

Positive Feedback

My My, Hey Hey — a Neil Young record sells for \$3,430

What is the "world's rarest single"? For a Beatles collector, it might be the 1958 Quarrymen single of "That'll Be The Day." For doo-wop collectors, it might be The Five Sharps' version of "Stormy Weather." But for Neil Young fans there is only one disc that could eclipse both of those and all others for rarity: The Squires' 1963 single "The Sultan"/"Aurora" (V Records V-109). The record features a 17-year-old Young on guitar.

"The group played their debut gig at Riverview Community Club in south Winnipeg Feb. 1, 1963, for \$5 [for the whole band]," said Winnipeg music historian and author John Einarson. The group included Young, lead guitar (later vocals); Ken Koblun, bass; Allan Bates, guitar; and Ken Smyth, drums. "The Squires' first recording session took place on July 23, 1963, at local radio station CKRC studios in Winnipeg," said Einarson. "Harry 'The Horse' Taylor and DJ Bob Bradburn produced two instrumentals penned by Young, "The Sultan" and "Aurora." A grand total of 300 copies were pressed and distributed locally. According to collectors, it is estimated that only eight copies still exist.

Luke Stein readily admitted he is not a Young collector. "I like him, but I mainly focus on Beatles," the Michigan printer and part-time record dealer said. But while conducting an Internet search for the world's rarest records, he discovered the single listed. "I never knew that this record even existed until August, when I saw it on the list," he said. In an incredible twist of fate, a week later, he found the single and approached the owner, who originally purchased it from the band at a 1963 show in Winnipeg. "We agreed on a price and I took a gamble and bought it." On Dec. 29, he posted the record for auction on eBay, listing it as the "world's rarest record." A record so rare, it is often (incorrectly) believed that even Young didn't own a copy. "I had two copies, and I gave one copy to Neil," said Bachman Turner Overdrive frontman and fellow Winnipeg musician, Randy Bachman. "I still have one."

"I was completely surprised to see it," said a Winnipeg collector, who wanted to be identified by his eBay name only, Rustydd. "I have only been aware of two others being offered for sale. The first one went about two years ago for \$2,000, and the second one went for \$2,800 a few months ago." But hometown collectors weren't the only ones shocked that another single had surfaced. "I was very surprised and



excited when I saw this auction," said Austin, Texas, Neil Young collector Mike Raney, who lists his eBay name as neilyoungfan. "I never thought that there was the possibility of acquiring a copy to add to my collection."

With a starting bid of 99¢, it didn't take long before bidders surpassed Raney's once and final offer of \$501. However, he wasn't disappointed. "There are so many different items out there, and it is fun to track them all down." With eight days remaining Rustydd would also take a bow, with a final bid of \$1,554. "Living in Winnipeg I may get lucky at a garage sale one day," he admitted.

When all was said and done, a U.K. collector, with the appropriate moniker of dreamerofpictures (taken from a line in Young's "Cinnamon Girl") came away the victor Jan. 8, with a final bid of \$3,430.

"The end of the auction was in the middle of the night here in the U.K., so I placed my bid before going to bed," said the winning bidder, who asked that his name not be revealed. "It was a great thrill to open my e-mails in the morning and find out I'd got it. "I will, of course play it — but not too often."

While many were denied the chance to own the world's rarest Young record, the artist's earliest music will soon be available for all to hear with the release of the long-awaited 32-CD box set, *Archives*. "The *Archives* box set will be released later this year and will feature 'The Sultan' and 'Aurora,' plus another early instrumental of Neil's, 'Mustang,'" said Einarson. The set also includes Young's vocal debut on "I Wonder."

Have you discovered a rare recording from your favorite artist on an online auction site? Let me know about it. Contact me via my Web site: www.isleofwrite.com, where you can also find an archive of my past columns.

— Lisa Wheeler