

NO 1 Single "Breaking up is hard to do" Neil Sedaka

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A&M'S CHARITY BROWN IN GOOD COMPANY (see page 10)

Cancon vets and fledglings

by Rob Mearns

bolstering '76 chart picture

Joe Sommers, Director of Marketing for A&M Records, Canada, has set aside the week of Feb 14-21 as the label's first Annual Canadian Roster Week, which was prompted by "increasing requests from the media and the performing arts for background material on virtually our entire catalogue", Sommers told RPM.

The company's entire network of promotion and sales offices have been geared up to their "First Team" of Canadian talent, with Feb 16th set aside as Charity Brown and Valdy Day the 17th as Cliff Edwards and David George Day, and the 20th as Casino Records Day with heavy concentration on Susan Jacks, Chilliwack and Bim. Sommers points out that "FM programmers may be required to compile actual libraries of information on Cancon artists due to expected CRTC regulations", adding, "the Canadian offices of A&M will be available on 'artist days' for the public-release of biographies, photographs and interviews."

RPM would like to assist artist compilation by acknowledging the accomplishments of '75 Juno Award nominee Charity Brown.

Our cover girl, this week, was a former member of Rain, a 5-member group out of the Kitchener-London area that toured Ontario roller rinks, farming and papermill towns. Our heroine, then known as Phyllis Brown, split the group after 5 years. Another few months of gigging with various groups and Phyllis decided to try the solo route, and landed a contract with A&M. It was decided that the R&B mood was best and a name change advisable. Harry Hinde produced with an assist from Motown's sound arranger Tom Baird.

Her first entry, Jimmy Mack made a good impression but her followup single, You Beat Me To The Punch, sold in excess of 30,000 copies, a sales figure that ironically, became known

in March '75 which was the Juno month. More recognition came her way and she opened the Paul Williams show at Toronto's Massey Hall, and a month later A&M released her single, Take Me In Your Arms, and then her troubles began. A&M's parent firm picked up the single for release in the U.S. and the Doobie Bros. covered it. "That cost us an American hit", said A&M's Doug Chappell. Charity's Canadian hit took a backseat but her status as a hitmaker remained, with the June release of her debut album, Rock Me.

In July A&M released No Way To Treat A Lady, which Chappell considered "a weird circumstance of events, because we had no idea that Helen Reddy would come out one week later with the same title on her single and album." So, it was another downer for Charity, who has been described as "a singer who has her ups and downs, but mainly in her 3-octave range." She is also regarded as Canada's "premiere pop stylist." If you happen to be following the areas you might just check out this beautiful young talent: Kitchener (14), Bridgeport (16-21), Orillia (26) and Burlington (27). March dates include Peterborough (6) and Stratford (12).

As Charity is one of the leading lights on the Canadian scene, a dozen more names, veterans and fledglings in the business, have shown early indications of making 1976 a better-than-average year. General Hand Grenade by Trooper, the initial group on producer Randy Bachman's Legend label, moved into chart prominence (Dec 27) with a No. 75 and is still moving upwards with an increase in sales being tallied as well.