

Positive Feedback



Buying records en masse can be the bulk of collecting

There never seems to be enough time in the day. Between work, family, errands and life in general, there can be precious little time for outside interests such as searching for records. Wouldn't it be wonderful if collectors could simply summon Barbara Eden to work her genie magic and bring hundreds, no thousands of records directly to the front door? Your wish and being a high bidder, is your command to big volumes of vinyl.

Much like one would buy massive amounts of paper towels or bulk quantities of tomato sauce at one of those massive discount warehouses, more and more record collectors are discovering buying vinyl en masse. The allure of an instant record collection is what brings collectors, such as part-time club DJ, "DJ Scratch," to online auction sites such as eBay. "I once picked up about 500 12-inch singles there," said the 30-year-old Denver collector, who wanted to be known only by his "spinning" name. The vinyl enthusiast said buying large amounts of records at one time saves him time and money. "I picked them all up for about 25¢ apiece."

Ari Glogower, 24, of Jackson, Miss., hit paydirt last October. He discovered a gentleman who, with the prodding of his wife, wanted to get rid of 2,500 albums from his West Jackson home. "They practically filled two small rooms and spilled out into the kitchen," Glogower said. He spent the day hauling every single LP (rock, disco, blues and soul records from the 1960s-80s) home to scrutinize for keeping or reselling on eBay.

The full-time elementary school teacher is no stranger to part-time bulk selling, having successfully sold several lots of records in the past (including 3,300 45s and 190 12-inch singles). He didn't hesitate to again attempt a winner-take-all approach. "I would love to have the time, the patience and the organization skills necessary to break up record lots and sell in smaller groups," he admitted. "But I often return home from work exhausted, and when the record pile gets too large it's all

I can do to toss 'em all on at once and hope for the best."

On further inspection, almost half of the 2,500 albums he acquired were too scratched to list for sale, while 750 were deemed worthy for auction. On Nov. 6, he placed those that made the cut on eBay, with an opening bid of \$1. "I always start my auctions at \$1," he said. "I'm fascinated by the psychology and process of online bidding. Setting a reserve or a high starting bid gives me too much control over a fundamentally uncontrollable medium."

In Naples, Fla., record dealer Richard Wolfe immediately took an interest in Glogower's offerings. "Every now and then we find an unusual value in buying bulk," he said. "I buy them for reselling and like to have an inventory on hand. I try to buy cross-sections of the LPs and artists from the '50s through the '70s."

Wolfe wasn't the only interested party. "I had significant interest from overseas bidders. I had to quote shipping prices to Australia, Greece, Switzerland, Italy, Cyprus, Quebec, Taiwan and Germany," said Glogower.

Wolfe eventually beat out an Italian bidder, with a final offering of \$1,125, or \$1.50 per album. That same day he picked up an additional 530 albums from Glogower for \$523. "I'm happy when they sell, regardless of the price," Glogower said.

While it's relatively easy to list 750 albums on eBay for auction, it's another thing to actually ship 750 albums. To make things even more interesting, Glogower had several bulk auctions ending at the same time. "I took off from work the day after the auctions ended and shipped off nearly 1,400 records, or close to a half-ton of vinyl," he said. "It took three trips to the post office in my beat-up but faithful 1991 Honda Civic."

Have an online record auction story? Contact me via my Web site at www.isleofwrite.com.

— Lisa Wheeler