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Barcode on cover '80s album causes incorrect retail pricing 

London, England, July 22, 2005 (Reuters) - The music industry has a new scapegoat for its revenue problems: album cover art. A big barcode splashed on the cover of an '80s compilation CD is being mistakenly scanned by retailers instead of the real barcode, giving Tears for Fears and Duran Duran fans a fat discount. Consumers buying Sony BMG's 46-song, three-disk "Electric 80s" compilation at Tesco Plc supermarkets, for example, were only being charged 9.77 pounds instead of the listed price of 14.97 pounds, a spokeswoman for the retailer said on Friday. Some stores pulled the CD, and a new version with a different cover was rushed out. At the same time, singer Jack Johnson is said to be showing phantom gains in record sales as the cover art barcode sometimes rings up as his new album, "In Between Dreams."

"We became aware of the issue and like other retailers withdrew the album on Tuesday morning," the Tesco spokeswoman said. "Customers are not out of pocket and albums with a newly designed cover were delivered on Wednesday and are now back on sale," she said, adding that Tesco would work with suppliers on the issue of money lost as a result of the mistaken discount.

Music retailer HMV Group was aware of the quirky barcode-covered album, but said it has not had any problems and used the gaffe as an opportunity to tout the benefits of being a specialist.

"Someone would have to be pretty stupid not to recognize that," HMV spokesman Gennaro Castaldo said. "The proper barcodes are always done on the reverse of the CD," he added. "All our staff are aware it's the cover artwork, and if fellow retailers and supermarkets are doing that, it just highlights that they're not really music specialists. We've not had any issues."

Among the songs on the compilation are Harold Faltermeyer's "Axel F," Duran Duran's "Planet Earth," Men Without Hats' "Safety Dance" and Tears for Fears' "Mad World." Sony BMG, the world's second largest record company, is co-owned by Japan's Sony Corp (NYSE:[SNE](#) - [news](#)) and Germany's Bertelsmann AG. Spokespeople for the company could not immediately be reached.

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