

Billboard's Top Album Picks

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Billboard SPECIAL SURVEY For Week Ending 5/7/77

Number of LPs reviewed this week 49 Last week 66

Country

ROY CLARK—My Music & Me/Vocal & Instrumental, ABC/Dot DO2072/2. A strong LP effort by Clark that exemplifies his masterful vocal and picking ability. A mixture of serious ballad type material, instrumentals and kicky uptempo numbers, this double LP set contains a Hank Williams' tune, "I'm So Lonesome I Could Cry," a Neil Sedaka/Howard Greenfield tune, "Breaking Up Is Hard To Do," "Hookin'it," which is a self-penned number along with "Half A Love," that was written by both Clark and R. Lane, among others. String arrangements by Bergen White and Bill Walker complement four out of the 20 tunes offered in this collection.

Best cuts: "Georgia On My Mind," "Kids," "Half A Love," "Modern Day Miracle."

Dealers: Clark's frequent tv appearances should spark sales.

TOM T. HALL—About Love, Mercury SRM11139. An unusual album by Hall that, for the first time, relies heavily on writers other than himself for love songs. Hall throws in some of his own mellow compositions—such as "Your Man Loves You, Honey" and "A Whole Lot Of Love"—in the melange that includes the timeless "It's All In The Game," the Tom Jans classic "Lovin' Arms" and Don McLean's tadbuck love ballad, "And I Love You So." Hall's vocals are caressed by some tender guitar work from Ray Edenton, Pete Wade and Jerry Kennedy (who produced). A few strings, some banjo licks, bass, drums and keyboard are included in the simple, effective arrangements.

Best cuts: "Your Man Loves You, Honey," "Lovin' Arms," "One Of The Mysteries Of Life," "It's All In The Game."

Dealers: No stranger to the pop chart, Hall could appeal to pop and MOR as well as country with this package.

WAYLON JENNINGS—O! Waylon, RCA APL12317. Exceptional LP from Jennings who is setting some new standards with his recent product. Kicked off by his hot new single, "Luckenbach, Texas (Back To The Basics Of Love)," the album also carries several more biographical and autobiographical songs. Smooth, polished production from Chips Moman results in an album that could easily crossover to the pop field. A fresh and broad choice of material—with songs from Jennings, Moman, Neil Diamond and a host of writers—provides a vehicle that slides into, and out of, various music styles and feelings. A beautifully balanced album with a powerful lineup of musicians headed by Jennings on vocals, lead and rhythm guitar.

Best cuts: "Luckenbach, Texas (Back To The Basics Of Love)," "If You See Me Getting Smaller," "Sweet Caroline," "I Think I'm Gonna Kill Myself," "Belle Of The Ball," "Brand New Goodbye Song."

Dealers: Stock this one deep and watch for pop action too. A good bet for No. 1.

FREDDY FENDER—Best Of . . ., ABC/Dot DO2079. Spanning the years from 1974 to 1976, this Fender album is a compilation of hits from four previous LPs, including "Before the Next Teardrop Falls," "Are You Ready For Freddy," "Rock 'n' Country" and "If You're Ever In Texas." The traditional TexMex delivery that Fender's sensitive vocal style has made famous is surrounded in production by bass, strings, guitar, steel, electric guitar and piano.

Best cuts: "Before the Next Teardrop Falls," "Wasted Days And Wasted Nights," "Secret Love," "The Rains Came."

Dealers: A collector's LP which should spur sales.

EDDY ARNOLD—I Need You All The Time, RCA APL12277. Arnold's second RCA album is a quality blend of the rich smoothness, consistency and lyrically meaningful material that has established him as an artist who surpasses musical time spans. Owen Bradley's production expertise brings together classy instrumentation spiced with effective guitar, piano, string arrangements by Bergen White and vocal accompaniment by the Hollady Singers. Songs by Boudleaux and Felice Bryant, "(I Need You) All The Time," Lawton Williams, "Frauline," and George Tomso, "Gettin' Away From It All" enhance Arnold's identifiable vocal delivery.

Best cuts: "(I Need You) All The Time," "Frauline," "I've Never Loved Anyone More," "Gettin' Away From It All."

Dealers: Arnold's appeal reaches many fields of music.

First Time Around

SHALAMAR—Uptown Festival, Soul Train BVL12289 (RCA). This vocally inventive threesome makes something of a specialty of contemporary disco updates of early Motown material. The title cut has already been a Hot 100 single and is a four-de-force medley of a string of Motown hits. Sides one and two have different producer-arranger teams. The first side is sparkling, immaculate disco with a white-hot mix. Side two is soul balladry with Gene Page string charts and featuring the voice of the female member of this trio. The mainstream soul cuts are good and wide-ranging in style, but nowhere near as distinctively individual as what Shalamar does with the disco tracks.

Best cuts: "Inky Dinky Wang Dang Doo," "Uptown Festival."

Dealers: Good for perky store play at soul-disco outlets.

Spotlight

10cc—Deceptive Bends, Mercury SRM13702. Although half the original 10cc has departed in order to perfect and market a new kind of revolutionary synthesizer, remaining Graham Gouldman and Eric Stewart have—with the aid of percussionist Paul Burgess and a few guest soloists—produced a lavishly pretty and cosmically silly LP in the great 10cc tradition. As eccentric as it is multi-talented in studio virtuosity and songwriting, 10cc went its own determinedly madcap way for years before breaking through with a No. 1 single, "I'm Not In Love," a couple of albums ago. This new LP was heralded with a top 5 single, "The Things We Do For Love," that is a perfect recap of 10cc style in general and this entire LP in its blend of beautifully lush melodies and production surrounding slyly surrealistic lyrics.

Best cuts: "The Things We Do For Love," "People In Love," "Feel The Benefit," "Modern Man Blues."

Dealers: The double-fold jacket with its bizarre graphics of deep-sea divers will make an eye-catching display.



Billboard's Recommended LPs

pop

BRAND X—Moroccan Roll, Passport PP98022 (ABC). Mostly instrumental, evocative free-form rock on this somewhat eccentric English group's second album. Brand X quintet is quite fine at conveying floaty, dreamlike moods with highly controlled studio techniques. The group also can cook with a restrained elegance somewhat reminiscent of Pink Floyd. **Best cuts:** "Why Should I Lend You Mine," "Disco Suicide."

KINGFISH—Live 'N' Kickin', Jet JTLA732G(UA). Good live set with a jam-like feel recorded at the Roxy in L.A. Grateful Deader Bob Weir sits in on guitar and vocals and many of the songs do have a Dead flavor—a more laidback type of rock 'n' roll. **Best cuts:** "Goodbye Yer Honor," "Juke," "I Hear You Knocking," "Jump For Joy," "Jump Back."

GINGER BAKER & FRIENDS—Eleven Sides Of Ginger Baker, Sire SA7532 (ABC). Friends include Chris Spedding, Rick Grech, Herbie Flowers and "Mr. Snips" on vocals. The 11 musical sides of Baker are represented by 11 short songs. The styles range from the sonic assault Baker perfected with Cream and the Baker Gurvitz Army to Elvis-type rockers to jazz-oriented Latin and African rhythms. The LP shows Baker as much more than a power drummer, but its eclectic nature is somewhat of a bar to smooth continuity. **Best cuts:** "Candystick Taker," "N'kon Kimi N'kon Nkon," "Don't Stop The Carnival."

RICHARD TATE, ABC AB1016. Tate is a singer-writer-producer-arranger whose light tenor voice is most at home with blue-eyed soul sophistication in the vein of Hall & Oates. He is less distinctive on the more rock-oriented cuts here. The LP was cut partially at Muscle Shoals and the soul-rock rhythm tracks are powerfully dynamic. **Best cuts:** "Fill My Life With Love," "Long Mountain Road," "She's Got The Time To Love Me."

KEVIN AYERS—Yes We Have No Mananas/So Get Your Mananas Today, ABC, AB1021. The music on this LP is just as prodigious as its title. Ayers' wobbling deep vocals help bring a new sound to each tune, avoiding repetition. Most tunes are light, whispery ballads. While Englishman Ayers backs up his singing on guitar with a rhythm section, the emphasis is on lyrics and melody. This album, previously released in England, is Ayers' first for ABC. **Best cuts:** "Star," "Love's Gonna Turn You Around," "Blue," "Ballad Of Mr. Snake."

TORNADER—Hit It Again, Polydor PD16098. Mostly blue-eyed vocal funk from writer-singers Larry Alexander and Sandy Torano with cooking rhythm tracks by New York studio stars and some guitar from Johnny Winter. Tends to fall a bit between format standardizations but has no shortage of r&b energy. **Best cuts:** "Back Up (Hit It Again)," "Does Anybody Really Wanna Do The Thing."

MUSICA ORBIS—To The Listeners, Longevity LD1. This quintet—three male and two female—have a wide campus following. Each member is an accomplished musician utilizing varied instruments including harp, organs, flutes and recorders. The music itself has a rock classical feel with Kitty Brazellon offering ethereal vocals. **Best cuts:** "Welcome," "Samuel," "Red Winds," "It's Hard To Say."

SEEDS—Fallin' On The Edge, GNP-Crescendo GNPS2107. Sixth LP by this California veteran foursome has a country-flavored title song and 10 others of merit. Sky Saxon, Rick Andridge, Daryl Hooper and Jan Savage show commendable talents not only as performers but as songwriters. The production team of Kim Fowley, Marcus Tyball and Neil Norman captures it all with excellent fidelity. **Best cuts:** "Fallin' On The Edge Of My Mind," "The Wind Blows Your Hair," "Pushin' Too Hard," "Chocolate River."

BLOSSOM DEARIE—My New Celebrity Is You, Daffodil BMD103. Beautifully recorded package of two LPs offers 16 highly sophisticated songs by the inimitable New York singer-

pianist, long a favorite of Manhattan's Cafe society. Ron Carter, Grady Tate, Toots Thielemans, Hubert Laws, George Devins and Jay Berling provide subtle, effective accompaniment. Title song was possibly the last Johnny Mercer composed; Dearie clefied eight of the titles herself. **Best cuts:** "My New Celebrity Is You," "Unless It's You," "There Ought To Be A Moonlight Saving Time."

SEVERANCE—Largo 6001. A powerful entry by a struggling, unknown California quintet comprised of Barry Saperstein, Greg Hines, Todd Bingham, Zum Vanderlip and John Philip Shenale. Heavily electronic, combo boasts extraordinary musicians in drummer Saperstein and guitarist-singer Bingham and a knack for popping up with ingenious original songs, 12 in this debut LP. The Severance sound is particularly tailored for discos but will excite almost every type of 1977 auditors. **Best cuts:** "Right To Choose," "Out There On My Own," "Only Me," "What More Can I Do?"

MOM AND DADS—Whispering Hope, GNP-Crescendo GNPS2108. There's a paradox here, inasmuch as the California-based label is internationally noted for its jazz product and the unpublicized Mom and Dads group, working out of Spokane, is as far from jazz as Liberace's mother. Oldsters, however, sing and play with an abundance of emotion and are now the label's biggest selling act. A program of old-timey semi-religious tunes, group has wide appeal in the Midwest. **Best cuts:** "Whispering Hope," "America The Beautiful," "Let The Lower Lights Be Burning."

soul

FLOATERS, ABC AB1030. The title of this Detroit foursome is quite appropriate since the vocal sound features a high lead voice interacting with almost-as-high harmonizing. Longish, full-sounding studio rhythm jams also find their way on most of the cuts. The group is a contemporary update of Detroit roots soul. **Best cuts:** "I Bet You Get The One You Love," "Everything Happens For A Reason."

IKE WHITE—Changin' Times, L.A. International GG58007. Recorded at Tehachapi State Prison in California by Jerry Goldstein for a new Far Out Productions independent label, keyboardist-singer-guitarist White is a bluesy, jazz-funk artist whose light, soulful voice and imaginative, full-sounding multi-overdubbing rhythm tracks would not be out of place on a War LP. **Best cuts:** "Comin' Home," "I Remember George."

TOUCH—Energizer, Brunswick BL754214. Philly-style smooth soul by a self-contained sextet billed as highly active in studio and commercials session. The ubiquitous Brecker Brothers lead a guest horn section. A disco-oriented, clean, percussive sound with all cuts on the longish side and featuring smooth choral (seven) vocals. **Best cuts:** "Energizer," "Come On Baby."

country

CONNIE CATO—Whoever Finds This, I Love You, Capitol ST11605. Cato's third album for Capitol is almost a greatest hits package containing her last five country charted singles—"I Love A Beautiful Guy," "Here Comes That Rainy Day Feeling Again," "I'm Sorry"/"Evil On Your Mind," "Don't You Ever Get Tired (Of Hurting Me)"/"I've Been Loved By You Today" and "I'll Be A Lady Tomorrow (But I'm Gonna Be Your Woman Tonight)." The title cut is a slight variation from other included material that deals with an old man and an orphan child. Production is handled by Don Davis, who does many of the Johnny Cash recordings, and Audie Ashworth, who produced two of the ten songs here. **Best cuts:** "Evil On Your Mind," "Then Give Him Back To Me," "I'm Sorry" and "Whoever Finds This, I Love You."

jazz

NOEL POINTER—Phantasia, Blue Note BNLA736H (UA). This jazz violin discovery is produced by Dave Grusin and Larry Rosen, who also cut guitarist Earl Klugh for the label. Klugh and classical-trained Pointer team for some snazzy duets throughout the LP. Young Pointer has fast fingers and a lush

tone. The production approach is standard Blue Note crossover jazz-soul with pretty orchestrations and interestingly complex rhythm patterns. **Best cuts:** "Phantasia," "Night Song."

ZBIGNIEW SEIFERT, Capitol ST11618. Seifert is a Dutch jazz violinist who did his early jazz playing on saxophone and credits John Coltrane as his model. He is a writer and player with top-rank verve and energy who could easily fit right in with churning free-form groups like Weather Report or the Mahavishna Orchestra. Seifert does a lot of violin overdubbing on top of his small rhythm and brass backing groups. **Best cuts:** "On The Farm," "Way To Oasis."

JOHN WOOD—Until Goodbye, Los Angeles LAPR1002 (Ranwood). Pianist Wood, the son of former Dot founder Randy Wood, makes his solo piano debut and it is a fine one. He has a sensitive touch on the acoustic and on three of the five cuts he performs alone, with a haunting quality melded to some single hand ripples. There is one clever overdubbing of a Fender Rhodes to one tune and the addition of an acoustic bass to two cuts on side two. Wood plays with a gentleness but with firm conviction in a serious manner. **Best cuts:** "Until Goodbye," "I'm Buckley," "Until Hello."

CHILDREN OF ALL AGES—Just Might Turn Out To Be Sages, Adamo AD59500. Ten musicians get together with a jingle writer to make this charming collection of mellow to sprightly jazz-flavored tunes that should endear themselves to children of all ages, particularly those whose parents like jazz. Some of it is fairly serious, but it makes a wonderful addition to a child's musical education. **Best cuts:** "You Can Run," "When Children Find."

DAVE GRUSIN—Discovered Again, Sheffield Lab 5. The pianist and film-television composer is latest to get the direct to disk mastering treatment from this Santa Barbara specialty label. Grusin leads a star studio rhythm section in a clean, pretty set of mainstream West Coast jazz, swinging lightly and tastefully. **Best cuts:** "Captain Bacardi," "Adeus A. Papai," "Git Along Little Dogies."

JIMMY GIUFFRE—Tenors West, GNP-Crescendo GNPS9040. Marty Paich's Octet backs the veteran Texas saxophonist on 11 tracks originally taped 22 years ago. Stalwarts like Bob Cooper, Harry Klee, Bob Enevoldsen, Conte Candoli, Art Mardigan and Jack Duong lend spirited support. A bit dated, perhaps, but ideally representative of the Los Angeles jazz scene in 1955. Plenty of expressive, moody solos. **Best cuts:** "Patience," "Shorty George," "There's No You," "Take The 'A' Train."

STAN KENTON—The Jazz Composition Of . . . Creative World ST1078. His devotees may have forgotten Kenton's skills as a composer, but this lovingly prepared LP is a reminder of his enviable talents. Twelve tracks, all featuring his full orchestra, go back to 1943 and all are eminently more simple than his 1977 creations. There's a maximum of superbly recorded big band fare here originally produced by Lee Gillette for Capitol. **Best cuts:** "Opus In Pastels," "Concerto To End All Concertos," "Theme For Sunday," "Eager Beaver."

FRANK MORGAN—GNP-Crescendo GNPS9041. Obscure but gifted alto saxophonist Morgan is a former narcotics addict now living in Los Angeles who taped these 10 tracks in 1955 with Wardell Gray, Conte Candoli, Carl Perkins, Wild Bill Davis and Howard Roberts along with Machito's pumping rhythm section. There's a bit of Charlie Parker in Morgan's playing and the LP reflects a period long dead but remembered. **Best cuts:** "My Old Flame," "Milt's Tune," "The Nearness Of You."

MARKY MARKOWITZ SEXTET—Mark's Vibes, Famous Door HL111. Title is misleading; Markowitz is a gifted flugelhorn and trumpet soloist who is given superb support throughout six long but at no time dull tracks by Urbie Green, Al Cohn, John Bunch, Milt Hinton and Mousie Alexander. No vibes at all, except for the good vibrations evoked by the music. Washingtonian Markowitz is immensely impressive as a jazz soloist. **Best cuts:** "How Deep Is The Ocean," "Four Flights Up," "Over The Rainbow," "Mark's Vibes."

Spotlight—The most outstanding new product of the week's releases and that with the greatest potential for top of the chart placement; picks—predicted for the top half of the chart in the opinion of the reviewer; recommended—predicted to hit the second half of the chart in the opinion of the reviewer, or albums of superior quality. Albums receiving a three star rating are not listed. Review editor: Nat Freedland; reviewers: Eliot Tegel, Gerry Wood, Is Horowitz, Ed Harrison, Jean Williams, Dave Dexter Jr., Pat Nelson, Sally Hinkle, Agustin Gurza, Roman Kozak, Dick Nasser, Jim McCullough.

Disk Sales Off

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ABC chairman Leonard Goldenson and president Elton Rule report net income for the first quarter hit \$18.9 million, nearly doubling (+94%) the year ago figure of \$9.73 million. Revenues rose 20% to nearly \$378 million, compared to \$313.7 million in the corresponding 1976 period. Earnings per share were up 88% to \$1.05, from 56 cents last year.

Gains were primarily due to the continued audience ratings and advertising sales growth of the ABC Television network.