

KEYSTONE RECORD COLLECTORS' RECORDER

Published on a periodic basis by Keystone Record Collectors, P.O. Box 1516, Lancaster, PA 17604

VOL. 1 NO. 1

WINTER 1985 — 86

KENNY CHANDLER

Story by Phil Schwartz and Bill Trousdale

Kenny Chandler, born Kenneth Bolognese, was originally from "The Hill" section of Harrisburg, Pa., and was a member of John Harris High School Class of 1959. Interested in music at an early age, Kenny got together with four classmates in senior high school to form a group called the Montclaires (later changed to the Clairmonts). This first group consisted of Micky Liddick (drums), Junie Brown (congas), Nathaniel Edmonds (piano), with Lee Bradshaw, Ray Carlisle, George Campbell, and Kenny doing vocals. They split up after only a short time but Ken stayed together with Ray Carlisle, in hopes of forming another group. It was after football practice, while singing in the showers, that Ray got word that teammate Frankie Cacapardo was interested in joining the group. Thus, the trio was formed, calling themselves Kenny, Frank, and Ray. Kenny remembers that, at the time they were singing a lot of street-corner harmony, and became practiced enough to win second place in a talent show at the Senate Theater, Harrisburg. This little bit of notoriety brought the trio to the attention of WHGB disc-jockey Paul Landersman, who was, at the time, doing a live radio show from the Colonial Theater. The boys came down to the theater during one of these live broadcasts and actually auditioned for him on the fire escape during a break. Paul had already established good connections in the music business as manager of the Quintones (York, Pa.), and was impressed enough with the trio's talents that he asked to manage them on the spot.

The first big local show that Kenny, Frank, and Ray performed at was at the Zembo Mosque, Harrisburg, featuring Danny and the Juniors and Connie Francis. During rehearsals, one of the members of Danny & The Juniors became very impressed with the trio's vocal stylings, and inquired whether they had a record out. This connection soon got them to an office in Philadelphia

LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT

I'm sure you K.R.C. members will agree the club has come a long way over the years. We are pleased to announce that "The Recorder" is the first K.R.C. Record News Publication. The Recorder will have some great articles featuring 50's through 80's music highlighting such areas as doo-wop and Rock N' Roll. Many of you will find the publication useful in reading about record care, area record finds, and rare and collectable records. The purpose of the club has always been to buy, sell, and trade records; learn about this great hobby; and to discover and mold some great friendships as the years unfold.

"The Recorder" is a publication that gives the reader a little more of a thirst quenching knowledge of this great hobby. If anyone has any articles, comments, or ideas please feel free to contact one of us.

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where they auditioned for Bernie Lowe. They presented 4 original songs at the audition, but Kal Mann and Bernie Lowe were more impressed with the talent than the songs and arranged a recording session at Reco-Arts Studios which produced 2 sides: "Everybody Loves Saturday Night" and "I'm Going Away." Bernie Lowe was the piano player on the session, and Paul played the folding slat chairs (a low-budget version of the drums). Lowe issued it on his own label as Cameo #144. "Everybody" was written by Cameo staffer Tony Mamerella under the pseudonym Anthony September. Cameo was one of the new "hot" labels when the song was released in the summer of 1958. They had pushed regional action hits by Charlie Gracie, The Rays, Billy Scott, Timmy Rogers and monster-flick host John Zacherle onto the national charts in the previous year, and were currently working on a lease-acquisition from the Martinique label by The Playboys which was breaking nationally. Unfortunately, although "Everybody Loves Saturday Night" received good local play, it never went national. Cameo's efforts at the time went into pushing Dave Appel's Applejacks version of "Mexican Hat Rock." The extra push put the instrumental in the National Top 20, but, meanwhile, Kenny, Frank, and Ray stiffed along with the Playboys' recording in the greater Philadelphia and central Pennsylvania arena. Cameo, in fact, didn't have another big vocal hit for nearly another year, when Bobby Rydell broke through. Disillusioned with Cameo's handling of the K, F, and R disc, manager Paul Landersman decided to put the follow-up disc out on his own label. Frankie had already departed for the Navy by this time, and Ralph Stevens was the "Frankie" on this session. The name "Kenny, Frank, and Ray" was still used because of their previous exposure on Cameo. Reco-Arts



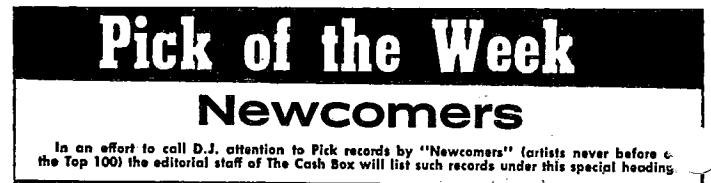
was again used to record "If You Love Me" and "Why Was I Born" (a Ray Carlisle original). Issued as PL #13 in late 1958, the record received only limited regional exposure. By 1959, Ray had become disillusioned and dropped out of the group, ending their string of near-hits at two. Kenny, however, had been writing some original material, and formed a new group in 1959 called The Beaus. This group consisted of Dick Donmoyer, Bob Napotonia, Frank Desendi, and Ralph Stevens. Kenny took on the stage name "Kenny Beau," and returned to Reco-Arts to cut "You're the Right One" and "Gift of Love." The session produced a solid 2-sided doo-wop record, released as PL #1015. The Whirlwinds, which is the group credited on the label, were really the studio musicians used on the session, as the name of the group was officially "Kenny and the Beaus."



In 1959, Paul Landesman was caught up in payola accusations, like so many of the disc jockies of the time. Even though he was judged innocent, this period of McCarthyism in radio left a very bad taste in his mouth and he left the radio business and dissolved the PL label. In the later part of that year, Kenny lived in Lancaster, Pa. for a month or two and worked with Herald Kern, a music teacher at Elizabethtown College, who was managing local bands. Through "Hi," Kenny met Bix Richner of Paoli, Pa., a songwriter, who got Kenny an offer to go to New York to replace a member of the Tree Swingers, a folkrock group who were getting regional exposure with a cover version of Jo Ann Campbell's "Kookie Little Paradise." Kenny wasn't actually on the record (Guyden 2036), but was hired to go on the road to lip sync the record for TV and stage performances. The Tree Swingers manager Irving McCommek noticed Kenny's vocal talents and felt that he should be a solo. This connection brought them to the offices of Herb Weiner (who later wrote It's

My Party for Lesley Gore), who was a talent manager as well as a songwriter, and who became Kenny's new manager. Herb took Kenny to a small studio at the corner of 48th & Broadway where they cut a demo of "To the Aisle" with just voice and piano. Armed with the disc, their next stop was the Brill Building at the offices of Leiber and Stoller. When they got there, the place was like a crazy house. Herb presented the new talent to Jerry Leiber, but when he asked Jerry to listen to the demo, he replied, "Fine, but not today." Unable to persuade him to give them any more time, Jerry headed for the men's room, and Herb and Kenny followed him in, doing an impromptu audition live in the bathroom. Whether it was the natural echo from the tile walls or the novelty of the situation, Jerry was impressed and agreed to give the boys some more of his time. Before they left they had a recording session scheduled and a Leiber/Stoller original tune called "Drums," which was originally to have been recorded by Della Reese.

While working in New York during the week, Kenny was driving back to Harrisburg on weekends. It was just before one of these weekend drives that Danny Kessler, Leiber and Stoller's business manager, told him that the record was about to be released, and he should come up with a name. Kenny thought about it on the trip and, while stopped briefly near the Schuylkill Expressway, he thought of one of his favorite actors, Jeff Chandler. Thus, "Kenny Chandler" was born. The record hit the trade magazines and the radio stations the week of August 5, 1961.



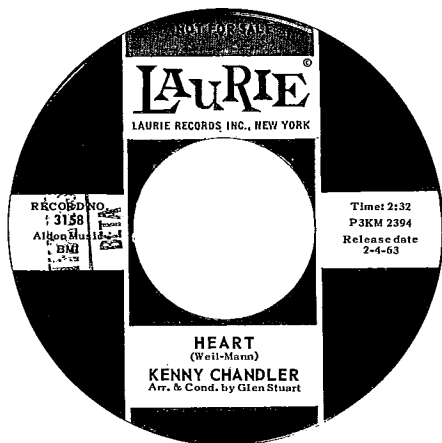
"DRUMS" (2:18) [Trio BMI—Leiber, Stoller]
 "THIS MAGIC RING" (2:18) [Trio BMI—Leiber, Stoller]
 KENNY CHANDLER (United Artists 342)

Chandler can 'beat' his way to the upper rungs of the sales ladder with his first-time-out on U.A. His vehicle is a power-packed martial beat opus, tagged "Drums," that he (and the ork chorus) renders with the telling, dramatic effect of Roy Orbison's "Runnin' Scared." Great debut. "This Magic Ring" is a hauntingly beautiful folk-like ballad that also has loads of chart potential.

"Pick of the Week" Reviews aided by full-page ads in Cashbox and Billboard magazines should have assured the record a starting spot in the national top 100. A radio station in Florida was the first to "break" the record, and it went on to sell 50,000 copies in that market alone. Kenny remembers hitchhiking to Los Angeles to promote the record after it broke out there. Records reviewed the same week included "Ya Ya" by Lee Dorsey, "Crying" by Roy Orbison, "Take Good Care of My Baby" by Bobby Vee, and "This Time" by Troy Shondell, all of which jumped onto the national playlists. However, whether it was poor timing, lack of follow-up promotion by U.A., or late-summer vacations in the record business, this well-produced name-writer product never took that leap onto the National charts, even though it went to #1 in several regions of the country.

For reasons that are uncertain, the association with Leiber-Stoller and U.A. was not renewed after one more release, U.A. #384, which was basically a flop. Ken's next record deal was a solo release with Coral records. It was a polished version of "It Might Have Been" which had been a Scranton/Wilkes-Barre regional hit by Joe London (Liberty) in 1959. Herb Weiner took Kenny to Laurie Records, under the direction of Bob and Gene Schwartz in 1962. The label's major act Dion DiMucci had just

departed for Columbia, and the label was looking for a talent to groom for a Dion sound-alike. Kenny was chosen, and his first release on the label, "Leave Me If You Want To," demonstrates this pseudo-Dion arrangement. Then, in the first months of 1963, Kenny got a call from Art Polhemus, who had been the lead singer of the Tree Swingers. Art had become a recording engineer since the breakup of this group, and had just engineered a demo session for Barry Mann and Cynthia Weil on a song called "Heart, I Hear You Beating." The demo was scheduled to be sent to Wayne Newton on a "Exclusive" basis, but Art just happened to have a dub of it. The reaction at Laurie was very exciting, and the race was on to get their version out before Wayne Newton's. A session was quickly scheduled at the RCA Studios on 33rd St. in New York. Kenny remembers how the musicians and the engineers had to work for a long time to get the right sound on the bass, for the "heart-beat" effect. Once they got it, the song was recorded in slow time. On the playback, they decided it was too slow, and redid it in almost double time. Laurie launched the finished product onto the market on February 4, 1963, beating the Wayne New-



ton version by only about a week. It is interesting to note that Laurie printed the release date on the label of all the first pressings, which was not their habit. According to Bob Schwartz of Laurie, this was done to prove to the D.J.'s that their version was out first. "Heart" got a good start in many regions of the country, going to the top ten all over Pennsylvania. In April of 1963, Kenny was scheduled to appear on Dick Clark's American Bandstand, a move which would have given the record its final needed push to be played everywhere. But, in stepped Bobby Darin. Darin was Wayne Newton's manager, and persuaded Clark that Laurie Records had unscrupulously "Scooped" an exclusive recording intended for their boy. Whether any money changed hands or not is unknown, but at the last minute, Kenny received word that the performance had been cancelled, and the next Saturday afternoon, there was Wayne Newton on the show lip-synching his version of the song. Nearly all music critics today agree that Kenny's version is far superior, and outsold Newton's record, reaching over a half million total. The sales were spread out from market-to-market over a 5 month period, so that the national peak was never Top 40. Subsequent releases on Laurie were never as successful, although Kenny remembers the people at Laurie as being the best label he ever worked for. "The people there were wonderful," Kenny remembers, "and, at the time, it was probably the only honest label in the business, as far as giving you your money and reporting accurate sales."

The natural success of "Heart" and good regional play of the follow-up, "I Can't Stand Tears at a Party" (which was intended as an answer-song for Lesley Gore, before they imagined that she would answer her own song), put Kenny on the road again for a lot of shows, until, possibly because of the strain, and overuse, he lost his voice. During this period, Kenny became involved with production and learning various instruments. It wasn't until a year later that Burt Bacharach's personal physician was able to provide therapy which restored Kenny's vocal chords. He then resumed his career with the Epic Label, and had 3 releases for them, including a different "Heart." Kenny also resumed his association with Irving McCommek who took over as his manager, and brought Kenny and Del Shannon to the Amy-Bell-Malla organization at the same time. Kenny's recording for Amy was very country oriented, and is one of Kenny's least favorite releases of his career. He had another brief association with Capital records in 1968, for whom he recorded 2 sides, which were released on their subsidiary as Tower #405. Ken's only release in the 70's was an independent production deal which was sold to and released on his old label Laurie in 1971. This disc was important in his development, since it represented the first sides he had produced. The female "answering" voice on the A-side "I'll Be Home" is Melissa Manchester.

In 1974, Ken decided to move to Los Angeles to further his career. He explains, "All the record companies had left New York, and the West Coast was where it was happening". Actually, Ken had been involved in writing and producing jingles since the mid-60's, and had already appeared as an actor in 2 soap operas while in New York. (as Pauley in the "Edge of Night" and Dr. Spence in "Love is a Many Splendored Thing"). So, while in Los Angeles, he further developed his talents in the commercial jingle, production, and acting fields. A few of the on-screen parts that Kenny has played in recent years, for all you silver screen buffs, are episodes of the Six Million Dollar Man, Captain America, and Buck Rodgers. In the Dick Clark Production of "Elvis" he played one of the Jordanaires, and he had a brief appearance as a trombone player in "The Buddy Holly Story", as well as providing the voices for the backup group in the soundtrack for this film. The most recent acting sequence was the part of the technical director in NBC's "Fitz and Bones."

Earlier this year, Ken made a video and record for release in Europe, and traveled back to his home town of Harrisburg to use this city as a test market for the product. One of his first stops was WKBO, where he met music director Bill Trousdale, a K.R.C. member, and avid oldies collector. Bill encouraged the release of the single in this country, and the result was USA 85003, Ken's first single in 14 years. At this writing, the single is receiving good regional play on at least 5 radio stations in Pennsylvania. More importantly, Ken has recently started a business in his hometown known as Ken Chandler Productions with Bill Trousdale and Chris Purcell as partners. As Bill explains, "The time is ripe for a quality production house as would be found in Los Angeles, or New York, in central Pennsylvania." The company will be involved in producing radio and TV jingles, custom music for industrial videos and tapes, commercials, and film soundtracks for commercial films. Bill adds, "We will have a quality product for about 1/3 the cost of the big city studios." All of us at K.R.C. wish them success.

1. Herald "Hi" Kern formed his own label "HI-MAR" in the 1960s. One of his groups, The (Royal) Lancers recut both sides of PL 1015 in 1963, released on Swan's subsidiary Lawn as #205. "Gift of Love" was retitled "Oh, Little Girl". 50's collectors will certainly want to pull out a copy out of "Here I Stand" by Wade Flemmons (Vee Jay) to see if they can detect similarities.



KENNY CHANDLER DISCOGRAPHY

As Kenny, Frank, and Ray

Cameo 144 Everybody Loves Saturday Night
I'm Going Away 1958

PL13 If You Love Me 1959
Why Was I Born

As Kenny Beau

PL 1015 You're The Right One 1959
Gift Of Love

As Kenny Chandler

United Artists 342 Drums 1961
The Magic Ring

United Artists 384 Please Mr. Mountain 1961
What Kind Of Love Is Yours

Coral 62309 It Might Have Been 1962
Yours And Yours Alone

Laurie 3140 Leave Me If You Want To 1962
Man On The Run

Laurie 3158 Heart 1963
Wait For Me

Laurie 3181 I Can't Stand Tears At A Party 1963
I Tell Myself (Running After You)

Epic 9758 S.O.S. (Sweet On Susie) 1964
Come Softly To Me

Epic 9862 Heart 1964
Ain't Gonna Hurt You

Epic 10009 I'll Be Coming Back 1964
Sunshine Sweetheart

Amy 890 I Didn't Know How 1964
Happy To Be Unhappy

Tower 354 Sleep 1967
Nickels & Dimes

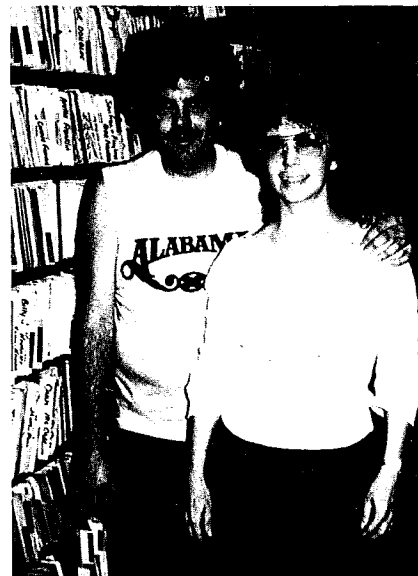
Tower 405 Beyond Love 1968
Cherity

Laurie 3577 I'll Be Home 1971
Leave Me If You Want To

USA 85003 Gotta Go, Gotta Fly 1985
Heart



K.R.C. PROFILE



Dan and Pat Sullivan are the proprietors of the music and Video Ranch located at Walker Drive in New Oxford. Dan has been involved in buying and selling records since age 16 originally in Tennessee. Together, they serve as President of the National Charlie Louvan Fan Club. (Grand Ole Opry Artist for 35 years). The Music Ranch was built in 1984, and features a wide variety of old and new releases, specializing in country music. In addition, Dan and Pat offer videos and equipment which they also service. Pat works as a dental assistant, as well as her role in the "Ranch." For those of you on a tight schedule, they're open 7 days a week.

TERRY THE T'S

O - Wopp COLUMN

This being the initial issue of our club's mini-magazine I thought I would outline what I intend to do in my column. My idea is to make every issue something different in regard to the Doo-Wop collecting scene. There will be record identification (how to tell bootlegs from originals complete with pictures of both along with other pertinent information regarding label design, matrix #'s, thickness of wax etc. Multiple choice Doo-Wop tests will be an integral part along with stories of Doo-Wop groups and notes of the forgotten legends of the Doo-Wop scene. There will be a "Did You Know" column where I hope to enlighten even the most seasoned veteran about certain groups and records and what facts I can dig up about them. I will also list records I feel are underrated or obscure that deserve some recognition that collectors and club members should keep their eyes and try to find.

Since it's still good weather and everyone is hunting those records at flea markets and garage sales I felt it would be a good time to start listing some obscure sides.

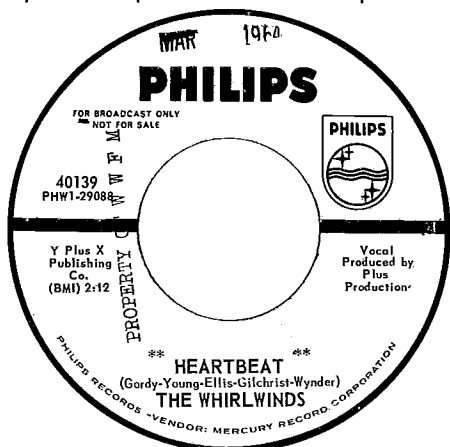
Launie, My Love • Val-Aires • Coral 62177 A really nice slow white Doo-Wop sound. Issued in 1959, the surprising fact is that the Val-Aires are really the *early Vogues*.

Thinking Of You • Silvertones • Joey 302 A fantastic black ballad, a killer of a record. This label is from the Pittsburg area and was issued in 1962. Flip side is a so-so uptempo version of "Canadian Sunset."

Light Like Tonight • Lee Andrews/Group • Swan 4076 . . . This is Lee at his best. Issued in 1961, forget his earlier recordings, this is a *must*. Opening is reminiscent of 5 Satins: "In The Still . . ." but with a nice tenor sound. Backup group could be the Hearts.

I Lost You • Charters • Alva 1001 If you like Earl Lewis/Channels type of record, this is for you. Issued rather late 1963, it has that high Lewis type of sound. A good group on an obscure label, what more can you ask for in a record. I believe the only record issued on this label.

Heartbeat • Whirlwinds • Phillips 40139 Issued in 1964, this song is almost identical to the Cordells "Beat Of My Heart" on Bargain from 1961. After a little digging I found out that the groups are the same except for 2 new members. The song itself is a fast uptempo with a great bass riff. However, playing them back to back, the Whirlwinds version is superior. Also the DJ copy on Phillips is the premium collector piece.



Congratulations, Baby • Rendezvous • Reprise 20089 . . . Pressed in 1962, both sides of this record are nice. Congratulations, Baby is a real nice slow ballad with the flip "Faithfully" uptempo. Lenny Welch was the lead singer of this group.



You Told Another Lie • Little Pete/Youngsters • Lesley 1925 . . . If you are into the Frankie Lymon type ballad then you are in for a treat. A classic sound with the voice that epitomized the little kid lead. The start begins like "I'm So Young" by the Students. A steal at \$25.

Smile • Pretenders • Power Martin 1001 Pressed in 1961, this, in my opinion, is one of the best 2sided records ever recorded. The "A" side is a haunting slow romantic white ballad with a great lead singer and group back-up. The "B" side "I'm So Happy" is the Teenchords and Ducanes song, but I feel done better.



Is It A Dream • Bill Baker/Group • Audicon 115 . . . A very underrated disc which was released in 1962. Believe the group is the Del Satins Baker (ex 5 Satins) does a superb job on a big collector record. Label is a subsidiary of Laurie records. Super hard to find in clean shape.

Sure As The Flowers • Hi-Tones • Segway 105 . . . Recorded in 1961, if a Bass lead on a tremendous ballad is your bag—get this record. This is one of the prizes of my collection. Same label as "Baby Blue" by the Echoes.

In closing, unfortunately none of the above records has been bootlegged although some have been reissued on other labels (i.e. Smile-Pretenders). I have access to a master listing of over 839 bootleg group records which I am constantly updating with other discs that I find from other dealer contacts. I can basically let you know if a certain group record has been bootlegged.

If you have comments, suggestions or other info that you would feel would be beneficial to the doo-wop collecting scene direct this info to Phil Schwartz and it will be forwarded to me. Till next time . . . REMEMBER GOD DIGS DOO-WOP.

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