

Survey Probes Black Retailer Plight fr 53

dimensions to the area of white crossovers in sales. Jimmy Foster of Jimmy's Record Rack mentioned that "anything they play on the radio sells." Likewise Mary Randall of Lee's Records felt that "if black stations play them (crossovers) then they go." The best examples of crossover sales at these stores seem to be AWB, Wild Cherry, and KC and the Sunshine Band, with some stores having good luck with Gino Vannelli and The Rolling Stones.

Even though in-store play does help it does not accomplish the same results that demos do. Nonetheless, this seems to be the best compromise that the "mom and pop" stores can come up with at the moment.

Ads

The black community in Los Angeles, as in many other major cities, has a number of publications such as "Scoop" which are devoted to the events and happenings of the community. Many of these papers are distributed to the community free of charge and usually have reasonable rates for advertising. Since these papers deal exclusively with the black community and cost little or nothing to the consumer, they seem to give the retailer the best buy for his advertising dollar. Some of the community-conscious retailers leave these papers on their counters, but CB found that few stores utilize these publications to their own best interest.

Gary Holmes indicated he had 500 handbills printed to stimulate slow business. Holmes said, "Response to the handbills was excellent." He increased the effect of the handbills by staying open on Sunday when many of his competitors were closed. Holmes stated that his is progressing slowly into store advertising so as not to get ahead of his means and that he next plans to try FM radio ads since they are less expensive than AM ads.

Larger R&B outlets in L.A. have often brought current hit artists into the store on weekends. Few "mom and pop" stores are able to do this, but those who have tried were usually satisfied with the results. Sometimes however the situation may get out of hand. Frank Johnson spoke of one incident that occurred when he hosted the Jackson Five at his store. Police had to be called to direct traffic and crowds were so great that his store had to be closed for the day. Calvin Anderson of VIP Records said that his store solves this problem by "knowing who to let come in." Anderson said that they "try to give the average group a break" and that people are always excited about meeting recording artists.

Roland Boyd at R&S Records brings this concept a little closer to the means of the smaller independent dealer. Boyd is a musician himself and often brings his guitar

and amplifier into the store on weekends and plays the current top tunes. This attracts the people in the area (especially when business is slow), and often keeps people in the store for a longer period of time when they might normally stay. With so many aspiring young groups in the black community this could be the "mom and pop" stores answer to the appearance of the established artists at larger stores.

Anderson's idea that his VIP store is "always trying something new and different" could be useful to smaller outlets.

Unique Approaches

Some small R&B outlets in L.A. have had the foresight to capitalize on areas of sales that larger stores neglect. This may be specializing in gospel, jazz, and oldie record sales or utilizing the smaller store's ability to deal in used records and trade-ins. One store CB contacted brought a large number of cutout LPs from record companies for less than a dollar. The dealer is able to sell these albums for \$2.49 and capitalize on the fact that an artist's entire catalog sells better when a new album is released. The same dealer sells the current LPs for \$3.99.

Add-on sales of non-record items in small stores is a proven way to boost profits for most R&B independents. The high profit margin on incense, posters, and needles for phonographs increase the life of many stores which seem to have been hurting this summer. Still, many stores fail to display these items to the best advantage.

Independent R&B stores in L.A. are definitely being affected by low prices of larger outlets and in most instances seem to be doing little to really improve their situation. Even though conditions in the community do not point towards a big growth in these outlets, it seems that some attempt must be made to incorporate community support.

While opinion differs widely as to the best way to enlist such community support, it would appear that, for now, many black independent retailers are dissatisfied with their lot, but confused about which way to turn. The need for greater exposure, advertising and free goods support from the manufacturer, co-op advertising dollars, and central purchasing power all point to a climate ripe for change. Erroll Dophin perhaps summed the dilemma up best when he said "someone has to be paid" to pull it all together. It may turn out to be in the best interests of L.A.'s independent black retailers to find such an individual. New York's Hitsville co-op has offered the retailers in that market an alternative and though L.A. retailers claim they are in need of relief, it appears that, for the time being, they'll have to settle for what they've got.

Stevie Wonder Promotion Underway fr 53

also planning a tribute to Stevie on the Mid-night Special, to include film segments and obtain additional national attention. Next, Tucker revealed that he will institute a fan club, organized by him separate from the what the record company had previously organized. In outlining how the club will be handled, Tucker stated, "There will be a club application in every album. A nominal fee will be charged, and each member will receive a Stevie membership card, a beach towel, T-shirt and shoulder bag, which is far more in value than the nominal membership fee paid."

Sesame Street

Starting in October, there will be an additional member to the muppet family on Sesame Street. There will be a blind muppet by the name of Stevie. There is also an additional film called "Birthdays of Tomorrow" filmed in part last may on Wonder's birthday, where people from seventeen nations were represented in conjunction with the bicentennial. This film will be

shown as an educational film on the PBS channels. Tucker has other irons in the fire, to be revealed at a later date. Upon being asked to give an exact date of the release of the LP, Tucker stated, "I expect the LP will be completed and represented to Motown records in one week, and allowing fifteen to twenty days for Motown to actually release the album, it should be on the street the last week in September."

Gaye LP Heads Motown Release

LOS ANGELES — "Marvin Gaye's Greatest Hits" heads Motown Records' initial September release. Additional albums are Eddie Kendricks' "Goin' Up In Smoke," "The Miracles," "The Power Of Music," writer/producer/arranger Willie Hutch's "Color Her Sunshine," producer Leon Ware's "Musical Massage," and Tattoo's "Tattoo" on Prodigal.

TOP 50 R&B ALBUMS

		Weeks On Chart		Weeks On Chart	
1	HOT ON THE TRACKS COMMODORES (Motown M6-867S1)	2 12	27	HARD WORK JOHN HANDY (ABC/Impulse ASD 9314)	23 14
2	WILD CHERRY (Epic PZ 33957)	3 8	28	LOVE TO THE WORLD LTD (A&M 4589)	37 5
3	ALL THINGS IN TIME LOU RAWLS (Phila. Int'l./ Epic PZ 33957)	1 15	29	DR. BUZZARD'S ORIGINAL SAVANNAH BAND THE SAVANNAH BAND (RCA APL 1-1504)	35 3
4	SOUL SEARCHING AVERAGE WHITE BAND (Atlantic SD 18179)	5 8	30	MANHATTANS (Columbia PC 33820)	22 20
5	CONTRADICTION OHIO PLAYERS (Mercury SRM 1-1088)	6 14	31	SILK DEGREES BOZ SCAGGS (Columbia PC 33920)	29 8
6	BREEZIN' GEORGE BENSON (WB 2919)	7 23	32	GIVE, GET, TAKE AND HAVE CURTIS MAYFIELD (Curtom/WB CU 5007)	27 11
7	SPARKLE ARETHA FRANKLIN (Atlantic SD 18176)	4 13	33	FEVER RONNIE LAWS (Blue Note/UA BNLA 628G)	31 15
8	HARVEST FOR THE WORLD ISLEY BROTHERS (Epic PZ 33809)	8 15	34	WAR GREATEST HITS (UA LA 648G)	41 2
9	YOU ARE MY STARSHIP NORMAN CONNORS (Buddah BDS 5655)	12 8	35	I WANT YOU MARVIN GAYE (Motown T634251)	34 24
10	LOOK OUT FOR #1 BROTHERS JOHNSON (A&M 4567)	10 11	36	MOTHERSHIP CONNECTION PARLIAMENT (Casablanca NBLP 7022)	32 33
11	MIRROR GRAHAM CENTRAL STATION (WB BS 2937)	9 11	37	SUMMERTIME MFSB (Phila. Int'l./Epic PZ 34238)	36 11
12	AIN'T THAT A BITCH JOHNNY GUITAR WATSON (Amherst DJM/Amherst DJLPA-3)	15 7	38	SECRETS HERBIE HANCOCK (Columbia PC 34280)	— 1
13	HAPPINESS IS BEING WITH THE SPINNERS SPINNERS (Atlantic SD 18181)	14 7	39	I'VE GOT YOU GLORIA GAYNOR (Polydor PD 1-6063)	39 3
14	ARABIAN KNIGHTS RITCHIE FAMILY (Marlin/TK 2201)	17 6	40	GLOW AL JARREAU (WB BS 2248)	45 2
15	EVERYBODY LOVES THE SUNSHINE ROY AYERS UBIQUITY (Polydor PD 1-6070)	20 5	41	LET YOUR MIND BE FREE BROTHER TO BROTHER (All Platinum 7015)	40 16
16	DIANA ROSS' GREATEST HITS (Motown M6-869S1)	18 5	42	THE WHISPERS (Soul Train/RCA BVL 1-1450)	42 3
17	SKY HIGH TAVARES (Capitol ST 11533)	16 13	43	ACCEPT NO SUBSTITUTES PLEASURE (Fantasy F9506)	47 8
18	TOGETHER AGAIN... LIVE BOBBY BLAND & B.B. KING (ABC ASD 9317)	11 9	44	THE TEMPTATIONS DO THE TEMPTATIONS (Gordy/Motown G6-975S1)	— 1
19	LOVE POTION NEW BIRTH (WB BS 2953)	19 8	45	AIN'T NOTHIN' BUT A PARTY MARK RADICE (UA LA 629G)	46 3
20	FLOWERS EMOTIONS (Columbia PC 34163)	24 8	46	WHERE THE HAPPY PEOPLE GO TRAMMPS (Atlantic SD 18172)	49 16
21	GET UP OFFA THAT THING JAMES BROWN (Polydor PD 1-6071)	25 5	47	JUICY FRUIT (DISCO FREAK) ISAAC HAYES (Hot Buttered Soul/ABC 953)	33 8
22	NATALIE NATALIE COLE (Capitol ST 11517)	13 16	48	THOSE SOUTHERN KNIGHTS CRUSADERS (Blue Thumb/ ABC BTS 6024)	44 16
23	THREE BOB JAMES (CTI 6063)	21 12	49	LOVE'S ON THE MENU JERRY BUTLER (Motown M850)	— 1
24	STRETCHING OUT IN BOOTSY'S RUBBER BAND BOOTSY'S RUBBER BAND (WB BS 2920)	26 14	50	ON LOVE DAVID T. WALKER (Ode/A&M SP 77035)	— 1
25	LIFE ON MARS DEXTER WANSEL (Phila. Int'l./ Epic PZ 34079)	28 4			
26	NIGHT FEVER FATBACK BAND (Spring/ Polydor SP 1-6711)	30 4			



RUFFIN' IT — David Ruffin recently stopped by CB to talk about his latest album, "Everything's Coming Up Love," and forthcoming single "On And Off." Ruffin will be touring the islands next month with his band The Ruff Riders. Ruffin is planning to release an album on his band that will be produced by Van McCoy and Charlie Kipp, who produced Ruffin's last two albums. Pictured (l to r): George Albert, publisher of Cash Box; Cookie Amerson, R&B editor; and David Ruffin.

1812 Overture Wins Motown Competition

MILWAUKEE — 1812 Overture Records and Tapes here has won first place in Motown Records' nationwide 1976 Music Revolution Display Competition.

At the awards ceremony, 1812 Overture president Alan Dulberger accepted the first place prize, a check for \$1,000. Second prize in the Motown contest went to Pacific Records, 11336 Crenshaw Blvd., Inglewood, California, and third place was awarded to Musicland #609, 137 Northtown Drive, Blaine, Minnesota.

ASCAP To Fete Dietz' 80th B'day

NEW YORK — The 80th birthday of Howard Dietz, lyricist and author, will be celebrated by his colleagues in ASCAP at a party to be held at ASCAP's New York headquarters. Dietz has written a number of popular songs, as well as the librettos for two Metropolitan Opera productions.