



A NEW music publishing company, headed by the UK music industry's best-known promotion man and former chief of RAK Music — Dave Most — was established in May this year via a joint venture deal with Rondor Music, the publishing arm of A&M Records.

The company is called Most Music/Rondor Music and operates from Rondor's offices at 10a Parsons Green, London SW6.

The venture, which comes in the year that Dave Most celebrates his 20th year in the music business, is something of a departure for Rondor which has never before been involved with a

third party in the UK.

Welcoming Most to the Rondor fold, managing director Bob Grace (above left, with Most, centre, and A&M's Derek Green) said that in addition to acquiring and developing new talent for the catalogue, Most also intends to maintain his promotional activities "when suitable publishing opportunities arise". And Most stressed that he will continue his policy of only promoting records to which he holds the publishing rights.

Dave Most, music man

DAVE MOST is a permanent fixture in the British record business. During his 20-year involvement he has built up a reputation not only as a top promotion person and a thoroughly active and determined publisher, but also as a personality.

Whether he's plugging at Radio One, sending parcels of tea to Radio Luxembourg, keeping goal for the Radio One football team or just "hanging out", Dave is an enthusiast.

Five years at Carlin, 15 years with RAK, he's more than served his dues. And now, in 1984, he's setting out on a new venture with Rondor Music. In an interview with Jim Evans, he talks about his life and times in the business he firmly believes in.

How did you get into the music business in the first place?

"I tried various jobs when I left school, but my main job was as an apprentice electrician — and after three years I still couldn't change a plug. But I stuck at it for quite a long time. I was working for Strand Electric in Covent Garden and we were all allocated areas. I got Wembley Park, which was marvellous for me, because that was where Rediffusion was, where they did all the pop shows then — Muriel Young and Wally Whyton and so on.

"I was always interested in the musical side of things — and once I got into the business, I made sure I was never going to get out of it. When I left my apprenticeship as an electrician, my main function was selling products — and I soon realised that I could sell — and that I could do it with anything else I wanted.

"I first started to sing years ago, when I was 15. I did one show and quickly realised it wasn't for me. I've never seen 1,000 people move so fast — there must have been a lot of exits. That was when I realised that if I wanted to be in the music business, it would have to be on the other side.

"Before I was even in the business, I'd been asked to get a contract signed — and the witnesses to that contract were Bruce Welch and Frank Ifield. I worked at it . . .

"Somehow, when I was at school, I always knew I'd go into the music business. For some unknown reason, I knew it. Whether I willed it, I don't know, but I just felt it."

What sort of music were you listening to at the time?

"It was Del Shannon, Johnny and The Hurricanes, Chris Montez and all that. I love black music, I always have done. Why, I don't know, but it just seems to be the best. It turns me on a lot . . . But I'm not a musical snob, I can like anything.

Your personality must have helped you get a start in the business?

"I always knew that I could talk to people, get on with people. I'm quite an open person and I just like people to be happy. I'm just one of those sort of people. For me, dealing with people is no problem. And for me, this has always been one of the most important things.

"My big break came in 1964, when I joined Carlin and started in the promotion business. Paul Rich was very kind to me at that time, as was Alan Freeman, who helped me a great deal to get breaks. Alan was, and always has been, a great pusher of people. He has helped so many people I know — disc jockeys, producers, everybody, on all sides of the business.

"At Carlin, I was given the Motown catalogue, A&M, Stax, Atlantic and Enquiry Music with acts such as Herman's Hermits — and not forgetting Cliff Richard and The Shadows and my association with Peter Gormley. It was all marvellous."

Promotion then was a very different game to what it is now?

"When I started, it was just the BBC and Saturday Club, Easy Beat, Five Way Family Favourites and 12 O'Clock Spin. And it you got plays on those four shows over a weekend, you were the genius.

"I didn't have a lot of chance to begin with, because it takes a long time to serve your apprenticeship in this business — no matter who you are. So it took a long time to crack. But eventually, I broke through — and another programme which was very important at this time was Top Gear with Bernie Andrews. It was a left field sort of thing, rather like John Peel today.

Did the emergence of the pirate radio stations change the situation?

"That, as well as being a big break for me, was also a big break for many new artists. The only bad thing about them was that they didn't pay performance fees, but the only thing I was interested in

was selling my product.

"For the kids, it was an alternative, it was something to listen to during the week. And I knew that while I might get one play on the BBC's Saturday Club, I could get — as well — eight plays in a day on Radio London.

"There were really only two programme directors at that time — I just had to go to Radio London and Radio Caroline. One was in Curzon Street, the other in Chesterfield Street, it was so convenient.

"I'd go round in the morning with a hot record by, say, The Four Tops or The Supremes, and it would be out on the tender the same day and being played that evening. It was wonderful radio.

"It was the same with Radio Luxembourg. I'd take the record round and the next thing I knew it was on the plane and being played the following night. I used to try and work it so that the record would get mass play in one day. And I made sure everyone was treated fairly, which is maybe why I got on."

Were there many others doing the same as you at this time?

"I was the youngest really, at that time. I did meet a little bit of resistance because of my lack of musical knowledge, but I like to think I knew what was going on. It's the same now, where kids promoting records know what's happening.

"I do keep in touch a great deal, because I want to, and because I know I have to, but wanting to is better than having to.

"Working this way, with the BBC, Caroline and London, broke a lot of barriers for me. And I knew that if the records got played, this would translate into sales and the artists and writers would get paid.

"So many artists broke through those pirate stations — Tom Jones, The Who, it was nice. It was a lovely era. In fact, it was the best era of all. I know lots of people from that time who are still involved in the business, and they all say that was the only time. It was great, it was fresh. It's become stale occasionally since, but that's normal, there are reasons why.

Did you actually ever go out to Caroline or London?

"I went out to both — as a guest. It was an amazing experience to go out in the tender . . . Meeting such people as Tony Blackburn, John Peel, Ed Stewart, Tony Brandon, Duncan Johnson . . .



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DAVE MOST, MUSIC MAN

FROM PAGE SIX

They were all just great because they were all trying to break through, to get into radio. It was a struggle for everyone. But this was the only way, because at the time there were so few DJ type shows on the BBC.

"But they were all out there, battling with force nine gales. I went out to Caroline in a force five gale, and it was unbelievable. You'd arrive there with the boat going up and down, the tender going up and down, and you'd have to judge your jump just right, otherwise you'd had it. It really was like pirate times."

Which were your biggest successes at this time?

"There were so many, I couldn't begin to tell you. But remember, the BBC broke a lot of records as well. I remember the BBC were very much into a record by Jeff Beck called Hi Ho Silver Lining, and Caroline were into the same number by a group called Attack. I made sure I got the BBC plays, the Saturday Clubs, the Top Gears and the Easybeat plays, which with the back-up of Radio London, broke the record. We won the battle by getting more BBC plays. The BBC had the power and still does.

"It was a weird time, there were so many records — Donovan The Supremes, Four Tops, Temptations, Cliff Richard, Billy Fury, Lulu, Herman's Hermits, Otis Redding. . . .

And Radio Luxembourg . . . ?

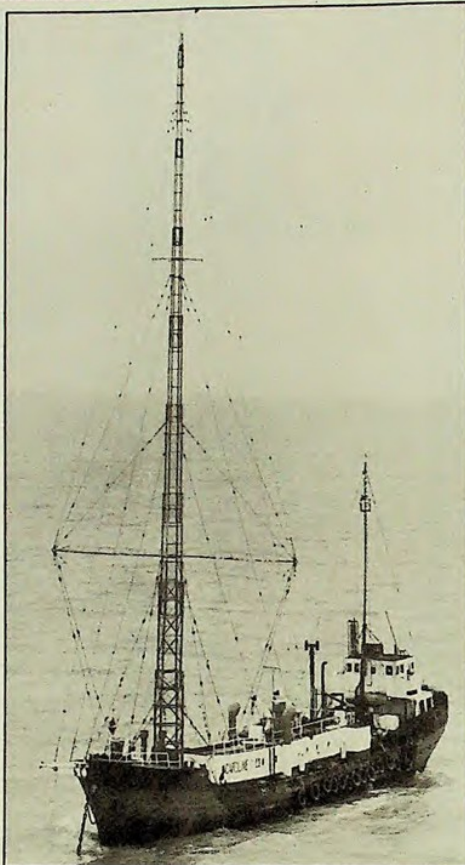
"I used to send parcels of tea and bacon to Radio Luxembourg. Sometimes it used to get waylaid in the post and was not a lot of use to anyone delivering it, yet alone receiving it. But the tea was the main thing . . . it was like gold out there. Whether they drank it or sold it on the black market I don't know, or care. I just genuinely felt sorry for them stuck out there. Whenever I went out there, and stayed with Paul Burnette or Kid Jensen, Noel Edmonds or whoever, they were always so hospitable to me, so sending them the tea was the least I could do.

You've always got on well with DJs and presenters?

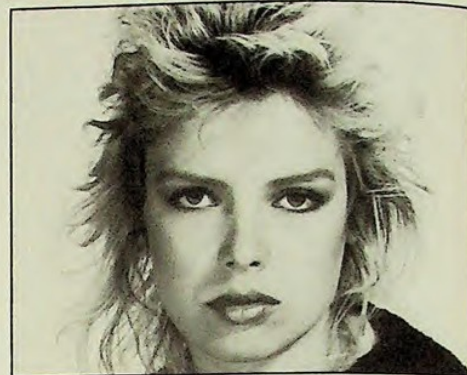
"I knew all the DJs from the pirate stations, Luxembourg and the BBC, and, most important, I believed in them. In fact, a lot of them asked me to manage them, but I couldn't do that because of the conflict of interests. I don't think it would have gone down well with anybody. You've really got to have none or the lot. And when you've got the lot, you've got aggravation. You can't do everything for all of them, because they've all got egos; they all want to be personalities in their own right. I wasn't capable of that. And apart from that, you can't own a disc jockey and promote at the same time. There's bound to be backlash. So I've kept away from it.

"Sometimes I wish I'd done it, I really do, because they were so

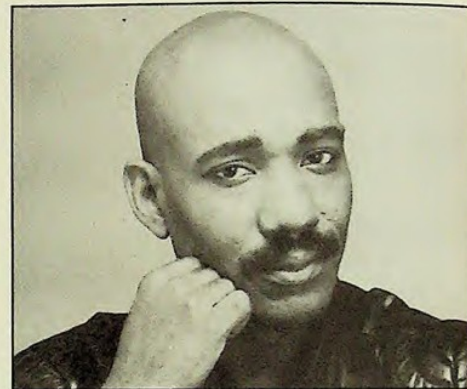
CONTINUED OPPOSITE



RADIO CAROLINE: "So many people broke through the pirate stations."



"HE has been spotted nutting radio producers for 20 plays-a-week rotation. Will settle for a game of football, as long as you let him score the goals. A skunk of the first order and utterly irresistible" — KIM WILDE.



"HE'S a great promotion man has been a tremendous help with our career. We have a lot to thank, him for" — ERROL BROWN, HOT CHOCOLATE

DAVE MOST, MUSIC MAN



important to my life . . . But I don't want the backlash and I want to be in this business for a long time . . . We're still friends, and there's no reason not to be. . . .

So you were well in when Radio One started?

"It was a wonderful time. Radio One was fresh, it was new and it was different. I knew everyone, which was an obvious advantage, but I also had some good product to promote — and also some that weren't quite so good, but still managed to get through . . . I've got a great philosophy in life — if you hear it enough, you'll buy it, no matter what it is. It's like soap powder, you brainwash people. If it gets advertised enough and it's in the shops, it will sell. It's the same with records — get enough plays, make sure it's in the shops and it will sell.

"Marketing's a different game. I've never really understood that. All I do is get the plays and hope people hear it enough to want to buy it."

You've always made it your policy to treat everyone equally?

"I used to — and still do — care about everyone. You have to, not least because they've all got long memories. So for obvious reasons, I try to be fair to everybody. If I had an exclusive, I would give it to the programme I thought best suited it. I was very good at getting exclusives, but then I had some pretty good acts to work on. But they weren't all easy. There were a lot of records that were 50-50 or even 60-40, but I broke them because of perseverance and generally knowing people. And I used to time my promotion with the record companies' activities.

"That's still my job now, there's no difference really. It really hasn't changed at all, except that there's not so much fun in it now.



"Dave Most is a great promotion man and also a great motivator of artists. His energy keeps you going. He promoted a lot of the early Sweet material, and when Sweet stopped working, he helped me with my solo projects: as a motivator of artists, there's none better. He's one of those guys who likes to get involved. But the main thing is friendship. Dave's a friend and you don't have too many friends in the music business." — ANDY SCOTT

"There have been all the cutbacks and so forth, but the record industry is still big business. It still earns fortunes, though some pretend not to. They've all got bigger buildings than any other business I know. . . .

Back to the plot . . . You left Carlin after five years, at a time when you were proving more than a little successful?

"Things change in life. Carlin had been very good to me. Paul Rich, Freddie Bienstock, everybody. In some ways I wish I'd stayed with Carlin — they offered me so much, and I'll always be grateful for what they did for me. But things change in life . . . I wanted to earn some money for myself. Rak Publishing was formed and I chose to go with it.

"I started with Rak with absolutely nothing, not even a song. Then I got this one song, Temma Harbour by Mary Hopkin, did a publishing deal in Germany and was able to pay my wages. Then we made it a hit here. . . .

"Soon I was to meet a couple of guys who are very close to me — Errol Brown and Tony Wilson from Hot Chocolate. Tony's publishing commitment had just run out and he was happy to sign with me. Errol had no commitments and was happy to sign with me for promotional reasons. They both knew I could get the plays, but they also knew that, as a publisher, I was interested in Europe, not just in the UK.

"This was the reason why Nicky Chinn and Mike Chapman signed with me — they knew my interests lay further than just this country. It's no use having a product that only sells in England, you've got to sell outside the country as well.

"Whenever I did my sub-publishing deals, I checked every area thoroughly: Germany, Switzerland, Austria, Scandinavia, Holland, Belgium, Spain, France, Italy, Japan, Australasia — all were so important. And in every territory, I made sure, and I vetted

carefully. It took a long time and a lot of hard work . . . Another thing that was important to the way I worked was honesty. I always made it clear to my writers the way I was working.

You've always believed in waving the flag for Britain?

"The British chart is the Bible and always will be. It's got the Old Testament, the New Testament and everything in between. It's a showcase for the world.

"We've got such eccentric people in this country, anything can come out of it . . . One of the greatest breakthroughs for me was The Beatles. If it wasn't for them I wouldn't be here, and I don't think half the people in the business would be either. I was into their music when I first started in the business, and The Rolling Stones as well — I used to go to Eel Pie Island to see The Stones, and for me, they were the nearest thing to black music I could get to.

During your 15 years at Rak, you signed a wealth of talent didn't you?

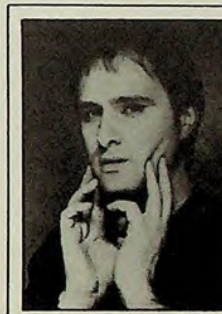
"Steve Harley, Barclay James Harvest, John Miles, Selecter, Camel, Bonnie Tyler — even now we've got the b-side of Duran Duran's The Reflex with Make Me Smile.

"With Steve Harley, I just went into a club and saw him with Paul Burnette and Annie Challis — everyone else there walked out and turned him down, but having heard Judy Teen and Mister Soft I said he'd got two hit singles. But no-one else saw the potential. I nurtured him as a writer, stuck by him, phoned him, talked to him, encouraged him, worked with him . . . John Miles was the same.

TO PAGE 11



"Dave handled all of our plugging and promotion and did a great job. It took us nine weeks to get our first hit — If You Think You Know How To Love Me — and it was largely because of Dave's determination and perseverance that we stuck at it." — CHRIS NORMAN, SMOKIE



"He's certainly a law unto himself. He's different and he knows it. He loves play-acting and as such is a great performer. He's a thoroughly transparent rogue and I love him dearly for it. A lot of pluggers will work anything. He won't unless he completely believes in something. He is a serious asset to an otherwise dull industry. He loves the business." — STEVE HARLEY

A& MAJOR SCORE



DAVE MOST



DAVE MOST, MUSIC MAN



FROM PAGE 9

"At Rak, my job was to nurture songwriters — and there were so many that I nurtured and cared about.

"They wanted to hear their songs on the radio, and that was obviously something I could help with. I also liked to help with the writing — I've written a few hits myself, but I always needed other people. It's very rare to find a single songwriter, two, generally, can achieve more than one, and three can sometimes help.

"Knowing the business as long as I had, I was able to help considerably. I was very commercial-minded, but I just love working with writers. That was always the most important thing to me and, I believe, why we had so many hits, so much success with artists such as Sweet, Kenny and Hot Chocolate.

"I was bringing in material for Rak Records because people wanted to come to me for promotion and because I cared about the writers.

"Suzi Quatro, Mud, Cozy Powell — there were so many. I worked with Rod Stewart in the early days, and he was always asking me for Motown albums — now I know why! We were on the same wavelength. Even Donovan, I liked working with him, though he could be weird at times and was "doing his own thing", he was always very nice with me. I always wanted his publishing, but never got it — that was one that eluded me.

"Rak Records and Rak Publishing were formed at the same time — and neither of them had any money whatsoever, they didn't have a penny. I was determined to crack it. So determined in fact, it became an obsession with me — but an obsession in the nicest possible way.

"Workwise, I can't think of a nicer obsession. To me, what we achieved was an amazing feat and I'm very proud of it. I was the quiet one in the background, I did the work, getting the plays, worked with the artists and writers, protected them when necessary, doing everything a publisher and promotion man should do. I've remained that way."

Now you've left Rak and gone into partnership with Rondor?

"I've known Derek Green for a long time, 20 years in fact, we used to work together at Carlin. He was a publisher through and through. Now he's moved into records and proved himself equally brilliant at that.

"I've known Bob Grace for 19 years. Derek saw his potential and pushed him into the publishing side.

"When I was free, they made me an offer I couldn't refuse. They're a young company that's musically minded. So I sold my shares in Rak Publishing and started again with Rondor. It's the first time I've ever done a third party thing with anyone and I find that an honour.

"I've turned down a lot of offers in my time and have always refused to promote records independently. If I had done



BRIAN MATTHEW: "If you got a play on Saturday Club you were a genius . . ." Most recalls.

independent promotion, I'd probably have earned far more than I have. But that was never in my veins and still isn't now.

"I'm a publisher and want to work with writers and new artists. It's like when I started with Rak and this one's going to be even more important to me.

"I'm getting involved, listening to material and seeing another side of the business. I feel like I'm back in the music business. It's a change, and, as they say, a change is as good as a rest.

"I really want to get into the artist side of things and work with them. That's always been my best asset. You play to your strengths."

For the record

"Dave Most was, and still is, one of the great music men. He is as full of enthusiasm for music today as he was when we first met and worked with him 20 years ago at 17 Savile Row. We still think of him as part of the family."
— PETER GORMLEY

"He's the only guy who puts a smile on my face every time I see him. And he's got the worst catalogue of jokes you can think of. On a more serious note, he's a kind, generous hooligan."
— TONY BURFIELD, DIRECTOR OF PROMOTION, A&M

"From the promotion point of view, he's the best ever. He's also a great character and great fun. He's done so much for the record industry, you can't say enough about the guy."
— RICHARD SWAINSON, RADIO LUXEMBOURG

"Dave and I have been mates since 1967/68 when I was EMI's happy snapper. We really got to know each other when we were asked to play for Radio One's football team and our friendship blossomed in the showers. On a more serious note, he helped me greatly when I first started in promotion — which proves he is older than me. We worked really well together on breaking Kim Wilde . . . I wish him well with his new venture."
— ALLEN JAMES

"He manages to combine two very important things — talent and the ability to enjoy the business in which he earns his living."
— ROGER UPRIGHT, MOTOWN RECORDS

"Dave Most has an irrepressible charm, the ability to make you laugh and a hook as firm as a lobster claw. We began to work together when Rak moved offices to Charles Street. And for more than 10 years, while I acted as press officer for a host of artists ranging from Hot Chocolate to Suzi Quatro and Kim Wilde, I was always confident that the acts would enjoy substantial radio play from the person I regarded as the best pluggin' in the business."
— BILL HARRY

DAVE MOST, MUSIC MAN



Teddy Warrick, former Radio One executive assesses Dave Most's sporting abilities and throws in the odd complimentary line about his prowess in other areas.

Good sport

SURELY IT'S NOT 20 years since I first met Dave — it feels more like 40.

The newly-appointed office boy at Carlin Music set out from the start with an enthusiasm for the music business and keen to get to know everything and everybody in the shortest possible time.

With people like Paul Rich, Clive Westlake and Derek Green working for Carlin at the time, and Peter Gormley and Dolly East working in the same Savile Row building, there was no shortage of the best possible advice and example.

Working for the publishers of one of the great catalogues of rock 'n' roll songs began to rub off and it wasn't long before Dave was trying his own hand at songwriting. Although Westlake and Most doesn't quite have the same ring to it as Leiber and Stoller or Pomus and Shuman, Clive and Dave joined those illustrious partnerships when they had one of their efforts recorded by Elvis Presley.



TEDDY WARRICK, Dave Most and Bobby Robson discuss the finer points of football.

How The Web Was Woven was originally recorded by Jackie Lomax and produced by George Harrison for the Apple label. The Elvis version coupled with I Just Can't Help Believing stayed in the UK charts for 16 weeks, eventually reaching number six.

Dave's subsequent collaborations with other writers resulted in songs for Bucks Fizz, Hot Chocolate, Candidate and others including The England World Cup Squad. The adaptation of the British Airways Fly The Flag theme did a lot better in the charts than the team did on the field of play — but then they didn't have Dave working for them in Brazil.

Dave's own interest in football extends beyond supporting Arsenal, an aberration he doesn't look like growing out of, fortunately he prefers to play. His skills were put to good use when it became obvious that it was all very well for the Radio One DJ's to give generously of their time to turn out for charity games, but as most of them had difficulty in telling a free kick from a freebie, it was necessary to bring in two or three players to strengthen the team.

His role as a "ringer" goalkeeper had seen him picking the ball out of the back of the illustrious nets of Old Trafford, Roker Park and St Andrews, not to mention Slough Dog Track. To be fair

enough, not an inconsiderable number of those goals have been scored by people who are supposed to be playing on his side. What can he do though, but smile toothily and pat his hair back into place as the DJ who plans to play one of his records on his next show leaves him stranded once more.

At a game in Edinburgh, an esteemed ex-manager of the Scottish National team, the late Willie Osmond, did make an enquiry, admittedly with a twinkle in his eye, as to whether Dave had any Scottish blood in his veins. But with the notorious reputation of Scottish goalkeepers, maybe Willie wasn't kidding — at least we'd all like to think so.

"Dave's enthusiasm hasn't wavered in 20 years. He just bubbles over with love and zest for what he does. He gives back to the talent he signs and contributes so much, which is why so many remain loyal to him. I'm sure he's going to attract an immense amount of work to the company" — Bob Grace.