

Four or Six Songs In a Cardboard Cover

RCA Victor introduced the 45 RPM single in 1949. As 45 RPM records emerged as an alternative to 78's, the speed immediately spawned several format incarnations. Boxed sets of singles were common throughout the industry (as an alternative to the 78 RPM "album"). One notion that did not escape immediate attention was the possibility that at the slower speed of 45 RPM, the new records were not only smaller but could also hold more than one song per side.

Four-song, 45 RPM records were introduced by RCA in **August, 1952**, as "Extended Play" records or EP's. Several EP's would be collected into extended play albums. Traditionally, an EP held two previously-released singles by an artist or four songs from a Broadway show or film soundtrack (an abridgement of the 78 RPM album). Capitol boarded the EP train in early 1953.

As the trend continued toward records that held more material, the long-playing "LP's" introduced by Columbia Records in 1948 also gained popularity. Seven inch "long play" records were also released, essentially as experiments. "33 singles" did not fare well on the singles market, but their counterparts, "compact 33's," were popular enough in juke boxes to warrant releases well into the 1960's. These compacts usually contained 6 songs instead of the 4 found in an extended-play release.

At the beginning, an EP cover was often a reproduction of the 78 album cover. In the early years, Capitol frequently used the same cover for its EP's, 45 RPM boxed sets, 10" LP's, and later even a few 12" LP's. Albums can be found with the 7" EP cover pasted into the middle of a

Extended Play—the Evolutionary Heart of RCA's New Disk Program

Extended Play, or EP records, as RCA Victor is working to popularize them, actually represent the heart of the company's 1952 fall program. EP's are actually an extension of the record industry evolution, which started with the introduction of the new speeds in '48-'49. They are, furthermore, RCA's all-out attempt to regain a vast portion of the record market, which may have been priced out of the picture in recent years, and lost sight of to a considerable degree during the hectic days of the introduction of the new speed records, and the years which followed.

For example, RCA's own statistics show that prior to the introduction of the new speed records about 65 per cent of all Red Seal (RCA Victor classical) record business was done on single records. Since the introduction of the new speeds about 85 per cent of the business has been done in albums, and LP records. This led the company to the conclusion that a tremendous amount of volume was possibly being missed by record dealers, volume represented by the classical record buyer who could afford to spend \$1.50 per record for the specific selection he desired, but either could not afford or didn't care to spend two or three times the amount for more extensive works, only a portion of which he really wished to own.

The solution developed was the EP classical record. For an EP record, as most traders know, is simply a standardized, 7-inch, 45 r.p.m. disk, on each side of which up to eight minutes of music may be

of revitalizing the classical singles market is a sound one. While almost all of the fifty records in the EP Classical singles line are selling "back and neck," the top ten sellers in the line to date, on the order basis outlined above, are:

- (1) Encores by Jose Iturbi.
- (2) "Jalousie" and other favorites by the Boston Pops Symphony Orchestra with Arthur Fiedler conducting.
- (3) Marche Slav, Op. 31 by the Boston Pops.
- (4) Grand Canyon Suite and two other selections by Arturo Toscanini and the NBC Symphony Orchestra.
- (5) The Magic Flute and The Barber of Seville Overtures by Toscanini.
- (6) Selections from the Nutcracker Suite with Stokowski conducting.
- (7) Romberg Melodies.
- (8) "FPA" Favorites by The First Piano Quartet.
- (9) Robert Shaw Chorale in 4 Great Choruses.
- (10) Selections from Porphy and Bees with Rise Stevens and Robert Merrill.

(Individual selections on above records may be found in accompanying complete list.)

The popular EP single record and two-record packages, of course, are designed to solve yet another current marketing problem. Here there is no question of the single record sale. The 99-cent (retail) popular 45 r.p.m. record, with a single selection on each side, has steadily increased in sales and popularity. Here the question was simply whether a great many more persons, particularly younger people with limited allowances and budgets for such luxury items as records, wouldn't be inclined to buy popular albums, if such albums were lower-priced. EP offers an ideal opportunity to test this theory.

When the new RCA Victor line was originally announced several weeks ago, there was some dealer resistance and reaction to the effect that duplication of many items presently in the catalogs, and indeed, in stock on dealers' shelves would lead to substantial inventory losses. In the short time since the line has been introduced, however, the resistance seems to have disappeared to a substantial extent. Most dealers, it seems, have found that the additional 2 per cent discount RCA is giving them on all merchandise (whatever speed or type) purchased for the 90 days after the introduction of the new line, leaves them with no inventory loss at all, or an insignificantly small loss, if any.

It cannot be denied that the introduction of EP, as did the original introduction of both the new speed records, creates new inventory and stock control problems for the dealer. The best solution of this problem necessarily lies in the hands of each individual dealer himself. It calls for closer stock control, more up-to-the-minute and accurate stock control and inventory records than ever before. It calls for the wisest kind of initial purchasing of the new EP records, purchasing with a full knowledge and understanding



10" LP cover. Also, since the cover would be blown up to 10" or 12" size, the cover designs had to be simple enough to reproduce well at any of the three sizes. An example follows.

As far as the Beatles releases in the USA are concerned, all of Compact 33 releases are scarce, while the EP's actually sold quite well -- even though they received little respect from the

retail charts.

Early EP's sold well enough to have several different back covers. These back covers can be used to provide approximate release dates for individual copies of a popular EP.

EP Back Covers

First EP on List: 416
Highest-Numbered EP: 421
Probable Date: 4/53 to 10/53



First EP on List: 421
Highest-Numbered EP: 451
Probable Date: 10/53 to 5/54

First EP on List: 448
Highest-Numbered EP: 520
Probable Date: 1954
Corner Number: P1006



First EP on List: 584
Highest-Numbered EP: 630
Probable Date: Late 1955
Corner Number: P1017

First EP on List: 442
Highest-Numbered EP: 629
Probable Date: 1955-56
Corner Number: P1018



First EP on List: 812
Highest-Numbered EP: 833
Probable Date: 1957-8
Corner Number: P1020

First EP on List: 973
Highest-Numbered EP: 1015
Probable Date: 1958
Corner Number: P1021



First EP on List: 446
Highest-Numbered EP: 1211
Probable Date: 1959

In England, the Beatles used 1964 to issue an EP of brand new songs (as opposed to the usual practice of pulling singles or album tracks together); that record, *Long Tall Sally*, sold many thousands of copies. Three years later, *Magical Mystery Tour* would be a top-selling double EP, being treated as both a single and an album. After 1962 in America, though, EP releases were sparse, with Capitol issuing no EP's or Compact 33's after 1965.

The first Beatles EP to make the scene in the US was Capitol's *Four By the Beatles* (EAP 1-2121). At this time, Capitol's EP's were still numbered along with their albums. Two singles that were released by Capitol of Canada had fared well on the American charts. Capitol (US) attempted to draw away some listeners to their own (domestic) product by issuing the two singles together as an EP. The result was unimpressive, and the EP sold well for an EP. It charted, but it certainly did not match the popularity of a single or an LP.

The EP may be found with either of two covers: one that has the smaller slick on the front side, and one that has the smaller slick on the back side. Either configuration may be found with copies of the EP coming from either factory, Scranton or Los Angeles, so it does not appear that the distinction is merely one of factory.

In addition, there are two major label variations. Copies from Scranton are missing the word "RECORDS" underneath the Capitol logo. Copies from Los Angeles have the word, and the labels tend to be in a different shade of blue/green than found on Scranton pressings. Finally, LA copies are known to exist in three variants: wide space below the title but not above "Recorded in England"; wide space in both places; no wide space below the title.

The EP was introduced in *Billboard's* May 16, 1964, issue. Capitol promoted it with part of a full-page ad the following week. Capitol reported this as their best-selling EP ever.

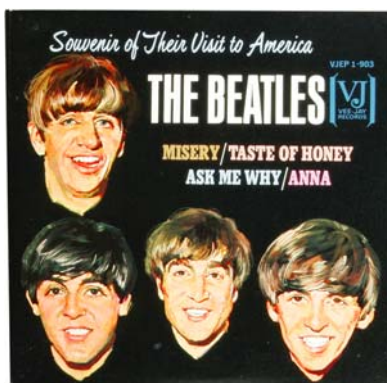




Vee-Jay Records entered the Beatles EP market as soon as they were able – taking out ads in the March 21, 1964, issues of trade magazines. Their offering, *Souvenir of Their First Visit to America* (Vee-Jay EP 1-903), was a great success. It is relatively common among US EP's. However, due to the fact that part of the EP's sales came through mail-order offers, the trade magazines refused to chart it.

Vee-Jay issued very few extended-play releases. A complete list is shown here.

Abner EP 1-900	Dee Clark	Just Keep it Up + 3 (mono)	September, 1959
Abner S-EP 1-900	Dee Clark	Just Keep it Up + 3 (stereo)	September, 1959
Vee Jay EP 1-901	4 Seasons	<i>The 4 Seasons Sing</i>	December, 1962
Vee Jay EP 1-902	4 Seasons	<i>The 4 Seasons Sing</i> (vol. 2)	March, 1963
Vee Jay EP 1-903	The Beatles	<i>Souvenir of Their First Visit...</i>	March, 1964



There are eight commercial label variations and three promotional label variations for the souvenir EP. In addition, Vee-Jay issued special promotional picture sleeves to accompany a few of the promo singles. These sleeves are very rare.



4-in-1 Single to Be Bowed by Capitol

By ELIOT TIEGEL

HOLLYWOOD—Capitol has developed a space age, super single concept which debuts later this month. Tagged the "4-By" series, the new product is four singles by one artist, principally in the teen-age field, which will be merchandised and sold as a single, not an EP.

The new product line will be launched with "4-By the Beach Boys," according to Brown Meggs, Capitol's merchandising-advertising vice-president. The new product will be "complimentary to singles and albums by the artists," explained Meggs, and will not be competitive with any of a performer's current hot single product.

The Beach Boys packet includes "Little Honda," "Wendy," "Hushabye" and "Don't Back Down," all culled from their current "All Summer Long" LP. "Honda," which is the emphasized lead track, has never been

released in 45-r.p.m. form before.

The series will be restricted to acts with immediate market success, with no set release pattern. The four singles will be offered in a soft paper color sleeve, to get away from the hard cardboard EP concept, which, generally speaking, has not been that successful for the industry. EP's will continue to be released when necessary and sold as albums. In fact, a recent EP package "Four by the Beatles," which sold like a single, prompted Capitol to develop the "4-By" series, Meggs said.

Designed to look and sell like a single, the "4-By" package will be offered to dealers at the regular 38 per cent singles discount price of 80 cents. The suggested manufacturer's list price is \$1.29.

Meggs said stock would be ready by Sept. 21. He anticipated no airplay problems since promotion men will emphasize the packet's top track similar to

Having been caught unawares in early 1964 by the popularity of the Beatles and the penchant for dealers to import Canadian singles, Capitol picked some sure winners for their second Beatles EP: *4 By the Beatles*. The EP received more promotion since it was part of Capitol's deliberate attempt to revive the format. Buoyed by solid sales of the first Beatles EP, Capitol initiated a "4-By" series in September, 1964. Originally, the intent was to sell an EP for the price of a single, housing it in a standard paper picture sleeve. They switched the EP's to the swirl label and began numbering them as singles, too.

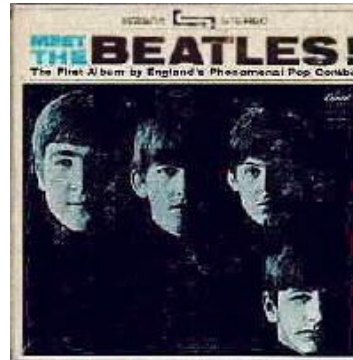
The first single in the series, *4-By the Beach Boys* (Capitol R-5267), charted as two singles – exactly as Capitol had hoped. It was not exactly a dominant record, but it gave the label hope for keeping the EP format alive. By the time Capitol chose to release *4-By the Beatles* (Capitol R-5365) in February, 1965, they had replaced the paper sleeve with the familiar hard cover. Perhaps the similar title threw many teenagers, or perhaps they had already purchased the *Beatles '65* album. The charts were also reluctant. They treated the EP as an EP this time, rather than as two singles. Whatever the reason, this EP charted only briefly and faded quickly, much like the first Beatles EP. Capitol would never issue another Beatles EP; this would be their last. The only other record in the 4-By series was *4-By Buck Owens* (Capitol R-5446), issued in June, 1965. It did not sell well.

As with the earlier Capitol EP, there are two covers, differing in how they are folded. Some copies also seem to have the 4's at the top in emerald green, while on other copies the color is more of an olive green. Copies were pressed in both Scranton and Los Angeles, and there are at least two LA label variations: with the publishing credits crowded together; or with the credits spread out.



Since Compact 33's were items that were (in 1964) available in jukeboxes through Seeburg, and since Capitol was issuing compacts of nearly every one of their popular artists, it was natural that the Beatles would be issued in this format. The cover to the Compact 33 was the same as the corresponding LP, with the back cover usually being blank (white). As jukebox inserts, there were timing strips and mini covers accompanying the record; these inserts were printed by Star Title Strip Co. in Pittsburgh.

Meet the Beatles is by far the least scarce of the three Compacts. This release is about as common as the *Four by the Beatles* EP.



Somewhat less common is the *Beatles Second Album* compact. Beatlemania was still in full swing, though, and the compact is only slightly more rare than the earlier jukebox release of *Meet the Beatles!*



The least common of the compact releases is certainly the *Something New* compact 33. By the end of 1964, Capitol was rapidly reducing the number of releases that would be sent to jukeboxes as Compact 33's. The Beatles' next Capitol album, *Beatles '65*, would not be released in that format. Bootlegs exist that mimic the Capitol Compact 33 format, but no genuine later releases exist.



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