

Townes Van Zandt: Portrait Of The Artist Building An Audience

NEW YORK — Townes Van Zandt, a singer/composer who records for Poppy Records, is being readied for success without benefit of the type of promotional push that has launched the careers of other recording artists, both lasting and transient in the public's favor. When interviewed by *Cash Box* recently, Van Zandt and Kevin Eggers, president of Poppy, suggested that the day of the "hype" may well be coming to an end.

3rd Van Zandt LP

The manner in which Van Zandt's career is moving is indicated by the title of his first Poppy album, "For The Sake Of The Song." For it is the artist's very compositions and performances that are being focused upon by Eggers and Van Zandt. Van Zandt, after the release of his second LP, "Our Mother The Mountain," has now completed the recording of his third, which is as yet untitled. The set is scheduled for release in July.

Perhaps even more of an indication of the emphasis being placed upon Van Zandt as an artist, rather than as merely a marketable commodity, is the upcoming publication of a book of his poetry and songs that will be published this fall. Noted graphic artist Milton Glazer, who created the poster which was included in the "Bob Dylan's Greatest Hits" album, will design the cover of the book.

Van Zandt and Eggers, who note that Los Angeles underground stations have given airplay to the performer's first two LP's, believe that the third album, which employs fewer instruments than the earlier sets, is Van Zandt's best. The disk was cut in Nashville, and Eggers and Van Zandt, when interviewed by *Cash Box* here, has just come in from Houston where they had been conducting a talent search.

European Tour

Eggers detailed the events which are aimed at obtaining a wider audience for the artist. RCA Records, which now distributes Poppy, has scheduled a 10-city concert tour in the U. S. for the fall for Van Zandt. He will also appear this fall at Carnegie Hall, in concert with Dick Gregory, and the Mandrake Memorial, in a program called "From Poppy With Love," thus bringing together in one show the current roster of Poppy recording artists. In addition, the fall of 1969 will see Van Zandt performing in London, Paris, Rome, Scandinavia, and Germany — the main European music markets.

Eggers' approach to Van Zandt's developing career is evidenced by his statement that "I'd rather have an artist who takes three years to break than someone who makes a lot of bread immediately. . . . Sometimes it takes the public three years to catch up with the artist instead of the artist taking three years to catch up with the public."

Eggers feels that the merchandising of album product is of the utmost importance because LP sales are now operating more and more at the consumer level. Word of mouth about a certain album can now break the record successfully without heavy airplay. Effective distribution of an LP, says Eggers, has currently become mandatory for its success on the market. "In five years, there will be 100 distributors for each major label," he predicts.

Poppy Records hopes to distribute Townes Van Zandt's contemporary art songs to listeners all over the world, listeners who have been neither "hyped" nor hit with the hard sell of a massive promo push, which, in the mortal words of the movie ads, announces the debut of a highly forgettable film which "you will never forget."

BMI Reports U.S. Music Boom

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icans supported 622 opera-producing groups which, according to *Opera News*, offered 5,222 performances of 348 works in this country during the 1967-68 season. By comparison, the country boasted only 77 companies in 1941 and only 316 during the 1950-51 season.

Concert Season Survey

Works by 20th-century American composers are being played here in concert at an ever-increasing rate. The startling figures were among those gathered in the ninth annual BMI/American Symphony Orchestra League Orchestral Program Survey. The survey showed that during the past season, orchestras performed almost four times as many 20th-century composers as earlier ones. Furthermore, modern works comprised more than a third of the total performances.

The 417 orchestras reporting to the survey played works by 834 20th-century composers, out of a total 1,047 composers. The orchestras gave 8,877 performances of 20th-century works and 12,624 performances of standard works.

Opera companies also are producing more contemporary works than ever, and during the 1967-68 season, productions of contemporary operas

Tempt's TV'er

NEW YORK — "The Temptations Show," a syndicated special from Screen Gems, will begin its TV run in Los Angeles tomorrow (6). Motown Records is rushing release of the soundtrack set, which will feature guest star Kay Stevens and special guest star George Kirby in addition to the Tempts.



EDDIE LOVETTE brought his recent promotion tour to a close last week with a series of visits in the New York area on behalf of his new Steady single "Too Experienced." The artist (left) and Steady/Hourglass promotion director Dick Corby arrived in New York after a string of personal appearances in Detroit, Cleveland and Philadelphia. This week, Lovette flies to Jamaica for completion of his first LP for Steady.

Oracle Deal, Execs

BOSTON — Oracle Records, a new label headed by Buck Spurr, president of the Lordly & Dame talent agency, has set Renaissance Productions to cut singer Jimmy Helms for the label. Renaissance is headed by Dallas Smith, former Liberty Records producer, and Marshall Leib.

Spurr has set Ron Simons, prominent Boston realtor, as the label's general manager, and has named Dick Turner and Joe Jordan as national promotion chief and sales and distribution head respectively.

Tannen To Nashville For Richards Session

NEW YORK — Paul Tannen, director to east coast operations for Warner Bros./7 Arts Records, will visit Nashville next week (12) for three days. Principally, Tannen will record the first product from Turley Richards; but, Tannen will also be scouting new talent.

actually outnumbered those of standard works. Quoting figures compiled by *Opera News* the pamphlet reports that out of last season's 5,222 performances, 1,879 were devoted to 181 contemporary works, against 3,343 performances of standard works. During the preceding season, there were 1,825 performances of 171 contemporary operas.

Amateur Music Making On Rise

The pamphlet notes that according to the most recent statistics (1967) gathered by the American Music Conference, there are 43,900,000 Americans who play musical instruments, almost 2-1/2 million more than the previous year. By comparison, there were only 14,300,000 in 1936 and 20,000,000 in 1950. The piano is still the most popular instrument (23,500,000 players), with guitar second (11,000,000) and organ third (4,700,000). Instrument ownership is up 76% since 1950.

The average person spent nearly twice as much on music in 1967 as he did in 1941. The music industry's percentage of annual personal consumption expenditures rose from .111% (of \$80.6 billion) in 1941 to .187% (of \$491.7 billion) in 1967. These figures include purchases of musical instruments, accessories, sheet music and instructional aids, not admissions to musical events or purchases of records, phonographs or radios.

Radio Listening Increases

Americans are now listening to over 268,000,000 radios. Approximately 90% of all radio programming is music, and more than 140,000,000 persons, 12 years of age and older, listen each week. Radio thus continues to hold the largest concert music audience of any medium.

These and other significant facts are reported in "Concert Music USA, 1969." Single copies and information on availability of quantity lots of this brochure for educational institutions, symphony orchestras and other interested groups may be obtained from Public Relations Department, Broadcast Music, Inc., 589 Fifth Avenue, New York, New York 10017.

ABC Wholesaling

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warehouse will be moving into new quarters that will utilize the latest developments in warehouse mechanization to insure the quickest possible flow of product plus use of cube space. This new facility was designed by an industrial engineer after inspecting many record warehouse operations throughout the country.

1st Tahoe Summer Fest

LOS ANGELES — Plans for the first Lake Tahoe Summer Music Festival at Tahoe, Nevada, were announced as the highlight of a recent formal dinner party at the Lake Tahoe Racquet Club, hosted by Mr. and Mrs. David C. Irmer of Belvedere and Crystal Bay.

Guest of honor, Henri Temianka, founder/director of the California Chamber Symphony Society, announced to the assembled group of approximately ninety guests who had arrived from Tahoe, Sacramento, San Francisco and Los Angeles, that David Irmer, president of General American Development Corporation, has agreed to become the founding patron of the Summer Music Festival.

The initial series of outdoor concerts will be held on August 15th, 16th and 17th at Alpine Peaks, site of the Tahoe residential/recreational community adjacent to the Alpine Meadows Ski Resort.

Operatic Soprano, Marian Anderson will be one of the international artists slated to appear at the 1969 Summer Music Festival. Discussions are also underway with Victor Borge, Shelley Manne, Benny Goodman and Jose Iturbi regarding their appearance at the premier concerts.

As a sample presentation of the forthcoming Summer Music Festival a specially produced color video tap was shown to the assembled guest featuring such celebrated performer as Gregor Piatigorsky, Lauritz Melchior, Rudolph Serkin and Marj Nixon.

Included among the many notable present at the dinner were Mr. and Mrs. Willard Coe, of San Jose and Pacific Palisades; Mr. and Mrs. Frederick Waingrow, executive vice president of Peterson Publications; Mr. and Mrs. Henri Temianka; Dr. Werner Gebauer; and their hosts, Mr. and Mrs. David Irmer.

Mrs. Willard Coe is and has been the patroness or innovator of many musical and cultural endeavors in California.

Dr. Werner Gebauer, executive vice president and general administrator of the California Chamber Symphony Society and formerly concert master of the Minneapolis, Dallas, M.G.M. and National (Washington) Symphony Orchestras, will be in residence in Tahoe from May 15th through August to coordinate committees and volunteer groups who will organize the three day Summer Music Festival.

MOVE AHEAD
with
CASH BOX



A SCEPTER RE-SIGNING SCENE was held in Memphis recently when R. Milsap (seated) re-inked a recording contract with the label. Joining in the congratulatory gathering are (l. to r.): Scepter recording artist Dionne Warwick, Steve Tyrell, national promotion director for Scepter; B. J. Thomas, Scepter disk artist; and Chips Moman and Don Crews, president and vice president respectively, of American Sound Studios in Memphis.