

CD bin bling: Tom Goodwin of West Bloomfield peruses the used compact discs at CD Warehouse in West Bloomfield.

# Bands play on, but labels hope to silence used CDs

BY JESSIE HALLADAY  
STAFF WRITER

Used compact discs have inundated the market, and that is just the way retailers and customers like it. But major record companies would like to end this new trend in music buying.

In an effort to curtail the sale of used CDs, record companies are refusing advertising to retailers who continue to deal in resale. And the retail community is angry.

From the consumer's point of view, many don't know what the record companies are doing.

"What I think is unfortunate is that most consumers aren't aware of it (the controversy)," said Thom Goodwin of West Bloomfield. "If they (record companies) keep used CDs out of stores it's a way of controlling prices."

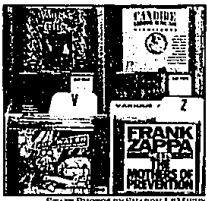
Goodwin buys two or three CDs a week, both new and used.

"What bothers me most is that record companies think they can do this and bypass the customer in the equation," he said.

Retailers concur. "We feel what they are trying to do is wrong," said Roman Kotrys, owner of the three-store chain Repeat the Beat and co-founder of the Independent Music Retailers' Association (IMRA).

Four of the six major record companies have joined in the fight, which, according to Kotrys, began when the Warehouse Record chain based in California began selling used CDs. WEA, CEMA, Uni and Sony Music take exception.

It doesn't come as a surprise that the companies want used CD sales stopped because they don't make any money off the sale, and



STAFF PHOTOS BY SHARON LEMIEUX

**Resale discs: Used CDs of ten retail for \$8 each compared to anywhere from \$12 to \$15 for brand-new ones.**

neither do the artists.

But Kotrys says that the company and artist have already been paid from the first sale so there is no problem with reselling a disc.

"The record companies claim that the sale of used CDs diminishes the quality of the product they are trying to market."

"They're saying that we are diminishing the value of the product," said Kotrys. "But what about compact disc clubs where you can get eight CDs for a penny?"

Companies also claim that used CDs hinder artists just breaking in. But retailers maintain that it really helps the new artists because people feel freer to experiment when they don't have to spend as much money.

"Record companies use stores like ours to break new artists," said Kotrys, "and by not using us, they'll be shooting themselves and the artists in the back."

Some believe that the record companies are the cause of the popularity of used CDs — by keeping the cost of the discs so high, they are actually forcing consumers to find an alternate route.

"They brought it on themselves," said Steve Minter, owner of Disc Connection in Troy. "Consumer preference is there for used. People are tired of paying \$14-15 for CDs."

"With CDs, more and more people are turning to used because they don't scratch up as easily," said Lorna Kuschel, manager of Solo Records, CDs and Tapes in Bloomfield Hills, "and they get more sounds for their money."

But not everyone is putting up a fight. CD Warehouse in West Bloomfield is discontinuing its used CD service in an attempt to comply with the record companies.

"The only way to pass along savings to the customer is to continue to buy from the manufacturers," said Larry Grodsky, manager of CD Warehouse. "The only thing we can do to maintain the best relationship (with the manufacturers) is to do what they ask."

But the majority of used CD dealers do not intend to stop selling. However, not all are optimistic that they will be successful in their fight.

"Anytime you get that much power unified," said Minter, "they're going to be tough to beat. They could care less about the mom-and-pop corner record store."

"Somewhere down the line, they may extinguish the little business."

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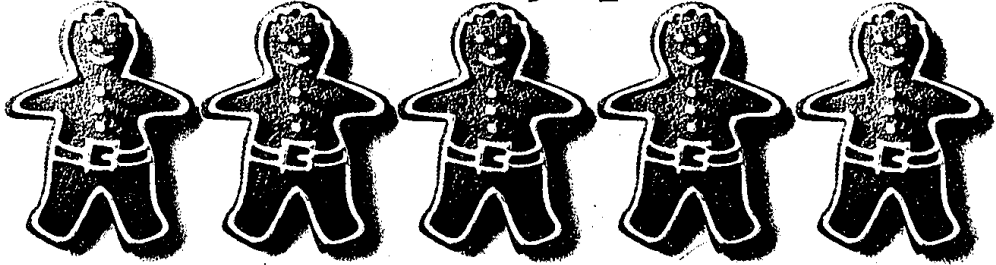
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