

circular

The 7,000 Ballads of Bernie Knee

by HARVEY GELLER

It's been a long, unspectacular, unglorified, uncharted disc career for cantor Bernard Knee, a 49-year-old Teaneck, New Jersey, resident who also dwells in anonymity. Privileged to have recorded about 7,000 songs in the past quarter century—undoubtedly more than any vocal act in the 96-year span of recorded sound—Knee still doggedly dreams of the day when he'll be sanctified on *Billboard's* Hot 100. And, though he has introduced approximately 600 chart titles—more than the combined efforts of Crosby, Como, Cole, Sinatra, Fats Domino, the Rolling Stones, the Beatles and Presley—Knee is as unsung as an instrumental, as overlooked as a four-leaf clover, as top secret as a Cambodian air attack. His tapes, like those of Richard Milhous Nixon, are undisclosed to all but the most circumspect ears.

The ballad of Bernie Knee is a dirge. He might have been one of the titled troubadours of Tin Pan Alley—except that others reigned on his parade. All but a handful of Knee's 7,000 sides have never been offered for public approval. Just one, a 350,000-selling Columbia single released in the fall of '58, managed to climb to #33 on *Billboard's* chart. Knee's name, unaccountably, didn't appear on the label.

Exalted with something akin to veneration by a coterie of Broadway's Brill Building backsettlers, Knee regards his past with some remorse and no apologies. "I could have been a little hungrier," he says, recollecting the mid-50s



when his yearly income exceeded \$150,000 and he was cutting barrels of beer commercials and demonstration discs.

For the past 25 years Knee—who plays drums, piano, bass, guitar, harmonica; sings lead, second and third harmonies—has been regarded as the demo duke of Tin Pan Alley. Aside from recording songs for Como, Sinatra, Cole, Presley—most of the exalted male chart acts of the 50s and 60s—Knee is also credited, along with guitarist Les Paul, as the inventor of the overdub.

"There was a period when I was cutting eight to 10 demos a day," says Knee—"songs by Bob Merrill, Al Hoffman, Steven Schwartz, Alan Jay Lerner, Stephen Sondheim, Richard Rodgers." He recorded six of Julie Styne's Broadway scores, most of the David-Bacharach copyrights beginning with *Magic Moments*, their baptistic triumph, right through the *Promises Promises* score. Hill and Range Publishing hired him in the mid-50s to demo all of Presley's songs. He cut *Follies* and *Company*. Still Knee's name has never

appeared, even on those demos.

Songsmith-publisher Buddy Kaye testifies that it was Knee who vocalized on the first disc produced to demonstrate a song.

"Until the late 40s the normal procedure for songwriters was to leave their material with a publishing house pianist who played the songs 'live' for recording artists and record producers. Along with Ralph Care I had composed a duet novelty, 'A Penny a Kiss, A Penny a Hug,' which I felt couldn't properly be demonstrated by one person. I knew Bernie as a Bronx club date musician who doubled as a cantor at weddings and bar mitzvahs, and I asked him to find a girl to help cut the record. It was produced at an upstairs 'record-your-voice' studio on Broadway, and the total tab was \$55."

Publishers Shapiro-Bernstein, astonished by the disc, proclaimed it "the most significant publishing innovation since the color slide" and handed Kaye an unprecedented \$1,000 advance for the song. Sides by Dinah Shore-Tony Martin and Ethel Merman-Ray Bolger catapulted the copyright onto Your Lucky Strike Hit Parade's Top 10.

Knee credits Kaye as his "mentor" but also recalls that a friend, during the days when he was majoring in music at Columbia University, was "a sickly kid named Jerry Ross who showed me songs he was writing with another youngster, Dick Adler. Among the first I taped was 'Rags to Riches'."

The Adler-Ross team later

A Dream Date With Dr. Demento, or How to Tame a Mad Record Smasher

Little did I know when I entered a *Circular* matchemup contest some months ago that my scheme to meet Dr. Demento himself would work. Kind to his webfooted friends, a gentleman and a scholar, Barrett Hansen's reputation is legend in Burbank. While checking off the list matching the names of record labels to their coded descriptions I decided that a) since I would naturally win the contest and b) since I had every Warners album I could ever want and quite some that I didn't, I would go the limit and request an introduction to Dr. Demento as my prize.

How did I know I would win, you ask? Because I fixed it. These things are possible when you know your way around in the music business; it's all part of drugola and now it can be told.

I spied the freshly printed copy of *Circular* on the editor's desk, and while he was concluding a long distance call I ticked off all the right answers. When said call was completed I presented my entry to said intrepid editor. Copies of *Circular* had not even been mailed out yet so I knew I would be the first correct entry in the house. Smug and sure, I went back up north and waited for the telephone to ring.

No Egg Sucker

It didn't happen. Why? I demanded of *Circular's* not so intrepid anymore editor. He had forgotten to take my entry down the hall and deposit it on Dr. Demento's desk. It was karma. And I was crushed.

But wait! In the land of Elmer Fudd where dreams come true, I was offered an alternative. I

should go back up north, kiss my baby and ride my horse for a while, and after a respectable amount of time had passed *Circular* would fly me back to beautiful Burbank for an all expense paid two days, culminating in an introduction to and an escorted evening with Dr. Demento himself. That is really the way it happened. You know I would sooner suck a raw egg than lie.

Knockers Up

I arrived in Burbank June 20. It was 106 in the shade. The following day it was 107 in the shade. The next evening it was 108 in the shade—what shade you could find. Intrepid editor and wife picked me up at the hotel and we drove out to meet the good Doctor.

Dr. Demento, alias Barrett Hansen (also alias Professor Pimento) looks just like his pictures but more like his caricatures. His modest living quarters consist of a few sticks of furniture, an elaborate stereo and tens of thousands of—you guessed it—records. They are stacked wall to wall in shelves—45's, 78's, 33's and tapes. They fill the kitchen cabinets; they overflow on to the floor. Those shelved are alphabetically arranged and cataloged. Some of them are ancient. Dr. Demento's prescription for an old scratchy record is to give it a good bath. Most of the pops are from goop and not from physical damage to the disc, he explained. He is a true devoted collector of discs and information about records.

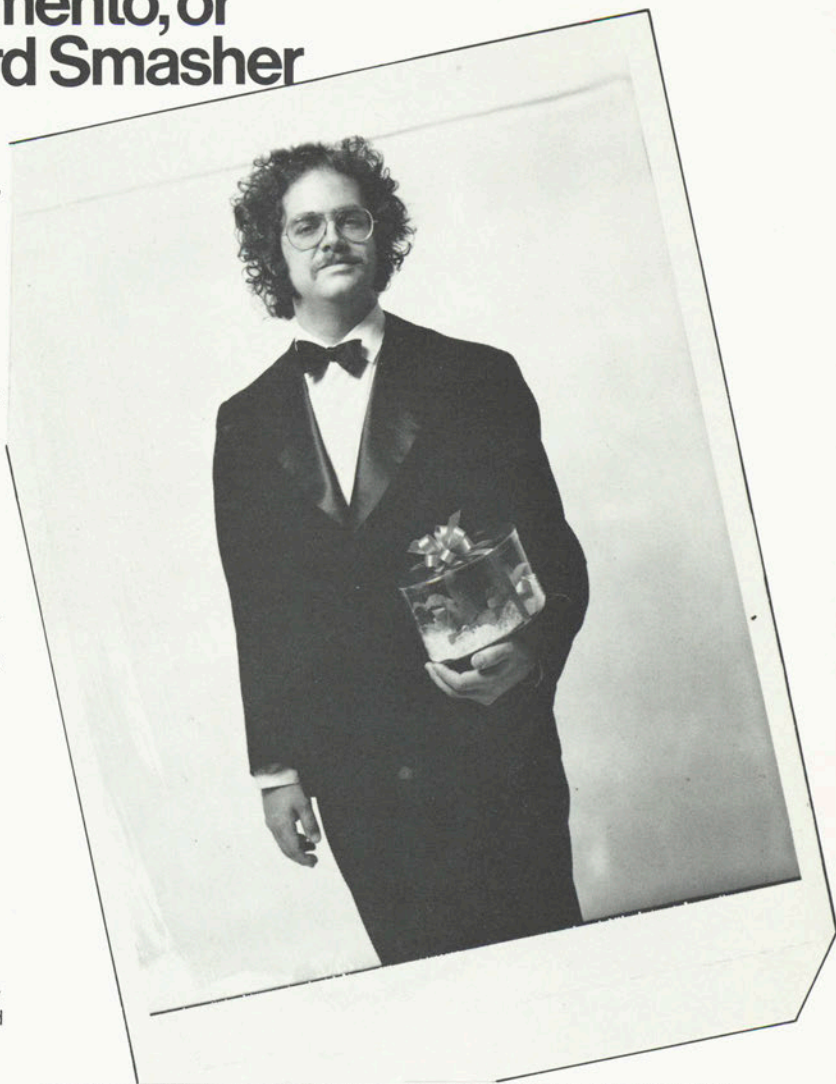
Last summer (the time of my dream date) Hansen taught a course in rock & roll at UCLA. There was not a day when a rockophile did not stop him on the

campus and try to engage him in a rap about records. The course started with music of the 20s. He played some of his favorites for us.

Dr. Demento works for Warner Bros. Records in a capacity difficult to define. He is sort of a resident expert and contributes to special products and sampler albums, as well as writing his famous column for *Circular*. He also has a bizarre radio program on L.A.'s KMET during which he holds forth

with such recorded dementia as Big Bad Bruce, Knockers Up and a rousing rocker by Groucho Marx. From all reports he keeps that perverse breed of radiophile which inhabits Los Angeles County in stitches for the duration of his show, which Warner Bros., by the way, sponsors. You see how it works? It's an American Dream for Dr. Demento.

We were oogling over a stash of old 78's when Hansen handed me



Hot Water Shortage Chills U.K.

one to examine. The minute I took my eyes off the beady discophile he shattered a record over my head. I gasped in shocked disbelief and ran into the arms of my chaperones who were convulsed with laughter. "He does that to everyone," they reassured me. "It's like an initiation." (For some reason I recollected this story a fortyish lady who sells jewelry in Beverly Hills had told me. She had a date with Cary Grant once and the next day he called her up (she says) and asked if he could come over and watch her take a bath. I don't know why I thought of that.)

"The only one who has ever complained," said Dr. Demento in his own behalf, "was Kim Fowley."

Well that was just too much. It must be the price of fame or something. I just couldn't get over being cracked across the head with a record after all I'd been through in my career.

I tried to interview Dr. Demento to salvage the evening. He allowed that he had told his life story so many times in the recent past that it was beginning to bore him. "I draw the line," he said, "at kids trying to interview me for a school assignment." I was on assignment from *Circular*, I reminded him, as I asked if he had any disfiguring marks or scars. The answer was "no" and we left shortly afterwards. Dr. Demento had to prepare a lesson plan and go to bed early (I had been warned about that) and as for me, I heard there was a party for the Eagles on the beach at midnight. "Goodnight My Love" played softly on the Doctor's phonograph as I walked out the door.

—ELLEN SANDER



Steeleye Span

LONDON — While Ruby dutifully informs you of impending vinyl and nickel crises that imply a paucity of platters back home, I have been experiencing some fairly dramatic shortages of a more domestic nature over here. Even the largest grocers are sporting Mother Hubbard style shelves, and this morning there was a notice tacked up downstairs in my building warning us all that the hot water would be shut off for at least a month because they can't get any oil delivered. So I suppose if we're all to be clean and fed and musically fulfilled we'd better run off to Samoa and bathe in the warm waterfalls and pick breadfruit and hum a lot.

Steeleye Spins. An original and intriguing union of Chrysalis' top talent, the progeny of which mine ears await, is the production by Ian Anderson of a new Steeleye Span single. Ian and the Steeles are well acquainted, having toured many a mile together, but this

represents their first collaboration. Meanwhile, there are plans to ease "Gaudete," the vibrant a capella track from their *Below the Salt* LP, as a British single. "Gaudete" is most impressive done live with all five singing members lined up on the apron of the stage, fingers wedged firmly behind their ears to be sure of impeccable pitch. But the indelible harmonies and the Christmas spirit should give the recorded version a spirited chance.

Wizard Move. Warners has made another stellar English signing with Wizzard. This is the closest thing to a foolproof singles band that I can think of. "Ballpark Incident," "See My Baby Jive" and "Angel Fingers," to name but the most recent three, all found the Number One spot fast and stayed there long. The main brain of the eight-piece outfit is Roy Wood, a tireless idea man whose present prominence

should be no surprise to those who have long venerated the Move. He has plans for a seasonal single tentatively titled "If Every Day Was Like Christmas," vocally assisted by local school children. It now remains to find a way to add snow to the summery palms on the Warner label.

Neil Lives. It's still a mystery how the "Neil is dead" rumor started over here. (Do you know who sent that wire to *The Evening Standard* from America?) But the rumor itself has expired now, thanks to the diligent efforts of press officer Moira Bellas, who was on the phone at four in the morning confirming Neil's vitality, and all is in excited readiness for the first Neil Young U.K. tour in two years.

Scribe Arrives. Steve Peacock, the *Sounds* writer who is so good that even the musicians like him, is making his long-overdue maiden voyage to New York in order to see our own divine Doobie Brothers. I have given him directions to my old hang out, the White Horse, on Hudson and 11th, but leave it to our Gotham Groovers to show him the most up to date delights in town.

Empire Sunset. Can anyone tell me if "Waterloo Sunset" is being included on the Kinks' re-package that I see promised in the so-called future albums schedule? (Believe none of what you read and half of what you hear . . .) Because if it is, I will try to take a picture of a true Waterloo sunset for you. It is one of the most moving vistas London affords—and a tune for all time.

—SHELLEY BENOIT

Everything's in Short Supply, Part IV



Ruby Monday

It's the Vinyl Again Boys, Not to Mention Paper, Gas and Denim.

One of my favorite subjects is in the news once more. The vinyl paucity is so severe now many major labels are cutting back production schedules. Beginning last week all pressing plants are operating on a short week schedule. Recycling has begun recently, using test pressings and over-run LPs. *Record World* tells us pressing plants can make two albums from every three albums recycled. Cal Roberts, veep of Columbia Record Production, said, "We are in a constricted situation. We've told our clients that we can't press everything they want. They have to decide what their priorities are." Retailers all across the U.S. told *Record World* that this pinch was going to "kill" them during the brisk Christmas season. One reason given for this growingly acute problem was Japan's current heavy vinyl purchases. Between Japan and the auto industry, it looks like the record industry is going to suffer in '74. The RIAA is

stepping in now—asking Congress to try and gain favorable vinyl allocation for all accounts. It's gettin' worse and worse. Ruby Monday's Word-to-the-Wise this week is Save Your Jeans. Denim is getting scarcer and scarcer. Pretty soon you'll be able to sell those old jeans for quite a profit—if you can bare to part with them, that is. Will the price of LPs, 45s and blue jeans go up? Billy Gaff (manager of Rod Stewart and the Faces among others) told *Billboard* last week, "With a product pinch approaching, the U.S. record industry should take advantage of the shortage by raising the price of LPs to perhaps \$8.00." Perhaps and then again perhaps not, Billy.

Payola-Drugola Problems Are Either Just Beginning or at an End.

Billboard magazine tells us, "The majority of record companies submitting answers to the tough payola questionnaire sent by the Senate Copyrights Subcommittee in August have assured Subcommittee Chairman John L. McClellan that company investigations have turned up no evidence of the widespread drug payola rumored in press stories this past summer, and currently under probe by a U.S. attorney in Newark, N.J. Every major industry member said internal examinations plus outside audits turned up no illicit activities centering around promotional offers of money, drugs or illegal sex practices. Nobody found organized crime infiltrating record companies. It seems the record biz is clean, but McClellan is continuing his pursuit. Here's hoping the Senate Copyrights Subcommittee doesn't

put Ruby Monday out of business.

Two Rock Star Films in the Offing.

None other than Ian Anderson and Alice Cooper are currently planning (separately, of course) celluloid smashes for your local cinema spot. Jethro Tull recently announced they were holding up touring to work on Ian's other film, *War Child*. *Child* is expected to gel in 1974 with Terry Ellis (Mr. Chrysalis London) producing and Ian starring. Terry says it's not a "pop-rock" ho-hum documentary but "a musical, slightly futuristic film." Jethro Tull will release an album in advance of the film to prep audiences. Later a sound track LP will include performances by the cast of the film. Shooting will be done in Europe. Meanwhile, Stateside, Alice is winding up negotiations for a film trilogy called *Foreplay*. Stars lined

up for this one so far include Zero Mostel, Pat Paulsen, Jerry Orbach and Estelle Parsons. Alice will score, of course, and sing. Whether these two flicks are X-rated, R-rated or GP-rated, you can be sure the box office boys will be delighted.

Paralytics Can Now Watch TV Like the Rest of Us.

Strange news from England this week comes via a Telex saying that Lord Snowden has designed a boob tube which operates by blowing and sucking on a pipe connected to the controls. Princess Margaret's husband has also completed a design for a battery-operated wheelchair.

Now for Ruby Monday's Quote of the Week From New York. From the pages of *Music Retailer*, October, 1973.



Alice Finally Makes It to Japan. And that's one of the world's smallest countries with the biggest production schedule in World Trade. They love Alice over there—*School's Out* and *Billion Dollar Babies* topped the Nipponese charts for weeks on end. Seen above is Alice (with beer in hand and ceremonial dragon mask on shoulder) plus shorter friends, all promoting the Cooper Campaign to within an inch of their lives. Look for big sales on *Muscle of Love*. Sayonara.

comes a strange comparison made by Ben Karol, owner of the vast King Karol chain of record stores: "Our industry has glamor and it makes noise, but comparatively it moves a relatively small amount of goods. I read that Campbell's tomato soup has a bigger yearly volume than all records combined—and you can get a can of tomato soup for eleven cents."

Ruby's Run-Ons

◆ **Valerie Simpson** and **Nickolas Ashford** brought down the house at L.A.'s Troubadour two weeks ago. Along with performing new songs from their recently-released LP, *Gimme Something Real*, **Nick** and **Val** did a medley of their many hits done by other artists including "Let's Go Get Stoned" and "Ain't No Mountain High Enough." Each had a solo spot during the course of the show, but it was the dynamics of the two together that brought the entire house to its feet for a final standing ovation. **Ashford** and **Simpson** are really something real. New York City reports strong sales and radio play with Washington, D.C., Cleveland, Cincinnati, Detroit, Houston and San Francisco falling in behind. ◆ Certified glittering Gold by the RIAA last week were (are you ready?) *Are You Experienced?*, *Electric Ladyland* and *Smash Hits*, all by **Jimi Hendrix**; not to mention *The Association's Greatest Hits*; *The Best of Peter, Paul and Mary* and *Aqualung* by **Jethro Tull**. ◆ **Gram Parsons** was awarded the coveted Edison Award of the Netherlands posthumously last week for his LP, *G.P.* ◆ **Black Sabbath** to tour the



The UFO scare reached its zenith the other day when this mysterious "thing" appeared in Ghiradelli Square in San Francisco. It was first attacked by terrified onlookers and then smothered in arrest warrants by the police. At last it was identified by University of California Astronomical Physics professor Dr. Irving "Buck" Andromeda as a "human, cardboard-covered, coin-operated jukebox, genus Grimes Poznikov, that plays any one of 10 trumpet solos upon payment." Boy, those San Francisco people are crazy, aren't they?

U.S. this fall, coinciding with their new release *Sabbath Bloody Sabbath* which has yet to hit your record stores. **Ozzie** tells **Ruby** the group is booked solid for the next two gigging seasons, including dates in South America. Each member of the group contributed songwriting efforts to this new album and they're planning to make separate albums shortly. ◆ Bearsville's hot and cooking now with **Lazarus**, **Paul Butterfield's Better Days** and wonderwhiz **Todd Rundgren**. **Lazarus'** new single (penned by **Peter Dinklage** and co-produced by **Phil Ramone** and **Peter**), "Ladyfriends," was spotted under Spins and Sales in *Record*

World. Meanwhile, *It All Comes Back* (**Butterfield's Better Days'** newest 33 $\frac{1}{3}$) was an Album Pick and Top FM Airplay Pick in *Record World*, a *Billboard* Action Pick and charts at 177 withastar in the *Board*. **Todd's** "Hello It's Me" 45 is currently riding the charts at 30 withabullet in *Cash Box*, 46 withastar in *Billboard* and 29 withasquare in *Record World*. ◆ L.A.'s KABC has moved **Maureen Reagan** (yes, the governor's daughter) into its 6 to 8 p.m. time slot. Station exex said, "She does a great job for us, we love her. **Maureen** is also our girl at large on the Newstalk show. She covers everything from politics to movie

reviews." ◆ Finally, "O! Blue Eyes" (that's **Frank Sinatra**, of course) was just added by a sweeping majority of votes to Las Vegas' Entertainment Hall of Fame. His portrait will hang alongside those of the late **Judy Garland**, **Louis Armstrong**, **Joe E. Lewis**, **Nat King Cole** and **Sophie Tucker**; and the living **Jimmy Durante**, **Elvis Presley**, **Ella Fitzgerald** and **Sammy Davis, Jr.** in the Las Vegas Convention Center.

Vinyl Statistics

Circular is pleased to present a running account of newborn Warner Family Records, everything from 7 to 12 inches in diameter, a list stripped of adjectives, avoidable nouns and even verbs. The past week has given birth to four singles and one monster album.

ALBUMS (November 2)

Laid Back—Gregg Allman—
Capricorn album CP 0116

SINGLES (October 31)

- "As Time Goes By"—
Dooley Wilson—Warner
Bros. single WB 7741
- "What Is Hip?"—Tower of
Power—Warner Bros.
single WB 7748
- "Skweeze Me, Pleeze Me"—
Slade—Reprise single
REP 1182
- "First High of the Day"—
Duke Williams & the
Extremes—Capricorn single
CPR 0034



give me Guy Mitchell."

Thanks to overdubbing Knee tailored his demos for groups like the Ames Bros., the Four Lads and the Four Aces. His one chart single was a five-voiced version of the title song from a science-fiction pot-boiler (posthumously immortalized for introducing Steve McQueen to his first starring role). The song, composed by Burt Bacharach and Hal David's brother, Mack, was *The Blob*. Mitch Miller bought the demo and released it on Columbia, christening the group The Five Blobs. Knee enjoyed royalties but no public recognition for the side.

Continued from page 1
spawned *Pajama Game* and *Damn Yankees* and a string of smashing single successes: "Hey There," "Hernando's Hideaway," "Heart," "Steam Heat," "Two Lost Souls," "Whatever Lola Wants." But "Rags" was their thundering overture, and Columbia A&R chief Mitch Miller snagged it for fledgling baritone Tony Bennett. Jerry Dick and publisher Frank Loesser detested both the vocal rendition and the Percy Faith arrangement and pleaded with Miller not to release the side, but Mitch prevailed. "Rags" was an RIAA-certified cake-walk, establishing Adler, Ross and Bennett.

By the mid-50s Knee was demoing half the songs that bounced from the Brill, along with dozens of radio and TV commercials, including "Piel's the beer for me, boys" and "Ajax (boom-boom) the foaming cleanser."

The Five Blobs

"Before tape arrived, I was cutting directly onto discs," says Bernie. "In those days each one cost the clients two dollars. If the singer goofed, they'd have to buy another. I was an awfully good sight reader—maybe that's why I was in demand. My price was five dollars a song. When the studios introduced tape I began experimenting with overdubs. On the first take I'd play guitar and sing. On the second I'd add bass and another voice. On the third I'd throw in piano and more vocal harmony. Primitive, maybe. But the only real difference between that and today's 16-track is that the quality suffered.

"At one time pop singers had very definite styles—Crosby, Monroe, Tony Martin, Nat Cole, Johnny Ray—and songwriters would create songs that were tailor-made for

them. I tried to capture that individuality. The composer would say, 'This one's for Cole,' and for two minutes and 30 seconds I was 'King'."

Songwriter Bob Merrill ("People," "I'd've Baked a Cake," "My Truly Truly Fair," "Make Yourself Comfortable," "Honeycomb," "Love Makes the World Go 'Round," "How Much Is That Doggie in the Window") remembers the days when he was under contract to Joy Music.

"I'd write a song directed to a certain star . . . I'd call Bernie and in about six minutes he'd meet me in the studio. He'd put a sheet of music in front of him . . . it seemed like he never needed time to even look at it. He'd then ask, 'Who's it for?' I'd say 'Frank Sinatra,' and he'd record it sounding like Sinatra. If it was Guy Mitchell, he'd

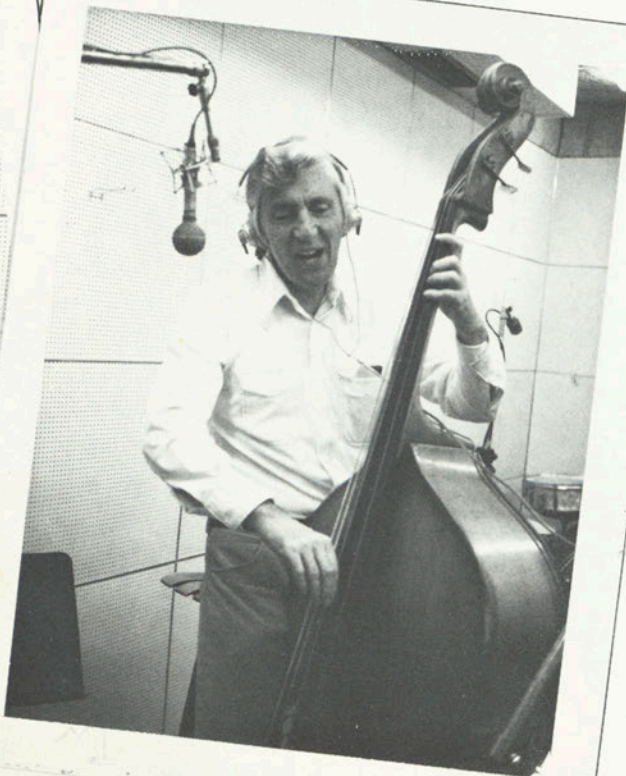


The Demo Duke of Tin Pan Alley

"A few weeks after the record broke," Bernie relates, "Mitch phoned and asked if I could demo a song, 'I Love You, My Little Hamantasch,' composed by his accountant. I booked a studio and hired a first-rate pianist . . . but I never got past the first eight bars. Everytime I hit the title the pianist's shoulders would go up around his ears and he'd start to break up. Finally I told the engineer, 'Please give my regrets to Mr. Miller. Tell him I got a terrific case of laryngitis.'

Synagogue Jones

"Richard Rodgers was the most exacting composer I ever encountered. He wouldn't permit me to alter even the *value* of a note. On the other hand Bob Merrill would say, 'If you feel like changing a few notes, don't worry.' Lyricists are particularly definite about their rhymes. 'I don't want to say anything but notice that in the third measure the last half of the word has an inside rhyme, so bring it out.' The melody writer, in another part of the studio, doesn't give a damn. They're working together—only separately."



Knee's early interests were cantorial. His prepotent influence: Moishe Oysher. For two years he studied with Katchko, one of the most celebrated Jewish teachers. Knee continues to faithfully function as a cantor on high holidays. "Working synagogues," he maintains, "is my jazz."

"Demo dates, these days, are few and far between. Once it was eight to 10 a day. Now it's maybe one a week."

Knee solemnly suggests that those sessions have been supplanted by a frightening omnipotence of self-contained rock groups.

"Today, with prohibitive studio costs, the record is the song. When Bernie Knee isn't making demos it means the songwriters as we knew them—the group between 35 and 70 years of age—are no longer creating meaningful material. Still there's hope for the traditional note-holder. Roberta Flack, for example, doesn't ever

change the melody—doesn't even add a nuance to a note.

"Although I don't believe there's any recognition due me for my kind of work, I can't help but hope that someday I'll crash the charts. A few years ago I wrote a ballad that Sinatra recorded: 'Love Isn't Just for the Young.' I think the kids today accept performers, regardless of their age. If you can do it, they don't care what you look like . . . Alice Cooper . . . obviously they don't care what anyone looks like."

"Knee is a giant," says Bob Merrill. "His voice—still is—absolutely superb. It's a shame that he had to imitate Sinatra, Guy Mitchell, Frankie Laine . . . because he's at least the equal of any recording star.

Bernie Knee might have been the Pablo Picasso of the platter. But after 25 years of canvassing record labels, he's still getting the brush.

Two Fisted Replays



As R&B music jumped, bumped and wailed through the 1940s on the trail that eventually led to rock & roll heaven, Aladdin Records was one of the more vigorous trailblazers. In the 1940s Aladdin labels decorated the waxworks of such R&B stars as Charles Brown, Helen Humes, Amos Milburn, Lightnin' Hopkins and Lowell Fulson, plus a famous series of ecstatic jazz instrumentals by

Lester Young. (Shirley & Lee, Thurston Harris and the Five Keys were to come along in the 1950s.)

No Aladdin artists, however, were ever heard in more homes than Don Dunphy and Bill Corum, whose ringside blow-by-blows were the quintessence of sports radio in the post-World War II days. Don and Bill became Aladdin artists for one record, Aladdin 150, a 10" 78-rpm disc devoted to the

Joe Louis-Billy Conn scrap of June 19, 1946. Side B has the climactic eighth round in its entirety, knockout and all; Side A has "Fight Highlights," including a cameo appearance by Joe Louis himself in a post-fight interview.

With boxing rounds being ideally tailored to the 3-minute dimensions of 78-rpm discs, one would imagine that entire fights could have been neatly packaged in the book-like albums that were so familiar in the shellac era. To my knowledge, this was attempted only once, and by another label specializing in black music: Paramount Records (the company that featured Blind Lemon Jefferson and Ma Rainey in the 1920s—no relation to the current proprietors of the Paramount trademark). And though the subject was one of the most famous wars of all time, the Gene Tunney-Jack Dempsey "long count" encounter of Sept. 22, 1927, the records evidently didn't make the charts, because in 20 years of collecting the Doctor has never even seen a copy.

Question for Next Week.

We turn now from sports to some *really* serious business—the vinyl shortage, currently making an all-too-quick transition from speculation to reality. This is not the first time that the industry has been strapped for the material from which records are made, a substance at least as essential to its well-being as musical talent. This week's Dr. Demento prize—one genuine pure vinyl record of your choice (see below)—goes to the person who most lucidly (and promptly) describes the crisis that

gave ulcers to the pressing-plant purchasing agents of an earlier point in time.

Winner of Dr. Demento's three-weeks-ago contest (identify the tall athlete who sang "That's Easy to Say" for End Records) is Cynthia Holman of N. Miami who correctly guessed Wilt Chamberlain. Cindy also gets a big smack from the doctor for being such a good artist.

Each week the good doctor poses a music lore question whose answer is the focus of his subsequent column. The earliest reply to his question (mailed to Dr. Demento, c/o *Circular*, Warner Bros. Records, 3701 Warner Blvd., Burbank, Ca. 91505) wins any *single* Warner/Reprise catalog album (Please specify choice.) Answers will be geographically pro-rated; ties will be judged on the basis of penmanship, wit and lucidity.

Top Ten

Warner Bros. Sales Figures for Week of October 29-November 4

1. America/*Hat Trick* (BS/M8/M5 2728)
2. Allman Bros. Band/*Brothers and Sisters* (CP/M8/M5 0111)
3. Uriah Heep/*Sweet Freedom* (BS/M8/M5 2724)
4. Fleetwood Mac/*Mystery to Me* (MS/M8/M5 2158)
5. Frank Sinatra/*O! Blue Eyes Is Back* (FS/M8/M5 2155)
6. Neil Young/*Time Fades Away* (MS/M8/M5 2151)
7. The Mothers/*Over-nite Sensation* (MS/M8/M5 2149)
8. *The Marshall Tucker Band* (CP/M8/M5 0112)
9. *Maria Muldaur* (MS 2148)
10. Bonnie Raitt/*Takin My Time* (BS/M8/M5 2729)