

## Harrisburg: Mr. Mike's" offers music - recorded and live

Karen L. Peiffer  
Capital Times Staff

Nestled among tightly-spaced row houses on South Third Street in Harrisburg is a one-room record store brimming with an extensive R&B and jazz record and tape collection.

Untouched by the downtown development project, Mr. Mike's Record Store has tremendous architectural character on the exterior, even more character on the interior, and attracts its share of characters as well.

Into the store walked a bespectacled man with a Marilyn Monroe pout wearing dress trousers and a tailored trench coat. He was greeted warmly by the staff and customers present.

"I thought you was into Mozart, man. Whatch you doin' here?" said one grinning record buyer.

A blushing teenage boy sporting a crew cut stood at the counter softly singing the words to a song whose name he could not remember. Manager Nate Clory leaned forward and smiled with patience at his off-key vocal attempts.

A curvaceous young woman approached the counter and said, "I don't know what I want. I want some mellow music. Some midnight music."

"Oh! I see," said Clory. "You have plans for the evening."

Mr. Mike's is often a place of high fives and greetings such as: What's up, brother? How's it goin', cuz? and Check it out, home! Customers seem to be on a first name basis with one another and cover the broadest spectrum of ages and professions.

Suddenly, a steady stream of customers poured in, the phone rang off the hook, and Clory sprang into action greeting customers, pointing out new albums and CD's, and ringing up several large orders.

"It's busy like this from Thursday to Saturday," said Clory.

From outside customers see a collage of album cover posters and a large, red sign spelling Mr. Mike's Discount Records and Tapes in bold, white letters.

Inside, record bins filled to capacity line the walls, black leather medallions

picturing the African continent hang from hooks, and colorful tee shirts dangle from the ceiling.

An overflowing rolodex strategically sits on the desktop with the office numbers of personal contacts at A&M, Arista, Atlantic, CBS, Columbia, Elektra, Epic, GRP, Island, MCA, Virgin, and Warner Brothers record companies as well as every secondary label imaginable.

On the counter flyers announcing upcoming concerts are piled next to stacks of "Mr. Mike's Likes" -- the staff-produced publication of album reviews.

Pegboards provide the backdrop for dozens of proudly displayed photographs of R&B and jazz superstars arm-in-arm with Mr. Mike's staff.

When owner Mike Albert and manager Nate Clory are not selling or writing they are promoting concerts and staging autograph-signing sessions with today's biggest stars.

Musical sensations Keith Sweat, Najee, Rob Base, Kid 'N Play, and M.C. Hammer have all taken a glorified seat at Mr. Mike's and autographed albums, posters, and tee shirts (while worn) for adoring fans often numbering in the hundreds.

All this hard work and dedication has definitely paid off for the five-member staff at Mr. Mike's which also includes Mike's wife, Cathy, his brother, Jason, and good friend, Leroy Burke.

"We have been invited guests at many of the larger shows in Philly and Baltimore," said Clory. "We rarely sit in the audience." We are given backstage passes; enjoy the catered buffet dinners; and, are privileged to socialize with the artists and their entourages, he said.

Backstage at the York Fair Grounds, Tone Loc, an hour before his performance, said "I could really use a cool one," recalled Clory. "We all piled into the limousine; me, Tone, Mike, and Harrisburg rapper JolliRock; found a bar; picked up a few six packs of Heineken; and, got him back to the show a little late."

More "Mr. Mike's" on 7



photo by Sondra Kinsey

Balloons take to the sky at the First Annual Hometown Hot-air Balloon Classic in Hershey.

## Hershey: Hot air balloons fill skies

Sondra Kinsey  
Capital Times Staff

Balloon rides, skydiving, and dance demos, live music by Big Wheelie and the White Walls, fireworks and more attracted thousands to the First Annual Hometown Hot Air Balloon Classic in Hershey this month.

Early morning and late afternoon balloon launchings highlighted the three day event. Pilots from the National Balloon Racing Association were competing for \$7,500 in prize money and points to go on to national competition.

Announcer Ron Griffin of the NBRA explained that this balloon "race" was really a "hound and hare" chase. The launching is the only part of the race the audience gets to see.

With a short lead, the hare balloon lands in an open field for its crew to mark a 40-foot "X" on the ground. The object of the race is for the hounds to maneuver in the winds to drop a beanbag on the mark from at least 75 feet up.

"The winner isn't the fastest, but the most accurate," Griffin said. "Up and down is easy, but going sideways means catching a steering wind. A hundred-foot change in altitude can mean a change in wind direction."

Pilot Michael Renish, of Allentown said, "If they hit the mark, it's 99 percent luck and one percent pilot error. I haven't dropped a beanbag yet this weekend."

Pilots were taking passengers along in the race at \$100 to \$160 a head. One average-size wicker basket under a seven-story balloon can hold three or four people. Taking riders helps defray personal hobby expenses.

"My balloon cost \$20,000," said Kathy Martin of Quakertown. That figure

doesn't include the Cherokee to haul it.

Camp Hill pilot Don Dillon said he was happy to come in 20th out of 30 racers.

"Those pilots are good competitors because they follow the circuit every chance they get," he said.

Dillon's balloon, Windcarver, is one of only 4,000 registered sport and commercial balloons in the United States.

The crowd seemed fascinated by the balloons.

"I never thought they'd be so big," said Tony Rubinic from Linglestown.

Long lines of people waited patiently for the free rides in two tethered balloons--30 feet up and back down again--two people at a time.

Other events featured juggling, kite demos, classic and antique car displays, kiddie rides, gymnastics, a night "glow" of several balloons.

"I liked the skateboard show best," said Andy Diehl, 11. He was one of 29 Boy Scouts and 24 adults from Troop 43 in Dallastown poking at paper cups on the ground and emptying trash cans.

Sponsored by WPMT--Channel 43, the promotion also benefitted the Make-A-Wish Foundation for seriously ill children.

The York-based TV station had hoped for a turnout of 100,000, but the actual figure was closer to 35,000.

"I thought it was a very good turnout for a first year event," Dillon said.

"I'm disappointed that none of the newspapers carried it," said Jon Paiva, executive producer at WPMT--Fox 43. "We had over \$100,000 invested in it."

"This is a conservative area, but a good market for family fun," he said. "People have a wait-and-see attitude about something new. I've been deluged with [vendors and sponsors] who want in next year."

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