

SU Records expands hit-seeking facilities

By Bruce Cookson
Photos by Russ Sampson

A welcome change for the first-year and returning students will be the expanded facilities of Students' Union Records. Since May, the record store has been in a new location at the north end of the HUB Mall. The old location is now the site of the recently opened Students' Union Music and Tapes.

Two large wood-burned logos make the new store easily visible. The interior is well lit with natural lighting, and the potted plants are a nice touch. Old customers of SU Records will be glad to know that the new location provides ample room for people and records. Expanded floor space means more freedom in the aisle and less time in the purchasing line. There is a more relaxed atmosphere for buying or browsing than existed in the cramped quarters of the old store.

Atmosphere is important, but what has brought success to the store has been its management, staff, and of course, the records it has provided. Students' Union Records, owned and operated by the Students' Union, began about six years ago, but its financial success coincided with the appointment of Florence Roberts as manager. Since taking the job in August, 1976, she has used her extensive business experience to turn the store into a profitable enterprise.

One criticism of the HUB Mall has been that its location makes shops and stores unknown and inaccessible to the public. Roberts feels this isn't so, at least for her business. "I think we'd do well wherever we were." This confidence becomes tangible when one checks her record prices. Volume selling has paid for stock and initial costs and kept records at one to two dollars cheaper than those of competitors.

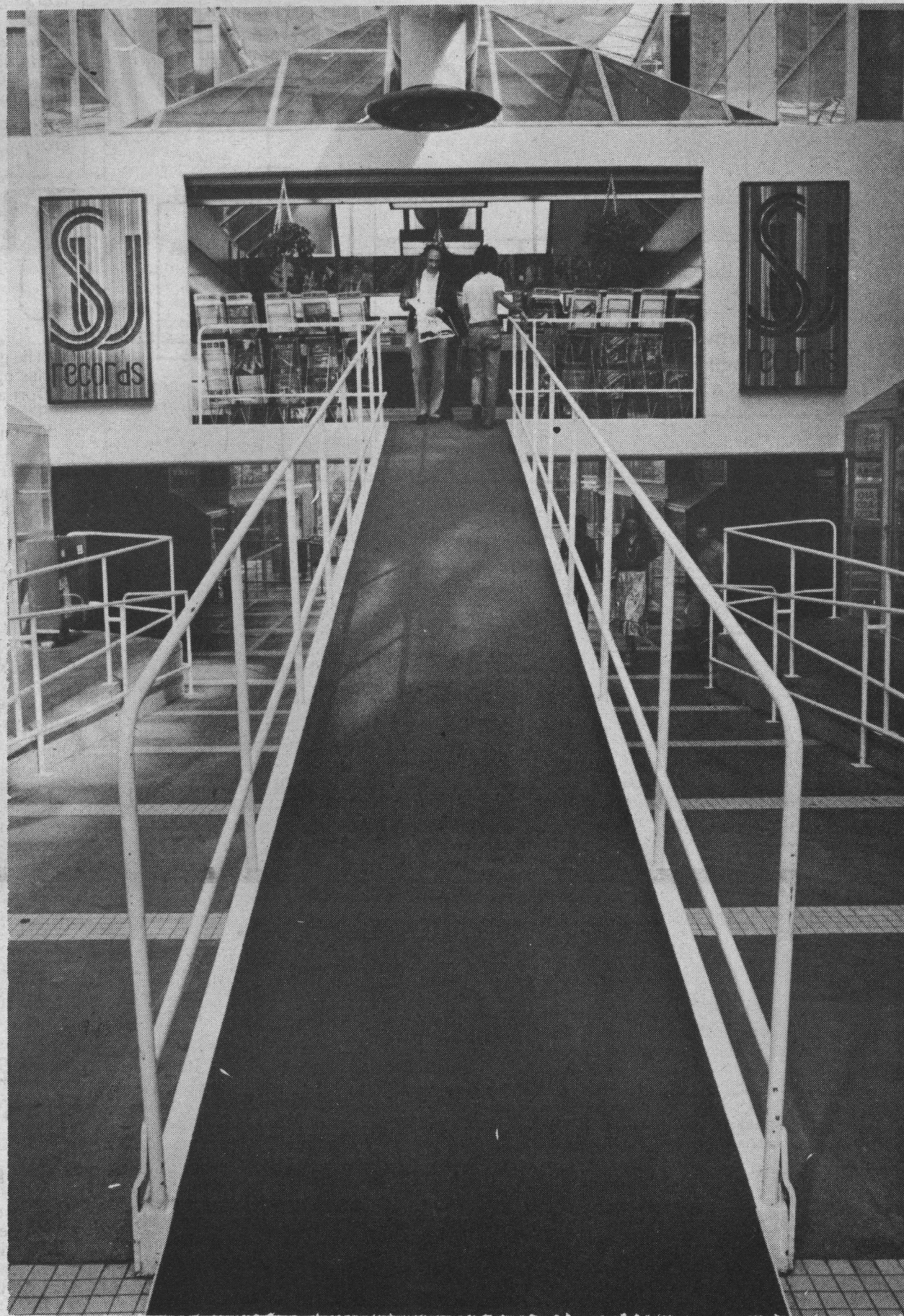
What makes SU Records special, however, is not low prices, but its musical philosophy. Allan Lucykfassel, assistant manager, says the store is trying to promote all kinds of music. The emphasis is on good music, and not on what the record companies are currently pushing. Edmonton has yet to become a city of specialist record stores, but Lucykfassel claims the SU store has "probably everything you want and way more." With an inventory of over 50,000 records, his claim is well backed quantitatively.

They have the number, then, but what is actually on the records? There are records here of all types: everything from poetry to bird calls, old radio shows to jazz. There are also the latest rock, folk, and MOR albums available. More important, the selection of artists in each category indicates that there is a fine musical intelligence at work stocking the shelves. Someone obviously cares about music and not just marketing a product.

Any records not in stock can be ordered, providing they are still attainable. There is also a mail order service for people unable to shop in person. Imports are available from many different countries, and Lucykfassel hopes the store will soon be importing these directly. All the major record labels are handled as well as the more esoteric types. Jazz fans can look for ECM and Inner City; blues and folk enthusiasts can find Alligator, Blind Pig and Rounder labels.

One of the changes in the store has been the physical separation of the classical and pop sections. A glass wall now keeps the two apart, and classical lovers can listen to their music in peace; their musical sensibilities sheltered from the "stuff" next door. John Charles is the classical records advisor for SU Records, and his section contains some 15,000 records. It is, according to Roberts, the "largest selection of classical records in Edmonton."

Albums have gone from SU Records' old location, but the music remains. The old site in the center of HUB Mall, is now the home of Students' Union Music and Tapes. Renovations have altered the store and there is even more room now that the



Old store, New location: SU Records moves north and up the ramp to success

Students' Union Box Office has moved to the north end of HUB.

One of the reasons for physical expansion was to

provide more room for a tape collection. Roberts says the inclusion of tapes reflects their growing importance; they now account for about 35% of the record industry's profits. There are about 10,000 tapes on the shelves, and most of them are cassettes. Eight-tracks, all in the pop category, will be selling on a trial basis until Christmas. At that time a decision will be made whether or not to continue sales.

In addition to these other changes, Students' Union Music and Tapes will also be selling sheet music to complement their records and tapes. Fred Crory has been important in acquiring the music, most of which is difficult to find elsewhere. There will be a full line of rock and pop music books for sale, but most of the "learn to play in five easy lesson" books will be left for competitors.

With today's prices, experimenting with different musical styles can be an expensive gamble. There are five full-time and three part-time staff members in the record store, full of helpful suggestions for customers. According to assistant manager Lucykfassel, they are perhaps more knowledgeable about music than the average sales representative. "Music is a big part of what they like; it's a major thing."

SU Records and SU Music and Tapes are open six days a week, 10 a.m. to 5:30 p.m., except Thursday, when they are open until 9 p.m. Drop in — they probably have what you're looking for.

