

Italian Cleffing Business Booms

Survey Puts Annual Take at \$32 Mil; Screen, TV Interest Adds to Impact

By SAM L STEINMAN

ROME — Italy's song business has become an annual \$32,000,000 event (record sales not included) with the festivals serving as sample fairs which sparkplug the industry, according to a survey by Vincenzo Buonassisi in "Corriere Della Sera" of Milan, Italy's leading newspaper. One of the great new influences in the song business has been the growing participation of the large motion picture production companies which are showing signs of taking over everything.

(TV is showing the impact of the pop song with the fact that three of the top evening shows — "Happy Vacation," "Sentimental" and "Tintarella" — are devoted to featuring recording names as well as two early-evening features, "First Floor" and "Four Steps Among the Notes," for a total of five nights. One of the three radio programs, the Second, is devoted almost entirely to recordings while there are many similar events on the National network.)

With the advent of the movie companies and their promotion methods it is highly possible that 1959's total of \$32,000,000 will be topped in 1960. Both SAE, which controls performance royalties, and SEDRIM, phono royalties, indicate increased amounts are being received in 1960. Last year the respective take for these two groups were \$12,800,000 and \$1,600,000. The writer points out, however, that the phonograph sales are only incidental to increasing the value of the songs and the singers for other performances.

One-Stopper Debs Label

KANSAS CITY, Mo. — The continuing trend of various facets of manufacturing and distribution in the disk industry to plunge into affiliated fields added a new first this week when Leroy Davidson, owner of One Stop Phono Records, veteran one-stop chain based here, bowed his R record label.

Davidson told The Billboard that he decided to go into the disk business because he felt he had a ready-made pre-testing audience in the customer circle of dealers and ops over a 12-State area whom he regularly sells. Davidson said that his initial dinking by Zig Dillon and Frank (Shake Apley) Frazier were recorded with the aid of Sam Phillips and Scotty Moore, of the Sun Record organization, and both men will continue to aid in the recording of R label artists.

In his first distributor appointment, Davidson has MS Distributing, Chicago, handling the disk, while Davidson's own Choice Distributing, Kansas City, is also handling the label.

Lawrence-Burton Pubbery Tie-In

NEW YORK — Bernie Lawrence, Steve Lawrence's brother, has formed his own BMI company, Anax Music, Inc. He has taken offices with Burton Management, Inc. (Ed Burton).

Anax will concentrate on the pop song market. Foreign rights to Anax tunes will be handled by Burton Music, Ltd. In the past Lawrence has been associated with Tommy Valando and Hill & Range Music, Inc.

According to Buonassisi, the acceptance of a song for a festival assures it of 5,000 sales, a rendition on the final night of 10,000 and a top place of 50,000. Winners sell from 100,000 to well over 500,000. The industry's interest in the festivals where tickets sell at high prices — San Remo, \$100 for three nights, Naples, \$64 for three nights — is justified by the return which can be produced. However, he points out, a song has to have values and the larger the house the more likely it is to have a choice of the best material.

(In Italy today one of the important sources of income is the film industry which is using more and more singers. A song which wins a festival is likely to become the theme of a movie or to be inserted into a movie. Another considerable source of income comes from "theme songs," which are sung by recording artists while the titles are flashed on the screen at the start of the pictures. These often become best selling records.)

Rendezvous Records Buys Class Catalog

HOLLYWOOD — Leon Rene last week sold his complete Class Records catalog and all the label's artist contracts to Rod Pierce's Rendezvous Records. According to terms of the deal, Rene retains the Class label name but sold some 700 masters, including all LP's and singles previously released under the Class banner as well as unreleased material. He also transferred to Rendezvous his contracts with Bobby Day, Eugene Church, Gogie Rene and the Jubilee Stars.

All disks previously issued by Class will now be part of the Rendezvous catalog and will be re-

New Bluebird Kiddie Sets

NEW YORK—RCA Victor has instituted a new series of Bluebird albums designed for pre-school, nursery, and first grade children. According to Ray Clark, manager of planning and merchandising of RCA Victor Records, two Bluebird albums in this series will be released each month. They will be produced for Bluebird by Tom Glazer.

Among the albums coming up on Bluebird are "Around the Block, Around the World" and "Holidays." The series will retail for \$2.49 each, and will be packed in ply bags and pre-priced.

Darin, Anka In TV Series

NEW YORK—In an effort to reach the teen-age audience, Screen Gems is working young recording artists into the scripts of a new TV mystery film series, "Dan Raven." Bobby Darin and Paul Anka are among the first to be signed for the show.

The warblers will both play themselves—singing as well as acting—since the series is about a Los Angeles detective whose beat covers local niteries. The show, with Skip Homeier in the title role, starts on NBC-TV, September 30 at 7:30 p.m.

King A.&R. Men, Branch Mgrs. Confab

CINCINNATI — King Records' a.&r. men and branch managers gathered here Wednesday thru Friday of last week to discuss a.&r. planning covering the next three months. King prexy Syd Nathan presided at the three-day session, assisted by King general manager, Hal G. Neely.

Attending the meeting were Billy Myles, King New York a.&r. head; Sonny Thompson, Chicago a.&r. rep; Andy Gibson and Gene Redd, who handle a.&r. here; Jack Pearl, New York attorney for King; Jim Wilson, Grand Rapids, Mich., manager; Jim Namey, King manager in Charleston, W. Va., and Richard Kline, Dallas branch manager.

Neely announced Thursday (14) that the Drifters are not leaving Atlantic Records to sign a recording pact with King, as was recently erroneously reported.

The Stanley Brothers were at the King studios here Wednesday (13) to cut a session. One side was their own country version of "Finger Poppin' Time," which is slated for immediate release. "Finger Poppin' Time," as done by Hank Ballard and the Midnighters, is King's top seller at the moment and is moving up rapidly on the national charts.

ARMADA OKAYS SORD SUMMIT MEET PROPOSAL

NEW YORK—At least one area of support loomed last week for a proposal voiced by the Society of Record Dealers of America to the effect that an all-industry "summit" conference should be arranged to discuss the ills of the business.

Art Talmadge, prexy of the Association of Record Manufacturers and Distributors of America, said that officials of ARMADA "would be glad to meet with heads of record firms and SORD and other trade organizations at any time," to go into the matters. Talmadge said that ARMADA has already plunged into the bootlegging problem and is making strides in that direction, but that the outfit would be ready anytime the dealers are for a summit conference.

On the Record Industry Association front, an early reaction to the proposal could not be obtained. RIAA prexy, George Marek, reached in a barber chair of the Fairmont Hotel, San Francisco, quipped that under the circumstances he could offer no comment until next week.

Liberty Calls Distrib Meet

HOLLYWOOD — Liberty's 33 distributors will attend the firm's second annual convention to be held here for two days starting July 28.

Label will unveil up-coming product, sales policies and merchandising - promotion plans. In addition to Liberty's execs, group will also be addressed by tappers of agency, Anderson - McConnell Advertising. Meetings will be held in Liberty's new Sunset Boulevard headquarters which it had acquired late last year. Liberty Records, which now distributes the Dolton and University lines, last week added Seattle's Jerden label to its line-up. First Jerden platter to be peddled by Liberty is Darwin and the Cupids' "How Long," backed by their version of "Chloe." Single rose to best seller standing in the Seattle market several weeks ago. Liberty is also negotiating to add the Sabrina label to its list of Indies it distributes.

SEEK NEW SITE FOR FRENCH LICK JAZZ

FRENCH LICK, Ind.—A new site for the 1960 French Lick Jazz Festival was being sought after officials of the French Lick Sheraton Hotel announced cancellation of the annual concert which brought 20,000 people to this resort town last year.

While Sheraton organization entertained its own apprehensions about festival after riots and vandalism at Newport, local protests registered by French Lick town board and civic organizations were principal factors in cancellation decision.

Dick Santangelo, publicity director of festival, disclosed that negotiations are in progress with tentative sponsors in Evansville, Ind., and Cincinnati.

Featuring Benny Goodman, Dave Brubeck, Stan Kenton, Sarah Vaughan and other celebrated jazz musicians, the three day show is scheduled for July 29-31.

Al Banks, entertainment director for Sheraton Corporation flew here from Boston for conferences with Morgan J. Smith, manager of the French Lick Sheraton Hotel. They concluded that the festival would

be held only if they received assurances of adequate police protection.

Such assurances were granted to Banks by Harold S. Zeis, Superintendent of Indiana State Police.

Still doubts lingered as to whether authorities could cope with disorders if they rose to proportions of the Newport rioting.

"That is most improbable," Santangelo said when asked if the festival might be abandoned completely.

First to put in a bid for the festival was Mayor Frank McDonald of Evansville and that city's Chamber of Commerce.

The festival had been produced under the joint sponsorship of the Sheraton chain and George Wein, Boston promoter.

"Officials and residents of French Lick felt it might be unwise to go ahead with program in view of recent incidents in other places," John Nolan, sales director of French Lick Hotel, said.

Hotel manager Smith stated that there were no serious disturbances at the 1959 festival.

WB Racks Big Quarter

HOLLYWOOD — Warner Bros. Records net income during the past quarter substantially surpassed that of the same period of a year ago, altho the label was enjoying a sales peak this time last year, according to prexy Jim Conkling. Conkling said that during April, May, and June last year, his firm had reached the charts, both on the singles and album front. Its "77 Sunset Strip" album was riding high while its "Kookie" single similarly had hit the charts.

Despite comparison with a peak period, Conkling claims the past quarter's net far outshines last year's take. Label currently has four singles on the top hundred including one (Connie Stevens' "Sixteen Reasons") which has been on the chart for 24 weeks. Its Bob Newhart album, in No. 2 position on the LP chart, has been among the list's best-sellers for the past nine weeks.

Conkling attributes the fact that his firm is enjoying greater chart recognition this year than last to the fact it released less product this year and thereby was able to give the individual releases more concentrated effort. During the same period a year ago, the label issued 25 LP's and the same number of singles. This year, WB issued almost a third of the previous year's product, or nine LP's and only eight singles during the same period.

Bourne Music Sale Delayed

NEW YORK — The auction sale of the Bourne Music firms, originally set for September 12, was temporarily postponed last week pending a meeting this week (19) among the principals, for a permanent say of the auction order. The Bourne firms, Bourne Music, Bogat Music and ABC Music, are now being run by the late Sol Bourne's widow, Mrs. Bonnie Bourne, and his daughter, Beebe Bourne.

The feuding between Bourne's widow and daughter has been going a long time, with Mrs. Bonnie Bourne wanting to sell the firms and Beebe Bourne against the sale. The daughter is taking her case to the New York State Court of Appeals to stop the sale. According to the original auction order the upset price for the three firms was set at \$2,100,000. Mrs. Bourne's attorney is Phillips, Nizer, Benjamin, Krim and Ballon. Miss Bourne's counsel is O'Brien, Driscoll and Rafferty.

Sinnott Exits GAC, Sets Own Firm

NEW YORK — Howard Sinnott, veepee in charge of all musical entertainment for GAC for the past 20 years, has ankle the booking firm for his own company.

In his new firm Sinnott will supervise all entertainment for the New York City Park Department. This includes the dance programs, sponsored each year by Consolidated Edison Company, which feature leading dance bands. He will also package and stage industrial shows. This fall he will present three such shows for the New York Telephone Company, the first of which will be performed September 12 at the Brooklyn Fox Theater.