

INTERVIEW WITH BILLY MESHEL

Q: Alright Billy, tell me about the development of the publishing operation.

A: Well, in January 1977 the publishing company was set up.

Q: The record company was established when?

A: I think the record company was 3 years old...We started with no songs in the catalogue. Our first deal was with Gregg Diamond and "More, More, More" was the first song that we had that made money...it went to number one. That went on to become a real good relationship and gave us some good songs to exploit.

Q: You started by looking for writers rather than acquiring catalogues?

A: We never look for catalogues...the thing you do is find talented people...catalogues are inflated.

Q: Do you feel that even back in '77 you were better off going after good writers than established catalogues?

A: Well, good writer-artists. We couldn't sign straight writers because we didn't have the staff yet. Even now, almost 5 years later, we still don't have enough of a staff to take care of straight writers. We get involved mainly with writer-artists who we believe to be talented.

Q: What else is important besides signing good writer-artists?

A: The next thing when you are starting up a company is individual songs. So you listen to everything that comes in. Before we had anyone working for us I listened to all of the tapes myself. I found "Hard Times For Lovers", the song that Judy Collins ultimately did, plus a bunch of other individual songs that way. But in order to put us on the map we had to get involved with successful writer-artists. Developing unknowns entirely would have taken too much time. So the second deal that we made was with Alan Parsons on the strength of hearing "I Robot".

Q: So first you signed good writer-artists, second individual songs, and third, a well known artist-writer?

A: Well Parsons was well known but hadn't gone all the way yet. The "I Robot" album was just beginning...the plastic was still warm from the presses...As time went by we added to the companies that we were working with like Chinnichap. We had a number one hit with "Kiss You All Over" and went top 5 with "Stumblin' In", but I don't have to tell you about Mike Chapman and Nicki Chinn.

Q: In that particular case you were dealing with a production company. Was that your next phase of development?

A: No, actually I view that situation the same as a writer-artist because they write the songs and then produce them, and their catalogue is superb. It's hard to believe but in less than four years we've gotten them over 100 covers...isn't that wild?

Q: What about your international situation?

A: In April of 1977 we started making deals and we're still with the majority of those people. We concentrate on sub-publishers who exploit copyrights and are expert in promotion. We've had international versions of songs that we never hits in the U.S. For example, after "Sad Eyes" by Robert John, we had a series of hits with Dutch artists on his material.

Q: Tell me about Interworld.

A: Interworld started about the same time we did. Their concept was different from ours. They had all the confidence in the world that they could build a substantial publishing company mainly by acquiring catalogues...we took over in 1980.

Q: Was it a merger?

A: No...it's separate companies with the same management. When the people at Ariola bought Arista and became acquainted with our success, they were very impressed...According to Billboard's End-Of-Year Top Publishing Chart, the first year we were 56th, the second year we were 23rd, and the third year we were 9th...and I bet you money that this year we were higher than that. So, for whatever reasons, when Mike Stewart split, the Ariola people figured they didn't have to go anywhere else for management.

Q: How do -ou make decisions as to what will be assigned to Interworld and what will go to Arista-Careers?

A: All the new signings go to Arista unless there is a special reason, like if it is an Ariola inspired signing. The attitude toward Interworld is to exploit what is already there...I think it is important to point out that, pound for pound, we probably have the largest professional management staff in the country, if not the world. Our warehouse is full of good material and we're using it. We're not just buying new material.

Q: What about direction now for your company?

A: Our direction is really simple...to exploit to an even finer degree the music of the people who are already with us. I also think, more and more, it is becoming clear that finding young, unproven but obvious talent and putting our connections and ability to work for them is the way to the greatest profit. It's my opinion that when you're offered things by the "business types" they leave practically no rational chance for a profit.

Q: So rather than deal with lawyers...

A: Not just lawyers...it's everybody who is sending tapes around to make a deal...when a businessman calls a music publisher to make a deal, the music publisher almost never can make out.

Q: So your alternative is what?

A: The alternative is new talent. Dealing with the street...the music people off the street...the managers, the unsolicited tapes...it makes you crazy listening to everything but last week we found a song that came in from the mail and we're gonna make a fortune with it.

Q: What about the future in TV, video, film, etc.

A: There is no question the future is bright. The ways to make it work haven't yet been established. Everybody's employing interim practices. Chappell is a gigantic company and we're keying in on their policies at present because they've got such muscle.

Q: So you're just watching now?

A: Well it's not watching, it's tacit involvement. We're not rich enough yet...and then we also have the NMPA which is a God-send for music publishers. It's just a miracle that the NMPA has actually happened and survived. The majority of the benefits we enjoy as publishers and writers are a result of that organization.

Q: Is there anything else that we've left out?

A: Well there is something I might like to mention. It was in the experimental stage and now I'm going to put it into practice. I've asked my professional staff that when they have some time during the week, rather than redundantly follow-up...I mean follow-up is extremely important but you can do that too much...So what we're now doing is spending that extra time developing relationships at top notch secondary radio stations. In other words we're developing record promotion through our professional department and it's proving very successful. ...By the way, I think it's worth noting that right now, while we're doing this interview, we have the Number One U.S. hit with "Private Eyes" by Hall and Oates, and the Number One U.K. hit with "It's My Party" by Dave Stewart and Barbara Gaskin, both of which are Interworld copyrights...so we may be doing something right. Incidentally, when "It's My Party" was turned down by all the major labels in the U.S. we were asked to help. We recently placed it with Platinum Records. This week it was picked in Cashbox.

BILLY MESHEL - President and Chief Operating Officer



Billy began in the music business at seventeen as a member of a popular rock group. In 1959 Billy was 20 years old when the group broke up and he began putting more emphasis on his songwriting. That year he wrote a top twenty hit called "Do You Ever Think Of Me" by Little Esther on Savoy Records. In 1963 Billy took his first job in music publishing as a writer and Professional Manager for South Mountain Music. While at that company Billy was instrumental in the comeback success of Little Anthony & The Imperials. He also became interested in record production under the tutelage of Don Costa and Teddy Randazzo.

In 1965 Billy next moved to California to work for H&L Productions where he not only ran the publishing company but also wrote songs and produced records for them as well. While there Billy wrote, produced and was the artist on an international hit that sold some 5 million records called "Dear Mrs. Appleby" for Parrot Records. He was also responsible for numerous covers of the H&L catalogue by major artists before leaving in 1967 to form a partnership with Lew Futterman. Together he and Lew soon had a top ten hit with "But It's Alright" by J.J. Jackson which sold over 2 million records and Billy wrote "L. David Sloan" which was an international hit for Michelle Lee among other successful songs.

In the beginning of 1970, Billy became Director of Creative Affairs for Famous Music. Within the first three months he promoted the release of Dionne Warwick's "Make It Easy On Yourself". Billy also brought producer Phil Gernhard to Famous which soon resulted in such hits as "Me And You And A Dog Named Boo", and other hits by Lobo; "Spiders And Snakes" and "My Girl Bill" by Jim Stafford to name only a few of Phil's many hit productions. Meschel was also responsible for bringing Kraftwerk and their "Autobahn" album to Famous as well as sub-publishing deals for Martin & Coulter, Bickerton & Waddington, the Cyril Shane Organization, and publishing on the Hollies from the U.K.

In January 1977, Billy Meschel left Famous to set up Arista-Careers Music.

JEFFREY BREBAC - Director of Business Affairs



While attending law school, Jeff and his twin brother Todd began writing songs and, as "The Reunion", recorded for Mr. G Records, a subsidiary of Audio Fidelity Records. After graduating from New York University School of Law, Jeff became a staff attorney in a neighborhood law office in Chicago as part of the Office of Economic Opportunity's Legal Services Division. In 1971, he returned to New York and assumed a position with ASCAP. In 1973, Jeff entered private practice primarily as a consultant to entertainment law firms. In 1978, Jeff moved to California to take the position of Director of Business Affairs for the Interworld Music Group. When the Arista Music Group and Interworld were

combined in 1980, Jeff assumed the business affairs position for both companies.

JUDY HICKS - Manager Copyright and International, Arista - Interworld Music Group



Judy Hicks is originally from Cincinnati, Ohio, where she graduated from the Cincinnati College of Music. Musically oriented, she sang with groups and with local dance bands before settling for a career in radio. She did on-the-air shows, was musical director and publicity manager for radio stations in Ohio, Kentucky and Texas before emigrating to Los Angeles with her husband in 1951. Since that time, she was Associate Producer for the Tennessee Ernie Radio Show on ABC network, West Coast Manager for Frank Music Corp., Manager of Jerry Lewis' publishing companies, International Manager for Dot Records, Copyright and International Manager Amaret Records, Metromedia Music Corp., New York Times

Music Corp. and one of the original members of Interworld Music Group in the same capacity as Manager of Copyright and International. She was instrumental in introducing the computer program for royalties and the microfilm file system to Interworld.

LINDA BLUM - General Professional Manager



Linda started her career in publishing at Landers-Roberts. In July 1979, she became the West Coast Professional Manager at Arista Music Publishing Group. After the combination of Arista with Interworld she became General Professional Manager in charge of West and East Coast professional departments which is the position she holds today.

PAT BAIRD - Professional Manager

STEVE SUSSMAN - Professional Manager

GARY MITTMAN - Professional Manager

TOM STURGES - Professional Manager

SONGWRITERS UNDER CONTRACT

Graham Russell

Daryl Hall & John Oates

Alan Parsons

Eric Wolfson

Rob Preston

Robert John

Gloria Sklerov

Greg Guidry

Al Kooper

Dennis Henson

Susanna Clark

Eugene Record

David Courtney

ADMINISTRATION DEALS

Chris Rea - through Magnet Music Ltd.; Henry Mancini - throughout Northridge Music Co.; Lalo Schifrin - through Scherzo (outside U.S. and Canada); Sandy Torano - through Torano Music; Rene Moore and Angela Windbush - through A La Mode Music/Moore & Moore Music; Mike Chapman & Nicky Chinn - through Chinnichap Publishing; Amanda McBroom - through McBroom Music; Leslie Bricusse - through Stage & Screen Music; Jack White - through Edition Sunrise/Sunset Publishing