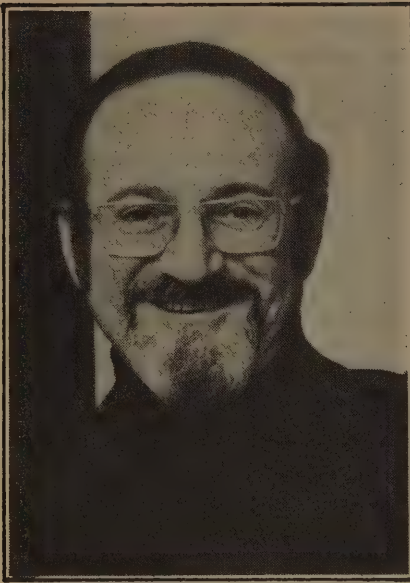


# The "How To" Of The Record Business



## By LARRY UTTAL, President of Bell Records

I have often been asked how to go about building a career in the record business. To young people it's a perplexing field. To the aspiring young musician or writer it often appears to be a world of closed doors and unwilling ears.

The most basic piece of information I can pass on about the record business is that it is an area of highest professionalism. The groups, the artists, the writers who are successful today are very serious about their work and devoted to the perfection of their craft, through much hard work. The musicians are well schooled and among the very best instrumentalists the record business has ever seen. Singers do not just "let it all hang out". They work on every aspect of their vocal and stage performance in an effort to project to the public exactly what they are trying to communicate. The fun, the excitement and the success that are part of the recording star's image is an offshoot of that effective communication.

If you think it's a lark, don't go any further than parties with friends or playing the local high school dances. Music can certainly be enjoyed as a hobby, but there are no hobbyists making it on the professional scene. When you have accepted the idea that a career in the music business is very hard work, and you are willing to make the effort on that basis, then you are ready to try.

Assess your talents, then work on getting them perfect. As a singer or musician you must first master your instrument to a more than ordinary level. Use your ears.

Listen to popular artists and learn what sells now. Study artists whom you admire and try to understand what makes them different or unusual. Learn from them all and begin to develop your own style. If you have a talent for writing, note that in today's market, the artist who writes his own material is very much in demand. Develop your ability. If you're a poet and the lyric alone comes to mind, find a composer to work with who has the same basic view as you do.

The "live audition" is rarely used for finding talent in the record business. Tapes come in to record companies, the creative department people listen to them and decide whether they have sales potential. No record company expects to receive a tape good enough to be put on the market, but since it stands for you and is your one shot bid for the opportunity to record, it had better be the best it can be.

Today there are professional recording studios available in almost any area of the United States where you can produce a tape with enough fidelity for audition purposes. What will make that tape an effective display of your talent is not the studio's audio equipment, but your preparation for taping.

Select your material carefully. Record companies are not interested in your ability to "sound like" a specific group or to mimic half the groups on the hit charts. They are interested in hearing your idea of what is currently popular in addition to the best of your own work and a selection



Larry also takes pride in his personal friendships with such of his artists as Shirley Jones and David Cassidy.

of material that you feel is particularly well suited to your talents. Define your style of music and pick material that will show your talents in a good light.

Record companies do not expect you to do your own A&R work. One of the main qualities of a successful record company is the ability of their A&R department to bring together the elements of production, material and artist that makes hit records; but, it will certainly be to your advantage if your



Larry, our editor Joyce Becker and her date Ken Rifkind (owner of a top "hip" boutique and beauty salon ... Flair) celebrate after the opening of "Oh! Coward" in New York.