

Buttermilk Sky Associates is a multi-faceted music publishing company which was formed by its President Murray Deutch in early 1978. In less than four years time Buttermilk Sky's catalog has grown to contain over 3000 copyrights including songs recorded by The Beatles, Janis Joplin, Ted Nugent and Elvis Presley. For the past two years they have been music consultants to Columbia Pictures, coordinating and promoting soundtrack albums for all Columbia Picture releases. In that time, Columbia Pictures has become the leader of all motion picture companies in the number of soundtrack albums released and sold. Their most successful music campaign was this past summer on the gold certified "HEAVY METAL" soundtrack which is well on its way to platinum status, and are now involved in the motion picture "ANNIE" due for release in May of this year.

Recent activities in the publishing company include #1 Dance records by Gino Soccio - namely "DANCER" and "TRY IT OUT" from Soccio LP's which Buttermilk's ASCAP publishing company "Good Flavor Songs" control. They also publish "The Chi-Lites" and a wave act called "The Show". Also, they have recently obtained cover versions of copyrights by Tavares, Johnny Mathis, Phil Seymour, and Louis Goffin. Most recently, they have charted the Booker T. single "I Want You" on A&M records. Future projects include a newly signed production deal with a major label with releases scheduled as early as February 1982. Buttermilk also plans to represent additional motion picture companies.

INTERVIEW WITH MURRAY DEUTCH

Q: Murray, let's start from the beginning. After you left the New York Times situation how did the company start?

A: Well actually during the New York Times situation, when it was decided that we were going to sell the company...what we did was set up the separate company called Buttermilk Sky Association.

Q: That was while you were still at The Times?

A: Well yes...It wasn't a conflict of interest because we knew that the company was going to be sold. Then, to give us a base, we bought a few companies.

Q: When you say "we", does that mean you had other investors?

A: No, it was just me.

Q: You said you bought a few companies?

A: Well I acquired 31 different publishing companies from one man who owned them...that is 50% of each plus administration rights. With those we set up Buttermilk Sky Associates with music publishing companies called Buttermilk Sky Music Publishing Co...actually 2 BMI companies and 1 ASCAP.

Q: When was that?

A: In October of 1978.

Q: Did you then set up sub-publishing deals or were they already in place?

A: There were some sub-publishing deals, but when I acquired those companies some of them terminated within a month or two.

Q: So you have a staggered sub-publishing situation?

A: In a few places.

Q: What did the company staff consist of at that time?

A: It was really just me and Jane Vaughn, who had worked with me for many years at United Artists, and then Stu Cantor joined us shortly thereafter.

Q: How did you find Stu? What was he doing?

A: He had just graduated from graduate school as an accountant and he happens to be my son-in-law.

Q: OK, take me from there...where did the company go next?

A: Well first we handled all the copyrights on the group War for Far Out Productions as well as the publishing wing for AVI Records.

Q: When did you get into the motion picture end of your company?

A: Well I'm with Columbia Pictures now for two years as their music consultant.

Q: Exactly what does that mean?

A: If we start from the beginning of a picture we recommend composers to the producers and directors. If we can't start at the beginning we pick up at whatever stage the project has reached. If there's no album, if we can, we put one together; If not, we will help package and make a deal with a record label...We help pick the single, co-ordinate the release date with the release of the picture...In the case of the film Heavy Metal, there was no song called "Heavy Metal" so I suggested that they have one written.

Q: Do you get involved in administration of the publishing on the music for these various pictures?

A: I represent the film and protect the film company, that is my primary responsibility. What's more is, we also hire the independent promotion people and set up all the national promotion, that is if there is a music campaign with the picture.

Q: I presume you do this in conjunction with someone in promotion at the film company?

A: We do that in conjunction with the promotion and advertising departments at Columbia Pictures. We get our budgets from them and then we go from there.

Q: Do you have a specific group of promotion people that you use?

A: It depends on the material.

Q: So in that respect you work very much like a record promotion company. What else are you doing? What about acquiring other catalogues?

A: We're negotiating now for a couple. We don't know if we'll get them because we're fighting Chappell and all those kind of companies in the market...We also have a production company and we just made a deal with a group called Silverado.

Q: Is this production company a new situation?

A: No, we've had the production company for the purpose of picking up masters and channeling them to the record companies that I approach with the film soundtracks. But I really haven't found anything that I've been that excited about because when I go, I have to believe I've got something better than what they've already got on the label. Another thing I should mention is that we are now starting to represent a company called Golden Harvest Films.

Q: What are you doing with them?

A: Well they're the producers of "Cannonball Run" and all those Bruce Lee pictures and I'm going to do the same thing for them as I do for Columbia Pictures.

Q: What films are you working on for Golden Harvest?

A: We're now working on a picture called "Mega Force I" that's just great. Then we'll be on a picture called "Menage Et Tois" that Henry Mancini is scoring in London right now.

Q: What about the sub-publishing on the Golden Harvest films?

A: We will administer the Golden Harvest catalogue throughout the world.

Q: There's no problem with a conflict of interest with Columbia Pictures?

A: No, I have a non-exclusive deal in each case...although I have to admit that 99% of my time is spent on Columbia Pictures.

Q: What about the TV area?

A: We really haven't touched that yet except for the Songfinders that Stu has set up to help advertising agencies to track down copyrights for commercial usage.

Q: What about films for TV?

A: We're not getting involved in that right now. The music there is all for one night...it's very, very tough to do anything with the music on that basis.

Q: Is there anyone else doing the same thing as your company for the film industry?

A: No, actually the only one I can think of in the same business as I am is Snuff Garrett and he only does it for Burt Reynolds and Clint Eastwood...But his deals are different. He owns the publishing in those cases. There may be one or two others but I'm not sure.

Q: Would you have a problem taking on another major studio?

A: Well the reason there are only a few of us around is that all of the major studios have a music department. It just so happens that Columbia Pictures has broadened their outlook more than the others in the music area.

Q: What about expansion...Are you about as large as you expect to get?

A: That's hard to say. We're looking at other companies. We're looking to perhaps take over another company, a public company...but who knows that will happen.

MURRAY DEUTCH - President

Murray was President of United Artists Music for 8 years ending in 1973, when he started a music publishing company for The New York Times as President and Chief Executive Officer. Upon leaving The Times, Murray opted to start his own business under the umbrella of Buttermilk Sky Associates, and the rest is history.

STU CANTOR - Vice President/Director of Creative Affairs

Stu has a background in music and entertainment from his pre-high school days, performing in bands and shows. He has a B.S. degree in Advertising/Marketing and a Masters degree in Accounting. He joined Murray at the outset of Buttermilk Sky as assistant professional manager, was promoted to Professional Manager and more recently to his current position.

FRANCES BARBER - Assistant to Murray Deutch and Stu Cantor

Fran worked for James Brown Enterprises as administrative assistant from 1967-1971 and then joined Columbia Pictures as publicity/co-ordinator for the movie "Watts Stax", from 1971-1974. In January of 1980, she joined Buttermilk Sky Associates as assistant to both Murray and Stu.