

RPM WOULD LIKE TO BE
AMONG THE MANY WHO
WISH A&M A HAPPY
5TH YEAR AND THANK
YOU FOR 5 YEARS OF
ENCOURAGEMENT
AND SUPPORT



**5th
Anniversary**

SPECIAL SECTION

A&M-Five years later



A STATE OF EUPHORIA???

Is there a state of euphoria within the Canadian recording industry? The people at A&M Canada believe one exists within their camp and they're continually working on it. Call their head office on any given day and you immediately enter the wide wonderful world of A&M. Probably the most important and least recognized of any record company is their "hello" gal. That voice is your first introduction to the record company and she has the power to "turn you off" or "on." A&M boasts two such gals. Their head office switcher, Madge Wiseman, and Lorna Richards the voice that leads you into the inner sanctum of the label's publishing, A&R and press operation, affectionately known as Madison House.

Now that we've established an opener, let's go back to when it all began. Canada you say.....the land of snow and Johnny Cash? You'd have to be out of your skull to want to set up a label operation in Canada. A lot of people thought this way back in 1969 and 70. But A&M's International Director, Dave Hubert, was convinced there was more than snow and country record buyers in Canada. They had opened overseas, in England, and that had proven to be a good move. But Canada, with a population of only 22 million spread across one of the largest countries in the world, could almost boggle the mind. After all it was a well circulated rumour that the city of Philadelphia sold as many records as did all of Canada. Come on Hubert, be honest about it. You were peddling easy listening records.....sure, you had a giant with Herb Alpert and the Tijuana Brass but you hadn't even discovered the Carpenters back then. How cum....Canada?

"We were as you know, with Quality Records in Canada, and I feel in a very general way that most Canadian licensees of American companies really don't have to do much more than get the records out and sit back with their hands folded because there is so much strong promotion done in the border-line cities on the stateside that they can look awfully good if the American company has hits. Obviously, and I'm not going to put down Quality Records, but I'm just saying that, as a general formula, this has happened time and time again, particularly with American independents who make a license deal in Canada and the Canadian licensee is able to sort of really ride on the coattails of what's done in America. I'm not saying that they all do that. Some of them, from time to time, become aggressive and start to do their own thing." Well okay, so you weren't satisfied with what was going on in Canada. You obviously researched the market and found that aggressiveness came in small bags. Could you be more aggressive?

"We had aspirations far beyond that, in setting up the Canadian operation. When we started, one of the prime considerations was to find a Canadian who could head it up and, right from when we opened the doors, to try and find and develop Canadian talent, which was exactly what we did when we opened England. Our philosophy has always been that if we're only going to exploit the masters produced by A&M in America, then we don't need a wholly-owned subsidiary, we

just need a licensee. But, if we really are serious about developing local talent for exploitation in the market as well as globally then, of course, we need our own operation."

Before we get into who was to head up the A&M Canadian operation, let's zero in on Jerry Moss, the "Big M" of A&M and find out if he had ever been out of the label's ivory tower. Come on Jerry, did you really think Canada was ready for an independent



Gerry Lacoursiere - Vice President A&M Records of Canada Ltd.

thrust? "Sure I did. I think the closeness and the musical tastes of the Canadian population to the American population and a few items which was primarily our folk catalogue, our rock catalogue and certainly our English catalogue, would be strong enough to generate enough sales to make the proposition worthwhile." Did you really know Canada? "Yes, from a business standpoint and we had a very good association with Quality Records who had licensed our lines for a number of years. We had a very fine working relationship with both George Keane and George Struth."

Now we flash over to Hubert's corner, as Moss waits breathlessly for his turn. Alright Dave Hubert, nothing can deter you. It's Canada and you won't settle for Tasmania and, to rub salt into the wound (that's how some of the Canadian observers viewed it) you picked a Canadian to run the operation. Why?

"Jerry Moss and I felt right from the beginning that that was absolutely essential. I feel that it would really be very ass-backwards to take someone from America, as some other American record companies do. Again, I think it's very much down the same line of developing Canadian talent. You find someone who is local and knows the terrain to deal with the people." Over to you Moss, and I'm not telling you what Hubert said, what about Gerry Lacoursiere running your Canadian company? "We said we have to get started in Canada and we

have to get the right person to run it, and that's when Dave Hubert and Bob Fead, came up with Gerry Lacoursiere. Gerry was born a Canadian but had worked within the American record industry with Liberty Records. After talking with Gerry, he just seemed to be perfect, and has been. Our companies have to be run by nationals. We have to be, and I hesitate to use the term, but I believe we want to be good citizens."

The shy one of A&M, the "A" side of the company, Herb Alpert, was in Toronto on a recent tour and we had the opportunity to discuss A&M and the Canadian operation. He was asked how he felt about Gerry

Lacoursiere. His answer: "Gerry who....?" Of course, we're kidding, Alpert may be the silent part of the business activity at A&M but he's obviously a bottom line man and he knows what his primary function is - talent. "There's a lot of talent in Canada", he said, "and we're looking to break some of it internationally. But talent doesn't necessarily have to have a country identification about it. The country of origin is not considered an important factor. We look for talent that will be accepted around the world, and we happen to think that Canada has a lot of talent to offer the world." Well, Alpert sure punctuated his remarks with what could be the biggest find of the year - Gino Vannelli, who this year won a Juno as Most Promising New Male Singer, and he happens to be an Alpert prodigy.

So, A&M opened its Canadian doors, but really all they had was Herb Alpert and the Tijuana Brass and Gerry Lacoursiere. What do you think Dave Hubert, wasn't it a big gamble? "No, I don't think it was that big a gamble. The point in time was very interesting. When we set up our Canadian operation it was just at the time when A&M was in a transition from the MOR acts only, into more contemporary pop music, and there was a nice nucleus of sales with our MOR acts which was a good basis for founding an operation. And, let me correct you, it wasn't just Herb Alpert and the Tijuana Brass. There were a good number of acts that had very decent success in Canada, mainly because

they had very decent success in America, not because they had been terribly well exploited or promoted or because they had even gone to Canada. We had some very well established acts and I think Quality deserves credit for having established them." Alright Moss, it's your turn, weren't you apprehensive about moving into Canada? "Not really, because I think Gerry exuded such confidence and, remember, we did something that was very unique. He was working with a wide variety of companies to try to give us the best service and also to gain some knowledge about how these companies worked and gained some experience in the marketplace. I think, in retrospect, he discovered all the good points and all the bad points about a lot of those companies and how we could end up trying to be as efficient as possible in marketing our product in Canada."



PHIL OCHS GREATEST HITS ???

Breaking Canada wasn't easy. It was a challenge and Lacoursiere used every trick in the book to establish himself. What better way to bring attention to a company than to establish the label had hits? Lacoursiere bowed the Canadian scene with the "Greatest Hits" package. He released the "Greatest Hits" of Herb Alpert, The Sandpipers, Wes Montgomery, Baja Marimba Band and Phil Ochs. He followed this up with an A&M sampler called "Cream Of The Cream" which illustrated various albums even to a greater degree. One of the first releases for Canada was an album by Shawn Phillips and, get this, the initial order was for one hundred albums. My, how the scene has changed, Phillips is now one of the big moneymakers for A&M and so have many other artists Lacoursiere allowed releases for in Canada.

Lacoursiere has a great deal of freedom, making decisions about acquiring local talent and releases. Says Hubert: "We leave our Canadian operation very much in the hands of Gerry Lacoursiere. We give him a great deal of freedom and license to make his own decisions. It's really very exciting, in the sense that it's not the sort of situation that he has to check with Hollywood when he wants to make a major decision. He really doesn't. He's given a lot of flexibility to make decisions on his own — and he has made some very mature ones." The profit picture has been an expanding one in Canada. They made money on the Canadian operation from day one, so we go back to the old question of apprehension in the beginning. Okay, Hubert, you're making lots of money in Canada. The chips have fallen pretty well in place, so really, you wouldn't admit if you were apprehensive in the beginning even if you were? Well, that got a

rise out of Hubert: "Now, wait a minute, there was certainly some apprehension, not about Gerry, but there were apprehensions about how heavy we should go in. There was a lot of soul searching as to whether we should open up our own distribution in Toronto and Montreal. That sort of grew naturally. As you know, historically, we didn't go in with a wallop the first six months — to open our own distribution branches. That grew naturally. We started with a distribution deal with Capitol and London and it developed, as the right situations presented themselves. We've had many, many approaches to manufacture and distribute some pretty important labels from America and England in Canada, and we very much resisted those deals because I have a philosophy about this, that we don't want to take the efforts of our good people in Canada, I'm not speaking saleswise or the distribution branches. I'm speaking of the promotion level. We don't want to take those people's efforts away from A&M, Ode and Dark Horse product and spread them too thinly over too much product. Sure, we take on labels for distribution, but that's a different matter."

Alpert, Hubert and Moss aren't familiar with nor concerned about Canadian apathy. What Moss sees is "That you have had some success in the international market, particularly with BTO, but quite frankly, it's tougher and tougher to break acts altogether. I think if you put the Canadian roster of acts up against those of other countries, you're not doing too bad. I think you have been breaking on the average of five or six acts internationally each year. Examples like Terry Jacks, Anne Murray, our own Gino Vannelli, BTO and others. I think Canadians are pretty strongly entrenched. I know everybody is impatient. They feel there isn't enough of this or of that, but I think if you add up all the Canadian talent that's doing well around the world, it's a sizeable roster and I think it's something that any company would be proud to be involved with."

Well, now you've heard it from the ivory tower. Who is this guy Lacoursiere? He talks like a Detroiter, he does business like an American and he has both feet planted in his native country - Canada. Here's a television view of Lacoursiere as he was interviewed on a recent RPM Music Week:



LACOURSIERE TELLS ALL !!

I can relate to the very first day we opened here in Canada. We had myself, Liam Mullan and two girls in the office — and two desks, because the rest hadn't come in yet. Of course, I had a lot of doubts at that point, and I'm sure a lot of people in the industry felt that there was no way that A&M as a

small label — with what we had going at that time — could really survive. It was probably six or seven weeks after when we received a record called "Song of Joy" by Miguel Rios. You can't believe the excitement that was there. Even the girl that was answering the phone would get all excited about hearing the Miguel Rios record on the air, and that basically, as far as I'm concerned, really set us up and put us in business and showed us that we could do something and make something happen in Canada.

You're a Canadian — and I understand you were picked to head up the A&M operation because of your expertise in the American method of record operations.

I began in the record business in 1957 in Detroit with Decca Records as a stock clerk and after nine months went on the road as a salesman. Unfortunately, or fortunately, I was such a bad salesman, they made me a promotion man — and I think that basically turned out to be my mission in life. I got a kick out of taking a record, I believe in — not because it was happening in Los Angeles or any other market, but that I personally believed in, and going out and getting somebody to play it, and then finding out later that the consumer or the mass public was buying it — and that it was a hit record.

Isn't that exactly what you brought into Canada with you. Some people are saying — 'I don't know what the hell it is about A&M. They seem to take a record and they'll run with it and get somewhere with it.' Isn't this the philosophy you passed down onto your promotion staff?

Sure, basically, we had some good promotion people before we came to Canada, but I think they were so used to looking at what is happening in the States and then working on it and not going on what they believed in. So, I tried to find people who were excited about music to begin with, who were not afraid to make a commitment and go out and follow through on it, and I think we have been very fortunate to get the people we have had from Liam Mullan to a Doug Chappell today, a Bob Roper, a Bruce Bissell, and that is what makes A&M, not the name on the front door.

You have a real network of promotion people that would take a Miguel Rios, and although you didn't have a top forty play in a major centre you did manage to sell over a hundred thousand copies of the single?

It's still selling. In fact, it's one of our best catalogue items. I was looking at the computer sheets last Friday, and since Friday (Jan. 18) a year ago January 31st, we had sold something like 3500 singles and that is good catalogue product. We've never destroyed a record. We've never had to break them up. It just continues selling.

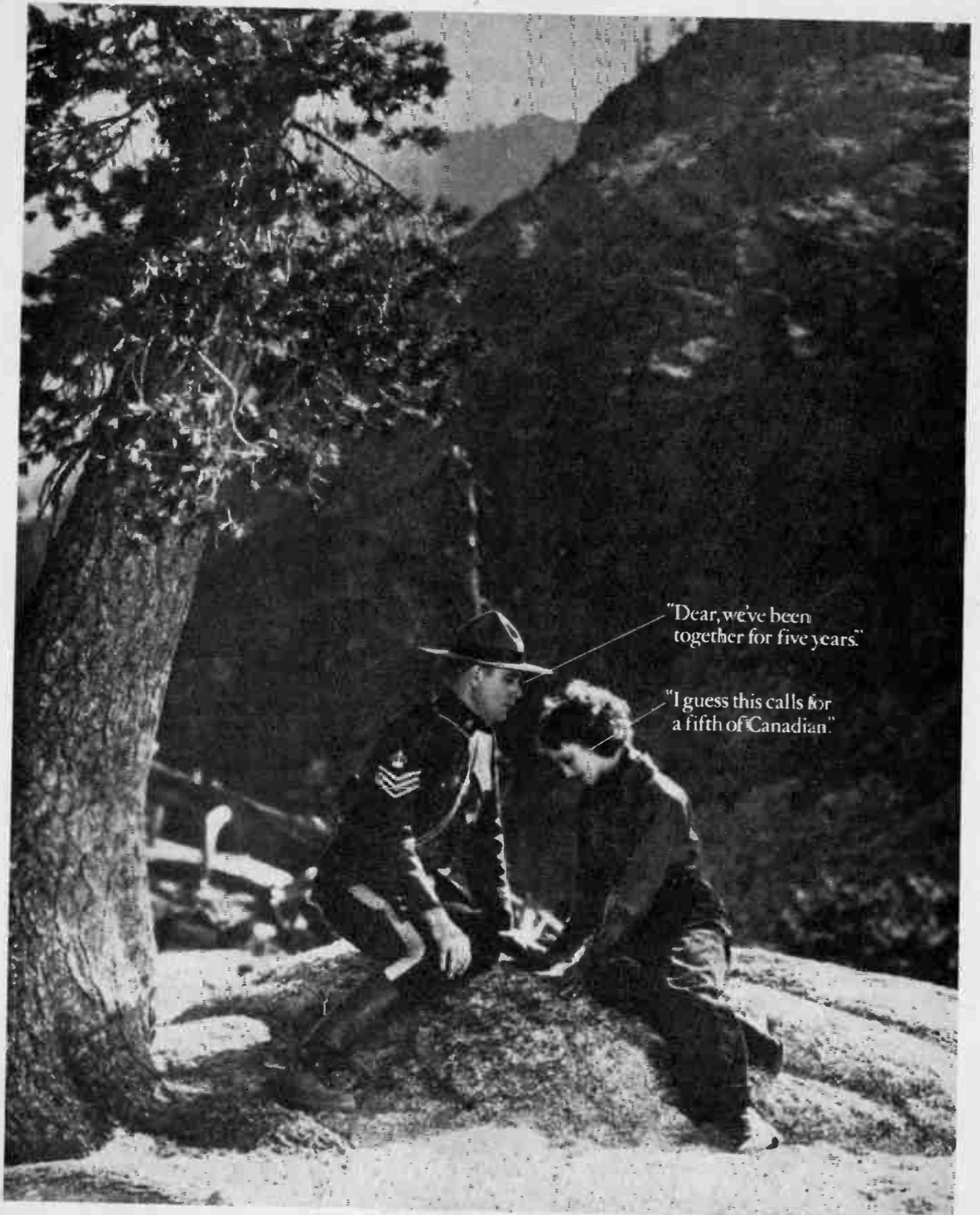
When did you first get involved in the feeling that there was potential in Canadian product?

When we opened up, Jerry Moss' philosophy, and I concurred with it, was that if we were going to be a company here, we had to be a total company. By a total company, I mean that we have to create something. The first nine months we were opened we didn't do anything with Canadian content. Our first was a Canadian record by Tundra — a record called "Band Bandit", and it turned out to be a top ten record in most markets. That was our commitment at that point, and we kind of extended it to the point where we have eleven Canadian acts on the roster, and we feel we should be able to break with them all. Unfortunately the

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"I guess this calls for
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consumer isn't ready for everything yet, but we're working on it.

Do you feel the climate is getting better for the acceptance by the Canadian public for Canadian artists?

I believe so. I look at some of our sales figures, for example, Valdy, and look at him selling 35,000 albums. They're not buying him because he's Canadian — they're buying him because he's talented. I think we probably have more talent in Canada, per capita, than there is in the U.S.

Do you find that it would probably be to your benefit to establish a certain number of artists in your roster and develop them rather than going out and signing, say up to twenty-four acts?

Our initial philosophy was to get six acts and really do the best job we can. Unfortunately, in this business, it's very hard to say no, when you hear something you're excited about. We started with one and went up to six and finally went up to eleven. At this point, because of the economic situation, we're looking at the artists we do have with the idea of trimming down our roster again to maybe six or seven and doing a more thorough job — taking the same amount of dollars we're spending now, with eleven acts, and spending it on a smaller number, but giving everybody a fair shot and doing a complete promotion job on them.

Will you still remain in that area of pop top forty and country?

That's the game plan at this point.

Talking about the economic problem, supposedly we've entered the year of the crunch — is the business in trouble?

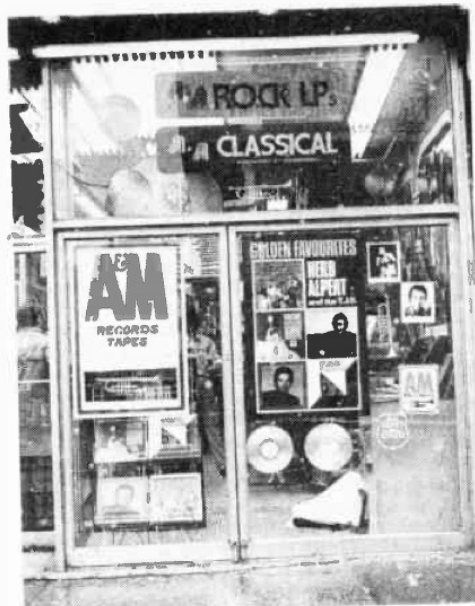
There was an article in a recent U.S. trade that said the record industry is probably the only recession-proof business in the world, and I have to believe that. Just recently I was speaking to A&M's managing director in England, and as everybody knows England has been going through a lot of economic problems, and they've just come off their best year in their history, and I think when you have economic problems, the consumer doesn't have the dollar to go out there and have a steak dinner, so he looks for other forms of entertainment, and if you stop and think about it, a record for \$7.29 is the cheapest form of entertainment you can have. It's not only the cheapest it's the most lasting, and if you go to a movie tonight, you've had it, that's it — whereas you can have Frank Sinatra, the Beatles, the biggest names in the record business singing for you in your living room, at your beck and call, and it's good for four and five years.

That's good propaganda, whether it be true or not. I happen to agree with you. But you know there are some people in the industry who will panic and go the opposite way. It's too bad you can't spread this philosophy over the industry generally.

Well, we're going to do what we didn't do last year, on top of what we did last year. There's a saying, I don't know where it really came from but it goes something like this: 'When the going gets tough, the tough get going', and I believe that this is what's going to make a record company in the coming year — if they're going out putting out the extra energies, working everything a little harder, a little better commitment, a little strong commitment, it's going to be a tremendous year for the record industry in 1975.

How does Gerry Lacoursiere view the sales and promotion departments?

My philosophy has always been that if you have someone you put him in a position of responsibility, and you let him do it his way.



A typical A&M retail store display at Toronto's A&A Store.

For example, Doug Chappell, our present national promotion manager, is totally different from Pete Beauchamp, but they're both very effective. They run their people the way they think it should be done, and they report back to me. I don't tell them they have to 'do this today', but we communicate. If something happens at 1PM, for example, CKGM gives the Cat Stevens single a number, right away it's on the phone to me and Joe Summers, our national sales manager. In turn, Joe calls our national distributors to make sure we have records in the store, enough backup product at the branch level



Inside the store are A&M's Joe Summers, A&A's Ray Rosenberg and Hank Kotch. — and it's basically a free-flowing communications. We don't have a set time for meetings. My door is always open. If the kid in the warehouse has a problem that he wants to discuss with me, he can walk in anytime. He doesn't have to make an appointment. There are people coming in and out constantly, and to me, it's free-flowing and it creates excitement — that someone can come in and say right away exactly what he feels instead of waiting an hour later because he doesn't have an appointment.

It's a total involvement company in personality as well?

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WE'LL MAKE THE RECORDS

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We're trying to create the family atmosphere. We have our annual summer picnic for our employees and artists, managers and producers. We also have our annual winter carnival. It's just a process of getting everybody together, totally involved and keeping everybody on a first name basis.

It's not really that smooth though - really. When does Lacoursiere get tough? If you have a single you think should be on the charts and your guys can't get it on, what do you do?

At that point, I'll go out and see the radio station guys myself. My background has always been promotion and I still get kicks going out there and talking up a record and trying to convey my belief to that program director, and I always tell my people that if they have trouble with any of the programmers, let me know and I'll get in touch with them myself.

Has that ever backfired on you? Have you ever found that the attitude has been 'well the local can't do it so they brought in the President?'

I've never heard that. I think most of the stations react like 'what are you doing here?' I really care. That's why I go there. I believe in the record. I think it's a hit record and I show them what proof I might have, other than my belief. That gives me a chance to sell, and I think they admire that.

Has it paid off for you?

Definitely. You can talk to the programmers and if they're having a problem with A & M, they can let me know - not to go above the local promotion man's head, but just to convey first hand what the problem is.

So you're really not upstaging your promotion man?

No, it's just to show a team effort. If it takes myself, or even Jerry Moss, if he's in town. We're involved, we're in the record business, that's our only business and if we don't believe in what we're doing, how can we expect the programmer to believe in it.

Do you also get involved in this way on the retail level?

We try to get involved with everybody. Our idea of selling or merchandising product is

not just going in and talking to the buyer, and selling him on it, but I think you have to sell everybody within the store - if you have a Strawbs promotion or a Herb Alpert promotion, we try to convey to our salesmen that you have to sell everybody. I like to see our personnel working on a Saturday at the retail end, and I think I would get a kick out of it too - just to get the feel out of what's happening. My biggest thrill would be to just be in the store when someone buys an A & M album, especially when an unknown artist that we've been trying to break - like a Super Tramp, that we're just really starting to come with. To me, that's kicks.

Does this work right across the country?

In theory it works right across the country. In some areas, it's much closer than other areas, but we're always striving to do it a little bit better. We don't sit on our laurels. Just because we're up fifty percent over our previous year, we don't stall. We take the attitude that we're still not doing a total job.



LIAM MULLAN CAUGHT ON FAST !!

You know, meeting record people over the years, one becomes hardened to "the same old bullshit." The hype artists, the overnight promotion wizards, and the little giants who lock themselves up inside their comfortable insular company image. Many have that "I'm alright Jack" attitude and most of them end up being "down a quart" after facing the realities of business. Not so with A&M. We should say otherwise in a special A&M issue? Enemies? A&M's got them, from retailers to programmers. Friends? They've got a lot of them as well, but admirers is where they shine. Sure, they hold the line on deals which irks some retailers and they breathe pretty hotly on programmers when they feel they're getting a raw deal, so they get a few ding-dong programmers with a chip on their shoulder. But it all balances out pretty good, because A&M have the hits which when attached to persuasive promotion and hard selling is a good winning combination.

Before we get too syrupy about A&M we thought we would dig up an old employee, actually one of the first, Liam Mullan, and see if he could throw some dirt on the pile.

You had a great deal of experience in the record business and had moved into radio as music director for AM and FM at CKGM, what attracted you to the new Canadian operation of A&M?

I was attracted mostly by the image that the label had. Cocker and the Carpenters were both breaking big. I also liked the feel of the label as an independent and felt they had more success than most North American independent labels. The English acts they had licensed were the acts that were really happening big.



Liam Mullan, now with Island Records, was one of the first A&M promo men.

Did Lacoursiere strike you as being an aggressive, no-holds-barred, type of businessman? Did you bend or break the rules in the beginning to get your own way with the promotion of product you felt deserved it?

Lacoursiere gave me the impression of wanting to understand the Canadian market thoroughly in order to properly merchandise an already well-established line in Canada.

I never really found any rules, we were a small company starting up and we utilized every possible means available to us to break records. "Song of Joy" came along at the right time and I seized it with a vengeance along with Lacoursiere and it went to No. 9 on Cashbox.

The setting was there, inasmuch as we had a label that was constantly giving us new creative acts to work with, so the promotion necessarily demanded finding new channels to introduce the artists to record buyers and radio stations and so on.

What's your opinion of A & M now?

I think it's still probably the most aggressive, family-type independent record company. They fully understand all the ingredients necessary to make, create, and maintain new and established artists.

I'd like to congratulate them on their first five years. They make a healthy and aggressive competitor, which is always good for the record business.

What do you think was your greatest "coup" while with A & M?

There were three things, but without question the greatest was "Song of Joy". The other two major accomplishments were the establishment of Cat Stevens as a best-selling album artist, and the success we had with Procol Harum. Their album "Procol Harum and the Edmonton Symphony" became the group's biggest selling album ever. We lent

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A&M's J.P. Guilbert says thank you to CFOM's Mike Godin for Vannelli single.

considerable energy to making them a major-selling group.

And just think, Mullan isn't even looking for a job. He's safely secure as national promotion manager for Island Records.



DAVID BRODEUR - THE FIRST ABOARD

In keeping with the nostalgic trip, we called David Brodeur who has been with the company since Lacoursiere opened the doors. Come on David, tell us what it's like being one of the pioneers of A&M in Canada.

I was the first guy Gerry hired, and the only one left from those days. I was with Quality prior to joining A&M and, as they were distributors of A&M product, I was aware of the line.

What did you think about going into an English language label with no real roots in French Canada or product?

Well actually, Quality was an English speaking company. They had some French product, but not really. They had sort of gotten out of it, so there wasn't that much of a change. However, the people around me thought I was crazy, going to A&M. But in my mind, A&M had the artists, they had the records, and they looked like they knew what they were doing.

It must have been a major change for you — coming from a company that had a great deal of excitement with chart records and all A&M had was Herb Alpert, The Baja Marimba Band and strictly easy listening product?

Oh sure, but they had begun to pick up new rock acts like Procol Harum and Lee Michaels. As a matter of fact, one of the first albums we released was from a guy named Shawn Phillips, who ended up selling a lot of records in Quebec. I think we are up to 62,000 copies on second contribution.

What did you do first with your new job? Did you build the image of A&M or did you concentrate on the artists?

I think it was everything with a high concentration on selling A&M, including our distributor at the time, London Records, down here. Everything had to be done. I'd wake up in the morning and say 'Okay which of these twenty-two thousand things am I going to start with.' It was very hectic the first year.

Did you have some apprehension at the beginning?

Not apprehension — there was just so much to do, and so much to learn. Gerry was very new at this. He had ideas, some that worked and some that were duds, and I had a lot of ideas, but we tried them. We invested in A&M and we invested in our artists and to me it was



Gino Vannelli Award to CFCF's Andy Forsyth, John Mackay and Mike Kramer.

'an attitude that other people around me didn't have, or didn't seem to have at the time.

What was your average working day?

About the same as it is now — very long hours and very long weeks. I'm totally involved. It's a way of life for me.

Aren't you more involved in a lot of across the board activities with the company?

I've expanded my duties and I think I've been everywhere in Canada except Vancouver. My title is regional marketing manager. Basically what I'm going to be doing is combining whatever I know about promotion and sales and working from that angle. Promotion as you know is the basics of this business. You can have the greatest artists in the world, but unfortunately talent is maybe only fifteen or twenty percent unless that talent is so obvious. It takes people to break artists, and it takes people to sell them and even when they're selling them they have to promote them.

So your new position is allowing you to do work that A&M hasn't done before?

Right, I'm working with rack jobbers, salesmen, promotion men, branch managers, covering places like Regina and Saskatoon, the Maritimes and places that had never before seen anyone from A&M — or any other record company for that matter. They just couldn't believe that a record company thought them important enough to call on, especially a lot of dealers, which I found very surprising.



More A&M thank yous to CKGM's Tom McLean and Greg Stewart.

Is it beginning to pay off?

I'm convinced it is. Just from the sheer fact that we went there and talked to these people. I'm a great believer in secondaries. I think they work. The best example of that is the Maritimes. If you put all those stations together you really have something, particularly with a country record.

Is the company completely autonomous from the parent company?

To a point. Right now we're getting vibes on a group called Super Tramp. We're away ahead of the States on it, in the sense that we're after them, we want them to tour. We don't care if they're going to tour in the States. Take Nazareth for instance — a very unique situation. These guys came here and did a cross Canada tour and went back to England and never once went to the States. It was a Canadian tour by a British act signed to A&M England, but we got the sparks and the vibes on it and we took it from there. Maybe not completely autonomous, but we are independent — not the Canadian branch sort of thing.

A&M does listen to the people who work for them?

Yes, very much so, it works both ways. Lacoursiere keeps saying he's only as good as the people who work for him. He reacts to us and we react to him. It's a two way street. I really can't see myself anywhere else. We're a small compact, very together outfit. I'm still very impressed after five years, and I really can't see the end of it. I

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AND WISHING YOU

MANY MORE

FROM THE GANG AT



GOLDFISH RECORDS

Terry Jacks

Susan Jacks

Chilliwack

Greenfield



The Strawbs with Larry Wilson (CHUM-FM) Marty Onrot and A&M's Bob Roper and Charly Prevost.



Montreal's heavy, Donald Tarlton with Darrell Smart and Dan McCafferty of Nazareth and Polydor's Rory Gallagher.

like the way they think, the way they sign acts. They try to find unique and talented artists. Not necessarily the ones who might sell the most records, but people you can build.

How come A&M haven't got into the French Canadian talent?

It's a very different business in more ways than one. You have to become a specialist in it. First, I think the priority was to do a super number on what we have in English, but I think you can expect A&M to go into that very shortly — and quite seriously. It would be an investment in people, artists and a lot of people's time. It's a totally different record business. It could be two different branches. The French branch and the English branch, and you have to treat it that way.

Don't you think there's a growing resentment in Quebec for foreign owned record companies becoming a part of their own little culture?

Well, I'm looking at the business and I see that right now the hottest act on the street is a group called Beau Dommage. They're on Capitol Records. Capitol really did a number. They trained, and they had a French specialist among their ranks. Pierre Dubord is a French specialist. Michel Tremblay, who is now the promo man is a French specialist — that's all he does. So, it's no longer Capitol Records in Canada in a lot of French Canadian's minds — it's le Disques Capitol. It becomes the French end of Capitol Records, and I think that's what A&M is going to have to do. It's not like the foreign powers, or the Americans coming in and cashing in. Beau Dommage proved a lot of things to a lot of people. The promotion was done the American way. It was like Capitol Records committing themselves to an artist — putting money behind them and putting all the company's efforts behind them, and I think that's the only way it will work. The key is to become specialists in the market. I'm still learning a lot about it. I'm still not a specialist. It's easier for me to sell English records in this market than to sell French records. It's a thing you got to learn. The French record business is just one big family. It's very much to itself. It's very big. There's a lot of labels, there's a lot of artists, there's a lot of records that come out. I just wish English Canada had the same sort of star system going for it. Quebec is ten years ahead of the rest of the country.



JOE SUMMERS "BACK TO BASICS"

There are so many personalities in the A&M camp it would be a sin to miss any one of them. Sure, Lacoursiere laid the foundation but he had to support his house and that's why there's an "All in the family" attitude within the structure of A&M.

Joe Summers. Now there's a heavy. Scared half our readers out of their habit when they saw his mug shot on the cover of RPM (November 9, 1974). Joe's got the rhetoric down pretty good. He mixes a little Detroitism into the company philosophy, reads a lot and comes up with a pretty good evaluation of the situation — "Back to the basics." Summers has applied his American know-how to the Canadian scene. He bought a farm north of Oshawa (he needs it with all the kids he has) and he wields a powerful clout when it comes to sales.

Sitting down and talking with Summers is an experience in itself. An American, he came to Canada with preconceived ideas about the business. He was shocked however, to find that the Canadian industry, boasting a strong similarity with its American counterpart, was a pale imitation. Says Summers: "There was no excitement — no enthusiasm. It was almost like a sin to get excited about anything." It was like a Guy Fox operation for Summers. He began sparking his own company and, although his was only a small part of the industry, there was a mild A&M explosion that quickly spread throughout the industry. The A&M saleswagon was beginning to move.

New and innovative ideas for retail sales. Salesmen who knew their product — or else; a close working relationship with the promotion department; and what emerged was a company with a "total concept for sales, promotion and press and all working toward building a class company." Although the company works as a team, there's still that "Big Daddy" attitude by Summers that shows itself from time to time. Don't talk to Summers about salesmen doing the job

RPM

A SINCERE THANK YOU TO THE STAFF OF A&M AND THE CHIEFS FOR AIDING AND ASSISTING US IN COMPILING THIS SPECIAL SECTION. IT'S A PLEASURE TO WORK WITH PROS. THANKS TO THE ADVERTISERS WHO HELPED MAKE IT POSSIBLE. IT BRINGS THE INDUSTRY TOGETHER.

of promotion men. First off, don't call Summers' boys salesmen: "They're record merchandisers and they should be able to walk into an account and help that man sell more product." He expects the promotion department to look after their end of the business and not stray too far into his territory. Don't talk discount deals with Summers either. "We don't have deals. We have programs. It's the total concept of trying to reach the ultimate goal, whether it be to the consumer or to break an act or whatever. Unfortunately some people believe that a promotion is to buy at a cheap price and sell for \$1.99. That's not a promotion. To me, it has to be a total concept program." Summers is the only national sales manager with a communication line open to the trade (RPM). It's his opinion that the trade paper should be a useful tool for his accounts, and it was through his insistence that RPM, this week, introduced a new "Dealer Aid" service, a weekly feature that will serve to inform retail accounts of weekly single and album releases.



*A&M's National Promotion Chief
Doug Chappell.*



Colin Macdonald, creative genius behind many of A&M's adverts.



TOTAL PROMOTION!!

Promotion! Total promotion is the theme at A&M — if you happen to be in the promotion department which is headed up by Doug Chappell. His team comprises Bob Roper, a runaway from Capitol who found refuge in the A&M camp and has been responsible for solid promotion in the Ontario region; Bruce Bissell, that photo-venture-some little devil who ties it altogether on the west coast; Ron Sinclair, who hustles

the Manitoba and Saskatchewan territories; Jean Pierre Guilbert, the likeable French Canadian whose just chomping at the bit for A&M's entry into the Quebec market; Johanna Raab, the head office cutie who sets the pace for the national team; and Colin Macdonald who displays an even greater creative flair on the ad layout board. How does bossman Chappell work his department? Well, we got him together with our Kate Elliott and after a lot of heavy editing (he just goes on and on and on) she filed the following.

Have you seen any major policy changes during your three years at A & M?

Just our involvement in Cancon. About two years ago, we got heavily into Cancon, we believe in it very strongly.

Do your sales and promotion departments work very closely together?

The rapport between the sales and promotion offices has really been intensified lately. The sales and promotion people are talking a lot more now, making sure that they're covering each other's promotions, so they're not two forces working in opposite directions.

How do you work with the A & R department?

We usually get to hear product maybe one to two weeks before it comes out. In the past we'd get a tape of something maybe a month or two before release and get excited about it, but by the time we got it out to the stations, it was old hat to us and we'd sort of lose our fire on it.

Is it difficult getting Canadian product released in the U.S?

Always. We have to prove Canadian product up here before they'll release it in the states. There's always some factor that seems to prevent a release from being marketable or viable in the U.S. even though it may be a hit up here.

Is that the case with Valdy?

They really don't think there's a market for Valdy in the U.S. We're stymied by it really. We feel he's a superstar now in the field of contemporary folk, he crosses over into MOR and progressive rock stations all across the country. Our sales bear us out that the public has accepted him immensely, but to this date they still haven't released anything on him in the states.

Do you feel isolated from headquarters in L. A.?

No, we don't feel cut off, we're just in the position that England was in six or seven years ago when they had trouble getting world-wide releases on their product. When the British explosion came and there were a few hit acts coming out of A & M England, they began releasing just about everything that England produced. Should we get any

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Gerry Lacoursiere
& the A&M crew**



major breakthrough on an artist, internationally, then I'm sure the door will be fully opened to us.

Why do you think A & M won the Juno award for promotion in 1973?

It's probably the looseness and the music knowledge of all our guys out in the field. I think we come up with some pretty funky promotions sometimes and we really have the feel of the record business - it's an entertainment business, not computers or type-writers.

What procedure do you usually follow when you're promoting a recording artist?

We try to promote artists rather than records. Any longevity comes from making an artist a star rather than in making a record a hit. There are a lot of one-hit wonders in the business and they really don't seem to pay for themselves.

Do you consult with an artist on what kind of promotion you'll give him?

It's up to them as to what their image will be. The prime example is Valdy. Ian Tyson is another one who has a very definite image. Artists like that are very easy to promote. We don't drop artists after one single, one album, if we don't make it on an initial release. It's a long-term project - you don't get an image after one record or even after one hit, it comes after a series.

Do you feel that some artists have hurt themselves by not cooperating as well as they might with their label?

Yes, though when artists are on tour, we take into account many things. For one thing they're on a hell of a time schedule, they're tired, quite often they're bitchy by the time they hit town because they've been up all night traveling. If you get an artist on the tail-end of a tour especially, you know they're probably going to be a little more down than an artist just kicking off a tour. So all that is taken into consideration.

But I think the prime thing for any artist to remember is that when they're dealing with the promotion men for the record company, that they're out there fifty-two weeks a year and the more they're a human being in the eyes of a promotion man, a friend if you want to put it that way, the promotion man's going to feel a little more affinity towards that artist and he'll work a little harder. He's not promoting an artist or just another record, he's promoting a friend. It goes a hell of a long way, friendships and relationships in this business are really the key. A snarky person may come up with a hit record and may become a star, but by and large, I think the longevity of their career is determined by the kind of people they are.

What's your routine procedure for concert promotion?

We have a basic outline that we follow. We have deals that we offer promoters and we work with them very closely. We try to get them to bring our acts to town and when they do, we support them. We try to make the concert a success first of all because we believe that successful concerts sell records. It's not like a one time shot. When an artist comes to town, whether we're billing the artist at that time, or whether it's just an opening act, we still support them. There aren't very many of what we term "free rides."

Every artist on the label deserves the most promotion we can give him or her. If they're on the road, we'll support them to try and sell the concert out and do as much promo-

tion when they get to town as time will permit. We have a very close relationship with all the major promoters across the country and I think they're happy with the deals that we offer them.

Do you have a policy for approaching radio?



How do you deal with radio types? Dave Cousins of the Strawbs - and Lurry Wilson.

Credibility, I think, is the key with radio stations. You can't tell music directors that every record is a hit, because they know that every record put out is not a hit. If we believe that we have a hit when we go to the station with it, and can't prove that it is, then it wasn't a hit to start out with. I think our guys across the country have that relationship with music directors, when they tell them something is happening, the music directors believe them. If he goes out on a limb with you on a record, it's got to be that he believes in it too. You've got to have that credibility, once that's gone, you're pretty well useless as a promotion man.

With the company showing an amazing growth pattern, head office was fast becom-

ing a time bomb. How can you contain all that excitement under one roof (sales, promotion and A&R and press, the latter was just beginning to burgeon). Somehow Lacoursiere secured the funds and bought a house on Madison Avenue in downtown Toronto. Pete Beauchamp, who had come to A&M from Columbia's Montreal operation began in Ontario promotion and graduated into the new position of national promotion manager. It was during his tenure as national promotion manager when A&M won a Juno for Promotion Company of The Year. Anyway, Lacoursiere had a bigger deal for Beauchamp. He moved into Madison Avenue and headed up the A&R operation. Beauchamp knew what he was looking for and what the company would accept but it took him a long time to get into gear. Now, he is starting to see some of his efforts emerge as national "shockers", particularly with Charity Brown's single, "You Beat Me To The Punch", and new album product from Valdy and Ian Thomas. A new Los Angeles produced session by Bruce Miller and the label's latest signing, David George.



NO ROOM FOR FUN & GAMES??

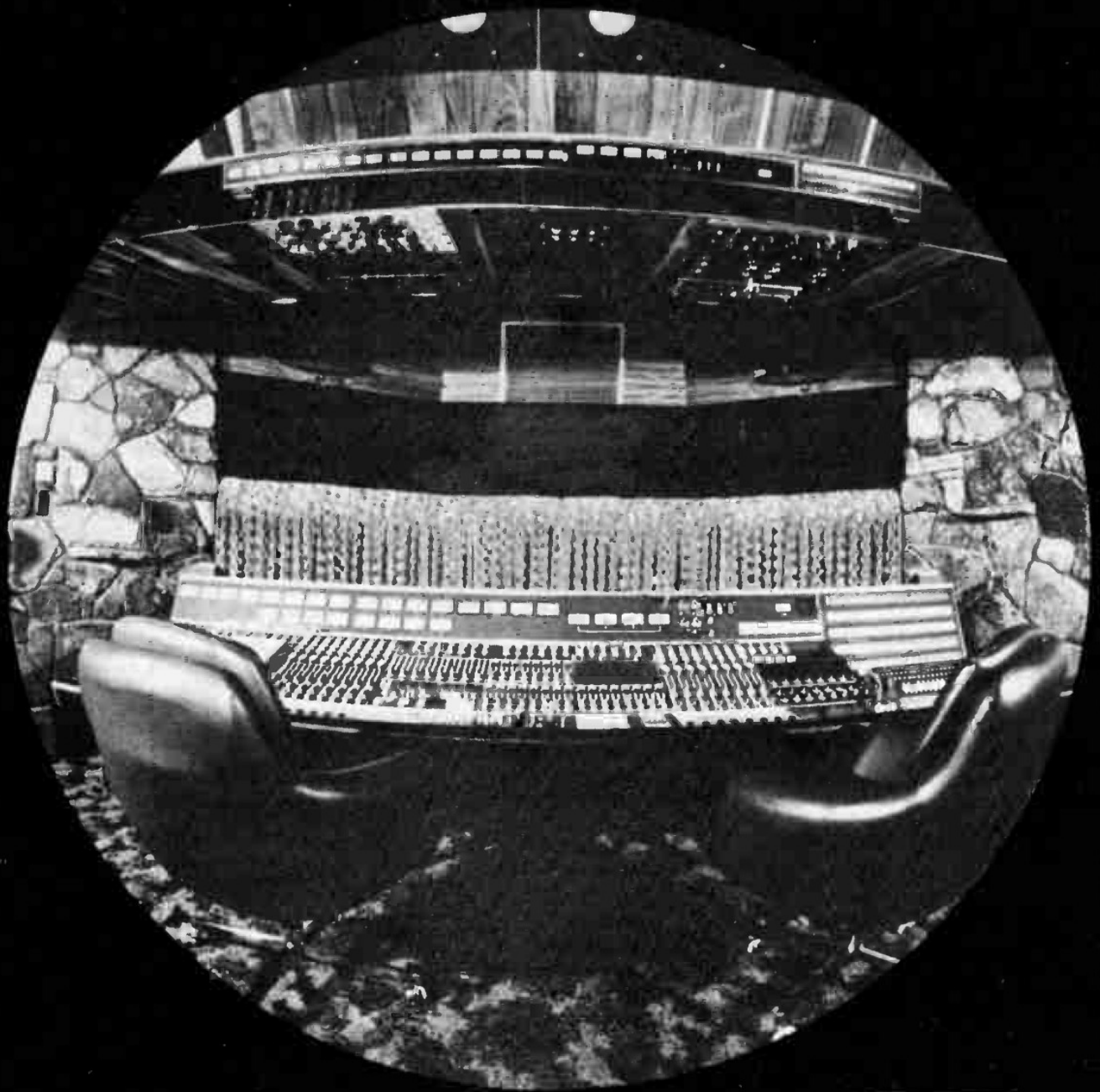
If you're still with us, you might be thinking A&M's is strictly a "bottom line" company with no room for fun and games. Well, it is strictly a "bottom line" company and the fun and games come by accident. In the category of "Now it can be told", combined efforts of A&M's promotion, press and A&R team, left the company image sitting with a short fuse. This energetic group had been informed that Britain's controversial Strawbs were coming to Canada and, because they had created a bit of noise through their single "Part Of The Union", it was decided that the tough union town of Sudbury would be a perfect setting to get the group a foothold in Canada. Elaborate plans were made for a giant reception and parade through downtown Sudbury. Charly Prevost and Doug Chappell spearheaded the "A&M extravaganza" and when the Strawbs and the rest of the A&M crew arrived at Sudbury airport

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A&M's A&R man of the hour, Pete Beauchamp giving Charity Brown's manager, Harry Hinde, some of his valuable time.



Nazareth's Dan McCafferty, Darrell Sweet, Manuel Charlton and Pete Agnew with A&M's press officer, Charly Prevost.

It was as if the town was expecting the plague to arrive. Just as planned however, there were a couple of trucks waiting for the group and in the old showbiz tradition of "the show must go on", the Strawbs and the A&M crew made good their parade plans - up the main drag, over to the nickel mine for a short tour and then on to the union hall for a reception. The first thing that hit them when they entered the union hall was a large blackboard at the end of the room with "Welcome the Strawbs." In their haste to get some kind of warmth into the setting, someone had misspelled welcome. Nevertheless, the people that A&M coaxed in from the street, had an opportunity to meet the Strawbs and a fairly good drunk - continuing for some of the disappointed A&M crew. The whole fiasco came to a close at a not so disappointing turnout for their performance at the local arena which they shared with King Crimson. Sudbury was a "bummer." No radio play and not a word in the local press. However, press officer Charly Prevost had laid the foundation for what he hoped would be the ideal kickoff for the Strawbs' first Canadian concert tour.

His hype didn't go unnoticed however, as Toronto press and radio heavies leaned on the apparent success of the Strawbs and, purely by accident, the Britishers did, in fact, go on to bigger and better things in Canada with some spillover action in the U.S.

The stories are many and just as varied. Nazareth is another British group that got a foothold in the North American market through the expertise of A&M, particularly through Charly Prevost. Now, that Prevost is something else. He has enough energy for three companies. He's easily excited and he protects his groups and artists like a mother hen. There are times perhaps, when Prevost's honesty might get him into trouble. He's very tuned into radio and sales action reports and he dislikes, intensely, fabricated chart action. If a single or an album isn't happening, Prevost will be one of the first to let you know. As a matter of fact the credibility of A&M as a company has been built

on this very cherished policy. They do their homework, they tell their story straight, they work their records and their artists, but they never sit back and relax. It's on to the next one and so on.



SUPERTRAMP BRINGS IT HOME !!

by Ritchie Yorke

Some of you might not remember but it's an interesting nostalgic point to bring up. Back in early 1971 Ritchie Yorke, world renowned rock critic, was high on the list as a rock consultant as well. He got a few vibes from the Edmonton Symphony Orchestra that they were interested in "rocking" one of their sophisticated sessions.

Yorke suggested the best draw would be Procol Harum. The date was set, A&M was plugged in and the session was recorded "live" and became one of the big sellers for A&M. Ironically, the CRTC were also tuned into the effort and allowed the album to be classified as having Canadian content.

Ritchie Yorke was tuned into A&M's newest signing, Supertramp and he filed the following.

As far as rock writers operating out of North America these past few years are concerned, I have been frequently told that I am associated more than almost anyone covering the rock scene here with that prestigious body of music emanating from the British Isles. It was never a conscious intention on my part to be exclusively associated with music from any particular geographic sector - music, after all, being like love and lice, universal - but in retrospect I can see the basis of various contentions that I am identified with the emergence here of a few electric warriors from the British brigade. It's just that the Pommies have proved to be so unique and innovative in their approach to contemporary music; I would even go as far as to say that the clear majority of the finest artists hitting the U.S. charts in the past eight years have come from the U.K. There's good reason for that too and we'll come to it shortly.

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So it really comes as no surprise that any writer who propelled his body on a regular basis between London, L.A. and New York would become identified with reporting on exciting new British activities. A lot of the Pommy groups of late were able to stir one's imagination instantly upon first exposure. They had what it takes in the grooves and it's hard to stop. All you have to do is turn people onto it. That's always been my philosophy.

Consequently I have never for a moment considered myself shrewd or even mildly perceptive in being the first writer to publicly predict the rocket-like ascension of Led Zeppelin. Just listen to that first album again and you'll see that Zep were hard to deny. Nothing could stop that. And they did become by far the biggest rock band in the world (and indeed the most popular hard rock group in the music's history). Some years down the line, and with a book biography of the band due out internationally in the near future, it gives the old heart a bit of a flutter to see just how enormous Zep has become. To me though, it was always an obvious thing. It didn't require any genius on my part to call that one.

And ditto for Yes. After seeing the band play in London one trip and having an approximate projection of what North America was ready for, it seemed likely that Yes, like Zep, had what it took. Putting Procol Harum together with the Edmonton Symphony, and giving both groups their first gold albums, was pretty straightforward. There was a lot of fandangling required but the union could hardly miss. It was a natural development for all.

My involvement with John Lennon and the peace mission was another trip altogether but it too had something to do with the creative climate surrounding London at the time. Writing a book on Van Morrison (to be published in July) is a project almost any rock writer would be delighted to tackle and I was simply fortunate enough to be in the right place at the right time with ardent desire.

But when you put all of these things together, so people tell me, you get a picture of a commentator who identifies with the British rock scene, someone who has been ready

and hot to trot with the latest word on the goods from England, a Pommy pundit if you will. A series of circumstances has given me this image which I am powerless to prevent or regret. It simply is. Friends tell me I should be proud of it and boast about it and all that number but what's the point. I don't see myself as a genius with golden ears. I simply commentate on the obvious; what to my dearly subjective soul is The Truth.

Which leads me directly into Supertramp. As you may have noticed, it's been quite some time since I came out and awarded the golden gloves to an up and coming British heavyweight. There are several reasons for this. To maintain one's credibility, you need to be super sure you're right, and therefore you must avoid being wrong. I've got to get that searing buzz to know that I'm definitely right. I haven't felt that buzz for a long, long time. There have been many excellent British bands with varying degrees of expertise and potential in more recent times, the likes of ELO, Stealers Wheel, Bad Company, 10 cc, AWB and so on - just as there has been no shortage of wankers. But none of them gave me that hot buttered buzz which accompanied my first exposure to Zep, Yes or Procol Harum.

To my ears, Britain has been cool for a while. Living in London in 73/74 gave me the opportunity of delving below the top layer a little and I wasn't too impressed. The entire London scene seemed to have gone stale, bogged down in the flimsy excesses of glitter glamor, without the lust and thrust of originality. I found it hard to get really excited behind the Bay Street Rollers, Mud, Sweet, Gary Glitter or Suzi Quatro. This was not the stuff that superstars are made of. When I was there, the London rock scene seemed to revolve on the import of U.S.-based artists such as Van Morrison, the Allmans, the Doobies and Zappa. I was deeply disappointed. England no longer felt conducive to the creation of music which could envelop the globe. It was the same old jaded faces done up in different disguises.

The long absence of Britain from the grand terrace of rock innovation has however made the arrival of Supertramp an even more significant and welcome event. Here at last is a relatively new band from Tommyland

with what it takes to blow off the world. Supertramp is the finest new British band to reach these ears since Yes and its potential is just as enormous. Their third album, *Crime of the Century*, is by far the best album by anyone that I've heard this year. It is in a class of its own. As is Ken Scott's production work.

With Supertramp, A&M has the chance of bringing home the bacon. It is merely a matter of turning on ears to the magnificence of this album. Their overall concept of music as outlined on the new LP is at least the equal of Pink Floyd and ultimately Supertramp will be as popular as the Floyd. Don't forget it took the Floyd at least five years to get into the top fifty. Supertramp are in the top three in Britain with their third album.

I could not begin in this scant space to adequately describe the wonders which await you within the *Crime of the Century* set. The music is as good as it gets anywhere these days. So superb at times that it's hard to believe. But I don't want to hype you. This record don't need no hyping - it merely needs one listen by everyone reading these words. You owe that to yourselves. If an entire album is too much for you to get into, then simply head straight for the closing two cuts - *If Everyone Was Listening* and *Crime of the Century* - and get blown away. I doubt if you'll believe that rock could be so powerful and compelling.

Many of you are probably long since into the album. But if you ain't already, you sure as hell should not waste a moment in confessing your sins of omission. *El primo* music is too rare these days to be neglected.

Now on their first North American tour, which includes a gig at Massey Hall in Toronto on April 17, Supertramp are bound to be superstars. I'll stake my Pommy reputation on that. And you know I would not come on that strong if I wasn't one hundred per cent locked-up certain. All I ask is that you check it out for yourself. Bloody well right mate.



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Ron Sinclair rides the Manitoba and Saskatchewan promotion circuit.



Bob Roper, one of the pushes behind Gettin' Off, looks after Ontario sales.



Bantamweight Bruce Bissell spreads A&M promotion through Alberta and B.C.



Rock journalist Larry Leblanc with Roger Hodgson and Richard Davies of Supertramp.



New to the A&M camp is Chuck Mangione here with Jerry Niewood at CBC-TV taping.



Gino Vannelli and A&M's Canadian heavies Gerry Lacoursiere and Joe Summers.

in the form of a collection of news on artists, company activities etc., and tagged Getting Off, became an important vehicle for A&M's promotion team. The publication even roused the National Reference Library who demanded to be put on the mailing list as they, by law, must receive one copy of any established publication — and so the A&M tale just goes on and on. Look at their roster of Canadian artists: Valdy, Gino Vannelli, Charity Brown, Ian Tyson, Linda Brown, David George and on.



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