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Modern Records began with the exclusive signing of Stevie Nicks in the fall of 1978. Modern then signed its distribution deal with Atlantic in June of 1979. While Stevie was completing her recording and touring obligations to Fleetwood Mac, two other acts were signed to the label, Joey Wilson and Jah Malla. When their albums proved not to be successful, in Danny's words, "We changed our game plan. We looked at our bottom line and tried to project our future bottom line and decided that, for the time being, what we had to do was concentrate solely on Stevie. I mean the difference between selling 1 million or 2 million albums on a superstar makes a good deal more sense than 20,000 or 60,000 on a new act. While we both love the creative aspects of breaking new acts, we want to stay in business first." Based on this philosophy, Paul and Danny decided to put all their efforts into maximizing the career of their only artist, Stevie Nicks. They were intimately involved in everything from introducing her to her producer, Jimmy Iovine, imput on arrangements and material, introducing her to Tom Petty etc.

The "Bella Donna" album was released in the summer of '81 with the single "Stop Draggin' My Heart Around" out about two weeks prior ro the LP. The album has sold some 2.6 million copies in the U.S. alone with worldwide sales of over 3 million. Stevie was awarded at NARM '81 as the Best Selling Female Artist as well as Best Selling New Artist of the year. Its worth noting that the album had 4 hit singles on it that were released with a strategy in mind. As Danny Goldberg points out, "One of the things we felt good about is that we got Stevie played in AOR, it was the #1 album for 2 months; Top 40, we had two top 5 singles; AC with two of the singles 'After The Glitter Fades' and 'Leather And Lace' which was #1 AC record; Country with both 'Leather' and 'Glitter'..." Paul adds, "There was a real strategy in the way we put out the singles. When we put out 'Edge Of Seventeen', which was our third single, we put a live version on the B side which rekindled AOR play even though the album was six months old at that point."

At present a new Stevie Nicks album is half way along with an expected release set for the fall or winter of this year. Jimmy Iovine is once again producing with most of the same musicians. Both Paul and Danny still also feel that they are not ready to sign any other artist to the label as yet. Danny explains, "If you look at the labels that have started in the last few years, without mentioning names, some of them have been run by very prominent, talented people... a lot of them have either gone under or have barely been able to survive financially. I don't think it's because those people aren't bright...it's just very difficult. In the 'pop rock' idiom, you can count on the fingers of one hand new labels in the last five years that have really flourished. Geffen has obviously done phenomenally well but other than that the other three of us are all surviving on one big act...I mean IRS has the GoGo's, Boardwalk has Joan Jett, and we have Stevie."

No article on Modern could be complete without mentioning their Atlantic distribution situation. They first signed with Atlantic based on a personal relationship between Paul and Doug Morris. Doug was head of Atco and custom labels at that time and Modern came in as a custom label. About six months later Doug went on to become president of Atlantic. Meanwhile, over the years Danny had also developed personal ties with a number of Atlantic people, partially through his affiliation with Swan Song Records. Paul comments, "We all feel very comfortable and lucky to be involved in the Atlantic operation. Other than the Rolling Stones, Stevie Nicks has proven to be the best selling artist of the Atlantic affiliated group." Dan goes on to say, "At the point that we do want to attract other artists, I don't think there is any artist, lawyer or manager in the business that wouldn't want to be with an Atlantic distributed label... it's definetely a plus."

## WHO'S WHO AT MODERN RECORDS

### PAUL FISHKIN - Co-Founder

Paul grew up in Philadelphia where he was originally studying pharmacy. However, at the same time he was also managing bands, including a group called "Woody's Truck Stop" which included Todd Rundgren. When Todd left for New York and got involved with Albert Grossman he called Paul about producing a group called The American Dream that Fishkin was handling. That turned out to be the first act on Ampex Records, and, as fate would have it, the world probably lost a great pharmacist to the allure of the music business. Even though that particular situation didn't work out, Paul developed a close working relationship with Albert Grossman and Bearsville Records. When Todd recorded his solo album "Runt" he included a song specifically about Fishkin called "We Gotta Get You A Woman". Due to his personal involvement with that record as well as his belief that it was a hit, Paul went on to promote the record for the next 9 months and finally broke it. It was through that working experience that he really learned the meaning of promotion and in 1971 when Bearsville went to Warner Bros. for distribution, Fishkin was promoted to General Manager of the label. In that capacity he trimmed down the artist roster, channelled the resources of the company, and over the next two years was successful in breaking both Todd Rundgren and Foghat. Bearsville did very well in the mid '70s with Fishkin as its president and eventually 1/3 owner of the company. He stayed there for 8 years and during that time met Stevie Nicks and developed a strong personal relationship with her. It was also during his tenure at Bearsville that Paul met Danny Goldberg and later, when the time seemed right for all three of them to make a career move, Modern Records was established.

As a postscript to this story, it's worth noting that they finally got Paul a woman. By the time this article goes to print, he will be getting married for the first time to Ms. Janis Beckerman. All the best Paul!

### DANNY GOLDBERG - Co-Founder

Danny grew up in Hastings-on-Hudson (the suburbs of N.Y.) and began working in the chart department of Billboard at age 18. He then went on to write reviews for them, before moving over to be the music editor of Record World, and then editor of Circus, freelance writer for The Rolling Stone, The Village Voice and other music related publications. Danny then moved into the publicity end of the business for the now defunct Famous Music-Paramount group of record labels, including such acts as Commander Cody, Melanie, Billy Joel, etc. Goldberg next headed the rock department of Solters & Roskin, with such clients as Stigwood, Moody Blues, Paul McCartney and Led Zeppelin. In 1974 Led Zeppelin hired Danny as Vice President of their new Swan Song label. He ran the U.S. operation until 1976, during which time the group Bad Company was also broken. In '76 Danny started his own PR and management company called Danny Goldberg Inc. His P.R. clients included ELO, Kiss, 10CC, Marvel Comics, and some TV work for Norman Lear and Bearsville Records. In approximately 1977, Paul Fishkin, who was then at Bearsville, introduced Danny to Stevie Nicks to develop a film based on the hit song "Rhiannon". Although the film never saw the screen, a close relationship developed between the three of them and in '78 they decided to establish their own label.

It took awhile for each of them to extricate themselves from their various legal entanglements but in June of 1979 Modern Records signed its distribution deal with Atlantic Records. Meanwhile, as Stevie completed her obligations to Fleetwood Mac, Danny found another project as he produced and directed the film "No Nukes" with his friend Julian Schlossberg, starring such artists as Bruce Springsteen, Jackson Browne, The Doobie Bros., James Taylor, Carly Simon, Bonnie Raitt, Crosby, Stills & Nash etc. In August of 1981 the "Bella Donna" album was released and since that time Danny has devoted himself to the development of Modern Records.



Danny Goldberg

Paul Fishkin