



Billboard photo by Gerry Wood

kins In Action—Chet Atkins (center), still an active producer in the studio success helped build, listens to a playback on new Victor talent Jack Ruth (left) as engineer Chuck Seitz rides the controls in the Studio A control room.

Nashville: For RCA, Most Hits

By GERRY WOOD

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

Studios A, B, C and D, plus a remixing room, a quad remixing room and disk mastering room, provide one of the most complete recording complexes under one roof in the nation, and RCA plans to continue to improve these facilities.

The history of RCA's Nashville studios closely parallels the rise and fortune of the "Nashville Sound." Before 1954, RCA used several independent studios in Nashville as producer Steve Sholes and engineer Jeff Miller journeyed to Nashville from New York with tape machines, mikes and other equipment.

The pair used Owen Bradley's quonset hut studio (now part of the Columbia complex), Brown Brothers (over a cigar store downtown), the Thomas Studio in a downtown garage, and the Castle Studio in the old Tulane Hotel.

Artists using these studios included Eddy Arnold, Hank Snow, Johnny and Jack, the Carter Family, Chet Atkins, Bill Carlisle and Elton Britt.

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 Elvis Presley recording on RCA, "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 operations and producer, and the noted guitarist convinced RCA that a new building and studio should be built. Later that year RCA opened studio and office facilities on 17th Ave. S. Atkins produced a string of hits with such artists as Jim Reeves, Sonny James and Roy Orbison. As the RCA roster and custom recording business increased, a larger facility was needed.

The plant was doubled in size in 1960, and in 1965 the present three-story building and giant studio A was opened. Along with B, the complex grew with two additional studios, new lacquer channels and new tape mastering rooms.

Despite the expanding facilities, rumors persisted through last year that RCA was considering shutting down its studio facilities here. Instead, the label brought John Olsen 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, the activity has increased and we're investing money in our facilities. Where we need to spend money to stay competitive and stay ahead of the other studios, we will."

Though most observers believe that RCA records only RCA acts in its studios, the studio operation is trying to build up its custom business. "The reason we're here is to do our commercial product," Olsen explains. "But we've got to keep paying bills—and to do that we need to stimulate custom business. We want to serve custom people as well as we service our commercial people."

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Studio Track

By BOB KIRSCH

LOS ANGELES—Jack Clement Studios in Nashville is rapidly growing into one of the busier locations in that city. Merle Haggard was by recently, with Jim Williamson handling the engineering. Austin Roberts cut with producer Bob Montgomery and engineer Billy Sherrill.

Sue Richards has been cutting a new LP following several successful singles. Milton Blackford is handling production. ABC-Dot president Jim Fogelson has been in putting final touches on an upcoming live Roy Clark LP, recorded at the Frontier in Las Vegas. Cam Mullins came by to arrange some strings for Ray Price. Jim Williamson did the engineering on all the above sessions.

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At RCA Studios in Los Angeles, John Denver was in with producer Milt Okun and engineer Mickey Crofford. Milt Jackson cut with Norman Granz and engineer Grover Helsey and Black Widow (Alice Cooper's new group) recorded with producer Bob Ezrin. Stephen Schwartz was in with producer Eirin Weinberg and engineer Pete Abbott and Jack Jones did some work with producer Bruce Johnston and engineer Kent Tunks. Juice Newton was also in, with Bones Howe handling controls.

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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. Pathe Marconi Records of France, an EMI affiliate, cut a bicentennial music program evoking the life of George Washington and other patriots. Gregory Peck, Kirk Douglas and Olivia De Havilland all contributed readings. Other stars handling readings for various projects included Charlton Heston, Hans Conreid, Leonard Nimoy and Ray Bolger. Cecil Jones engineered the sessions.

Jim Vincent recorded some material for Caribou, with Bruce Botnick engineering and producing. Al Jarreau was also in cutting, with Tom LiPuma producing and Al Schmidt at the boards.

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In notes from around the country: Richard Perry will handle production on Ex-Guess Who lead vocalist and writer Burton Cummings' debut Columbia LP. In Nashville's Sound Shop, Curtis Potter has been cutting with producer Ray Pennington.

In Los Angeles, Barry Rudolph has been busy over the past few months. The engineer, who works with Ken Mansfield's Hometown Productions, has been involved with product from Jessi Colter and C.M. Lord at Sound Labs. Rudolph is also working with producer Steve Cropper at Clover, cutting the Cates Brothers.

At Allen Zentz's Mastering Studios in Los Angeles, Allen Zentz and Brian Gardner have recently completed material for Steely Dan, Booker T. Jones, Funkadelic, Angel, Smoke, the Giants, Roberta Kelly and Lisa Hartman.

Excalibur heads into Gladstone's in Los Angeles shortly to begin work on an LP for a major label. The group will produce itself with Gary Gladstone at the controls.

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At Woodland Sound Studios in Nashville, Joni Lee was in working with producer Snuffy Miller and father Conway Twitty. Dave Burgess came by to handle sessions for the reactivated Republic label, owned by Gene Autry. Kathy Barnes and Larry Barnes both cut singles. Les Ladd handled the engineering. Sherry Harper cut material with producer Don Marsh. Ron Chancey cut sessions with Richard Tillis, brother of Mel Tillis. Joel Sonnier cut with producer Glenn Keener and engineer Larry Magliner. Rex Collier mixed some Freddy Fender material for GRT and also worked with the Dixie Travellers and the Angelic Gospel Singers. Shannon Williams handled the a&r on these two dates.

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Weisburg & Walters has been at American Studios in Nashville cutting with producer Thomas Williams. Group is said to be mixing in progressive country and an FM flavor.

At Heritage in Los Angeles, John Court was busy on an LP with Tom Ranier and Ray Ruff was in producing Pat Boone.

Stan Bronstein & Elephant's Memory have been busy at the L-R Recording Studios in Northvale, N.J. Larry Rosen was in charge of the engineering.

Brenda Pepper has been at the Sound Shop in Nashville with producer Eddie Kilroy, working on her upcoming "Southern Lady" single for Playboy.

Also in Nashville, Waylon Jennings has finished the mixing on his upcoming RCA album. Waylon and Ken Mansfield co-produced.

1,000 Due For 54th AES At the L.A. Hilton Hotel

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ixdown: Phase Two," he points out some of the pitfalls to be avoided when applying automation to conventional console controls. The new Allison system reduces system redundancy, and utilizes a priority data encoding system.

Teledyne Acoustic Research has developed "A Programmable Signal Delay Network." David McIntosh and Robert Berkovitz describe a 4-16-out system which will store and recall several delay patterns, allowing the user to compare the subjective qualities of various reverberation characteristics.

Other papers describe "Digital Computer-assisted Post Production Fixdown," and "Microcomputer Applications To Console Automation."

On Wednesday evening, convention participants will convene at the Muel Goldwyn Theater, located in the new Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences facility in Beverly Hills. The session will include papers on film consoles and recording systems, as well as a history of Motion Picture Sound Recording" by J. G. Frayne. In addition, Johnny Rosen of Fanta Professional Services will describe the Live Multi-track Dialog and Live Music Recording For The Movie Nashville." The evening will conclude with "A Demonstration Of The Sensurround System," presented by Richard Stumpf of Universal City Studios.

Of special interest to recording engineers and producers is a paper by Michael Rettinger on "Instrumentation For Multiple Track Music Recording." The paper discusses the amount of sound attenuation versus frequency that may be realized by various types of acoustic baffles. Rettinger is the well-known author of "Acoustic Design And Noise Control," one of the leading reference books on the subject. His paper will be given during the architectural acoustics session on Thursday afternoon (6).

Friday morning's sessions get underway with a panel discussion on audio standards, chaired by Rex M. Isom, recently retired from RCA Labs in Indianapolis. Isom, who will be the Society's president in 1976, points out that this will be the first time that a comprehensive overview of audio standards has been given in one session. Panelists include representatives of most of the major standards organizations.

The standards meeting runs concurrently with the session on special applications in audio, during which the Year of Audio Develop-

ments-ADI will describe the "Design Of An Automated Graphic Equalizer." The author claims that the device permits ± 1 dB equalization of stadiums and studios within a very short time, thus taking much of the tedium out of the room equalization process.

During the convention, the Los Angeles section of the AES will once again sponsor a free audiology test for all interested registrants. Participants may review their test results through a number identification system. Industrial Acoustics Co. is providing the sound proof booth and test equipment, and the testing will be supervised by Dr. Donald Dirks and Sam Gilman, both of UCLA.

Once again, the AES will offer a seminar series during the convention. On Wednesday (5) at 1:30 p.m., David Klepper of KMK Associates will discuss "Basic Sound Reinforcement System Design," from the point of view of acoustics, architecture, and functional requirements. He will be followed by Stan Miller of Stanal Sound, who will cover "Aspects Of Sound Reinforcement For Live Entertainment." In his talk, Miller will describe how to choose the right equipment and how to use that equipment to best advantage.

On Thursday (6), the first seminar, on "Echo And Reverberation" will discuss the differences between echo and reverberation, and describe the control room simulation of echo, reverberation, delay, and decay. The final seminar, "Compressors And Expanders," will cover the similarities and differences between compressors, limiters and expanders, and discuss the development of the compander as the foundation of the noise reduction system.

Sound Waves

By JOHN WORAM

NEW YORK—At RCA Records a completely new tape-to-disk transfer system reflects the company's interest in becoming more competitive in disk mastering.

Some years ago the tape-to-disk process was considered by many to be the first step in the record pressing production process, rather than the last step in the creative process.

However, as the multi-track syndrome took hold, producers began

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