

AGP Launched; Bell to Handle

MEMPHIS — Chips Moman, Tommy Cogbill, and Don Crewes have launched a new label—A.G.P. Records—and it will be distributed by Bell Records, according to Bell president Larry Uttal. A.G.P. stands for American Group Productions, a composite group of producers, songwriters, and musicians working out of American Recording Studios here who have racked up 54 chart records in the past year.

They produce for Amy-Mala-Bell Records such acts as the Box Tops and Merrilee Rush. Under the new deal, only the Box Tops will remain on Mala Records. All other artists will appear on A.G.P. These include besides Miss Rush, the Masqueraders, Flash and the Board of Directors and Sam Hutchins.

'Baby' Bows Myer's Firm

LOS ANGELES—"Let Me Get Through to You Baby," by Ginny Tin and the Few, is the initial singles release from Kenny Myer's new company, Amaret Records.

Myers has lined up 30 domestic distributors and has assigned non-exclusive tape duplication rights to Ampex for reel-to-reel 4 and 8-track and cassette.

Independent producer Bill Traut recorded the Ginny Tin group. Myers says he has three additional groups set to follow Miss Tin and plans covering r&b, underground and teen-age fields.

Joining his staff as sales/promotion director is Ronnie Granger, formerly with Capitol. Myers left DotActa in August to establish his own label, which will specialize in buying product from independent producers.

NARAS Gains Injunction Vs. Grammy Firm

NEW YORK — The National Academy of Recording Arts and Sciences (NARAS) has been granted a permanent injunction against Grammy Records, a Los Angeles-based recording firm, from using the name "Grammy Records." NARAS annually presents the Grammy Awards to record talent.

The injunction, granted by the Los Angeles Superior Court, further enjoins Grammy Records and Joey Baker, one of the firm's owners, from using the word or name "Grammy," any substantially similar name and the picture of an old-fashioned gramophone in connection with the production, manufacture, release or sale of any recordings.

In its action, NARAS alleged that the defendants used the name "Grammy" and a picture similar to its Grammy Award with the purpose of capitalizing on the prestige and prominence of the Grammy Awards in the recording field.

JIM HOWARD DIES IN VIET

NASHVILLE — Jan Howard, whose Decca recording of "My Son" was being picked on both pop and country stations all over the nation, received word Thursday (31) that her son was killed in action in Vietnam.

Jimmy, older son of the singer, was one of two brothers in Vietnam. It was to both of them that her letter, recorded with background music, was dedicated. A third son is still at home.

Hazlewood Cuts Ties With ABC, N. Sinatra; Develops Own Label

NEW YORK — Lee Hazlewood has severed his ties with ABC Records to develop his LHI label as a complete independent, and, at the same time, has ended his team-up arrangement with Nancy Sinatra, to work along similar production and duet lines with Ann-Margret.

In winding up his ties with ABC, Hazlewood said, "In today's competitive record market, the advantages of an independent record producer to

have his own label distributed by a major is rapidly dwindling. Most major companies in effecting dealings with independent producers are really only looking for an automatic hit and not the 'work' record. The emphasis by a major company is to work on its own product where its profit margin is highest. If the independent producer creates an automatic hit, then it works out fine. Otherwise to create an artist who sustains over a long period of time, a

great deal of promotional work must be invested."

In addition to Ann-Margret, Hazlewood's roster of artists on LHI includes the new Seattle underground group, the Surprise Package, the California underground group, the Aggregation, and the Honey Ltd. Ann-Margret will be recorded solo and in duet with Hazlewood.

Ann-Margret Tie

The first LHI push will be on Ann-Margret and will be tied in with her CBS-TV special set for Dec. 1. She will be going out on a 14-city personal appearance tour in conjunction with the sponsors of the TV special, Canada Dry. Following Ann-Margret's solo disk release will be an album by the Surprise Package. After the first of the year, LHI plans to release duets by Ann-Margret and Hazlewood.

Hazlewood's dueting with Miss Sinatra on the Reprise Records LP, "Nancy & Lee," is nearing the gold record award category. It is also a top seller

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Atl. Meets Rack Up 4M in Orders

NEW YORK — Atlantic-Atco ran over the \$4 million mark in billings for the firm's new product introduced at distributor sales meetings around the country last week. A total of 31 albums were shown to distributors at the meetings which were held in 24 cities.

The fall sales meetings were held in every major market, with Atlantic executives splitting up into teams to meet with the distributors. The meetings started Friday (25) and concluded Wednesday (30). The New York meeting was chaired by Len Sachs, head of album sales and merchandising for Atlantic. He was assisted by George Furness and Joel Dorn. Other Atlantic

executive teams handling distributor meetings included Bob Kornheiser and Sal Uterano, Juggy Gayles and Ralph Cox, Johnny Musso and Arnold Theis, Tim Lane and Rick Willard, and Herb Kole and Gunter Hauer. Ahmet Ertegun, Atlantic president, attended the Los Angeles meetings; Jerry Wexler, Atlantic executive vice-president, attended the New York meeting.

17 LP's by Atlantic

The new LP's on Atlantic included 17 albums, five in the jazz field, 10 pop, and two gospel. On Atco there was a total of 14 albums including 10 pop, two jazz LP's on Vortex, and one each on the Pompeii and Brook-lyn labels.

W-7 Building Young In Heart A&R Staff

LOS ANGELES — Warner Bros.-Seven Arts is building its own staff a&r department, with the emphasis on young producers. The build-up, rather than assigning more jobs to outside producers, is designed to create a "fluid state" for the Warners and Reprise lines.

The present a&r staff includes veterans Sonny Burke and Jimmy Hilliard and is augmented by Lenny Waronker (a two-year associate), Dave Hassinger, Andy Wickham, Richard Perry and Jim Hilton, the newest addition.

"We have to have both staff men and outside producers," said marketing Vice-President Joel Friedman. "You can't give all the assignments to outside people."

The company does a lot of work with outside producers,

Buddah, Cheetah In Promo Link

NEW YORK—Buddah Records and the Cheetah discotheque are combining in a promotion, merchandising and advertising campaign to make Nov. 4-9 "Buddah Records Week" at the club. A group of Buddah acts have been set to appear at the Cheetah during this time.

Newspaper advertising and radio plugs will support the event and Stern's department store will have Brooklyn Bridge for an in-store appearance, Monday (4). A prize draw for a 1969 Javelin car will be made at Cheetah Saturday (9), and 100 Buddah albums will be given away. In addition, WMCA will hold a special celebration at the club Friday (8), with the station's Dan Daniels attending.

but believes in hiring its own a&r men who are "young in terms of age, outlook and musical mind." Hilton, for example, was formerly an engineer-producer with Gold Star, a local studio. He recorded the Iron Butterfly. He has yet to be given any specific W-7 acts.

Dave Bassinger, a former engineer, records the Electric Prunes, the Collectors and Tom Northcut. Richard Perry records Tiny Tim, Holy Mackerel and Domino. Waronker records Harpers Bazaar, Randy Newman, Van Dyke Parks and the Beau Brummells. Jimmy Hilliard handles a variety of non-rock projects. Wickham records Jack Elliot and Burke records Frank Sinatra, Don Ho and the Allis.

Jimmy Bowan, a former staffer, is now an independent producer through his Amos Productions company. Approximately 50 to 60 per cent of W-7's LP product is recorded by independent producers. One result of hiring Waronker to audition masters, dubs and new acts, was the unearthing of Harpers Bazaar. "It's the chemistry between artist and producer that's important," Friedman said.

New Sound Music Established in N. J.

NEW YORK — New Sound Music, a new publishing and production company, has been formed in Camden, N. J., by Rick Dee, former deejay, Frans De Nie and writer-producer Ed. L. Harris. The firm plans to record "pure" rock and "progressive country" music. They are sharing offices with the Disc Den record shop in Glassboro, N. J.

On the Atlantic label, albums featuring Aretha Franklin, the Sweet Inspirations, Booker T. & the MG's, Sam & Dave, Archie Bell & the Drells, Herbie Mann, Carmen McRae, and "Super Hits—Volume 3" created the strongest sales response.

Leading the pack on Atco were albums featuring Otis Redding, the Bee Gees, King Curtis, Betty Wright, Scott Fagan and P. F. Sloan.

Co-op Advertising

In addition to the program for new releases and catalog product, Atlantic has set up a large budget for co-operative advertising that distributors can offer to qualified dealers. Atlantic's new in-store EP's, which are now being used in many large chains and discount stores, were demonstrated to the distributors at the meetings. Also, new radio spots on the top albums and ad mats for Atlantic and Atco product were shown at the meetings.

The co-op ad budget will supplement the already existing large scale consumer, teen, underground and trade ad program for Atlantic's new product. The firm's new point-of-sale merchandising aids for dealers were also shown.

All Atlantic-Atco product introduced at the meetings, along with all catalog product, is being offered at a special 15 per cent discount with dated billing for qualified accounts.

Buddah Into Country Field

NEW YORK — Buddah Records will enter the country music field, via a distribution agreement with Royal American Records, effective immediately.

Neil Bogart, vice-president and general manager of Buddah, said: "Our entrance into the country field is part of the continuing expansion of the label in all areas of music."

Headed by songwriter-producer Dick Heard, Royal American's first release through Buddah is "Things That Matter," by Van Trevor.

Heard started Royal American when he moved from New York to Nashville last March. Previously he was career consultant to country stars Nat Stuckey, Van Trover, Johnny Dollar and Lynda K. Lance.

Heard will oversee all Royal American sessions and co-ordinate with Marty Thau, Buddah's national director of promotion.

AFM Revokes Smith Agency Booking OK

NASHVILLE — The American Federation of Musicians has revoked the booking license of the J. Hal Smith Agency here and is "investigating" two other firms.

George Cooper, president of AFM local 257, said he had been informed by letter from New York of the revocation and of the probe of the other agencies. Haze Jones, manager of the J. Hal Smith Artists Bureau, said he had received a similar letter, notifying him he could no longer book members of the Federation. Jones said the union had notified none of the artists, and unless stopped, would continue booking.

The J. Hal Smith complex includes Pamper Music, Boone Records, and another branch for syndicated TV shows, as well as the Renfro Valley property.

Earlier, the union had revoked the right of Quentin Welty of B-W Music, Inc., of Wooster, Ohio, to continue in the management of singers Kathy Dee and Kenny Roberts because he also is engaged in radio station management, publishing and recording activities (Billboard, Oct. 5).

Artists now being booked by the Smith agency include Ernest Tubb, Jack Greene, Cal Smith, David Rogers, Bobby Lewis and Kenny Price.

NBC to Televis 'Brass' on Feb. 12

LOS ANGELES — NBC-TV will air the "Beat of the Brass" TV special Feb. 12. It was originally taped by Herb Alpert and the Tijuana Brass for CBS-TV and was telecast last April 22. The show was put together for the Singer Co. as part of its series of musical specials. Alpert and associates traveled around the country for on-location tapings.