

# Little Darlin': A C&W Contender After Six Months In Operation

NEW YORK—About six months ago a label with the unlikely name of Little Darlin' Records made its debut on the country scene, and undoubtedly the name caused a smile or two among the trade folk. It's doubtful that the firm, with its lineup of two artists, was considered a contender by even a few. Up until several weeks ago Little Darlin' had released six records, four singles and two albums, and three of the six had hit the country charts—for a very respectable batting average of .500.

Mayhew company had scored success with two singles, "The Lovin' Machine" by Paycheck and "Show Me The Way To The Circus" by the newly-signed Homesteaders, and one LP, "Johnny Paycheck At Carnegie Hall."

During a recent interview, Mayhew stated, "We started this label in order to offer something new and refreshing to the consumer. We are constantly on the lookout for bright talent and searching for inventive sounds."

"Little Darlin' is more than a label—it's a family. By that we mean that everyone works together for a common cause. On the road, all our artists work to promote each other, in addition to promoting their own images. Prima donnas aren't wanted, no matter how big they may be."

"In addition, we believe that the record buyer deserves to get his full dollar's value on every record he buys. This applies particularly to album product, where, under the new copyright law, most labels have found it necessary to reduce the number of tracks to ten. LD, on the other hand, has been offering and will continue to offer 14 tracks per album."

From the bootstrap operation with two artists, LD has grown, in just 6 months, into a chart-making setup with a roster of 11 names. And if the name of Little Darlin' caused a smile when it first went into production, some of the artists' names, also Mayhew-contrived, are sure to be worth a chuckle or two. At this stage the lineup also features Country Johnny Mathis, Micki Evans, and, if you can believe, Sam Teardrop, Bolliver Priff, Tom Kitty paw, Haldree P. Justbuddy, Johnny Dallas and Houston Roberts.

Since hitting the .500 mark with its initial six releases, LD has gone into full-scale production, with several recent outings and a batch more coming in the next few weeks. But no record company can continue with a .500 batting average. Or can it?



LD CHIEF AUBREY MAYHEW

The label had its beginning when Johnny "Little Darlin'" Paycheck and manager Aubrey Mayhew formed the firm and visited with several labels to discuss distribution deals. Eventually the two met with Audio Fidelity execs, came to a meeting of the minds and the Little Darlin' line was under way. Armed with the talents of steel guitarist Lloyd Green and the song stylings of Paycheck, the firm launched its attack on the music world. In a few months, the Paycheck-

## Atlantic Billing

(Continued from page 8)

Dee Sharp, Barbara Lewis, Solomon Burke and The Shadows of Knight.

Len Sachs spoke at both the Atlantic and Atco sections of the meetings about the firm's increased emphasis on dealer and rack-oriented radio and newspaper advertising. A large budget has been set for advertising for distributors to offer to qualified dealers. This large co-op ad budget is in addition to Atlantic's substantial consumer and trade advertising program currently underway at Atlantic-Atco. New point-of-sale merchandising aids for dealers, including four color motion displays for store windows and single framed LP lithos mounted on a color display, were shown to distributors by Sachs.

All Atlantic-Atco product introduced at the sales meeting, as well as all catalogue product is being offered at a special 15% discount with 30-60-90 days deferred billing for qualified accounts. Discount program will continue through Dec. 31. All albums are covered by the usual Atlantic-Atco 100% exchange policy.

One of the high points of the meet-

ings was the announcement of the new Atlantic and Atco distributor contest which has as first prize a Round The World Trip For Two. Contest winners will get a free round trip to any city in the world. There are three contests for Atlantic distributors, (East Coast, Mid-West and West Coast) and three contests for Atco distributors (East Coast, Mid-West and West Coast). The contest runs the entire length of the Atlantic-Atco fall program (until Dec. 31).

The company is releasing a total of 22 LP's during Oct., ten sets on Atlantic, 7 on Atco, 3 Stax items, 1 Volt package and a disk under the Dunwich logo.

The list of releases on Atlantic includes Percy Sledge's "Warm and Tender Love," "Esther Phillips' "The Country Side Of Esther Phillips," Leslie Uggams' debut disk "A Time To Love," "The Fabulous New French Singing Star Mireille Mathieu," "New Mann At Newport" by Herbie Mann, "Blues At Carnegie Hall" by the Modern Jazz Quartet, Shelly Manne's "Boss Sounds!," "The Great Arrival" by Sergio Mendes, "Drums Unlimited" by Max Roach and "Indo-Jazz Suite" by the Joe Harriott Double



## David & His Goliath

Still topping country charts with his monster smash, "Almost Persuaded," David Houston lets loose with a chorus or two during the WWVA Jamboree, where he recently signed on as a regular. Helping out on the titanic tune is David's manager, Tillman Franks.

## Abnak Aiming For National Coverage

DALLAS—Abnak Records and its affiliated labels have set their sights on national coverage of disk product.

John Abdnor, head of Abnak Musical Enterprises, decided on this course after the expiration of a production deal with Hanna-Barbera Records, which got a recent hit, "I See the Light" by the Five Americans, from the company. There was also a follow-up success, "Evol—Not Love."

In its national drive, the company is putting on 40 distributors, has hired Steve Topley to do national sales and promo, and will expand the number of outlets pressing its disks. Abnak also records product under the Jetstar, Startime and Britania labels.

In Dallas, the company will move, in about three months time, to a building it has just purchased, containing 30,000 square feet of office space. Edifice is located at the corner of Ross and Olive Street, and will also contain a recording studio.

Dale Hawkins, the former disk star ("Susie Q"), is Abnak's producer and director. Among the label's artists are Jon & Robin (Jon is John Abdnor, Jr.), Bobby Patterson and the In Crowd.

Abnak has also retained legal representation in New York. He is Philip S. Kurnit of Tabak & Kurnit, attorneys and publishing licensing corp. at 40 West 55th St. Company's Dallas attorney is G. H. Kelsoe, Jr.

## Cameo/Parkway Profits

(Continued from page 8)

and Midnight Music, and to provide a custom pressing service for a number of other manufacturers."

Just prior to the conclusion of Cameo/Parkway's fiscal year, June 30, 1966, the company acquired Midnight Music, Inc. Rosenthal commented that he believes Midnight will contribute substantially to the growth of Cameo/Parkway. Midnight "produces an established line of children's records, featuring nationally advertised dolls, such as Heidi, Tammy and Tressy as well as favorite personalities such as Bozo The Clown."

Midnight has introduced a series of seven-inch, extended-play children's records employing a new packaging concept. The record cover is actually a jig-saw puzzle, and it contains a color-in picture. This item has been test marketed with excellent results.

Midnight Music is also active in the field of premium albums with firms such as Montgomery Ward, Holiday Inn and Procter and Gamble.

Midnight Music recently introduced its first toy item, a doll village, licensed by the makers of the popular "Pee-Wee" dolls. This toy has already been sold to such leading retail stores as G. C. Murphy, J. J. Newberry Co. and Montgomery Ward.

### 3 More Masters

Continuing his master purchase spree, Neil Bogart, sales manager, has made three new master deals ("96 Tears" was a previous one). They are: "Bread & Water" by Mike Finnegan & the Surfs on the R&S label out of Wichita; "I Don't Want to Cry" by the Fabulous Flippers out of Chicago, and "Why Must You Cry" by the Magicians on Villa out of San Francisco.

### Quintet.

Under the Atco logo are "King Curtis Live At Small's Paradise," "The Two Sides Of Mary Wells," "Penny Candy and Other Treats" by Frank Hubbell and the Stompers, Mr. Acker Bilk's "Mood For Love," "Buffalo Springfield" by the group of the same name, The Barclay Stars' "Guitars Unlimited," and "Music In Five Dimensions" by Clyde Borly & His Percussions.

Stax adds "Memphis Gold" by Various artists, "And Now" by Booker T. & The M.G.'s, and Sam and Dave's "Double Dynamite."

Volt contributes Otis Redding's "Dictionary Of Soul" and Dunwich rounds out the release with "Back Door Men" by The Shadows of Knight.



"LONG HOT SUMMER"—65-year-old Duke of Paducah's Country Music summer sojourn ended back home in Tennessee Oct. 5 when the "frost was on the pumpkin." The riotous old relic, who's always "going back to the barn because his shoes are killing him," undertook a summer's activity that would have done in a lesser man. From July 1-Oct. 5, he logged over 28,000 miles enroute to personal appearances across the United States and into Canada. Above, he soaks "dogs" that saw more action this year than many see in a lifetime.

## Shurfine Product To Jay-Gee

NASHVILLE—Russell Sims, head of Sims Records, has announced that his label is no longer handling distribution for Shurfine Productions. The Sims-Shurfine distribution deal, an oral agreement, was terminated when Shurfine owner Wendell Parker signed an exclusive contract with Jay-Gee Records, calling for the release of all his productions through that label.

## Lucky Millinder Dies

NEW YORK—Lucky Millinder, the popular bandleader of the '30s and '40s, died of a liver ailment recently at Harlem Hospital in New York. He was 56 at the time.

Millinder began his career with a small combo in Chicago and later shifted to the N.Y. scene. The group, as it gained ground, was booked into large theatres around the country during the swing band era.

He then signed on with the Decca label, where his disks included "Sweet Slumber," which he co-wrote with Henri Woode and Al Nelberg, and "Ride, Ride, Ride," which he recorded with his group called the Mills Blue Rhythm Band. The combo worked out of the old Mills Artists Bureau, operated by Irving Mills.

In 1948 he was featured on the "Swingtime At The Savoy" radio show, emceed by Noble Sissle and written by Langston Hughes. He was also a regular at the Savoy Ballroom and the Apollo Theatre, where his trademark was in his fancy style of leading the band, quite often using the tails of his frock coat as a baton.

He gave up his band in 1951, when he started concentrating his efforts on arranging and leading studio bands for recordings. His recent work included writing arrangements for vocalists and small combos, in addition to running a small mail-order business.

He is survived by his wife, a son and a daughter.

## Guitarsville Label Bows On West Coast

NEW YORK—Guitarsville Records has been formed by J. C. Thompson in Monterey Park, Calif. The fledgling diskery plans to "explore the boundaries of commercial music with new ideas." Early Nov. is the target date for Guitarsville's premiere release.