

Diskers' Production Costs Rise Sharply

Recording, Pressing Status Quo, But Other Prices Jump 15 to 30 Per Cent in Year

NEW YORK, Dec. 8.—Record manufacturers' production costs for the year 1951 were marked by a sharp increase in the prices of albums, envelopes, labels, printing and shipping cartons, although the prices for recording and pressings remained about the same. Increases in paper and cardboard

were reflected in prices charged by the album and box manufacturers, which jumped from 15 to 30 per cent since December 1950.

One year ago, an LP envelope in 1,000 quantities sold for about 6 or 7 cents. Today the price is nearer to 10 cents. Four pocket 78 rpm albums that cost 17 cents in 1950 are now about 20 cents. Although printing costs rose only by about 10 per cent, the higher prices charged for set-up and typography has made many a small manufacturer eliminate the liner that usually is on LP envelopes and albums. In order to beat the high cost of printing, a number of independent LP firms use a standard cover for all LP's, and merely paste on a gummed sticker to identify new releases. This eliminates being stuck with envelopes for LP's that do not move.

Presses Static

Pressing charges have not risen, and in some cases have even fallen a bit below last December. This is due to the heavy competition in the pressing field and the fact that threatened shortages of shellac or vinylite did not develop as anticipated. Prices for records today run about the same as last year, with 78 rpm shellac at 15 cents to 18 cents, break-resistant 78's and 10-inch LP's at 22 cents to 28 cents, vinyl-filled records at 28 cents to 32 cents, and pure vinylite records at 33 cents and up.

At the moment there do not appear to be any acute shortages in any department of the record business. However, one large album manufacturer is of the opinion that there will be a smaller supply of cardboard next year, when the Government starts buying this product.

Royale Gets Material for 43 New LP's

NEW YORK, Dec. 8.—Eli Oberstein returned from a two-week European junket Tuesday (4) with a batch of longhair masters procured in Vienna and Berlin which will provide the backbone for the addition of 43 new long-play 12-inch platters to his low-priced Royale line. The new titles will be added sometime before January 15.

Among the new recordings Obie bought on this trip were four complete operas: "Tales of Hoffman," "Gypsy Baron," "Merry Widow" and "Die Fledermaus," which will represent Royale's first entry into low-price complete opera business. Obie also bought recordings of five symphonies and seven concerti. Most important symphonic purchase was a complete Beethoven Ninth, first for low-priced LP catalogs.

HOW'S ABOUT "DROP DEAD?"

NEW YORK, Dec. 8.—The disk industry continues to produce intriguing and unusual ideas similar to the local firm which records a "welcome to the world" wax item for new-born infants (The Billboard, Nov. 24).

This week's example is Artists Recording Studios, Kansas City, Mo., which for \$2 will mail out a special waxing of a talk from Santa Claus to moppets whose parents send in the money and such information as the child's name, address, pet's name, etc. Artists' diskery reports having had a successful year last season.

King Realigns Staff; Mobile Unit Set Up

CHICAGO, Dec. 8.—King Records, Cincinnati diskery, has realigned its sales supervisory staff and is experimenting with a mobile distribution center out of Knoxville. Jack Kelly, King's sales manager, has brought Jim Wilson, disk jockey contact for King, off the road to work permanently out of the main office. Wilson, who will handle sales promotion, is still supervising the King outlets in Detroit, Cleveland, Buffalo, Pittsburgh and Charleston, W. Va.

W. A. (Mooney) Marthaler, Kelly's aide in Cincinnati, will oversee branches in Louisville, Columbus, O., Indianapolis and Chicago. Cy House, formerly with Art Rupe, of Specialty, Hollywood r.&b. diskery, will head up the Chicago branch. Howard Budlow, manager of the branch in Baltimore, is in charge of the Washington, Philadelphia and Richmond, Va. branches. The Norfolk branch was moved to 216 East Main Street, Richmond, last week. Reshuffling of the supervisory posts was occasioned by the departure of Ben Mann from King.

King is in the midst of a three-month experiment in a traveling distribution point. Kelly has set up a man, working out of Knoxville, with a ton-and-a-half truck, specially equipped with record racks to hold 10,000 disks. Thus far, King has found that dealers and juke ops like the faster service, less breakage and the fact that they receive immediately the exact numbers they ordered. Truck carries about 80 per cent current King material, with the remainder catalog.

Sid Nathan, King proxy, has inked Erskine Hawkins' full band, with Henry Glover cutting the ex-Victor, Coral trumpeter to four sides next week. Nathan also has cemented the relationship with Moon Mullican, who attempted to bolt King, but will remain with King until 1957, following a review of his contract by the American Federation of Musicians.

Phono Production Seen as Exceeding 1,250,000 for 1951

TV Combos Total 276,222 for 10 Months Despite Material Cutbacks

WASHINGTON, Dec. 8.—Production of all types of phonograph sets in the nation totalled 1,133,444 in the first 10 months of this year, it was disclosed this week. At the current rate, it is estimated that the total will exceed 1,250,000 sets for the entire year. These comprise radio-phonograph combinations, phonos only, record-players and radio attachments, and TV-phonograph combinations. Although the year's total will constitute a dip below last year's, it compares favorably to 1949 output.

Record player attachments led the production list for the first 10 months, according to monthly output figures by the Radio Television Manufacturers Association. Player attachment output totalled 320,077 in the first 10 months, with TV-phonograph combinations ranking next with 276,222 sets produced. Radio-phonograph combinations totalled 268,055 for this period, and phonograph sets without combinations totalled 259,090.

Phono set production has been clicking at a solid pace since 1939, with the biggest production years registered from 1946 thru 1948. In those years, every annual total was well over the two million mark, with the total soaring close to four million in 1946 alone, dropping to 3,200,000 the following year, and to 2,500,000 the year after that. In 1949, production of phono sets of all types dropped

to 1,262,090, and best estimates on 1950 production show around 1,700,000 sets. Output of phono sets thus far this year is considered remarkably good in view of emergency materials cutbacks.

The pace of output has been slackening along with TV and radio sets production. In the first four weeks of October, for instance, phono-radio attachments shipped from factories totalled 22,877, compared with more than three times that number in a corresponding period the previous year. The monthly pace was considerably higher in the earlier part of the year.

High-Price LP Sets Dominate New Releases

NEW YORK, Dec. 8.—High-priced LP sets continue to dominate the new releases issued this month by the major and independent LP companies. Urania's "Tannhauser" (four LP's) is listed at \$24.50, and their "Hansel and Gretel" (two LP's) lists for \$11.90. RCA-Victor's "Don Giovanni" and the "St. John Passion," both three-record sets, retail for \$17.16 each, and the "Marriage of Figaro" (two LP's) is set at \$11.44. The Westminster "Tosca" and the Period "Juditha Triumphans," (three LP's), list for \$17.85 and \$18.50 respectively.

Even Remington Records, low-priced LP firm, is releasing three record sets, their "Tosca" and "Rigoletto" are in the inexpensive LP market at \$6.57 for each opera.

Dealers are pleased to push the sale of three and four-record LP sets, because of the high profit per unit sale. However, the high cost of these sets prevents the average dealer from stocking more than one or two of each number, due to the large amount of capital that has to be tied up in them.

Capitol Signs Jane Froman

NEW YORK, Dec. 8.—Jane Froman has been signed by Capitol Records and will be used in two album packages. She will be featured in the diskery's "Pal Joey" set and in the flick-album "With a Song in My Heart." Latter is a 20th-Century Fox film based on Miss Froman's life and stars Susan Hayward. The Froman voice was used for the singing chores on the film's sound-track.

The Capitol has acquired the original cast rights to the upcoming revival of "Pal Joey," the legit musical's leads, Vivienne Segal and Harold Lang, waxed a "Joey" album for Columbia last year. Capitol therefore will use Miss Froman, as as yet unsigned male lead, and the rest of the Broadway cast.

Lewis Office Signs Up Gloria Warner

NEW YORK, Dec. 8.—Gloria Warner, Walter Winchell's thrush discovery, has been signed to a personal management contract by the Lester Lewis office. The Lewis office contract with the singer covers all of the phases of show business.

She is currently being submitted to the diskeries in pursuit of a recording paper.

Seab'd Enters TV Sync Film Strips Field

NEW YORK, Dec. 8.—The latest entry into the TV film strip field is Seaboard Studios, which has so far produced 10 strips synchronized with pop phonograph records for use on TV disk jockey shows. This new venture follows close on the heels of Columbia Pictures' affiliate, Screen Gems, which is producing cartoon and live action film strips in synchronization with records. The Seaboard strips, all using live action, include films made for records of Perry Como's "Me and My Shadow," the Tony Martin-Dinah Shore "If You Had a Little Cold," Perez Prado's "In a Little Spanish Town," etc.

The Seaboard film strips were conceived by Dick Rose, and are produced by Sanford Johnson. They are on 35 millimeter film, and can be used in any 16 or 35 mm. projector. Seaboard strips will receive their first public showing via station WPIX here next week on the Ted Steele program.

THE GOSPEL ON WAX

Religious Groups' Labels Rack Up Healthy Figures on Platter Sales

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mum 1,000 sets each in a 12-month period.

Other Groups

Other religious groups making their own records are the Baptist Council on Missionary Co-operation, which has released an LP containing a worship program and a missionary program. This is sold only thru Baptist libraries. The St. Olaf Choir, well known Lutheran church chorus, sell their record via music stores. The American Bible Society, non-sectarian organization producing the "Talking Books for the Blind" (the Old and New Testaments take up 170 LP records),

has sold more than 90,000 of these disks over the past 15 years. (The Society, however, sells its LP's at a fraction of their cost, 25 cents each.)

At the same time that religious groups have increased their recording activity, there has been a companies specializing in religious disks produced by the commercial record companies, with many of these waxings reaching comfortable sales figures.

Commercial Disks

Religious numbers by George Beverly Shea on Victor, Stuart Hamblen on Columbia and Red Foley on Decca always have a

steady sale. All of the major companies have hymn albums on the market, sung by popular artists like Perry Como, Bing Crosby and the Mariners, as well as records of children's hymns and Bible stories. Classical religious works on LP records are also being issued in quantity by large and small labels. Even most of the great and lengthy classical oratorios now have been put to wax. In addition to these, record companies specializing in religious disks, Bibletone, Sacred, Singspiration and others, produce a large number of sacred cuttings each month.

DISK EDUCATION

Cap Preps Record Mfg. Color Film

HOLLYWOOD, Dec. 8.—Capitol is currently prepping a 16mm. color sound film to be shown to its salesmen during the forthcoming exec tour of the company's divisional offices, showing men in the field the various steps in making a record. Running time is expected to be more than a half hour, with Cap artist Billy May playing a prominent role in the film. Pic is spiced with humorous sequences to sugar-coat its educational and sales-hyping content.

Chief cinematographer is Cap's Glenn E. Wallich, who personally lensed the footage.

During the forthcoming exec tour, a semi-annual event during which Cap's toppers introduce new product and sales plans, plan will be tried for the first time to combine reps of different territories to speed up the junket's timetable and provide larger groups for the sessions. Dallas and Atlanta divisional men will meet in New Orleans (January 3), while Chicago's session (January 4) will combine reps of both the Cleveland and Chicago offices. Meetings kick off December 28 at Capitol's Hollywood headquarters for the Western division and will wind up January 6 in New York for the Eastern reps.

Execs participating in this year's product prevue include Wallich, Artist-Repertoire Veepee Alan Livingston, Merchandising Veepee Lloyd Dunn and Sales Promotional Chief Hal Cook.

Dec. 12 Set for Disk Org Meet

NEW YORK, Dec. 8.—The Record Industry of America Association's first meeting has definitely been slated for December 12. The initial meeting of the budding organization of record manufacturers, originally intended as a general session, will be restricted to a conclave of the temporary board of directors, as well as proposed directors.

Out of this will emerge the first date for a general meeting and an agenda for that initial general get-together. Meeting was finally skedded upon the arrival of Capitol proxy Glenn Wallich, in town this week, and will also include, in conference for the first time, proposed board members Columbia proxy Jim Conkling and RCA Victor's general manager of the record division Paul Barkmeier.

GOLDSSEN SIGNS TAHITI'S LUND

HOLLYWOOD, Dec. 8.—Mickey Goldsen signed Tahiti's Eddie Lund to an exclusive songwriting pact. Latter's Tahitian tunes will be pubbed by Goldsen's Criterion firm, already pubbing "The Far Lands," penned by Lund and James Norman Hall, who wrote the book of the same name treating life in Tahiti. Lund is mentioned in James Michener's "Return to Paradise."

Out Next Week . . . Another Billboard First . . . See Page 49
The Billboard Auditorium-Arena Number

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