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 seeing 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 22 titles by new and developing artists, that will grant accounts discounts and extra dating. The distributor is also moving 92 more titles into its $12.75-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 industry support is crucial.

Candidates Vying For Music Dollars

BY JEAN ROSENBLUTH
NEW YORK As the race for the Democratic presidential nomination enters its final three months, celebrities’ financial support and personal endorsements are being eagerly courted by the candidates.

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.

RUBEN BLADES’ new album burns like a barrio summer.
NOTHING BUT THE TRUTH (60754), RUBEN BLADES’ first album in English, features the single and video “Hopes On Hold.” Music to believe in ... On Elektra superior-quality cassettes, compact disc and records. Produced by Tommy LiPuma, Carlos Rios, Ruben 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 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, Cinders, 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

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 time, he’s doing it for YOU.

EATON ORANGE COUNTY

(Continued on page 91)
POPPICKS

JERMAINE STEWART
Say It Again
PRODUCERS: Andre Cymone, Jerry Knight & Aaron Zigman
16/Arista AL 8455

Though nothing here is quite as insistently catchy as 1986’s “... Clothes Off,” album has more to offer than “Frantic Romance.” 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-driven 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 60794

Well-crafted 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.

PICKS

PASSION FODDER
Fat Tuesday
PRODUCER: Theo Nakota, Passion Fodder
Island 90999

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, now has his first commercial effort with a high-energy set of shock rocker backed by powerful new combo. Longtime Flag followers will welcome this fine return to form.

GILES REAVES
Nothing Is Lost
PRODUCERS: Giles Reaves, Tommy Dorsey & Tony Crow
Larry Cherry
MCA 42105

Multikeyboardist Reaves shows off his versatility on second album. His work here bears greater resemblance to prog music of the 70s than to new age music; in-store play could get musicianship-oriented owners interested in this somewhat-overlooked talent.

JANE HARVEY
The Other Side Of Sndheim
PRODUCER: Jane Harvey
Atlantic Jazz 81833

Though labeled jazz, vocalist Harry’s revuel of Sndheim 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 guitarist duet of Nick Webb and Greg Carmichael offers excellent playing that cuts across a variety of styles, from pop jazz to U.K. folk. Fusion-oriented jazz stations and West-style formats will have difficult resisting this pair.

THE SPLEACATS
Free Ringaby
PRODUCER: James “Hoded” Krawczyk
Moving Target/Celuloid MT16

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
PRODUCER: Dave Kusworth, Glenn Tranter
Texas Hotel 6

Singer-guitarist formerly partnered with Nikki Sudden in the Jacobites steps up 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 steel камере by Stevie Ray Vaughan, Freddie Hubbard, George Young, and others.

THE SPONGETONES
Wherever-land
PRODUCERS: Jamie Hooven, Don Dixon
Triopia Records CD-123077
Power-pop purveyors have been releasing heavily Beatles-influenced records throughout the 70s; this latest, on CD and cassette only, is the greatest, as well as fairly market to bubble rock as well as Merseybeat. Contact: 903-831-7016.

PATRICK STREET
#2 Patrick Street
PRODUCER: Patrick Street
Green Linnet SLF 1088

Second collaboration by four excellent Celtic musicians is a worthy encore to their well-received debut. Some fine songs and several “battling-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 harmonies by Andy Irvine.

OBEED NGOBEI
My Wife Bought A Taxi
PRODUCER: Peter Metcalf
Shanachie 64003

One of first releases in ethnic label’s West Coast/Ethnic 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, Monte Seward, Vincent Bradley
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-ballads, rich with warmth and tension, are driving “Strange Relationship” toward the top 10, 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-hoppers 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
FAL 90010

Late pose-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.

DJ JAZZY JEFF & THE FRESH PRINCE
He’s The D.J., I’m The Rapper
PRODUCERS: DJ 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 J’s considerable talents as a mixer.

GEOFFEY WILLIAMS
Heroes, Spies And Gypsies
PRODUCERS: Andy Longhurst, Christopher Neil
Atlantic 81786

Supercommercial effort combines clean production, ’80s electronics, and William’s breakbeats, several cuts stand out, especially the infectious dance track “Cinderella.”

COUNTRY

RECOMMENDED

JERRY JARIMOLLO
PRODUCER: Little Richie Johnson
LJU LR 2014

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 Tope
RCI 1478

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

JAZZ

PICKS

RIPPPINGTONS
Kilimanjaro
PRODUCER: Russ Freeman
Passport Jazz PJ 88042

Group’s debut was a top charter last year. First 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 “Backstabbers.”

RECOMMENDED

ED PALERMO BIG BAND
Ping Pong
PRODUCERS: Ed & John Palermo
Pro Jazz CDJ 650

Laid back natural feel for big band groove.