ROCK 'N' ROLL IS HERE TO PAY

The History and Politics of the Music Industry

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The Record Business: Getting It Right the Second Time Around

The Beatles made their debut in America at a time when the United States record industry was stagnating. The years 1955 through 1959 had seen retail sales increase as much as 36 percent each year. In 1960, however, industrywide sales were actually down (.5 percent) from the year before, and 1963 sales were up less than 2 percent from the year before. The general recession explained some of the decrease but a bigger problem was the music itself. With the exception of the "girl groups," the excitement generated by the r&b crossovers and the first wave of rock'n'roll had subsided; Philadelphia Schlock did little to bring it back.

The Beatles did not rejuvenate the industry singlehandedly. New styles of American music were emerging in New York and California, and the new type of record retailing, rack-jobbing, had been placing records before a broader spectrum of consumers. But the Beatles certainly signaled a new growth period for the record industry.

The Beatles, as everyone in the Western world must know by now, came from Liverpool, an industrial city northwest of London. They signed with the huge RCA-like electronic components firm EMI (Electrical and Musical Industries, Ltd.) after George Martin, an *EMI*

producer who had done mostly comedy albums, thought they might have something fresh. They had been turned down by most other British companies including British Decca, who picked a group called Brian Poole and The Tremoloes in their place. Their first contract with EMI gave them all of 1 cent royalties per single, 6 cents per album.

The group got off to a good start in 1962 with "Love Me Do" which made number seventeen on the British charts, followed by "Please Please Me" which hit number one. In 1963 for the first time in twelve years a British group, the Beatles, won the music poll of the British magazine *Melody Maker*. The boys were ready for the big time ("bigger than Elvis," hoped John Lennon), and they hit the States late that year.

Acceptance in the United States was not immediate but when it came it was hysterical. Ten thousand teenagers were waiting for the plane at the airport in New York. "I Want to Hold Your Hand" became the fastest breaking record that EMI's American subsidiary Capitol had ever released. By the end of the year the group had gotten twenty-eight sides on the singles charts and produced six top-selling albums. The record industry had never seen anything like it, not even Elvis. In the years 1963-68 the group sold an estimated $154 million worth of records worldwide.

The Beatles had more going for them than their light-hearted sexuality and wit, although both were new images for rock singers in America. Their manager, Brian Epstein, was extremely astute in promoting them. He was from Liverpool like them but had gone to private school and to the Royal Academy of Dramatic Arts before returning to manage the large record department in his family's department store. A customer's request for a Beatles record sent him to the Cavern, the sweaty, half-underground club that was the center of teen culture, or what passed for it, in Liverpool. He got the group their first contract, not an easy thing to do since they were so unorthodox for the time. Eighteen months later, having established the group in Britain he convinced Ed Sullivan to put them on his show even though British groups had usually failed in America. Sullivan gave them $2,400 for the appearance. The clean, suited image that Epstein built for the Beatles greased their way into the hearts of parents, as well as teenyboppers. Most significantly, Epstein promoted his act with coordinated press campaigns that emphasized the personalities of the Beatles as much as their music.

In addition to Epstein's packaging, the Beatles were also popularized by a $50,000 promotional campaign at Capitol. The money was spent mostly in New York since the company felt a success in that media center would spread to other cities. Although the Beatles eventually accounted for over 50 percent of Capitol's sales, the company was reluctant to back them until EMI insisted. Capitol evidently shared Sullivan's doubts

about British groups. Before Capitol changed its mind, two independents, Vee Jay in Chicago and Swan in Philadelphia, put out singles based on rather minor agreements with the Beatles. The records engendered several lawsuits, but Swan's "She Loves You" still became the second best-selling single of the year. For its part MGM even pressed a single from a tape which an affiliate had made in Germany a year before.

Beyond their music, Epstein's promotion, and Capitol's belated push, the time was right for a new teen sound. Nineteen sixty-four was the year the postwar baby boom broke. Seventeen-year-olds became the largest single age group in that year.

The Beatles' success in the United States was followed to a lesser degree by a number of other British groups such as the Rolling Stones, the Dave Clark Five, the Hollies, the Animals, the Yardbirds, and Gerry and the Pacemakers, the last also managed by Epstein. The Beatles and the Stones continued into the seventies, of course, joined by a second generation of British groups led by the Cream, Led Zeppelin, and Jimi Hendrix.

New music was being developed in the United States at this time as well. In New York, Bob Dylan was moving from folk music into rock, adding electric guitars and a backup band to his traditional acoustic guitar accompaniment. He was soundly booed by condescending folk fans for his effort. "There was a lot of hypocrisy all around," he later told Anthony Scaduto, people saying "it had to be either folk or rock. But I knew it didn't have to be like that. I dug what the Beatles were doing, and I always kept [their success] in mind." Dylan's new style, quickly labeled folk rock, greatly expanded his audience, and gave him his first real commercial success; "Bringing It All Back Home," his fifth album, became one of the best-selling albums of 1965. Dylan was able to put an unsentimental concreteness about social situations into his singing, a rage against society and an ironic humor that was rare for the purely rock songs of the time. His synthesis influenced thousands of young people who were beginning to turn away from the norms of 1950s America. Other New York musicians like the members of the Blues Project and the Paul Butterfield Blues band from Chicago were beginning to electrify black country blues and to bring the Chicago blues to a new audience of white young people. The records of these groups sold with little publicity and virtually no airplay.

On the West Coast bands began to follow Dylan's move into folk rock. The Byrds were the most successful. They made hit singles of Dylan's "Mr. Tambourine Man" and "Turn, Turn, Turn." They were joined in Los Angeles by the soft-rock groups the Buffalo Springfield and the Mamas and the Papas, the Doors, a more electrified group, and the Mothers of Invention, probably the most experimental as well as

satirical of the new California groups. The West Coast, along with a couple of city centers such as New York and Chicago, was producing a new white middle-class rock'n'roll music that drew from folk and earlier rock. It was inseparable from the new youth culture that was rejecting the consumer and goal-oriented patterns of adult middle-class America in favor of more free-living lifestyles involving shared communities and mind-expanding drugs.

The most developed center for the new progressive rock music and this new lifestyle was, of course, San Francisco. The major bands were the Jefferson Airplane, Big Brother and the Holding Company with Janis Joplin, the Quicksilver Messenger Service, the Grateful Dead, and Country Joe and the Fish. The Fish were from Berkeley, and often condescended to by critics and groups from across the Bay, but with their "Fish Cheer," "Vietnam Rag," and extreme psychedelic compositions, they had as much input as the others to the rest of the country. They were the only San Francisco psychedelic group to refer to part of their music as "rock and *soul* music."

The Airplane was the top band in the city commercially, but the Grateful Dead drew together all of the elements of the San Francisco scene and came to symbolize it to those outside California. The members of the Dead were mostly locals from Northern California cities. The group members had been influenced by a number of styles. Jerry Garcia had been involved in folk and bluegrass music, Phil Lesch had studied classical music and played trumpet, Pigpen (né Ron McKernan, the son of a white r&b disc jockey) was into electric blues. The name came in a moment of psychedelic inspiration: "One day we were all over at Phil's house smoking DMT," recalls Garcia. "He had a big Oxford dictionary, I opened it, and there was 'grateful dead,' those words juxtaposed. It was one of those moments, y'know, like everything else on the page went blank, diffuse, just sorta oozed away, and there was GRATEFUL DEAD, big black letters edged all around in gold, man, blasting out at me, such a stunning combination. So I said, 'How about Grateful Dead?' and that was it."[1]

Members of the Dead hung around with Ken Kesey's crowd in Palo Alto in the early days, and then played in the Acid Tests a few years later. They also played free in the parks and in Haight Street.

The music was reinforced by several dance ballrooms where thousands of turned-on kids went every weekend to see the groups and the light shows the ballrooms initiated. FM rock radio got its start in San Francisco at the same time, pioneered by several disc jockeys who, after dropping out of AM to take LSD and think things over, decided to develop a looser format to air the new music.

San Francisco musicians mixed with the new bands in Los Angeles. David Crosby, first of the Byrds, then of Crosby, Stills, Nash, and Young, was central to this process. He lived in Venice (Los Angeles) with David Freiberg and Paul Kantner who became part of the Airplane, and hung out with Dino Valente who later joined Quicksilver.

The year that the various elements of the San Francisco scene seemed to jell, and to attract national attention, was 1967. In May the Beatles' "psychedelic" album was released—Sergeant Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band. The album, as had Revolver before to a lesser extent, helped to popularize acid and Indian music, as well as the less positive, more general trend toward Eastern *kitsch*. The power and popularity the Beatles had assumed in their straighter period was enabling them to lead millions of young people through a series of changes. In June came the Monterey Pop Festival. Attended by 30,000 people, it was the first large rock festival. Although it was initiated from Los Angeles and was co-produced by Lou Adler and John Phillips, both key L.A. music figures, it showcased the San Francisco musicians, along with Jimi Hendrix and The Who. The festival focused national attention on San Francisco. *Time* and *Newsweek* began doing their articles on "the hippies," and that summer thousands of "love children" descended on the city. The commercial possibilities inherent in such entusiasm were beginning to be noticed by record executives, many of whom, like Columbia's Clive Davis, had flown to Monterey.

As the various forms of the new white rock music appeared, an old controversy resurfaced: were the Beatles, Stones, and other r&b-influenced British groups, the Los Angeles-San Francisco psychedelic bands, and the white blues groups like Paul Butterfield or the Electric Flag, all nothing but further elaborations in the ever-continuing rip-off of black rhythm and blues music? Since the controversy is a complicated one, all of its ramifications will have to be saved for a later chapter. (See Chapter 7, Black Roots, White Fruits.) However, it is clear that in the big picture most forms of sixties rock (heavily folk-influenced groups like the Airplane and Dylan are partial exceptions) did have their roots in black r&b, along with country-influenced rockabillies who derived at least half of their inspiration from black singers and dancers, as well.

What is different about most of the white groups after 1967 is not their basic musical structure which is still largely blues/r&b derived, but rather the lyrics and the lifestyle that the groups represented. These groups were not simply presenting black music to a white pop audience that was unaware of it, as Perry Como and the other white cover artists had done in the fifties. The new groups represented an authentic white subculture that had been produced by the economic and social conditions of the sixties. It was not an extremely oppressed culture like that of the black ghettos, but it was a grouping that like blacks was differen-

tiated from mainstream white America. Lyrics that concerned psychedelic experiences and songs that lasted forty minutes were different from the techniques of both white pop music and black soul music.

As for rock music sung by white performers replacing, for the young white audience, rock'n'roll or r&b sung by blacks, the conclusion is clear. Says Ahmet Ertegun. "The little white girl in school loved to dance to Chuck Berry, but somehow John Lennon looked more like her dream, you know what I mean?"

Going to School with the Grateful Dead

Although record companies, especially the large ones, did not like the new rock music as music any more than they had liked fifties rock'n'roll, they were quicker to embrace it economically than they had rock'n'roll a decade before. In some ways the message was too obvious to miss. The Beatles, pushed by a British company, had created a commercial excitement unequaled in the history of the industry. Latching on to some of the other British groups was a simple matter. The distribution of some of them even fell automatically to American companies through joint licensing agreements with British firms. In other cases American groups were made to sound and dress like their British counterparts. Paul Revere and the Raiders on Columbia, who were from Oregon, and the Sir Douglas Quintet from Texas, on Tribe (Huey Meaux producing), were examples. White English singers also presented no racial "problems" to bigoted executives and program directors. The folk rock groups were also easier for record companies to tolerate, at least at first. Major companies had been promoting clean folk groups like Peter, Paul, and Mary (Warner Brothers) and the Kingston Trio (Capitol) for several years, and the shift to folk rock was seen as a gradual one artistically. Columbia had signed Dylan when he was a pure folkie, although an outspoken one. With the Byrds the company got their first number one hit in the new wave—"Mr. Tambourine Man."

With two successful "sounds" just behind them, the industry was quick to move on the San Francisco music scene. Monterey had attracted a number of executives who recommended that various groups be signed. Columbia picked up Janis Joplin, RCA signed the Jefferson Airplane, Vanguard bought Country Joe and the Fish, and Warner Brothers on a tip from Tom Donahue contracted the Grateful Dead. Some of these groups had been signed before Monterey. A year later Capitol contracted the Quicksilver Messenger Service and the Steve Miller Band giving them quite a deal—16 percent royalties (based on wholesale prices) and $40,000 advances. "Some of the new groups are good," commented Max Weiss, one of the owners of San Francisco's Fantasy Records at the time, "but a little crazy. They are absolutely

noncommercial and have to be taught to conform a little to make money." Others pointed out that the youth culture was so large in Northern California, that a San Francisco group could break even in that market alone.

Outside of the Bay Area, Los Angeles, and parts of New York, however, promotion was necessary—and usually a problem. Songs were too long or too "uncommercial" to be played on AM stations. "We found we couldn't sell the Grateful Dead's records in a traditional manner," said Joe Smith, president of Warner-Reprise. "You couldn't take your ad in *Billboard* and sell a record that way. We found that they had to be seen. They had to play concerts. We had to advertise on FM stations which were just emerging about that time. The packaging was important. The cult was important. Free concerts where you handed out fruits and nuts were important."[2]

The underground club circuit became an important avenue of promotion for acts that were seldom heard over the air. Companies would finance the tours, and assist in the bookings. Ads and reviews in underground papers were found to be extremely effective. "If they praise a record," discovered the Mercury promotion head, "the response is tremendous. If they put a record down, the lack of response is startling." Soon the bulk of advertising for many underground papers was coming from record companies. Columbia, followed by others, put out its own carefully written, "underground" news sheet called "Keep Your Ear to the Ground." It was directed at FM stations and head shops. CBS may have thought up the most outrageous corporate hype during the militancy of the sixties when it created an ad campaign for its new underground releases which tagged them "The New Revolutionaires." As FM radio quickly spread to the major cities throughout the country, record companies discovered that short radio ads, or *spots*, played over new music created quick sales. Radio soon outdistanced print in promotional importance. As college students joined hippies and sophisticated listeners in liking progressive rock, campuses became centers for record company promotions as well. Major companies established campus representatives (Warner Brothers had twenty-five), bought ads in campus papers and campus radio stations, and subsidized college concerts. By the end of the sixties record executives like Gil Frieson, then a vice president at A&M Records, spoke of a "Standard American Promotional Package" for new recording groups: "Billboards on Sunset Strip and Broadway, full page advertising in the underground press, the trades, and various other outlets; radio spots and a promotional tour with all expenses paid for by the label." "This package," he added, "is being used by practically every major label to lure in what the label considers to be 'heavy' talent."[3]

The underground groups caused new problems for record companies. Performers insisted on artwork that represented their music, and forced companies to spend more than they wanted to on covers. Of more significance, the groups spent far more time in the studio recording their albums. A&R men blamed the Beatles for starting this custom when they took hundreds of hours to record Sergeant Pepper. Warner Brothers considered dropping the Grateful Dead after they had spent $120,000 in studios around the country without coming up with a finished abum. (The group finally put together three albums from their tapes: Live Dead, Anthem of the Sun, and Aoxomoxoa.)

The controversy over studio time was one of goals: the company wanted commercial hits inexpensively produced; the new groups wanted musical creations. The tension over studio costs was always present, but when music for music's sake also meant commercial success as it did with the Beatles or Simon and Garfunkel, the group was indulged. Since recording costs were paid by the groups themselves out of royalty advances, record companies were hardly taking chances with successful groups, anyway. In the early years of underground music, "company freaks" were often hired to handle the clashes between long-haired musicians and record industry executives. Derek Taylor, the publicist for the Beatles, was in residence at A&M. Andy Wickham, another example, worked at Warner-Reprise.

The new rock music caused a shift from singles to albums. "The LP business really began with the advent of the heavier rock acts," said Don Kirshner in 1972. Since their singles were rarely played, albums were used to introduce the groups, who planned their albums as singles anyway, that is as conceptual units. The affluence of record buyers in the sixties also had a hand in allowing albums to sell like singles, and the switch was also forced by rack-jobbers who sold a selected number of best-selling albums in department stores throughout the country. In addition, albums afforded a greater profit margin, were less breakable, and cost only slightly more to handle. By 1969, 80 percent of the sales dollar was in LPs.

The record industry exhibited a number of different attitudes toward progressive rock. Most signed up a few groups and contracted with independent producers to supply them with new talent that they had difficulty recognizing themselves. Warner-Reprise and MGM probably represented two poles in the responses of the industry. Warner-Reprise made the decision to move on the music aggressively, creating a benevolent image for itself that was calculated to attract wary groups. Columbia used a lot of money and a certain amount of taste to sign Dylan, Joplin, Simon and Garfunkel, the Byrds, and Santana. RCA got the Airplane and several psychedelic groups that did not do as well but

fared well with bubblegum groups like the Monkees and the Archies. Capitol rode with the Beatles.

MGM, however, followed a perspective pretty much its own, one usually the opposite of Warner-Reprise. It signed a number of progressive acts—the Mothers of Invention,Tim Hardin, John Sebastian, Eric Burdon, Laura Nyro, the Velvet Underground, and others—and then proceeded to alienate them. The company censored the Mothers' lyrics without consulting them and then released their records without bothering to tell them. They put out a record by John Sebastian that was recorded off a single speaker at a concert, in an effort to pressure him to adhere to their interpretation of his contract. They even released an entire album by the Grateful Dead (Vintage Dead) made from tapes initially intended for a one-song contribution to a "Sounds of San Francisco" LP proposed by another company but never produced. Legally, the Dead could do nothing. In the late sixties the company reportedly lost $4 million in a tasteless promotion of the Boston "Boss Town Sound." They hoped through hyperbole alone that Boston would become a second psychedelic record center to San Francisco. In 1970 the company turned against its progressive groups branding them "drug acts" and dumped eighteen from the label. "Hard drug groups," said company president Mike Curb, "come into your office, wipe out your secretary, waste the time of your promotion people, abuse the people in your organization, show no concern in the recording studio, abuse the equipment, and then to top things off, they break up."[4]

Curb was praised by President Nixon for his "forthright stand against drug abuse," but industry skeptics were quick to point out that Curb seemed more motivated by economic than moral considerations. Several obviously drug-oriented but strong-selling groups like Eric Burdon or Bobby Bloom ("You ain't been 'til you been high in Montego Bay") were to remain on the label while a number of completely unpsychedelic but poorly selling groups were among those getting the ax. The manager for Eric Burdon commented that he would be "ecstatic" if Curb would now let them leave the label because it was obvious, he felt, that the company president didn't understand rock music. Burdon left as soon as possible, followed by other acts, and the label soon changed its focus to clean teenybopper schlock like the Cowsills and the Osmonds.

Harnessing Creativity: *The Independent Producer*

An integral part of the record industry response to the new rock of the sixties was the growing utilization of independent producers. In the fifties the bulk of music was produced with staff producers who were assigned by the all-powerful A&R heads to record several of a company's acts. But these men often did not understand the new music. What's

more, since many new groups wrote their own material, an A&R person was not needed to bring publisher and performer together. As conflicts between staff producers and groups increased, and as company A&R men proved for the most part unable to recognize underground talent, record companies turned to independent producers. In the fifties and early sixties a few independent producers had a practice of discovering and developing groups on their own, then selling completed prototypes or "masters" of single records to the companies. As the cost of a master rose from $400 to $500 to around $2,500, these producers often brought a group to a company for prior approval, signed contracts, and then with record company financing produced the master, which was turned over to the larger company for distribution. Often the new self-contained groups would stipulate in their contracts that they wished to work with a specific producer.

By the end of the sixties probably 80 percent of all records were being produced by independent producers. The arrangements usually took one of two forms: a simple arrangement with an outside producer who produced records for one of the acts at a larger company, or a more elaborate "label deal" or "joint venture" in which an outside producer formed a record label and contracted the material from the artists he produced on it to a major company for distribution. The arrangements were often done with a manager, or a group itself, like the Beatles, rather than just a producer and could also involve control over promotion and artwork in addition to recorded material.

Some of the more famous fifties independent producers were Norman Petty, who produced Buddy Holly from a studio in Clovis, New Mexico; Lee Hazelwood, who operated out of Phoenix, Arizona, before moving to Hollywood and was best known for his work with Duane Eddy; Jerry Lieber and Mike Stoller, who had careers as songwriters ("Hound Dog"), staff producers, independent producers, and owners of independent record companies. Besides their writing efforts for Presley, Lieber and Stoller were probably best known for their work with the Coasters and the Drifters. One of the best known producers in the history of rock has been Phil Spector, who has had as various a career as Lieber and Stoller.

Spector started out at age eighteen by writing "To Know Him Is to Love Him" (the title taken from the epitaph on his father's tombstone) and forming the Teddy Bears to sing the song. The single became a #1 hit in 1958 but Spector realized his main talent was not singing. He began to compose songs and help out on production with Lieber and Stoller and later at Atlantic and Liberty. He co-wrote "Spanish Harlem" in those years. Then, with PR man Lester Sill, who later became president of Screen Gems Pictures, he formed Philles Records (Phil plus

Les). Philles was a complete, independent record company which did its own distributing and promotion as well as production.

Spector developed his characteristic sound with the company—the Spector "Wall of Sound." The sound basically involved elaborate overdubbing, rare at the time, in which numerous strings, horns, drums, and so on were added to the basic singing track until it seemed that there was a rock orchestra backing the vocals. Brian Wilson of the BeachBoys, himself heavily influenced by Spector, called it "the Wagnerian approach to rock'n'roll." "Writing little symphonies for kids," said Spector. The one-mike-over-everything technique, a major component in the sound, was developed by accident when guitar sounds "leaked" from an unbuffered mike into the other microphones in the studio during the recording of, of all things, "Zip-A-Dee-Doo-Dah."

After "River Deep—Mountain High" sung by Tina Turner was poorly received, Spector retired in disgust returning several years later as an independent producer contracting several groups to A&M. He was eventually reintroduced to the Beatles by Allen Klein and started a new phase of his career, a rebirth, by producing John Lennon's "Instant Karma" and the Beatles' "Let It Be" album. Spector had met the Beatles in 1963 and even flew with them on their first trip to America. Always terribly afraid of plane crashes, he figured he would be safe flying with the Beatles since he was positive they would make it. He produced nearly all of Lennon's and Harrison's albums since the breakup of the Beatles until about 1974 and became the virtual A&R head at the Beatles' Apple label, somewhat in the tradition of fifties A&R men. At present he has made a label deal with Warner Brothers.

Although Spector was a seminal producer who virtually created the technological studio sound that influenced recording groups and companies, especially Motown, throughout the sixties and into the seventies, he was not really one of those independent producers that helped to solve the large record company's relation to creative rock music. His first heyday had been before the new wave. Though he was involved artistically with Apple and the Beatles, Allen Klein (the Beatles' second manager) and the Beatles themselves rather than Spector were instrumental in setting up the Apple label, which provided recorded material to Capitol. An independent producer who had a more direct role in steering major companies toward the independent producer as the link between them and the new groups was Lou Adler.

Adler was from the East L.A. ghetto, and like Spector he gravitated toward the record industry in his late teens. He and Herb Alpert worked up some demos that sounded something like rock'n'roll, and landed a job at Keene Records where they worked under Bumps Blackwell, and where Adler met Sam Cooke, who became a close friend. After a stint

with a management firm that handled Latin acts like Tito Puente, Adler met Jan Berry and produced a record for Jan and Dean called Baby Talk. It was his first production, and acquainted him with the surfing scene. He formed Dunhill Productions around a Johnny Rivers album that became the first of the go-go records (Johnny Rivers Live at the Whiskey a Go-Go), and then turned the production company into Dunhill Records. Adler allied his label with ABC Records because he did not want to worry about sales and distribution, and did not have the money to finance the sessions. The second record Dunhill put out was Barry McGuire's "Eve of Destruction," a strange folk-rock smash that became a number one single. "I had a test on the first Dylan electric album and I gave it to P.F. Sloan ['Destruction' writer] telling him he ought to write some folk-rock stuff, which was just a label we put on it. . . . I didn't think it would get played."[5] McGuire introduced Adler to the musicians who were to become the Mamas and the Papas, and he turned out another series of hits.

At this point ABC realized Dunhill was a source of new music and that the Mamas and the Papas were an extremely valuable songwriting act and bought the company for close to $3 million. Almost immediately Adler formed Ode Records and contracted the distribution to CBS. It was the first time, says Adler, that CBS had agreed to distribute an independently owned label. CBS realized that a new music was being born, and felt that Adler, who had been a part of surfing music, the go-go fad, folk rock, and the West Coast scene in general, understood it. "Clive Davis had gone to the Monterey Pop Festival where he saw something happening, and he knew that I had put it on. But I had a great track record. He wasn't buying an unknown quantity."[6] After a time Adler switched distribution to A&M, which is co-owned by his old friend Alpert.

Adler's sound is different from Spector's. Instead of the elaborate overdubbing and the crescendo effects, records produced by him usually sound simple. Every instrument is clear, with no fogging. This is most evident on the Carole King records Adler has produced. Tapestry, which is at more than 13 million copies the highest selling album of all time, "was a very naked sounding album. I wanted it to sound like she was in the room playing piano for you." Although the records with Johnny Rivers and the Mamas and the Papas are more heavily produced—live effects preserved, strings added—the aim is to bring the artist out, rather than to create something new as Spector often seems to be doing by using the singer as only one of several variables in the total production.

Like a few other independent producers, Adler has always done more than produce the session. He usually coordinates the artwork and tries to design the ad campaigns. His contract with larger labels has been written to allow him to do this.

By the end of the sixties, various musicians and groups were beginning to form their own independent production companies to control artistic content and packaging while contracting with larger companies for distribution. Frank Zappa and the Mothers of Invention, fed up with the attitude toward progressive rock acts at MGM, left that company in 1968 when their contract expired and formed Bizarre, Inc. Bizarre was also a management company handling the Stone Poneys and Tim Buckley besides Zappa and the Mothers, but it was mainly a record label. Zappa and his business partner Herb Cohen signed with Warner-Reprise for distribution. Bizarre proved the value that independent label deals could have for a larger company. Zappa found and developed artists like Alice Cooper that probably would never have been recognized by a large company. The Cooper band was directed to Warner-Reprise several years later and became one of their highest selling acts.

Other examples in the late sixties were the Beach Boys, who founded Brother Records with Capitol distributing. The group later complained that Capitol was stealing royalties and that an independent label deal with the company offered them no more freedom than a standard relation. (Brian Wilson liked to call Capitol Records "Captive Records.") The Jefferson Airplane created Grunt Records but allowed their old company RCA to distribute. Like Capitol and other companies faced with an act that wasn't satisfied with their company, RCA found that doing a label deal was better than having the group leave the company altogether. Besides the greater creative freedom label deals usually offered, groups liked the fact that they could sign other musical acts to their new labels.

Although a few artists like the Tokens and Frank Sinatra had formed their own labels long before, the Beatles were the group that started the trend toward artist companies in the sixties. They used Apple as the economic unit to spring their ideas on the world. Set up with $2 million dollars after Brian Epstein's death in 1967, it had five divisions: records, music publishing, films, electronics, and retailing.

But Apple exemplified the possible pitfalls of an artist-run company. The Beatles lost hundreds of thousands of dollars through miscellaneous electronics inventions that never saw the market and through a boutique in London run by a financially profligate design group called The Fool. Liquor and side expenses by the staff were more than exorbitant and the Beatles were bled by an assortment of friends, some newfound, others old. By the end of the first year the company had lost a cool million. At that point John Lennon brought in music accountant Allen Klein who restored order. Paul McCartney preferred his new father-in-law, lawyer Lee Eastman, and separated from the group. Klein was a cigar-chomping entrepreneur who certainly exacted a percentage

for his services, but he based fewer business decisions on the *I Ching*. Like most groups, the Beatles realized that as part of a money-making enterprise operating in a capitalist economy they needed a capitalist to handle business affairs. Groups that have felt otherwise, with the possible exception of the Grateful Dead, have unfortunately failed.

The Apple label was distributed by Capitol from the beginning. As Phil Spector pointed out the group would have been "fighting their old Capitol product" if they had chosen to distribute with another company. Capitol would even have been able to release tapes from sessions the Beatles judged inferior.