

Four Electronics Firms Join To Market VHD Vid Disc In U.S.

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studios, for feature film programs. VHD programs is also in negotiations to acquire licenses from Walt Disney Productions, Imways and a number of independent production companies, including Time-Life Films.

Original Music Programming

While feature films will dominate VHD programs' initial library, accounting for approximately 160 of the titles, some 40 special interest titles are also expected to be available, with an emphasis on music programming in order to fully exploit the VHD system's stereo capability.

Los Angeles is slated to be the site of the first disc mastering and pressing facility for VHD Disc Manufacturing. A second, high-volume disc manufacturing plant is also being planned by the company to satisfy anticipated market demand. Production equipment and additional technology are currently being transferred from JVC's Amato plant, as well as others now producing VHD discs.

General Electric, JVC and MEI jointly own the third company, VHD Electronics Inc., which will manufacture all VHD players and related equipment for the U.S. Disc players will initially be produced by JVC and MEI for resale to GE and their respective domestic subsidiaries until a manufacturing facility is established here. It is also

WB Buys Sire

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acquired a 50% interest in the British-based Blue Horizon label, which he set up with Mike and Richard Vernon. The label, considered a pioneering company in the area of British blues, released recordings by Fleetwood Mac and Chicken Shack. In the early-'70s, Sire became involved in the growth of the European progressive rock movement in signing the Dutch band Focus and later, in collaboration with JEM's Marty Scott, formed the Passport label, to which German based Nektar and Synergy were signed. Sire sold its shares in Passport in 1976.

Throughout the mid-'70s, Sire continued its involvement with British and European rock, signing the Climax Blues Band and Renaissance, both of which enjoyed some success in the U.S. The label later became an early leader in signing new rock acts, such as the Talking Heads, Ramones and, most recently, the Pretenders, as well as Madness and M, which had a hit this year with "Pop Muzik."

In response to Warner Bros.' acquisition of the label, Stein said, "With the prevailing uncertainties in our industry, it made sense at this time for Sire to throw its lot in with Warner Bros. and take full advantage of the security and support they offered for the future."

The Sire staff has moved to the Warner Bros. Records complex at 3 East 54th Street, New York City, but telephone service on (212) 595-5500 and telex 62622 will remain intact.

Geffen Signs Three

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these artists deserves."

McAnally, a singer-songwriter who previously recorded for RCA and Ariola, will have his first Geffen LP produced by Terry Woodford and Clayton Ivey in Muscle Shoals. Greg Copeland, a Jackson Browne find, is a Southern California-based songwriter managed by Peter Golden and Bill Siddons. His debut effort will be produced by Browne. And while production plans for David Lasley aren't quite set, his credits include writing hit songs for Boz Scaggs and Maxine Nightingale and residing as one of the chief staff writers at Irving Almo Music.

expected that the VHD system will be marketed independently by Panasonic and Quasar (Motorola).

Toshiba, NEC, Sharp and Yamaha are presently marketing the VHD system in Japan, with others expected to follow. Domestically, Toshiba has already announced that it will market RCA's SelectaVision CED system, joining Zenith, Sears, J.C. Penney, Sanyo and CBS. MCA Discovision will market optical videodiscs.

Thorn EMI is planning to launch the VHD system in the U.K. and progressively throughout Europe in the near future. Negotiations are being held with other major U.K. and European corporations to provide software, among which are the British Broadcasting Corp. (BBC), independent television and publishing concerns.

The VHD videodisc player system is expected to be marketed here for about \$500, comparable with estimates for the RCA system, while the Pioneer Laserdisc system will go for approximately \$749 and the Magnavox Magnavision unit is slated to retail for \$775. A digital audio adaptor for the VHD system will also be available for about \$500 with a random access and remote control unit to be sold for \$150.

The 10.2 inch VHD disc features a one hour per side capacity and disc life is about 10,000 hours. It is contained within a plastic caddy or cartridge. Additionally, it features fast and slow motion, fast forward and reverse and stop mode, in addition to random access.

Horowitz Named

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sion would be involved in developing, producing, acquiring and distributing programming for all video forms, including network, syndication, pay and cable television, public television, video cassettes and discs. He additionally said his division would work closely with Polygram Pictures to develop and produce television programming and also to establish itself as a worldwide television syndicator using the parent company's theatrical feature library.

Horowitz started his career with Columbia Pictures Television Distribution (CPT) in 1959, and in 1960 was appointed head of the firm's international production and distribution division, followed by his role as assistant to the president and his later election to vice president in 1967.

In 1968, Horowitz left Columbia to serve as director of international sales for CBS Enterprises, Inc., only to return to CPT as vice president in charge of sales for the company's international operation in 1970. Horowitz' last position with CPT was president.

Dr. Eckart Haas, president of the Polygram Group's film and television division, of which Polygram Television is a part, commented on the Horowitz appointment by saying, "Norman's past accomplishments and standing in the television community are testimony not only to our confidence in his ability to make Polygram Television a leader in the industry, but his ability to attract talented and experienced people to the company as well."

Hall Campaigns For Forest Fire Prevention

NASHVILLE — Tom T. Hall has been selected by the Southern Cooperative for Forest Fire Prevention as its spokesman for the 1981 campaign. Hall's song, "Old Dogs, Children And Watermelon Wine" also was selected as the musical theme for the Cooperative's 1981 venture. Hall will be featured in a number of television and radio spots, as well as print campaigns.



WOLF AND RISSMILLER RE-OPEN COUNTRY CLUB — Wolf and Rissmiller celebrated the grand re-opening of the 1,000 seat Country Club in Reseda, Calif. with a show by Capitol recording group The Motels. Pictured backstage after the concert are (l-r): Dennis Turner, Ken Fritz Management; Martha Davis of The Motels; Jim Rissmiller, Wolf and Rissmiller Concerts, Inc.; Don Zimmerman, president, Capitol Records; and Ken Fritz, Ken Fritz Management.

AFM Considers Legal Redress As Strike Negotiations Break Down Again

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the Assn. of Motion Picture and Television Pictures (AMPTP), said, "We don't know if the federation wants to take legal action or not. Anyone can make charges."

Hunt added that "We did make an offer. We were prepared to make one, but found out through side bar conversations that it would not meet the AFM's demands."

"We feel it highly improper to introduce a new set of proposals during a strike," countered Victor Fuentealba, AFM international president.

Calling the move by producers "unexpected," AFM negotiators said they were prepared to take the producers' final offer during the most recent talks, which began Oct. 27, to its membership, although they would not commit themselves as to what recommendations would be made.

Producers' negotiators allegedly countered that they would make no offer for membership ratification unless an entirely new proposal for original product for the home video market be included.

"The real problem here," according to Hunt, "concerns the terms and conditions for producing programs for pay television, video disc and cassette."

"They (the AFM) did not feel prepared to discuss it as of yet. We want to be able to produce in those markets, but they weren't

ready to negotiate. Their feeling was that they need more time to discuss the mechanics of this issue with their people for a protracted period of time," Hunt added.

Negotiation of such issues between the AFM and the AMPTP were not to be dealt with until the strike over reuse fees for commercial TV was settled. The current strike began when the current contract covering such provisions expired July 31.

AFM members, under existing contracts, are already covered for material transferred from commercial film mediums to home video markets.

Union Reaction

Commenting further on the strike, Fuentealba said, "The only purpose of such an action can be to prolong a strike. We're shocked and disappointed."

"In 30 years, this is the first time I've seen an employer do something like this — to present a new proposal in the middle of a strike and insist it be submitted to membership," Fuentealba added.

AFM officials further announced that picketing by union members will continue at all major studios. The union also indicated that they had support for their strike from several members of the Teamsters Union, whose members have refused to cross the AFM pickets at MGM studios.

WEA Announces New Returns Rate Revision For Eight-Track Cartridges

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to get a total "return credit" of \$1,800. If the retailer returned \$14,000 worth of eight-tracks, the 10% charge rate would yield a total "returns charge" of \$1,400. Subtracting the "returns charge" from the "returns credit" would yield a net credit of \$400. Under the old policy, the net credit would have been \$200.)

"We detected a problem with eight-track returns, which pointed to a laxity in the buying and stocking policies of many of our accounts," said a WEA spokesman. "Many of the accounts were buying out of outmoded views, sometimes just out of habit. This new policy provides an incentive, a 'carrot,' to be more efficient. All we're saying is 'if you're going to buy tape, do it intelligently. If it makes sense for your market, then do it, but do it right.'"

Dramatic Shift

While acknowledging that "the percentage (of sales) has shifted dramatically from eight-tracks to cassettes" in recent years, the spokesman explained that WEA would continue to service the eight-track field. "In

many of the 'markets on wheels,' L.A., Dallas and Atlanta, for example, many cars carry eight-track players. The equipment is still out there and is being used, so we will continue to market eight-track tapes."

When contacted, spokesmen for CBS and Polygram all said their companies did not have any immediate plans for revisions of existing eight-track returns policies.

At MCA Distributing, which still accepts 100% returns, Al Bergamo, president, said, "Our returns on eight-tracks have not been too substantial. We have lots of country and black product, which does better in the eight-track format than pop or rock, and there really isn't any need for us to change our policy on returns."

For The Record

An item in *Cash Box's* East Coastings column of Oct. 25 reported that 20th Century-Fox Records would sign a distribution pact with Hurrah Records. Twentieth Century-Fox Records has denied the report.