

Positive Feedback

There is a Future after all...

Sex Pistols single sells for \$22,154.63

If Marshal Peters could sum up his feelings about collecting punk records using the title of a Sex Pistols song, it would be "No Fun." "I've just lost interest in collecting," he admitted. The Internet made finding additions to the United Kingdom collector's evergrowing stash of rarities less challenging — something he missed. "Before eBay, there used to be a small group of hard-core punk addicts who would go to great lengths to find records," he said. So two years ago Peters sold his entire Buzzcocks collection on, of all places, eBay. The collection took 25 years to amass (and was prominently featured on his now-defunct archive, the SPIRAL SNAPS! Web site). "When the Buzzcocks collection had gone, I was surprised to find that I didn't miss it at all, so the sale of the Pistols collection was the next logical step."

Earlier this year he slowly began to post dozens of items, including albums, posters and other memorabilia. Then he listed what many consider the most desirable Sex Pistols collectible of all, the A&M pressing of the single "God Save The Queen" (AMS 7284).

Recorded March 3, 1977, "God Save The Queen" was to be the band's first single for A&M. The Pistols had just signed a contract with the label (home to the very un-punk Peter Dinklage and The Carpenters, among many others), after being dropped by EMI. By March 16, after allegedly threatening Bob Harris, the announcer of the *The Old Grey Whistle Test*, and allegedly getting an earful from its talent roster, A&M dropped the group, halted production of the single and destroyed the initial run of 25,000 copies of the record. However, collectors have long believed that a handful have survived.

"I had been searching for a copy for years, and each time I always got out-bid at the last minute," Peters said. Then in 1998, PolyGram closed its London A&M office and as a parting gift gave nine (some say 12) executives a copy of the elusive single. The records almost immediately began to appear for sale. "I found it through a dealer who obtained one," said Peters. "It was advertised for sale at bids in excess of £2,500. I immediately bid high at £3,000, which was finally accepted."

But after eight years of being one of the showcase pieces of his collection, he knew it was time to allow someone else the privilege of owning the record. On Feb. 20, Peters listed the record on eBay with an opening bid slightly higher than his original purchase price. It didn't take long before Dave, a collector from Coventry, who didn't want to give his last name, got things started as the first bidder. "For me, to own this record would



be the same as winning The World Cup. It's the ultimate record."

As an added bonus, Peters included the two copies of *Record Collector*, which featured the single in its June 2002 and August 2003 issues. Dominic Pedler, who not only was following the auction, but also bidding, wrote both articles. "I remember I first saw this record advertised in the small ads in *Sounds* and *NME*. The first price I remember was £25, which was a lot when singles cost 50p. But I've missed out on ever owning one."

As word spread about the auction, bidding began to escalate. Within four days, Peters' £3,000 investment was already surpassed by more than double as the bidding flew past the previous high paid for a copy of the record, £6,303, in 2004. But it didn't stop there. On March 2, Pedler was "this close" to finally owning the record he had written about, only to be outbid in the last hours by a Southern California artist for a staggering auction-ending price of £12,675 (\$22,154.63). "I am a Sex Pistols collector, more in the form of art," said the winning bidder, who asked not to be identified. "As far as the price, some would look at see a [Jean-Michel] Basquiat and see a child's scribble. Others see the importance and beauty of what it represents... this is art to me." The buyer admitted that the piece would be framed and displayed in his Montana vacation home.

"I'm still in shock," said Peters. "The final price exceeded my expectations and only reinforces just how sought-after this record is. I'm very pleased a hard-core Sex Pistols collector has won it and will appreciate it for just what it is. Better for it to go to someone who genuinely loves the band and their music rather than leaving it in some bank vault."

Have you discovered a rare missing piece of your collection on an online auction site? I'd love to know about it. Contact me via my Web site, www.isleofwrite.com.

— Lisa Wheeler