

FEATURES

Collectors cash in on old LPs, salvage vintage tunes

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Staff Writer

Old Dionne Warwick albums or Barry Manilow hit singles of the '70s that haven't been on the turntable for a while may be worth something to a used record store, even if they aren't included on the party tapes of today.

Chapel Hill has a large amount of stores that buy, sell and trade recordings. Back Door Records is in downtown Chapel Hill and Fair Exchange and Nice Price Books and Records are in Carrboro. All three buy and sell used albums, cassettes and singles and the latter two also deal in books.

Back Door is about the size of a walk-in closet but is full from top to bottom of new and used LPs. Tucked under the stairs next to Second Foundation Books in the NCNB Plaza on the Rosemary Street side, the store is usually crowded with browsing students and town employees. The walls are covered with various artists' pictures, discs and miniatures of their posters.

Kevin Maroney says the store is competitive with larger record store's prices, with new albums priced at about \$6.50. He said the store often holds sales, such as the current one with all albums and cassettes \$1 off. Some albums run much higher, such as classic Frank Zappa records that have been out of print for 20 years.

Maroney says the biggest requests come for the Grateful Dead (University culties, no doubt), and also for

David Bowie and Led Zeppelin. He recommends Bowie as one of his favorites.

Nice Price Books and Records has a large selection of albums in addition to its large book collection. The store is fairly new, having opened in mid-December of last year. Owner Bob Cromwell said business is going well, though it is experiencing a summer slump like most town businesses. He expects business to pick up when the ArtSchool moves into the plaza.

The main attraction here for him was the large university crowd. He says the location is good because there is a large parking lot and people can drive up to the door with their boxes of albums.

Cromwell says the store will buy any album brought in, even the less desirable ones. Like all dealers, he said that the condition of the record was important for resale. He usually examines the recordings and then gives the customer a proposed purchasing price.

Cromwell says that part of the fun of shopping a used store is finding the collector's items. He says that many people do not even know what they have in the way of value. The store carries everything from jazz to funk to Christian recordings.

The only thing he is short on is compact discs. He says people that usually spend the outrageous price for the discs are going to invest in something they like and keep them. He has a few CD's, and expects the



Tar Heel/Chip Beverung

Todd Lucire of Franklin, Mass., browses at Nice Price Books

price to drop in the next few years as compact disc players become more common.

The first used record store in the area was the Fair Exchange, located in the same plaza as Nice Price. It is fairly large and every inch of space is filled with albums and books. The store has a very relaxed atmosphere; customers are able to open a credit account if they can't find enough albums to exchange for theirs. The system works on a two-for-one exchange program with the customer able to get one album for every two

they bring in. Albums can be sold for roughly 70 percent of the two-for-one exchange rate.

Greg Hills, a Fair Exchange employee, told of finding an Billie Holiday album in the store worth over \$500. He says that the store carries many current albums and that as soon as a recording is available to the public it is usually available in the store. The walls are covered in concert shots, post cards and posters.

The Fair Exchange has probably the largest reggae collection available

with most of the recordings coming from the owner's private collection. Artists such as Bob Marley, Mickey Dred and Yellowman are represented. There is also a large blues section, with B.B. King, Duke Ellington and Dizzy Gillespie gracing the shelves.

Dennis Gavin, the owner, says that his policy is that the customer is always right. He said that the hardest part of the business is getting good records since people often want to hold on to their quality albums. He said he was amazed that the customers have such good eyes — whenever a good recording comes into the store it is snatched up quickly.

Gavin said that working in the store has made his tastes quite eclectic. He recommends Bob Dylan in the same sentence with Wagner, Lester Young and the Dead Kennedys. Rock represents at least half the store's business. The store does well in every category, and has done very well with folk and acoustic music.

Selling used albums is a good way to make a little extra cash, and also a good way to get some unusual or favorite records. Buy some Tangerine Dream. Get that "Their Satanic Majesty's Request" album by the Stones that has that neat hologram-like picture of Mick and friends on the front. Get an old Mylon LeFevre LP and revisit youth, or revisit the former generation's youth.

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