

Jukebox programming

Cite Lags in Service to Small Market One-Stops

By RAY BRACK

CHARLESTON, W. Va. — If distribution evolution is creating as many problems for other small, rural one-stops as it is for M. Z. (Red) Elkins here, then it comprises a major industry sore spot.

Unique in that he deals exclusively in singles and almost totally with jukebox operators (many whose routes he programs), Elkins is having difficulty getting software service from distributors involved in rack jobbing. And some key product, the 30-year veteran complains—"Just take RCA"—is available from no other type source.

With nearby sources of supply drying up in recent years (no distributor is located in the state), Elkins is forced at the outset to go far afield and to a variety of firms to find singles. That's problem enough, for delivery from, say, Cherry Hill, N. J. takes six days. And Elkins orders a lot of singles from that distance.

But that's not his biggest problem. Elkins puts it this way: "Some of those labels aren't doing right by distributing through rack jobbers. The hot hits go out on the racks first, and us little one-stops don't get a thing until the supplier stocks up later. Meanwhile, operators are in here asking for the singles and I have to tell them I don't have it. Of course, they don't believe me. But I never lie about a thing like that."

In short, Elkins sighs, being the middle man in the record business—when you're in a plus nothing market like the Appalachian high-

lands—can really put you in the middle.

It happened to Elkins most recently with "Go Away Little Girl" by Donny Osmond on MGM. He says he placed an order with a Baltimore distributor, the Joseph M. Zamoiski Co. and was told the title was not in stock.

In the case of RCA, Elkins says, he is extremely disappointed in top management decisions in recent years that took the software from Ohio Appliance in Cincinnati (which retains the hard ware) and gave it to rack jobbers distributors.

Elkins said "I couldn't get service on John Denver's RCA hit, 'Take Me Home, Country Roads' when the record was hottest because the distributor was shunting all it had out on the racks." The unavailability of this particular single rankled Elkins especially because operators in West Virginia, the inspiration for the song, were frantically demanding the single. Elkins eventually moved 4,000 copies onto the state's jukeboxes where customers played them incessantly, but many copies of the single were delivered long after the hit had peaked nationally and the distribution pipeline in the major markets had clogged up.

Being remote from his distribution points in major markets has created another major problem for Elkins. The staple on the state's jukeboxes is still traditional country and hillbilly music, Elkins' distributors, however, finding little

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1-Stop Service Lag Wrongfully Blamed on Dist.

BALTIMORE—Distributors are often wrongfully blamed for lagging shipments to one-stops when the problem can be due to many complex circumstances, a check with wholesalers here and in other cities shows. Most were familiar with complaints such as those made by M. Z. (Red) Elkins, Charleston, W. Va. (see separate story).

Many times, the problem is with the distributor obtaining deliveries from manufacturers. This was mentioned by spokesmen at various distributors. "There was for a time a problem getting 'Go Away Little Girl,'" said singles buyer Joyce Heider of Joseph M. Zamoiski Co. here, "but it's all straightened out." Speaking to Elkins' complaint specifically, she said: "He hasn't complained since we became aware of his shipment deadlines."

She said Elkins is on the road

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Dot Jukebox Push

NASHVILLE — Dot Records is initiating a direct promotion to jukebox programmers as an adjunct to its one-stop arrangements, according to Larry Baunach, national sales and promotion director. The program will be very selective.

Initially, jukebox programmers are being serviced with Roy Clark's "Magnificent Sanctuary Band/Be Ready" and Jack Barlow's "Catch the Wind/Tonight I'm Wantin' You Again." Baunach said future releases to jukebox programmers will carry letters explaining why this service is being supplied. Dot regularly ships new releases to 110 key one-stops but Baunach wants an even stronger push in the jukebox market.

JUKEBOX PRICING

Consent Order in Missouri

WASHINGTON — The Justice Department's consent order barring any future anti-competitive pressures or price fixing of jukebox record play and vending items by the Kansas City Music Operators' Association and three vending firms became final recently. The department also ordered dis-

Sue L.A. Location

LOS ANGELES—The Trojan Amusement Co. has filed suit for \$6,396 against the Turf Cafe and its owner, Claude Leonard, in Superior Court here. Trojan charges that the location broke a \$17.50 weekly jukebox contract with 104 weeks still left to go. The operator is also seeking \$3,000 in punitive damages as a result of the Turf Cafe switching to another company's jukebox.

Holland Jukeboxes Improved

By BAS HAGEMAN

AMSTERDAM—Better quality jukeboxes are being installed in this country, some utilizing Little LP's and most emphasizing better sound. However, there is not as much growth here as in other countries, a report shows.

The number of jukeboxes in Belgium is still 10 percent more than in France, although France has five times as many inhabitants and is 18 times larger than Belgium.

In 1969, the number of Belgian jukeboxes in normal use—excluding the boxes on fairs and summer encampments—was almost 35,000 (in France: 31,500).

The growth for the year 1970 is estimated at three percent for Belgium and five percent for France.

The number of boxes in use in Holland in 1970 was approximately 30,000, plus exclusive apparatus in use on fairs and campings.

Singles Go Longer; Soul 45's Grow Too

By EARL PAIGE

CHICAGO—Pop singles continue to grow longer and lengthy 45's still are a controversial topic at jukebox conventions. Moreover, comparisons with one year-age show soul singles stretching out too while country pressings are running about the same length. Comparisons with several years ago offer dramatic evidence of the longer single in all categories.

While the subject of lengthy singles wasn't slated as a formal topic at Music Operators of America (MOA) here last week, it was expected to be much discussed. MOA has made no formal statement on the subject. Some one-stops are now mentioning length in sales bulletins. Label marketing people are showing growing awareness of jukebox programmers demanding shorter singles.

Larry Baunach, national sales and promotion director, Dot Records, said the lengthy singles problem is critical with MOR and other stations, particularly in tight-sold drive time segments. He said his label recognized a problem with Hank Thompson's "Mark of a Heel." Said Baunach, who is particularly conscious of jukebox singles, "I tried to get the producer of the Thompson record to cut it down, but it still couldn't be less than 3:37."

Baunach said the trend to more meaningful lyrics, songwriters trying to relate more to modern life and other aspects such as the emphasis on albums all point to

longer singles, although in country he said the trend is not yet significant.

The average length of the 10 top recordings on the "Hot 100" Oct. 9, 1971 was 3:16, paced by "Uncle Albert" at 4:47 and "Maggie May" at 4:07. One year ago, the top 10 averaged 3:08 with Rare Earth's "(I Know) I'm Losing You" the longest at 3:38. The Oct. 10, 1964 top 10 averaged 2:30 with Roy Orbison's "Oh, Pretty Woman" the longest at 2:55.

Random averages from reviews this fall compared with one year ago, show the growing length of soul singles. Seven singles reviewed Sept. 4, 1971 averaged 3:08 against 2:52 for a like amount a year ago. Another group of seven reviewed Sept. 11, 1971 averaged 3:10 against 3:01 for the same week a year ago. A random average of soul singles reviewed in the same period of 1964 averaged 2:36.

Country singles, with notable exceptions such as Baunach mentions, are generally even with a year ago though some longer than in 1964. A group of 12 singles reviewed Sept. 4, 1971 averaged 2:31 against 2:49 for 12 a year ago. Groups of 10 reviewed Sept. 12, 1971 averaged 2:31 against 2:35 one year prior. A group of eight reviewed Oct. 9, 1971 averaged 2:42 against 2:36 for a similar amount the same time last year. However, a group of 10 reviewed in a similar period in 1964 averaged 2:29.

Coin Machine World

NEB. ASSN.

The Coin Operated Industries of Nebraska (COIN) association is attempting to gather information

on locations that own their own equipment. The association is working with the state department of revenue which believes that locations owning their own jukeboxes may not be contributing to the operator license and occupation tax, according to COIN president Ed Kort. The tax matter and another legislation project, a push for a new break-in law, are being handled by Ed Zorinsky, prominent Omaha distributor and COIN officer. Copies of landmark laws from Kansas and the nation's capital are being sent to Nebraska senators.

ARIZONA VENDORS

New officers of the Arizona Automatic Merchandising Association: Charles Humphrey, Coca-Cola (Phoenix) director for one-year; three-year directors Roy Dickson, Struve Dist. (Phoenix), Claude Sharpenstein, Jr., A. A. Amusement (Yuma), Charles Snelson, Arizona Cigarette Service (Phoenix). Other officers will be elected at the December board meeting.

Anti-Trust Suit

CHICAGO—Two trade groups here and individual jukebox operator members have until Oct. 29 to pay the balance of a \$50,000 fine levied against the defendants in an anti-trust suit, assistant attorney general Robert S. Atkins said. Attorneys for the defense recently handed over to Cook County Circuit Court Judge Samuel B. Epstein checks totalling \$30,915, some for amounts as low as \$28.66. Atkins said newspaper accounts failed to mention that assessment checks were received from individuals (and firms) "not even named in the suit."

Russian Fair Focus on Soviet Jukebox Business

By VADIM YURCHENKOV

MOSCOW — It may be some time before Russia becomes a significant market for U.S. or European jukeboxes and resultant software new equipment might require such as Little LP's or stereo 45's. But the potential is here. This is the assessment of industry experts following the recent Attraction '71, the first international coin machine fair ever held in the USSR.

No big sales of American or West European made jukeboxes can be expected in the near future. Polish industry completely dominates in the local jukebox market and thousands of inexpensive monaural 100 selection Melomane hi-fi type jukeboxes have been supplied to Russia during recent 10 years. Russia can become a potential market for American and European product in the future, experts feel, though a lot of various problems must be solved before this.

The fair was organized by V/O Soyuzatraktzion, the USSR Ministry of Culture's department of amusement and games. It must be noted that the fair itself is a reflection of a bigger leisure now enjoyed by the Russian people and the Ministry of Culture's interest in increasing popular recreation facilities. Participating companies from 10 countries introduced over 60 outdoor exhibits.

A \$500,000 order was obtained from the Soviet Ministry of Culture by Amrex, Inc. a New York trading company, whose executive vice-president, Mrs. Bettine Parker had spent considerable time in Russia. Among other exhibits, coin machines were most popular with Russian visitors who stood in long lines for hours to get a 20-minute

spell to enjoy games. The Izmailovo park Amrex, Inc., and Japan Taito Trading Co., Ltd. exhibits included sophisticated games and Seeburg jukeboxes. In Gorky park, where the main part of the fair was located, Japan's CI Itochu Co. presented several Kasco coin machines: Indy 500 Air Fighter and Combat Gun.

However, the biggest collection of coin machines—games and jukeboxes—was introduced by Bo Billing & Co. AB, a Bally distributor in Scandinavia and Eastern Europe. Most of the machines introduced by Billing were Bally's still there were several Swedish and German made games and jukeboxes — Mustang, Treasure Chest, Zip a Dog, Four Million B.C., Express Way, Double Up, Big Strike, Sebring, Target Zero, Sea Devil, Race Day, World Cup, Football, Basket Ball, Jet Rider, Invaders from Outer Space, Wild Kingdom.

Billing has a considerable experience in supplying coin machines to East European countries and first made a deal with Soy-

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