

SONGWRITERS' ASSOCIATION

MAY 1980 □ NEWSLETTER 3

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Ron Patton (A. P. R. A. matters & Royalties)

MEMBERSHIP ENQUIRIES: R. BRANDSMA ☎ TEL. 88 4126

2 EDITORIAL

It's a funny game, this newsletter business. For three months you scream for articles while all our members are having simultaneous writer's cramp. Then, one WEEK before the printing deadline, you get flooded with enough material for several issues. Ahh well....

This issue sees the first of what I hope will be regular features in this newsletter. Russell Zimmer starts off our book review section, and a most useful introductory feature on recording at home. Peter Shaw has dug up some fascinating statistics on the music industry, and our own reporter-at-large, Tom Louch, presents an interview giving us an insight into the publishing game.

Thanks to all contributors - keep it up.
To the "silent majority" - you don't HAVE to wait to be asked for a contribution - send it now to me at 1 Jasper rd., Kalarama, 3766, or pass it on to Tom, Rudy or me at the next meeting.

Keep those hook lines coming,
Yt.

NEW MEMBERS

The following new members have joined us up to the date of publication. We welcome them to the Association.

| | |
|-----------------|------------------|
| Debbie BLASHKI | Marianne HOWES |
| G.R. BOONELL | Jocelyn KING |
| Michael COUSINS | Maureen LAUER |
| Alex FAZAKAS | Francis MCGOUGH |
| Lory FOX | Frank PARKER |
| Kym FURLONG | Anne SCEID |
| Brian GESSELL | Andea STEER |
| Marcus GREEN | Alexander TAIFER |
| Ken HALLAM | Richard TREMBATH |
| Lewis HOUSE | |



A WORD FROM THE CHAIR

During the past month we have progressed a little further in our Association. It now seems likely that at long last our official constitution is to be established. However, I should like at this time to remind all members as to the purpose of our Association. I think you will agree that it is to bring together people who share a common interest. We can share our knowledge, experience, and also our problems, and we can all gain from this sharing.

If we are able through the Association to achieve success with our songs, whether as individuals or in collaboration with other members, then the benefits will be even greater. However, let us not forget that the Association consists of many members. Whenever the name "Songwriters' Association of Australia" is used, ALL of us are represented, and at no time should that title be used to gain an advantage for oneself unless approved by the other members. On that basis it should also be pointed out that any information passed on to a member, but ultimately addressed to the Songwriters' Association, should be passed on to all of the members during one of our meetings.

This is our third Newsletter. At the present time it is the only means of communication between us and a number of those members in the country or interstate. It is suggested that those members use the Newsletter as a link by sending letters, queries, suggestions etc. to our Editor, Yt, for publication. All contributions are welcome and we might all learn from each others' songwriting experiences - good or bad. It is also an excellent venue for finding collaboration partners.

Till next time,
Tom Louch.

SERVICES

A range of services is currently being offered to our Members. This list will be expanded as resources permit.

- **Demos:** Recorded on the most modern multi-track equipment with skilled engineers and musicians at prices much lower than elsewhere.
- **Manuscripts:** From lead sheets to full arrangements by a M.A.G.A. Member. These can be prepared from your own tapes; cassettes or rough manuscripts from just \$15 per song.
- **Collaboration Sessions:** Lyric writers can get together with composers for the mutual benefit of both.
- **Legal Advice:** Members can receive free legal advice on matters pertaining to their works.
- **Tape Library:** A library of Members' original songs has been established and will be available to interested parties such as record companies and producers.
- **Airplay:** Your songs can be broadcast on our Association program on 3CR.
- **News Information:** This bulletin will be circulated every month - FREE to all Members.

SOUND ADVICE from RUSSELL

When presenting a tape of your songs to a publisher, record company or whoever, it pays to ensure that your recording is of the best possible quality. If the people we play it for are impressed, our chances of success are so much better.

Although people in the industry would be expected to recognise potential in a song regardless of the recording quality, they will subconsciously respond more favourably to a clear, bright tape than to a hissy, muddy recording. This would seem obvious, but I have seen unfavourable reactions to a poorly recorded song swing to an enthusiastic response when the same song is presented on a clearer tape. And this from a recording engineer/musician in a renowned city studio!

There are many influential people in the industry who are not musically trained or technically aware. They hear your tapes but have little imagination when it comes to visualising a finished product from your basic recording demo. There is only one thing you can do about this: make sure your tape is of the highest possible standard.

Bear in mind another point. You have invested a lot of money in instruments, recorder and other equipment. You have also invested a lot of TIME in writing and presenting your song. That in itself represents a lot of money. Is it wise economy to spend all this time, effort and money completing a demo on a tape costing only perhaps \$1?

Cassettes all look the same, but as in anything else, you get what you pay for. A tape costing 90c can not possibly compare with one costing \$6 or more. Try recording your song on a cheap cassette, and then again on a more expensive one. You'll be amazed at the difference when they are played back. The expensive one will sound clearer, brighter, louder, have less tape "hiss", fewer audible speed variations (wow & flutter) - all in all, it will absolutely kill the cheapie.

PTO.

Don't go into debt trying to solve this problem, just bear in mind that the cassette tape format is probably the poorest quality recording system available today compared to other formats. It is never used by studios unless at the specific request of the client - so we have to help it sound as good as we can. OK, you say - How?

In the next article we will look at some practical hints on recording at home with a cassette machine for best possible results. Til then - good luck & good recording.

Kevin Zinner

INTERVIEW by TOM LOUCH

Interview with Helen Fayman, Tumbleweed Music

Helen has been in the publishing industry for several years and used to work for Image Publishers. Her role at Tumbleweed is to listen to and select songs for marketing for the recording industry. Helen has offered her advice to members. Any member is welcome to ring her should they have any questions about publishing. However, please remember that she is very busy and will not have the time to answer irrelevant questions. On behalf of all of us, thanks to Helen for the offer.

- Q. What do you do with songs submitted by unknown songwriters?
- A. We listen to all demo-tapes sent to us and if we feel that a song has merit, we will try to get an artist interested in the song for recording. If it is accepted we ask the songwriter to sign a contract with us.
- Q. What sort of contract do you have for the songwriter?
- A. Our contract is for a period of 3 years and any unpublished work by the songwriter comes into the contract. If we get any of the songs recorded during this time, then those songs are under our contract for the life of the copyright.

Q. How do you get an artist interested in a song?

A. This usually involves a lot of work on our part. We must present the songs to the artist through their agent or recording companies. We will push the song as best we can and that is why the publisher asks for a percentage of the royalties if the song gets recorded.

Q. What percentage do you take?

A. We take 40% of the royalties due to the songwriter. The money is paid to us and we pay the songwriter his/her share of 60%.

Q. Could the songwriter do the work of the publisher and thereby collect all the royalties due?

A. Yes, of course this could be done. However publishers usually have connections which the songwriter does not have, and therefore the song is far more likely to have a chance to be recorded. We also have connections on the overseas market and will try to sell the song overseas, thereby earning far more money for the song than if it were confined to the Australian market.

Q. How do you prefer to receive demo-tapes?

A. We prefer to have the tapes sent to us through the post. Our time is valuable to us and we do have allocated times to listen to tapes. If someone walks in with a tape, or even to sing a song to us, we do not wish to be impolite - so we may listen - but we would much rather listen to the songs in the time we allocate.

Q. Do you ever use lyrics on their own?

A. We do have musicians who sometimes ask us for lyrics but this happens very rarely. Therefore we cannot really use lyrics on their own. In America they have large workshops where musicians and lyric writers get together and often come up with fantastic songs.

(At this point the interview was interrupted so that I could explain about our songwriters' association)

Q. Would you in future refer people who send lyrics to your company to the Association?

A. I shall be happy to do so and think it is a great idea.

8 Q What about the demo-tapes - what sort of quality do you look for?

A. We do NOT expect an elaborate demo-tape, in fact, a simple recorded tape is often easier for us in regards to where we may use it. As long as we can hear the melody and the lyrics we are happy to listen to the tapes. Some tapes are very obscure as to the song, and the song should not be longer than 3 minutes.

STATISTICS PSHAW

"Are you writing for the market or yourself?"

The largest category of music played or sold is pop, or rock'n'roll, which accounts for 85%-90% of world sales. The definition of pop music is any music that is created for a large audience and is marketed accordingly by that industry. 80% of pop records are bought by people under the age of 30 years, and 75% of these people are aged between 12 and 20 years old.

The life of a record (single) is between 60 and 180 days, and the percentage of hits (records that make the top 40) is 8% of a year's record releases.

-Simon Frith, "The Sociology of Rock" 1978

"Are Australians being ripped off in the recording game?"

92% of record sales derive from recordings of works made overseas. As these imports are under contract to the major companies (6) and the major companies are owned by overseas, larger companies, 92% and more of the profits of the recording industry is going out of the country. *

This is estimated, including royalties and concerts, to be \$1,000,000 a week. **

*I. A. C. Report 1975

**Ron Tudor 1979

CLASSIFIEDS

Dreaming of owning a 32 track studio to produce your songs? I haven't got one, but how about a stereo open reel machine with sound-on-sound facilities, which lets you record an instrument or voice, then add several more instruments/voices until you sound like a complete band. I have such a device for sale. After 10 years hard creative work, it's a bit worn around the edges, but can still give good results with a PATIENT operator.
\$50 - yes \$50 makes it a songwriter's delight. If interested contact RUSSELL ZIMMER A/H 704 6528.

CONTACTS

Ear to the ground Department

* COULD BE WORTH YOUR WHILE TO WRITE A SONG ABOUT PHAR LAP, WHO KNOWS - IT COULD BE ANOTHER 'PALESTINE ADIOS' SUCCESS STORY!

* HERE'S AN OVERSEAS PRODUCER WHO SAYS HE CAN RECOGNISE GENUINE TALENT ON A HOME DEMO.
VINCE MONTANA IS YOUR MAN - 203 WEST 6TH AVENUE, CHERRY HILL, NEW JERSEY, 08002, U.S.A.

* "VENUS+MARS" - GREAT UK. GROUP, APPARENTLY LACKS ONLY A REALLY COMMERCIAL SONG TO ROCKET THEM TO THE TOP. GOT ONE? TRY GRAHAM SCULTER, OF TABITHA MUSIC, 39 CORDERY RD, EXETER EX2 9DJ, UK.

* RELIGIOUS OR CHORAL WORKS CAN BE HARD TO PLACE.
TRY: SHAWNEE PRESS INC, DELEWARE GAP, PA 18327. SEND CASSETTE + LYRIC SHEET TO LEWIS KIRBY JR. THEY ALSO PUBLISH FOLK, GOSPEL, METHODIC POP, MOR AND COUNTRY.

NOW THE NEWS ...

When Richard Trembath, the Editor of the "Trotting Weekly", realised that Lalace Adios would soon win his 100th race, he knew it would be a world record. The thought of a record in a different sense must have set the wheels spinning - and a set of lyrics was born. Now to find a composer. Richard went to Ron Tudor, who passed him on to Ron Baton, who then steered him on to Rudy Brandsma.

Rudy, man of action that he is, immediately sat down and wrote the music. The rest is history. Within a week 3MP and 3UZ were playing the unfinished demo tape. Such was the interest that a publishing company (Aussie Music Publishers) and a record company (Trend Records) were formed to launch the record. The time between writing and record release was 17 days - a record?

The first pressing of 1000 records sold out in one week, so another 1000 were rushed out - and it's still selling.

Who said "it can't be done!" ??

The Association is delighted to welcome a new member - Savvas Christopoulos - a solicitor with interest and experience in the music business. Any member who needs advice on legal and copyright matters should see Savvas, who has volunteered his services in an honorary capacity.

Keep your ears open for news of our forthcoming social evening - winning, dining and sweet sweet music!

We are about to announce details of a songwriting competition for school students. A prize fund has generously been donated by John D'Arcy-Hickey, and details are being organised now.

BOOK REVIEW with Russell Zimmer

A recent trip to the library produced two books which I thought would be of considerable interest to members. The first concerns those of us with some musical ability who wish to present a cassette of themselves performing their songs to the recording industry, or at club meetings. If you can play a little guitar, piano or any accompanying instrument and can also sing, you will be no doubt trying to capture that sound on your cassette recorder or possibly open-reel machine.

But it soon becomes obvious that there is more to it than you first thought. Perhaps you wonder how to get the best results out of the equipment at your disposal, but don't know where to begin to look.

"Home Recording for Musicians", by Craig Anderton, concentrates entirely on this subject. The author has obviously been through the above problems, and by learning the hard way, offers much experience to the songwriter/performer wanting to attempt the best possible presentation without going broke buying studio gear.

By showing how a little initiative can be used, the book lets us turn our kitchen into a percussion section with the assistance of a willing friend.

The book covers all aspects of typical recorders used by musicians at home, but concentrates mainly on the open-reel machine - no matter how cheap a model.

Only with such a machine can maximum flexibility be achieved in getting those sounds down on tape. Such built-in characteristics as higher tape speed and wider tape (compared to cassettes) immediately guarantee better quality recordings, while the ease of editing the open-reel tape makes the end result so much more professional and listenable. If you are lucky enough to have access to a sound-on-sound machine, you'll find ideas on using it to make successful "one-man-band" recordings.

P.T.O.

RUDY RECOMMENDZ



If you possess the songwriter's dream machine - a 4 track synchronising recorder, such as the now famous TEAC series, then this book is a must. Above all, I recommend it because of the inspiring way the author approaches the subject. I wanted to try out the ideas with my songs and recorder as soon as I had finished the book.

It is available from Allans Music by ordering. The book is published by Music Sales Corp. 33 West 60th Street, New York. At around \$12 it is great value.