

Audio Retailing

Missouri Distributor Likes Sound of 'Do-Ci-Dough'

By EARL PAIGE

ST. LOUIS—More and more elementary schools and an increasing number of colleges are including square dancing and folk dancing as part of physical education curriculum with the result that many dealers can add dance records as a profitable sideline, according to Roy Gleason, Webster Record Distributing Co. here. Gleason, however, advises dealers that they should make a careful survey of dance activity in their area, take lessons themselves and learn some of the language used by dance teachers before catering to this specialized market.

"The square dance record business is very specialized," he said, describing it as a kind of microcosm within the record industry. Gleason, who also has a very successful retail operation here, has been in the square dance distributing business 16 years. "A lot of the old line square dance labels have subsidiary labels now, just as in the regular record business, and there's quite a high mortality rate for labels in the square dance field."

Some of the people who founded square dance labels have died. "Doc Alumbaugh, who founded Winsor Records, is dead, and Ed Lowry, formerly general manager of MacGregor Records, now heads that label," Gleason said. "The MacGregor label is now managed by the widow of the late C.P. MacGregor."

Some of the well-known labels are still significant in the business, he said, mentioning such names as Old Timer Records, Sets and Order Records, Bogan Records, Blue Star Records, Longhorn Records, Kalox Records and several more. "Now,

Zenith Program

CHICAGO—Zenith Sales Co., a division of Zenith Radio Corp., has launched "Know How Clinic," a new fall sales training program designed to reach more than 20,000 dealers, retail salesmen and distributor sales personnel in nearly 100 major market cities in the U.S. and Canada.

"The entire three-hour meeting package is aimed to sharpen the skills of professional sales people by providing them with sound selling techniques and ideas for use in promoting Zenith products," explained president Walter Fisher.



ARVIN'S SOLID STATE portable phonograph is now available in two colors, yellow and white (model 10P33-11) and orange and white (model 10P33-14). The suggested list is \$18.95.

there's a whole host of subsidiary brands. Many labels produce LP's but the specialized nature of the business does not lend itself to tape CARtridges or cassettes," he said.

The specialized nature of the dance record field allows for some unusual factors. "For one thing, square dance callers will often subsidize the recording of a record in order to have their name put on the record. This gives a caller national prestige." Gleason said that, aside from the growing influence of physical education teachers, the square dance business pretty well revolves around callers.

"There's actually three aspects to the dance record business—square dancing, round dancing and folk dancing. By far, square dancing is the largest segment. Round dancers are usually first interested in square dancing. Folk dancing is important in colleges and other schools and involves foreign languages such as Polish, German, Swedish and other songs for which a pattern has been choreographed."

Gleason's advice for dealers wanting to stock dance recordings is to first survey their area to determine how much square dance activity exists. He suggests this can be done by contacting local square dance federation offices. Next, the dealer should contact schools and colleges to find out how many physical education instructors are involved in dancing. And finally, he suggests that the dealer seriously considering stocking dance records, take a few lessons.

"This is a whole little world of its own with its own language. A dealer must be able to communicate with callers and educators. For the most part, people involved in square dancing will talk about nothing else. A square dance caller thinks nothing of driving 100 to 200 miles to shop for records."

An initial square dance inventory can consist of as few as 200 titles, he said. "About 100 titles will take care of the standards and beginner's series used by physical education instructors. There are a few oldies which should be stocked mainly for the purpose of supplying established callers who might want to replenish their collection. These, and the current releases, would fill out the initial inventory."

After a dealer has an initial inventory, 90 percent of his business will consist of current releases, according to Gleason. There are about 15 new square dance releases every month and from three to 10 round dance releases. Dealers receive the normal discount and can sell the records at \$1.55. "There is less of the cut-throat discounting in the dance record business," he said.

Gleason said a number of schools in his market have added square dancing and that Washington University has an ambitious dance program. "Many school instructors don't know where to buy records because it's such a specialized business that few retailers can afford to advertise the fact that they carry dance recordings. "The new emphasis on dancing in the education field is our big hope in this field," he summarized.

Retail Survey Shows Effect Of Discounting

NEW YORK — A national survey based on 40,000 personal interviews with retailers shows that 78 percent think the Nixon administration will have no effect on their businesses, that 27 percent report a significant increase in discounting operations and that 40 percent expect 1969 sales to increase over figures for 1968. The survey, conducted by Audits & Surveys, Inc. during late spring and early summer of this year, disclosed interesting fluctuations both in terms of geographical location of outlets and in types of outlets reporting. Major increases in discounting were reported.

Fluctuating reports were registered, for instance, in the area of increased discounting activity, where 30 percent of the Western retailers led all other geographical sections in reporting a rise in discount retailing. Retailers in the Northeast were next in this category with a survey percentage of 29. In terms of being hurt by discount retailing 56 percent of the Northeast dealers said they have been hurt, while 55 percent of the Western dealers complained about rising discount competition.

Of the dealers reporting being hurt by discounting, automotive type outlets led with 59 percent, followed by food stores at 55 percent and furniture-furnishing stores which reported 51 percent.

The buildup in discounting was reported by over half of the general merchandise retailer category, which includes department stores and full-line discount outlets.

Other fluctuations in the report were seen in terms of the reaction to the new administration. Of the Furniture-furnishing retailers, 19 percent said business will improve; 14 percent said it would diminish and 67 percent said there would be no effect. In the automotive group, 12 percent look for increases, 14 percent anticipate decreases and 74 percent look for no change.

Anticipated sales increases also fluctuated according to region. Only 35 percent of the dealers in the Northeast expect increases, while 48 percent of the Western retailers look for improvement. The total report showed that 12 percent reported the new administration will hurt business and that 10 percent reported it will help. While 40 percent expect increased sales in 1969, 47 percent expect sales to remain the same and 13 percent expect a decrease.

Sylvania Addition

BATAVIA, N.Y. — Sylvania Entertainment Products, an operating group of Sylvania Electric Products, Inc., has announced that it will construct a 253,000-square-foot warehouse addition to its headquarters facility here. Earlier this year, construction of a 13,500-square-foot addition was begun to accommodate the group's procurement and data processing departments.



MODEL 80P57-19, Arvin's new solid state stereo deluxe portable phonograph with FM/AM/FM stereo radio, is a luggage-style unit with a suggested list price of \$199.95. The unit is also available with AM/FM radio in model 70P57-19 with a suggested list price of \$109.95.

Anderson Death

COLUMBUS, Ohio—Joseph (Ed) Anderson, owner of Anderson Hi-Fidelity Center, has died here at the age of 66. Anderson, who is survived by three sons and two daughters, was for many years in charge of sound systems at the Ohio State Fair.

WSIX-FM Nixes Stringer's Claim

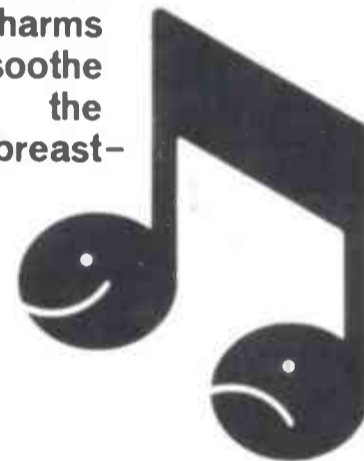
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one suggested the station refer to itself as "Countryopolitan" but the term was rejected because "even at that time it had become trite and overused."

Gerson, a leading air personality as well as program director, said the company's own "Metropolitan Country" theme had been borrowed by stations all over the nation.

"I wish I had a dollar for every program director who has come to town, listened to our format and taken both the name and the sound back home with him," Gerson said. "We're rather proud of that fact and hope that we have helped spread the word about the new sound of Nashville and the new image of country music. At one time we actually considered the tapping and syndication of Metropolitan Country, much the same as Plough, Incorporated has done with 'Music Americana.' I'm rather sorry that we didn't follow through."

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