

Video See Danger Depth Of Copy

pull "inventory dollars away from B titles."

The risk of focusing on the hits to the exclusion of the secondary titles, says Balner, echoing the concern of many dealers and suppliers, is that people will no longer be lured to the video store. "We think we're
(Continued on page 91)

Discount Programs From MCA, WEA Front-Line CD Price Cuts Continue

BY GEOFF MAYFIELD

NEW YORK Music merchandisers will see still more of the price cuts on compact disks that they have been seeking as a result of MCA's and WEA's new plans to reduce front-line and catalog prices.

MCA is making several moves on

the CD-cost front, introducing a three-month discount program, cutting the price for most of its front-line CDs by 11%, and launching a new midline series that will move 43 titles to a price between the cost of its budget-line and its front-line CDs.

With these cuts, MCA becomes

the first distributor to reduce front-line CD prices since CBS caught the industry's attention with its front-line slashes at the National Assn. of Recording Merchandisers convention (Billboard, March 26).

Meanwhile, WEA has kicked off a six-week program, centered around 23 titles by new and developing artists, that will grant accounts discounts and extra dating. The distributor is also moving 92 more titles into its \$12.78-list Super Savers series, a maneuver that it teased during the NARM convention.

According to John Burns, executive vice president of MCA Distribution, the company is convinced that lower retail prices on CDs are a necessary step toward increasing the
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Candidates Vying For Music Dollars

BY JEAN ROSENBLUTH

NEW YORK As the race for the Democratic presidential nomination heads into its final three months, celebrities' financial support and personal endorsements are being eagerly courted by the candidates.

According to campaign representatives of the three contenders who are given a chance of winning the nomination—the two front-runners, Massachusetts Gov. Michael Dukakis and the Rev. Jesse Jackson, and the long shot, Sen. Albert Gore Jr. of Tennessee—music-in-

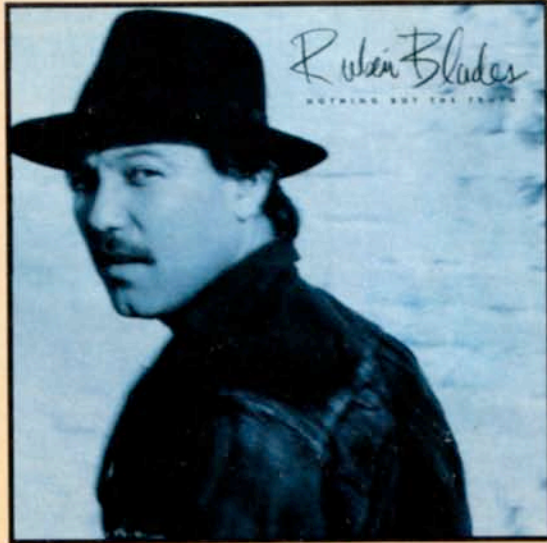
dustry support is crucial.

Jackson, who has appeared on records by Aretha Franklin and Stetsasonic and has many friends in the industry, has had little trouble attracting musicians and record-business executives to his cause.
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ADVERTISEMENTS



A SOURCE OF INSPIRATION, the ancient Greek spring **CASTALIA** lends its name to MARK ISHAM's new album, his first for Virgin Records. The renowned composer, producer and trumpeter has worked with the likes of Van Morrison, Suzanne Vega and David Sylvian, in addition to his film scores and enormously successful solo recordings. "THE GRAND PARADE" is among the featured tracks on MARK ISHAM's **CASTALIA**.



RUBÉN BLADES' new album burns like a barrio summer. **NOTHING BUT THE TRUTH** (60754), RUBÉN BLADES' first album in English, features the single and video "Hopes On Hold." Music to believe in... On Elektra superior-quality cassettes, compact discs and records. Produced by Tommy Lipuma, Carlos Rios, Rubén Blades and Lou Reed.

Superstars Will Rock Montreux For 1988 IMMC

NEW YORK An all-star lineup of major and emerging acts is set to take the stage May 12-16 during the Montreux Rock Festival and the accompanying third annual International Music & Media Conference in Montreux, Switzerland.

Already contracted for the event are Steve Winwood, Robert Palmer, Billy Ocean, Icehouse, Bruce Hornsby, Howard Jones, Cinderella, Jermaine Stewart, Run-D.M.C., Ziggy Marley, Scritti Politti, and Midnight Oil. Talks with several other mega-acts are in progress, according to IMMC organizers.

The Rock Festival and IMMC Video Awards presentation stage shows will be produced by the Brit-
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EVERY ONCE IN A WHILE, A MAN NEEDS A LITTLE TIME FOR HIMSELF. THE TIME FOR JUNIOR IS NOW.

For the last two years, this is where Junior has been:

It has all made him one of the most respected musicians around, but it didn't leave much time for Junior. Now Junior's time has come. And this

POP

PICKS

JERMAINE STEWART

Say It Again

PRODUCERS: Andre Cymone, Jerry Knight & Aaron Zigan
10/Arista AL 8455

Though nothing here is quite as insistently catchy as 1986's "... Clothes Off," album as a whole has more to offer than "Frantic Romantic." Reggae-tinged single "Say It Again" is bounding up the charts, while "Get Lucky" or Jody Watley co-written "My House" could follow.

THE ADVENTURES

The Sea Of Love

PRODUCER: Pete Smith
Elektra 60772

Class-A offering from U.K. pop band sounds like a can't-miss proposition for radio. Spectacular, wide-screen production by Smith enhances melodic, guitar-charged tunes sung by potent triumvirate of vocalists. "Broken Land" is muscular debut single; "Drowning In The Sea Of Love" (not the Joe Simon track) is a natural follow-up. Big push for this label debut (band was on Chrysalis) won't hurt splendid album's chart legs.

RUBEN BLADES

Nothing But The Truth

PRODUCERS: Tommy LiPuma, Carlos Rios, Ruben Blades, Lou Reed
Elektra 60754

Well-calculated English-language album could finally put this deserving Latin star across to a U.S. audience. Strong, streetwise tunes with hearty Third World influence are beautifully sung by Blades; writing collaborations with Reed and Elvis Costello will interest print and radio outlets hitherto slow to react to artist's equally fine Spanish-language works.

RECOMMENDED

BOBBY McFERRIN

Simple Pleasures

PRODUCER: Linda Goldstein
EMI-Manhattan EM1-48059

These songs are most certainly pleasurable, but simple they're not: McFerrin's intricate vocal and body work turns such rock staples as "Good Lovin'," "Suzie Q," and "Drive My Car," along with several originals, into offbeat top 40 radio fare. Most pleasurable: "Good Lovin'."

WESTWORLD

Rockulator

PRODUCER: Mark Ferda
RCA 6999-R8

Pixilated U.K. band purées everything from rockabilly to scratching on exhilarating debut, which scored big overseas. Single "Sonic Boom Boy" will get cross-format radio response; ballad "Silver Mac" should also play well on the airwaves.

RUSSELL HITCHCOCK

PRODUCERS: Various
Arista AL-8456

Hitchcock's distinctive vocals, which have fueled Air Supply for so many

PASSION FODDER

Fat Tuesday

PRODUCER: Theo Hakola, Passion Fodder
Island 90899

Paris-based group pays direct homage to the Velvet Underground on the leadoff track, "Luz Blanca" ("White Light"), from its U.S. debut; rest of the album continues in a similar vein.

ROLLINS BAND

Life Time

PRODUCER: None listed
Texas Hotel 8

Ex-Black Flag front man Henry Rollins, who has concentrated most of his latter-day efforts on spoken-word material, returns at his hell-bent best with a high-energy set of shock rockers backed by powerful new combo. Longtime Flag wavers will welcome this fine return to form.

GILES REAVES

Nothing Is Lost

PRODUCERS: Giles Reaves, Tommy Dorsey & Tony Crow, Larry Chaney
MCA 42105

Multikeyboardist Reaves shows off his virtuosity on second Master Series stanza. Work here bears greater resemblance to progressive rock of the '70s than to new age music; in-store play could get musicianship-oriented buyers interested in this somewhat-overlooked talent.

JANE HARVEY

The Other Side Of Sondheim

PRODUCER: Jane Harvey
Atlantic Jazz 81833

Though labeled jazz, vocalist Harvey's recital of Stephen Sondheim compositions—some well known, some obscure—might find favor with audience for Linda Ronstadt's albums of standards. Unflashy, honestly sung program receives nice orchestral settings from Ray Ellis.

ACOUSTIC ALCHEMY

Natural Elements

PRODUCER: John Parsons
MCA 42125

Second Master Series entry by English guitar duo of Nick Webb and Greg Carmichael offers elegant playing that cuts across a variety of styles, from pop jazz to U.K. folk. Fusion-oriented jazz stations and Wave-style formats will have difficulty resisting this pair.

THE SPLATCATS

Feelin' Bitchy

PRODUCER: James "Hodad" Krawzyk
Moving Target/Celluloid MT016

Raunchy New York quintet occasionally stirs up some of the rebellious energy associated with the Replacements, although writing is never commensurate with power. Title track, with guest shot by guitarist Ivan Julian, could raise smoke in alternative corners.

DAVE KUSWORTH

The Bounty Hunters

PRODUCERS: Dave Kusworth, Glenn Tranter
Texas Hotel 6

Singer-guitarist formerly partnered with Nikki Sudden in the Jacobites steps out on his own; extremely attractive package mates almost Bowie-esque vocals to handsomely played pop melodies. A definite winner at college depots. Contact: 122 Broadway, Santa Monica, Calif. 90401

New set by mallet man extraordinaire goes past his debut's baroque parameters and thus better reflects his down-to-earth personality. Latin and classical influences make a mark here, as do stellar cameos by Stevie Ray Vaughan, Freddie Hubbard, George Young, and others.

THE SPONGETONES

Where-Ever-Land

PRODUCERS: Jamie Hoover, Don Dixon
Triopore Records CD-12-3077

Power-pop purveyors have been releasing heavily Beatles-influenced records throughout the '80s; this latest, on CD and cassette only, is the greatest, paying tribute to pub rock as well as Merseybeat. Contact: 803-831-7016.

PATRICK STREET

#2 Patrick Street

PRODUCER: Patrick Street
Green Linnet SIF 1088

Second collaboration by four excellent Celtic musicians is a worthy encore to their well-received debut. Some fine songs and several "battering-the-floor" sets of jigs and reels make this a must for those who love traditional Irish music. Favorite track: "The Braes Of Moneymore," featuring some memorable harmonica by Andy Irvine.

OBED NGBENI

My Wife Bought A Taxi

PRODUCER: Peter Moticoe
Shanachie 64003

One of first releases in ethnic label's World Beat/Ethno Pop series, delightful album spotlights socially aware South African singer whose music is a zesty combination of Zulu township jive and reggae. Peppy disk will benefit from in-store play at outlets dealing the world beat style.

BLACK

PICKS

HOWARD HEWETT

Forever And Ever

PRODUCERS: Howard Hewett, Monty Seward, Vincent Brantley
Elektra 60779

Crooner Hewett's post-Shalamar platinum success story lays another musical cornerstone in his rise to claim the crown as the "young Smokey." His love-bent vocals, rich with warmth and tension, are driving "Strange Relationship" toward the top 20, while "Shakin' My Emotion" and "You'll Find Another Man" are similarly well tailored.

GRANDMASTER FLASH & THE FURIOUS FIVE

On The Strength

PRODUCERS: Grandmaster Flash & the Furious Five
Elektra 60769

Back on the attack, the pioneering hip-hopsters look to strike "Gold" with like-named first single and score rock points with updated cover of "Magic Carpet Ride," featuring John Kay. With polish rare to rap, they prove there are plenty of sparks left in the old masters.

JOHN WHITEHEAD

I Need Money Bad

PRODUCER: Gene McFadden

late posse-partner Scott LaRock on this burning slab of alert urban music. KRS' raps are raw, tough, and not always airable, but shoot-from-the-hip style will find a home on better boomboxes.

RECOMMENDED

DJ JAZZY JEFF & THE FRESH PRINCE

He's The D.J., I'm The Rapper

PRODUCERS: D.J. Jazzy Jeff & the Fresh Prince, Bryan "Chuck" New & Pete Q. Harris
Jive/RCA 1091-J

The Prince's raps all too often take the form of familiar braggadocio, but Jeff proves himself a turntable master with frequently mind-blowing work. Good-humored two-fer package includes a second all-scratch disk spotlighting JJ's considerable talents as a mixer.

GEOFFREY WILLIAMS

Heroes, Spies And Gypsies

PRODUCERS: Andi Longhurst, Christopher Neil
Atlantic 81786

Supercommercial effort combines clean production, '80s electronics, and Williams' mean vocals. Several cuts stand out, especially the infectious dance track "Cinderella."

COUNTRY

RECOMMENDED

JERRY JARAMILLO

PRODUCER: Little Richie Johnson
LRJ LRJ3016

Strong, sensitive, and melodic vocals coupled with some first-rate original material. Contact: Box 3, Belen, New Mexico 87002.

TOPEL & WARE

Change Of Heart

PRODUCER: Michael Topel
RCI 1478

Passionate vocal harmonies and thoughtful lyrics distinguish this male duet album. Contact: P.O. Box 126, Elmsford, N.Y. 10523.

JAZZ

PICKS

RIPPINGTONS

Kilimanjaro

PRODUCER: Russ Freeman
Passport Jazz PJ 88042

Group's debut was a top charter last year. First-rate follow-up will have no problem replicating that success and building upon it; heavier emphasis on guitar should bring crossover in droves. Best for new age/jazz—"Northern Lights" and "Kilimanjaro"; for pop—a spunky cover of the O'Jays' "Backstoppers."

RECOMMENDED

ED PALERMO BIG BAND

Ping Pong

PRODUCERS: Ed & John Palermo
Pro Jazz CDJ 650

Leader's natural flair for big band