



Rhino Records
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Rhino Records in L.A. was formed by Richard Foos and Harold Bronson aka The Rhino Brothers. Both had worked at Rhino Records, the store that preceded the label, founded by Foos in 1973 near the UCLA campus as an alternative to the mainstream record outlets. Richard decided on the name because he associated with Eugene Ionesco's play "Rhinceros", the theme of which is conformity. An indication as to what was to come from the two self-professed "music maniacs" could be seen back then with such store sponsored theme days as; "Hassle The Salesman Day", "Jewish Day" (with free corned beef and Yamulkas), "Polka Day" (with an in store accordian player), and the sale of "Turkey" albums at 40 cents a pound for Thanksgiving.

The first record release was a promotional 45 called "Go To Rhino Records" recorded in the back room by a local weirdo named Wildman Fischer. Bronson remembers, "...John Peel of the BBC began to play it in England. It got a lot of requests and ended up being one of the most requested records of 1975." That was all of the encouragement they needed. Their first official record was in 1978 called "My Name Is Larry" by Wildman Fischer. It became Dr. Demento's #2 record of the year. By the end of '78 Rhino had released eight albums including: A four song EP of The Turtles' hits, pressed on green vinyl and shaped like a turtle; Soundtrack music to the horror films "Blood Feast" and "2,000 Maniacs"; Ten versions of the classic cult rock hit "Louie, Louie"; An album of Henny Youngman with four concentric grooves on one side to ensure that you never hear the same set of jokes in a row; A collection of the "World's Worst Records" complete with a personal barf bag; And there ever popular Temple City Kazoo Orchestra, including their hit version of Led Zeppelin's "Whole Lotta Love".

"We were producing records part-time out of the back of the store and things were just exploding," recalls Bronson. In 1979 Richard sold the store and the Rhino Brothers began to work at running the label fulltime. At the outset they specialized in best-of's, novelty and comedy records. "The Turtles' Greatest Hits" is still Rhinos top seller at more than 50,000 copies.

Rhino also feels an allegiance to Los Angeles. Foos points out that "Anything we do, whether it's novelty records, re-issues or new music, has a focus right here in Los Angeles." They have championed the Latin-rock scene in East L.A. with the Zyanya label while at the same time helped revive the recording careers of Spirit, The Firesign Theatre and Love.

Both Foos and Bronson take special pride in the packaging and recording of their re-issues. Along with extensive research for rare photos, interviews, detailed histories, and liner notes, Bronson goes on to point out, "Other companies put out greatest hits with ten or twelve cuts, we have fourteen or sixteen. Many times, other companies won't include a certain song on an album because they can't get a special rate on the publishing rights. We'll pay that extra money to have the record complete. The time we take in re-recording is important to us, too...We've had people tell us that some of our albums sound better than the original." Such is the case, for example, with the three re-issued LP's by the Nazz, Todd Rundgren's early group.

Rhino's success has led to other diversification as well, including book publishing, video and film. In 1983 they published "Zappalogue", a discography of Frank Zappa and in 1984, "Rock Explosion", a photo portrait of British Rock groups of the mid-60's. Also in 1984 was their first video "My Breakfast With Blassie", starring wrestler Fred Blassie and comedian Andy Kaufman, a spoof of the movie "My Dinner With Andre".

In October 1985 Rhino concluded a national distribution deal with Capitol Records. That November, Rhino released a six-record boxed set, "Dr. Demento Presents The Greatest Novelty Records Of All Time". This includes unusual records, broken down by decades, as far back as 1940 to the present, along with a 16 page booklet of information and photos. This year's releases include a CD-only package of "Little Richard's Greatest Hits" as well as a new all-girl group called The Pandoras. By far, however, their most ambitious compilation project to date has just been released. The album called "Cover Me" is a collection of Bruce Springsteen material recorded by various artists and will most probably soon take it's place as one of Rhino's all time great compilations.

RICHARD FOOS & HAROLD BRONSON - aka The Rhino Brothers

GARY STEWART - Director of Licensing and A&R

After working at the Rhino retail record store as a clerk and then manager for 5 years, Gary went to work at the label as full time head of sales in 1981. His experience as he says, "hard-core record collector and pop-music history fan", led him into compiling re-issue packages. Since he also had worked extensively with new artists locally, Gary also took on the responsibilities of Director of A&R as well. His primary duties are negotiating master leases and publishing rights and track selections for the label's compilations. At the same time Stewart investigates new talent for Rhino's contemporary roster

BRIAN SCHUMAN - Operations and Production Manager

Having worked as a rack jobber for cut-outs and a warehouse operations manager for a record distributor, Brian was well equipped to take over in production and operations for Rhino. His primary responsibility is making sure that all production schedules are met along with manufacturing and inventory control.

BILL INGLOT - Director of Engineering

In Bill's words, "As a pop music fan and historian for 24 of my 28 years", coupled with his experience as a recording engineer, Inglot oversees all stages of re-issue production. This includes tape research, disc mastering and re-mixing along with making sure that the right songs or versions are used on their records.

GRACE ENSEMAT - Director of Publicity/Promotion

Coming out of college radio, and having worked in retail marketing for another label, Grace notes, "I've had a great opportunity to grow at Rhino". Her responsibilities include; national publicity, national college promotion (on their contemporary artists) and radio promotion.

DAVE DARUS - National Sales/Marketing Coordinator

Dave started in Licorice Pizza's Glendale distribution center. He next moved into college radio promotion, then into retail marketing for two other record labels before joining Rhino. His responsibilities include; Developing and implementing all marketing and point of purchase materials, maintenance of their product with the Capitol staff, direct communication with one stops, chains and independent stores nationally as well as international accounts that carry Rhino overseas.



1st Row L to R: Grace Ensenat, Grace Amemiya, Richard Foos/
 2nd Row L to R: Caprice Carmona, Adele Baughn, Harold Bronson,
 Brian Schuman/
 3rd Row L to R: Stan Becker, Bill Martin, Gary Stewart, Don
 Brown, Dave Darus, Fred Cunningham

Harold Bronson

Richard Foos