



## ZE RECORDS

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Ze Records' first signing was James White and the Blacks in July of 1978. At the time the music scene was polarized with Disco enjoying its' heyday (Saturday Night Fever came out in December 1977) and Punk was still a minority taste. Ze made a conscious effort with James White to combine the two elements and "Off White" which came out in February 1979 was their first album. Because of James White's proclivity for beating up his audience and rock critics in particular, that album and the Contortions record which came out in September of 1979 through a label deal with Buddah/Arista both received a great deal of press attention and sold about 25,000 each. At the same time Ze had a number one Disco single with "Deputy of Love" which sold over 100,000 records. In Michael's words, "When we failed to get paid, we opted for our current American distribution system." Acting as a production company Ze has since licensed their acts to different labels: Kid Creole and the Coconuts to Sire Records, Was(Not Was) to Island and then Geffen, Cristina and the Waitresses to PolyGram, Alan Vega to Elektra, Sweet Pea Atkinson and Ricki Von to Island, etc. Meanwhile, in Europe, Ze has maintained an overall distribution deal with Island since the beginning. This has been a very successful arrangement culminating in Kid Creole's sales of some 900,000 albums last year.

Ze also has its' own publishing affiliates: MEZ Publishing (ASCAP) and Cri Cri Music (BMI). Both publishing companies are administered by divisions of Island Music Inc. Lionel Conway, who heads up Island's publishing wing has been instrumental in the development of Ze's publishing interests worldwide. Many of Ze's acts are signed, such as Alan Vega (MEZ Publishing), James White (MEZ) and Caroline Loeb (Cri Cri Music.)

Ze is still working with almost all the bands with which they were originally involved. Michael explains, "We tend to lay a large emphasis on pre-production, making sure that lyrics are coherent and that albums flow well. We have consciously divided the roster into potential home-runs where we will spend a lot of money on production, and records we make because they deserve to be made. On these we exercise strict cost controls in order to ensure that we break even and that the artist can make another album. Our distribution deals are not standardized and are tailored to our expectations for the artist concerned. Although we started out primarily as a dance label and have had several Disco hits over the years, our records have become more diverse, encompassing different forms of music, but keeping a sense of fun and self-irony."

### Ze Roster

Was(Not Was)	Caroline Loeb
Sweet Pea Atkinson	Davitt Sigerson
Alan Vega	Junie Morrison
Cristina	Ben Brierley
John Cale	Breakfast Club
Ricki Von	

## Michael Zilkha - President



Although born in the U.S., Michael Zilkha's family moved to England when he was 2 months old. After graduating from Oxford with a degree in French and Philosophy, Michael decided to move back to New York in 1975. Having worked on the school magazine at Oxford, Michael was able to land a position as a theatre critic for the Village Voice. Upon leaving the Voice, Zilkha saw a gap between disco and punk music and decided to set up Ze Records. Michael sees his label much as a repertory company with everyone working on each other's projects and very few new signings to the label. As president of the company, Michael decides when to bring a group into the "family", negotiates the distribution deals and works closely with the distributing companies upon release of an album.

## Debbie Caponetta



After four years with Twentieth Century-Fox Film Corporation, Debbie Caponetta joined Arista Records in 1978 working for the Vice President of AOR Promotion. She moved to the Dance Music/R&B Promotion Department as Promotion Coordinator until the Dance Department was closed in May 1980. At that time Ze was distributed by Buddah/Arista, and she was asked by Michael Zilkha to join Ze as National Promotion Manager, working with college and commercial radio as well as clubs. As Ze is primarily a production company, she also acts as liaison with the companies that distribute Ze Records and their artists, and oversees most of the day to day activities at Ze.

## Andrew Fuhrmann



Andrew Fuhrmann joined the company in July of 1980 and is responsible for all aspects of production publishing and business affairs. He works closely with Michael Zilkha and in addition is responsible for much of the art direction of the label's covers. To his credit are covers for the Waitresses, Was(Not Was), Alan Vega and Sweet Pea Atkinson.

## Susan Schmidt Horning



Sue came to New York City in May 1981 when friend, Chris Butler, whose group, The Waitresses, were signed to the label. What began as a summer job and temporary stay in New York turned into a long-term affiliation with Ze. Her previous experience in the business had been primarily as musician, singer and songwriter. At Ze Sue works with the new and developing artists and gives general assistance to all departments. She continues to work in the studio, however, as she sang and played on the Cristina and Caroline Loeb albums for Ze.