STROBE

by Tim Walter

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Big Hits No Easy Road To Riches

Although fame and fortune have attended many who reach the top of the recording business, those starting out should be aware that the money doesn't come in cascades with the first hits.

"It's getting better," says **Sharon Bryant** of **Atlantic Starr** about their fourth A&M album, "Brilliance." "But we're not rich yet."

Because record companies invest major sums in launching acts, they have what are called 'recoupable' expenses in the contract. The act must repay these from royalties before enjoying the cash flow. These days, it can take an act three or four hit albums to repay the record company before achieving financial independence.

Bryant and **Jonathon Lewis**, two of Starr's nine members, shared with me some of their experiences in reaching their current chart-topping and headline tour status.

"We literally lived together in the beginning," adds Sharon. "We left White Plains for Los Angeles in 1976 and spent the next three years trying to get our breaks. To survive, we all lived together like a family. I think that has added a closeness that keeps us together now."

Lewis, who plays trombone, explains that all decisions are "very democratic. We vote on everything. It keeps everyone's head level. We all grew up in the same town and went to the same high school." The group ranges in age from percussionist **Joey Phillips**, at 33 to sax player **Koran Daniels** and guitarist (and heart-throb) **David Lewis** at 23. The third Lewis brother, **Wayne**, is 25 and plays keyboards. David and Wayne write many of the group's tunes and, with Sharon, provide most of the group's lead vocals. David and Wayne wrote No. 1 hit single, "Circles."

Lewis relates the group's pleasure at hooking up with producer **James Carmichael**. Carmichael had a finger in the success of both the **Jacksons** and the **Commodores** and nuances of both groups can be detected on "Brilliance."

"James is a genius at what he does," agree Bryant and Lewis. "In the studio, there's a lot of give and take, we learn from each other."

Carmichael once related to me advice that he had given the Commodores about staying together, how adversity is adhesive and money and fame split the best of friends. Since then, **Michael** and **Jermaine Jackson** have established solo careers and **Lionel Ritchie, Jr.** is well on his way with a solo album due from Motown this month. It's too early to predict how Atlantic Starr will manage at the top.

Lewis says the group left New York because of the pressures of other jobs and family ties prevented adequate closeness for development. "In L.A.," he says, "we didn't really know anybody. Without outside influences, we just worked on our music and it paid off." After **Herb Alpert** (a co-owner of A&M Records) heard the group in 1977, it took him less than 20 minutes to decide to sign the group.

Atlantic Starr is now on tour for the summer; they broke in as headliners in Washington, D.C. with Motown's **Jean Carn** as an opening co-star. My assessment? Their stage show confirms what I hear in the recordings...a bright, talented "house band" that represents A&M's answer to the Jacksons and the Commodores....but they're not really cutting any new ground. Perhaps their creativity will be more apparent in the future; just now they're just the product for the dealer's shelves.

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The American Cancer Society is grateful to **Alan** and **Diane Kay** of **Rozansky & Kay Construction Company** for the largest one-night gala fund-raiser for Cancer in the world. The Washington Hilton affair raised $400,000 after expenses (which included several lobster-laden plates for yours truly). The black-tie ball gave me a chance to renew acquaintance with comic **Alan King**, now wrapping up post-production on movie "Lovesick" with **Dudley Moore** and anxiously awaiting the June 18 debut of "Author Author" with **Al Pacino**. The busy super comic is starting a new movie in June and plans to finish a book by summer's end.

We both oogled **Donna Mills** from "Knott's Landing," who confided that her moments earlier VIP White House tour included "everything, even the barber shop and the kitchen." She's taping a mini-series "Bare Essence" for fall release on CBS, then starts 22 new "Landings" in June.

Tuesday Evening

June 1, 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	NBC News	M.A.S.H.	MacNeil Lehrer	Welcomeback Kotter	Good Times	Carol Burnett	Joker's Wild
	15								
	30	P.M. Magazine	Family Feud	Jeffersons	T Brown's Journal	M.A.S.H.	P.M Magazine	Atlanta Braves	Tic Tac Dough
	45								
8	00	Yabba Dabba Dooz	Billy Graham	Yabba Dabba Dooz	Danger UXB	The Waltons	Happy Days	vs. N.Y.Mets	Billy Graham
	15								
	30						Laverne & Shirley		
	45								
9	00	NBA Finals Lakers vs. 76ers	NBC	NBA Finals Lakers vs. 76ers	American Playhouse	Merv Griffin	Three's Company Too Close For Comfort		Three's Company Too Close For Comfort
	15								
	30								
	45								
10	00				Final Solution Auschwitz	News	Hart To Hart		Hart To Hart
	15								
	30							TBS News	
	45								
11	00		Benny Hill		Alfred Hitchcock Dave Allen At Large	M.A.S.H.	News		News
	15								
	30	News	Tonight	News		Odd Couple	Nightline	All In The Family	Nightline
	45								
12	00	Alice		M.A.S.H.		Perry Mason	The Manions Of America Pt. II	TBS Theatre: "The West Point Story"	The Manions Of America Pt. II
	15								
	30		David Letterman	Rockford Files					
	45								

Wednesday Evening

June 2, 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	NBC News	M.A.S.H.	MacNeil/ Lehrer	Welcomeback Kotter	Good Times	Carol Burnett	Joker's Wild
	15								
	30	P.M. Magazine	Family Feud	Jeffersons	Stateline Meeting	M.A.S.H.	P.M. Magazine	Atlanta Braves	Tic Tac Dough
	45								
8	00	Mr. Merlin	Billy Graham	Mr. Merlin	Survival	The Waltons	Greatest American Hero	vs. N.Y.Mets	Billy Graham
	15								
	30								
	45								
9	00	CBS Movie: "Rodeo Girls"	Facts Of Life Love Sidney	CBS Movie: "Rodeo Girls"	Buddy Holly:	Merv Griffin	The Fall Guy		The Fall Guy
	15								
	30								
	45								
10	00		Quincy		Money & Medicine	News	Dynasty		Dynasty
	15								
	30							TBS News	
	45								
11	00	News 2	Benny Hill	News	Alfred Hitchcock	M.A.S.H.	News		News
	15								
	30	Late Movie:	Tonight	M.A.S.H.	Dave Allen At Large	Odd Couple	Nightline	All In The Family	Nightline
	45								
12	00			Rockford Files		Perry Mason	The Manions Of America Pt. III	TBS Theatre: "Lightning Strikes Twice"	The Manions Of America Pt. III
	15								
	30		David Letterman						
	45								

Thursday Evening

June 3, 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	NBC News	M.A.S.H.	MacNeil/ Lehrer	Welcomeback Kotter	Good Times	Carol Burnett	Joker's Wild
	15								
	30	P. M. Magazine	Family Feud	Jeffersons	Stateline	M.A.S.H.	P.M. Magazine	Sanford & Son	Tic Tac Dough
	45								
8	00	Magnum,PI	Billy Graham	Magnum,PI	Paper Chase	Metromedia: "Hell In The Pacific"	Mork & Mindy Bosum Buddies	TBS Movie: "The Plainsman"	Billy Graham
	15								
	30								
	45								
9	00	NBA Finals	Diff'rent Strokes Gimme A Break	NBA Finals	Sneak Previews Fawlty Towers		Barney Miller Taxi		Barney Miller Taxi
	15								
	30								
	45								
10	00		Hill Street Blues		Austin City Limits	News	ABC News Closeup	TBS News	ABC News Closeup
	15								
	30								
	45								
11	00		Benny Hill		Alfred Hitchcock	M.A.S.H.	News	All In The Family	News
	15								
	30	News 2	Tonight	News	Dave Allent At Large	Odd Couple	Nightline	TBS Theatre: "24	Nightline
	45								
12	00	Quincy		M.A.S.H.		Perry Mason	Vega$	Hours To Kill	Vega$
	15								
	30		David Letterman	Rockford Files					
	45								