

Has Las Vegas radio lost its edge?

commentary
by Cory C. Myler

The alarm goes on in the morning and it's there. You get in your car to go to school and it's there. You go into a shop in the mall and it's there. In the background while you're studying, it's there too. The radio—it's almost everywhere we are at any given moment.

Lately, however, it seems as if the radio, top 40 stations in particular, has lost its ability to stay on the cutting edge.

If you go back about a year on the music scene, Las Vegas radio stations seemed on the ball as far as variety of music was concerned and willing to give their listeners something new and different.

The Aug. 31 issue of *Billboard* states that of the current top 10 albums, six have spawned legitimate top 40 hits that have been ignored by both KLUC and KYRK.

Why are these stations ignoring such successful albums and singles? It cannot be because of a lack of popularity. All ten of the albums have gone Gold (500,000 sold) and are either on their way or have surpassed the Platinum level (1 million sold).

It seems that KYRK's and KLUC's programmers may be afraid to take any chances for fear that they might lose listeners. How-

ever, in the past 12 months, ratings for both stations show a loss of 20 percent of their audiences.

The ultimate reason KYRK and KLUC are avoiding these "hit" albums and songs may be because of all the "new and different" kinds of music to hit the scene in the past 18 months.

Look at the "new" music we have with "technopop," "synth/funk," "hiphop" and "new jack swing." These four styles are new, but they are basically derivatives of the dance/pop formula that has been so prevalent in the recent past.

Technopop, synth/funk, hiphop and new jack swing all consist of a dance or rap song with a superior backbeat music track and bass line.

By the time the fall is in full swing, perhaps Las Vegas radio stations will take some chances with the hits.

If not, you can be sure you'll get your fill with a new Mariah Carey album in September, a new Prince album in October, and the return of Michael Jackson in November (featuring a duet with Madonna and a video with "Home Alone" star Macaulay Culkin on the new release *Dangerous*).

So save up your money. The only way to hear a variety of music this fall may be by forking over \$11 to \$18 to the music store.

'Harley Davidson and the Marlboro Man' is harmless fun

by Dan Duffy

I was somewhat apprehensive going into *Harley Davidson and the Marlboro Man*. After seeing the less-than-spectacular previews, I was afraid my favorite actor, Mickey Rourke, was going to be involved in another box office disaster.

However, this film exceeded my expecta-

tions and turned out to be a mildly entertaining slab of pop culture.

Harley Davidson and the Marlboro Man is the story of a nomadic biker (Rourke) and an ex-rotary cowboy (Don Johnson) who are out to save their local rock 'n' roll bar from sinister drug-dealing bankers.

Actually, there isn't much of a story, but there

is plenty of action, mayhem and some good "buddy" humor. I was surprised at how well Rourke and Johnson worked together in this film.

This film is in the same genre as something like *Roadhouse*, with romantic cheese like *Dirty Dancing* or *Ghost*. Regardless, it is interesting to note that a few

cool scenes from this film are shot right here in Las Vegas.

Even though this movie has a fairly weak supporting cast and hokey dialogue at times, it's not a bad film. I would recommend this flick to people who like a good action/adventure film, but don't mind that the story is almost nonexistent.

Seeger releases first recording in five years

Rocker Bob Seeger's new album *The Fire Inside* is what programmers call radio: "active, blazing away on the airwaves."

Set for an Aug. 27 release, the album's first single, "The Real Love," is emerging as the hot record on radio.

Seeger's hometown paper, the *Detroit Free Press*, reports the single is the no. 1 most-added record on the three important contemporary radio formats. Over 150 stations devoted to album rock have added it, along with 75 top-40 stations and 33 adult/contemporary rock stations.

The Gavin Report, a major industry tipsheet, reported "The Real Love" as the most added recording this week. All the more impressive since *The Fire Inside* is Seeger's first album in five-and-a-half years.

"It's a runaway hit on radio and now the stores are heating up," said John Fagot, senior vice president at Seeger's label, Capitol. "Even before we began a retail campaign, word-of-mouth and radio created advance orders for *The Fire Inside* of over 700,000."

Fagot is obviously pleased with the reaction to the Seeger album, but not surprised. "Bob had a hell of a fan base waiting for his next album," Fagot said. "There's anticipation rather than a situation where people have forgotten an artist because of the length of time between recordings."

Hale Milgrim Capitol Records president said, "Most people think it's only been two or three years (since Seeger's last album) because Bob is one of those artists who is recognizable and gets played all the time on radio."

The Fire Inside is a continuation of Seeger's 16-platinum record career and builds on his definable, restless and gripping heartland

rock.

Seeger wrote nine of the 12 songs on the album with songwriting team Bill Davis and Walt Richmond contributing one, and fellow singer-songwriter Tom Waits penning two.

Inclusion of the Waits' material came from Seeger's desire "to do something different, to break the mold a little bit. I have a feeling of kinship with Tom." Seeger himself, after a 25-year recording career, claims still

to be growing as a songwriter himself.

"I write tons of songs," he explained to KTXQ's air talent Redbeard. "I probably write 100 a year and out of those I'll probably finish 40. And then out of those 40 there will be about 10 that are good. But I like to finish everything I start because I end up stealing from myself."

Seeger's Silver Bullet Band (Chris Campbell, bass; Craig Frost, keyboards and

Alto Reed, sax) is joined on the LP by guest performers Joe Walsh, Bruce Hornsby, Patty Smith, Don Was, Rick Vito (Fleetwood Mac), Bill Payne and Fred Tackett (Little Feat), J.D. Souther and Roy Brittan (Bruce Springsteen). Seeger produced one song himself, co-produced four with Nashville's Barry Becket, two with long-time manager Punch Andrews and five tracks with Grammy Award-winning producer Don Was.

Benway Bop Music, bargains for the broke

by Jared Dean

Benway Bop, the latest in bargain record stores, specializes in new, used, imported and domestic CD's, records and tapes; basically everything.

Ronn Jackson, along with his wife Kelly, opened Benway three weeks ago and already have regular customers.

"Things are so far, so good," Jackson said. "We have a good selection of imports and used records. But we also have new selections."

Jackson is relying on their years of experience to make Benway a success. He has been involved in the industry for eight years and gives credit for his earlier experience to *The Underground*. He was born in Las Vegas and moved to Los Angeles when he was 18.

"I owe Wayne (from *The Underground*) for my beginnings," he said. "Ten years ago that was the only place to get alternative. I bought my first Black Flag and Replacements there."

When compared to Record City and other used record stores, Benway's prices are significantly less. They are also concerned with the customer. If a CD is defective it can be returned for another or cash back.

Besides location, (4800 Maryland Parkway - across from the University behind Wendy's), Benway has another plus—their business hours. They are open 11:00 a.m. to 9:00 p.m. Monday through Saturday and 12:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m. Sundays.

So if you need a late night bargain fix, Benway is ready to accommodate.

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