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October
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One of his
last interviews

JOHNNY 1944- 2014 WINTER

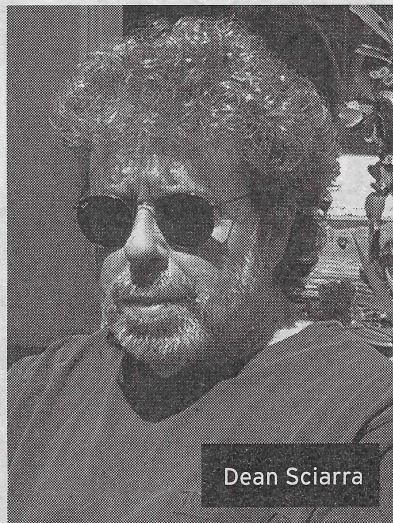


PLUS! **FOGHAT'S ROGER EARL**
LESLIE WEST JOHN MAYALL
GLEN PHILLIPS JONNY LANG

HUNTING FOR A LONG-LAST ALBUM? MIGHT BE TIME FOR A TRIP TO THE CLASSIC MUSIC VAULT

By Susan Sliwicki

JUST BECAUSE THE 1960s and '70s are in the rear-view mirror doesn't mean the music and artists of the day should be forgotten. At least, that's the viewpoint of Dean Sciarra, owner of Classic Music Vault (classicmusicvault.com) and It's About Music (itsaboutmusic.com). When it comes to his Clearwater, Fla.-based business, Sciarra is a one-man band. Although he is a businessman, it is clear that Sciarra shares a common bond with record collectors far and wide: He loves music, he treasures his records and he loves to spread the word about deserving artists who might otherwise go unnoticed.



Dean Sciarra

GOLDMINE: What was the first record you ever owned/bought (or remember buying)?

DEAN SCIARRA: The very first record I ever bought was in 1956 at the age of 6 – a 45 of "Hound Dog" by Elvis. He made an early impression but soon the influence got a little lost on me as I discovered I was into more far reaching sounds. The '50s were a real mess musically – great music, but it was all over the place as a result of the influence from the '40s. It wasn't until the Beatles came over in 1964 when I was a freshman in high school that it all started to make sense. By then, the writing was on the wall for me. Music was all I cared about. Ironically, I never became a musician other than to learn how to play drums and then never joined a band.

GM: Do you still collect and enjoy vinyl records (or other bygone physical formats)? If so, what and how much do you collect? Or have you switched over completely to CD/digital? And what are your go-to albums these days?

DS: I still buy vinyl sometimes, but usually it's because it's music that I must own that is not available in other formats. At one time, I had about 10,000 LPs – back when I was a reviewer in Philly and New York – but I now have a small vinyl collection that means the world to me, like the first Big Star album, the American release of "Lifeboat" by The Sutherland Bros. & Quiver, early Poco, the first CSN along with "Deja Vu," the Christine Perfect album, the first It's A Beautiful Day, all of The Buckingham's LPs and a few Beatles LPs. I don't own cassettes anymore, or 8-tracks for that matter. I'm actually selling off almost all of my CD collection (7,000 CDs) in favor of digital (with duplicate backup drives – just in case) using Apple TV as my interface to iTunes. My "go-to" albums today are what they have been for a very long time – the above mentioned LPs (now in digital) along with most Van Morrison albums ("No Plan B" rivals his entire catalog for me), early Fleetwood Mac with "Future Games" side by side with "Bare Trees," but the Peter Green era is very special, "Portraits" by The Buckingham's, the only album released by the band Elizabeth on Vanguard in 1968 (saw them a few times – great band!), Good God's only release on Atlantic, a few albums by Heads, Hands & Feet, any early album from Procol Harum but "Broken Barricades" tops my list, most Al Kooper records, the first Alan Bown and Jess Roden's first, but I love all of his albums, a whole bunch of albums from the band Man – but "Back Into The Future" stands out, "Songs From The Film" by Tommy Keene (I was his first manager in 1981), the first Mahavishnu Orchestra, "Jools &

Brian" by Julie Driscoll and Brian Auger! I'm pretty much a Lindsfarne freak. Caravan can do no wrong; but "For Girls Who Grow Plump in the Night" is my fave. Andy Pratt's "Resolution" album. I'm a huge fan of The Association. Aztec Two-Step's first album is in my all-time Top Ten, "Romany" by The Hollies, Ben Sidran's "Feel Your Groove," John Martyn's "Solid Air," Batdorf & Rodney really impacted me in 1972 along with Bill Quateman, Emmitt Rhodes, Casey Kelly, Jackson Browne, Colin Blunstone, Peter Frampton, Dan Fogelberg, Boz Scaggs, Gary Wright's "Extraction" album, Buckingham Nicks and so many more. Of course, the mid-period Beach Boys ("Sunflower" – "Carl & The Passions" – "Holland") along with some Byrds' albums (mostly "Notorious" & "Younger Than Yesterday"), the first Loggins & Messina, Laura Nyro's "Angel In The Dark," Luther Grosvenor's "Under Open Skies," The first McGuinness Flint and Dennis Coulson's solo album, Sopwith Camel's "Miraculous Hump" and all three Space Opera albums are standbys and can often be heard coming from my

stereo. And then came Crack The Sky – the best live band I've ever seen. We got to be friends and still are. I tend not to listen to the Beatles much since I know every song by heart, I suppose, but I own all versions of their U.S. and U.K. albums on CD. My guilty pleasures include Bread – "On The Waters," Cat Stevens, England Dan and John Ford Coley's "Fables" album, "Canned Wheat" by The Guess Who, The Spiral Starecase and "Lucky" by Steve March (Torre). Recent albums, like the last 25 years or so, include "Hats" by The Blue Nile. I fought liking Adele, but she is pretty amazing. Love The Alternate Routes; Ed Sheeran is pretty cool. Lizanne Knott's "Standing In The English Rain" is ingrained at this point – check her out.

GM: When did your label officially go into business, and inspired you to start your own record label? How did you choose your area of focus?

DS: My current labels are not my first. I started It'sAboutMusic.com in 2001, but I had a label in 1993 called 7Records, which featured the first Huffamoose album and a few other artists you probably never heard of. What inspired me to start a label? I had access to artists whose music was great, and no one was paying attention to them, so it was a no-brainer to take my support of these artists to the next level. Luckily, I lived in Philly and had the best-ever radio station in my market – WXPN – who played the livin' sh*t out of Huffamoose along with another great band on my label, Peter's Cathedral. The song "James" by Huffamoose was the most-requested song in the history of that station, probably still is. As for my area of focus – that was easy. I got behind any band I loved. I still do, but today it's only bands/artists from the '60s and '70s, since that's my wheelhouse. There are a few exceptions, like Nik Everett, but that's because he sounds like he's from the '70s. What a great songwriter!

GM: What are the characteristics of your label and its releases that set Classic Music Vault apart from other labels, both independent and corporate?

DS: First of all, I don't try to release "big" records. If I sell lots of units, that's great. My biggest seller thus far is "Live at The Fillmore '68" by It's a Beautiful Day. But I'm happy releasing much lesser-known stuff by artists like Country Weather from San Francisco (1969). They are a real treasure as far as I'm concerned. But I don't get caught in the psychedelic stuff. I'm as likely to release pop as well – like the entire Bill Quateman catalog from the '70s or all of Michael Stanley's catalog. I suppose there's a thread connecting all of

the releases on my label, but it's probably more to do with the quality of the music than the niche they're in.

GM: In addition to high-resolution downloads, your label offers DVDs and CDs. Where do you stand on offering reissues and new releases on vinyl?

DS: I love the fact that vinyl has made a comeback, but I'm too much of a perfectionist to want vinyl over a CD. Pops and clicks have no place in music for me. But the idea of holding a 12-by-12 album cover in my hands certainly makes me feel all warm and cozy and takes me back to the days I cherish, when you'd run to the record store the day an album was released and then get home ASAP and sit and listen to the album without distraction. Nonetheless, I don't see my artists as the kind that warrant vinyl releases.

GM: What's the process you go through from the initial point of selecting an album for release or reissue, all the way up to selling the finished product?

Since I am a one-man band, so to speak, I do it all. I find an album that I love, make the deal to release it, design the artwork, master the album, set it up for release with my distributor (MVD - who are great, by the way) and do some promo work with their help. The real problem today is that artists from the '70s still think the business runs the way it used to, and they want a big advance and expect radio promotion and a publicity campaign. Truth is that none of that does a bit of good and will doom a release to financial failure. All you can do these days is to count on your reputation as a label and hope that people are paying attention. Radio doesn't sell records anymore. It used to be that people were listening to the radio to hear something that they would then run to the stores to buy. Not anymore. And only record hounds are reading blogs and magazines to find albums they must have. Thank God Goldmine is still around for those of us who can't live without the info you provide.

GM: What steps, if any, do you take before you complete a reissue in terms of re-mastering, album art and overall presentation? Do you update liner notes and tweak the art? Are there any special features or items your reissues and releases have that others lack?

DS: Since most of what I release came in its original form as an LP, it can be a little tricky transforming it into a digipak, which is the only format I use these days. Digipaks aren't square, so you have to adjust your perspective with either an abbreviated take on the cover art or a border that respects the original. Each release demands its own approach.

The masters for some albums simply don't exist anymore, so you have to use vinyl as the source on occasion. Luckily, I'm pretty good at converting vinyl so that 99 percent of people can't tell. I remastered the first LP by Casey Kelly (Elektra, 1972), which was the worst pressing ever. I did such a good job that when Casey heard it, he cried and said that not only did it sound great but that he hadn't heard it sound that good since he was in the studio when he recorded it. Hearing an artist say that means the world to me. That's why I do what I do. By the way: I'm pretty sure that Elektra used my master when they finally released the first Casey Kelly album. So vinyl as a source doesn't have to be a bad thing.

I love to write new liner notes when I can, like with the Dino Valenti "Get Together" release. But that was the first time that album saw the light of day, so I had to write something. But when you reissue an album that people used to own, I think they want the original liner notes, as well as artwork, that comes as close as possible to the original.

GM: How do you feel the recording industry has changed since the 1960s and 1970s? Is it better or worse, or just plain different? And what is your view of the role of independent record labels in today's environment?

DS: What a loaded question! Well, back in the '60s, it seemed like all the good bands got signed. There were fewer bands back then, and the scene was exploding, so records were a big part of the expanding consciousness. I think because of that, record companies got caught signing everything and

PAUL GRENYO - 238 TAINTER DRIVE - LITCHFIELD PARK, AZ, 85340 - 45s AUCTION 45s		* LIST #179-50s MIX	
NOTE	MIN	Postage costs added	Closes
1 ANDREWS, LEE	DA	162	Just suppose/Boom -w/Group, 2nd Label- VG+ light scuffs- 88
2 AQUATONES	FARGO	1003	Our first kiss/The Drive-In VG++ light wear 15
3 ARABIAN	MAGNIFICENT	114	Tear drops in the night/take me VG++ -promo- 75
4 TWIN STAR	1018	Heaven sent you/The shack VG++ to M- 2nd Label- 15	
5 ASTORS	STAX	170	Candy/I found out VG++ mild r-wear- 10
6		179	Mystery woman/In the Twilight Zone - M- white label- 10
7 AVONS	HULL	744	Whisper (softly)/If I just (had my way) - VG++ tan/lt scf- 30
8 BARONS	IMPERIAL	5370	Cold kisses/Searching for you VG++ Red label 65
9 BERRY, CHUCK	CHESS	1653	School day -Chess pieces label- VG++ a few scuffs -20
10		1700	Carol/Hey Pedro 45s instrumental- VG++ to M- 15
11 BROWN, LITTLE TOMMY	GROOVE	0132	Won't you forgive me/Don't leave me - M- 15
12 BROWN, RUTH	ATLANTIC	1125	Lucky lips/My heart is breaking over you - VG+ lite scuffs- 12
13		1197	This little girl's gone rockin/Why me - VG++ 12
14 CLOVERS	ATLANTIC	963	One Mint Julep/Middle of the night VG mild scuffs -20
15 CRICKETS	BRUNSWICK	55009	That'll be the day/I'm looking---to love - VG++ 12
16 DANLERS	MERCURY	71356	I really love you/My flaming heart VG+ mild scuffs - 8
17 DANNY & THE JUNIORS	ABC PARA	9953	A thief/Crazy cave VG++ 10
18		10052	Playing hard to get/Of love VG++ to M- 20
19 DEL VIKINGS	MERCURY	71180	Come along with me/What'cha gotta lose - VG+ mild scuffs - 8
20		71345	You cheated/Pretty little things called girls - M- 12
21 DICKY DOO & DON'TS	SWAN	4014	Leave me alone/Wild party M- 10
22 DUBS	GONE	5020	Beside my love/Gonna make a change - VG+ to M- 25
23		5034	Be sure (my love)/Song in my heart - VG+ " " " " 25
24		116	Cool baby baby/Best of--pretty girls - M- Blue max w/PS 10
25 FEDERAL	DELUXE	6112	Cold cash/Come go with me DelVikes song - stry VG scuffs - 25
26 FT-TONES QUINTEPTE	ATLAS	1055	I belong to you/Silly & sappy - VG+ to VG++ lt scuffs - 80
27 FLAMINGOS	END	1068	Nobody loves me like you/You me & sea - VG+ wh lbl/ " " 7
28		1081	Your other love/Lovrs gotta cry VG++ a few scuffs - 8
29 4 HAVEN KNIGHTS	JOZ	824	In my lonely room/I'm just a dreamer - VG+ mild scuffs - 25
30 HARPONES	RAMA	203	That's the way it goes/Three wishes - VG+/VG++ 45 bothside- 50
31 IMPERIALS	END	1027	Tears on my pillow/Two people--world - VG+ West press /51-40
32 " " & LITTLE ANTHONY		1067	My empty room/Bayou bayou baby VG++ "delta press- 10
33 JONES, AL	POPULAR	104	Mad mad world/Lonely traveler - stry VG/VG+ mild scuffs - 7
34 LANCE, RIC	PLAZA	501	I didn't know/when you're in my arms - M- 10
35 LEWIS, JERRY LEE	SUN	267	Whole lot of shakin going on VG+ mild scuffs - 7
36 LYMON, FRANKIE	ROULETTE	4068	Portable on my shoulder/Wanna don't allow it - VG+ to VG++ 10
37 NELSON, RICKY	VERVE	10047	I'm walkin'/A teenager's romance VG+ mild scuffs - 15
38		10070	You're my one and only love VG+ to VG++ 8
39 PARLAMENTS	REVILLOT	223	Time/Good old music VG+ to VG++ 8
40 PERKINS, CARL	COLUMBIA	41379	Pointed toe shoes/Highway of love VG++ mild scuffs - 15
41 PERKINS, DOL	VIV	102	Young lovers/Shy -Phoenix label- VG++ " " " " 10
42 RINKEY-DINKS	AICO	6121	Early in the morning/Now we're one - VG+ to VG++ 22
43 " " " & BOBBY DARTIN		6128	Mighty mighty man/You're mine VG++ 22
44 ROCKIN' CHAIRS	RECORITE	402	A kiss is a kiss -Flip instrumental- VG+ to VG++ 25
45 SERENADERS	STARFIRE	115	Nite owl/I'm gonna love you M- GRmax w/PS -10
46 SHIELDS	DOT	15856	I'm sorry now/Nature boy M- lite scuffs - 15
47 SMITH, WARREN	SUN	314	Sweet sweet girl/Goodby Mr. Love M- stry VG mild " " 8
48 STEVEN, PAUL & ROYAL LANCERS	CITRIZON	5003	Say Mama/I fought the law - M- 1st press -50
49 STEPPEN, PAUL & APOLLIS	CITE	5007	Hey lonely one/devil's soul is black - M- Pink OR Orange 12
50 TEMPTATIONS	PARKWAY	803	Birds n bees/Temptation -Holly-ish- VG xol/scuffs - 8
51 TURBANS	HERALD	486	It was a nite like this/All of my love - stry VG sticker - 10
52 TWITTY, CONWAY	MM	12785	Hey little Lucy/When I'm not with you - VG++ to M- 20
53		12804	Mona Lisa/Heavenly M- 10
54		515	This could be the night/Hands across--table - VG++ a fewscf-35
55 VELOURS	ONYX	5085	I'll never love again/Goin back wto St Louis - M- r-wear 10
56 VICKREY, MACK	GONE		
57 WILLIAMSON, SONNY BOY	CHECKER	894	Your funeral & my trial/Wake up baby - VG+ to VG++ 33

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played their successes against their losses since their successes were gigantic, and they needed the losses to offset their financial gains. They wound up signing some great bands that they had no idea were really good and they let them slip through the cracks. Bands like Blue, eventually on Elton John's Rocket label, released their first album on RSO that went nowhere. Of course, Rocket changed the band somewhat, and they did have a minor hit, but the first album was amazing. My point being is that far too many bands were overlooked simply because the label had no real interest in breaking them. They were loss leaders, except to those of us who truly loved the music. In the '70s it just got worse. Don't get me wrong: The music I truly love to this day came out in the '70s. But the concept of throwing a band against the wall like spaghetti to see if it's ready started taking the labels to a new low of signing crap simply because they had no idea what was good, while promoting the hell out of it and letting the truly good stuff slip away. I always tell the story of when Island released the first Robert Palmer album with the first Jess Roden album on the same day, as I recall. They pushed Palmer and treated Jess like yesterday's news. I wrote a review of both albums in a Philly mag back then, explaining that Jess was more and that Palmer was less. To this day, Jess is still the artist to listen to, but Palmer made all the cash. I find it interesting that Robert Palmer replaced Jess Roden in The Alan Bown and that it is Jess' version of that band that is still more interesting. Today – risking being the old man disrespecting the new generation – I find that what serves as hit songs is more often than not just passable music and not anything that could ever unite a generation or even stand the test of time. It's like processed food with an early expiration date. There's nothing of great value in it, and, ultimately, it will do you harm since it will water down your taste in music. Much of today's music is just that! It fills the space needed to play something, but tomorrow you'll want something else. Of course, there are exceptions, thank God! But they are few and far between.

GM: What's the most interesting thing (or most unexpected skill) you've learned as a result of running your own record label?

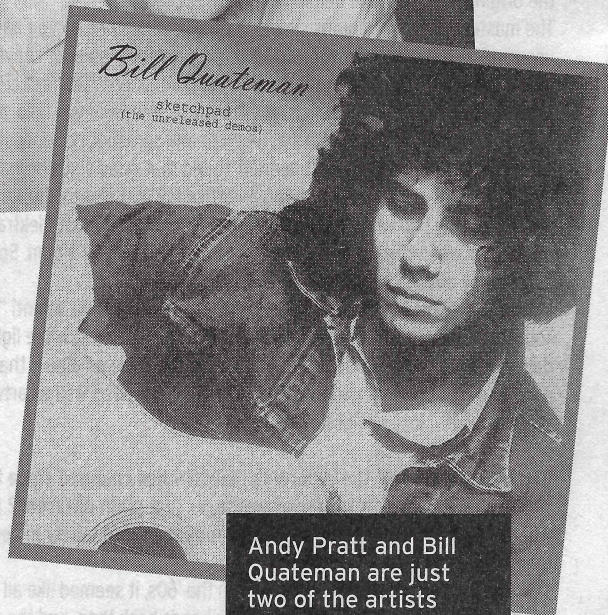
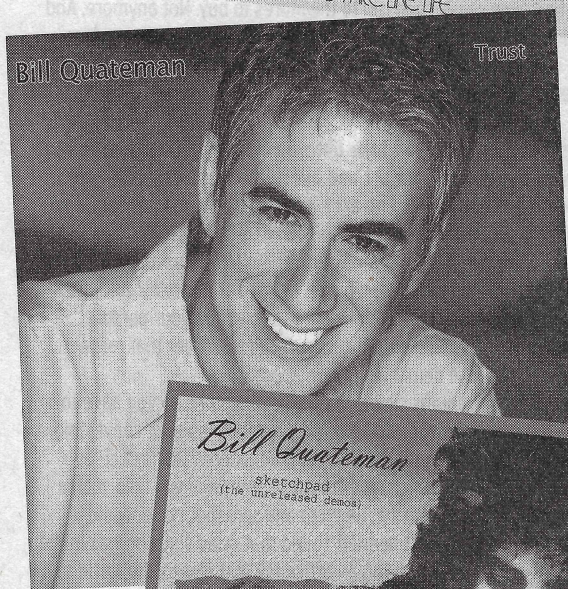
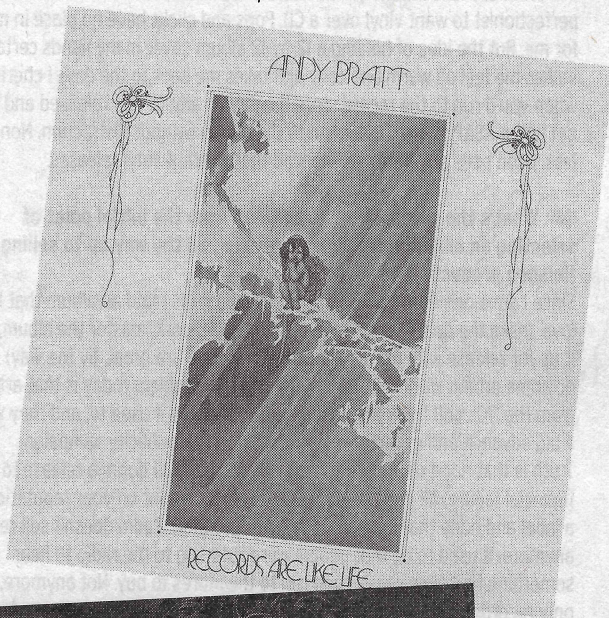
DS: Funny you should ask. When I started ItsAboutMusic.com I wanted to do nothing more than help great artists, so I signed 300 of them. Literally. I worked my ass off to tell the world about them. In general and in retrospect, no one cared. Well, not too many, anyway. I still had the naïve perspective that if I built it, they would come – the fans, that is. But today, more than a decade later, I have had to trim my roster down to 50 artists who actually make money in order to keep the label afloat. Instead of caring for 300 artists, I now care for far less and make sure that I keep things interesting for each of them. A hard lesson to have learned.

Another hard lesson was my involvement in the revival of the Ruffhouse label in 2012, as the president and majority owner of the label alongside its originator, Chris Schwartz. We signed Beanie Sigel (an amazing individual and a gifted artist who got caught in everyone else's crap and deception and is now in prison – such a shame!) and Glenn Lewis (from Canada), who is a great singer, but who thought he was a great songwriter. You'd think that Beanie would have been the most difficult to deal with, but it was Glenn who made my life hell. I worked with "Beans" exclusively since he wanted nothing to do with Chris or anyone else at the label. The end resulting album, "This Time," was under my purview – all of the artwork and the music was mostly guided by me as much as it could be while working with a strong artist like Beans. Our NYC promo junket was a nightmare, though, since Beans was about to deliver himself to the penal system a few weeks later, and he was stressed to the max. I tried to influence the Glenn Lewis album called "Moment of Truth," but while Glenn acted like he respected my opinion, in the end it turned out that he was disrespectful and ungrateful. The hell that became the Glenn Lewis experience was something I'll never deal with again. The album finally came out but went nowhere. It's a great album, but the direction I wanted it to go in was considerably different. Maybe if he had listened to me, things might have been different. We blew more than a million dollars on both artists and came up with bupkus. Politics within the company played a huge part in its failure. Just because Chris made Ruffhouse the biggest Hip Hop label in history the first time (in the '90s) didn't mean he could do it again. Living on your laurels is no way to run a company. History

doesn't always repeat. When I write my memoirs, it will all come out in detail. But that's for another time.

GM: What's the most challenging part (or task you dislike the most) of running your own record label?

DS: Having been around for 40 years, I've seen it all. I used to think that dealing with artists was the most difficult part of this business. Some of them



Andy Pratt and Bill Quateman are just two of the artists included in the label's upcoming releases.

can be really difficult. But that was personal. What really bothers me is the writing on the wall. If you've paid attention to the demise of video stores and the near demise of record stores, then you've noticed that video streaming has caused chains like the giant Blockbuster to go out of business. Why buy or rent a DVD when you can click and stream? Well, that's what's about to happen with music by means of companies like Pandora and Spotify. Except the one thing most people don't know is that those companies pay almost nothing to the artists and labels while they reap huge profits. One million streams pays \$300 to the artist/label. What are you gonna do with \$300? You can't afford to make more music that way. And please tell me which artists you love that can even approach 1 million streams. Streaming video still pays well and justifies making more films. If streaming music takes over, with actual sales diminishing to almost nothing, then there will be no way that new music will be made. Streaming music is the end of the music business itself, no matter how cool it may seem right now, unless the artists get paid what they deserve.

GM: What do you find to be the most rewarding part of running a record label?

DS: After 40 years of doing this I can honestly say that I've lost that lovin' feeling. When I was young, I had a fever for all of this. Don't misunderstand; I love this business. But the gild is off the lily for me. I love bringing music to the masses even if the masses are smaller than desired. But the angst that drove me to stay up all night with bands after gigs and see the morning sun when we exited a recording studio after a 24-hour session? That's gone. So to ask what is the most rewarding part of this for me can only be answered in the abstract. That is to say that when I look back on all of it, I'm rewarded by what I've accomplished and thanking my lucky stars that I took what I loved to do and made a living from it. In addition, the personal relationships I've made with artists like Carl Giammarese of The Buckingham, David LaFlamme of It's A Beautiful Day, Pat Martin of Unicorn, John Batdorf, Iain Matthews, Michael Stanley, Jake Holmes, Andy Pratt, Nick Gravenites or Rex Fowler of Aztec Two-Step make all of the headaches worth it. I'm a very lucky guy.

GM: What are your label's plans for the rest of the year and beyond (upcoming releases, new artists, new formats, setting up a huge recording studio, opening up an online store to sell your own CDs, etc.)?

DS: I have always sold CDs in my online stores, but I find it easier these days to link to Amazon for fulfillment than to drive traffic to my site and then fulfill orders myself. I may do the same with iTunes soon, so that I don't have to deal with my own download sales. But I like offering full streams of the albums at my site rather than partial streams, so that fans can get a full perspective on what they are hopefully about to buy.

As for new artists, I'm planning an anthology from Marc Benno and two from Michael Stanley – one from the Michael Stanley Band – and more reissues from It's A Beautiful Day. As of September, all of the Bill Quateman catalog will have been released, as well as all of the Michael Stanley and MSB catalog. I have a rare recording of Huffamoose live that sounds amazing coming later this year. By 2015, I'll release all of the Andy Pratt catalog, and I'm slowly moving toward reissuing the Grinderswitch catalog.

GM: Anything else you'd like to add or share about yourself, your career background or your record label?

DS: In general, it's been a real trip – good and bad. But the good far outweighs the bad. In my early days as a music journalist working under David Fricke and as George Meier's assistant at Walrus, and then as editor of that trade publication, I felt that I would someday be the next Bill Graham. Not! But I did what I felt was right for me and for the artists I loved. All things will pass, but when you can have a knock-down, drag-out fight with an artist – namely Huffamoose – and then 20 years later you can still work with them and feel the same kindred spirit and want to continue with the same respect you always had for them, that's saying something not only about the music but the people who make it. **GM**

RECORD STORE RECON

by Dr. Disc



Name: **Day Old Blues**

Address: **437 Kings Highway, Shreveport, LA, 71104**

Hours: **10 a.m.-7 p.m. Monday through Saturday**

Phone: **318-773-3168**

Web Site: **www.dayoldblues.com**

7

STOCK: What you will find here is a lot of new vinyl, some used vinyl, T-shirts and other music-related items. It's a growing store that is always gaining inventory through the purchase of both new and used records. The only CDs the shop carries are from local artists.

9

STAFF: I rate this store this high, and they only have one employee: the owner, James. When I shopped, he greeted me as I walked into the store and offered up any assistance I needed. He loves to talk music with the customers. This is the type of record store employee others should aspire to be like.

8

STORE: I found this store to be very clean, brightly lit and easy to look at the items in the bins. Additionally they have some records on the walls, which makes it very easy to see.

7

SELECTION: Like many smaller, independently owned record stores, Day Old Blues can only have so much stock at any one time. It does have a great selection of the new popular releases and even some of the more hard-to-find new releases. In most cases, you will only find one copy of a title, so get there when it first come out ... or order it in advance.

8

SPECIAL MENTION: This store does participate in national Record Store Day. Additionally, the store will host live concerts. When asked why he opened the store, James told me he was just tired of having to drive to Dallas to find new records. So if you are in the Shreveport area, stop by and drop some coin on good old-fashioned records.

Want to suggest a shop Dr. Disc should visit? Send an e-mail to DoctorDisc@yahoo.com with the shop's name and address, or contact the good doctor via Twitter @Doctordisc.