

## INTRODUCTION

Windsong Records is among the smallest of the small labels we have spotlighted over the past few years with a roster of only four artists. There is an interesting interrelationship at Windsong (jointly owned by John Denver, Milt Okun, and Harold Thau) and Management III (co-owned by Jerry Weintraub and Milt Okun) and Cherry Lane Music (co-owned by Jerry Weintraub and Milt Okun).

The President of the label is Al Teller and Vice President of A&R is Denny Diante, both of whom came to Windsong from similar positions at United Artists Records. In discussing the actual day-to-day functioning of A&R at Windsong, Diante notes that, with a label of its size, it is very difficult to review unsolicited tapes; "This business is very much a collection of personal relationships and it is through those relationships that I receive tapes or hear about acts from managers, lawyers, publishers and so on. If I spent my time listening to unsolicited tapes, I wouldn't have time to do anything else." Although both Al and Denny do go out to see acts, it is usually only when the act is highly recommended by people in the industry, perhaps already has some label interest and usually has competent representation already lined up. Denny goes on to note that he is very song oriented and, along with everything else, he must also hear hit songs before signing an act.

When asked about the mixed responsibilities of Windsong as a producer and A&R director, Diante points out that his experience as a producer allows him not only to evaluate what he does and doesn't like but also to be able to suggest what can actually be done to improve a tape. Denny cautions, however, that "You must leave your ego out of it. You can't analyze a tape by what you would have done but must rather understand what that particular act or producer is trying to achieve." Given the above, he does admit that a competent A&R staff would make it easier to do both A&R and production and notes that, should Windsong continue to enjoy chart success at its present rate, some personnel might be added in the area of A&R. As a footnote to all this, Denny also manages to produce some artists as an independent producer for other labels and has recently completed a project with Michel Colombier for Chrysalis.

Although Windsong has been primarily an AOR label in the past, Diante points out a change in direction with the signing of Danny Spanos, an R&B group called Kocky and the increased R&B flavor being added to Maxine Nightingale's material. It is also interesting to note that a label as small as Windsong can afford to become involved in minor specialty situations such as the "Theme From Chips" which is selling very well in department stores with minimal promotion effort.

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**AL TELLER:** President of Windsong

**CYNTHIA MEYERS:** Office Manager and Secretary to Al Teller and Denny Diante

As a Harvard graduate, Al Teller first entered the music industry as assistant to Clive Davis at CBS Records. From there Teller accepted a position running Playboy Records in Chicago. Al next returned to CBS as Vice President of Marketing under Bruce Lundval until moving to United Artists as President of the label. Upon leaving U.A., after a brief hiatus, Teller accepted his present position as President of Windsong.

**DENNY DIANTE:** Vice President of A&R

Denny was born in Pittsburgh and moved to L.A. at the age of three. He began playing accordion at six, drums at ten and guitar by twelve. Denny formed his first rock group at the age of fifteen called the "Cornells" and then a group called the "Sentinels" both of which enjoyed some local success with a few surfing records. Diante next began working as a solo vocalist with friends David Gates and Marty Cooper and gradually developed an interest in studio work and production. At age seventeen, Denny founded a publishing and production company with Marty Cooper and for the next five years enjoyed record success with such artists as Brian Hyland, Jack Nitzche, The Ventures and others. He next took a brief position with E.H. Morris where he signed both Stephen Bishop and Alan O'Day before moving to Southern Music as West Coast Professional Manager. From there, Diante accepted a position as Vice President of A&R for United Artists Records. Upon leaving U.A., Denny spent approximately a year as an independent producer before his appointment to his present position at Windsong. Denny's production credits include such artists as Paul Anka, Michel Colombier, Maxine Nightingale, Bobby Goldsboro, Kingfish and Sylvie Vartan.

**GENE ARMOND:** Vice President Sales & Promotion

**ESTHER BERNSTEIN:** Secretary to Gene Armond



There isn't much that Gene Armond has not done in the music industry. Born and raised in New York, Gene began as a musician and accepted his first record position at Everest Records and then Kapp Records. During his years at Kapp, Armond was involved with the success of such artists as Jack Jones, Roger Williams, Jane Morgan and numerous others. His promotion work included such records as Hello Dolly, The Impossible Dream and other hit records too numerous to list. Gene next moved to United Artists as East Coast General Manager where he worked with such artists as ELO, Kenny Rogers, Crystal Gayle, and the Brass Construction to name only a few. Armond next joined Windsong where he recently helped make Maxine Nightingale's "Lead Me On" into a million seller. At present he works out of the New York office where Armond oversees the day-to-day operations of the record company.