



Sam with a happy customer, TV star Nanette Fabray. On an average day 4000 people shop at Goody's.

Duke of the Disc Dealers

Sam Goody runs the world's largest record store—without salesmen. Sometimes customers have to stand in line for an hour to get inside the place.

By RICHARD THRUENSEN



Goody (center) helps Pakistani Ambassador Ali and his begum add to their collection of American jazz.

One day last winter a New York merchant named Sam Goody returned from lunch and entered his self-service record shop on 49th Street, just off Manhattan's Times Square. Nodding to the clerks around the door, Goody started toward the rear of the store, threading his way through the customers milling around before the long, head-high racks of records.

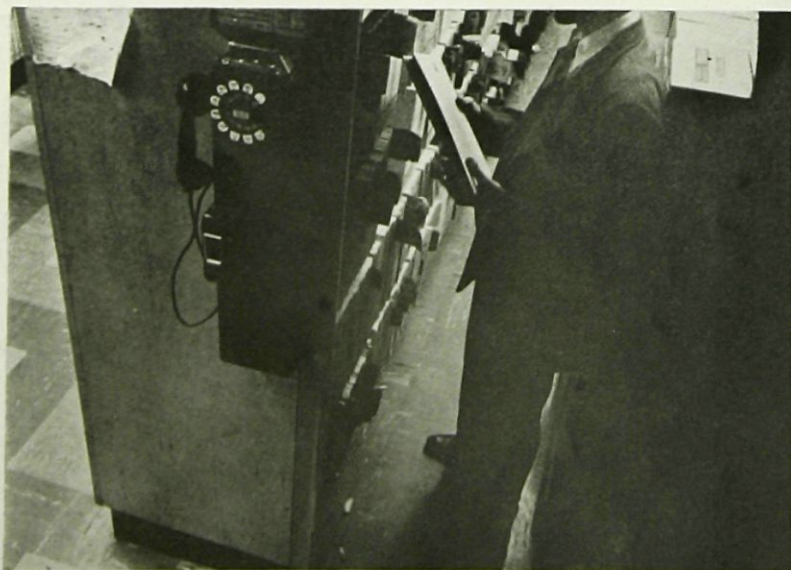
"I saw this fellow who acted suspicious," relates Sam, looking owlish behind his glasses, "and so I moved in close to him and made believe I was looking at records too. I still had my hat and coat on. The next thing I knew, this man, he looked around and took about half a dozen records from the shelves and stuck them under his coat. Then he looked around again and he even looked at me, but he didn't say anything. So I went up to him and said, 'So you think you're going to get away with that?' And this fellow looked around and said, 'Yeh, you take some too. You ought to be able to get away with it. There's nobody watching.' So I said to him, 'Well, if I do, it won't do me much good because it only happens that I'm the guy who owns this store.' So this fellow gave me a

startled look and opened his coat and dropped the records and went out of there fast."

This invitation to pilfer his own wares did not unduly shock Sam. When you run the world's largest record store you have to be prepared for almost anything—music lovers being the individualists they are. Goody's customers—an average of 4000 a day visit the store, while additional thousands order by mail—include royal households, ambassadors and diplomats, the Armed Forces at home and abroad, entertainment stars, audiophiles, professional musicians, glassy-eyed collectors and just plain people who want to buy a record or two. The average purchaser at Goody's leaves between fifteen and twenty dollars with the cashiers when he leaves the store, but there have been single orders for more than \$25,000 worth of records, and there is one indomitable character who has appeared once a week for more than a year to ask for a record which has never been pressed. No one pays any attention to Marilyn when she shops at Goody's for Bartok, Alban Berg and other long-haired discs—because, obviously, Mozart is more exciting than Monroe—and no one bothers the gentleman who

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Photographs by Margery Lewis



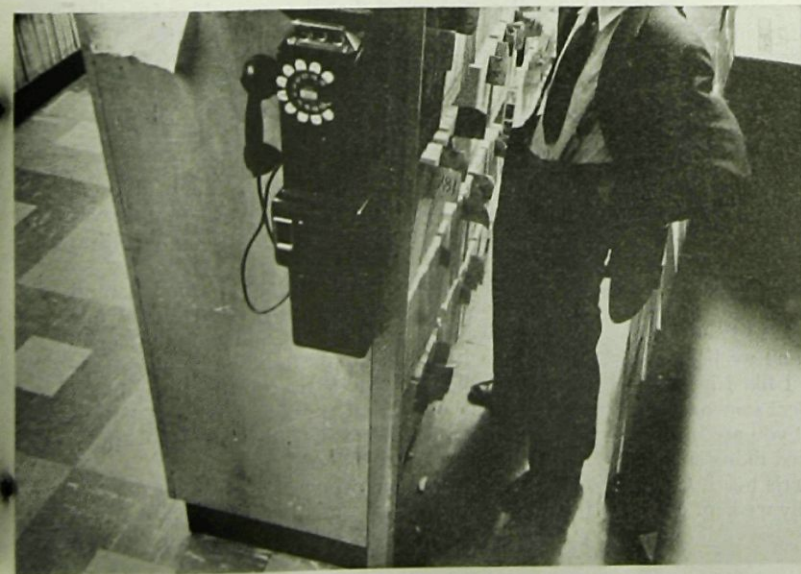
1 Here, a reformed thief re-enacts the theft of a record album.



2 Records aren't easily concealed, but this fellow gives it the old college try.



Last year, Goody's did a \$4,000,000 business. The secret of Sam's success: low prices and a huge stock. He carries a line of 38,000 different LP records.



3 The light-fingered music lover adjusts his loot, and prepares for a getaway.



4 Buttoned up and ready to go, the thief will now get an unpleasant surprise from the shop's "spotter."



Duke of the Disc Dealers

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spends hours taking records from the racks, cleaning them with a damp cloth and examining them through a jeweler's glass. This perfectionist usually buys one record.

Goody's volume is a retailer's dream of an unobtainable paradise; selling only long-playing discs, the store's over-the-counter and mail-order sales in 1955 approximated seven per cent of the total national sales of 33 $\frac{1}{3}$ RPM records. This oversized slice of the record retailers' pie is the more remarkable when it is considered that there are no salesmen and no record players for the customers' use in the Goody shop. The Goody staff of consultants stand by to help the customers find records and to advise when they are called upon, but other than that, the purchaser is on his own. Having selected and paid for his records, the customer must take them home if he wants to hear what they sound like. Last year, this continuing act of faith on the part of music lovers accounted for a Sam Goody gross of close to \$4,000,000.

Sam Goody's success story, an eight-year, full-throttle climb which is without precedent or parallel in the record-selling trade, is generally attributed to the fact that the store operates on two sound merchandising principles—low prices and a big stock. Goody sells the average long-playing record, which has a retail list price of \$3.98, for \$3.25, and scales down other records accordingly. Twice-yearly sales whittle this basic price down to about \$2.50, the approximate wholesale price of the discs. Goody's inventory is by all odds the world's largest—the store currently carries in stock some 38,000 different long-playing records. This selection accounts for just about every ten- and twelve-inch disc made available by the 100-odd record manufacturers. The on-hand supply of each of these labels runs from half a dozen records to, sometimes, 10,000 copies of a fast-moving number. The day-to-day value of Goody's long-playing inventory is, roughly, \$1,250,000. Recently an annex on the opposite side of 49th Street was opened to sell 45 RPM and 78 RPM discs, most of them in the jazz and popular-music class. The stock necessary for this store will increase the Goody inventory by \$500,000. No one yet knows what this second store will do to the Goody gross, though Sam

has his eye on the \$5,000,000 mark for 1956.

Bargain prices and the customer's assurance of finding what he wants have surely helped Sam Goody to run far ahead of the retailing pack, but there is more to the story than that. There has been, if you will pardon the expression, a trend. The direction and force of this trend are to be found in two figures. In 1950 there were \$185,000,000 worth of records, of all types, sold in this country. In 1955 the public's bill for records was \$220,000,000—an approximate 20 per cent dollar-increase during a period when record prices dropped about one third. Someone has pointed out that we now pay more for records than we pay to watch baseball. A good many authorities—including Sam Goody—feel that Sam Goody has played a significant part in this recent growth of recorded music in the home. A brief look at Sam's business history suggests there may be some substance in this claim.

Sam, who has no objection to the obvious in his own humor, insists that he backed into the record business. This happened seventeen years ago when Goody had a small toy-and-novelty shop in downtown New York. A stranger walked into the shop one day and asked Sam if he had any records around—old records.

"I said, 'Why records?'" reports Sam. "I thought they went out with the dodo birds. This fellow said he was looking for old records by people like Caruso and Alma Gluck and Paul Reimers and Tomagno and people like that, and that he'd be willing to pay from fifty cents to a dollar for certain records. I told this fellow I knew where there was a stack of old records and that I'd bring them down to the store for him in a day or two. I'd remembered that when I was in the basement talking to the superintendent of my apartment building a few days before, I'd stepped back and broken a few of a big pile of records that lay in the corner. I had felt bad about it, but the super told me to forget it—that he was going to burn the whole lot when he got time."

Sam hurried back to the basement that night and found that a number of the records bore names the stranger had mentioned.

"There must have been a hundred and fifty of those old seventy-eights in the pile

and they weighed almost a pound apiece. The super said he'd settle for a cigar. I gave him a quarter, for three cigars, and lugged the stuff down to the shop. A few days later the stranger came in and fished out about thirty of those records. He asked me how much I wanted and I asked him what they were worth to him. He said he couldn't give me more than twenty-five dollars for the ones he had chosen. I told him I'd take it, and said to myself, 'This is a beautiful business. What am I doing wasting time with toys and novelties?'"

That started Sam in the business of searching out discarded collections of old records and selling them, in turn, to record collectors. It was an esoteric but highly profitable trade. Most of the choice discs were vocal recordings from the early 1900's and the early jazz records of the '20's. As a case in point, Sam located an Italian family in Brooklyn with a collection of some 300 operatic records. After a good deal of dickering, Goody bought the lot for sixty dollars. He eventually made a profit of eleven hundred dollars on those records.

Having established himself as a collector's dealer, Goody dropped his toys and novelties and broadened his record business by selling new discs. It was about this time that Victor and Columbia cut the price of their quality records from two dollars to one dollar to stimulate sales. It was during this period, too, that Sam discontinued the practice of letting his customers play records before buying them—an innovation which, to this day, has attracted few imitators.

"If a customer wants to buy a record, he doesn't have to hear it," is Sam's theory. "He'll buy it, and if he isn't satisfied when he gets it home we'll switch it and give him something else. That way we saved a lot of time and the bother of having people who just wanted to listen to music clutter up the shop. Later, when we got into the long-playing records with their fine grooves, we saved a lot of records. A careless customer can spoil a record in a minute."

Sam made what he calls "a fair chunk of money" with his downtown record shop. A brief and disastrous experience as the wholesaler of a nonselling line of records dissipated the profit he had made from the sale of his downtown shop and in 1948 Sam borrowed several thousand dollars and re-established himself as a retailer in mid-Manhattan. The major recording companies were then introducing their 45- and 33 $\frac{1}{3}$ -speed unbreakable vinyl records in competition with the old 78-speed shellac discs and Sam turned this three-speed confusion to his own advantage by buying up old stocks of 78's from panicky dealers. Buying and selling these orphans of the record war at bargain rates put Sam Goody back into the retail-record business in a big way.

"I knew there was no real future in buying and selling the old seventy-eights," recalls Sam. "I decided to gamble on the future of the long-playing records."

The sales gimmick Goody chose to help establish the store in the long-playing field was a simple and, on the face of it, a suicidal one. Columbia was then producing a plug-in unit which modified a 78-speed phonograph so that it would play 33 $\frac{1}{3}$ -speed long-playing records. Goody bought these units from Columbia for \$9.95 apiece and offered one free to every customer who bought twenty-five dollars' worth of long-playing records.

"The records cost us fifteen dollars and fifty cents, and by the time I added advertising and promotion I was losing about a dollar and a half on each one of these transactions. Despite that, I gave away forty thousand of those machines within



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Brother, if you've been meaning to try a pipe, here's your baby. A completely different, patented construction. Far sweeter, drier, cooler! Whatever you smoke now, you'll love Airowrate Yello-Bole. Extra "screw-in" bowls—\$1.25 each—make a whole pipe collection. Ask your Yello-Bole dealer for this exciting new Airowrate Pipe, and for choice briars from \$1.50 to \$2.50.

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Airowrate "Icepak"! Real cool gift idea—pipe plus two extra interchangeable bowls, smartly boxed in plastic "ice". \$5.00.

FREE booklet—

"How to enjoy a pipe." Write Yello-Bole, Dept. 27, N. Y. 22



a short period of time. That meant forty thousand new customers for long-playing records, and I think helped establish the thirty-three-and-a-third speed as the dominant one in the classical and popular field. Jazz, with its shorter pieces, is better suited to the little forty-five-speed records. The seventy-eight speed is gradually being discarded altogether."

During the three years from 1949 to 1952, Goody's sales jumped from \$500,000 to \$2,000,000 a year. Through advertising his "giveaway" machine he also established a world-wide mail-order service. During this burgeoning period, Sam moved to his present location near Times Square and started building up his staff, which now numbers 138 employees. The most notable addition, personnel-wise, was Abner Levin.

Levin, who is Sam's manager, is the intellectual counterpoise of the Goody enterprise. A soft-spoken man who talks around an ever-present pipe, Levin is a student of both music and the music business. Editor of David Hall's guide through the long-playing record world, *The Disc Book*, and publisher of the Goody catalogue, Levin is the store's final authority on most questions pertaining to recorded music. Levin maintains that he has listened to most, though not all, of the Goody 38,000-record inventory.

The store Goody moved into is a neon-lighted, air-conditioned room about the size of a tennis court. The interior is cut into aisles by the long rows of shelves, and looks more like a library than a store. At the rear of the store is an area that is set aside for record players and hi-fi equipment. Above this there is a balcony with an office shared by Goody and Levin. Behind partitions which border the store area and in the basement are records—mountains and mountains of records which move out in batches to fill the sales bins as rapidly as they are emptied. This reserve stock is constantly replenished by both distributors' deliveries and the three Goody trucks which shuttle around the city between the store and its suppliers. The Goody mail-order division occupies several floors of a building across the street, just above the annex store.

The various labels—Victor, Columbia, Decca, and so on—are sectionalized at Goody's and in each section the records are racked according to their catalogue number. Customers, who may browse as much as they wish, sift slowly up and down the aisles, peering intently at the labels above each bin and occasionally pulling out a record in order to digest the full, rich prose with which the record companies describe their products. When the prospective purchaser has bought his quota—which is usually two or three more records than he can afford—he moves reluctantly away from the racks, has his records wrapped, pays his bill and then speeds home to listen to his new treasures and refigure his week's budget.

This agonizing contest between will power and desire is a sort of psychic mist which clouds the air at Goody's. The temptations of the saints were mild compared with the inner struggles of a music lover surrounded by 38,000 records he can feel, fondle—and buy. Sam, though he profits from these unequal battles, is nevertheless aghast at the emotional traumas involved.

"It's pitiful, sometimes, if they've got it bad. Their eyes get glazed, they go white, their hands tremble. They're oblivious of everything around them. They take out a record, study it, push it back, move away and then move back to the same record again. As I watch them I often feel that a dope peddler is a gentleman compared with a man who sells records." The forms the music lover's acquisitive

mania takes are sometimes surprising. Although Goody's has a rule that customers must check anything that can hold records at the door, some regular patrons are allowed to carry their brief cases with them into the record stacks. One frequent visitor—a well-known New York professional man—apparently loses all self-control when he finds himself surrounded by records and simply stuffs his brief case with everything it can hold. And once they are in the brief case, this customer feels that the records are his; to save him the embarrassment of a customs check at the door, Goody's simply estimates the number of records in the brief case and hands him a bill. The record fancier never questions the total and pays on the spot.

Another collector, faced with the problem of how to buy more records without causing trouble at home, enlisted Goody's help in a really nefarious bargain. As Sam tells the story:

"This fellow came in and said, 'Look here, Goody, my wife swears she'll divorce me if I buy another record. So you take this hundred dollars and keep it, and when I walk in here with my wife in a few days to exchange a record, you tell me I've won a contest or something and that the prize is a hundred dollars' worth of records.'

"I went along with him," continues Goody, "and a few days later this fellow walks in with his wife. I greeted him and then snapped my fingers and said, 'Say, aren't you so-and-so and didn't you enter that prize contest we had here several months ago? Well, you won first prize, which is a hundred dollars' worth of records. Congratulations!' So I gave him a credit slip and he traded on that for several months. I don't know what trick he'll come up with next."

Another music lover—a wealthy businessman who apparently faces similar obstructionism on the home front—has arrived at a different solution. This collector visits Goody's once a week and buys everything that has been issued during that period which strikes his fancy. The purchases are wrapped in packages of two or three records and held at Goody's, and whenever the collector's wife is away from home for part of the day a messenger picks up a package and delivers it to the apartment—where an accomplice places them in the record collection. The collector thinks he is fooling his wife with his gradually expanding record library. Sam, who is a grandfather, isn't so sure.

The compulsion to buy more and more records—which is quite distinct from the urge to play and enjoy records—has been

the subject of considerable study by Abner Levin—who suffers from what might be called a painless form of the compulsion.

"There seems to be a certain narcotic effect which records have upon the buyers. I've decided that the bigger the collection and the easier it comes to hand, the less there is for that individual to play at any given time. If he owns fifteen records, he has something to play. If he owns five thousand records, he has to go down to Sam Goody's because he hasn't got a damn thing to play. This is a psychological phenomenon I find to be true in my own case and with every one of our large buyers. I ask them, 'You bought thirty records last week, what do you need?' And they tell me, 'I have nothing to play.'

"Many collectors will acquire a record, handle it with gloves on, play it once and then put it away—and there it remains forever. They will stand before their enormous collection and say they have nothing to listen to today, got to get down and buy some more records. It's a sickness which, fortunately, is highly profitable to the record industry."

"It's an odd thing," continued Levin, "that even ordinary record buyers exhibit an iron determination to get the records they want, when they want them. Some of our busiest days are when the weather is worst. Apparently the record-buying public suddenly realizes it needs something to play on a stay-at-home evening. We had a hurricane last year. All New York workers were urged to leave their offices early and go straight home. We were jammed that day—couldn't get the store cleared at our seven-o'clock closing hour. During one of our sales last year we had a terrific snowstorm and bitter cold. There was a double line half a block long outside the store, waiting to get in as others left. Some of those people waited an hour out there and were almost frozen by the time they got in."

Some "collectors" suffer from a different sort of sickness—a psychopathic urge to get something for nothing. Goody's staff is up to most of the tricks employed by these dreamers. One customer—a well-dressed man of obvious means—regularly buys four or five records a week. On each of his buying visits this man will secrete one extra record about his person. Goody's, rather than lose a good customer, simply adds the charge for this extra record when he presents his purchases to the cashier. The customer blandly pays the bill and walks out with his purchases and what he considers his "free" record.

One of the most obvious dodges employed by light-fingered patrons at Goody's is to take a cheaper record from an on-sale bin and switch the envelope or sleeve containing the record with the sleeve of a more expensive disc from the regular stock. Goody's cashiers counter this by glancing at the contents of all sleeves in the lower-price brackets. Oddly enough, these fey deceivers rarely bother to look above the sales floor—if they did they would find a laconic young lady spotter interestedly watching the switcheroo from the rear balcony.

Professional thieves rarely bother Goody's, because records are difficult to get away with and hardly worth a pro's effort. Lower-class Fagins sometimes give it the college try; at Goody's these gentlemen are known as LC's because they generally appear with long coats, no matter what the weather. Goody spotted one of the brethren last year and grabbed the back of his coat just as the culprit went out the door. A score of records spilled out, the thief wiggled out of the coat and dashed down the street, and Sam was left at the door holding the garment. In the pockets there (Continued on Page 124)



Look at the State They're In!

"I live in Kentucky, but I can't get back to my home without leaving the state!" That complaint by residents of the extreme southwestern corner of Kentucky who are visiting elsewhere in the state meets with sympathy but nothing more. For their trouble is caused by something that is hard to lick—"Ol' Man Ribber," the mighty Mississippi.

Early in history, the Mississippi shifted its course and lopped off the far corner of Kentucky by cutting inside it all the way down to Tennessee. About eleven square miles of Fulton County was left caught up in a loop of the river, known as the Madrid Bend, with Tennessee to the south and Missouri across the river to the east, north and west. To get to their county seat of Hickman, Kentucky, the river-exiled residents of Fulton County had a hard choice:

Ferry north across the river to New Madrid, Missouri, and travel

nineteen miles through that state to another ferry upstream at Dorena, opposite Hickman, or take a forty-one-mile roundabout ride circling south and east, about twenty-five miles of it through "alien" Tennessee.

Official surveyors of Kentucky and Tennessee got together in 1858 at a river village optimistically called Compromise and tried to resurvey state boundaries to untangle the strayed portion of Fulton County from its next-door neighbors. Their work failed to solve the situation, however.

Prodded by the annoyance of being used as a corridor between the two parts of Kentucky, Tennessee has halfheartedly petitioned her neighbor to relinquish the stray bit of land to her. The true-blue Kentucky answer is, "Who in thunderation wants to live in Tennessee?"

Richard McGregor

(Continued from Page 122) were several dollars in change and two letters asking the recipient to pick up certain records at Sam Goody's. Unfortunately, the addresses had been removed from the mail, so Sam had no way of returning to the accommodating shopper his coat or money.

If there is such a thing as an average purchaser of serious record music—the cheaper jazz records attract a large teenage audience—Goody's experience suggests that he is a preoccupied male in the thirty-to-fifty age bracket. Masculine customers outnumber the ladies 30 to 1 at Goody's, which leads Abner Levin to conclude that good music in the home lies almost entirely within the man's province.

"I think that's partly because the man has more ready cash to spend on records and partly because the reproducing equipment, with its switches and knobs and dials, is generally considered a man's gadget. I notice that when we sell equipment to couples the man is most interested in tonal quality, while the wife is usually concerned with the appearance of the machine and often indifferent to the quality of the reproduction. Men, of course, like to play their music much louder than women, which is probably why so many men and so few women are audiophiles and hi-fi addicts."

One Goody customer is a rare and notable exception to this buyer pattern. An old lady in her seventies, she depends on Levin to set aside all records with fortissimo percussion passages.

"She loves drums, gongs, cymbals and anything that makes a loud banging noise. She has excellent hearing and is not interested in volume, as such. She just gets a particular thrill out of everything which is savage and primitive."

One of Sam's favorite customers is a naval commander who has been visiting the store, at irregular intervals, for years. This purchaser always makes a careful study of the art work on the envelopes of the records.

"He'd call me over occasionally," relates Goody, "and suggest that a certain record must have good music on it because of the fine picture on the envelope. I could see he didn't know much about music, so one day I volunteered that he must get some surprises—buying records by the picture on the front. And he said, 'Oh, I haven't played any of my records yet. Someday when I retire, in another five or ten years, I'm going to sit down and play them all for the first time.' There's a man who has probably collected several thousand dollars' worth of records without hearing one of them. Since we learned that, we've been trying to guide his selections, so he won't be disappointed."

Another Goody customer—a purser on an Italian ship which calls at New York—has spent years collecting operatic records and now owns just about every operatic pressing made in this country. This enthusiast, having no permanent home, takes his purchases back to Italy, where he stores them in a warehouse. When he retires, the purser is going to buy himself a small villa near his native Milan and spend the rest of his days listening to opera.

It was an operatic record that recently gave Dave Kurlan, a member of the Goody staff, a hard time. Kurlan, a singer himself and a former recording technician, takes care of most of the complaints and the record returns at Goody's.

"This woman brought back a recording of Mozart's Marriage of Figaro and complained that there was some extraneous noise in the recording. She said it sounded like someone being slapped. I

told her that, as I remembered the opera, there was some slapping going on at one point. But this lady would have none of that; she'd seen the opera a dozen times from her regular sixth-row seat at the Metropolitan and she'd never seen or heard anything like this. So I had to hunt up a score, find where Susanna is berating Figaro and giving him the back of her hand, and then play the record again for the customer. At the point where the slaps came I gave myself a couple of hard ones on the face—and there was the same sound which bothered her on the record. That satisfied her. That must have made quite a picture—me standing in front of the machine slapping myself silly while we listened to the record.

"Now, if she had been an audiophile," continued Kurlan, "she would have prized that record. Audiophiles may like music, but what they prize most are the extraneous sounds their equipment can catch on a record—they're always listening for sounds that are not supposed to be on the record. If they can hear a singer taking a deep breath, or a chair scraping in the background, or the sound of the keys during a piano concerto, then they feel their expensive equipment is doing a good job. We have one audiophile customer who assembled his own equipment; he loves organ music, and when he can stand in the middle of his living-room floor and feel the vibrations coming from an organ record playing full blast, then he's happy. I'd hate to be his neighbor."

Considering the fact that Goody's customers cannot listen to their records when they choose them, the store's problems with returned records is a relatively minor one. The staff attributes this to an educational campaign they have been carrying on in concert with several of the record manufacturers.

"The cross all record dealers have to bear," states Kurlan, "is that phrase, 'permanent needle.' Medium-priced record players are generally equipped with a sapphire needle, which will not play more than forty or fifty records without deterioration of the sound. Expensive equipment has a diamond needle, which should last for a thousand hours of playing. But no needle is permanent, and a blunted needle will destroy the record grooves. Most customers blame the record when it's their own needle that's at fault; I haven't seen more than two or three imperfectly manufactured records in the seven years I've been working here."

Members of the top echelon at Goody's can all spot difficult-to-play records by simply examining the grooves under a good light—just as they can all warble

perfect 400-cycle A's, in order to straighten out buyers who claim a record is off pitch. The difficult records are those with percussive sounds which may bounce an improperly balanced tone arm out of the groove. Goody's suggested therapy for this trouble costs twenty cents—tape two dimes to the tone arm just above the needle. The store recommends an even cheaper remedy for another common complaint—rapidly wearing records and a needle which slides the grooves. Take a carpenter's level and see that your turntable is on an even keel.

"We'll play any returned record on our own machines," explains Levin, "to show the customer that it's his equipment and not the record that's at fault. If that doesn't satisfy him and if the record hasn't been played more than once or twice, we'll give him another record. Record scratches are difficult to decide about because there's always the chance that the record was scratched during packaging at the factory or here in the shop while someone was examining it. We can tell how many times a record has been played—record changers always make a mark at the spindle hole and at the entrance groove when the needle moves onto the disc."

Sam is convinced that record buyers are an inordinately suspicious lot. "We sell diamond needles here—they range from ten to twenty-five dollars apiece. Every once in a while a customer will come in with a diamond needle and ask us to examine it. 'Tell me if you think I ought to replace this,' he'll say. Our man will examine the needle under a microscope. 'You can replace it,' he'll tell the customer, 'but you'll be wasting money. It's a perfect needle—in fact, it's never been played.' We can be fairly sure, then, that we sold the customer that needle a few days before."

The fact that Sam Goody's is more than just a local or even an American institution is attested by the store's collection of odd envelopes bearing orders from distant lands; addresses such as "Sam Goody, U. S. A." and "Sam Goody, The World's Largest Record Dealer," apparently present no problems to postal clerks the world over. Goody's mail-order department, which now accounts for more than half the store's sales, has regular customers in most of the embassies of the free world. Our State Department is a regular Goody customer. U. N. delegates get a special discount card at Goody's. Casts of Broadway musicals can buy their show's recording at cost. Israel's prime minister, Ben-Gurion, buys his records at Goody's—as do some of the Near East's

ruling Moslem families. General Gruenther and his NATO staff send large orders to Goody's; Levin is proud of their selections, which show a high level of musical taste. The armed forces buy \$10,000 worth of records at a time and have Goody's distribute them to bases and posts throughout the world. Libraries and schools are big purchasers; a library in Brazil ordered \$12,000 worth of records and then ran into foreign-exchange trouble.

"Shortly after that, our Government gave Brazil a substantial loan to facilitate its foreign purchases," recalls Sam. "We always figured that loan was made so the library could pay Goody's."

Goody's newest enterprise, launched while this article was being prepared, is a long-playing-record club in which subscribers pay a twelve-dollar annual service fee and get their records at the dealer's usual cost—\$2.47 for a \$3.98 record—plus postage and a wrapping charge. The service fee covers the selection, by Levin and several associates, of a monthly list of twenty records from which the contributor may make his choice. Goody, who is never backward about prodding other record retailers, is offering dealers five dollars for every member they enroll in the club.

Goody's catalogue, which runs to several hundred pages and represents a complete listing of available long-playing records, sells for five dollars a year and is given away to store visitors. The Long Player, which is updated monthly, costs ten cents apiece, net, to produce. On a busy month the store will give away 40,000 copies of The Long Player.

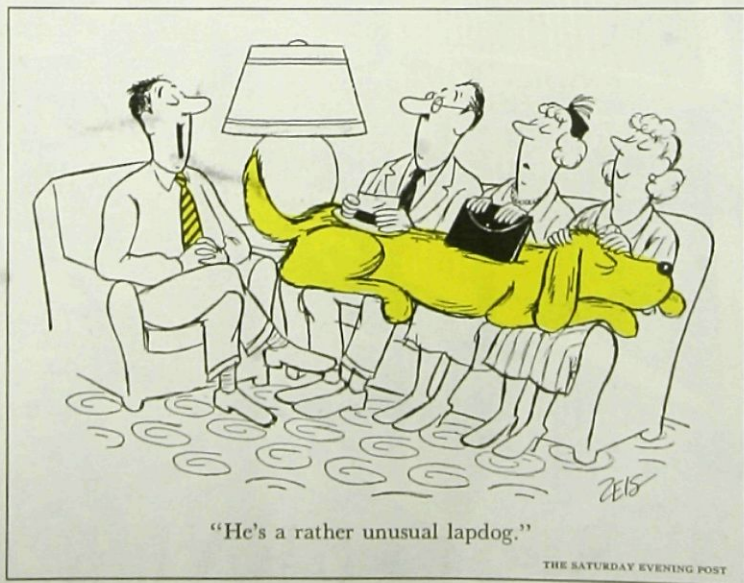
Goody's uniquely dominant position in the retail-record trade makes it a sort of barometer of public taste in long-playing records. The store's biggest continuing seller in the popular field is the South Pacific music. Toscanini conducting Beethoven's Ninth Symphony is the leader in the classical division.

"All the Beethoven symphonies as done by Toscanini are immensely popular," relates Abner Levin, "though the great man is now being given a run for his money by Bruno Walter, Scherchen and the late Furtwängler. Then there are singers—the late Kathleen Ferrier, a contralto, still sells as though she were putting out a record every month, and Renata Tebaldi, a soprano, is tremendously popular. Mario Lanza sells well in the classical field. Sinatra tops all the ballad singers, while Dave Brubeck and the Mulligan Quartet top the jazz instrumentalists. Generally speaking, the orchestral record will outsell instrumental or vocal music. The early classics—Haydn, Mozart and Beethoven—are the fastest movers among long-playing records. I'd say that sixty per cent of the catalogue is worth stocking heavily because of the short life of most of that music."

And then, of course, there's Debussy. Never underestimate Debussy. Sam Goody doesn't.

"We have this customer I call the counselor. He's great for Debussy. And every once in a while the counselor would come up to me and say, 'Here, Goody, here's a cigar; we just had a baby.' Then, after a while, when I realized he was giving me the fourth or fifth cigar, I said to him, 'Say, I have four kids, and it seems to me that this must be your fifth, so now you're one up on me. What's it all about?' The counselor said, 'Well, I love Debussy, you see, and every time I play Debussy I'll be darned if something doesn't happen.' The counselor has eight children now and he's still playing Debussy."

THE END



"He's a rather unusual lapdog."

THE SATURDAY EVENING POST

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