

Interview with Rick Stevens

Q: Polydor's initial turnaround in the U.S. came with Disco and R&B cross-over success . . . what is the Company's overall talent direction for the future?

A: A successful full-line record company must have both successful stars and developing artists in every viable music category . . . Rock, Disco, Jazz, R&B . . . the major sub-market segments. Our goal is therefore, to have hits in every category. Our initial success in this country came with Disco and R&B hits which we crossed to the Pop charts. The product mix during this quarter is much more heavily weighted towards the Rock & Roll side with Polydor currently breaking the ATLANTA RHYTHM SECTION, BRAM TCHAIKOVSKY and BLACKJACK.

Q: Polydor was relatively quiet in the U.S. market for a while and in the last year has turned around to become a major competitor in the U.S. market. What happened?

A: It was a change of personnel at the top and a general maturity of the staff at every level. The real success of the U.S. operation started when Freddy Haayen joined the company as president. Freddy is one of the great A&R minds and company leaders in the industry. In fact, we consider him like a star member of the A&R staff. As a former record producer, with considerable success, Freddy knew the reality of success. He knew the direction we had to go in terms of talent and he also knew that we needed the strongest marketing and promotion staff possible. One of his first priorities then, was to find someone to head up that end of the company. He hired Dick Kline, who came to us after some twelve years as a Senior V.P. at Atlantic. The team of Haayen, Kline and Stevens clicked . . . it worked. And what happened below the management level was simply that people matured. We didn't turn the company around by wiping out the staff but rather by giving people direction and a sense of priority. They grew and sophisticated with the company.

Q: Polydor operates with one of the smallest artist rosters and A&R staffs of any major U.S. company. Why?

A: It's been our view in turning the company around and now in maintaining a successful company that a large artist roster is not the formula. The concept of throwing 20 records against the wall and hoping that one succeeds is not today's record business. We're operating with the smallest artist roster in relation to our company's Financial, Distribution and Executive staff power. We release fewer records but back the artists and product that we release with substantial pre-calculated marketing plans and campaigns. The size of our A&R staff is adequate to service the needs of this artist roster.

Q: I understand that you do not accept unsolicited tapes. Is this true?

A: Yes. Given our priorities and the size of the department, we do not take any unsolicited tapes because we don't have the time to listen to them. Our priority for the A&R Department is simple. Our absolute first responsibility is to service artists already on the roster . . . to work with the artist in selecting a producer, in developing song material and in working out an appropriate direction. Our time is used more profitably in that direction than in reviewing unsolicited tape material.

Q: That sounds like Artist Development as much as A&R?

A: Well, we have an Artist Development Department for the Marketing area which concentrates on a different aspect of artist development . . . that is touring, artist image from a live performance point of view and coordinating with Marketing and Promotion on specific artist projects. The A&R Department activity is strictly related to their musical direction but certainly that musical direction is largely related to the reality of that artist's situation in the market place. That's why on a regular basis A&R meets with representatives from the Marketing, Sales and Promotion areas to review name by name artists on the roster. The market place's input to us is very valuable in determining the direction we will recommend musically for an artist. My philosophy has always been to know the "reality of the market place" and the "reality of breaking an artist" . . . there's no better way to get that input than from frank discussions with the Marketing and Sales people who actually see the "street" and media reaction first hand.

Q: One can't help but notice that much of your artist roster is originally from outside the states. How did this internationalization evolve?

A: Beyond our President, Freddy Haayen's stature and track record as an European record operator, the prime reason is that our parent company is enormously successful all over the world. For that reason the global talent scene has always been a viable product source for us. Also, because of our excellent reputation overseas, I specifically made an effort to develop and maintain relationships with the top English and European artists, producers and managers. As we deliver success for these people the word spreads . . . and you see the old snowball concept in effect.

Q: Just to clarify something here, how much communication is there between the companies within the Polygram group. For example, how much communication is there between Polydor and Mercury-Phonogram.

A: In terms of the creative side, A&R and Marketing we are totally separate. In fact we're competitors. There is communication at the planning level, theoretical level and management level and we use some services in common like the same distribution system and the same royalty accounting computer, but basically we are friendly competitors.

Q: Rick, what do you see as the future of Disco?

A: I think it's changing. What happened was that Disco, perhaps more than any other form of music became highly formulated. In other words, you had to have more than just a good record from a music point of view. You had to have the "format" of making a Disco record down pat too. That's why you saw the emergence of the whole school of Disco Mixers, like Jim Burgess and Tom Moulton who basically took somebody else's music and transformed it into the Disco format. Now, Disco has touched the entire country. This financial investment in the physical facilities plus the general concept of a reason to go out and socialize, are strong indicators that dance music will be here for quite some time in the future. I do see though the heavily stylized format that had characterized Disco records as breaking down somewhat. Good records which are danceable will come from the R&B, Disco and even the Rock area in the future. The criteria will not be the structured Disco format that existed in the past but the musical strength of the record and it's danceability not its specific stylized format.

Who's Who In A&R At Polydor

Q: To go back and touch on something we discussed earlier. As Polydor grows more successful will the artist roster increase drastically?

A: I would have to say no. Our philosophy in developing the company is to be able to maintain direct line involvement between key executives and every artist. To do this we must maintain a relatively small artist roster in terms of the number of artists. We would rather be an A&M sized company than a CBS, in terms of style. The whole philosophy of the Polygram Group, by the way, underscores that kind of a more personalized company. Polygram is built up as a kind of federation of independent companies. Casablanca is our partner; Polydor and Phonogram are wholly owned subsidiaries; RSO is a part of the family... if you add up the artist rosters for each of them, you would probably come to a CBS size artist roster. Yet, each company is totally independent. So the Polygram companies can in aggregate accomplish the same thing as CBS and yet remain smaller in terms of servicing the artists through smaller individual attention-oriented companies.

POLYDOR A&R — EAST COAST

RICK STEVENS: Vice President A&R



Together with Polydor President Fred Haayen, Rick Stevens is credited with the talent acquisition and production arrangements which have led to the streak of hits which Polydor is enjoying.

Los Angeles-born Rick Stevens was recruited while still attending college in 1969 by CBS to be their first ever College Promotions Representative. At Columbia Records, Stevens helped organize a college promotions program which quickly became the model for similar set-ups throughout the music industry. In the early '70's, Stevens was Director of Product Management for Epic and the Columbia custom labels, responsible for a wide range of acts including the Gamble & Huff roster, Sly and The Family Stone, Ojays, Harold Melvin and The Blue Notes, Billy Paul, Johnny Cash and the Hollies. He left CBS in 1973 to form his own concern production company, Contemporary Concert Productions, which grew to become one of the key concert producers in the entire country, putting on shows in the southeast and midwest by groups like the Who, Ten Years After, Sly and Arlo Guthrie. In 1975, Stevens joined Polygram Distribution as Assistant to the President, moving through the ranks until he achieved his present position as Vice President, A&R, where he not only supervises product acquisition for the U.S. — based Polydor, but vigorously pursues international acquisitions as well.

VIVIAN GREENBERG: Administrative Assistant

STU FINE: Director of East Coast A&R

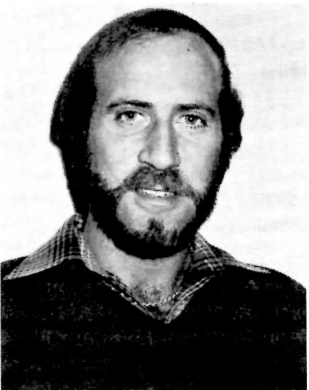


Born in Providence, R.I., Stu got his start in the music business through a column he penned for the *Providence Journal*. Fine served as the paper's pop music critic for close to five years, from the time he was a senior in high school up until his graduation from the University of Rhode Island in 1974. Upon leaving college, Stu landed a job as a publicity writer for RCA, reporting to publicity chief Herb Hellman. An eighteen month stint as Manager of East Coast A&R for Arista Records followed, where Fine became particularly involved with repertoire and song selection for acts like the Bay City Rollers and Melissa Manchester. Stu joined Polydor in November 1977 as a consultant for East Coast A&R, quickly rising to the position of Manager for East Coast A&R. Among the acts he has worked on at Polydor are Pat Travers, Don Ray, Bionic Boogie, Bram Tchaikovsky and others.

RENA TEMPLESMAN: Assistant

POLYDOR A&R — WEST COAST

STEVE DUBOFF: Director of West Coast A&R



New York-born Steve Duboff began his music business career upon graduating high school in 1959 when he recorded a tune called "You're Unforgettable" as a member of the Routeens for Irv Spice's Charm Records. After a stint in college and the reserves, Duboff started to collaborate as a songwriter with Jean Kaufman, mother of famed d.j. Murray the K and composer of Bobby Darin's "Splish Splash." In the mid-'60's, Steve worked as a staff songwriter/producer for Charley Koppelman and Don Rubin at Screen Gems, Roulette Records and Koppelman-Rubin Associates. In 1965, writing with Artie Kornfeld, Duboff penned and sang "Pied Piper" as lead singer for the Changin' Times on their tour of America with Sonny & Cher. In 1967-68, Kornfeld and Duboff co-wrote the Cowsills' hits, "The Rain, The Park, and Other Things" and "We Can Fly." After his association with Kornfeld, Duboff managed, produced and signed publishing deals with various groups, the most renowned being Insect Trust, which experienced critical acclaim at the turn of the decade. Duboff moved to California in 1971, where he signed a publishing deal with MGM Records. In 1975-76, he had a publishing and production deal with A&M Records and in 1977 Duboff became Director of A&R for ABC Records, working with acts like Lenny Williams, Poco, and Shotgun. Early this year, Duboff assumed his current post as Director of West Coast A&R for Polydor Records.

POLYDOR ARTIST ROSTER

POLYDOR

Roy Ayers
Ayers/Henderson
Barcelona
Bionic Boogie
James Brown
Blackjack
Buckeye
Chilly
Ray Dahrouge
Philip D'Arrow
John Davis (studio group)
Linda Dillard
Dodgers
Farragher Bros.
Gloria Gaynor
Steve Gibsons
Roger Glover
Barclay James Harvest
Isaac Hayes
Wayne Henderson
The Jam
Jean Michel Jarre
Tamiko Jones
Benny Mardones
Missouri
Alton McClain & Destiny
Frank Mills
Olympic Runner
Original Mirrors
Phillips & MacLeod
Quartz
Rainbow
Don Ray
Saga
Siouxsie & the Banshees

Southern Cookin'
Starkravin'
Sweet People
Pat Travers
Vangelis

POLYDOR/BGO

Atlanta Rhythm Shction
Alicia Bridges
Billy Burnette

CHARISMA

Sir John Betjeman
Blue Max
Chuck Brunacardi
Darlin
Dazzlers
Isaac Guillory
Peter Hammill
Hawklords
Bo Hansson
Barry Humphries
Steve Joseph
Leszek Konopekski
R.D. Laing
Levinsky/Sinclair
Patrick Moraz
Phoenix
Vivian Stanshall

POLYDOR/EG

Bill Bruford
Robert Fripp
U.K.

POLYDOR/HAREM

Arpeggio
Michel Freeman
French Kiss
Simon Soussan Orch.

POLYDOR/KOLOB

Donny Osmond
Marie Osmond
Donny & Marie Osmond

POLYDOR/MVP

Peaches & Herb

POLYDOR/MAGNET

Darts

POLYDOR/MAN KEN

Godley/Creme/Manzanera
10cc

RADAR

Bram Tchaikovsky
Yachts

POLYDOR/SPRING

Fatback
Millie Jackson
Millie Jackson/Isaac Hayes
Krystal
Renee Pryor
Joe Simon