

## FIRST QUARTER RELEASES

# New Acts Crowd The Field

By ROMAN KOZAK

NEW YORK—The first quarter is traditionally the time when major labels release product by new artists, and this year is no exception. A survey of record companies by Billboard finds them fielding more than 100 such acts for these first few months of '83.

British talent, especially of the techno-pop variety, appears to be the favorite among U.S. label a&r departments, as noted in an earlier report (Billboard, Dec. 25). Acts from Canada and Australia are also in abundance.

However, the rockabilly fad has apparently not caught on at record companies—yet. Though the Rockats have gotten a deal with RCA, they

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# Majors Ready Barrage Of New Artists

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are about the only new such act uncovered in the survey. If labels are growing any Stray Cats clones, they appear to be keeping them in the incubators, at least for the rest of the winter.

Meanwhile, more acts led by women will be entering the marketplace, and there are also a number of new black artists looking to break into the white pop mainstream.

Beyond that, the list of new pop acts for release by the major labels in the first quarter contains the expected assortment of solo debuts by members of older bands, label switchers, struggling singer/songwriters, and various "baby dinosaurs." What follows is a label-by-label breakdown of the various new acts.

New from A&M Records is Simple Minds, an English techno-pop band the label has picked up from Virgin U.K. Also just released are the Spoons, a young Canadian group that plays new progressive rock. Coming from Austria is Falco, whose debut single is "The Commitment," a German rap record. In March, the label will release Espionage, a mainstream AOR act produced by Roy Thomas Baker.

"Our black music signings have always been a little MOR, and we are working to push it a bit to the left," says Jordan Harris, vice president of a&r for the label. Signings in that direction include Kiddo, a funk band. New from IRS, distributed by A&M, will be the Cosmetics, a band formed by producer Richard Mazda.

Arista Records has just released the U.S. debut album by the English techno-pop act Heaven 17, which contains material taken mostly from the group's British LP "Penthouse & Pavement," plus some new songs. An American techno-pop group is Ministry from Chicago. Both groups, incidentally, are managed by Lookout.

Also coming from Arista is the debut LP by Alex Coll, former singer for Clover, and Q Field, a dance-rock band on Jive Records. Another new r&b band on Arista is Juicy.

New from Atlantic in January are Klein & M.B.O., formed by the Milan-based duo of Mario Bonaldo and Tony Carrasco, and Steve Arrington's "Hall Of Fame I," recorded by former members of Slave. Atco is debuting Australian group Inxs. Pattie Brooks joins the Mirage label, which is also releasing the first LP by Sweat, a duo formed by Mic Murphy and David Frank. On the Mirage/Omni label is the solo debut by Paul Barrere, former guitarist/vocalist/writer with Little Feat.

After January, Atlantic plans releases by James House, produced by Gary Katz; Lee Kosmin, on the Duke label; and Zebra, a heavy metal band from Long Island. Tony Banks of Genesis will have both a solo and a soundtrack LP. Sissy Spacek will have an LP out on Atlantic/America.

Chic member Nile Rodgers will do a solo LP for Mirage, as will Gary Moore, formerly of Thin Lizzy. Blue Magic will be on Mirage/Omni. R&B singer Johnny Gill will be on Cotillion Records.

Coming from Island Records, distributed by Atlantic, is the debut LP by ex-Sex Pistols-Bow Wow manager Malcolm McLaren, following up his dance club hit, "Buffalo Girls." Club favorites the New York

Citi Peech Boys will have their debut LP in February. Island has two new English techno-pop acts: Blancmange and Paul Haig, formerly of Orange Juice. To support the releases by Blancmange, McLaren and the Peech Boys, Island is releasing a series of 12-inch singles, which it will be promoting via a radio and print campaign and store giveaways.

Capitol Records is releasing two new Canadian rock bands in the next three months, Strange Advance and the Deserters. It is also releasing an EP by English techno-pop artist Thomas Dolby this month. The la-

ing will be the label debut by pioneer new wave band the Stranglers.

Debuting on Portrait will be reggae/pop artist Eddy Grant, who comes over from Epic. Also due from Portrait are Arcangel, a mainstream rock band from Connecticut, and Hawaiian Pups, a new music act from New York featuring female vocalists.

On the various CBS associated labels, Nemperor will release an LP by the Single Bullet Theory, a rock

Munch. LP was produced by Tom Allom. Coming from the Musician label is the debut album by guitarist Kevin Eubanks.

According to Joe Wissert, vice president of a&r at MCA, the label's new signings, to be released in the first quarter, are Sound Barrier, a black hard rock band; Zoom, an r&b band picked up from PolyGram; Bobby Martin, a singer/songwriter and keyboardist for Bette Midler; and Peter Emmett, who was a member of Climax and comes via a deal with Sweet City Records. The label will also release the Au-

tan Transfer type of act from Denver; and the Passions, a new music band from Britain. In March there will be an Uncle Floyd album, and an LP by a New York AOR band, Shelter.

On the Mercury side, former Runaway Lita Ford will be making her solo debut in March. Also making their U.S. debut will be the English group Tears For Fears and Big Country, whose LP is due in April.

On Riva Records, Kelly Groucutt, a member of ELO, will be making his first solo LP. Midnight Blue, an r&b band from Atlanta, will be on Atlanta Artists/Casablanca Records, while Fonda Rae will be making her label debut on Spring.

According to Vince Pellegrino, division vice president of merchandising for contemporary music at RCA, the label will be promoting its new artists with a series of mini albums to be supported by posters, radio spots and college promotions. Benefiting in February and March from the programs will be EPs by English singer/songwriter Robert Ellis Orrall; Philadelphia rock act Robert Hazard; the Mood, an English rock act; and "SCTV's" Count Floyd. In March there will be label debut EPs from Martha & the Muffins, the Rockats, and the Eurythmics, a techno-pop band from Britain.

To further aid new artists, RCA is releasing a series of die-cut 12-inch singles, with the record label featuring graphics of the band. Initial releases in this series are by Slow Children, the Mood and Still Life. RCA has also signed a Canadian rock band, Blushing Brides, whose LP will be out in February. On Millennium Records, there will be the debut of Rodway from Britain, featuring Steve Rodway.

The only new acts to be debuted on Warner Bros. in the first quarter are r&b/jazz artist Marcus Miller and country artist Randy Howard, says Bob Merlis, director of publicity at Warners. But Merlis says "absolutely not" to suggestions there may be a signing freeze at the label.

Tommy Lipuma, vice president of a&r at the label, adds that there will be a pop push for Miller and for a new release by Brenda Russell. "These are a new breed of young black artists, who don't want to be frozen as being white or black," he says. "They were brought up on Aretha and the Beatles, and they do not want to be pigeonholed."

Geffen Records, distributed by Warner Bros., has a new pop-rock band, Preview, whose debut LP, due next month, was produced by Keith Olson. Geffen also has on tap singer/songwriter Mack McAnally, who has written material for Jimmy Buffet. The label has signed the critically acclaimed American techno-pop band Berlin, and it will be rereleasing its debut mini-LP, previously available on Enigma Records.

Bearsville, also distributed by Warners, is releasing in March an LP by Nicole Wills, who used to be in the Johnny Average Band, and will also have the label debut of veteran rock band NRBQ.

The first quarter debut on Warners from Sire has been the recently released album by the Nitecaps, a New York rock band with strong blues and r&b roots. The label will also debut an EP by Tom Scott, former member of the Rockats, produced by Richard Gotterth. Also coming are 12-inchers from the all-female Girls Can't Help It from Britain, and British techno-pop duo Tin Tin. Coming from Full Moon through Warners is the label debut of Girard McMann.



1. Heaven 17 (Virgin/Arista); 2. Light Of The World (Capitol); 3. The Nitecaps (Sire); 4. The Camaros; Diana Mae Munch (Elektra); 5. Berlin (Geffen); 6. Divinyls (Chrysalis); 7. Sound Barrier (MCA); 8. Robert Hazard (RCA); 9. Spoons (A&M).

bel is debuting a number of r&b acts in the first quarter, among them Light Of The World and Ray Chew. Also due on Capitol are LPs by Glenn Shorrock (his first solo) from the Little River Band, and Eddie Jobson, ex of U.K. and Roxy Music.

New from EMI America will be Naked Eyes, a techno-pop duo from Britain. Their debut single is "Always Something There To Remind Me," which will be promoted via video.

Coming from Columbia will be the debut LPs of Mike Bolton, a contemporary rock'n'roller from New York, and Fast Way, an English heavy metal band formed by ex-members of Motorhead, UFO and Humble Pie. On the dance music side, there will be the debut LPs by the Weather Girls and Lulu Temple.

On Epic, the debut LP by the Nolans, an English MOR pop group composed of four sisters, has just been released. Coming are the Bees, a Midwest rock'n'roll band produced by Tom Werman as one of his last projects for CBS before moving to Elektra. Debuting from Australia will be Sharon O'Neil, "a singer/songwriter/keyboardist, rock'n'roller," says Gregg Geller, vice president of a&r at Epic. Also com-

band from Richmond, Va. with a previous release on an independent label, Pavillion will have Art In America, an AOR rock band. Tyrone Brunson, of "The Smart" fame, will have a solo LP on BID Records. Quiet Riot, a rock band on Pasha Records, will be out in February. Blue Rose, another AOR band, will be on Estate Records, while Felony is coming on Rock'n'Roll Records, a label formed by the Scotti brothers. And William Robinson, ex of B.T. Express, is debuting on Coast To Coast Records.

The act that Chrysalis will be introducing in the first quarter is Divinyls, an Australian rock band with a female lead singer. They will tour the U.S. in March.

New releases on Elektra will include the debut solo album by Patrick Simmons, formerly with the Doobie Brothers. Contemporary folk-rock from Wales is the music made by Jaki Whitren and Tom Cartwright, whose debut LP is titled "Rhythm Hymn." Coming from Australia is a self-produced album by Billy Field, "Bad Habits."

Due in March is "Stars In Your Eyes," the debut album by the Camaros, a New York rock band formed by singer/songwriter Diana Mae

tomatis, a hard rock act from Detroit, and the Lost Tropics, an eclectic pop-rock act from Norfolk, Va. with a female vocalist whose debut was produced by Roma Baron. In addition, the label is reserving the Catholic Girls album, released last year.

MCA recently issued albums by Shary Ulrich, a singer/songwriter from Canada, and by Windjammer, an r&b band from New Orleans managed by Joe Jackson, father of the Jacksons.

New from Motown are two r&b solo artists, Gene Van Buren and Mona Lisa Young. The label will be also releasing an album by comedian Finis Henderson. And it is debuting a new wave funk band called Kagny & the Dirty Rats.

Polydor Records will release in February the debut LP by the John Butcher Axis, a three-man rock band, led by a black guitarist from Boston, who were taken on the J. Geils Band's tour after being discovered by singer Peter Wolf. The Suburbs, a dance-rock band from Minneapolis, who earlier had an EP, "Dream Hogs," on Twin Tone Records, are also making their major-label debut with Polydor. Also coming on Polydor are Rare Silk, a Manhat-