

FANTASY Records

In the 1940s, while running a plastic molding factory that also handled record pressing, brothers Max and Sol Weiss had their first client, Dave Brubeck. With Brubeck's record achieving local success, the Weiss brothers named the pressing plant "Fantasy" after a science fiction magazine, and in 1949, they founded the record company. They went on to sign Dave Brubeck, Gerry Mulligan, Cal Tjader, Vince Guaraldi, and many other artists, including those from genres beyond jazz.

In 1951, the parent company Fantasy established "Galaxy," a jazz specialty label, named after the science fiction theme of the parent company. Despite periods of dormancy and numerous changes, the label revitalized in 1977, featuring major musicians such as Tommy Flanagan, Red Garland, Johnny Griffin, Hank Jones, and Art Pepper.

In 1968, investors led by Fantasy's sales manager Saul Zaentz purchased the company. A year later, they put the rock band Creedence Clearwater Revival at the forefront, gaining attention in the then-burgeoning hippie culture of San Francisco. The debut record was established in New York in 1952 by bassist Charles Mingus, his wife Celia Mingus, and drummer Max Roach. In 1958, Charles and Celia Mingus divorced. Celia soon moved to San Francisco and worked under Saul Zaentz at Fantasy Records (whom she later married) and sold their small but powerful debut catalog in 1971.

From 1970 onwards, the headquarters moved to Berkeley, releasing works by the Blackbyrds (a jazz-funk group whose members were all graduates of Howard University and produced by Donald Byrd, who lectured at the music department in 1973), Stanley Turrentine, Sylvester, Ruth Brown, and Freddy Cole. They also achieved success with soundtracks for movies like "Amadeus" and "The English Patient," becoming one of the largest independent labels.

In 1971, Ed Denson and guitarist/teacher Stefan Grossman founded Takoma Records in Berkeley, California. Focusing on expanding genres centered around acoustic guitar (country, folk, blues, etc.), they acquired Takoma in 1995 and established it as a subsidiary, Kickin' Mule Records. However, in 2004, they sold the company to Concord Records, bringing it under their group umbrella.

1949: Established in San Francisco, California, by brothers Max and Sol Weiss.
1951: Founded their first subsidiary, Galaxy Records.
1968: Investors led by sales manager Saul Zaentz acquired the rights to Fantasy.
1970: Relocated headquarters to Berkeley.
1971: Acquired Good Time Records, Prestige Records, and Debut Records.
1972: Acquired Milestone Records, Jazzland, and Riverside (ABC Records rights).
1977: Acquired Stax Records.
1983: Established the jazz specialty label, Original Jazz Classics (OJC), to reissue titles from acquired labels.
1984: Acquired Contemporary Records and began reissuing its titles under OJC.
1987: Acquired Pablo Records and began reissuing its titles under OJC.
1988: Partnered with Wave until 1990 (Wave released the WJC series).
1991: Acquired Specialty Records.
1995: Acquired Takoma Records and established Kickin' Mule Records.
2004: Sold to Concord Records, becoming part of the Concord Music Group.
Concord Music Group becomes one of the largest independent jazz labels.

In early February 1960, Wes started "The Montgomery Brothers" with his brothers who were active in San Francisco. Buddy and Monk's "The Mastersounds" had disbanded, but they continued their contract with Fantasy. Meanwhile, Wes was also under contract with Riverside. As a result, the two companies agreed that Keepnews would alternate recording sessions for both labels.

As a result, "The Montgomery Brothers" disbanded in April 1962. However, they left behind two records with Fantasy, one with Riverside, and one with Jazzland, a subsidiary of Riverside Records, in collaboration with Capitol.

Regarding the records:
The notable feature of the Fantasy records is easily recognizable. The center label of the monaural records is red (specifically maroon), and the discs themselves are translucent red. The stereo records share the same design but in blue (specifically dark blue). However, not all the records are colored discs. For example, SP records are black, 10-inch records come in black, red, and green, and 12-inch records (numbered in the 3000 series) are red for mono and blue for stereo (numbered in the 8000 series and some in the 3000 series). Later, they returned to using black discs.



Around 1960, Tokyo Shibaura Electric (now Toshiba) released a record under the name "Ever Clean," which mixed an anti-static agent into the raw PVC material to prevent dust from adhering to the record. Although this technology later spread to Capitol records, including those of The Beatles, it was said that the anti-static agent accelerated the aging process and resulted in poorer sound quality compared to standard black records.

At that time, using an automatic record player, I experienced the cartridge failing to land on the edge of these translucent red records and returning, possibly due to the transparency. However, Fantasy records were not known to use Ever Clean. They looked similar with their translucent appearance but were simply colored to distinguish between mono and stereo records. Dust still accumulated on them, and even when new and handled with care, these records were reputed to have high susceptibility to surface noise.

12-inch Mono Record Numbers:

From 3-201 to 3-239, the thousand and hundred series numbers are separated by a hyphen. For example, "Mulligan Quartet/The Paul Desmond Quintet" is identified as both 3-220 and 3220. Records like "Dave Brubeck Trio/3205," "Cal Tjader Quintet/Ritmo Caliente!/3216," and "Dave Brubeck Octet/3239" show this inconsistency. It's unclear if this applies to all records. The range from 3240 to 3376 seems to be categorized under the 3000 series.

12-inch Stereo Record Numbers:

Starting from mono number 3342, the 8000 series was introduced by adding an 8 prefix, standardizing the numbering. Before this, there was no uniformity in the numbering system. From 8377 onward, only stereo records were released.

Colored Discs (Addendum):

Red discs with red labels were produced up to around number 3350. After this, black discs with red labels became common. However, many second presses before number 3350 also featured black discs with red labels. Not all records followed this pattern. For example, "Re-Union/Desmond Brubeck/3268" has been found with a stereo disc (8007) in a mono jacket (3268) with a red disc and blue label, which is irregular. Another example is "Concert In The Park/Paul Miller/3276," which also has irregularities. Fantasy's inadequate recording data management during this period made it a frustrating label for collectors. For stereo records, the blue disc and blue label format continued until around number 8345, after which black discs with blue labels were used.

The Montgomery Brothers



MONO

STEREO

MONO



1st-Original

- 1.MONO :3308
- 2.Label :Red
- 3.Groove :[A]

注)赤ディスク

STEREO



1st-Original

- 1.STEREO :8052
- 2.Label :Blue
- 3.Groove :[A]

注)青ディスク

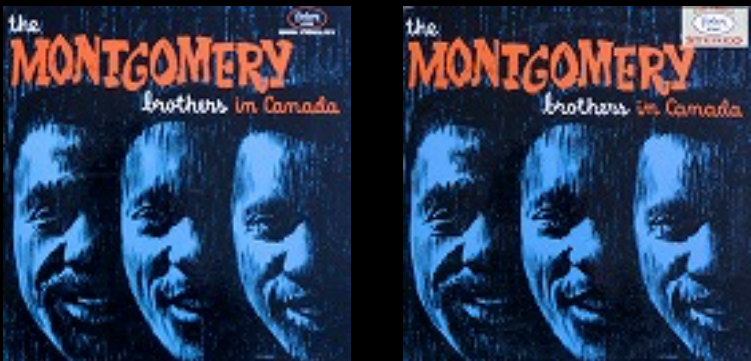
Interdisc



- 1.Label :Vocalion
- 2. No :LAE 556
- 3.Groove :[A]

A British record with "BIEM" printed on the label. BIEM stands for the Bureau International des Sociétés Gérant les Droits d'Enregistrement et de Reproduction Mécanique, an international organization headquartered in Paris. Initially, it was a Europe-led international organization with France, the United Kingdom, Germany, and the Netherlands as members. In recent years, it has expanded its membership to include organizations from the United States, Latin America, Africa, and the Asia-Pacific region, becoming a global organization that protects recording rights.

The Montgomery Brothers In Canada



MONO

STEREO

MONO



1st-Original

- 1.MONO :3323
- 2.Label :Red
- 3.Groove :[A]

Red Disc

STEREO



1st-Original

- 1.STEREO :8066
- 2.Label :Blue
- 3.Groove :[A]

Blue Disc

OJC



2nd

- 1.STEREO :OJC 283
- 2.Label :Blue
- 3.Groove :[B]

OJC Early Press
Red Disc



2nd

- 1.STEREO :OJC 283
- 2.Label :Blue
- 3.Groove :[B]

Black Disc

Interdisc



- 1.Label :Vocalion
- 2.No :LAE 542
- 3.Groove :[A]

A British record with "BIEM" printed on the label.

As for domestic LP records, Toshiba Music has only released "Wes Montgomery Best" in the past, without releasing any original albums. This remains the only best album available, and while it doesn't include any alternate takes, please take a look at the changes in the label design.

Wes' Best/Wes Montgomery and His Brothers

