Sid Nathan’s Open Letter To Trade

NEW YORK — Sydney Nathan, president of King Records, Cincinnati, last week sent a letter to the trade in which he outlined his views on why the soft singles market.

Reprinted below is Nathan’s letter:

“Let us all, our hair down, if not on everything, at least on one thing that hinders our business — the carousal position. Records any company brings out today, which to me are far superior to those of two or three years ago, are not selling. Sales are off — way off. Some of the best of the one-stops tell me they find their sales off as much as 70%.

“Has anyone stopped to think why the record business has fallen to such depths? Believe me, the whole thing has been tampered with. The house has fallen in. Why? Because the dealers, the ones who give us all the credit and are our best friends, have all gone hog wild on LPs. It is wonderful and fine to make a lot of LPs and we admire those who can do it. But the LP dealers have not only abandoned the 45s and reaped huge profits, but you cannot find them. A customer has to walk in and ask for them personally.

“This reminds me of a saying that has been repeated by those of us who make Cadillacs (regardless of the price) and hide it, the dealers who have lost sight of their real purpose, and I think it is one that all the 45 dealers could do with hearing.

“However, the single record business is the backbone of our entire record industry. Therefore, I think the record dealer who, we have long known from experience, account for his sales of singles, and don’t just display any 45s, any singles. They have some probably because they make a lot of money, but if they have a certain number of them, they are not sold. We have all heard about the carousal position and how the record business cannot afford to lose sight of the primary aspects of the business and the probable loss our dealers are in. We have always had an idea that in the record business you must create new singles once a week, new stars, new hits, and the only way you can do this is to keep the push and keep looking for a ‘big one’ that will continue to sell albums.

“Too, feel that the big single is not the whole thing into the album, and when they come in to buy the ‘hit,” they will be subject to all the merchandising and promotion, including selling that we can throw at them. But, until the buyer walks into the store or displays the record dealer take us, we have no chance to separate them, and our push is not complete. And the push is not complete. And the push is not complete. And that is why the record business will continue. We have no future if we don’t have singles, and we have no future if we don’t have a single sales by the end of this year.

“Although I feel that we have the best business in the world, we are in a position where we have to do something about the carousal position. If we do not do it ourselves, the record business will fall back on itself. I think the record dealer who, we have known from experience, account for his sales of singles, and don’t just display any 45s, any singles. They have some, but they are not sold. We have heard about the carousal position and how the record business cannot afford to lose sight of the primary aspects of the business and the probable loss our dealers are in. We have always had an idea that in the record business you must create new singles once a week, new stars, new hits, and the only way you can do this is to keep the push and keep looking for a ‘big one’ that will continue to sell albums.

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“The Battle of New Orleans” is on, and it looks as though Lonnie Donegan’s recording is winning hands down, having jumped in from nowhere to No. 7 slot this week. Anthony Newley and Michael Ball are still fighting the “Personality” battle, both doing very well with the edge slightly to Mr. Newley.

“Although rumours have it that Eddie Fisher may record whilst in Britain nothing definite has been settled, not even final dates for television appearances.

“Most of the TV summer replacements are now on and the TV shows, such as "Cry Me a River" and "Teenage In Love," are doing well.

“A new record on the English Philips label, "A Song For Little Girls," has been released.

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“Josephine Baker now starring at the Olympia Theatre, Paris, has a hit on her hands, with "Sara" on the Beggars of Paris. In France, they have cut an album with Josephine for release very shortly.

“Belgian seaside resorts featuring U.S. talent during July and August including Paul Anka, Delta Rhythm Boys, Deep River Boys, also Edith Piaf recently returned from the States with new album. She has been in the UK recently, and "Sara" on the Beggars of Paris. In France, they have cut an album with Josephine for release very shortly.

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