

# Poppy Operating On Indie Basis

NEW YORK — Poppy Records, formerly part of the MGM 'Community of Labels,' has severed its connection with its former distributor and is now totally independent. According to label president Kevin Eggers, the move was made to allow the label complete freedom in developing itself as a unique and fresh new source dealing exclusively with product in the country, folk, progressive rock and social comment veins.

First release under the new set-up will be a single from Townes Van Zandt, "Second Lover's Song," shipping this week. Because of the growing importance of FM stereo outlets,

all Poppy DJ copies will be released with a double-'A' side, one mono, one stereo.

Albums by Van Zandt and Philadelphia underground group, the Mandrake Memorial, are skedded for release this month, with a set from country singer Shirl Milete set for early March.

"There is a very definite path we are trying to follow for Poppy," said Eggers. "The label is being developed as a very exclusive one which, through its independence and the nature of the people involved, will be able to very carefully and thoroughly guide the development of its artists. They are all doing important things musically, and by limiting the number of artists signed to the label we hope to avoid neglecting their talents."

### Own Studios

Within the foreseeable future, the Poppy artist roster will be limited to five. Extremely tight coordination is planned for label artists at a country retreat, complete with full 12 track recording facilities, being constructed in Woodstock, N.Y.

Poppy has already lined up 31 distributors in the U.S., with Canadian, English and other overseas deals in negotiation.

In conjunction with the label's initial release, advertising is planned in each of the major underground media and the label's theme of close personal contact will be executed through a staff Eggers is assembling for intense liaison and coordination with distributors and radio outlets.

Milton Glaser, of New York's Pushpin Studios, will be directing all art for the label.

## Thies To Monument In Rack Sales Post

NASHVILLE — Monument Records has added Arnie Thies in the slot of national rack sales director. Responsible for development of the firm's rack sales, Thies will headquarter at Monument's Nashville offices, reporting to Steve Poncio, vp and sales marketing director.

Thies has been West Coast sales manager with Atlantic/Atco for the last three years, and has also been an independent sales rep with his own firm, Gambit Associates, which covered 11 Western states.

# Producer's Profile



MICKIE MOST

Mickie Most makes his job sound simple. Just 30 years old, worth many millions sterling, and responsible for a string of hit records which have sold well into the millions.

After talking a while with him about record production, you wonder why you haven't cashed in on such a simple way of earning so many fat loaves of bread.

Basically, what Mickie Most does is favor the easy-going tastes: "I don't hold with all this deep, psychedelic stuff. In fact, I don't understand most of it. If I can't hum the tune or understand the words then I don't wanna know."

Long-hairs will throw up their aesthetic hands in despair at Most's wanton commercialism, but there is no disputing the results. Ask Herman's Hermits, Donovan, Jeff Beck, Lulu, the Animals. They are where they are because of his 'magic' disk fingers.

So what is a 'Mickie Most?' In his own cockney style, Most (nee Michael Peter Hayes) provides the answer: "I find the raw material, recognise it as being potential in its rawest state, find the right song, suitable arrangement to enhance the song, help the singer sing the way it should be sung, and create an overall sound on record which makes people want to go out and buy it."

A good case of 'raw material' was Most's first discoveries, the Animals, who were belting out the blues in very rough style in a North England pub when he spotted their obvious potential.

Then there was the case of young Donovan, who was singing wistful, willowy songs of fair, faraway maidens, until Most produced the commercial sounding "Sunshine Superman" for him, and followed with "Mellow Yellow" and many others.

Most's first production job was "Baby Let Me Take You Home" for the Animals, followed by "Tobacco Road" for the Nashville Teens. He reckoned he took 30 seconds to spot the potential of the Animals, and was even quicker off the mark

with a young Manchester chap called Peter Noone, who sang as Herman with a backing group called the Hermits. After the group's initial hit, "I'm Into Something Good," Most produced 14 consecutive hits for Herman's Hermits, both in the U.S. and in Britain.

Most's latest discovery is another young English singer, Terry Reid. Reid's first album was recently released here by Epic, and the singer's first U.S. tour was an unqualified success.

### Stateside Success

Most's fame as a top record producer has come about largely as the result of United States sales of his records. Does this mean he thinks British recording techniques are ahead of American ones?

"Not at all. I think England's lucky to be in the business at all, and even then it's all due to the Beatles Phenomenon back in '63. Till then, English product had a rough enough time making the English charts, and no chance at all for American success. The American recording business is much more professional than British operations because the stakes are higher."

Most finds the whole merchandising scene in the U.S.A. quite awesome. He has watched his records being peddled throughout the vastness of North America with amazing slickness.

"England is so small, marketing of records is no problem, and promotion is very much easier. No matter how outlying the village, if someone walks into a record shop and asks for a new disk, it's not on the shelves, they can have it there later that day, or at latest, the following day.

"In the States, they break a new record in particular areas and try out the reaction on local radio . . . then they spread distribution as demand catches on. I don't really think Britains understand what merchandising means. And that's what the Americans do well. They realize people can be made to buy almost anything if it's promoted and packaged right."

Like many successful men in his game, Mickie Most is a freelance record producer. More and more companies are demanding his sort of expertise rather than doing the job internally. How come?

"Record company strength depends on records that sell well. Consider the awful fact that of every 100 records produced, only six catch on . . . leaving 94 nasty smells around the place. If an independent producer has got the reputation of turning out hits, then you're going to go to him, aren't you, because you know the dice are weighed in your favor."

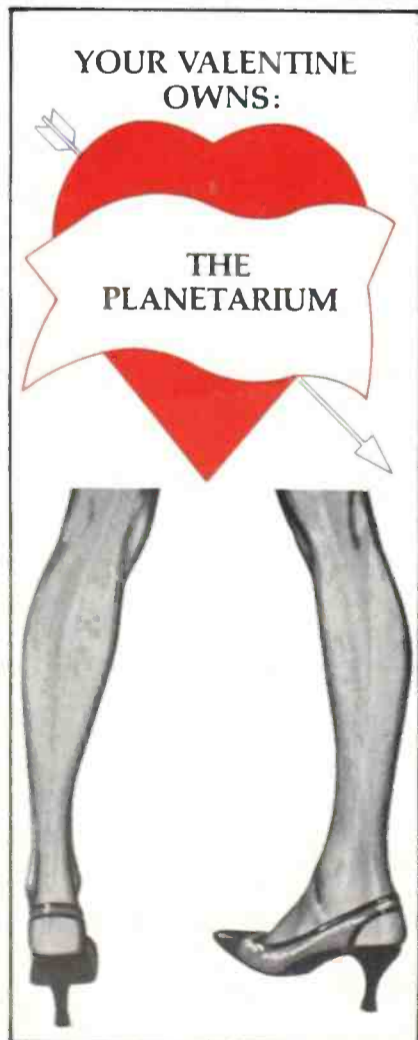
"Plus the fact that when the product is delivered as a complete package by a freelancer, then all the company has to do is press and distribute the disk. Easier and cheaper."

That's the whole story—it does sound easy. But how come there aren't more Mickie Mosts? Must be some extra ingredient he doesn't give out.

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PAUL ANKA.....RCA  
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KINKS.....REPRISE  
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Hi — Count Music
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KINKS.....REPRISE  
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- BABY LET'S WAIT  
ROYAL GUARDSMEN.....LAURIE  
Big Top Records, Inc.
- JOHNNY ONE TIME  
BRENDA LEE.....DECCA  
Hill & Range Songs, Inc.  
Blue Crest Music, Inc.
- SALLY GOES ROUND THE MOON  
DON FARDON.....GNP CRESCENDO  
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- HOW DO YOU BREAK A BROKEN  
HEART  
DON FARDON.....GNP CRESCENDO  
Bigtop Records, Inc.
- TRUE LOVE TRAVELS ON A GRAVEL  
ROAD  
DUANE DEE.....CAPITOL  
Hill & Range Songs, Inc.  
Blue Crest Music, Inc.
- WHAT ARE THOSE THINGS  
(WITH BIG BLACK WINGS)  
CHARLIE LOUVIN.....CAPITOL  
Hill & Range Songs, Inc.  
Blue Crest Music, Inc.
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ERIC BURDON & ANIMALS.....MGM  
Noma Music, Inc.  
Eric Burdon, Inc.
- SOUNDS OF GOODBYE  
TOMMY CASH.....UNITED ARTISTS  
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Noma Music, Inc.  
S-P-R Music, Inc.

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**WARNER'S WELCOMING:** Paul Tannen (3rd from left) is congratulated and welcomed to Warner Bros. Seven Arts Records by George Lee (2nd from right), vice president and general manager of Warner Bros. Seven Arts Music. Tannen assumes

the post of eastern operations manager for the record company. Joining in greeting the new exec are Lou Dennis (extreme left), eastern sales manager; Richard Sherman, national sales manager; and Stuart Love (extreme right), eastern promotion