

Who's Who In A&R At ARISTA

INTRODUCTION:

In a conversation with Bob Feiden, when asked if there was anything unique to A&R at Arista, his comments were as follows:
"Yes, I think that it all starts with the involvement of Clive Davis in A&R. I don't think any other record company has a president who is as involved on a daily basis in the creative aspects of music . . . and I don't think any other record company president really could be. I believe any artist on our roster benefits from that input. I don't think you can put a price tag on the value of his judgment. And it affects all of us on the A&R staff. Also, I think what we all have very much in common is a passionate love of music. We are on the streets constantly, we are listening to new material constantly, we work very closely with our artists. It's like a small family. There is a creative dialogue between us and the artists here on everything from choice of producers or material etc. . . they feel free to call and consult with us."

When asked about his feelings concerning today's "Soft Market" Bob noted:

"I think people are prematurely sounding death knells and screaming panic. We are not doing that at Arista. We haven't laid off people as many other companies have. Perhaps those other companies have just finally been forced into a more realistic attitude in appraising who and what they sign. You should always make your judgments as if it's a bad time and each should be a very tough decision."

BOB FEIDEN: Vice President of A&R, East Coast



Bob grew up in Brooklyn and after graduating as an English major from Boston University and the American University Law School, he practiced real estate law for a short time in New York. Meanwhile, he had always been interested in film and decided to move in that direction, accepting a position as story editor for Jack Lemmon's film company. From there Feiden moved to Cannon Films, again as a story editor. His next film credit was as Assistant To The Producer on *Love Story*. Bob also worked as an Associate Producer on an unreleased MGM film and in the course of developing that project became friends with Andy Warhol. Together they established a magazine called *Interview*. As one of the editors, Bob then did numerous interviews with movie and music personalities. As a result of this work, Bob was asked by Pete Clay to take over as New York editor of *Performance Magazine*. Through this position, Bob began to realize how much he enjoyed the music industry and began freelancing for other magazines as well until accepting a position as Associate Editor at *Record World*. There Bob worked on numerous concert and record reviews and learned the inner workings of the music business. After less than a year at *Record World*, he moved into an A&R position at RCA. During his tenure there, Feiden met and became friendly with Clive Davis. When Arista was founded Clive asked Bob to take over his present position as Director of A&R for the label.

MARCIE GORMAN: Sec. & Asst. to Bob Feiden

VERNON GIBBS: Director at A&R, R&B



Vernon grew up in Brooklyn and played music for his own enjoyment until entering a private high school where the academic demands were such that scholastics took up most of his time. Vernon began writing about music for the high school paper however, and by the time he entered Columbia in 1970 he had written articles for *Crawdaddy*, *Essence*, *National Scholastic* and other major publications. By the time he graduated from college he was writing for such prestigious magazines as *Penthouse*, *Playboy*, *Black Music*, *Rolling Stone* and *Jet*, to name only a few.

After a brief period in the publicity department at Atlantic, Gibbs enrolled in the Columbia School of Journalism in 1974. However, after a few months of school and some personal reappraisal, Vernon decided he really wanted to become a producer or to work in A&R at a record company. While doing an article in New Orleans, Vernon was able to talk his way into some studio time at Studio In The Country owned by Bill Evans. (Bill, he knows he still owes you money and still contends that he will pay you yet!) There Vernon cut a local band and then returned to New York where his tape was rejected by everyone. The contacts derived through this process, however, turned out to be valuable. In 1976 Vernon was in Chicago doing an interview when he met Cliff Burnstein at Phonogram and a few weeks later was asked to interview for an A&R position at

Mercury. Shortly thereafter, Irwin Steinberg hired him to his first A&R position in the New York office of Mercury-Phonogram. After a year there, Vernon decided to try producing on his own again. However, a few months later Vernon was interviewing an Arista act in Boston when he was told that Clive Davis was interested in him. In 1977, after a brief interview with Clive, Vernon accepted his present A&R position at Arista. In discussion with Vernon, he emphasizes how important he feels it is that a record company always be willing to listen to unsolicited tapes. In his words, any company that does not do this ". . . will lose out in the long run. I can't understand how a record company can say they don't listen to unsolicited tapes . . . Even if you have to hire somebody just to weed out the junk and pass the half decent stuff on, it's important . . . look at Boston, that was an unsolicited tape."

DON SILVER: A&R Coordinator



Don grew up just outside of Philadelphia and was a songwriter in local bands while in high school there. In 1975 after a brief stint in Hartford, he moved to Boston. While in college there, he brought up some old friends from home to join him in a "Yankee Reggae" band. They took old songs and re-arranged them to a reggae feel. During his third year in college, Don dropped out of the band as an active participant and moved into management and music publishing. He would produce demos in local studios and then make regular trips to New York to try and place his material. In August 1978 Don moved to New York City and lived in a friend's apartment while he continued to try and place his bands and writers. Gradually he became interested in A&R and wrote a letter to Clive Davis outlining his background and interest. After a series of meetings with Bob Feiden, Don was hired in January 1979 as A&R Co-ordinator for Arista Records. His responsibilities involve screening material for artists on the label, listening to unsolicited tapes, acquiring new talent. In discussing musical trends Don emphasized the importance of "New Wave" and the substantial effect it is already having on our industry.

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RICK CHERTOFF: Producer



A native New Yorker, Rick graduated from the University of Pennsylvania in 1972 as a History major and returned here to pursue a career in the music industry. Following his work with various groups in the city, Chertoff received his first production credit on the music in Robert Klein's album "Child of the 50's". Shortly thereafter he took a position with Hank Medress and Dave Appel and was involved with the music of Tony Orlando and Melissa Manchester. While Clive was organizing Arista Records, Rick arranged to see him about an A&R position. At that meeting Davis asked him to choose some songs that had the potential to be hits. Among the songs that Chertoff returned with were "She's Gone" and "Best of My Love"; months before either had been released . . . he got the job. Chertoff began as an A&R Coordinator and together with Clive, found "Mandy" for Barry Manilow. After approximately 2 years in A&R, screening talent, finding songs and doing edits for many acts on the label, Rick moved into production. His first production credit was the General Johnson album, whose single "All in the Family" was a Top 100 R&B record. Rick then signed and produced the group Baby Grand and later produced the Close Encounters single with John Williams. Recently, he signed and produced a group called Breakwater. The group's first album is on both the Pop and R&B charts and is selling very well. Arista is also very excited about a just released album by The A's, a clever new wave rock n roll band which Rick has produced.

MARCY DREXLER: Sec. & Asst. to Rick Chertoff

STEVE BACKER: Director of Progressive Product



Steve grew up in Brooklyn, the son of a professional tenor sax player in the tradition of Bob Webster and Coleman Hawkins. After graduating from Hofstra University with a degree in business, Steve traveled and worked extensively outside of the U.S. He returned to the states as V.P. and General Manager of a travel firm for which he worked for the next four years. During this time, Steve developed a talent management and production company as an advocacy and gradually became engrossed in the music industry.

Backer next took a position as Midwest Regional Promotion Director for MGM/VERVE. After a year and a half, Steve moved to Elektra as Northeast Regional Promotion Director for the next two years. At this point Backer felt he wanted to be more involved in Jazz and progressive music and accepted a position as National Promotion Director for ABC-Impulse. Within six months he was General Manager and signed such acts as Keith Garret, Gato Barbieri, Sam Rivers and Marion Brown to name only a few. Steve's next career move was to an independent production agreement with Clive Davis which gradually worked into a full time commitment to Arista. He has since been instrumental in developing the Savoy, Freedom, and Novis labels; the GRP production agreement; and has worked with such artists as the Brecker Bros., Larry Coryell, Michael Gregory Jackson

and others. Steve does not work out of the Arista offices but can be reached at his home in New Hampshire at (603) 887-4647.

MARCY DREXLER: A&R Assistant



Marcy grew up in the suburbs of New York City and after attending Farleigh Dickinson University in 1972 began work at the CBS Recording Studios as an assistant in the mastering division. She next moved into CBS radio as the first woman engineer at CBS-FM from 1975 to 1977. In July of 1977 she joined the A&R staff at Arista and presently listens to unsolicited tapes, reviews live acts, listens to and approves test pressings, and helps cast songs for artists on the label. Marcy also worked on various rock research books such as *Rock On* by Norm N. Nite.

LARKIN ARNOLD: Senior V.P. of A&R, West Coast

KAREN MOUTON: Sec. & Asst. to Larkin Arnold



Larkin Arnold has a lengthy and highly-respected list of credits in the music industry as well as in the legal field. Arnold is a 1966 graduate of American University in Washington, D.C. and Howard University Law School in 1969.

Prior to joining Arista Records, Arnold has spent nine years at Capitol Records, beginning there in 1969 as an attorney in the Legal Department. In March 1973, Arnold was selected to spearhead Capitol's entry into the Black music market. Given the title of General Manager — Soul and Jazz Division, Arnold was responsible for establishing the entire Soul and Jazz Division of that company.

In 1975, Arnold was promoted to Vice-President/General Manager of Capitol's Soul and Jazz Division. He was responsible for overseeing the signing, developing, and marketing of soul and jazz acts at Capitol Records. In that capacity, he discovered and signed all of the top names currently on Capitol's artists roster, including Tavares, Natalie Cole, Peabo Bryson, Maze, A Taste of Honey, Caldera, Raoul DeSouza, and Bobby Lyle. He is also responsible for signing to Capitol, artists such as The Sylvers, Bill Cosby, Freda Payne, Gary Bartz, and Eddie Henderson.

Since joining Arista as Senior Vice President, Arnold has continued his successful career discovering and signing G.Q. a platinum selling act and working with the other artists on Arista's label.

BUD SCOPPA: Director at A&R, West Coast

ETSUKO SHUDO: Sec. & Asst. to Bud Scoppa



Bud Scoppa was born in Brooklyn and raised in Atlanta. After college (Notre Dame, Seton Hall) and three years as an English teacher, Scoppa began writing reviews and articles for various music periodicals, including *Rolling Stone*, *Crawdaddy*, and *Circus*. He also authored two books, *The Byrds* and *The Rock People*. In '72, he took his first job in the music business, as East Coast Publicity Director for Mercury Records. While at Mercury, Scoppa and his A&R cohort, Paul Nelson, caught an early ride on the new wave by courting, signing, and working with the legendary New York Dolls and the cultish Blue Ash.

When A&M beckoned with a publicity writer's gig in late 1973, Scoppa modified his jeans into cut-offs and journeyed to L.A. During his five years on the A&M lot, Bud became closely involved (as product manager, biographer, and confidant) with the Tubes and the Stranglers. He also put together the Nils Lofgren "authorized bootleg."

In August '78, Scoppa became Arista's West Coast A&R Director, bringing to the label The Pop, The Elevators, and The Timmys.