



Cavaliers Of The Month

Charles Koppelman and Don Rubin

Richard Gersh

Sid Bernstein

Burt Bacharach

Jim Webb

By Arnold Shaw

WITHIN RECENT WEEKS, the No. 1 vocal disk on pop bestselling charts was by an accomplished and highly admired trumpet player. Hardly had *This Guy's In Love With You* climbed into the golden circle than a vocal disk by a highly respected actor also became one of the nation's hottest bestsellers. The curious success of two non-singers as hit vocalists serves as a reminder that Pop Music is really an iceberg. Performers always are in the sunlit glare of publicity. Largely submerged is a mighty network of creative and promotional talents without whose contribution the Herb Alpert and Richard Harris' *MacArthur Park* would not make it. Managers, publicity agents, bookers, arrangers, even songwriters and record producers, tend to remain behind-the-scenes pros. But today's tycoons of teen include a growing number, some of whom have even become part of an exclusive set: the New Millionaires of Rock, or, as we like to call them, the Cavaliers of Rock.

In 1964 Charles Koppelman and Don Rubin were making \$25 a week as staff writers at a Broadway publishing company. In the spring of 1968, they sold the assets of a joint venture known as Koppelman-Rubin Associates for three million dollars (\$3,000,000). What were these assets? A batch of rock songs, seventeen of which had yielded Gold Records. Publishing contracts with the writers who had created these. And recording contracts with a number of rock groups, among them The Lovin' Spoonful. These were tangibles. But the combine that shelled out the millions paid mostly for intangibles. Call it *savvy*. Call it the *golden touch*. Call it the *groovy feel*. Koppelman and Rubin had persuaded some hard-headed financiers that they had it.

Before that, they had also persuaded some tough recording artists that they had it. Among those who paid for their savvy, golden touch or groovy feel were Bobby Darin, Connie Francis, Tim Hardin, Wayne Newton, The Turtles, the Righteous Brothers, Gary Lewis & The Playboys, and other singers hungry for or high with hot records. Supervising the selection of material—much of which came from the pens of writers under contract to their publishing companies—controlling record sessions and mixing (editing) the resulting sound for release on disk, Koppelman & Rubin had delivered over a dozen Top Ten disks. Included were such hits as *Summer in the City*, *If I Were A Carpenter*, *Younger Girl*, *She'd Rather Be With Me*, *Nashville Cats*, *Do*

You Believe in Magic and other solid rockers. They were, in a word, among the most successful of "independent record producers," a coterie of recording studio wizards who have become the kingpins of rock.

The rise of the indie record producer is a corollary of the growth of rock. Until the advent of Elvis Presley in 1955, the pop record scene was ruled by an all-powerful oligarchy of A & R men at seven major record companies. Their control of artists and repertoire was quite absolute. By the time the Big Beat was banging through the land, all of these men were over thirty and not too receptive to the sounds of the Now generation. The results were predictable. Where bestseller charts had been monopolized by Capitol, Columbia, Decca, RCA Victor, etc., suddenly the hits began coming from small, independent labels. In desperation, the big majors began adding under-thirty producers to their staffs so that there is no major today without a "house hippie," a young A & R man who looks like a character-in-search-of, or a-fugitive-from, a rock group. Adorned with Beatle hairdos or long, shaped sideburns, leather boots and Nehru jackets or turtleneck shirts, the house hippies have helped keep the majors in the rock scene. (The Jefferson Airplane is an RCA Victor group, Simon & Garfunkel are on Columbia, Spanky and Our Gang are on Mercury, etc.) But bestseller charts reveal that out of the Top 100 singles, eighty percent or more are produced by outside indies.

The fact is that the indie producers have a charisma that even the house hippies cannot match. Part of it is the result of ego. "I am the greatest producer in the business," George (Shadow) Morton—who produces Janis Ian and the Vanilla Fudge—told *Time* magazine. And he added without any show of reticence: "I am also an egomaniac." But so is Phil Spector of Righteous Brothers fame and the grand-daddy of the set. So is Bob Crewe, who produces the Four Seasons and Mitch Ryder and the Detroit Wheels. So is Lou Adler of Beverly Hills, whose artists include the Mamas and the Papas, Johnny Rivers and Scott McKenzie.

The most successful of indies also are masters of another craft—one that they might have learned from such gifted users of the *con-and-hype* as Michael Todd, Florenz Ziegfeld, George White et al. These days, with the way money has cheapened, talk of anything less than a million hardly counts. Bob Crewe maintains the facade by living in a three-story, ostentatiously appointed penthouse on Fifth

Giulia, most of whose family is in the Roman theatre, may find that her height, five-one, keeps her from her "dream" career, a racing driver.



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