

RIVERSIDE Records

In the summer of 1952, Bill Grauer and Orrin Keepnews founded the label in New York City as a specialty label for reissuing traditional (RCA and Paramount) recordings. The company name was derived from the name of the local telephone exchange.

1953: By undertaking new recordings, they entered modern jazz with their first exclusive contract with Randy Weston.

1955: With the signing of Thelonious Monk, they began producing contemporary series and 12-inch LP records.

1960: Established the subsidiary Jazzland Records.

1963: Ceased operations due to the death of Bill Grauer.

1964: Declared bankruptcy on July 20. The label was acquired by Orpheum Productions.

1967: Rights transferred to ABC Records.

September 1972: With Orrin Keepnews joining Fantasy Records, some of the original Riverside masters were repurchased. Prior to this, in 1966, Keepnews himself had established the label Milestone, which reissued these records. In Japan, the release rights were held by Victor Musical Industries.

1983: Became part of the Fantasy family with the establishment of Original Jazz Classics.

2004: Fantasy Records, the parent company, was acquired by Concord Records, making Riverside a part of the Concord Music Group.

Wes Montgomery's relationship with Riverside spans 11 works (excluding compilations) released between 1956, starting with catalog number RLP12-201 (Bill Grauer Productions) under the 12-inch Contemporary Series, and 1964, ending with RM499/RS9499 (Orpheum Productions).

As the first pressings, the following three MONO records had the catalog prefix "RLP12" (Riverside Long Playing 12inch):
1959: RLP12-310 The Wes Montgomery Trio/A Dynamic New Sound
1960: RLP12-315 Work Song/Nat Adderley
1960: RLP12-320 The Incredible Jazz Guitar of Wes Montgomery

There also exist STEREO versions of the above records, released under the "STEREO 1100" series between 1957 and 1960, which comprises 68 works:
RLP1156 The Wes Montgomery Trio/A Dynamic New Sound
RLP1167 Work Song/Nat Adderley
RLP1169 The Incredible Jazz Guitar of Wes Montgomery
These labels are referred to as "small labels," with both MONO and STEREO versions having a diameter of approximately 90mm.

The subsequent six works have "large labels" with a diameter of approximately 100mm. The MONO records dropped the "12" prefix, while the STEREO records added a "9" prefix:
1960: RLP-342 RLP-9342 Movin' Along/Wes Montgomery
1960: RLP-355 RLP-9335 Cannonball Adderley And The Poll-Winners
1961: RLP-362 RLP-9362 Groove Yard/The Montgomery Brothers
1961: RLP-382 RLP-9382 So Much Guitar!/Wes Montgomery
1961: RLP-407 RLP-9407 Bags Meets Wes!/Milt Jackson And Wes Montgomery
1962: RLP-434 RLP-9434 Full House/Wes Montgomery

Probably from the latter half of 1962 onwards, the prefix for MONO re-releases was changed to "RM" (Riverside Monaural) and for STEREO to "RS" (Riverside Stereo):
1963: RM-459 RS-9459 Boss Guitar/Wes Montgomery
1963: RM-472 RS-9472 Fusion!/Wes Montgomery With Strings
Up to this point, Riverside (Bill Grauer Productions) originals feature a blue label for MONO and a black label with a silver microphone and reel logo for STEREO.
(Note: The label inscription at the bottom changes from "Bill Grauer Productions" in the "RLP12" series to "Bill Grauer Productions Inc." in the "RLP" and "RM/RS" series.)

However, for Wes's final album under Riverside, "RM-472/RS-9472/Fusion!/Wes Montgomery With Strings," the jacket and label changed. The first pressing, as mentioned above, has the usual format, but a second pressing appeared around the time of Bill Grauer's death. For example, "RS-9472 Fusion!/Wes Montgomery With Strings" had a blue Riverside label for the STEREO version without the silver microphone and reel logo, featuring a smaller "Riverside" at the top and "Bill Grauer Productions Inc." at the bottom (Photo 1). The back jacket of this release reads "Produced By Riverside Records" instead of "Bill Grauer Productions" (Photo 2). The first pressing also says "Produced By Riverside Records" and includes the note "Distributed in Europe by Interdisc," indicating versions distributed to Europe by Interdisc (Photo 3). There are two types of Interdisc versions: those exported from Riverside to European agents and those pressed and sold by the European agent.

The lack of logo labels, possibly intended as an image change or influenced by the Interdisc versions, seemed to contribute to the company's deteriorating image, hastening its bankruptcy.

After Riverside's bankruptcy in 1964, the label underwent significant changes under the new ownership of Orpheum Productions. Two albums that had been recorded before the bankruptcy were released in 1966:
1966: RM-492 RS-9492 Portrait Of Wes/Wes Montgomery Trio
1966: RM-494 RS-9494 Guitar On The Go/Wes Montgomery

During the early period of Orpheum's ownership, for a very brief time, some labels (as seen in Photo 1) were released without changes, likely utilizing the existing stock pressings. However, the back cover inscription "Produced By Riverside Records" was changed to "Orpheum Productions" (Photo 2). The presence of Interdisc versions has not been confirmed.

Shortly thereafter, the label colors were changed to turquoise (blue-green) for both MONO and STEREO versions, which became Orpheum's distinct color. The back cover and the lower part of the label now read "Orpheum Productions," with the prefix "RM" for MONO and "RS" for STEREO retained. Additionally, the old catalog numbers, such as "RLP 12-310" and "RLP 1156," were revived for reissues.

In January 1966, they released "Portrait Of Wes/Wes Montgomery Trio," followed by "Guitar On The Go/Wes Montgomery" in October (Note: "Guitar On The Go" includes a mix of old recordings and new material). From this point, the label primarily focused on reissues, which was not sustainable for long-term operations. The quality of the album jackets deteriorated, becoming rough and poorly made. For STEREO records, both blue (Photo 4) and shallow black (Photo 5) backgrounds were used.

Determining an original Riverside pressing is quite complex due to the non-sequential release of catalog numbers. However, for Wes Montgomery, please refer to the above details. Regarding the labels, there are variations such as with or without grooves, and deep or shallow grooves, but there is no definitive proof that grooved labels are always first pressings.

Let's examine this using Wes's notable work "Full House." The first pressing with the prefix "RLP" (RLP-434/RLP-9434 / Full House) typically does not have grooves, while the second pressing with the "RM/RS" prefix (RM-434/RS-9434 / Full House) does have grooves. There are, however, occasional reports of first pressings of the MONO version "RLP-434 / Full House" having grooves. This raises the question of why such occurrences are rare.

In my collection, I have an "RLP-434 / Full House" purchased unopened from a specialized import record store at the time of release (with handwritten stamper RLP-434A-1), as well as a later acquired STEREO version "RLP-9434 / Full House" (with handwritten stamper RLP-9434A-1) and a promotional copy (with handwritten stamper RLP-434A-1), all without grooves. These first pressings were recorded in June 1962 and likely released in the fall of the same year.

According to DownBeat magazine, Riverside frequently advertised up until November 1962, including Jazzland and offbeat. However, by 1963, no advertisements were published, reflecting the rapid deterioration of the company following Bill Grauer's death in December 1962 and culminating in bankruptcy in July 1964. Despite receiving a 4.5-star review in the February 14, 1963 issue of DownBeat, "Full House" had no advertising.

Previous releases like "RLP-407/RLP-9407 / Bags Meets Wes! / Milt Jackson and Wes Montgomery" were advertised, but no ads were seen for any works after Orpheum took over. The prefix "RLP" continued up to "RLP-436/RLP-9436 / Bossa Nova Pelos Passaros / Charlie Byrd," after which MONO releases adopted the prefix "RM" and STEREO releases "RS."

The second pressing of "RM-434 / RS-9434 / Full House" was produced as "Bill Grauer Productions Inc." and differed not only in label but also significantly in the front jacket design. The second pressing with the "RM" prefix has the MONO catalog number "434" printed at the lower left (Photo 6). Interestingly, the rare grooved version of the MONO "RLP-434 / Full House" also has this "434" printed, a design carried over to Orpheum.

It seems plausible that the first pressing did not sell well despite high ratings, leading to additional pressings just before the prefix change. We can conclude that the existence of grooves may be due to different pressing plants used during these periods. Despite a minimum of 1,000 copies per press run, grooved versions are rare. Therefore, we can consider grooved MONO versions as "first additional pressings."

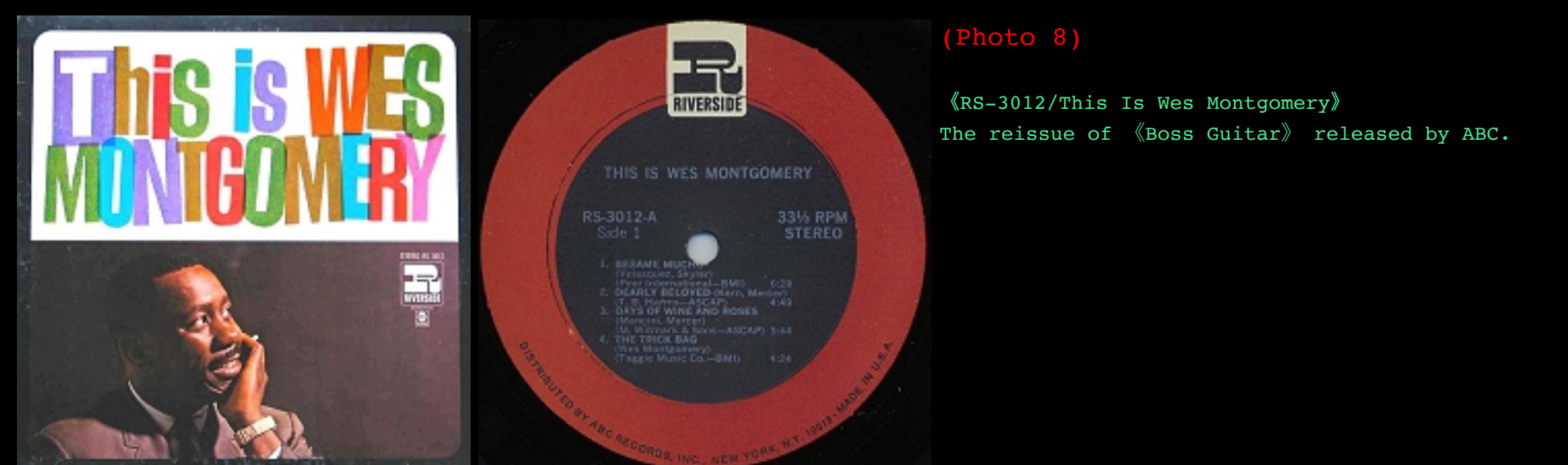
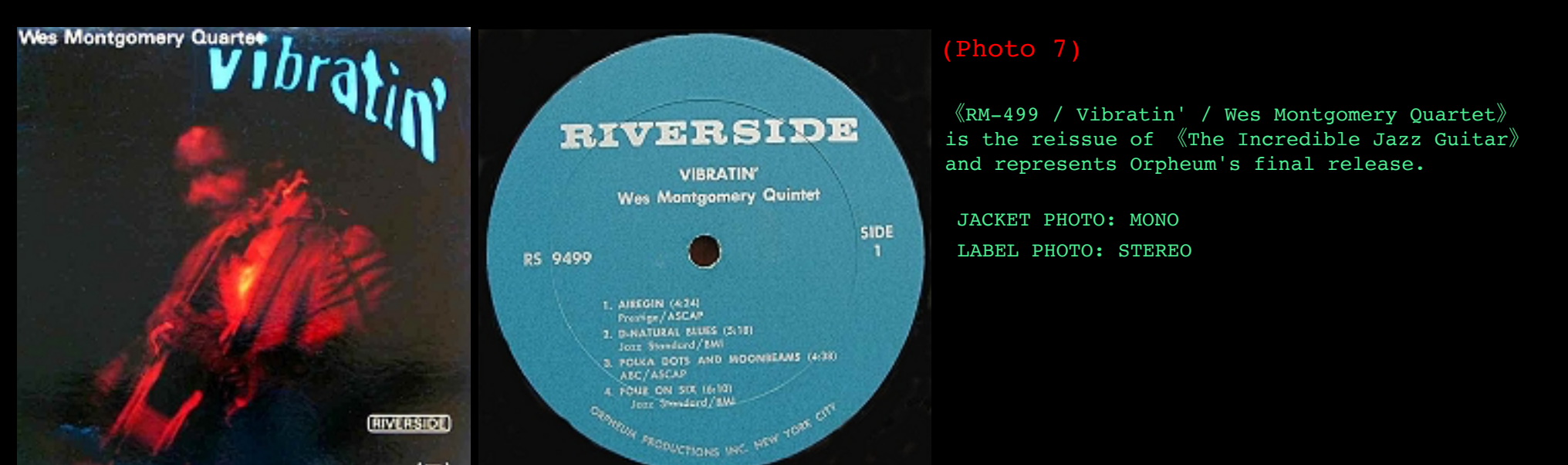
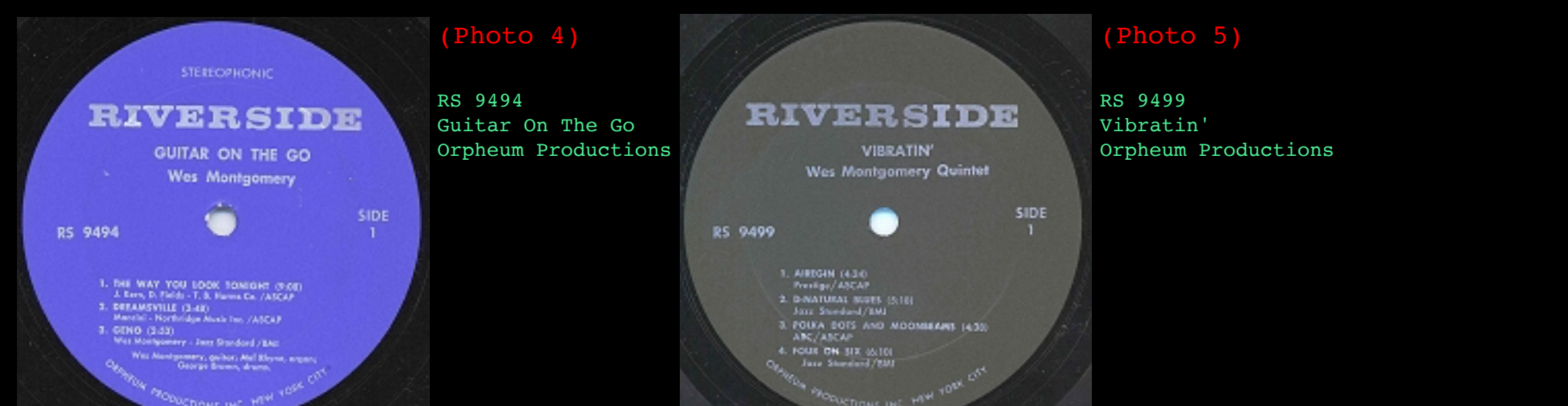
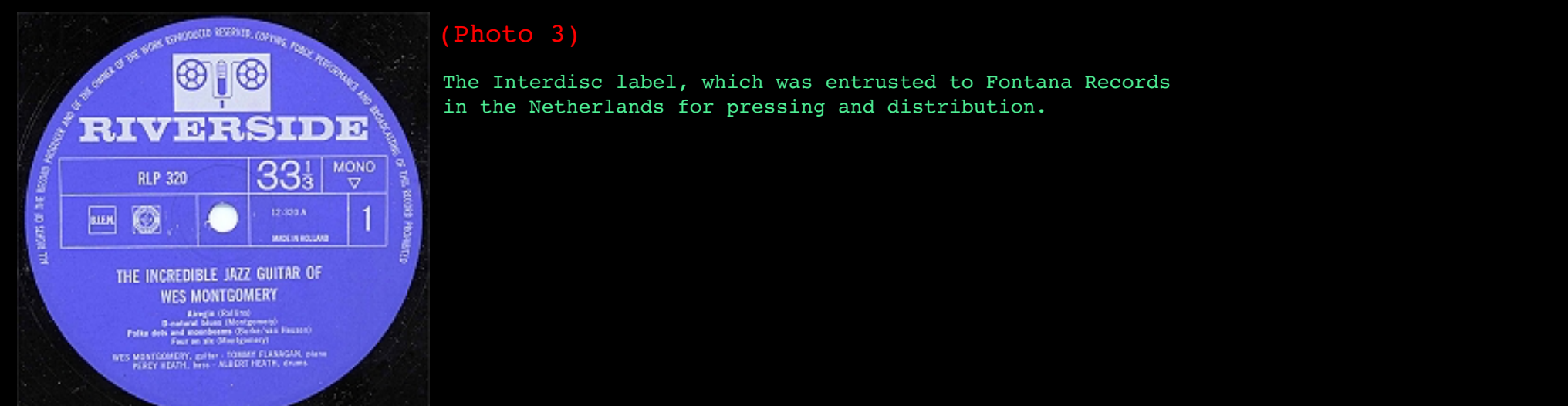
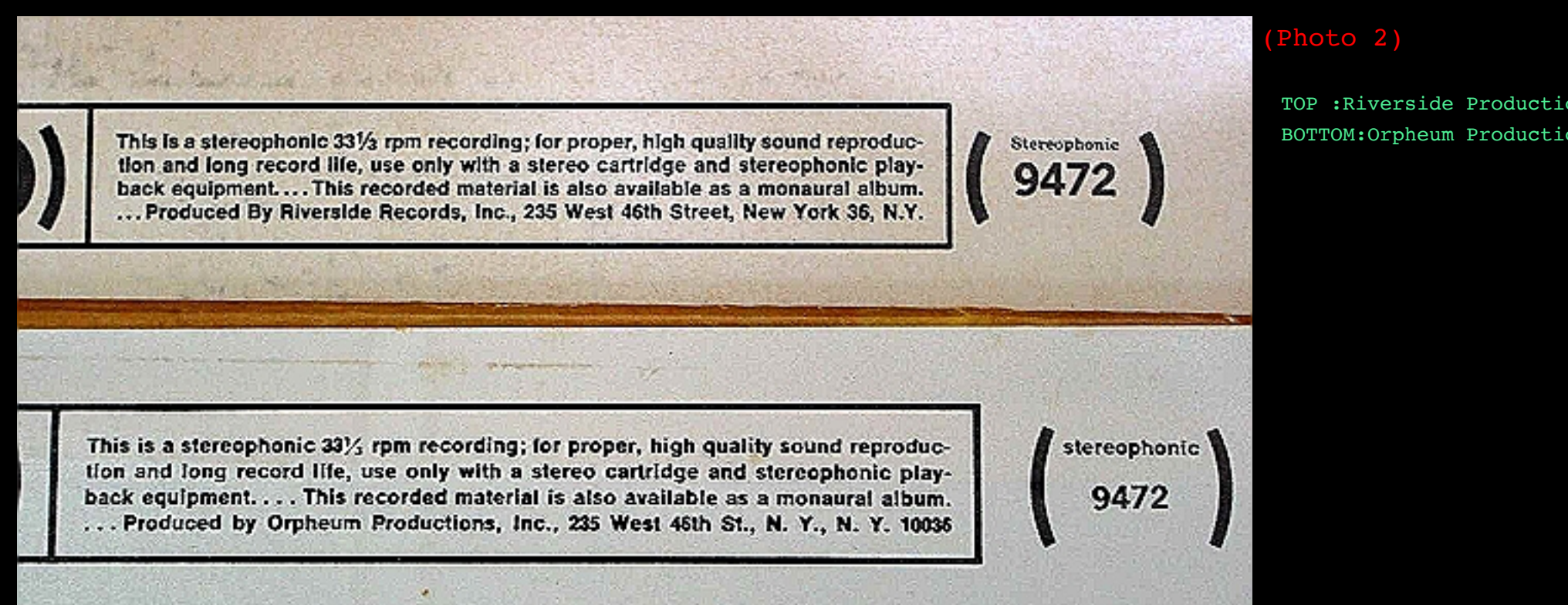
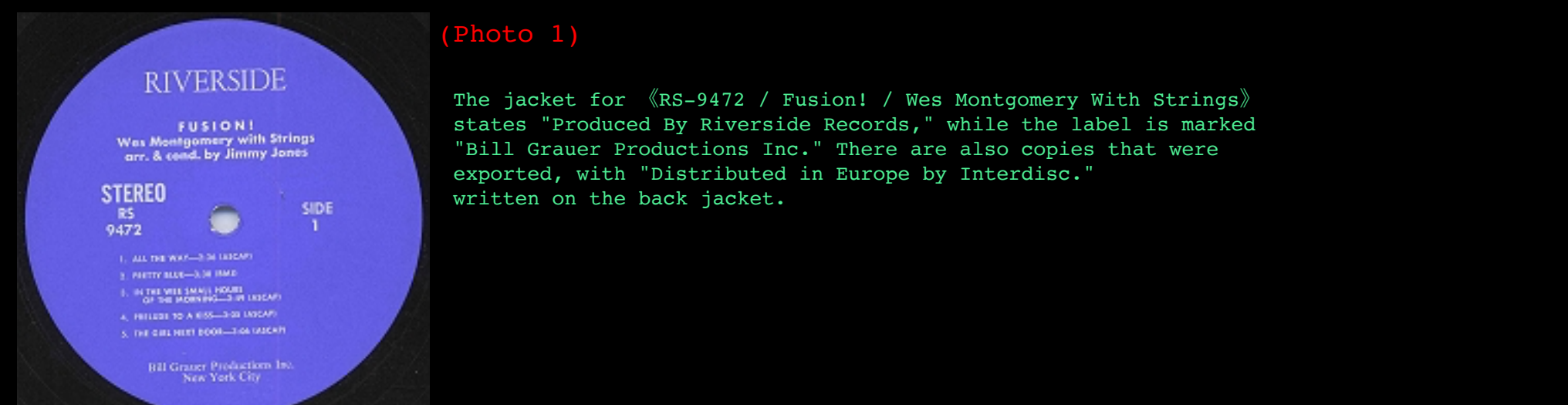
At some point, counterfeit Riverside pressings circulated, possibly in Japan. These counterfeits are well-made, indistinguishable except for the erased "Bill Grauer Productions" at the label bottom, and can still be found in auctions today. While grooves are not directly related to counterfeits, please be cautious when encountering grooved or non-grooved versions of "RLP-434 / RLP-9434 / Full House" to avoid poor-quality records.

Second Question:
Regarding specialist magazine coverage, the final release by "Orpheum Productions," "RM-499 RS-9499 / Cannonball Adderley - Cannonball in Orpheum," appears typical. However, there is also a reissue of "RLP12-320 The Incredible Jazz Guitar of Wes Montgomery" with the catalog number "RM 499/RS 9499 / Vibratin' / Wes Montgomery Quartet," with the title and jacket significantly altered (Photo 7). Naturally, I confirmed the existence of Wes's album first, but Cannonball's album also undeniably exists. Why is there a duplicate catalog number?

In 1967, Orpheum, which had been stirring things up as it pleased, transferred the rights to ABC Records. This year, John Coltrane passed away, which led to a decline in ABC Records' operations. Despite this, ABC managed to release three best-of compilations and three reissues:

"Fusion!" was reissued as "RS-3002 / In The Wee Small Hours / Wes Montgomery."
"Boss Guitar" was reissued as "RS-3012 / This Is Wes Montgomery" (Photo 8).
"The Wes Montgomery Trio" was reissued as "RS-3014 / Wes Montgomery Trio / 'Round Midnight."
Although the jackets and labels had changed, these were still recognizable as Riverside releases.

Additional Notes on Wes in the Contemporary Series:
The prefix "RLP12" for both MONO and STEREO versions, known as "small labels," measured approximately 90mm in diameter for the 1st press, labeled as "Bill Grauer Productions." The 2nd press had labels measuring approximately 100mm and were marked as "Bill Grauer Productions Inc." The prefix "RLP12-" can be found intermixed with "RLP-" from the late 320s to the early 330s. The prefix "RLP-" has been confirmed up to 436, while the "RM/RS-" prefix goes up to 483-484. Orpheum's unique label appears from 485 to 499. The address listed is 553 WEST 51 STREET up to RLP12-314 and changes to 235 WEST 46 STREET from RLP12-315 to Orpheum's RS9499.



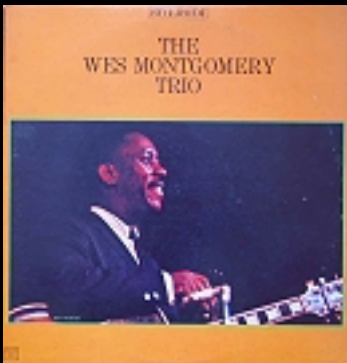
The Wes Montgomery Trio/A Dynamic New Sound



MONO



STEREO



2nd.cover



ABCcover

In the second cover, there are versions with Riverside's "large" label and Orpheum's turquoise label, and the back jacket design exists in approximately three variations.

MONO



1st-Original

- 1.MONO :RLP12-310
- 2.LABEL :SMALL
- 3.GROOVE :Y
- 1)"INC." NO



2nd-1

- 1.MONO :RLP12-310
- 2.LABEL :LARGE
- 3.GROOVE :Y/N
- 1)"INC." YES

STEREO



1st-Original

- 1.STEREO :RLP 1156
- 2.LABEL :SMALL
- 3.GROOVE :Y
- 1)"INC." NO



2nd-1

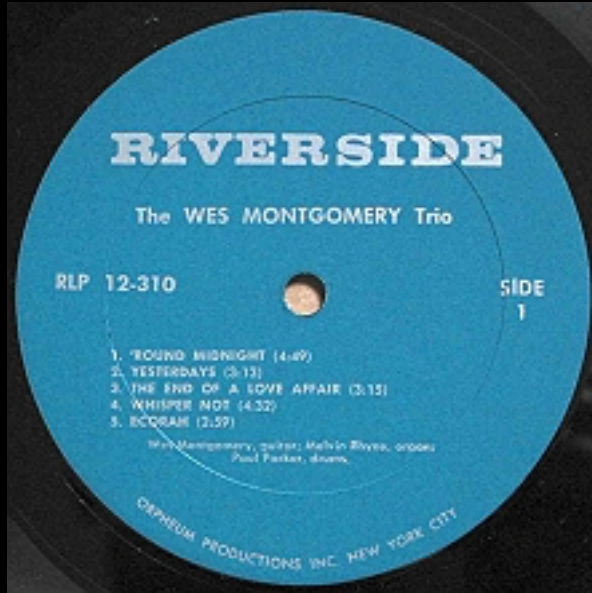
- 1.STEREO :RLP 1156
- 2.LABEL :LARGE
- 3.GROOVE :Y/N
- 1)"INC." YES



2nd-2

- 1.STEREO :RS 1156
- 2.LABEL :LARGE
- 3.GROOVE :Y/N
- 1)"INC." YES

Orpheum



3rd

- 1.MONO :RLP12-310
- 2.LABEL :LARGE
- 3.GROOVE :N



3rd

- 1.STEREO :RLP 1156
- 2.LABEL :LARGE
- 3.GROOVE :N

ABC

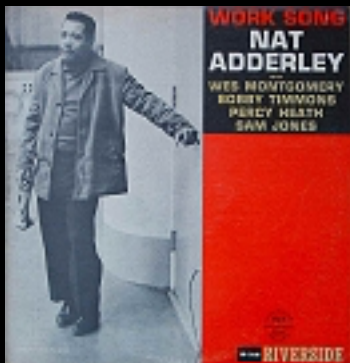


4th

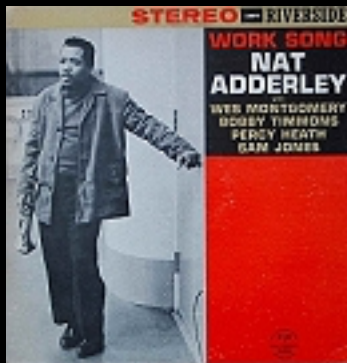
- 1.MONO :RS-3014
- 2.LABEL :LARGE
- 3.GROOVE :N

TITLE {Wes Montgomery Trio/'Round Midnight}

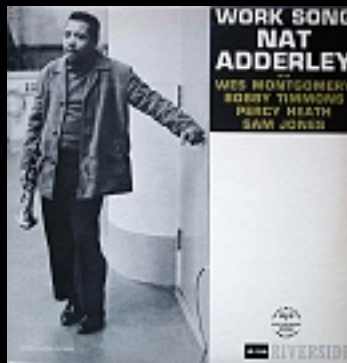
Work Song/Nat Adderley



MONO

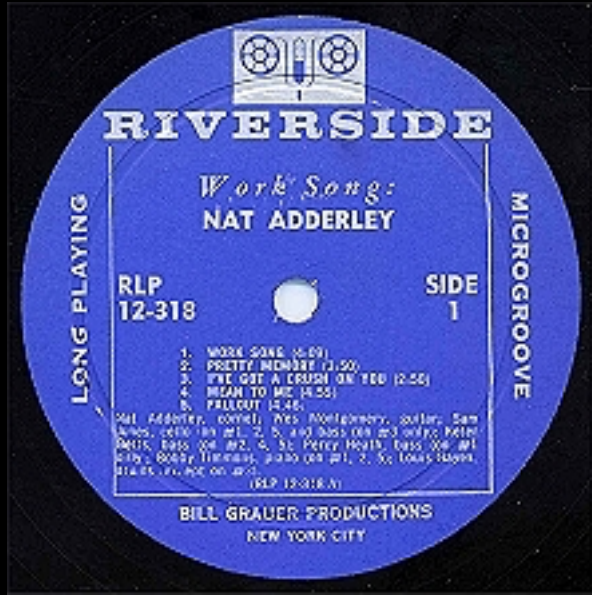


STEREO



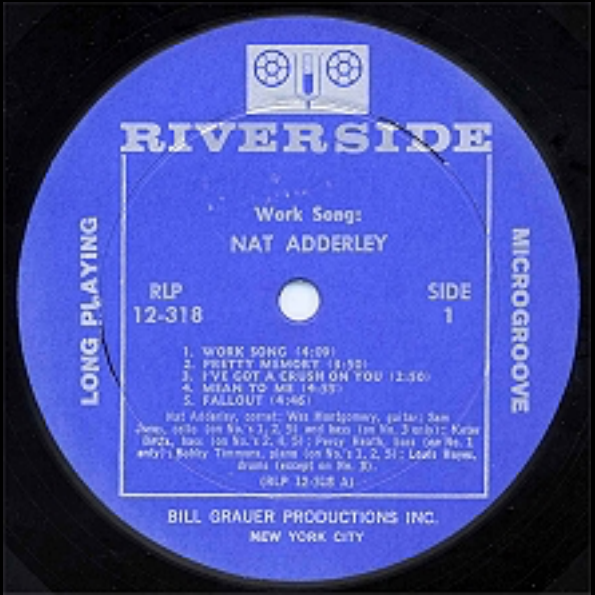
2nd.cover

MONO



1st-Original

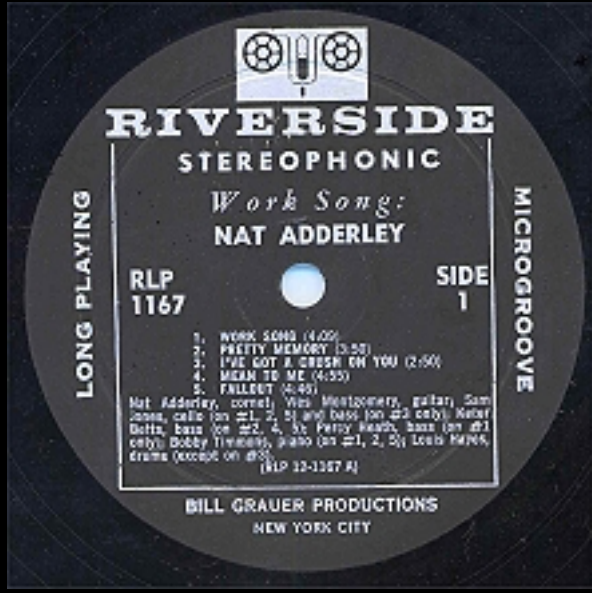
- 1.MONO :RLP12-318
- 2.LABEL :SMALL
- 3.GROOVE :Y
- 1)"INC." NO



2nd-1

- 1.MONO :RLP12-318
- 2.LABEL :LARGE
- 3.GROOVE :Y/N
- 1)"INC." YES

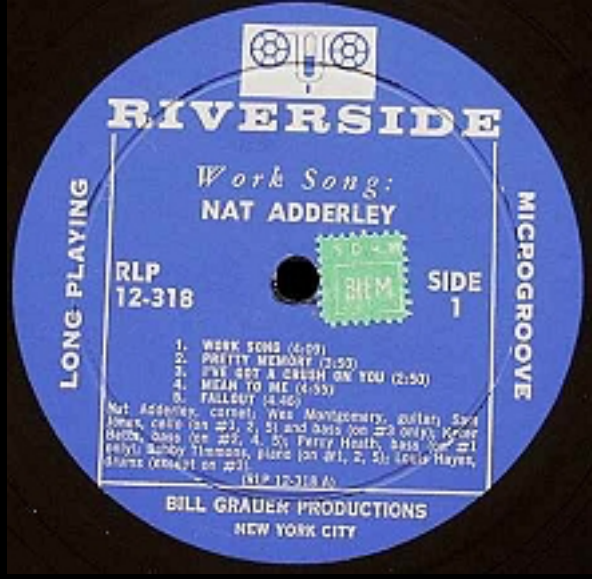
STEREO



1st-Original

- 1.STEREO :RLP 1167
- 2.LABEL :SMALL
- 3.GROOVE :Y
- 1)"INC." NO

Interdisc

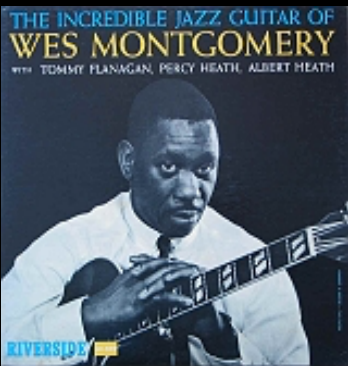


1st-Interdisc

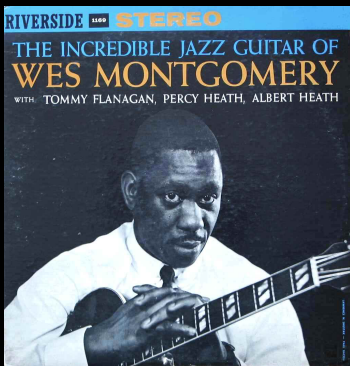
- 1.MONO :RLP12-318
- 2.LABEL :SMALL
- 3.GROOVE :Y

An unusual record with the original label affixed with a "BIEM" sticker for export to Europe. BIEM, which stands for the Bureau International des Éditeurs de Musique, is the International Bureau of Music Copyrights, headquartered in Paris. Originally founded as a European-led international organization, it included members from France, the UK, Germany, the Netherlands, and others. In recent years, membership has expanded to include organizations from the Americas, Central and South America, Africa, and the Asia-Pacific region, making it a global organization dedicated to protecting recording rights.

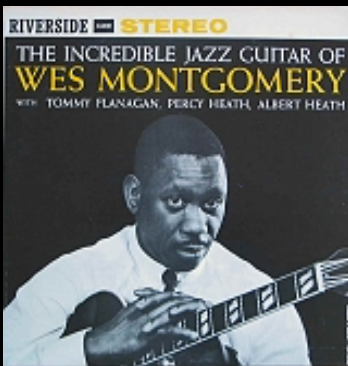
The Incredible Jazz Guitar of Wes Montgomery



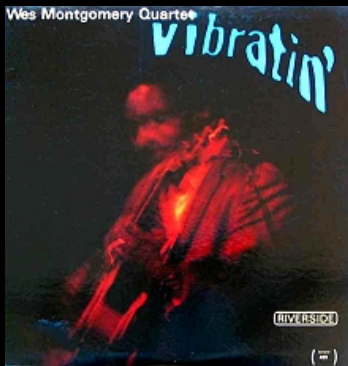
MONO



STEREO



STEREO-2nd



Orpheum

MONO



1st-Original

- 1.MONO :RLP12-320
- 2.LABEL :SMALL
- 3.GROOVE :Y

1)"INC." NO



2nd-1

- 1.MONO :RLP-320
- 2.LABEL :LARGE
- 3.GROOVE :Y/N

1)"INC." YES

STEREO



1st-Original

- 1.STEREO :RLP 1169
- 2.LABEL :SMALL
- 3.GROOVE :YES

1)"INC." NO



1st-2

- 1.STEREO :RLP 1169
- 2.LABEL :SMALL
- 3.GROOVE :NO

1)"INC." NO
LESS 180g WITHOUT GROOVE

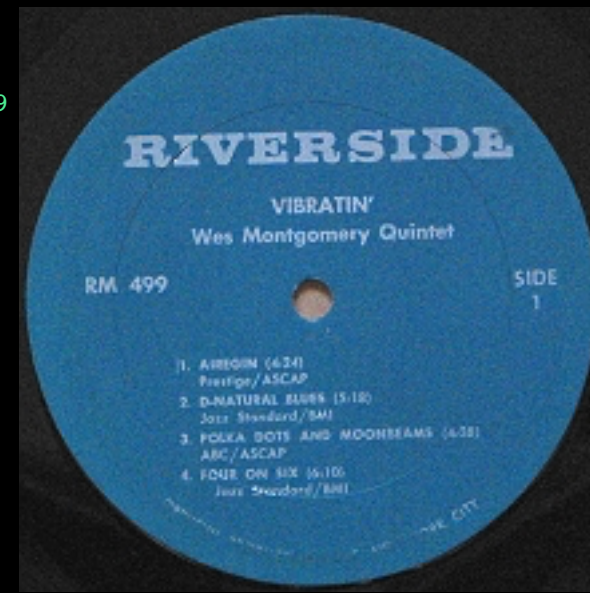
Orpheum



3rd

- 1.STEREO :RLP 1169
- 2.LABEL :LARGE
- 3.GROOVE :NO

1)The second
STEREO jacket
usage.



3rd

- 1.MONO :RM 499
- 2.LABEL :LARGE
- 3.GROOVE :NO

1)Vibratin' OF Orpheum
JACKET

Interdisc



- 1.MONO :RLP 320
- 2.LABEL :LARGE
- 3.GROOVE :SMALL

1)Export label
without the
logo border.



- 1.MONO :RLP 320
- 2.LABEL :LARGE
- 3.GROOVE :NO

1)Sales commissioned
in the Netherlands.



- 1.MONO :12-320
- 2.LABEL :LARGE
- 3.GROOVE :NO

1)Sales
commissioned
in the UK



- 1.MONO :12-320
- 2.LABEL :LARGE
- 3.GROOVE :NO

1)Sales
commissioned
in the UK

Movin' Along



MONO

STEREO

MONO



1st-Original

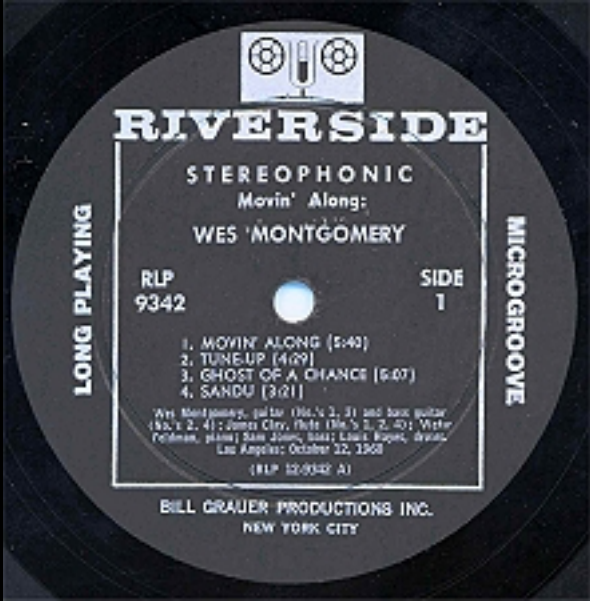
- 1.MONO :RLP 342
- 2.LABEL :LARGE
- 3.GROOVE :YES



2nd-1

- 1.MONO :RM 342
- 2.LABEL :LARGE
- 3.GROOVE :YES

STEREO



1st-Original

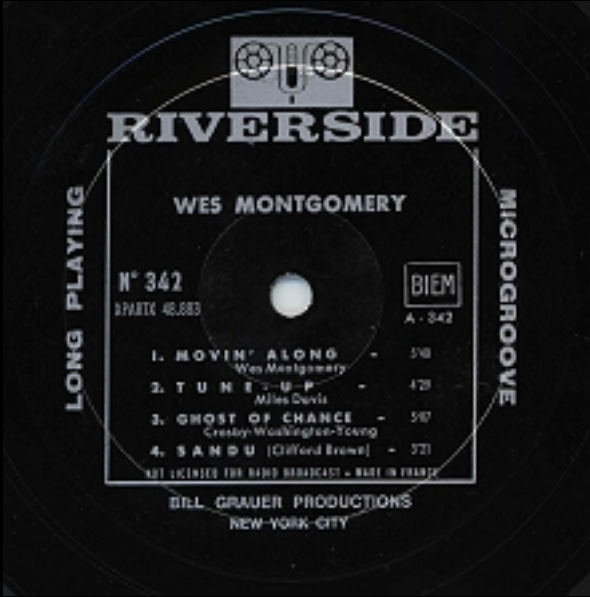
- 1.STEREO :RLP 9342
- 2.LABEL :LARGE
- 3.GROOVE :YES



2nd-1

- 1.STEREO :RS 9342
- 2.LABEL :LARGE
- 3.GROOVE :YES

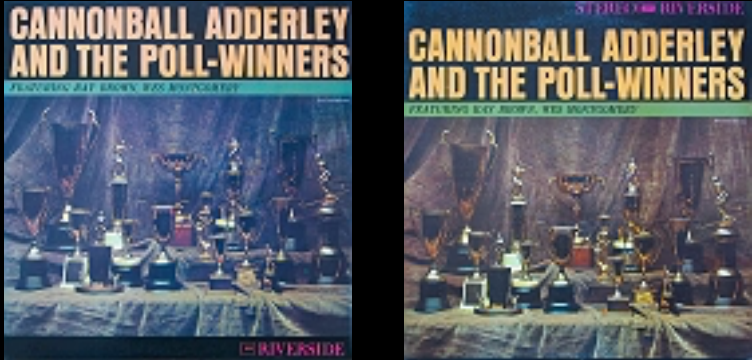
Interdisc



- 1.MONO :No 342
- 2.LABEL :LARGE
- 3.GROOVE :NO

1)Sales commissioned in the FRANCE.

Cannonball Adderley And The Poll-Winners



MONO

STEREO

MONO



1st-Original

- 1.MONO :RLP 355
- 2.LABEL :LARGE
- 3.GROOVE :YES



1st-Original

- 1.STEREO :RLP 9355
- 2.LABEL :LARGE
- 3.GROOVE :YES

Groove Yard



MONO



STEREO

MONO



1st-Original

- 1.MONO :RLP 362
2.LABEL :LARGE
3.GROOVE :YES

STEREO



1st-Original

- 1.STEREO :RLP 9362
2.LABEL :LARGE
3.GROOVE :YES

Interdisc



- 1.MONO :RLP 362
2.LABEL :LARGE
3.GROOVE :NO

1)Sales commissioned in the UK.

So Much Guitar!



MONO



STEREO

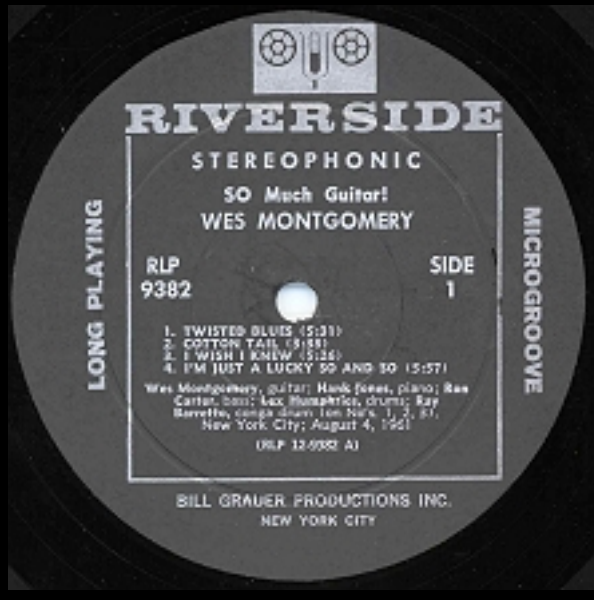
MONO



1st-Original

- 1.MONO :RLP 382
2.LABEL :LARGE
3.GROOVE :YES

STEREO



1st-Original

- 1.STEREO :RLP 9382
2.LABEL :LARGE
3.GROOVE :YES



2nd-1

- 1.STEREO :RS 9382
2.LABEL :LARGE
3.GROOVE :YES

PROMO



- 1.MONO :RLP 382
2.LABEL :LARGE
3.GROOVE :Shallow

Bags Meets Wes!



MONO



STEREO

MONO



1st-Original

- 1.MONO :RLP 407
2.LABEL :LARGE
3. GROOVE: YES

STEREO



1st-Original

- 1.STEREO :RLP 9407
2.LABEL :LARGE
3.GROOVE :YES

Orpheum



3rd

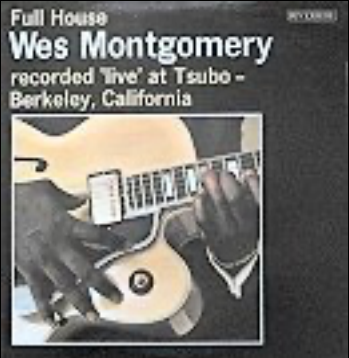
- 1.MONO :RM 407
2.LABEL :LARGE
3.GROOVE :NO

PROMO

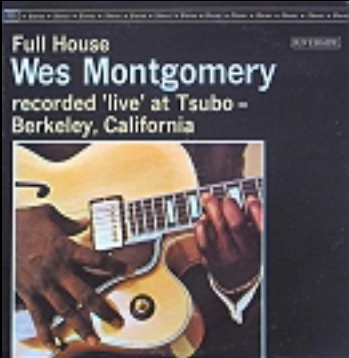


- 1.MONO :RLP 407
2.LABEL :LARGE
3.GROOVE :YES

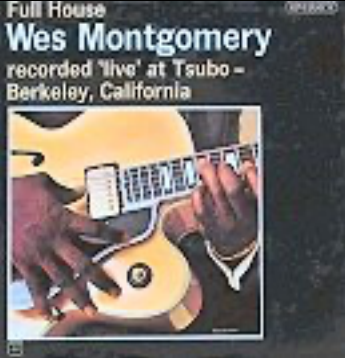
Full House



MONO



STEREO



MONO 2nd.cover

MONO



1st-Original

- 1.MONO :RLP-434
- 2.LABEL :LARGE
- 3.GROOVE :NO

!) no groove
MONO jacket
Without MONO
number in the
lower left



1st-Original-2

- 1.MONO :RLP-434
- 2.LABEL :LARGE
- 3.GROOVE :YES

!) has groove
2nd.MONO jacket
With MONO
number in the
lower left

STEREO



1st-Original

- 1.STEREO :RLP 9434
- 2.LABEL :LARGE
- 3.GROOVE :NO

!) no groove



2nd-1

- 1.STEREO :RS 9434
- 2.LABEL :LARGE
- 3.GROOVE :YES

!) has groove

Orpheum



3rd

- 1.MONO :RLP 434
- 2.LABEL :LARGE
- 3.GROOVE :NO

!)2nd.MONO jacket
With MONO
number in the
lower left

PROMO



- 1.MONO :RLP 434
- 2.LABEL :LARGE
- 3.GROOVE :NO

!)MONO jacket
Without MONO
number in the
lower left

Interdisc



- 1.STEREO :RLP 9434
- 2.LABEL :LARGE
- 3.GROOVE :SMALL

!)Sales commissioned
in the Netherlands.

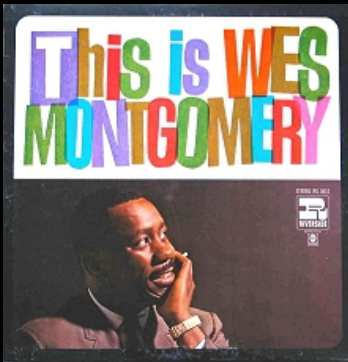
Boss Guitar



MONO



STEREO



ABCcover

MONO



1st-Original

- 1.MONO :RM 459
- 2.LABEL :LARGE
- 3.GROOVE :Shallow

STEREO



1st-Original

- 1.STEREO :RS 9459
- 2.LABEL :LARGE
- 3.GROOVE :Shallow

Orpheum



3rd

- 1.MONO :RM 407
- 2.LABEL :LARGE
- 3.GROOVE :Shallow

ABC

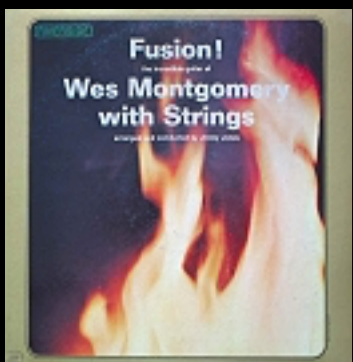


4th

- 1.MONO :RS-3012
- 2.LABEL :LARGE
- 3.GROOVE :NO

TITLE:
(This Is Wes Montgomery)

Fusion!



MONO



STEREO



ABCcover

MONO



1st-Original

- 1.MONO :RM 472
- 2.LABEL :LARGE
- 3.GROOVE :Shallow

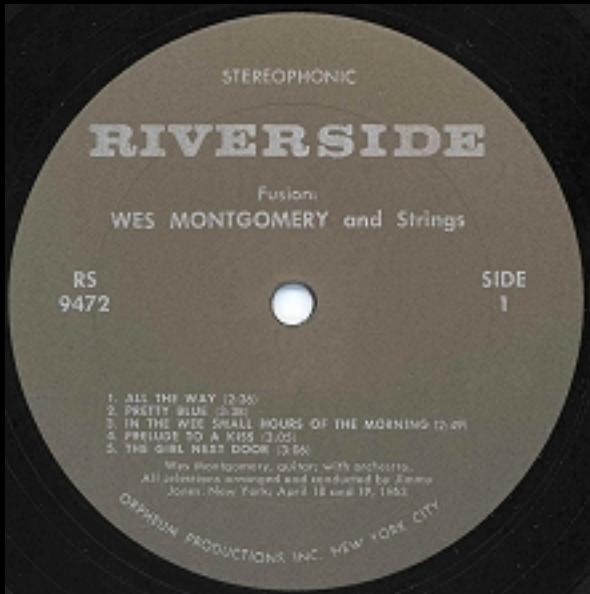
STEREO



1st-Original

- 1.STEREO :RS 9472
- 2.LABEL :LARGE
- 3.GROOVE :Shallow

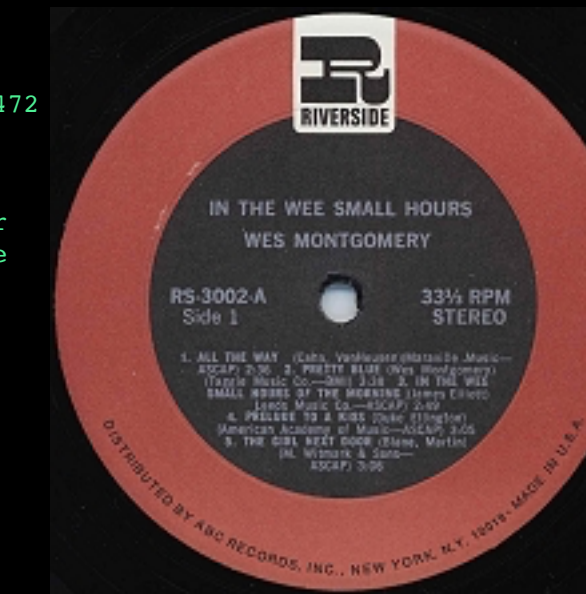
Orpheum



3rd

- 1.STEREO :RS 9472
 - 2.LABEL :LARGE
 - 3.GROOVE :NO
- Turquoise color label available

ABC



4th

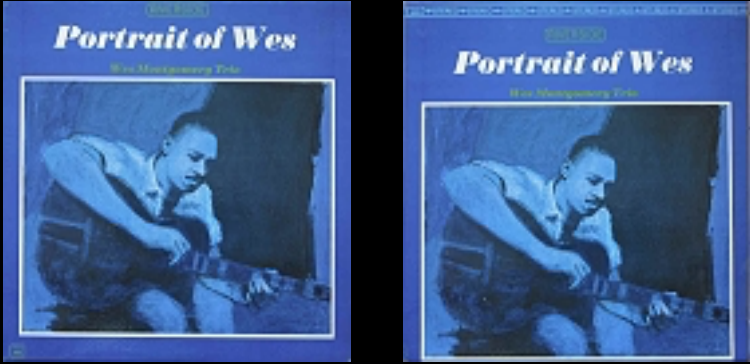
1.STEREO :RS-3002

2.LABEL :LARGE

3.GROOVE :NO

TITLE:
(In The Wee Small Hours)

Portrait Of Wes



MONO

STEREO

MONO



1st-Original

1.MONO :RM 492
2.LABEL :LARGE
3.GROOVE :NO

STEREO



1st-Original

1.STEREO :RS 9492
2.LABEL :LARGE
3.GROOVE :NO



2nd-1

1.STEREO :RS 9492
2.LABEL :LARGE
3.GROOVE :NO

Guitar On The Go



MONO

STEREO

MONO



1st-Original

1.MONO :RM 494
2.LABEL :LARGE
3.GROOVE :NO

STEREO



1st-Original

1.STEREO :RS 9494
2.LABEL :LARGE
3.GROOVE :NO



2nd-1

1.STEREO :RS 9494
2.LABEL :LARGE
3.GROOVE :NO

Other Label

Victor Records in Japan:

Around 1963, when Wes Montgomery was actively performing, Japan Victor released what is known as a "paper jacket" edition. The back cover indicates that it is an Interdisc pressing, thus aligning it with the European labels.



SR-7009/The Incredible..

Boss Guitar/Test Pressing

Interdisc



has "Promo" sticker

fontana/Holland

fontana/England

ABC LABEL

The next entity to acquire the release rights in Japan was Polydor in 1971.



polydor/JAPAN

polydor/England

polydor/Test Pressing



promo/Canada

promo/Japan

promo/Germany

Victor Music

In 1975, Victor once again signed a contract with Milestone.



Boss Guitar

So Much Guitar/Promo

FANTASY OJC



FANTASY-OJC



OJC-Germany

GERMANY



The Incredible Jazz Guitar