

Beautiful Music Syndicators Timeline

July 2001 with update December 2001

WRFM Program Services was formed by Marlin Taylor who was Station Manager of WRFM-FM in NYC in 1969. Essentially, Marlin was running the radio station and copies of Marlin's music tapes were being sent to other Bonneville-owned radio stations and a few non-Bonneville owned clients like WEZQ in Rochester.

Bonneville Program Services was formed in about 1971. At that point, John Moler was named manager of the NY radio station, Marlin was named President of the new division (BPS).

Company was renamed to Bonneville Broadcast Consultants in 1974. Moved from 485 Madison Avenue in NYC to Tenafly, NJ.

Company was renamed Bonneville Broadcasting System in 1981. Joined Satellite Music Network (located in Chicago suburb of Mokena, IL) to deliver Beautiful Music via 24 hour satellite in August, 1981.

Also in 1981, Bonneville purchased FM-100 Plan from Darrel Peters. Big stations that FM-100 had as affiliates included WLOO (FM-100, Century Broadcasting) in Chicago, KOST (Cox Broadcasting) in Los Angeles, KJQY (Westinghouse Broadcasting) in San Diego.

Bonneville purchased the 6 Beautiful Music contracts of Noble Broadcasting in 1982.

Company moves from New Jersey to the Chicago area in 1983-84.

In 1984, Bonneville purchased SRP (Schulke Radio Productions, formerly Stereo Radio Productions) and combines operations. Schulke's station list is legendary! Woody Sudbrink stations were all Schulke at the beginning. Bonneville acquired some as affiliates before the purchase of SRP, but you gotta love stations like "Peach"; WPCH, Atlanta, "Life"; WLYF, Miami, and WLIF in Baltimore and KLYF in Des Moines. There were (originally) GE-owned stations that played Beautiful: WJIB, Boston, KFOG, San Francisco. Other Sudbrink stations, "Lake" WLAK, Chicago, "Easy" WEZW, Milwaukee.

Of course, Marlin wasn't doing too badly. At Bonneville he had all big market stations like WRFM in NY, KBIG in Los Angeles, KRON, later KOIT in San Francisco, KMEZ in Dallas, KOSI in Denver, KODA in Houston, WPNT in Pittsburgh, his old alma-mater, WDVR, later WEAZ in Philadelphia. (Marlin really began his Beautiful Music programming career here as Jerry Lee's Program Director. Marlin had as his Music Director, none other than the legendary Phil Stout, who went on to become the VP/Creative Director and the primary music programmer for Jim Schulke at SRP!) I always referred to the pre-1969 days of WDVR as the "cradle of Beautiful Music," since Jerry's station was the first stand-alone FM to bill one million dollars. Jerry, with Marlin as his programmer, was VERY successful in this business! WCTO was originally a Schulke client, too. I believe someone in the group mentioned this legendary station...and it was! I believe 'CTO was the first SUBURBAN market stand-alone FM station to reach the \$1 Million dollar billing mark.

1984 is what I always refer to as the “high water mark” of Bonneville’s Beautiful Music. 184 clients, HUGE markets, enormous ratings success, but also by this time we were witnessing most markets reducing number of Beautiful stations to one per market.

In 1987, Bonneville purchased Churchill Productions from Tom Churchill in Phoenix. Tom was programmer of “Quiet” KQYT in Phoenix. Very successful and a very fine gentleman.

Easy listening, formerly Beautiful Music, began steep decline in success as a format after this point. Marlin retired from Bonneville in 1987. Instrumental/Beautiful stations began switching to Soft AC vocal formats, Bonneville client base declined, finally Bonneville ownership sold the assets of its syndicator to Broadcast Programming in November, 1993.

Broadcast Programming (originally formed in 1958) had itself been purchasing failing tape-based syndicators in the late 1980s. Starting with Peters Productions (Music For The Two Of Us), they also purchased Media General, Radio Arts, KalaMusic (Steve Trivers and Bill Wertz) out of Kalamazoo, Michigan, tape clients of TM Century and Drake Chenault Enterprises.

There were several other little bitty syndicators BPI purchased in the late 1980s...8 syndicators altogether, I believe.

To answer another question, “Is TM Century a rival?” I’ll say they are a provider of music libraries on compact disc (Gold Disc libraries and weekly updates on their Hit Disc CDs). Jones Radio Networks (formerly Broadcast Programming) also supplies radio stations with music for digital systems, computer hard drives, CD-ROMs and compact disc libraries and Chartbreakers Weekly Hit CDs. TM does not consult or provide programming expertise to radio stations as does Jones (BP). TM Century also is a very well known provider of radio station jingle packages and production libraries. I hope this makes the difference between our two operations more clear.

Other syndicators that may still be in business include RPM. Tom Krikorian is the gentleman who runs RPM (Yep, Radio Programming & Management) out of Southfield, MI (suburb of Detroit). Tom’s still in business. Distributes weekly hit service on CD far as I know, and may also provide service to some EZ stations, though probably very few. And, as far as I know, too, the Alternative Programming company is still doing business in Rockford, IL. We lost a client to them a couple years back, and they were still in Dallas then. They are still doing reel to reel business (where BPI finally exited that world on October 31, 2000).

Of course, this is just a brief overview. Your comments and corrections are welcome.



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