

INTRODUCTION

In examining Virgin Records as it relates to America, it must be noted that there are basically two operations, Virgin-United States and Virgin-International. The former is managed by Charles Dimont. The latter operation falls under the jurisdiction of Simon Draper and is based in London.

Virgin-U.S., based in New York, is primarily a filter and servicing office for the larger International operation. Charles notes that the U.S. releases include approximately 20 acts, although International maintains some 30 groups.

In discussing the composition of the roster and current trends, Charles emphasizes that, "we want to give the label shape and balance." He sees too many bands playing formula music whereas Virgin is seeking a different, original sound. Although the label is looking for such a balance, Dimont interjects that, "we would not feel comfortable signing an r&b act or a singer-songwriter." While International has some 4-5 reggae acts and an a&r executive to oversee that department, Dimont says that, "there is no indication as yet that reggae will happen in the U.S., 'New Wave' is in fashion," but he regards pop as a marketable and programmable style. In terms of his own roster, Charles points out that, "our acts are not necessarily programmable or sellable, but all are class — on the frontier of commerciality."

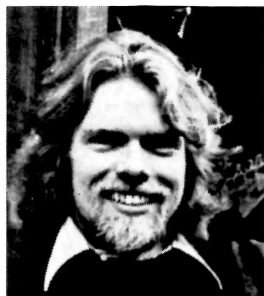
In regard to unsolicited tapes, Dimont stresses that because there is no formal a&r situation in New York, they all listen. Virgin-U.S. listens with International in mind. Favored tapes are sent to the U.K. for review. Charles believes that, "because of the Flying Lizards, Tangerine Dream, etc., we get every off the wall tape in New York." Some 20-30 tapes are sent in weekly. "Of utmost importance to Virgin is to see a prospective act perform live."

As far as video is concerned, Charles was quick to point out that it is quite expensive but the investment return is often realized in goodwill, if not sales. Most important is video as a PR instrument which gives licensees an important tool. It's interesting to note that the direction Virgin wishes to take in video is similar to that of their music — experimental, as evidenced in some of their promotional tapes produced by Jon Roseman.

Virgin is also involved in many varied special projects. Charles notes that the International's film company has completed Mike Oldfield's space movie as well as contributing to the Great Rock n' Roll Swindle. Virgin International also owns a retail operation, export operation, a recording studio, mobile studios, a video editing house, avenue and an island.

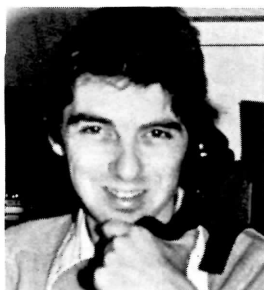
Because of further expansion of the Virgin International roster, management has created another label. Dindisc, headed by Carol Wilson and based in London. Dindisc has recently signed Martha and the Muffins as their first group.

RICHARD BRANSON: Chairman, Virgin International



Born in South Africa, the son of a London lawyer, Richard grew up in England. By the age of 16 he left school to run his own magazine called *STUDENT*. As readers began calling in for advice; the Student Advisory Centre was spawned by the magazine. Among other things, the Centre offered advice concerning venereal disease. Because of this legal proceedings were brought against the Centre under an old outdated law. As a result of the court proceedings the law was changed. Richard then became an authority on young people and received retainers for his advice in that area. In 1969 as the *Student* magazine went under, Richard and some friends established Virgin Records as a mail order company. By 1971, after losing money consistently, the mail order operation was closed and Virgin opened a record store in London. The record store handled only rock music and after a short time was doing well enough so that Virgin opened another in Liverpool. The stores soon acquired a cult following and Virgin record stores began popping up all over. This eventually led Richard to set up Virgin Records as a record company with Simon Draper overseeing the company's activities.

CHARLES DIMONT: US General Manager



Charles was born and schooled in England, where he attended the University of Manchester and East Anglio, graduating with degrees in philosophy. In his first vocation, Charles became a bookmaker for a group similar to the U.S.' OTB. In 1977 Charles joined Virgin-International. He began as staff and moved up through the ranks. As a figures man, he became head of manufacturing and distribution — then head of marketing — then creative director. In 1979, Dimont assumed his present position as Virgin-U.S.' G.M.

WHO'S WHO IN A&R AT VIRGIN RECORDS

SIMON DRAPER: Managing Director, Virgin International

Originally from South Africa, Simon co-founded Virgin Records with Branson in 1973. Simon was instrumental in signing Mike Oldfield in that year. He then borrowed the necessary funds to help make "Tubular Bells" a gold album. Draper is presently director of daily operations, including the overseeing of artist signings and releases in both Virgin-International and Virgin-U.S.

VIRGIN US RELEASES INCLUDE:

Captain Beefheart
Cowboys International
Fingerprintz
Flying Lizards
Gladiators
Holly & The Italians
Interview
Magazine
Martha & The Muffins
Motors
Mike Oldfield
Records
Ruts
Shooting Star
Skids
XTC

