



The lead singer of the Leslie Spit Tree-o shows off her cool dance steps. If you didn't spend at least one night of Orientation at the Student Centre Club, how can you call yourself a York student?

We're all victims of a "Sound Scam"

by Eric Alper

analysis

Billboard Magazine's new system for calculating the amount of music sold in stores has flaws which skew its results and leave it open to possible tampering

Something major has happened to the way the pop charts are put together. *Billboard*, the bible of the record industry, has adopted the "Point Of Sale" approach to calculating what's selling, and consequently what appears on their influential charts.

A computer system called SoundScan now registers every album sold. The clerk scans the bar code and the information is registered on an international data base.

This new methodology has led to dramatic changes in the album chart. Albums routinely debut at number one: Skid Row's *Slave to the Grind* did just this a couple of weeks ago, and N.W.A.'s *Efil4reggin* entered at number two, despite having no radio play. Obviously, we have a very major problem here.

The first week of this new chart, country music experienced a new life as Garth Brooks' *No Fences* was immediately in the top five. This was the first country album to do this since Willie Nelson's *Always on My Mind* turned the trick way back in 1982.

I have nothing against country music, so y'all put your pens and pitchforks down for a moment. What I am against is the idea that an album released in 1990, as *No Fences* was, is still selling enough to make the top five in 1991. I'm sure it's a fine album, but there's no way there are enough country music buyers to put it ahead of Natalie Cole's *Unforgettable*, an album which eventually did top the hit list, but later than expected.

Besides country, the winners in this new approach are the big name stars. The losers are up-and-comers and alternative acts. For example, the soundtrack to *Pretty Woman* jumped from number 127 back up to 75, while Jesus Jones went down from 29 to 51, despite having the number one single for "Right Here, Right Now" and two videos on MTV High Rotation.

Of the 7300 stores with the Soundscan system, only 2300 are full-time record stores. The rest are department stores and discount outlets. These outlets almost always carry big name artists. What do you get when

you walk into a Zellers or K-Mart (besides the tasty microwavable hot dogs)? The top 20 albums and singles. That's it. They certainly don't sell alternative products, so the sample of the stores is totally inadequate.

Many believe this new system will have a devastating effect on new acts. Record stores tend to stock albums based on what's selling on the *Billboard* chart. Records stations base their playlists on the chart, and tours are even set up geographically solely based on this cycle.

Fredric Danen's *Hit Men*, a tell-all book on the bestseller list last year, told about "power brokers and fast money inside the music business." It lifted the covers off independent promoters with an uncanny knack for getting top 40 record stations to play certain songs. A few bucks here and there, not to mention drugs, alcohol and members of the opposite sex readily available for pleasure were more than enough to get — or not get — a certain song played on the radio.

This "Sound Scam" brings to the mind another SoundScan problem: for some reason, while the system tabulates what is going out, it does not count what is coming back, via exchanges or voids issued by clerks. It is conceivable for one to sit for hours scanning the bar code of a certain album, or even certain companies' products, then voiding them all immediately afterwards with nobody the wiser.

The new concept looks great on paper, but until the wrinkles are ironed out, it's going to hurt music in the long run, and you are the one who is going to be screwed. But, that's rock and roll.



Billboard

Score well on the

GMAT LSAT GRE

In Toronto:
923-PREP (7737)
Outside Toronto:
1-800-387-5519

順來風飯店
小菜、粥、粉、麵、飯、堂食、外賣

THE WINDS RESTAURANT



SUPERB CHINESE FOOD
DINING, TAKE-OUT & HOME DELIVERY
UNIVERSITY CITY PLAZA
59 FOUR WINDS DR., DOWNSVIEW, ONT.
PHONE: 736-4646
SUN-THURS, 11:30 a.m.-12:00 midnight
FRI & SAT, 11:30 a.m.-1:00 a.m.

CAN YOU AFFORD TO WORK AT LESS THEN 50% EFFICIENCY?



SPEED READING 8 sessions only \$95.00

Taught on campus in cooperation with YFS/FEY
\$95.00 includes all materials and textbooks.
(\$30.00 value), 1 class weekly for 8 weeks.
No charge for repeat course at a later date.

The average speed reading student
triples their reading ability

REGISTER IN CENTRAL SQUARE
WEST BEAR PIT AREA
WED. SEPT. 25, 1991, 9 AM-3 PM

CLASS I
Mondays
3 pm - 4:30 pm
Starting Sept. 30 to Nov. 18
Vanier
Room 115

CLASS II
Mondays
5 pm - 6:30 pm
Starting Sept. 30 to Nov. 18
Winters
Room 135

CLASS III
Mondays
7 pm - 8:30 pm
Starting Sept. 30 to Nov. 18
Vanier
Room 106

Speed Reading Information MEM Communications Call 1-416-775-3832

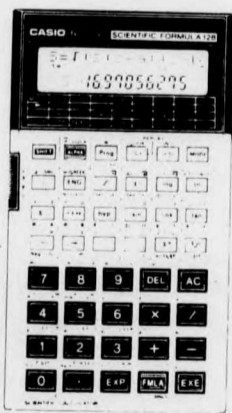
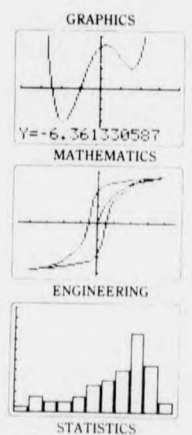
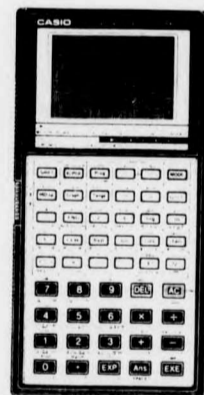
GOLDEN ELECTRONICS

261 YONGE STREET, TORONTO (across from Eaton Centre)

CASIO

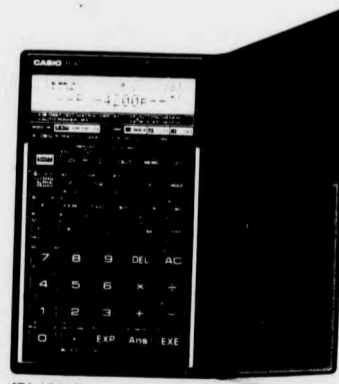
FX-7700G

- 4.1 KB/26 MEMORY
- GRAPHIC FUNCTIONS
- MATRIX OPERATION
- INTEGRATION
- 16X8 LINES DISPLAY
- STATISTIC FUNCTIONS



FX-5000F

- BUILT-IN 128 FORMULAS
- 288 FUNCTIONS
- 2 LINES DISPLAY
- 675 PROGRAM STEP



FX-4200P

- 150 FUNCTIONS
- 279 STEP MEMORY
- DOT MATRIX DISPLAY



FX-795P

- 16 KB RAM
- MATH SOFTWARE LIBRARY
- PROGRAMMABLE IN BASIC

CASIO
Where Miracles Never Cease

SHARP

HP HEWLETT
PACKARD

TEXAS
INSTRUMENTS