quietly appeared for Earth Wind & Fire (with a 12, not a 45), the Police and the unstoppable Orchestral Manoeuvres.

Big cult sales in prospect for Span- dau Ballet, self-styled as London's most-fashionable band, who have finally entered the recording scene after years of select gigs with 7- and 12-inchers on a disc bearing the logos of Chrysalis and their own Reforma- tion label. The sound of well-dressed young trendy fans are the market here. Of wider appeal is Chas Jankel's interesting 'At No Corrida', held in high esteem at A&M's offices, and good early sales on airplay. The title is taken from an exotic Japanese film, Jankel, of course, was Ian Dury's collaborator.

Watch those B-sides: with the in- pressible 'Oops Upside Your Head' now backing up the Gap Band's 'Party Lights' to keep sales moving, dealers will have to watch closely. Gladys Knight's last 12-inch 'Laid Back' (CBS 12 8542) will find the new 'Bourgie Bourgie' on the flip.

First fruit of Dr Hook's Phenogram deal shows this week ('Girls Can Get It', MER 51), bringing it into a straight fight with EMI's reissued 'Sharing The Night Together'.
The sound of Africa – coming to you on a new label with big ambitions

LAGOS INTERNATIONAL

Records is the first wholly-owned major African label to be formed outside the continent. Based in London, it aims to sell African-rooted music in Britain, besides providing a new and better outlet for British labels selling in Nigeria.

AFRICAN MUSIC has not made much of an impression in Britain so far. Apart from being evident in the music of one-off successes like Osibisa, black African influences have only manifested very indirectly – via the jazzer end of soul, for instance.

Now a new label is being launched in Britain which aims to promote these musical sounds. Lagos International Records, the label in question, is the first major record company to be wholly owned in Nigeria but formed outside Africa.

Its parent company is the big Nigerian conglomerate, The Punch Organisation, which owns newspapers and manufactures a variety of consumer goods, besides running the Skylark record label and distributing discs. The purpose of Lagos International Records will in fact be twofold.

The handling of licensing, pressing and distribution in Nigeria has, in recent years, left much to be desired. LIR aims to offer British labels a reliable pressing and distribution service there. The existence of a London office should facilitate business and make it easier to check on previously contentious subjects such as royalty payments.

But a major part of the company’s aim is to establish a serious presence in the UK market, either with African acts or with musicians who in some way use African roots in their music.

Keni St. George is the man running the A&R function in Britain. He is also overall UK label manager. A professional musician who has played in bands like Ozo and Dalai Lama, his job is to create for Lagos International Records a real label identity which will use African music as a base but not restrict the bands signed from creating upon that original feel.

His own influences take in Pink Floyd and Tangerine Dream – music for the mind. This aspect of music will be important to him when looking for new talent. “There are no barriers”, he says. “I would sign a good act.”

The first two acts on LIR are Hammatan and Nature.

Hammatan’s first single is a 12-inch in a sexy picture sleeve titled ‘Nite Of Bliss’. It has a marked lilting reggae feel. An album The Chameleon, is due soon. Nature is the other group, an all-girl, Jamaican three-piece outfit with a more definite African feel to its music.

The LIR label was conceived jointly between Keni St. George and the head of the Punch Organisation Chief Olu Aboderin.

Running of the record operation is being left to St. George and Ricky Hopper, who is in charge of sales and marketing. A big part of the operation, says St. George, is the attempt to sell LIR to the Third World countries. These will constitute a major part of the possible market. Fortunately, he emphasises, Punch International has the cash to sustain the launching and development of LIR in what is after all a relatively untapped musical area.

The promotion campaign for LIR kicks off on October 27 with extensive advertising in the music press. There is also a competition for dealers which can be entered by ordering a box of Hammatan’s The Chameleon album, and this will be followed in November by a competition for DJs with £1,500 worth of disco equipment as prizes. Details of this will be appearing in due course in the national press.

Spartan is being used for distribution of Lagos International.
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New Singles on Mute

Robert Rental

Double Heart / On Location

D.A.F.

Der Räuber und der Prinz / Tanz mit Mir

Disco/Soul

Top new sellers on R&B Disco Chart

Wilton Felder Inherit the Wind
Hiroshi Fukumura Hunt Up Wind
Roy Ayers (Sometimes) Believe in Yourself
Patti Austin People in Love
UK Players Everybody Get Up

Imports

Fastest Moving Disco/Soul Imports

Rodney Franklin In the Centre
James Brown Rapp Payback

For the full story behind the Chartbusters subscribe to the weekly trade magazine Record Business.
**NEW RELEASES**

Due in the shops this weekend

- **ROXY MUSIC** - SAME OLD SCENE
  - Polydor/EG ROXY 1
- **SAXON** - STRONG ARM OF THE LAW
  - Carrere CAR 170(T)
- **DR HOOK** - GIRLS CAN GET IT
  - Mercury MER 31
- **BUZZCOCKS** - STRANGE THINGS
  - UA BP 371
- **HAWKWIND** - WHO'S GONNA WIN THE WAR
  - Bronze BRO 109
- **IRON MAIDEN** - WOMEN IN UNIFORM
  - (12)EMI 5105
- **BOB MARLEY & THE WAILERS** - REDEMPTION SONG
  - Island (12)WIP 6653

**ROCK**

Top action from the **RB Top 100 and Indie Chart**

- **UB40** - DREAM A LIE
  - Graduate (12)GRAD 10
- **UK SUBS** - PARTY IN PARIS
  - Gem GEMS 42
- **COCKNEY REJECTS** - WE ARE THE FIRM
  - Zonophone Z10
- **DEAD KENNEDYS** - KILL THE POOR
  - Cherry Red CHERRY 16
- **DEEP PURPLE** - NEW LIVE & RARE VOL 3
  - Harvest SHEP 101

**OFF THE WALL**

Coming out of nowhere

- **SOUNDTRACK** - MIDNIGHT COWBOY
  - UA UP 634

---

**An...**

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**John Lodge**

The New Single

**STREET CAFE**

**F 13896**

**DECCA**

---

**BLONDIE**

NEW SINGLE

**THE TIDE IS HIGH**

CHS 2465

*TAKEN FROM THE FORTHCOMING ALBUM 'AUTOAMERICAN'*

---

**TIDE IS HIGH**

*FROM THE FORTHCOMING ALBUM 'AUTOAMERICAN'*
### TV GUIDE

**FORCASTING TV-ADVERTISEMENTD ALBUMS. ALL PRICES DEALER PRICES EXCEPT K-TEL IRP**

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<th>NATIONAL: All Regions</th>
<th>STREET LEVEL: Various</th>
<th>Ratalog: Ronco (3C/RT, 3C/TL 2048)</th>
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### THE DISCO CHART

Compiled by RB Research from returns from specialist disco-oriented shops

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Compiled by RB Research from returns from specialist disco-oriented shops

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<td>Atlantic</td>
<td>1977</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
An irresistible temptation from Motown.

The Temptations 20 Golden Greats

FEATURING
JUST MY IMAGINATION - PAPA WAS A ROLLIN' STONE
TAKE A LOOK AROUND - I'M GONNA MAKE YOU LOVE ME
GET READY - BALL OF CONFUSION
STML 12140 AVAILABLE ON CASSETTE

ORDER NOW FROM YOUR EMI SALESMAN OR EMI RECORDS DISTRIBUTION CENTRE. TELEPHONE 01-581 8722.
The Airplay Guide features playlists which are in force in the current week (except for Radio Hallam which due to production deadlines is for last week). Playlists normally only affect daytime Monday-Friday shows.

### New Additions to Playlists

Playlists normally only affect daytime Monday-Friday shows.

#### Key to Station Playlists

- **A**: Main Playlist/Chart
- **B**: Breakers/Climbers
- **C**: Extras
- **X**: Hit Picks
- ***: Station pick

#### Basic Key

- **A-** Main Playlist/Chart
- **B-** Breakers/Climbers
- **C-** Extras
- **X**: Hit Picks
- ***: Station pick

#### New Additions to Playlists are Shown in Bold Type

### Basic Key

- **A**: Main Playlist/Chart
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#### Key to Station Playlists

- **A**: Main Playlist/Chart
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- **C**: Extras
- **X**: Hit Picks
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#### Record Business October 27, 1980

21
Pinnacle Records welcomes and looks forward to their first 2 hits.

"Peaches & Cream / Foxy"
Supercharge
Swag 20

"Twilight Cafe"
Susan Fassbender
Swag 24
Airlines

Managers out on deck as Capital battles strike

CAPITAL RADIO was forced to generate its own news service when the ACTT strike received support from union members at IRN.

On Thursday (16) ACTT engineers discontinued feeding Capital with the hourly 3-minute IRN bulletin. At the same time sympathetic NGA members blacked the station's teleprinter service. To compensate, Capital's already overstretched staff have been airing an hourly news service 6am-8pm, collecting news from a variety of sources and using non-Equity members as readers. Managerial staff such as head of music Tim Blackmore and Peter Black, head of programme administration/special features have become news readers, as well as classical music presenter Peter James.

At press time the strike was in its eighth week and members were due to meet on Thursday (23) to discuss the situation following an ACTT committee meeting two days before which itself followed two meetings with Capital management.

Centre pays tribute to Lady Barnett

THE SAD death of Lady Isabel Barnett last weekend means the board of Centre Radio, the company that operated the Leicester ILR franchise, is faced with the need to appoint a new chairman.

Spokesman and board member Terence Gray told RB: "She was a very good chairman and played an outstanding part in the group's interviews with the IBA. We are all very sad. She hadn't been well for a long time."

Lady Barnett did not play a part in the day-to-day running of the company. Most likely replacement is vice-chairman Kenneth Bowder, subject to IBA approval. Bowder, a former Lord Mayor of Leicester, is a local solicitor and county councillor. Through his legal work he is chairman of several public companies.

Centre Radio is scheduled to begin broadcasting in the Autumn of next year.

More JICRAR research to be commissioned

THE AIRC has confirmed its intention to commission three JICRAR studies in 1981, but the ILR network continues to fund this research without financial aid from advertisers or advertising agencies. RG, the AGB associate, is undertaking the studies as previously but at the beginning of 1982 the radio contract will be offered for tender.

RG has worked closely with AIRC in the past in the development of JICRAR audience research, but the companies feel that it would be appropriate that such a major research contract should go to tender once its pattern is firmly established. This intention does in fact leave the area open for other options such as a similar set-up that arrived at with joint ITV/BBC research with the introduction of BARB.
DISCS

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The recession: how much is the companies’ own fault?

CLEARLY, THE continued reporting of the recession in the record industry in most forms of the media is a matter of great concern for all sections of the music trade. There are many varied reasons for the general recession but as far as records are concerned the causes fall mainly under three headings: changes in style of retail outlets, price confusion, and record companies’ performances.

The 1970s saw the rapid growth in non-specific retail outlets when most of the chain stores set up record departments. Because of the multiplicity relatively low overheads, large stock areas, and ability to buy centrally or bulk discounts, many High Street record specialists were unable to compete and disappeared from the scene. As this occurred, the multiples were able to reduce the dept of stock and, with recession, some have cut back further to virtually chart albums only. Now there are less outlets to fill the “catalogue” style retailing so back-catalogue sales have fallen dramatically.

In spite of the recession, I know that many specialist retailers who have survived and persevered are finding little or no decline in overall sales. In fact, they are getting more consumer recognition against the background of limited availability in the multiples.

In parallel with the growth of ‘record departments’, the later 70s also saw the advent of heavy discounting. Initially such discounting focussed the attention of the consumer on records and boosted overall unit sales. But few outlets could afford to discount every item while maintaining a comprehensive catalogue and effective research and rapid order system. Hence, another reason for the ‘telescoping’ of sales to a reduced numb of titles. The effect of recession has been to hot up the price wars as dealers jostle for their share of a falling market.

Such price wars are aided and abetted by the availability of EEC product. That EEC countries can often supply importers with current chart albums to retail at the UK manufacturer’s wholesale price does nothing to help the situation. The UK manufacturers are forced to give their major multiple accounts a reasonably competitive bulk discount, so cash is affected and the situation worsens: The fastest way of facing up to reduced cash-flow is to lay off staff, press and distributing is affected and thus the spiral of decline becomes fuelled.

Much of the blame for the reported decline in sales must be laid right on the companies’ doorsteps. Throughout the 70s they actively encouraged the multiplicity in preference to the specialists, and there is still little sign that they are any more interested in the survivors. The later 70s also saw much wheeler-dealing, with the chart-return and category A outlets getting freebies and special discounts. So, a situation of the haves and the have-nots has been created; little wonder the more aggressive dealers have looked to import, either directly or through wholesalers.

So much for the history. Looking at the developing situation I believe that some companies have overlooked their redundancy activities. A brief look at delivery notes in the last few weeks is enough to send shivers of apprehension down the dealers’ spines. Many record companies are simply not coming up with the goods on time, or even at all, on one recent order with EMI, for instance, 40 percent of the items ordered were out of stock. The present state of out-of-stock items, extensions and delays in delivery of new releases does nothing to help either the retailers’ turnover or the companies’ cash-flow problems. With further redundancies reportedly in the pipeline, the situation looks bleak for Christmas. I’m not alone in this view, several dealers I have spoken to are of the same opinion. While all this is going on, there is no doubt that the last few weeks have revealed a remarkable upsurge in sales; even the multiples seem to be taking notice with some beginning to expand stock once again. Perhaps this will be the spur for record companies to rethink their staffing levels.

Observation Post

It is of interest to look at the possible reasons for a new buoyancy in the record market, despite continued recession generally. Two reasons spring to mind.

Firstly, the TV campaigns have started with a vengeance; after quite a lull there are now some ten albums being displayed on Anglia TV. Secondly, many long-awaited albums are now being released. Yet, underlying this apparent good news there are warnings to some of the questionable aspects of record companies’ marketing policies. I think it’s a bit shortsighted for companies to hold many of their prime releases to the late September/early October slots. Had these releases been more evenly spread sales may have been more stable.

In preparing this article I have tried to solicit some opinions from the companies at the sharp end, every tele-sale person I’ve spoken to has said, when I’ve commented on the difficulty of getting through, on delayed releases, or on late deliveries “it’s very busy and short-staffed”. However, my enquiring letters to managing directors have had very little response – only Derek Honey, backed by his staff at RTF, and John Mair, CBS sales director, bothered to respond.

What is needed is equal treatment of all credit-writing accounts; a steady supply of new release product throughout the year; adherence to notified release dates; adherence to delivery time objectives; a maximisation of orders filled; timely information of releases and release dates and, in particular, of special campaigns.

Managing Directors: get to it, and get this industry on an even keel.

MARTIN ANSCOMBE
THE CHAMELEON
LAG 05
THEIR FIRST ALBUM OUT NOW

THE SINGLE "NITE OF BLISS" LIS 01 / LIS 1201 STILL BEING PROMOTED.
**ALBUM REVIEWS**

**Top 10**

**DIRE STRAITS: Making Movies (Vertigo 6359 034)** Prod: Mark Knopfler/Jimmy Iovine

Third album from the J.J. Cale sound, alikes and closer in style to their gritty debut album than the slightly disappointing, laid-back Communiqué. Jointly produced by Mark Knopfler and Jimmy Iovine, best know for his work with Bruce Springsteen, the only significant development is the addition of keyboardist Roy_bankes. As a result of Roy_bankes' arrival, a December UK tour lined up and the usual heavy promotion, it's a guaranteed heavy seller.

**EARTH WIND & FIRE: Faces (CBS 34490)** Prod: Maurice White

When it comes to really classy dance music Earth Wind & Fire are up there with the true giants and this double album will only enhance an already huge reputation. There is so much good music here that CBS will find it tough to pull off a single and with the 12 members soaring away like a soul orchestra, the album has something for everyone.

**STEVIE WONDER: Hotter Than July (Motown STMA 8035)** Prod: Stevie Wonder

After the indigent complexities of the last album, it's good to find Stevie Wonder taking care of business once again and doing what comes naturally. His return to basics, with tracks virtualy seiving into each other, has a great grace, because here he is boosted by his message, 'like I'm Sorry I Say You Love Me', 'Do Like You', 'Masterblaster' and the racially pointed 'Cash In Your Face', where assorted rhythmic patterns provide a vital base for the construction of some real gems of soulful high-tempo. In contrast there are the simple ballads of love found and lost, like the poignant highlight of his Wembley shows, where some of the other songs were given an initial airing. An album obviously destined for the upper reaches of the top 10.

**THE DOORS: Greatest Hits (Elektra ELK 52 254)** Prod: Paul A. Rothchild/Bruce Botnick/The Doors

Although all this seminal band's albums are still available and there have been hits compilations before, the newcomer to The Doors couldn't do much better than grab a copy of this double album. It offers the full version of 'Light My Fire' and the atmospheric 'Riders On The Storm' are here along with, 'Hello, I Love You', 'Ballad Of Easy Rider', 'L.A. Woman' and 'Break On Through'. Ten tracks in all that show what a debt this great new wave act owes to the Lizard King and his men.

**THE WHO: My Generation (Virgin V2179)**

It's the classic Who album of the mid-60s, the one with tracks like 'La-La-La-Lies', 'My Generation', 'The Seeker', 'I Can't Explain', and 'I'm A Boy'. The Who have been hit singles compilation, which may therefore hold some interest for today's mods. It's a return to basics and more up-tempo material for Stevie Wonder after the complexities of the last album, *Plants*.

**BEST OF THE REST**

**STEVE FORBERT: Little Stevie Orbit (Epic 84501)** Prod: Pete Solomons

SS depe and serious work, however, is the lead local point of the album and it is dedicated to the late Bobo Gadd, a stalwart invention throughout the varied moods and assorted tempos.

**STEVEN TOLER: Inherit The Wind (EMI SHSP 4115)**

**STEVE MARTYN: Grace & Danger (Island ILPS 9560)** Prod: Martin Levan

So it's been a two-year wait for John Martyn's new album, but certainly worth it. After half a decade of rather unsatisfactory experiment resulting to- wards the end in a completely shat- tered, ephemerally musical wasteland, Martyn is now working with keyboards, bass and drums and has turned his guitar into a sharp and telling instrument with his voice, though still slurred out of all recognition, is at least delivering lyrics again. The results at their best on the title track and 'Save Some (For Me)' surge along in the manner of Martyn's Solid Air masterpiece, aided by Phil Collins on drums and backing vocals.

**COLIN NEWMAN: A-Z (Beggars Banquet BEGA 20)** Prod: Mike Thorne

Colin Newman is a member of Wire, an adventorous experimental rock band which probably did a bit too much too soon. As a solo artist he is joined by Desmond Simmons, Robert Gotobed and producer Mike Thorne to continue a career into the outer edges of the musical landscape. A-Z makes for some unsettling listening moments, which are only to be expected, but offers little in the way of entertainment and that's bound to restrict sales to specialist level.

**BLACK RUSSIAN (Motown STML 12412)** Prod: S. & N. Kapustin/ Vladimir Schneider

Four years have elapsed since Black Russian quit their homeland to settle in the States. Their Motown debut presents an intriguing mix of slick State-side packaging with 70's rock that indicates unusual musical influences at work. They have an outstanding advantage - the hauntingly beautiful voice of Natasha Kapustin. The solo leader, and should pick up more than the songs, but when voice and song are as one, particularly on the lovely ballad 'Love's Enough'.

**THE WHO: My Generation (Virgin V6179)** The latest revivalist mod artifact from Virgin. It's the classic Who album of the mid-60s, the one with tracks like 'La-La-La-Lies', 'My Generation', 'The Seeker', 'I Can't Explain', and 'I'm A Boy'. The Who have been hits compilation, which may therefore hold some interest for today's mods. It's a return to basics and more up-tempo material for Stevie Wonder after the complexities of the last album, *Plants*.

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## THE ALBUM CHART 1-60

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- **Indie Specialists**
- **One-Stop**

**RECORD BUSINESS** October 27 1980
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EMI 5114
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The latest hit

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EMC 3349
Featuring the single
Also on tape

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The new single
The latest hit

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CHART BUSTIN’!

SHEENA EASTON

DENNIS WATERMAN
The theme from Minder
"I COULD BE SO GOOD FOR YOU"
EMI 5009
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The new single
The latest hit

EMI 5009
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Also available the album

EMC 3349
Featuring the single
Also on tape
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