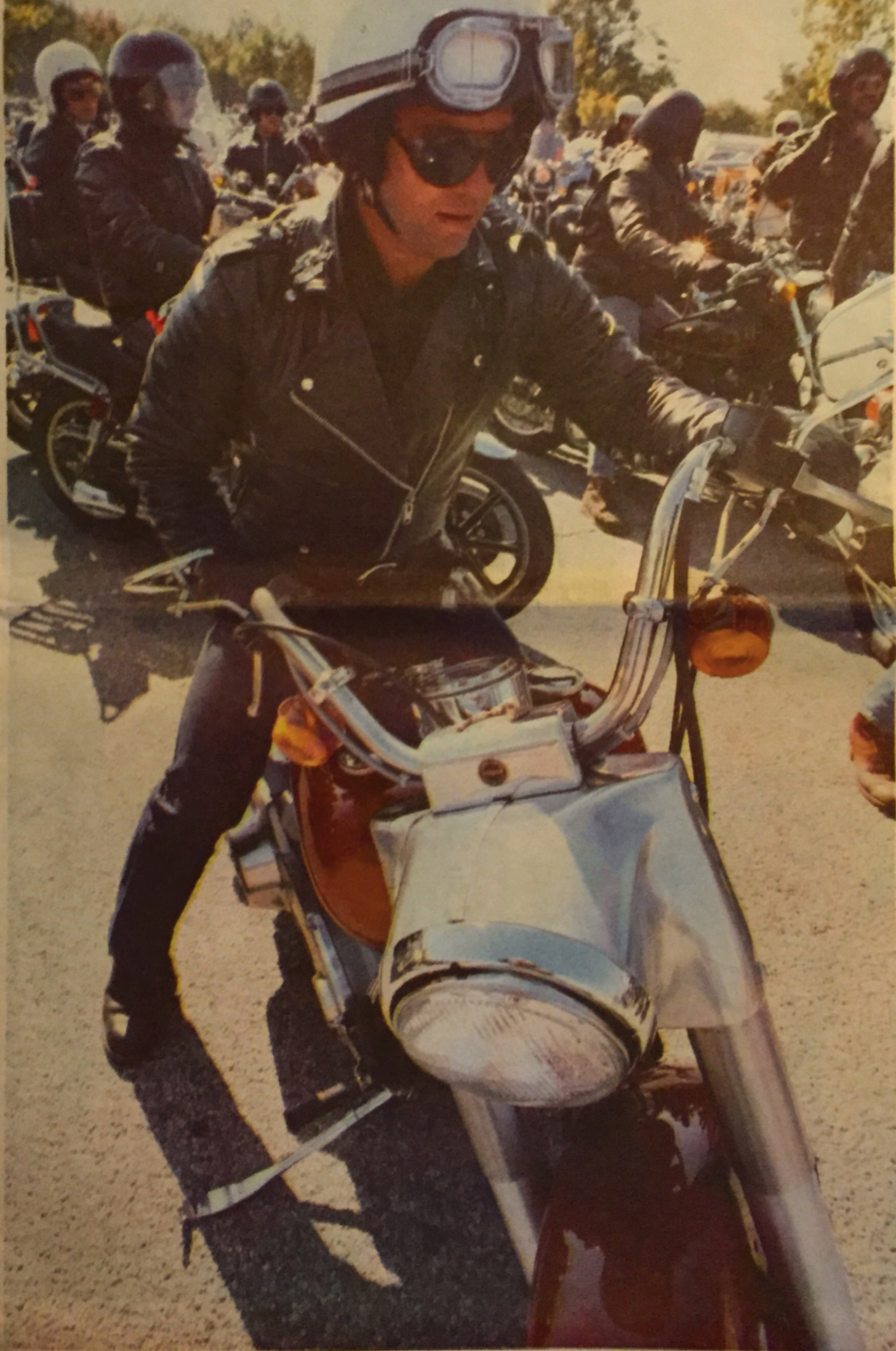
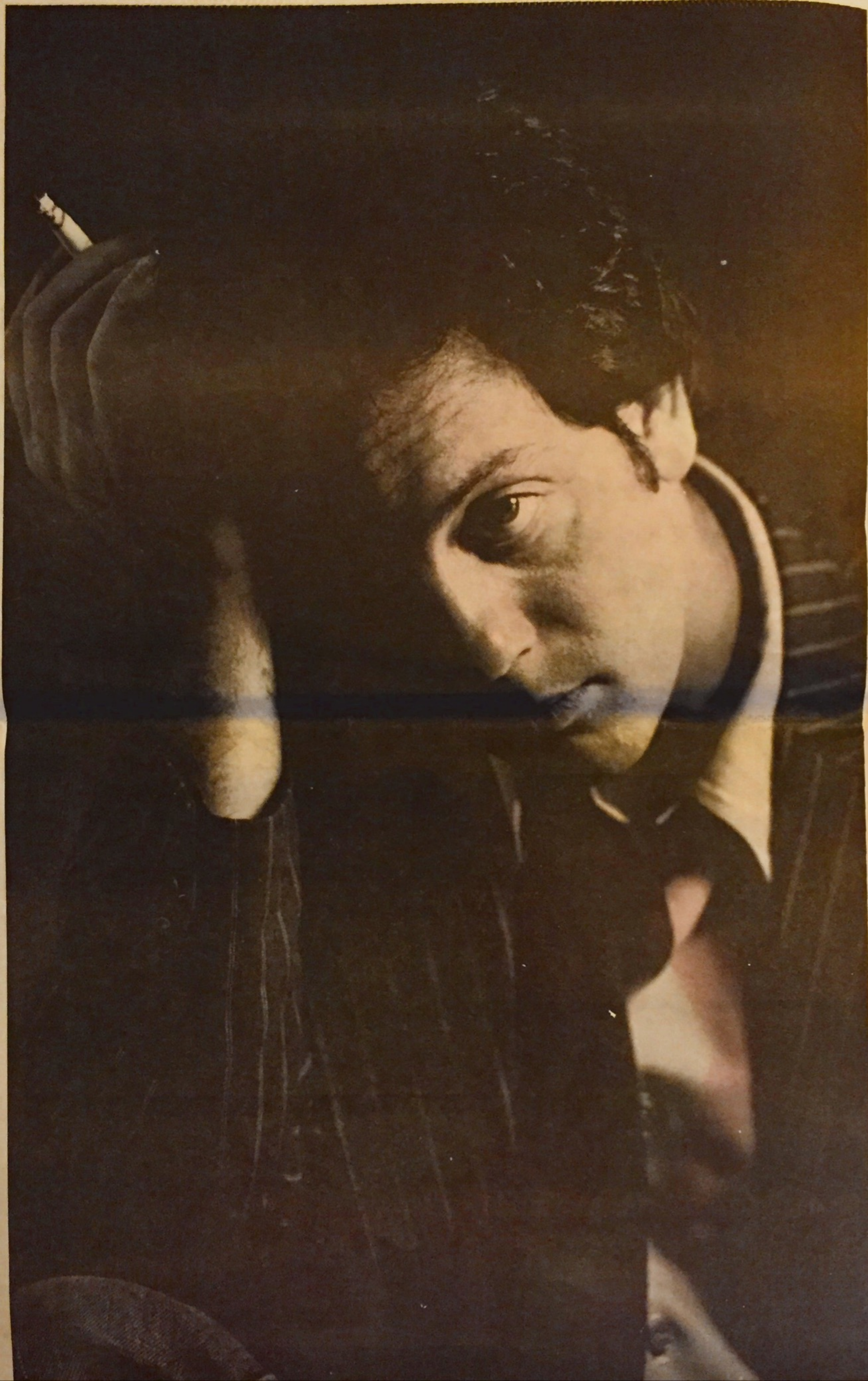


THE
ROOT BEER RAG

HOLIDAY ISSUE 1981





BILLY JOEL

THE ROOT BEER RAG : Design/Brad Olsen-Ecker; Editorial/ Merry Aronson

Editor's Note

THE ROOT BEER RAG, Billy Joel's official newsletter, will now be published twice a year in expanded 12-page editions: early in June and during the winter holiday season.

This holiday issue contains several treats. CBS Records president, Walter Yetnikoff, one of the most powerful decision-makers in the music industry, reflects on his long association with Billy.

Also included in this edition is a feature on how and when Billy's music publisher, CBS Songs, makes and markets collections of Billy's sheet music.

You can also learn what Billy's been up to this fall—cutting a special record, raising money for charity, and climbing to the top of the charts with *SONGS IN THE ATTIC*.

And for those of you who are always asking when a new BJ album is coming, I can only tell you that Billy and his band have been in the studio cutting demos of new material with Phil Ramone—and though no release schedule has been set—it's definitely worth waiting for!

Happy holidays and a healthy new year to all!

—Merry Aronson
Editor

Chart Action

Through your support, *SONGS IN THE ATTIC* bolted to the Top 10 of the album charts following its worldwide debut on September 10. The LP's first single release, *Say Goodbye To Hollywood*, remained among the Top 20 for many weeks. *She's Got A Way* is the current single climbing the charts. Thanks!



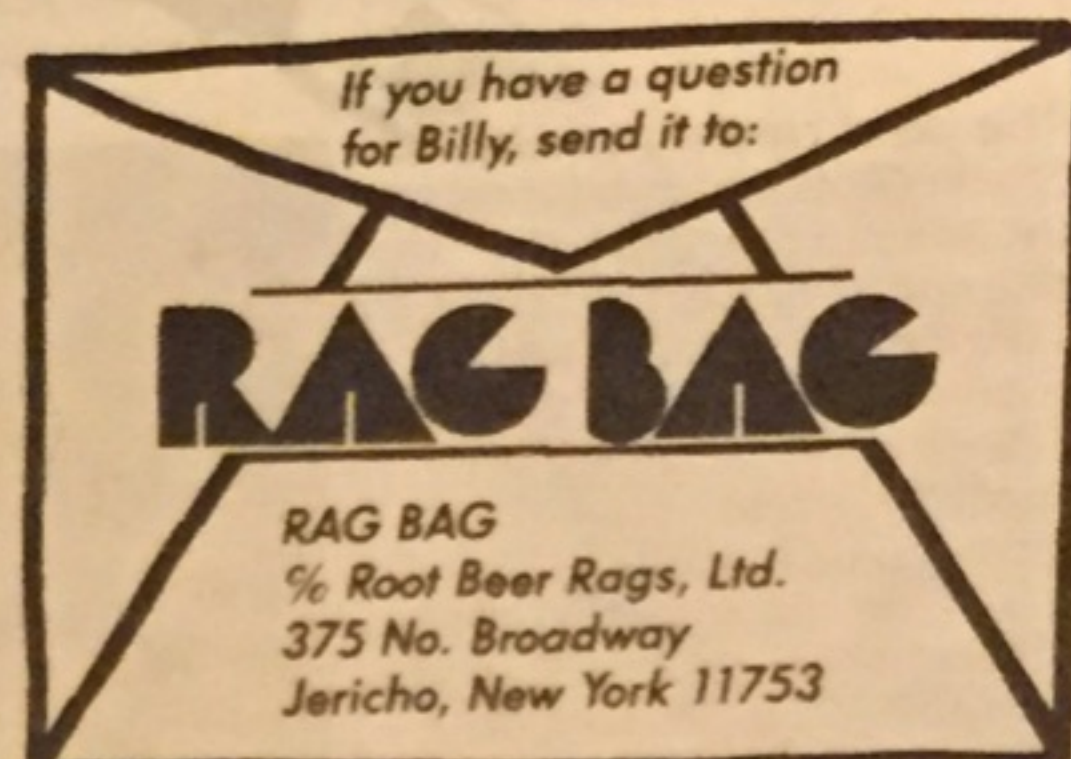
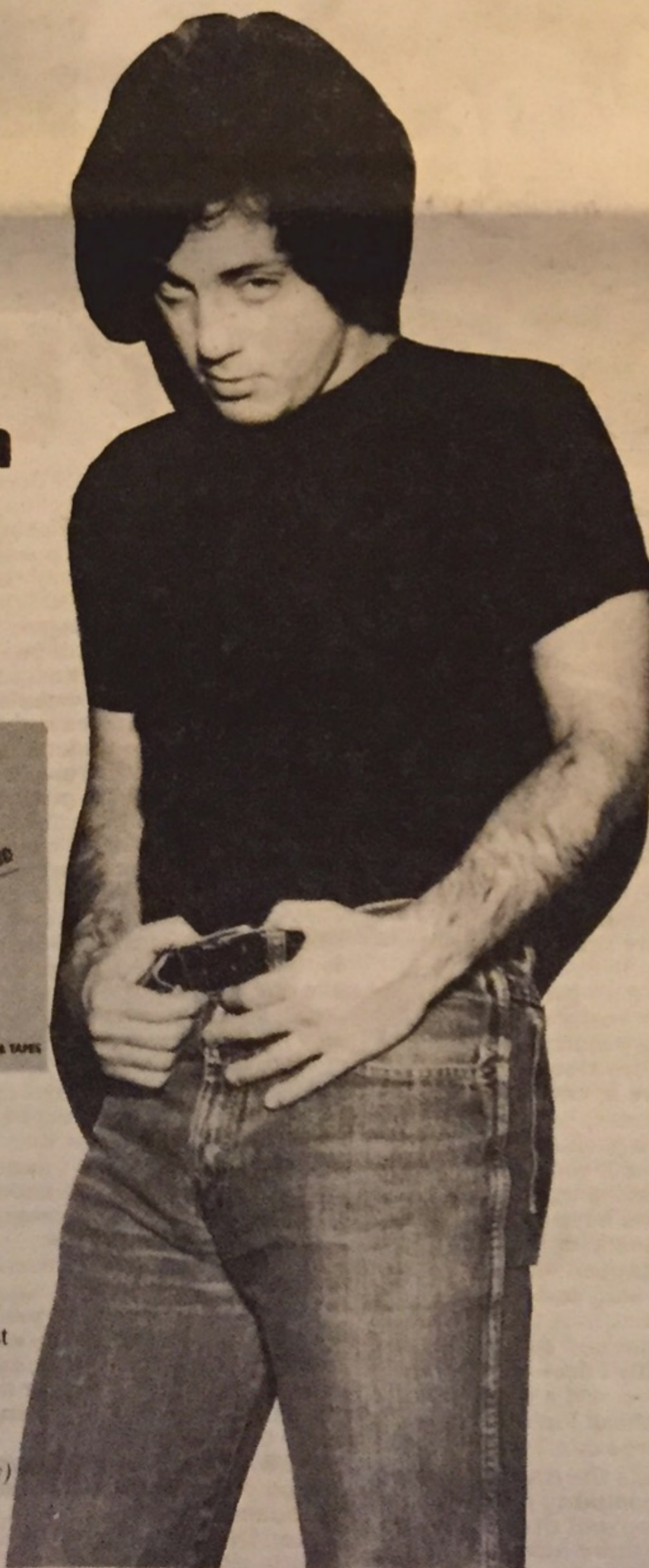
Live From New York!

In a rare network television appearance, Billy Joel was the special musical guest on NBC-TV's "Saturday Night Live" program (11/14). Broadcast live from Media Sound recording studios in New York City, where Billy and band members are cutting a new album, Billy performed *Miami 2017* (*Seen The Lights Go Out On Broadway*) and *She's Got A Way*.

Nobody Knows But...

Nobody Knows But Me, a song about a secret friend, written and recorded by Billy Joel, appears on a new album entitled *IN HARMONY 2*. Recently released by CBS Records, *IN HARMONY 2* also features Bruce Springsteen, Kenny Loggins, and James Taylor, among others.

The first *IN HARMONY* LP received this year's Grammy Award for Best Children's Recording. Both albums were produced by Lucy Simon and David Levine.



Q. Did you make any records before *COLD SPRING HARBOR*?
—Cathy Connelly, Brooklyn, NY

A. Yes. There were two albums with the Hassles, one album with Attila, and before that there were about a dozen demo records with the Lost Souls and the Echoes. I also did session piano work on a couple of records by the Shangri-Las, *You Remember* and *Leader Of The Pack*. I did a bunch of other session work, but I was never sure where it ended up.

Q. In the beginning of the song, *The Stranger*, who is whistling? Is it you or someone else?—Richard Gervais, Montreal, Canada

A. That's me whistling. I actually started out whistling the part because I wanted another instrument to do it. But Phil Ramone said, "Why don't you just do the whistling, it sounds good."

Q. It seems you change musical styles on every album you release. Do you do that intentionally?—Mark Purvis, Winston-Salem, NC

A. Yes. We don't want to do the same thing we've done before, especially after spending so much time making an album. So we consciously make an effort to move on to another style. I change it in the writing of the songs and we also approach it differently in the studio. We try to do the recording technique differently from the last record. It gets too boring repeating yourself, and it's also creatively stifling. You may get stoned by the critics or lose some fans by not doing the same thing over and over, but that's a chance you have to take.

Q. My favorite football team is the Minnesota Vikings. What team do you like best?—Andy Schaufler, Bristol, VA

A. I've always liked the Oakland Raiders.

Q. What do you think is the best song ever recorded, or your all-time favorite record by someone else?—Mike Meltzer, Clifton Forge, VA

A. There are too many. I can't pick just one. I don't have one favorite. If I had to pick the top five great records in my mood today, I'd say *Strawberry Fields Forever*; *Honky Tonk Woman*, by the Stones; *Go Now*, by the Moody Blues; *You've Lost That Lovin' Feeling*, by the Righteous Brothers; and *I Feel Good*, by James Brown. But those are favorite records—songs are different.

INTERVIEW

WITH WALTER YETNIKOFF

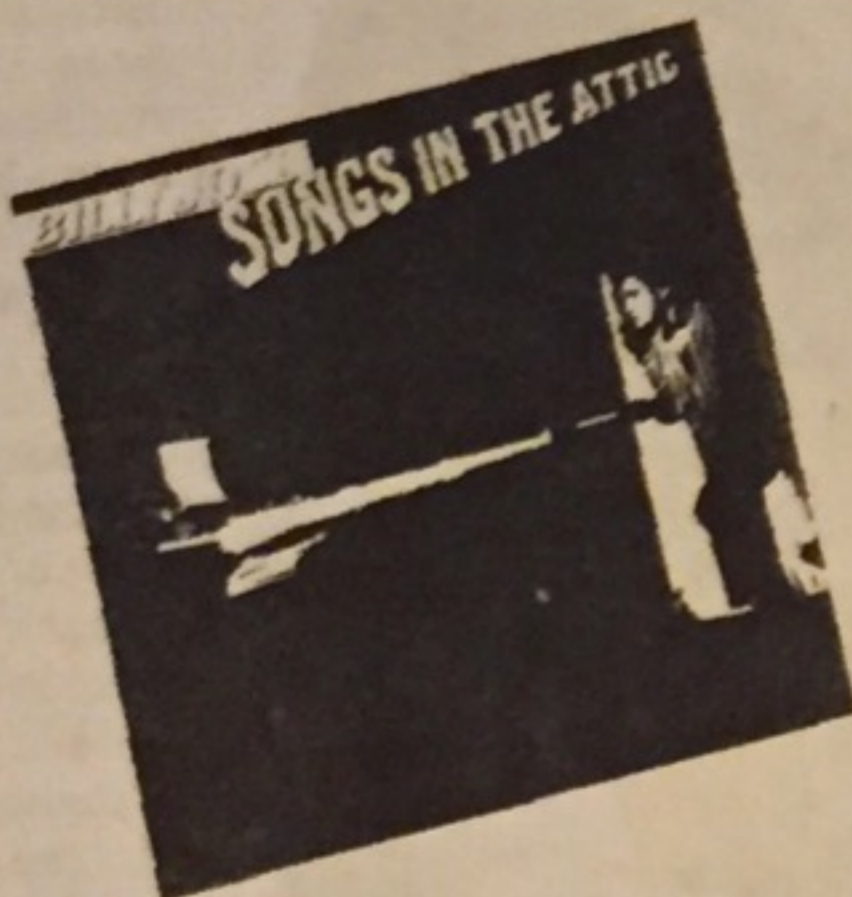
BY MERRY ARONSON



For the past twenty years, Walter Yetnikoff has played a significant role in the growth and development of Columbia Records. Walter began his career at CBS in 1961 when he joined the legal department. He later became general attorney for the CBS Records Group, and from 1971 to 1975, served as president of the CBS Records International Division. Since 1975, Walter has been president of the CBS Records Group. THE ROOT BEER RAG visited Walter in his office at the famous "Black Rock" building on New York's 52nd Street, finding him extremely warm and friendly, and eager to talk about his role in the music business and his longtime association with Billy Joel.

RBR: You run the largest and most prestigious record company in the world. How do you do it?

Walter: There are two businesses involved in the record business. One is the records part of it, dealing with artists, dealing with songs, the graphics, and so on. The other part is the business side, getting proper distribution, collecting accounts receivable, making sure the factories are running properly, et cetera. In one, you're dealing with the creative entities, in the other, you're selling a product. They're very different sides, and you almost have to have two minds and switch back and forth, depending on which aspect you're dealing with. They're two totally different worlds. We're hard workers here, we have a great deal of respect for our artists, and we've stuck by a lot of artists through very difficult times until many of them grew to be superstars. Billy happens to be a very good example of a company sticking with an artist and an artist sticking with a company until he became the Billy Joel of today. Boz Scaggs also had a number of records until he hit with *SILK DEGREES*. When it comes to artist/record company relationships, we're not interested in a quick hit record. We're interested in the long-term career of the artist. And an artist involves more than records. There are personal appearances, and for some it's movies. If we can't get that kind of an artist, then we're generally not interested in the quick hit single. Running a record company is a lot of hard work and long hours. It requires a sensitivity not only to the artists as individuals, but also a sensitivity to their music and what they're trying to achieve artistically. Artists are not all the same. The public tends to forget that household names, whether it's Neil Diamond, Barbra Streisand, or Billy Joel, also happen to be people, and you have to deal with them on a human level, and understand what it is that they're after. *SONGS IN THE ATTIC* is an



interesting record because Billy was after a certain type of retrospective that's hard to define. It's a live record, but not absolutely; it's a greatest hits which is not really a greatest hits. Billy was very sensitive about not calling it a live album, but it was recorded live in concert. And it wasn't a greatest hits, but rather songs he felt gave a perspective on his career. It took a little while for me to absorb what it was he was after. You have to have direct conversations with the artist. Billy and I happen to know each other quite well, and we're friends. Sometimes you're friends with the artist and sometimes not. With Billy I deal on a business level and a personal level, and I think I'm free to be critical where I don't agree.

RBR: Who has the final say when the record company president feels one way and the artist feels another? Is there always a compromise?

Walter: An artist of Billy Joel's stature has the final say artistically. We will talk about it, certainly, and there's a possibility of talking him in or out of things. On the sequencing of *SONGS IN THE ATTIC*, we didn't agree. But he had a reason for it to be sequenced the way it was, so we talked about it and it came out his way. But it required some dialogue for me to understand why he wanted it that way. Occasionally, you can persuade the artists that they're doing the wrong thing. Even in the studio, we try to keep tabs on what's going on and let the artist know if they're not doing something right or they're not hitting where radio is today. In the end, the artist is the one creating the artistry, and it will be his, her, or the group's way if we can't persuade them to the contrary. I can't play the guitar and sing, therefore I can't put a song down on a record—only the artist can. But that doesn't mean we don't counsel them, try to guide them and make suggestions on certain songs, particularly if they're not singer/songwriters. But even when they are, we might say, "Gee, we heard a song of yours which is not on the album which we think is a hit and you ought to put it on." But, as I said, in the end, it's the artist who's going to make that decision.

RBR: Which part of the business do you prefer, the artistic side or the business side?

Walter: Everybody likes the artistic side of the business,

although it's not so simple. The artists get very emotional sometimes and I get very emotional sometimes! It's certainly the more glamorous and fun part. But you've got to pay close attention to the other side too. If you don't have a viable business, you can ruin a good record. You have to make sure that the art is being communicated, and sell as many records as possible for both ourselves and the artists. So, both are important, but hanging out in the studio is more fun!

RBR: What three adjectives describe your style of management?

Walter: Serious, unorthodox, and loud.

RBR: In what ways unorthodox?

Walter: I don't follow orthodox business patterns at all times. I tend to go off the wall sometimes; I tend to try new things. I don't always go down well-defined paths. So it's unorthodox in that we're open to new and different things. And I always tell people—customers, artists—what I think. I'm not withdrawn.

RBR: How many labels belong to the CBS Records Group?

Walter: There are two basic labels, the Columbia label and the Epic label, and then there's the Portrait label. There are also a whole slew of labels that we have various relationships with, that don't actually belong to us. We may distribute a label, such as Philadelphia International, but it's not owned by CBS.

RBR: What are the parts that make up a record company?
Walter: It begins with the artists who make up the record company and either they write or do not write their own material. Streisand is an artist who does not write her own material, for example. So you have the creative A&R (artist and repertoire) function of matching up the correct producer with the correct artist with the correct song, and making sure the record sounds good. Then you have to make sure it's manufactured properly so that it doesn't have little bips and squeaks and warps, which we occasionally get. Then there's promotion, which involves all kinds of things, beginning with radio promotion—trying to get your records played on stations, which is the most effective promotional device. Then there's placing the right advertising, to supporting artists' tours, to getting the record physically into the marketplace at the right time in the right quantities, to getting them sold, and then collecting our money, and then paying the artists their royalties. But I've grossly oversimplified it.

RBR: What were your perceptions of Billy Joel during the PIANO MAN and TURNSTILES era?

Walter: Before *THE STRANGER* came out, *TURNSTILES* was selling about 200,000 copies, which is not a great big sale. But Billy continued to work hard and give concerts, and at his live appearances, you got a feeling that something was going to happen.

RBR: When you first heard the tapes of *THE STRANGER* prior to its release, did you anticipate in any way just how big it would be?

Walter: I first heard *THE STRANGER* in the studio when Billy played it for us. I remember Liberty DeVitto was there with his baseball hat on. Now, I have heard records and thought they were gonna be hits and have been wrong. But I remember when I heard *THE STRANGER*, I thought, "This is going to be an absolute smash, a big hit record." I didn't know but I thought so. And I walked out and said to Billy, "That's it, you got it!" And in fact we altered our commercial relationship at about that time.

RBR: What does that mean?
Walter: We changed our contract just prior to *THE STRANGER* because we felt that he was going to happen. It was one case where I was right. There have been cases where I've been wrong.
RBR: Is *THE STRANGER* still the largest selling album in the CBS catalogue?

Walter: It's right up there in the top five along with Simon and Garfunkle's *GREATEST HITS* and *BRIDGE OVER TROUBLED WATER* albums, Streisand's *GUILTY LP*, and Boston's album entitled *BOSTON*.

RBR: How does CBS go about discovering the Billy Joels of the future?

Walter: That is essentially the function of our A&R department. You go to concerts and see opening acts, you go to clubs and look for new talent. We also listen to the hundreds and thousands of tapes that are sent to us, and we get recommendations from people in the industry whose opinions we respect. There are a number of managers and lawyers who give us tips and we follow up. There are a number of producers and artists who let us know when somebody is great. So there's a multitude of sources. There are not a lot of people in the record business—it's a small circle.

RBR: What advice would you give aspiring recording artists in these inflationary cutback times?

Walter: That's very, very tough. My own teenage son would like to be a recording artist and musician and I'm not sure what advice to offer him. He's working in a

recording studio and I tell him to learn as much as he can about the sound that goes into making a good record. But to give advice to the aspiring musician is very tough.

RBR: So what do you say, go to medical school?

Walter: No. I think first you have to find out if you're good. Which is not so easy either because where do you go to find out? Any advice I give is hard to follow. I suppose, since it's not a large industry on the record company side, the best thing is to get a good representative that has entree into a record company—which is also not that simple. So I honestly can't answer your question, except to tell you what I advised my own kid to do, which was get better and get a job at a recording studio as a gofer.

RBR: I think people will be surprised that Walter Yetnikoff didn't snap his fingers and get his son a deal.

Walter: I would never do

sent Billy's records to Russian dignitaries. If you go back to the earlier days of rock and roll, the theme was counter-establishment. When Bob Dylan sang, "Your sons and daughters are beyond your command," that's an anti-establishment viewpoint. That's not exactly something a totalitarian state relishes. So the Russians are not totally in favor of rock and roll, which has become less counter-establishment than it used to be.

RBR: What are the possibilities of rock acts like Billy's to tour Russia?

Walter: That's easy. If Billy wanted to tour there it would be easy. Blood, Sweat and Tears went over to Russia, and a number of acts have gone over to perform. But if Russia's not releasing your records and you don't have an acceptable marketplace there, and you have the whole rest of the world to establish your career in, then the Soviet Union is not the first place you choose to tour.

many artists today who are very visual. Meat Loaf commands an enormous visual appeal, as do the Rolling Stones, and many others. Still, there are some artists whose appeal is only through the ear and will not be able to make that change. But, unlike when talkies wiped out silent movies, these two new fields are not inconsistent with each another. The audio-visual field will not knock out records. Many artists today will make the transition easily and some won't.
RBR: So you have no fears that records will become obsolete?
Walter: No. If you have an audio-visual thing you have to watch it. If you're listening to a record, you don't have to sit glued to your seat. You can dance to a record and you don't have to watch it. And I'm sure your readers can think of other things you can always do to a record!



that... unless I thought he was ready, and I don't. He's got a long way to go.

RBR: You are credited with conceiving and negotiating the first agreement with the Soviet Union by an American record company to market records in Russia. When did that take place and what records are available there?

Walter: It took place seven or eight years ago and it has not proven successful although I was given a lot of credit for it. The Russians are not really as interested as they should be. The problem is really one of currency. We cannot accept rubles. You have to take hard currency that's translatable into dollars. And rubles are not. The Russians do not want to pay hard currency because, in a controlled economy, they allocate what they're going to use their rubles for and at this moment, I think they'd rather buy tractors and wheat than records. So there are a number of records available in Russia but not in large quantities. There are a lot of contraband records smuggled in. The Russian kids are also desperate for blue jeans 'cause you can't buy them over there. The other problem besides currency is that, leaving aside classical music, there's a little fear on the part of the authorities that American pop music may pollute, or change, their culture.
RBR: Are there Billy Joel records in Russia?
Walter: I'm sure there are. I've

Certain artists will not go over at all on ethical grounds.

RBR: How about China? Do you think it's in the cards for American acts to break through there?

Walter: No. That's even tougher. In Russia you can get tours because there is a record company there called Melodia. Selling the records is another thing. But if Billy Joel said he'd like to tour China, I'm not sure I could arrange that.

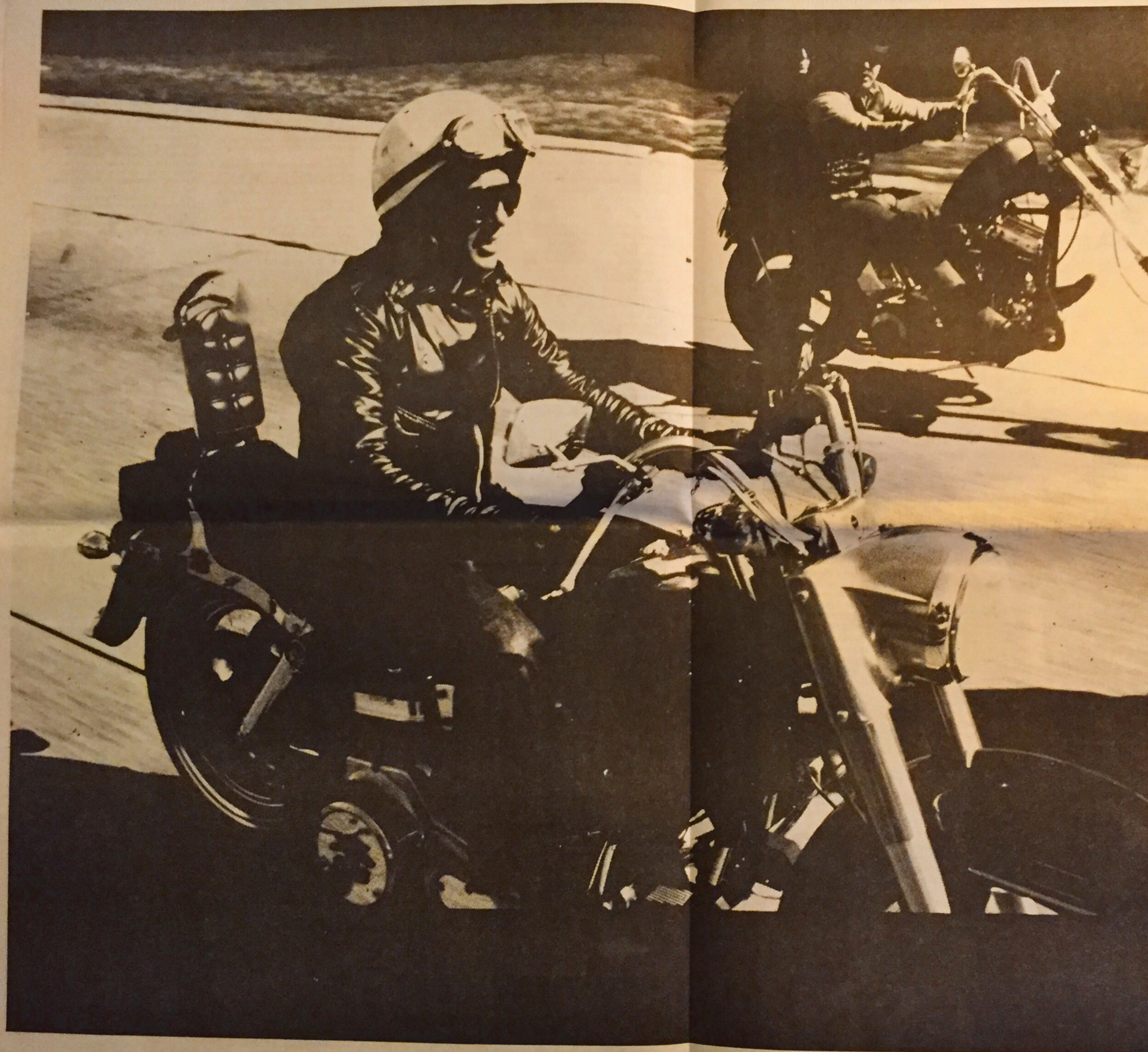
RBR: Do you think that will change in our lifetimes?

Walter: I don't know. I'm a little older than you! You might see it. China is even more afraid of cultural pollution. From a musical point of view, Russia has a large population that is attuned to certain parts of Western music, particularly classical music. And I mentioned before about smuggled records—the Russian kids are very interested in rock and roll. China is totally different, they don't have too many eyes turned to Western culture at all. Their musical forms are very different, although we are releasing some Chinese classical music here.

RBR: Last year you announced the creation of CBS Video Enterprises. How do you see the emerging home video field affecting the record industry?

Walter: I think that the new field will be successful. In many respects, it's like the early days of talking movies when some actors easily made the transition from silent screen to sound. There are





AUTUMN MOTORCYCLE RALLY

Two thousand motorcycle enthusiasts recently joined Billy Joel in a rally that helped raise funds for "Charity Begins at Home," a program begun by Billy to support self-help organizations on Long Island.

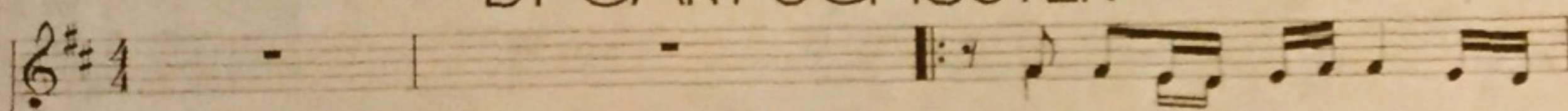
With hundreds of cheering spectators lining the route, bikers rode from Eisenhower Park in East Meadow, Long Island, to OBI South in Oak Beach, where Billy selected a rally ticket at random and presented the winner with the key to a new Harley-Davidson Sportster motorcycle. The Sportster was donated by the Brooklyn, Hempstead, West Babylon, and East Moriches Harley-Davidson dealers.

Entry fees for the rally were given directly to Long Island non-profit charitable organizations. Last year, Billy donated the proceeds from several concerts at the Nassau Coliseum to "Charity Begins at Home."



The Art Of Making Sheet Music

BY GARY SCHUSTER



Many of you have inquired about where to obtain Billy's sheet music, and which songbooks are available. Since it is impossible for Billy to respond to everyone personally, the following article answers many of your questions pertaining to the availability of Billy's published music.

When Billy Joel releases an album, his co-publisher, CBS Songs, simultaneously releases a songbook containing the music and lyrics to the songs on the album. When certain songs become hit singles on the radio, individual sheet music is also published and distributed to music and record shops throughout the world. Like the making of records, publishing sheet music is a long and complicated process that involves equal amounts of art and science.

Al Kugler, Director of Publications at CBS Songs, coordinates the many talented people who produce songbooks and sheet music. "We want to make sure we're reflecting as accurately as possible the actual song that appears on the album," Kugler says. "We also try to give something more than just the music—we try to give a feel for that particular album, and a feel for Billy Joel. So we're very concerned not only with musical notation, but also with the photos we use, the quality and color of paper, and so on."

For example, blue paper and dark

blue ink were used for the *GLASS HOUSES* songbook, rather than the traditional white paper and black ink, in order to correspond visually with that album. The cover of the newly published songbook to *SONGS IN THE ATTIC* matches the artwork on the album's cover. During the many weeks of readying a songbook for printing, Al Kugler and Jeff Schock, Billy's Director of Marketing and Promotion, are constantly in touch, reviewing the graphics and design. Photographs are collected, sorted, and tested for good reproduction quality.

Preparations for a songbook begin while Billy and the band are still recording in the studio. CBS Songs gets a tape of Billy's new songs and lead sheets—handwritten chord maps used by the band for practicing songs. The tapes and lead sheets are then forwarded to music arrangers who reproduce on staff paper what they hear on tape. It's a highly demanding and time-consuming process to guarantee that the notes and chords appearing in the songbook are exactly what Billy and the band played in the studio.

Musical notation involves dozens of different symbols. Very often, Al Kugler gives the arrangers' work to pianists to make certain that what is played sounds like the album. Music arrangers also transcribe Billy's music into notation for different instruments. Sheet music is available in arrangements for the piano, guitar, organ, flute, recorder, saxophone, and music-makers such as high school bands, marching and concert bands, and choruses. For several instruments, there are a variety of books available ranging from easy and intermediate levels to advanced. The Big Note series of songbooks features larger notation and simpler arrangements for beginner students who play infrequently. When the music arranger is finished and the notation is approved, it is sent to a music engraver. Using either a

musical typewriter or a computer typesetter, the engraver translates the arranger's penciled work into a form suitable for printing. It is critical that notes are precisely the right size and clarity, and are positioned exactly right; if a symbol is just slightly off, the music will not sound like the record when played. Engravers also make sure that pages are turned at convenient places in the composition and do not interrupt important lyric or chord changes. This work is constantly proofread and corrected by printers as well as by highly qualified musicians.



While the notation is being created, editors plan the table of contents, biographical information, lyrics, and other text that might appear. Billy personally approves all this material before it is sent to the printer.

After a songbook's pages are printed, they are collated, cut, folded, and bound together. It is not unusual for CBS Songs to print an initial run of 25-30,000 copies of a Billy Joel songbook. As an album climbs the charts, many more songbooks are manufactured.

Sheet music is sometimes printed in anticipation of a great demand. Kugler likes to recall that when he first heard *Just The Way You Are*, prior to its release, he predicted it would be a big hit, and immediately began ordering sheet music for it. Today, a special souvenir edition of sheet music for that song commemorates Billy's two Grammy Awards in

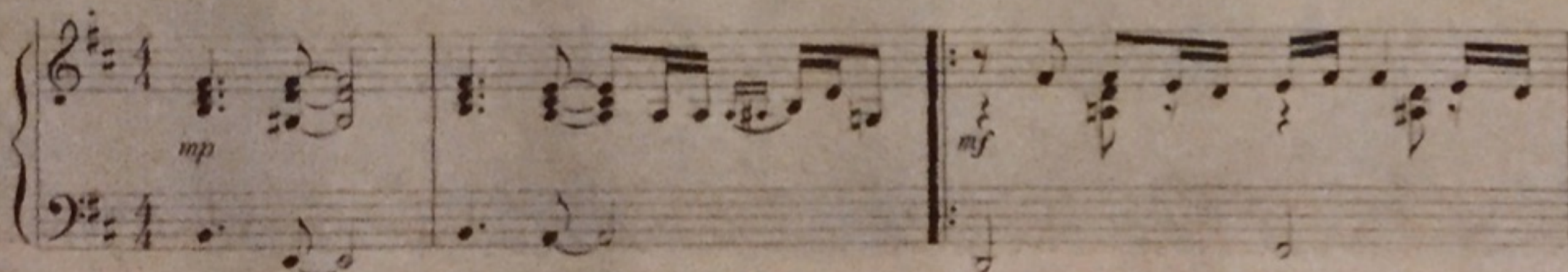


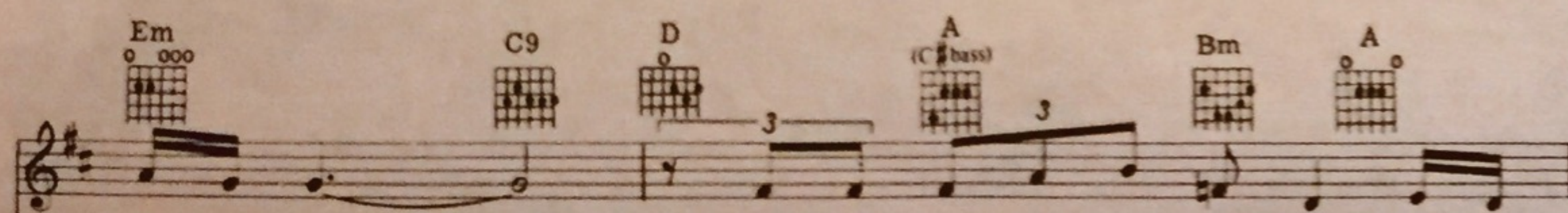
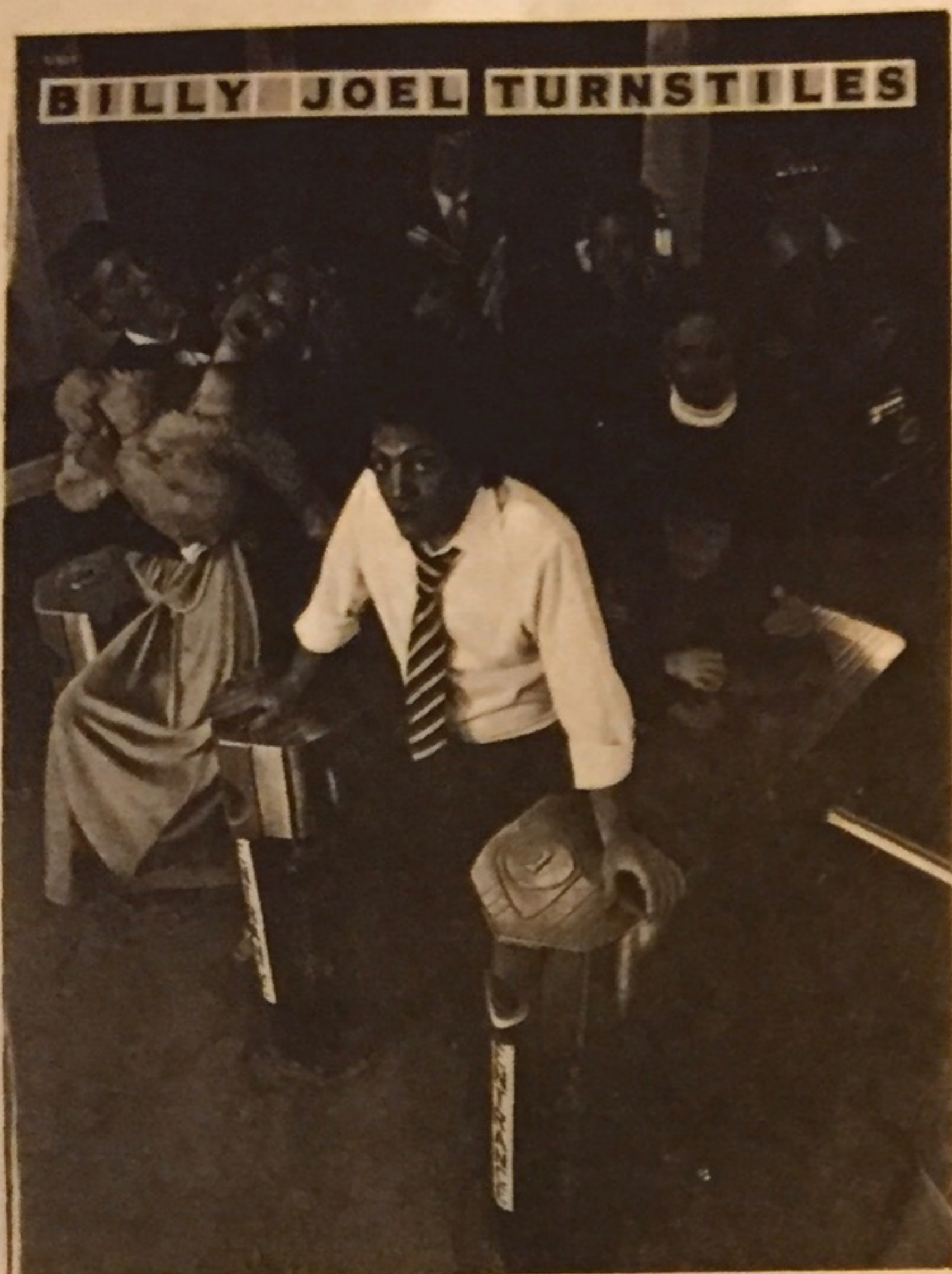
1978—Record of the Year and Song of the Year.

In addition to songbooks that match Billy's albums, CBS Songs has released *The Billy Joel Collection*, featuring music from Billy's first five albums, *COLD SPRING HARBOR*, *PIANO MAN*, *STREET-LIFE SERENADE*, *TURNSTILES*, and *THE STRANGER*, with many pictures never before published.

The photos, the lyrics, the text by Billy and others close to the band all make Billy's songbooks valuable, even to non-musicians. "We aim to make the books unique and something that people would like to own, not just to play a song from, but to have on their library shelf," Al Kugler points out. "We aim to have admirers of Billy's music pick up the book years from now and still find it interesting."

If Billy's songbooks are not obtainable at your local record or department stores, write to:
Al Kugler, Director of Publications
CBS Songs
1350 Avenue of the Americas
New York, NY 10019







Clothes In The Attic For Halloween

Photography by Paula Stone



With Billy decked out in a World War I GI uniform, Halloween at the Joels was lively and colorful. Hardly a creature from the animal kingdom nor a character from fantasy land was not represented. Here's a glimpse of just some of the fun!



Rag On Your Friends !!!



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