


Bob Thiele

Bob Thiele (July 27, 1922 – January 30, 1996) was an American record producer who worked on numerous classic jazz albums and record labels.

Early life and career

Bob Thiele was born in Sheepshead Bay, Brooklyn, New York on July 27, 1922. He hosted a jazz radio show when he was 14. He also played clarinet and led a band in the New York area. At 17 he founded the Signature Records label and recorded many jazz greats, including Lester Young, Erroll Garner and, in 1943, Coleman Hawkins. Signature folded in 1948 and he joined Decca Records in 1952, running its Coral Records subsidiary. His wife was the singer Teresa Brewer, whom he met and produced while working for Decca Records in the 1950s.

He took over as head of Impulse! Records from 1961 to 1969 after founder Creed Taylor left to run Verve Records. Thiele's best known association while at Impulse! was with John Coltrane, but he also recorded such artists as Charles Mingus, Dizzy Gillespie, Sonny Rollins, Archie Shepp, and Albert Ayler among others. His most successful hit song was with Louis Armstrong's "What a Wonderful World", which he co-wrote with George David Weiss. According to Thiele's memoir, the recording session for this now-famous song was the scene of a


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major clash with ABC Records president Larry Newton, who had to be locked out of the studio after getting into a heated argument with Thiele over the song. "What a Wonderful World" was credited to George Douglas or Stanley Clayton. These are pseudonyms Thiele used, made from the names of his uncles, Stanley, Clayton, George, and Douglas.

In the late 1960s Thiele was often brought in to produce artists on the company's Bluesway Records label. He produced the albums that graduated B.B. King toward the mainstream, including Lucille (1967). He also produced BluesWay recordings by John Lee Hooker, T-Bone Walker, and others.

After seven years with ABC Records, the parent of Impulse!, Thiele formed his own company, Flying Dutchman Productions, in 1968.[Thiele later formed his own record label, Flying Dutchman Records, which is now part of Sony Music Entertainment. Later in his career Thiele formed Doctor Jazz Records in 1983 and Red Baron Records in 1991, which released a number of albums on compact disc, including three by the Bob Thiele Collective, each a different "all-star" group which Thiele himself assembled and produced. In 1995 he released a memoir titled What a Wonderful World.

Thiele remained active in the music business until the end,[4] including the co-writing of the song "You," which was recorded by Bonnie Raitt and appeared on her 1994 album Longing in Their Hearts.

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Death

He died of kidney failure, according to a friend, at Roosevelt Hospital in Manhattan on January 30, 1996.