

Jukebox Programming

Flip Sides Spell Plus Profit

By INGRID HANNIGAN

EDITOR'S NOTE: During the recent Billboard Quality Control Committee meeting Stan Gortikov of Recording Industries Association of America asked if the flip side was really necessary. He said he had in mind the possible use of the flip side as a vehicle for expanded cuts from LP's so they could be tested for eventual release as singles. The following survey gives some indication of attitude toward flip sides.

CHICAGO—Although jukebox programmers largely ignore the contents of a record's flip side, the flip does bring profits back home—to the tune of 10-20 percent of the total record play. Programmers participating in a phone survey said they need this "extra" income, and will not consider jukebox records without a flip.

The flip is immaterial to most programmers—they may know the title, but except in rare instances, have not heard it and do not care to hear it. Clayton Norberg of C & N Sales in Mankato, Minn. listens to both sides before selecting his "record of the month." "To have wide appeal, the

record's flip side can't be terrible; that's all I ask of it."

Gerald Goudeau of Lafayette, La.-based Gerald's Amusement sums up the widespread lack of interest: "I get some money from the flip side, so I see it as income without investment. I buy a hit, and whatever comes on the back has a free ride."

As long as jukeboxes are designed to accommodate two sides to a record, and title strips have two sections, Joe MacQuivey wants two songs per record. The South Bend, Ind., operator said, "The flip's just a fill-in, but it does help sales."

MacQuivey's pet peeve is title strips which list the B side on top, and the hit below. "Maybe the record company knows the 'hit' will get radio play and naturally be requested at the box. Then if the B side is fairly good, it too has a chance of being played if the title is on top. It's a known fact that the top record appeals to the player."

"I think occasionally record firms don't know which song will be more popular," he continued, "so they reverse the order on the strips to find out."

Many Views

Chicago operator John Strong, South Central Music, retypes the strips if titles are in the wrong order. "I've had locations call me and request a certain record that I know is on that box. People are used to looking only on the top of the strip; if it's on the bottom, they won't see it."

Sometimes the dispute arises between the artist and the producer. Barb Oelke of C & N Sales reported the example of Elvis Presley preferring one song, his producer another, resulting in a two-hit record—the promoted record on top of the strip, but the most popular on the bottom.

Programmer Debbie DeWeese,

Emporia (Kan.) Music Service, explained that the more popular the group, the more likely the flip side will be played. Another factor is the amount of radio play and the promotion. John Strong said records with Part 1 on top and Part 2 on bottom play better than unrelated flip sides.

Not very often does a hit arise from the flip side, considering its disadvantages. However, about 1 to 3 percent of all flips become hits.

Allan Waldor of ABC distributing in Newark would jump at the chance for a two-hit record. "I would pay more than double the present cost of a record if both sides were hits. To have 200 hits on the box, instead of 102 or 104 would so increase my sales, and please my customers, that I'd pay almost anything for the records."

Meter readings on jukeboxes only measure the record's total play, not which side. That is where programmer-location rapport should enter the limelight. Gerry Gross, Sunset Automatic Music Co., Coos Bay, Ore., said she wouldn't know which song was more popular unless her routeman told her. "The locations tell him everything on the progress of records. It's invaluable to business to know just which song is doing well."

Whether or not the flip side commands its share of play, it still spells profits for the operator and more choice for the listener.

Jukebox Meetings

July 27-29—Montana Coin Machine Operators Assn., reservation deadline June 15, \$10 deposits, Big Sky of Montana, Big Sky, Mont. 59714.
Aug. 11-12—Kansas Amusement & Music Assn., John Enick Cabin, Lawrence.
Sept. 21-23—Florida Amusement & Merchandising Assn., Sheraton Motor Inn, Orlando.
Sept. 21-23—Illinois Coin Machine Operators Assn., Playboy Club, Lake Geneva, Wis.
Sept. 21-22—W. Va. Music & Vending Assn., Heart of Town, Charleston.
Nov. 9-11—MOA, Conrad Hilton, Chicago.

Lengthy 45's Still Hot Controversy

By EARL PAIGE

CHICAGO—The too-long single complaint of operators is too thorny to include in the next proposed Billboard Jukebox Programming Conference on quality control, according to a committee that met here recently with Stan Gortikov, president, Recording Industries of America (RIAA). Gortikov, who called for the quality control conference with top label representatives, believes yet another conference should be held on marketing that would include the lengthy single topic.

Lengthy singles was the subject of a highly emotional session at the recent first Billboard Jukebox Programming Conference and again erupted at the quality control committee meeting. Peoria, Ill. programmer Bill Bush was challenged by Gortikov when Bush suggested labels could exercise control. "No," said Gortikov, "the artist has complete, definitive and contractual authority."

Other alternatives might be dual pricing, with a 25-cent per side price on lengthy records. Seeburg engineer John Chapin and other engineers at the committee meeting said dual pricing is technically possible. Bush, though, said he experimented with quarter pricing and caught flak from the location and found little play resulted.

Gortikov questioned the jukebox people at length on the value of the flip side, wondering if possibly longer cuts from LP's might be tested on boxes by being made the flip side of certain releases.

4,000 Programmers —Sample Service Stir

NEWARK, N.J.—Sterling Title Strip Co. here is initiating an expanded sample service for labels that will go to 4,000 jukebox programmers and 230 one-stops presenting them with five to eight new releases per package. The program comes at a time when samples are causing an increasing stir.

At the recent Billboard Quality Control committee gathering in Chicago, programmers said that since the Jukebox Programming Conference sponsored by Billboard, they are being "deluged" with samples, indicating that little thought is put into the service. Some complained samples are too far in advance of distribution, but no one wanted samples discontinued either.

Dick Steinberg, president of Sterling, said in a phone interview that

indiscriminate sampling "can hurt." His service, however, is dependent entirely on the label's wishes and includes promotion the label furnishes along with Sterling's reminder to "buy the record if it shows up good in test spots."

Sterling has a Macey collator worth \$25,000 that is capable of handling 32,000 title strip cards per hour. This automation, plus less airtime for new releases due to shorter play lists and higher promotion costs for labels are reasons why Sterling has expanded its jukebox sample service.

"We are encouraging the manufacturer to push the single a little longer—go for the long pull. We provide a grass roots promotion second in importance to airplay."

Ill. Assn. Sets Meet

LAKE GENEVA, Wis.—Deadline for reservations for the annual Illinois Coin Machine Operators Association meeting here Sept. 21-22 at the Playboy Club is July 20. Rooms are \$64 (single) for two nights; \$74 (double) with two nights stay required. Fee for the meeting is \$35 per person. The total amount should be sent to ICMOA, 510 E. Monroe, Springfield, Ill. 62701.

The meeting represents a first for ICMOA, which has always met in Illinois. A golf tourney is set opening day and business seminars will highlight the second day.



JUKEBOX operating problems ranging from defective records to discussion of possible "one-side" hit-only disks highlighted the recent Billboard Quality Control Committee meeting that grew out of the first Billboard Jukebox Programming Conference. Attending (from left) John Chapin, Seeburg; Dick Hutter, CBS Records; Ingrid Hannigan, Billboard reporter; Bill



Bush, Les Montooth Phonographs, Peoria, Ill.; Chicago retailer Andy Andersen; GE home phonograph engineer C. E. Bedford; Stan Gortikov, president, Recording Industries of America; Henry Barkel, Rowe; Pat Schwartz, Modern Specialty, Madison, Wis.; Kip Parker, Acme one-stop, Minneapolis; Ruth Sawejka, Coin-Operated Amusement, Beaver Dam, Wis.;



William Findlay, Rock-Ola (back to camera); and Fred Granger, executive vice president, Music Operators of America. Issues raised led Gortikov to suggest two more Billboard conferences, one on quality alone and another on marketing with subcommittee meetings in advance of each.

45 RPM SALE

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1215 S. Howard Street
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Hit Quality Lag, Too Thin Jukebox Singles

CHICAGO—Concerned participants in Billboard's Jukebox Quality Control Committee meeting June 22 here unilaterally agreed that too thin records and non-stringent quality control in pressing plants must be corrected to prevent jukebox operators from absorbing needless heavy costs for service and machine repairs caused by defective records.

Bill Bush of Les Montooth, Peoria, Ill., reported that he made 33 service calls on the notoriously defective Bell "Tie a Yellow Ribbon." ... With each call costing about \$16.55, this amounts to \$550 lost in a three-month period on one record only, not to mention the lost play time for the hit.

Stan Gortikov, president, Recording Industries Association of America, stated that the 90 percent of major recording firms who comprise RIAA membership are not policed in quality control standards. "RIAA has been very effective in the past in establishing standards, and if thin records become defective easily, RIAA must change its standards." No means of enforcement are possible through the association, "but," Gortikov continued, "I pledge to contact members and major non-members to enlist their cooperation to solve this serious problem."

Henry Barkel of Rowe brought a stack of warped and defective records with statistics from a test he conducted on the correlation between thinness of

record and ability to withstand high temperatures. Photos depicting the jukebox's inability to pick up, place, and return defective records to their slots substantiated his claim.

Thin Disks

The present RIAA standard allows records to be as thin as 26,000ths and as thick as 52,000ths of an inch thick. From a sample of all major labels, Barkel found that RCA and Capitol consistently produced records only 26,000ths thick; these were the first to buckle (after 120 deg. F. for one hour), he said.

Most records, he continued, do begin to warp after being exposed to 130 deg. F. temperatures for a length of time. "Thickness directly relates to length of time able to tolerate heat," Barkel affirmed. "The inside of a jukebox is much hotter than one would think so this problem directly affects the jukebox operator."

Many locations are not air-conditioned, and in summer, combined with the absence of an outlet for heat in the box, causes temperatures to rise significantly above the 120 deg. cut-off point.

In a pertinent aside, Bush said, "Investigate the jukebox position, don't follow blindly any suggestion made by the location owner. We had one box that

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