

Walk on the cheap side

A short, unscientifically selected list of second-hand and used record shops in Portland

BY DR. TANTALUS

It takes only a brief stroll through Tower Records to discover that the record industry is pumping out hundreds of new albums each month. Of course, most of these will never be heard on any radio stations within 150 miles of where most of us live and even in the big city havens such as Los Angeles most new music simply dries up and fades away.

Music

Poring through this incredible output to separate the diamonds from the rhinestones is a Herculean task that requires every available second one can legitimately devote to the undertaking. While critics at The Village Voice and The New York Times receive promotional copies of these new releases, Just Out is fortunate to receive a single album during the course of the year. This frequently leaves Dr. Tantalus and his ever faithful assistant, Nurse Consuelo, in the unenviable position of reviewing those records that can be squeezed within their monthly budget. Make a couple of mistakes and whoops! — next month's column just went down the drain.

These economic facts of life place a premium on acquiring the largest number of albums at an affordable price. As a result, your intrepid duo has increasingly turned to perusing the used and second-hand record shops in order to alleviate this deficit spending. Armed only with our pointed elbows and the shopping skills developed at Meier and Frank warehouse sales (back in the days when they happened but twice a year) we offer our short, unscientifically selected list of stores where you might be able to save a nickel or two.

This time we also have given special consideration to those places in which used CDs can be found. With the drop in prices on many disc players, the continued steep prices of most CDs (\$11.99 on sale - \$15.00 or more) and the general increase in CD sales as a whole, a loosely organized used CD market has sprung up throughout Portland.

Another factor that apparently has accelerated the used CD market has been the rise in the crime rate. CDs make prime targets for theft: they are easily carried and can be readily sold. Since about 60 of the Doctor's CDs are circulating due to an unexpected change in ownership during the past year it is likely that some used CDs are simply "hot." One can certainly argue that purchase of such used discs encourages their theft. However, given the fact that many CDs are legitimately sold on the used market this appears to be a decision left to the individual consumer.

Django Records, 1111 SW Stark. Django

has a good selection of used albums and within the past year has been including used CDs in its portfolio. The selection is typically varied and changes frequently. David Byrne, Prince and The Beatles were among the discs seen on our last trip.

Dudley's New and Used Records, 808 SW 10th. Dudley's has one of the best collections of dance music available in the City and its used CDs often reflect alternative and new wave music. Prices are fairly typical for used CDs: \$8.99 to \$10.99 is the common range found around town. However, even careful shoppers can make errors. Dr. Tantalus recently purchased a new CD that was later found at Turntable Mary's for \$4 less. It always pays to shop around.

Turntable Mary's, 120 SW Stark. Turntable Mary's focuses on its collection of domestic and imported dance music. It's CD selection is growing and we've heard that they intend to expand further. Used CDs are almost non-existent, but this probably stems more from the limited availability of CD dance tracks than anything else. However, it is a great place for the hard-to-locate tune that's been bouncing in your head all week.

2nd Avenue Records, 418 SW 2nd. Right around the corner from Turntable Mary's. Frankly, it pays to check 2nd Avenue out since their prices can some times undercut Turntable Mary's on individual items. However, 2nd Avenue does not cast its lot solely with dance music and hordes of teenagers can be found there most every Saturday afternoon buying the latest head-banging music. Their import CD collection, which is kept behind the front counter, contains a surprising number of CD singles. The drawback is that there is very little space in which to look at them.

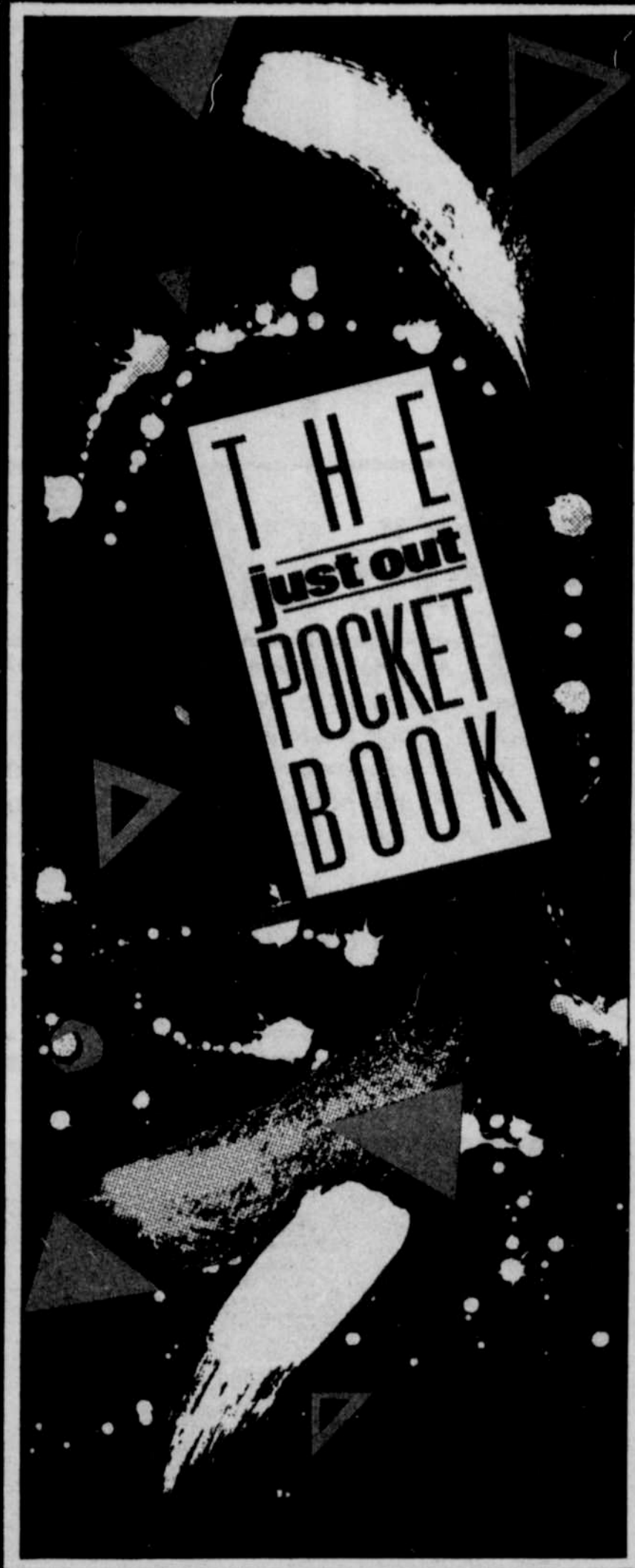
Rockport Records, 203 SW 9th. Rockport has many charms, including its support of local artists. However, used CDs have only recently appeared there and the selection, at least at present, is limited.

Crocodile Records, 3623 SE Hawthorne; 828 SW Park. For used CDs the store on SW Park is the one to try. The selection runs the gamut of the pop music spectrum.

Audio Addict, 917 SW Alder. Audio Addict appears to concentrate on alternative music and their used CD collection, although small, does the same. It's nice to see a store fill the alternative void, although one wonders whether they can last in what appears to be a high-rent district. We've got our fingers crossed here.

This is hardly an exhaustive list of cheaper music in Portland. However, since used CDs sound every bit as good as one fresh from the plastic shrinkwrap, it's often worth a trip to see if you can save yourself the extra cash. Our experience has been that even recently released albums show up fairly quickly at the used record outlets. Sometimes this means that the disc is a stinker, but then not everybody has the same good taste that you do, do they? ▼

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