

Starday-King Forms Agape, a New Label

NEW YORK — The Starday-King Music Group has formed a new label, Agape Records. According to Hal Neely, president of Starday-King, the new label will serve as an outlet for an increasing number of contemporary pop, rock and country-rock records scheduled for release beginning this month, while other labels within the Starday-King complex will continue their output of specialty product.

"The significance of the label name we've chosen," said Neely, "derives from the Latin and means 'love, feast and fellowship.' In some early Christian times the Feast of Agape was celebrated in good spirit, brotherhood and acts of charity—so much of which is reflected in contemporary music and stressed in the lyric content of the new generation of song-writers." He added, "We hope to bring some of that early spirit of the ancients into modern times." (Agape is pronounced ah-goh-pay.)

Several artists have already been signed to Agape including songwriter/singer/producer Myrna March from New York; Fort Worth, Tex., producer David Anderson; a rock group from Georgia known as Coldwater Army to be produced by Bobby Smith; First Friday who will be produced by Darrell Glenn, and a Miami-based unit whose production will be undertaken by veteran producer Kelso Herston.

Agape's initial product will feature singles by Miss March and Anderson. While Miss March has written a great deal of product for Starday-King artists, and recently produced Tony & Carol and the Manhattans for King via her Make Music Productions with Bert Keyes, she is making her Agape debut with a Bee Gees song, "Touch and Understand Love" backed with her own "I Can Remember." Recorded in Nashville, her sessions were under the personal supervision of Neely. Anderson's release will be "Songbird." Prior recordings by David Anderson with the company will ultimately be switched over to the Agape label.

Initially, the Agape label will be managed and administered by the staff of Starday-King with heavy responsibilities falling to sales manager Lee Trimble, Mike Kelly in the East, Bob Patton in the Midwest and Dexter Shaffer on the West Coast will coordinate regional promotion for all new releases and the over-all operations will be guided by Neely and vice presi-

GRT Records Shuts Its Office in L.A.

LOS ANGELES — GRT Records has closed its office here with Ron Kramer resigning as head of West Coast A&R. The GRT office had been open for over a year. The move is an economy measure, according to the company.

BEATLES CASE TO RECEIVER

LONDON—A receiver is to be appointed to look into the Beatles' affairs decided Justice Stamp in the High Court, Friday (12).

Justice Stamp announced this, saying that he was satisfied there was a need for a receiver in the organization "to produce order." The receiver will be James Douglas Spooner, who said the Justice would manage the business "as a going concern."

Justice Stamp granted a stay of execution in his decision for seven days pending the consideration of an appeal. (See International section for background on the case.)

dents Henry Glover and Jim Wilson.

The inception of Agape marks the latest in a series of moves towards the rebuilding of Starday-King under the encouragement and guidance of the LIN Broadcasting Corp., of which it is a division. In addition to strengthening the operations of the Starday and King labels, the company has reactivated the old Macon, Ga.-based Federal label and the original Deluxe Records, a blues-rock label. Recent increased activity, too, has centered on the jazz-oriented Bethlehem label with particular interest focusing on the big band sounds of Germany's Oscar Brandenburg.

Landers-Roberts Fuses 3 Firms Into Divisions

LOS ANGELES — A record company, a concert promotion firm and a motion picture production company have been fused as divisions of the Landers-Roberts Co.

The concert firm, Lou Robin and Allen Tinkley's Artist Consultants/Sight and Sound Productions, has a record wing, Prophecy, from which to draw new acts for its activities.

And the third division, Landers-Roberts Productions, operated by Hal Landers and Bobby Roberts, can draw on its music contracts for writers and performers for its film projects through the record company.

"Airplay itself isn't enough today in breaking a new act; people want to see the act in person. That's why having a concert division is so important," said Roberts.

He and Landers have just acquired Prophecy, run by Mickey Shapiro and Don Altfield. Landers-Roberts acquired the Robin-Tinkley concert film a year ago. All six are now owners in the over-all Landers-Roberts Co.

Prophecy, which has switched its distribution from Bell to Atlantic, has already provided Robin and Tinkley with a new act, blues singer Charley Starr, for concert bookings. The blind vocalist has been working dates with Blood, Sweat and Tears. Starr's debut LP is being produced in New York by independent a&rman Lou Merenstein. A second pactee, Nancy Vale, was just recorded by Ahmet Ertegun, Atlantic's president, in

500 Attend Atlantic Fete For Aretha

SAN FRANCISCO—More than 500 disk jockeys, record merchandisers and retail employees and music writers attended a special reception held by Atlantic Records for Aretha Franklin at the Fillmore West—part of her three-day appearance at the rock venue and a major promotion on the artist by the company.

Her appearances—including a

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Muscle Shoals, Ala. Miss Vale's first single is slated for release around March 25, with Starr's LP following in mid-April.

One advantage Prophecy has in negotiating with artists is its association with the concert promoters, acknowledges Mickey Shapiro. No concert dates will be guaranteed a new act as an enticement to sign, but Robin admits he will be needing around 36 new acts for the 200 concerts he will be promoting this year in the United States, Canada and Australia.

Robin and Tinkley have been in their specialty field since 1957 and their present company has been operable since 1965.

New Pub Co.

Prophecy's new publishing firm is Landers - Roberts Music (ASCAP) which has signed its first two non-performing writers, Vinnie Barrett and John Freeman Jr.

Film producer Roberts (and one of the founders along with Jay Lasker, Lou Adler and Pierre Cossette of Dunhill Records) plans to involve new names in the scoring of films. He is talking with Phil Spector about scoring "The Hot Rock" a film slated for 20th Century-Fox release. Landers-Roberts most recent film release was "Monty Walsh" starring Lee Marvin.

The record company will maintain a small roster, with Altfield in charge of production and Shapiro coordinating activities with Atlantic and overseeing business administration.

Studio Track

By CLAUDE HALL

IRA HEILICHER reports that he's back in the studio and will have an album produced on a group, Lightning, out in early April on PIP Records. This marks a return to creative production by Heilicher Bros. Remember the Fendermen, the Castaways, and Dave Dudley? They were Heilicher originals when Heilicher operated Soma Records. Now, after several years of distributing and racking, Heilicher Bros. is back in production. Ira Heilicher, produced the 16-track session in Sound 80 Recording Studios in Minneapolis; Tom Jung was the chief engineer. Ira says the LP took two months to create and it's so good that a couple of guys have already tried to steal acetate. A big promotion will be launched in most major markets.

Huey Meaux just cut Tommy McLain in the Jones Recording Studios in Houston. The 8-track Scully studio is operated by Doyle Jones, an engineer, and Mickey Gilly, a country artist on GRT Records. McLain had a "Sweet Dreams" hit some while back. This new master, according to Meaux, "will be up for grabs." Meaux, incidentally, is planning to build three separate studios side-by-side in Houston; this way, if he ever needs some fast cash, he can sell one of them. They'll be on different lots.

At the NARM convention in Los Angeles a week ago, Jerry Wexler told me that he and Tom Dowd had just finished another session on a new artist. . . . Doc Riemer told me about Marzano-Calvert Productions, headed by Jim Calvert and Norman Marzano. They just finished cutting Wadsworth Mansion in Hollywood Sound studios with Ed Baer engineering the session. The group's on Clarence Avant's Sussex Records label and a single will be released from the LP as soon as Marzano and Calvert finish mixing. In case you don't remember, these two guys were the Tradewinds. Calvert is a guitar player, Marzano plays bass; now they mostly produce.

Also ran into Jay Senter, who said that he's steaming to produce a blues album featuring Spencer Davis & Peter Jameson; he's already picked out about 20 tunes made popular by such as Bukka White, Big Joe Williams, and Son House. He'll cut the LP in April in Los Angeles. He cut "It's Been So Long" by Davis & Jameson at Goldstein Recording Studios in Los Angeles, but figures to cut the next sessions at Village Recordings Studios, where engineer Doc Siegel (he used to be at Goldstein) now hangs his empty tape reels. "Siegel cut all those Sonny & Cher hits," Senter said. "I've worked with two guys I consider the best in the business—Siegel and Eddie Kramer, who now operates at Electric Lady in New York." Senter is also planning to cut Richard Landis, that heavy piano player in the Davis & Jameson group, as a solo performer, backed by a nine-piece band. He'll cut Landis in June. Nix Nox Productions is the parent production firm. Barney Kessel just signed with Nix Nox and Senter will be producing him, too, plus Buck's Band, a group composed of the top Los Angeles studio players.

At Capricorn Sound Studios in beautiful downtown Macon, Ga., Phil Walden reports that his studio band has been traveling with Alex Taylor, backing him at concerts. But they're due back in the studio about the time you're reading this to cut with Arthur Conley, who's doing his first session under the Capricorn Records banner. Then they'll do a session with Cowboy, also a Capricorn group. Johnny Sandlin produces these people. Incidentally, one of the best engi-

neers, Tom Dowd, flew back from a shindig in Africa last weekend to produce a live session at Fillmore East in New York, featuring the Alman Brothers, another Walden group. A 16-track session and I believe that Dowd was producing the group as a favor.

Terry Knight was in Cleveland Recording Studios, Cleveland, last week producing Grand Funk's fifth album—"Survival." Terry is a former disk jockey; a friend tells me that Terry is now a certified millionaire. . . . We mentioned Eddie Kramer a while back; he just finished a third LP for the NRBQ, at Electric Ladyland, the New York studio owned in part by the late Jimi Hendrix. The Epic Records group is managed by Frank Scinaro. . . . Fedco, a 16-track mobile unit, just cut Buzzy Linhart at the Gaslight in Greenwich Village, and Sha Na Na at a Columbia University concert, both in New York, both for Buddah Records.

The recording studio begun by the late Bill Black (he used to back up Elvis Presley) has been purchased and renamed Bloc-6 Studios. It has been purchased by Bob Tucker, leader of the Bill Black Combo and president of the new company. The new organization also has Billy Herbert, vice president and manager; Joe Elmore, manager of Bloc-6 publishing company and secretary; attorney Maurice J. McGehee; drummer David Lovelace, and Larry Rogers, former manager of the studio who is now signed as an engineer with Mercury Records in Nashville. All this information comes from Memphis correspondents James D. Kingsley.

Bruce Turgeson, formerly of Atlantic Recording Studios, and Gene Ridice, formerly of Olmstead Sound Studios, both in New York, have joined the staff of engineers at the Hit Factory, 353 W. 48th St., New York, according to president Jerry Ragovoy. Turgeson engineered some of those Cream, Buffalo Springfield, and Iron Butterfly hits; Ridice engineered everybody from Dionne Warwick and Neil Diamond to Dawn's hit of "Candida."

Criteria Recording Studios in Miami (which Eric Clapton considers one of the best in the world) continues to turn out gold records with number four and five being accredited this week. Aretha Franklin's "Call Me" and Jackie Moore's "Precious Precious" are the latest awards for Mack Eberman and his staff. Taping sessions this week at the studio included Wally Futch, local well-known soul singer starting side two of his LP "Great Discovery" produced by Gerald Rothbart. Jackie Davis and Mack Eberman are editing Davis' one-hour tape down to a one-sider for his LP being produced for the Baldwin Organ Company. Criteria's other gold records were for "I've Got You," James Brown; Brook Benton's "Rainy Night in Georgia" and Aretha's "Don't Play That Song."

Scepter Mails 'Joseph' Sleeve

NEW YORK—Scepter Records has mailed a black and white version of their album sleeve. "Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat" to disk jockeys as part of a "Color Therapy for Harried DJs and PDs" promotion. The illustration comes complete with a box of crayons. "Joseph" is a rock opera, based on the Bible story of Joseph and is written by Rice and Webber who composed "Jesus Christ Superstar." Scepter states that initial orders for the "Joseph" album are approaching 200,000.

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