STROBE

by Tim Walter

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Recording Industry Embraces Gospel Music

Previously, almost all gospel music was sold in religious bookstores without much marketing. Now the big record companies are getting involved.

Gospel music is virtually the only thing "new" in the retail record store, hence its appeal to a public lacking viable choices. Gospel, after all, is fun and uplifting, even if it isn't everyone's cup of tea. With a tremendous jump in sales through the additional outlets, gospel labels have money they've never had before to record new, experimental acts and promote them. Churches are bursting with would-be "stars".

Of all the great frontiers, the Gold Rush, Alaska, space, the entertainment business remains a constant as the entrepreneurial dream.

Few other industries have offered, decade after decade, the opportunity to start without a dime (and sometimes without talent) and end up a millionaire. Presuming, of course, that fame and fortune bring happiness.

The same greed is there, typical of any frontier story peopled with cattle rustlers, penny-ante hustlers, daring (and dashing) train robbers, respectable citizens trying to make a living and honest-to-goodness eccentrics.

Times are tougher in 1982 with record sales down. According to a recent survey by Warner Brothers, almost $3 billion worth of music is taped at home illegally by consumers. They blame the sale of blank recording tape for some of the decline in business.

Others might point to the lack of new records. In 1982, new product releases are off over 20% from last year, continuing a three-year trend. Understandably, record companies are shy about backing new artists with promotional dollars (some might sell records, but many will not).

Perhaps new technologies are having an impact, although no one can chart that yet. Are consumers waiting for the dust to settle on new creations like digital recordings, laser discs, compact digital discs, miniature cassettes, satellite programming revolutions, etc.?

It all boils down to one thing: the market is scared. When an industry gets scared, it gets conservative. The only music to be funded and released is going to be tried-and-true, sounds-like-last-year pedestrian blah.

Enter the gospel explosion.

From time to time, this column explores the gospel artists and two are worth examining in the above context.

Richie Furay is not only a stunning gospel lyricist and composer, his sincere country/rock style is crisp, clear and easy to follow without failing to be uptempo. "My Lord and My God" is perhaps the best from his new Myrrh "Seasons of Change" album.

Furay was one of the founders of **Buffalo Springfield** in 1964, moving from that innovative group to form **Poco** with **Jim Messina** (later of **Loggins & Messina**). Poco ushered in, almost single-handedly, the highly successful fusion of country and rock sounds that later launched such groups as the **Eagles.**

"It was a period," Furay told me, "when music began to control my life. Nothing was more important than getting my next hit." Now he has a greater vision. "I don't want to be just a Christian entertainer," he explains, "I want to say something to those who haven't heard."

Coming at gospel from another direction is evangelist **Richard "Mr. Clean" White.** His fifth album for Savoy, a powerful Pentecostal rap disc, covers such family favorites as "Just An Old Story" with the **National Mass Choir of the Highway Churches of Christ.** White takes his message seriously and he works everywhere, even prisons. "I've been on the road 23 years, since I was 15," he admits. "People have been nice to me everywhere, I give because they do. They give what they can, even when times are hard." Part of the fun of listening to White is a grandfatherly voice that almost sounds as if he's gargling underwater. The warmth and sincerity make the record, despite Savoy's sloppy engineering on the choir mikes.

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Tuesday Evening

May 4, 1982

		WFMY CH. 2 Cable 11	WPTF CH. 28 Cable 3	WTVD CH. 11 Cable 6	WUNC CH. 4 Cable 9	WTTG CH. 5 Cable 10	WRAL CH. 5 Cable 12	WTBS CH. 17 Cable 13	WGHP CH. 8
7	00	CBS News	Family Feud	Jeffersons	MacNeil/	Welcomeback	Good Times	Carol	Joker's
	15	"	"	"	Lehrer	Kotter	"	Burnet	Wild
	30	P.M.	What's	M.A.S.H.	T.Brown's	M.A.S.H.	P.M.	Atlanta	Tic Tac
	45	Magazine	Happening	"	Journal	"	Magazine	Braves	Dough
8	00	Q.E.D.	Bret	Q.E.D.	Who Will	The Waltons	Happy Days	"	Happy Days
	15	"	Maverick	"	Protect	"	"	"	
	30	"	"	"	The	"	Laverne &	"	Laverne &
	45	"	"	"	Family?	"	Shirley	"	Shirley
9	00	CBS Movie:	Flamingo	CBS Movie:	American	Merv Griffin	Three's	"	Three's
	15	"Portrait	Road	"Portrait	Playhouse	"	Company	"	Company
	30	Of A	"	Of A	"	"	Too Close	"	Too Close
	45	Showgirl"	"	Showgirl"	"	"	For Comfort	"	For Comfort
10	00	"	Shape Of	"	"	News	Hart To Hart	"	Hart To Hart
	15	"	Things	"	"	"	"	"	"
	30	"	"	"	Creativity	"	"	TBS News	"
	45	"	"	"	w/Moyers	"	"	"	"
11	00	News	News	News	Alfred	M.A.S.H.	News	"	News
	15	"	"	"	Hithcock	"	"	All In The	"
	30	Late Movie:	Tonight	M.A.S.H.	Dave Allen	Odd Couple	Nightline	Family	Nightline
	45	"	"	"	At Large	"	"	TBS Theatre:	"
12	00	"	"	Rockford	"	Perry Mason	Fantasy	"	Fantasy
	15	"	"	Files		"	Island	"	Island
	30	"	David	"		"	"	"	"
	45	"	Letterman	"		"	"	"	"

Wednesday Evening

May 5, 1982

		WFMY CH. 2 Cable 11	WPTF CH. 28 Cable 3	WTVD CH. 11 Cable 6	WUNC CH. 4 Cable 9	WTTG CH. 5 Cable 10	WRAL CH. 5 Cable 12	[illegible] Cable 13	WGHP CH. 8
7	00	CBS News	Family Feud	Jeffersons	MacNeil/	Welcomeback	Good Times	[illegible]	[illegible]
	15	"	"	"	Lehrer	Kotter	"	[illegible]	Wild
	30	P.M.	What's	M.A.S.H.	Town	M.A.S.H.	P.M.	[illegible]	Tic Tac
	45	Magazine	Happening	"	Meeting	"	Magazine	[illegible]	Dough
8	00	BugsBunny	Real	BugsBunny	National	The Waltons	Greatest	"	Greatest
	15	Roadrunner	People	Roadrunner					
	30	"	"	"	Geographic	"	American	"	American
	45	"	"	"	Special	"	Hero	"	Hero
9	00	CBS Movie:	Facts Of	CBS Movie:	Kennedy	Merv Griffin	The Fall	"	[illegible]
	15	"Return	Life	"Return	Center	"	Guy	"	[illegible]
	30	Of The	Love Sidney	Of The	Tonight	"	"	"	
	45	Rebels	"	Rebels	"	"	"	"	
10	00	"	Quincy	"	Pavarotti	News	Dynasty	"	Dyna
	15	"	"	"	"	"	"	"	"
	30	"	"	"	"	"	"	TBS News	"
	45	"	"	"	"	"	"	"	"
11	00	News 2	News	News	Alfred	M.A.S.H.	News	All In The	News
	15	"	"	"	Hitchcock	"	"	Family	"
	30	Alice	Tonight	M.A.S.H.	Dave Allen	Odd Couple	Nightline	TBS Theatre:	Nightline
	45	"	"	"	At Large	"	"	"	"
12	00	WKRP	"	Rockford		Perry Mason	Love Boat	"	Love Boat
	15	"	"	Files		"	"	"	"
	30	McCloud	David	"		"	"	"	"
	45	"	Letterman	"		"	"	"	"

Thursday Evening

May 6, 1982

		WFMY CH. 2 Cable 11	WPTF CH. 28 Cable 3	WTVD CH. 11 Cable 6	WUNC CH. 4 Cable 9	WTTG CH. 5 Cable 10	WRAL CH. 5 Cable 12	WTBS CH. 17 Cable 13	WGHP CH. 8
7	00	CBS News	Family Feud	Jeffersons	MacNeil/	Welcomeback	Good Times	Carol	Joker's
	15	"	"	"	Lehrer	Kotter	"	Burnett	Wild
	30	P. M.	What's	M.A.S.H.	Almanac	M.A.S.H.	P.M.	Sanford &	Tic Tac
	45	Magazine	Happening	"	"	"	Magazine	Son	Dough
8	00	Magnum,PI	Fame	Magnum,PI	Paper	Metromedia:	No Soap,	TBS Movie:	No Soap,
	15	"	"	"	Chase	"The	Radio	"	Radio
	30	"	"	"	"	Boys From	Mork &	"	Mork &
	45	"	"	"	"	Brazil"	Mindy	Tiffany's"	Mindy
9	00	Johnny	Diff'rent	Johnny	Sneak	"	Barney	"	Barney
	15	Cash's	Strokes	Cash's	Previews	"	Miller	"	Miller
	30	Cowboy	Gimme A	Cowboy	Fawlty	"	Taxi	"	Taxi
	45	Heroes	Break	Heroes	Towers	"	"	"	"
10	00	Knot's	Hill Street	Knot's	Austin City	News	20/20	"	20/20
	15	Landing	Blues	Landing	Limits	"	"	"	"
	30	"	"	"	"	"	"	"	"
	45	"	"	"	"	"	"	"	"
11	00	News	News	News	Alfred	M.A.S.H.	News	All In The	News
	15	"	"	"	Hitchcock	"	"	Family	"
	30	Quincy	Tonight	M.A.S.H.	Dave Allent	Odd Couple	Nightline	TBS Theatre:	Nightline
	45	"	"	"	At Large	"	"	"	"
12	00	"	"	Rockford		Perry Mason	Vega$	"	Vega$
	15	"	"	Files		"	"	"	"
	30	McMillan &	David	"		"	"	"	"
	45	Wife	Letterman	"		"	"	"	"