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Legends Universe

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Spotlight On Edwin Starr

Vocalist, Multi-Instrumentalist, composer

Sona Jobarteh

Music of The UK 70s

THE MUSIC OF ROGER GREENWAY

Drifters Legends



A DRIFTERS LEGENDS CLUBHOUSE PRESENTATION

Featuring Butch Leake Joe Blunt Rick Sheppard and Clyde Brown

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Bell Records



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The Music Of Roger Greenaway

Golden year three marked a new milestone in the evolution of The Drifters with the signing in 1972 to Bell Records UK. After a long tenure with Atlantic Records the Drifters brand was making headlines again after falling to the weigh side due to a drop in record sales and a lack of promotion by the former recording company. Now under the auspices of Greenway Music, headed by UK producer Roger Greenway The Drifters were set once again to rule the music charts throughout the 1970s.

Though the group took up residency with the new recording company, they continue to have record crowds in the United States at prestige venues in Las Vegas Nevada, Waldorf Astoria New York City, Art Laboes Hollywood California and night club along the Eastern Seaboard of the country.

For those who doubt the importance of the British songs that were written and performed by the Bell/Arista Drifters. The Guinness book of British Hit Singles seals the fact that The Drifters Brand continued to record and perform great songs long after the Atlantic Record period.

Bell Records was an American record label founded in 1952 in New York City by Arthur Shimkin, the owner of the children's record label Golden Records, and initially a unit of Pocket Books, after the rights to the name were acquired from Benny Bell who used the Bell name to issue risqué novelty records. A British branch was also active in the 1960s and 1970s. Bell Records was reorganized in November 1974, which was the birth of Arista Records.

At its inception in 1952, Bell specialized in budget generic pop music, with the slogan "music for the millions". Originally sold on seven-inch 78 rpm and 45 rpm records for 39 cents (US), this style of music went out of fashion as rock and roll became more prevalent. Sound-alike cover versions of hit records were also issued on 78 rpm as well as 45 rpm disks priced at 49 cents.

One of these records was by "Tom & Jerry" who would later become known using their real surnames, Simon & Garfunkel.

Instead of being pressed into vinyl like a normal 7-inch disc, these records were injection molded by Best way Products using polystyrene, which either had glued-on labels or the label information was printed directly on the polystyrene, rendering many copies almost unreadable years later. Most (but not all) Bell and associated label 45 rpm records were similarly injection-molded all the way into the 1970s.

As Al Massler, the head of record manufacturer Best way Products, had become head of Bell Records in 1959, Mala Records was then formed as a Bell subsidiary label, specializing in rock and roll along with rhythm and blues.

In 1960, Amy Records was formed as another subsidiary label, focusing on soul and/or blue-eyed soul acts. The following year, Larry Uttal folded his Madison Records label into Bell after purchasing the label, along with its Amy and Mala subsidiary labels. Concentrating his efforts on the Amy and Mala labels, Uttal rendered the Bell parent label dormant until 1964, when the label was revived, featuring a logo utilizing a stylized "BELL" word mark shaped like a bell.

In 1966, the Bell label was expanded internationally and the company decided to issue all their albums, even for Amy and Mala acts, on the Bell label, and went on to issue several hit singles,



including: "Little Girl" by Syndicate of Sound (#5 CB/#8 BB), "I'm Your Puppet" by James and Bobby Purify in 1966, "The Letter" by the Box Tops (the single on Mala, the album on Bell) in 1967, "Angel of the Morning" by Merrilee Rush & the Turnabouts in 1968, and "Gimme Gimme Good Lovin'" by Crazy Elephant in 1969.

In March 1969, Columbia Pictures Industries (CPI) purchased Bell for \$3.5 million (mainly in CPI stock), retaining Larry Uttal as label president. Later that year, the Mala, Amy, and Bell labels were merged into a single unit,

keeping the Bell moniker. By mid-1971, the assets of the Columbia Pictures owned, but RCA Records distributed, Colgems Records were integrated into the label. Uttal was instrumental in signing many soon-to-be-famous acts such as the Partridge Family, David Cassidy, Ricky Segall, the 5th Dimension and Tony Orlando & Dawn, as well as adopting a new "thick-stripe" logo.

By 1970, the Bell label was more successful with pop music singles, and less successful with more lucrative pop LPs. After a year of declining revenues, Uttal resigned from Bell at the end May 1974 to begin his own label, Private Stock, financed and distributed by EMI. Uttal was replaced a week later by Clive Davis who was hired as a record and music consultant by Columbia Pictures and later became temporary president of Bell. Davis's real goal was to reorganize and revitalize Columbia Pictures music division. With a \$10 million investment by CPI, and a reorganization of the various Columbia Pictures legacy labels (Colpix, Colgems, and Bell), Davis introduced Columbia Pictures new record division, Arista, in November 1974 with Davis himself owning 20% of the new venture.

Bell had its final No. 1 hit in January 1975 with Barry Manilow's "Mandy" (Bell 45,613), followed shortly by the label's final hit, as well as its final single, "Look in My Eyes Pretty Woman" by Tony Orlando and Dawn (Bell 45,620—US #11) after which the more successful Bell albums were reissued on Arista. The very last releases utilizing the Bell imprint have the designation "Bell Records, Distributed by Arista Records, 1776 Broadway, New York City 10019" around the rim of the label.

Bell Records UK