Nashville: For RCA's Most Hits
By GERRY WOOD

NASHVILLE—More hits have come out of RCA's Nashville operation than any other studio configuration in the industry.

Studies A, B, C and D, plus a re-mixing room, a quad remixing room and dozens of control rooms, are some of the most complete recording complexes under one roof in the nation. As a result, RCA's Nashville has improved its facilities.

The history of RCA's Nashville studios was told in the course of the "Nashville Sound." Before 1954, RCA used several independent studios where producers Steve Sholes and engineer Jeff Miller journeyed to Nashville from New York on a harried trip, with tape machines, mikes and other equipment.

The pair used Owen Bradley's quarters at BMI's office and the Columbia complex, Brown Brothers (over a cigar store downtown), the Thomas Studio in a downtown garage off Capitol Studio in the old Tulane Hotel.

RCA became the first major label with its own studio in Nashville when, in 1954, it opened a studio in the building with the Methodist Radio and Television Foundation. The first label to be recorded there was "Heartbreak Hotel" with "I Was The One," came from this studio along with other Presley million sellers.

In 1957, Chet Atkins became the first Nashville manager of record producers and producer, and the noted guitarist convinced RCA that a new building and an adequately-equipped facility should be added.

Later that year RCA opened studio and office facilities on 17th Ave. S. Atkins handled all kinds of projects with such artists as Jim Reeves, Sonny James and Roy Orbison. As the RCA Nashville studio business increased, a larger facility was needed.

The studio was doubled in size in 1960, and in 1965 the present three-story building and giant studio A was opened. The studio and complex grew with additional studios, new recorder and tape mastering equipment, and by 1967, the facility was fully equipped.

Despite the expanding facilities, rumors persisted through last year that RCA was considering shutting down its studio facilities in Nashville. Instead, the label brought John Otesen from New York to Nashville as studio manager and earmarked even more money for expansion purposes.

"When I came to Nashville there was a lot of talk about RCA shutting the studios down," Olsen admits. "Actually, we were talking about making changes and we're investing money in our facilities. Where we need to spend money may be different than what we spent on the other studios, we will." Olsen adds.

The studio operation is trying to build up its custom business. "The studio is a custom business," Olsen explains. "We've got to keep paying the bills—and if we were to do our commercial product, we'd be the only studio doing it."

Thus, major observers believe that RCA has made a major commitment to its studios, and the studio operation is trying to build up its custom business. "We're going to make sure we've got the right facilities to serve our commercial people."

In Los Angeles, Barry Rudolph has been busy over the past few months.

The engineer, who works with Ken Mansfield and K. C. and the Sunshine Band, has been involved with product from Jesse Colin and C.M. at Sound Lake. Rudolph is also working with producer Steve Cropper at Clover, cutting the Cates Brothers.

At Woodland Studio in Los Angeles, Allen Zentz and Brian Gardner have recently completed material for Steely Dan, Booker T and the MG's, Funkadelics, Angel Smoke, the Giants, Roberta Kelly and Lisa Herland.

Excitement heads into Gladiol's in Los Angeles shortly to begin work on an LP for a major label. The group, which will be produced by Gary Gladiol at the controls.

At Capitol Studios in Los Angeles, Jon Denver was in with Milt Okum and engineer Ritchie Screw. Milt Jackson cut with Norman Granz and engineer Greer Helsley and Black Wills (Mike Cropper's new group) recorded with producer Bob Herrin. Stephen Schwartz was in with producer Erinn Weinberg and producer Pete Abbott and Jack Jones did some work with producer Bruce Johnston and engineer Kent Jones. Juice Newton was also in, with Bones Howe handling controls.

Lots going on at Capitol Studios in Los Angeles. Artists in recently for Angel included classical and Spanish guitarist Angel Romero, Ravi Shankar and Yehudi Menuhin. Carl Maroni Records of France, an EMI affiliate, cut a biennial music program eventing the life of George Washington and other patriots.

Gregory Peck, Kirk Douglas and Olivia De Havilland among others.

Jim Gerweck was in at the Bob Dylan sessions.

Debra Paley is the busier location. Enjoy Stassel's Mastering Studios and the Cates Brothers.

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