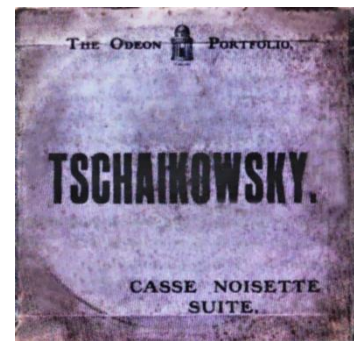
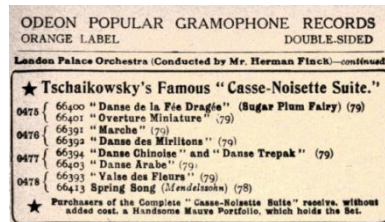


The first gramophone discs were sold individually and in separate sleeves. After 1900, the popularity of ten-inch and twelve-inch records increased – leading to the natural conclusion that one could collect several of these to be sold together as a unit. In 1907, Ben Hirsch put together his prototype for a record album, which he delivered to the US Patent Office in January, 1908. Before Hirsch’s design took off, the Gramophone Company Ltd. in the UK began issuing albums in portfolios. The first extended performance that required multiple discs was *Casse-Noisette Suite* (Nutmcracker Suite), recorded by the London Palace Orchestra under the direction of Herman Finck. His Masters Voice (HMV) released the records in a portfolio during or approximately April, 1909 – making it the earliest known commercial record album anywhere in the world.

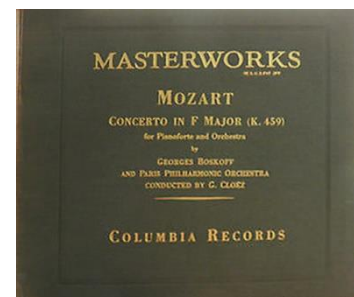


At first the labels paid little attention to the packaging of an album. There was cover text, but there was no cover art. Now and then, however, there was so magnificent or important a production that the recording company was determined to sell it as a deluxe edition, adorned with special artwork. The D’Oyly Carte recordings of the popular shows from Gilbert and Sullivan are the classic examples of such care being taken to design. Perhaps, then, it was *the Mikado* (from 1918), which was the first album to be featured in an artistically-designed cover.

American labels caught on eventually, and between 1918 and the end of 1939 there were at least 70 multi-record covers that sported artistic covers. There were quite a few more that did not simply include text against a single-colored background. Therefore, depending on what one wishes to count as “artistic,” there may have been over 100 such things. Many of these early albums are now hard to find.

The Great Depression took its toll all around the world. After 1933 there were not many companies releasing new albums in costly covers. Most members of the Columbia Masterworks Series, for example, were housed in single-colored packages adorned with text.

Some early designs are difficult to document. After the throes of the Depression began to die down, the labels swapped out some of their less attractive cover designs for new ones. For example, we may find an album originally released in 1938 sporting a cover design from 1940 or later. In this article I have tried to include the earliest known designs.



The Mikado studio cast
HMV D-2 to D-12
Recorded: 1917
Released (UK): c. February, 1918

The artist is not named on the cover.

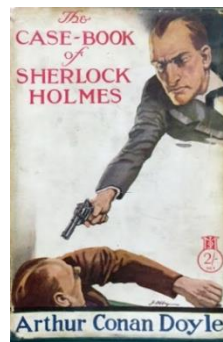
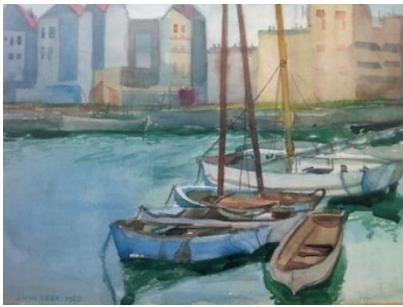
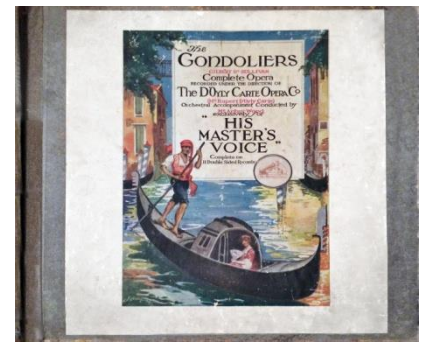


The Gondoliers studio cast

HMV D-36 to D-46

Recorded: 1919

Released (UK): October, 1919

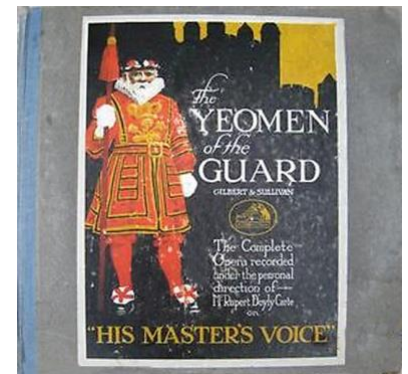
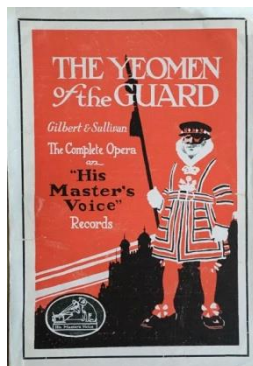


The Yeomen of the Guard partial studio cast

HMV D-481 to D-485 and D-496 to D-501

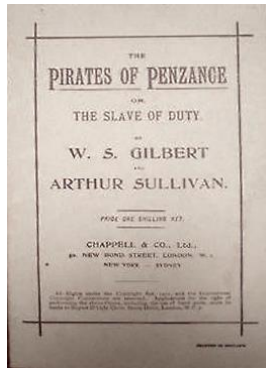
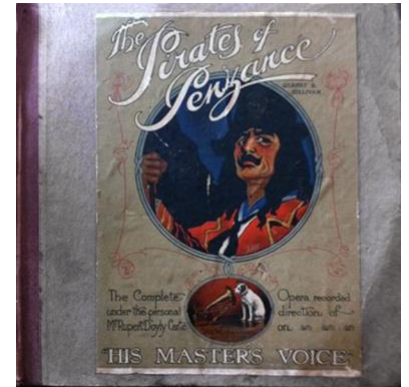
Recorded: 1920

Released (UK): December, 1920



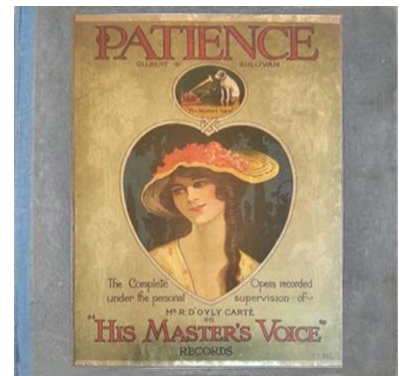
The Pirates of Penzance partial studio cast
HMV D-504 to D-514
 Recorded: 1920
 Released (UK): March, 1921

I am unable to read the artist's signature.

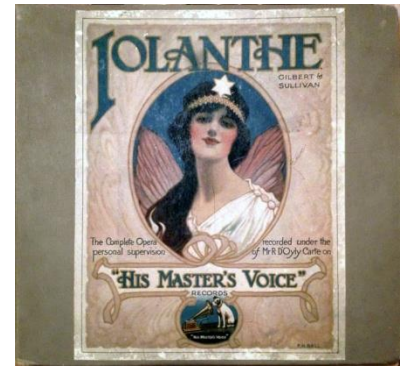


Patience studio cast
HMV D-563 to D-571
 Recorded: 1921
 Released (UK):

First pressing cover by FH Ball. See below.



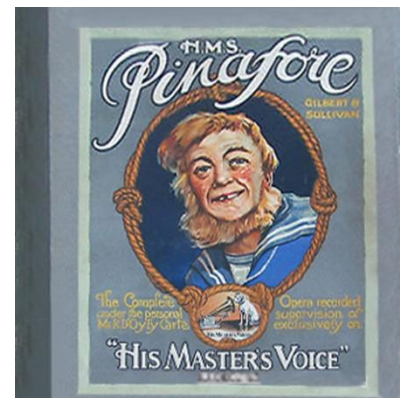
Iolanthe mostly studio cast
HMV D-633 to D-641
 Recorded: 1921-22
 Released (UK): Fall-Winter, 1922
 First pressing cover by FH Ball.



The artist was Frederick Hammersley Ball (1879-1939), who lived in Nottingham and who worked in pen-and-ink as well as paint.



HMS Pinafore part-original, part studio cast
HMV D-724 to D-731
 Recorded: 1922-23
 Released (UK): October, 1923
 First pressing and second pressing cover (1927?) shown



The Gramophone, October, 1923

REVIEW OF

HIS MASTER'S VOICE.—H.M.S. Pinafore (Gilbert and Sullivan) : Eight twelve-inch double-sided records in album, £2. 12s. 0d., or separate 6s. 6d. each.

This continuation of the Gramophone Co.'s series of Gilbert and Sullivan operas will be very welcome to all Savoyards. The difficulty of reproducing these operas satisfactorily lies in the equal importance of the words and music. There was never so perfect a whole as a Gilbert and Sullivan opera. The words must be understood or a good half of the value is lost. For those enthusiasts who know *Pinafore* by heart, the words are, no doubt, clear enough, but for the average listener who would like to enjoy the records as they should be enjoyed we recommend a book of the words. For the rest, the recording and singing are both on a very high level. Now may we have *Ruddigore*?



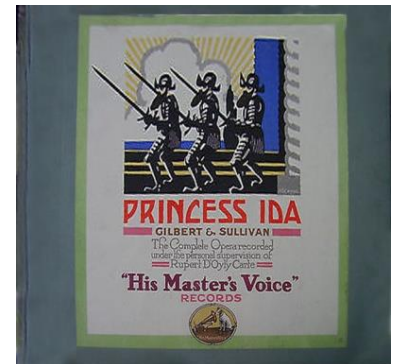
Ruddigore show cast
 HMV D-878 to D-886
 Recorded: 1924
 Released (UK): c. September, 1924

Original cover art by STC Weeks.
 Weeks illustrated several books (including the *South Downs*) and made a poster (1913) depicting a parrot at the zoo near Camden Town Station.

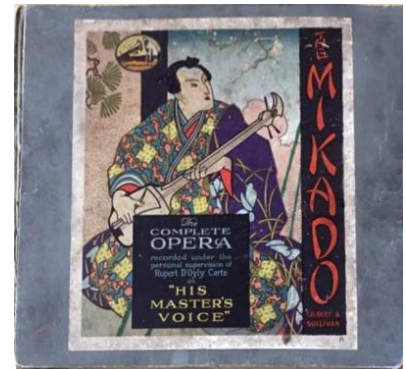


Princess Ida show cast
 HMV D-977 to D-986
 Recorded: 1924
 Released (UK): April, 1925

I am unable to read the artist's signature, but
 It appears to read STC Weeks.



The Mikado show cast
 HMV D-1172 to D-1182
 Recorded: 1926
 Released (UK): April, 1927



THE BUBBLE BOOK
 The Harper-Columbia Book that Sings
UNIQUE. An original as "The Hole Book." The children will love it.

The first of a unique series of books. The stories in verse by Ralph Mayhew and Burges Johnson, are illustrated by Columbia records, enclosed between the pages of the book, which are to be taken out and played on the phonograph, so that the children can hear sing the stories of "Tom, Tom, the Piper's Son," "Jack and Jill," and "Mary Had a Little Lamb."

Children like pictures. Children like verses. Children like music. Melody, art and poetry will be blended together in a book for the first time in this series. The old folks have their opera and their expensive operatic records. Here is a chance to give the children, with their eyes home musical sense and musical memory, their own opera books where their little imaginations can see, hear, and appreciate at the same time the old songs that have been as imperishable for the children as have been the operas for the grown-ups.

From these books, almost without any aid, the children can learn to read as well as to sing. Through association of ideas and a strong appeal to their imaginations they will be educational as well as entertaining.

Children naturally sing at play; these books will encourage their love of music and give them a fund of pleasure in their own little land of make-believe which the "magic pipe" will people with all the story-book folk brought vividly to life—no Aladdin's lamp could do—for a magic bubble pipe is one of the wonders in this fairy story that you can see, read, and hear.

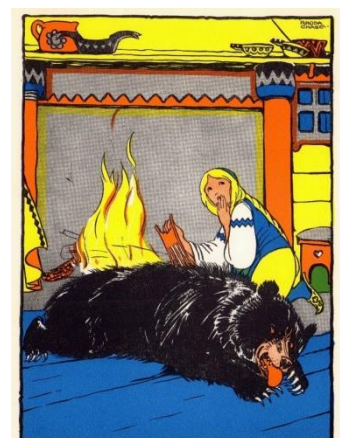
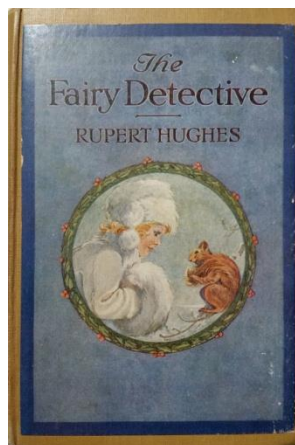
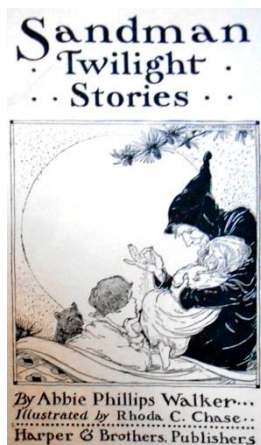
By RALPH MAYHEW and BURGES JOHNSON
 Three Columbia Records in each book. Illustrated in Color by Rhoda Chase. \$1.00 net.

HARPER & BROTHERS Established 1817

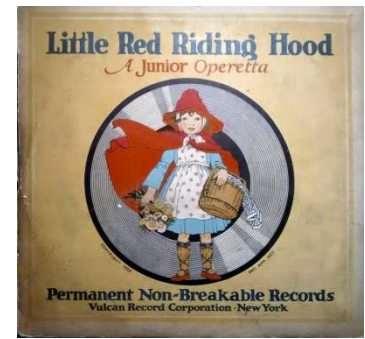
Rhoda Campbell Chase came from a family of talented artists. Her father, Henry S. (“Harry”) Chase was a successful painter whose works were exhibited at the Saint Louis Expo in 1904, and young Rhoda attended the St. Louis School of Fine Arts. In 1895 some of her sketches were on exhibit in Saint Louis, and a local paper called her “Harry Chase’s talented daughter.” Eventually she moved to Paris, where she studied with Théophile Steinlen, a noteworthy figure in the *Art Nouveau* movement. She finished her studies at the Art Students’ League in New York City, went into advertising, and soon had her own studio. She contributed art to many books for children and was an outstanding artist in the field.

In 1917, when Harper & Brothers called on Rhoda to illustrate volumes of their new “**Bubble Book**,” it was because they thought they had something new and exciting on their hands. The books would contain records. The kids could sing along with the records and learn to read at the same time. Rhoda Chase provided captivating illustrations in every volume. Harper partnered with Columbia Records of the UK on the venture, and by 1923 there were sixteen successful volumes available. The albums/books were well-received in reviews throughout the country, and in Great Britain. This attracted the attention of Victor Records – close associates of UK Columbia since both had been associates of Berliner’s Gramophone Company, and since in 1920 Victor purchased controlling interest in the British company.

Victor continued to release the popular Bubble books, which remained somewhat popular. However, in 1929 RCA gained control of the Victor Talking Machine Company in North America, separating Victor from (UK) Columbia. Having lost the Bubble books, Victor went on to create its own record-album books (see below), and once again they were produced by Columbia in Great Britain. These continued in production until 1932, when diminished sales and cutbacks associated with the Great Depression signaled their end. Through this collaborative effort, Rhoda Chase was the first regular album-cover designer.



Little Red Riding Hood studio cast
Vulcan Junior Operettas no number
Matrix numbers 5070-5072, 5074-5076
Recorded: 1923
Released: August, 1923



The artist is not named on the cover.

This was a three-record set in a fold-open folio cover.

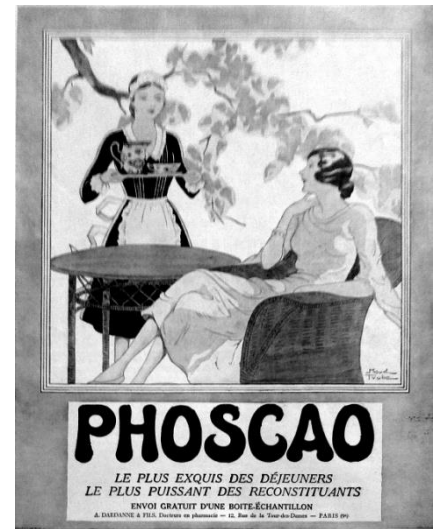
The Vulcan Record Corporation opened in August, 1923, in New York City. They appear to have released three singles and this set.



Little Tots' Records was an imprint of the Regal Record Company of New York. Beginning in **1923**, the company began issuing a series of mini albums oriented toward children. Each of the "Little Tots" series – there were ten in all – contained colorful cards for children to look at as they listened to the records. Both the cards and the covers contained striking illustrations by Maude Trube. In 1929, Trube began a series of advertisements for the French cocoa company, Phoscao. By the mid-1930's she had married and was exhibiting art as Maude Trube Ferrière. Her most recent work was a book on Swiss textiles.

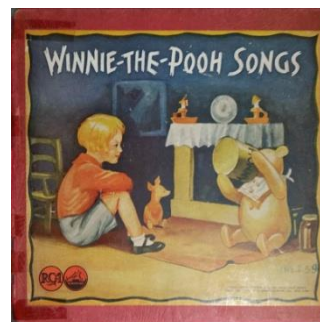
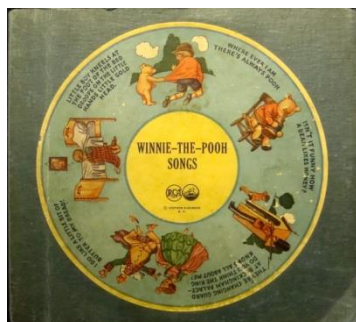
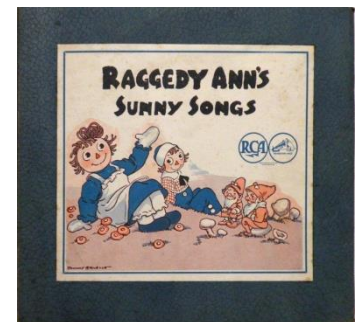
Raggedy Ann's Sunny Songs Frank Luther
Victor 218 to 220 (later Victor J-1)
 Recorded: 1931
 Released: December, 1931

Winnie the Pooh Songs Frank Luther
Victor 221 to 223 (later Victor J-2)
 Recorded: 1932
 Released: December, 1932; 1934



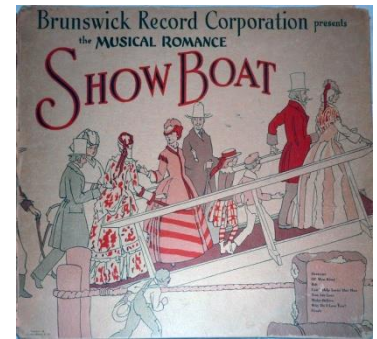
The allure of targeting records to children had been there since the start of recorded music. Apparently the record labels reasoned that children were likely to see a record that they might like to hear – IF that record featured colorful artwork.

Their 1931 offering featured a cover illustrated by Johnny Gruelle, who had created Raggedy Ann. It was successful, and Victor released an album of Winnie-the-Pooh songs.

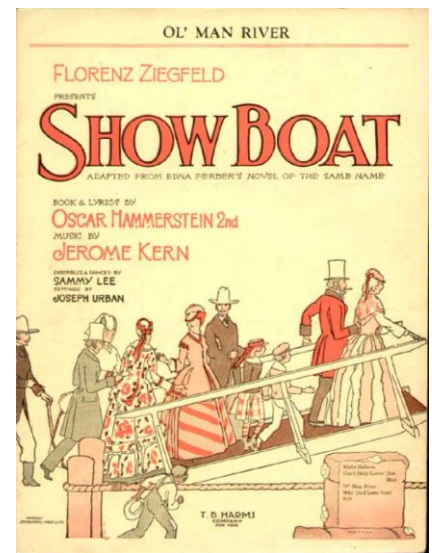
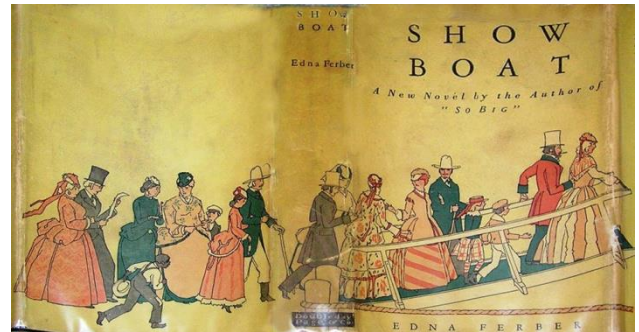


HERE'S A GRAND CHRISTMAS GIFT FOR CHILDREN
 "Winnie-the-Pooh Songs"—Milne's popular child poems put to music. Three beautiful, indestructible picture-records in six brilliant colors. Handsome album—\$2.00. Or "Raggedy Ann's Sunny Songs"—three records, same as above, \$1.25.
AND FOR GROWN-UPS... "Tristan and Isolde" (Prelude, Love Music, Love Death) by Stockowski and Philadelphia Orchestra, \$8.00. "Grand Canyon Suite" (Grofe), Paul Whiteman and His Orchestra, \$5.50.

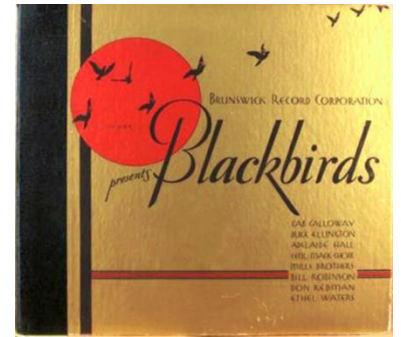
Show Boat partial show cast
Brunswick 20014 to 20017
Recorded: July-August, 1932
Released: Late 1932



The cover art was taken directly from the Sheet music published in 1927 by the TB Harm: Company. That had been extended and redrawn from the dust jacket to the 1926 book. The artist's name at Doubleday is not mentioned on the dust jacket.



Blackbirds cast recordings
Brunswick 6516 to 6521
 Recorded: 1928, 1930
 Released: March, 1933



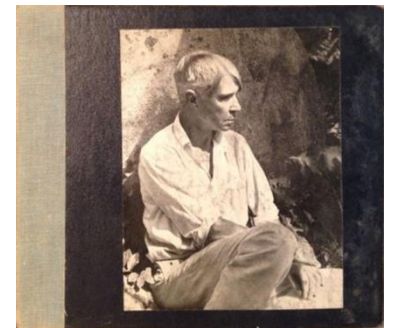
Songs of Wild Birds EM Nicholson & Ludwig Koch
Parlophone Boxed Set With Book (UK)
 Released: October, 1936
 While this was not the first set of records to feature bird sounds (that happened in 1934), this was the first set having a cover design.



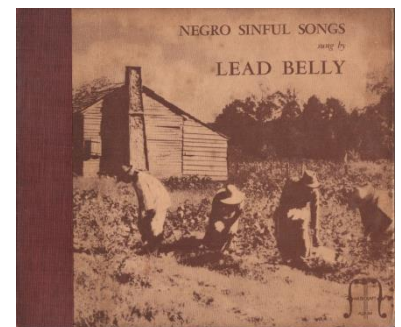
More Songs of Wild Birds EM Nicholson & Ludwig Koch
Parlophone Boxed Set With Book (UK)
 Released: October, 1937
 This second boxed set was followed by a box featuring the five discs.



From "*The American Songbag*" Carl Sandburg
Musiccraft Album 11
 Released: 1938
 This cover is from 1939



Negro Sinful Songs Lead Belly
Musiccraft Album 31
 Released: July, 1939

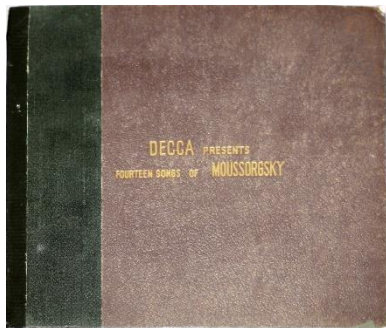


In Step With Decca

American Decca Records released approximately 75 albums before the beginning of 1940. Eight of the first nine albums were classical or neo-classical releases. The release of Decca 10 was announced in *Supplement to the Gramophone Shop* (August, 1938), and the release of Album No. 75 is mentioned in publications from November, 1939. Among these are some well-known records (such as Bing Crosby's compilation of Cowboy Songs) and some rarities.

We observe that the art department at Decca Records was playing around with effective album cover designs. Until the middle of 1938, they did what their rivals at Victor and Columbia were doing: they put out a few bland covers that simply identified the contents. With the release of *Music in Hawaii*, they decided to move in more interesting directions. Several albums from that point on have what appears to be a "wrapping paper" design. While these covers are not major works of art, they do succeed in grabbing one's attention.

Several of their albums from 1939 feature photographs, beginning with the first album from Deanna Durbin. They seemed confined to black-and-white or single-toned backgrounds most of the time, but from the photos below one is able to observe that they were deliberately working toward more effective album cover art. The tap-dancing album is noteworthy because it evokes the spirit of tap dancing by using a wood-grained background. Some of their designs were striking, while others were simple but effective.



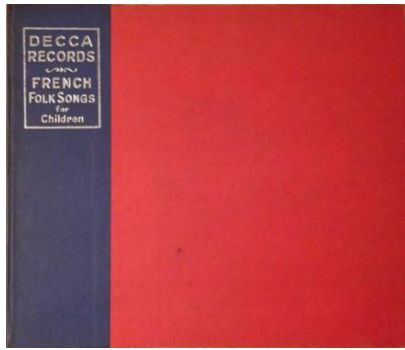
Album No. 1
*(Fourteen) Songs of
Moussorgsky*
Queen's Hall Orchestra
March 1938 (7 discs)



Album No. 2
Beethoven:
Violin Sonatas, Vol. I
Simon Goldberg; Lili Kraus
March 1938 (7 discs)

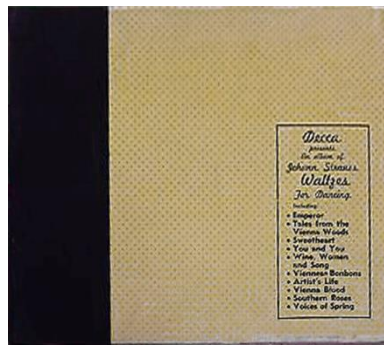


Album No.3
Beethoven:
Violin Sonatas, Vol. II
Simon Goldberg; Lili Kraus
March 1938 (5 discs)



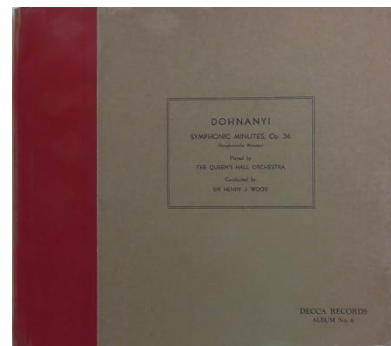
Album No. 4
French Folk Songs for Children

Louis Chartier (4/38)



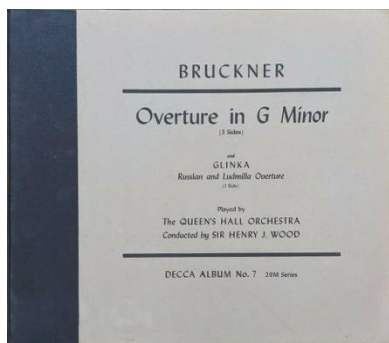
Album No. 5
Johann Strauss Waltzes for Dancing

Harry Horlick (c. 5/38)

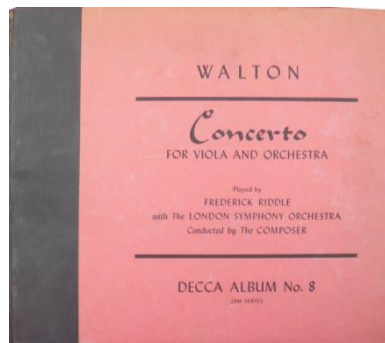


Album No. 6
Symphonic Minutes, Op. 36
Dohnányi

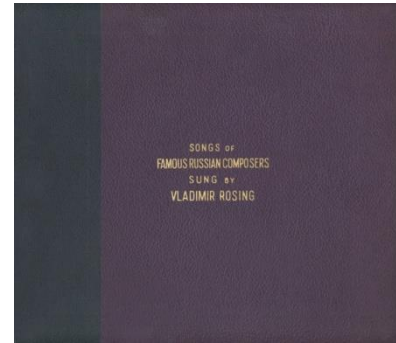
Queen's Hall Orchestra



Album No. 7
Bruckner's & Glinka's Overtures
Queen's Hall Orchestra
(Henry Wood) (7/38)



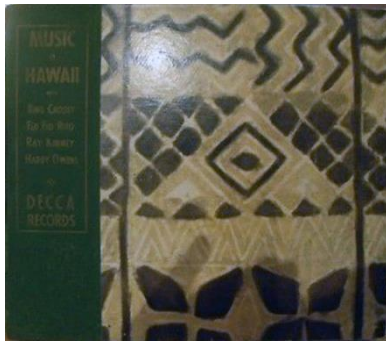
Album No. 8
Walton's Concerto for Viola & Orchestra
Frederick Riddle



Album No. 9
Songs of Famous Russian Composers
Vladimir Rosing

At this point in time, Decca began experimenting with cover designs – to create attractive packages that would sell the albums.

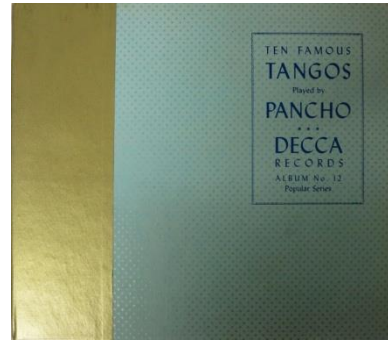




Album No. 10
Music of Hawaii
Various Artists

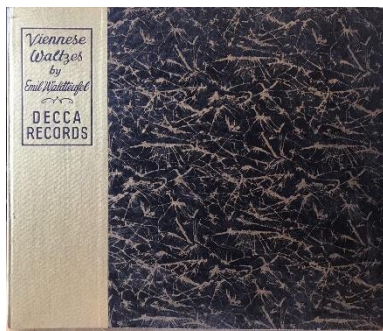


Album No. 11
Viennese Waltzes by Léhar and Kálmár
Harry Horlick



Album No. 12
Ten Famous Tangos
Pancho

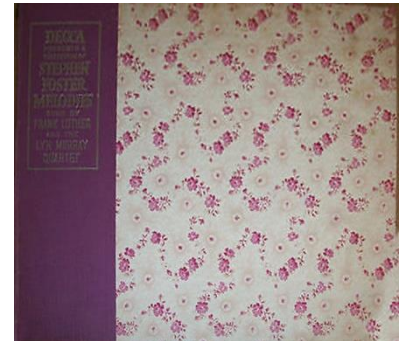
Album Cover Design of Hawaiian Tapa Cloth by Courtesy of Hawaiian Society, New York.



Album No. 13
Viennese Waltzes by Emil Waldteufel
Harry Horlick



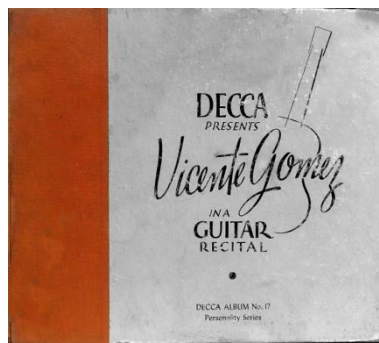
Album No. 14
Salon Music
Harry Horlick
Later logo on cover.



Album No. 15
Stephen Foster Melodies
Frank Luther &
Lyn Murray Quartet



Album No. 16
Ten Famous Rumbas
Henry King



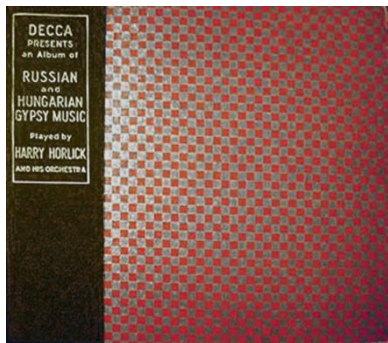
Album No. 17
Guitar Recital
Vicente Gomez



Album No. 18
Ye Old Time Dance Nite
Baron Wolf



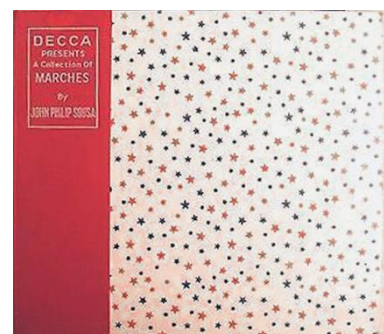
Album No. 19
A Collection of Old-Time Dance Music
Freddie Fisher



Album No. 20
Russian and Hungarian Gypsy Music
Harry Horlick



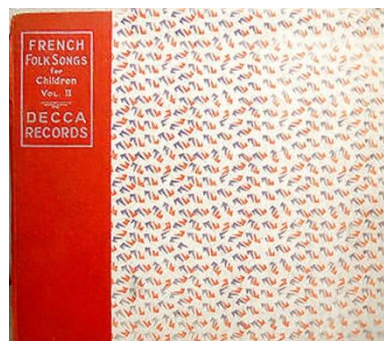
Album No. 21
Roumanian Gypsy Music
Nicolas Matthey



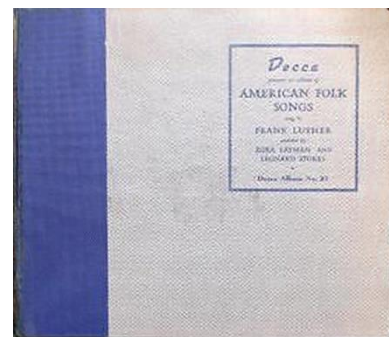
Album No. 22
Marches by John Philip Sousa
American Legion Band



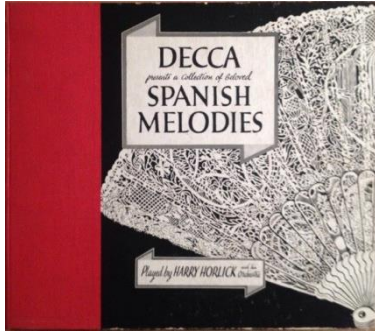
Album No. 23
Tchaikovsky's Nutcracker Suite
Little Symphony Orchestra



Album No. 24
French Folk Songs for Children Vol. II
Louis Chartier



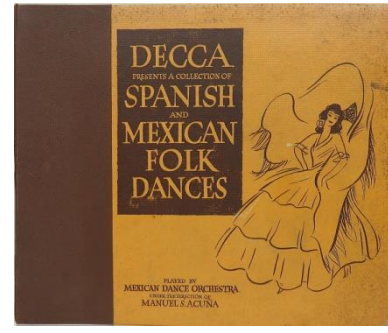
Album No. 25
American Folk Songs
Frank Luther



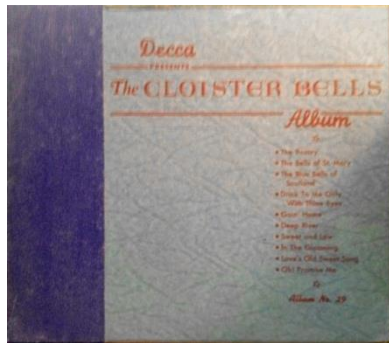
Album No. 26
Spanish Melodies
 Harry Horlick



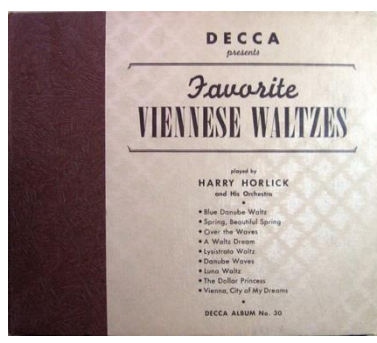
Album No. 27
Mexican Melodies
 Harry Horlick



Album No. 28
Spanish and Mexican Folk Dances
 Mexican Dance Orchestra



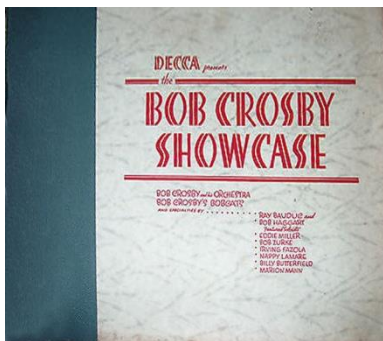
Album No. 29
The Cloister Bells Album
 The Cloister Bells
 Later logo on cover



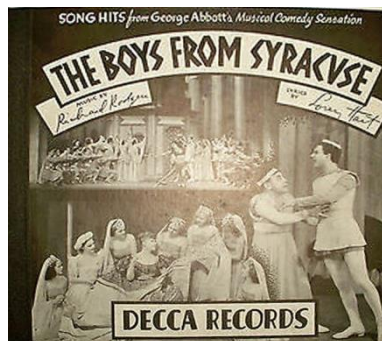
Album No. 30
Favorite Viennese Waltzes
 Harry Horlick



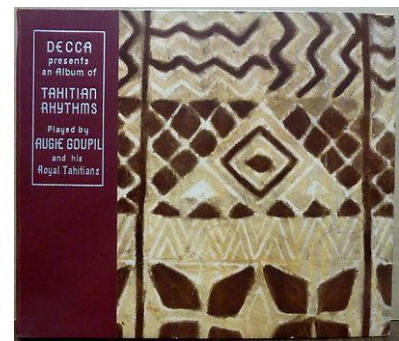
Album No. 31
George Gershwin Music
 Paul Whiteman



Album No. 32
The Bob Crosby Showcase
 Bob Crosby



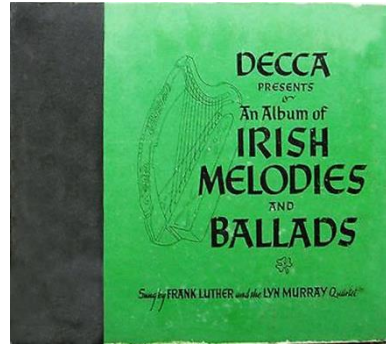
Album No. 33
The Boys from Syracuse
 Rudy Vallee, Frances Langford
 Studio Cast



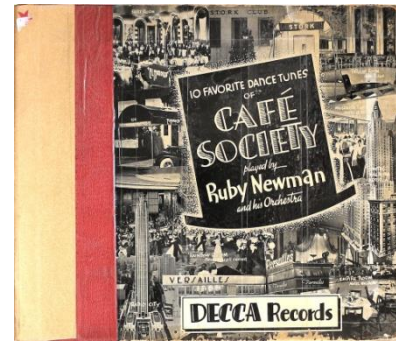
Album No. 34
Tahitian Rhythms
 Augie Goupil



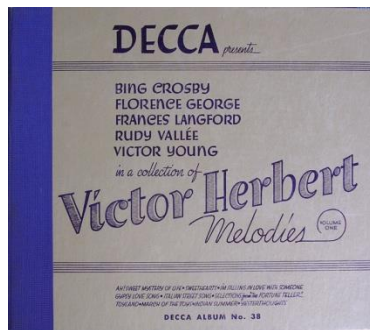
Album No. 35
Deanna Durbin
 Deanna Durbin



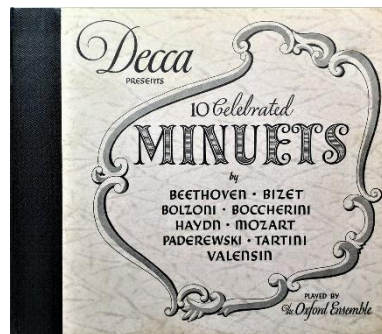
Album No. 36
Irish Melodies and Ballads
 Frank Luther and Lyn Murray



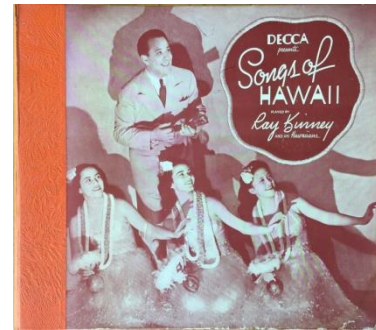
Album No. 37
Café Society
 Ruby Newman



Album No. 38
Victor Herbert Melodies
 Various Artists



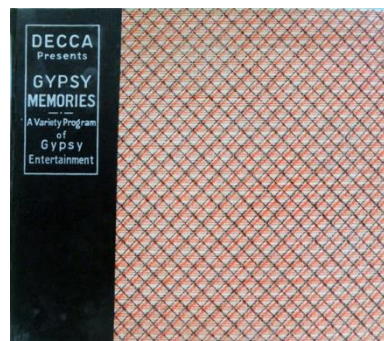
Album No. 39
10 Celebrated Minuets
 The Oxford Ensemble



Album No. 40
Songs of Hawaii
 Ray Kinney



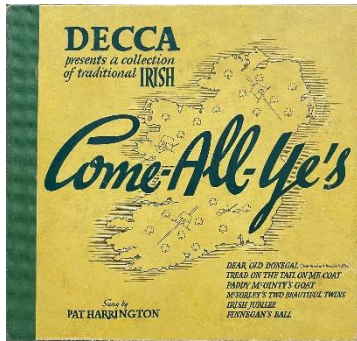
Album No. 41
Hebrew Prayers
 Cantor Moshe Rudinow



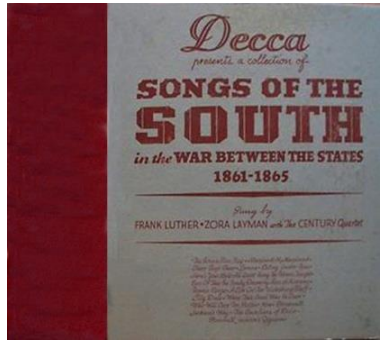
Album No. 42
Gypsy Memories
 Various Artists
 Casa Loma Orchestra



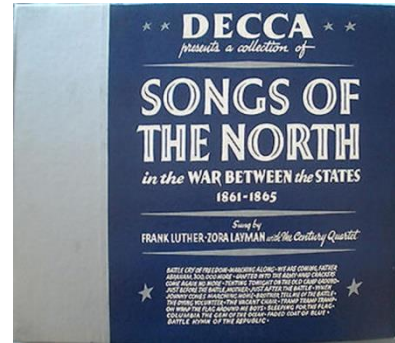
Album No. 43
Hoagy Carmichael Songs
 Glen Gray



Album No. 44
Traditional Irish Come-All-Ye's
 Pat Harrington



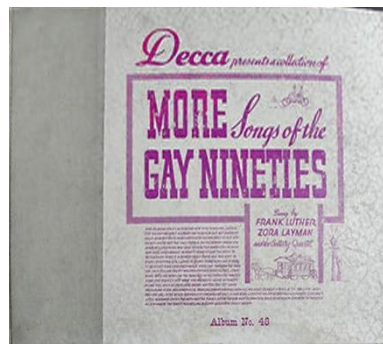
Album No. 45
Songs of the South
 Frank Luther



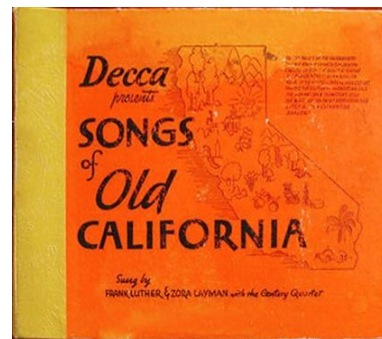
Album No. 46
Songs of the North
 Frank Luther



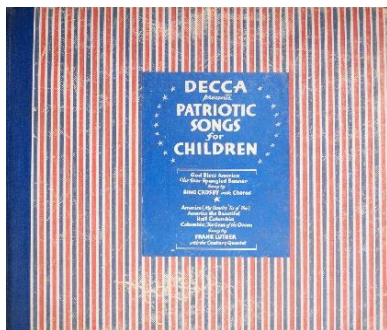
Album No. 47
Songs of Old New York
 Frank Luther



Album No. 48
More Songs of the Gay Nineties
 Frank Luther



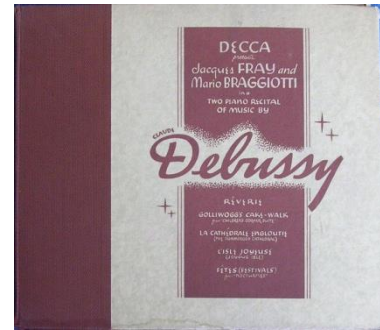
Album No. 49
Songs of Old California
 Frank Luther



Album No. 50
Patriotic Songs for Children
 Various Artists



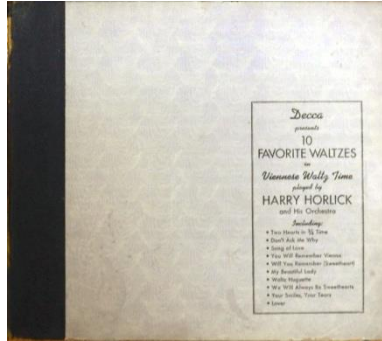
Album No. 51
Wedding Songs
 Frank Parker



Album No. 52
Debussy: Reverie
 Fray and Braggiotti



Album No. 53
Russian Imperial Singers
Russian Imperial Singers



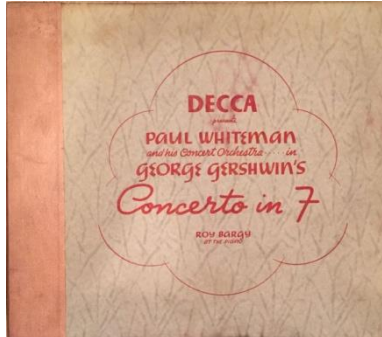
Album No. 54
Viennese Waltz Time
Harry Horlick



Album No. 55
Recordings for Tap Dancing
Russ Morgan



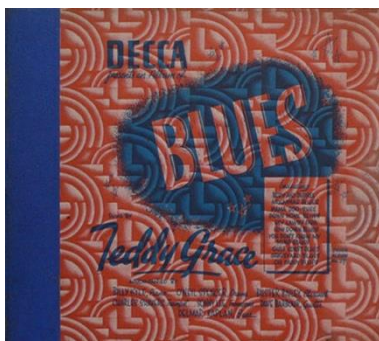
Album No. 56
More Old Time Dances
Byron Wolfe



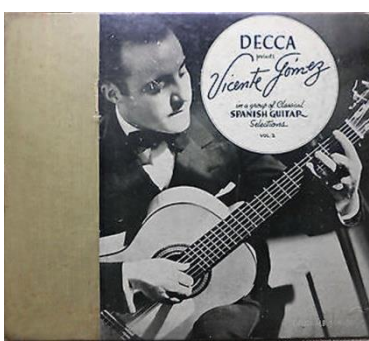
Album No. 57
Gershwin: Concerto in F
Paul Whiteman



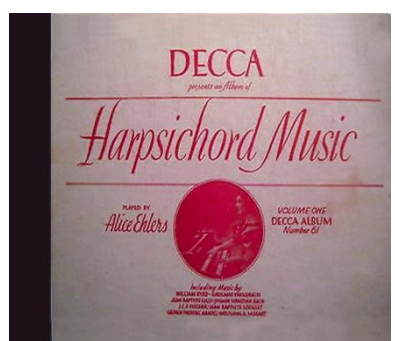
Album No. 58
Salon Music, Volume 2
Harry Horlick



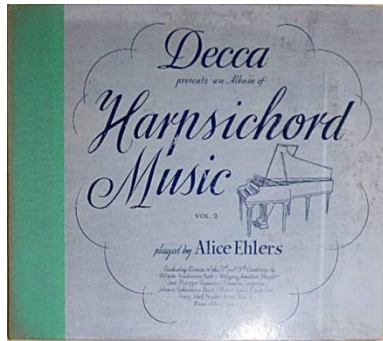
Album No. 59
Blues
Teddy Grace



Album No. 60
Spanish Guitar Selections Vol. 2
Vicente Gomez



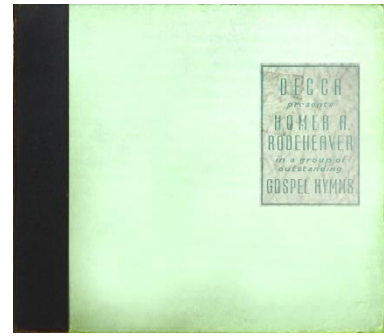
Album No. 61
Harpichord Music
Alice Ehlers



Album No. 62
Harpichord Music, Vol. 2
Alice Ehlers



Album No. 63
10 Favorite Cuban Congas
Eddie LeBaron
Later logo on cover.



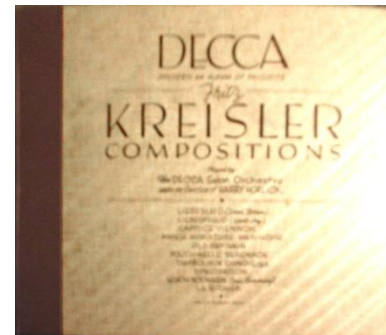
Album No. 64
Gospel Hymns
Homer A. Rodeheaver



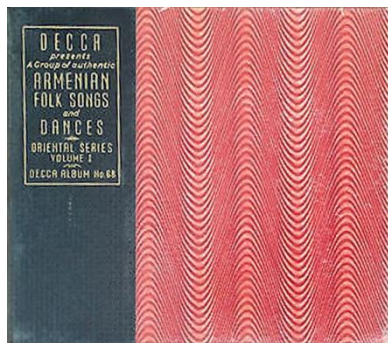
Album No. 65
Favorite Cowboy Songs
The Ranch Boys



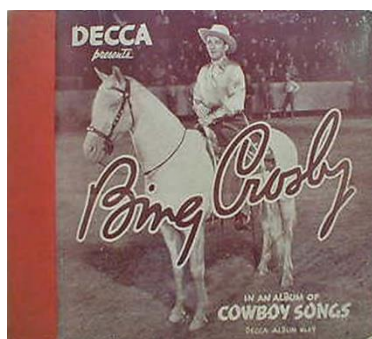
Album No. 66
Old Time Fiddlin' Pieces
Clayton McMichen



Album No. 67
Kreisler Compositions
Harry Horlick



Album No. 68
Armenian Folk Songs and Dances
Nicolas Matthey



Album No. 69
Cowboy Songs
Bing Crosby



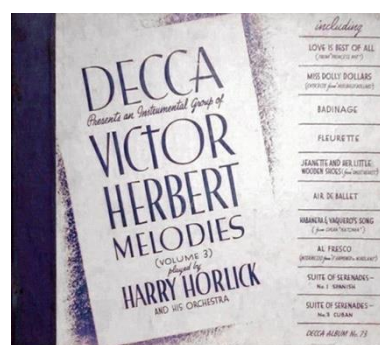
Album No. 70
Irving Berlin Songs
Paul Whiteman



Album No. 71
Irving Berlin Songs, Vol. 2
 Paul Whiteman



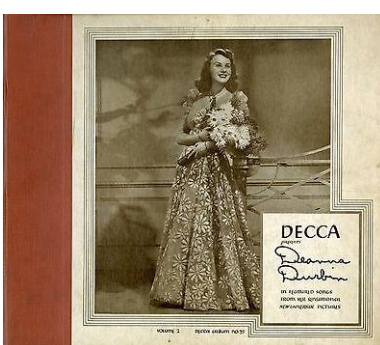
Album No. 72
Victor Herbert Melodies
 Harry Horlick



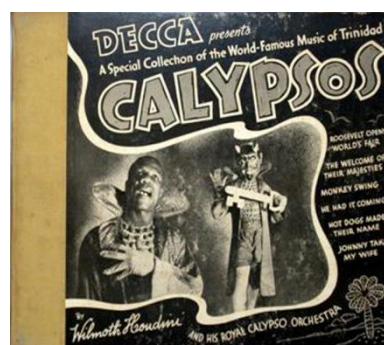
Album No. 73
Victor Herbert Melodies, Vol. 2
 Harry Horlick



Album No. 74
The Wizard of Oz
 Soundtrack
 March, 1940



Album No. 75
Deanna Durbin Vol. 2
 Deanna Durbin

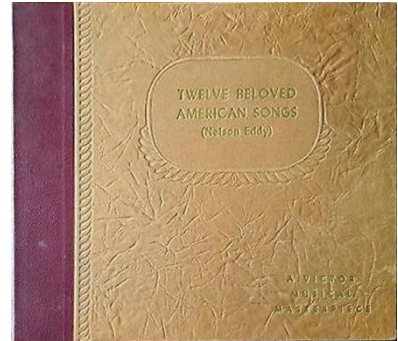


Album No. 78
Calypsos
 Wilmoth Houdini
 October, 1939

The Art of Being the Victor

Victor Records – not yet “RCA Victor” – introduced its line of popular “smart sets” in early 1938. Before January, 1940, they released ten members of the series. Before that P- series started, most of their albums looked like the at the right, but there were some exceptions.

As the Great Depression neared an end, Victor began adding more creative design elements to its C- series (of masterpieces) and to its S- series (of international sets). The following sets from 1938 and 1939 are known to exist with somewhat interesting cover art.



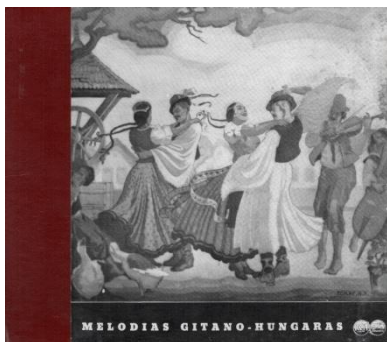
Album C-28
A Symposium of Swing
Various Artists



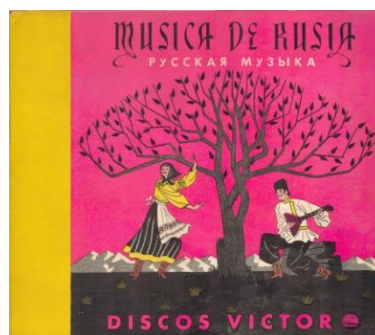
Album C-29
Memorial Album to George Gershwin
Various Artists



Album C-31
Gems from Jerome Kern Musical Shows
Victor Light Opera Company



Album S-13
Melodias Gitano Hungaras
Various Artists



Album S-18
Musica de Rusia
Various Artists



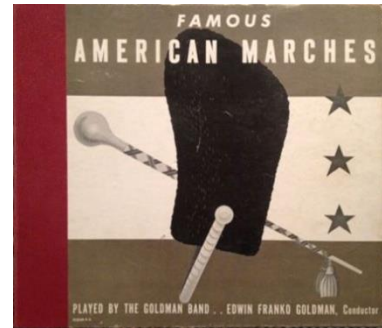
Album P-1
A Night at the Waldorf
Various Artists



Album P-3
A Swing Session
 Benny Goodman



Album P-4
All Star Album
 Various Artists
 Dedicated to Bix Beiderbecke



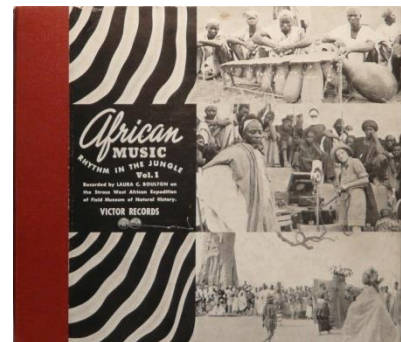
Album P-5
Famous American Marches
 The Goldman Band



Album P-8
Streamlining Your Hips and Thighs
 Wanda Bowman-Wilson



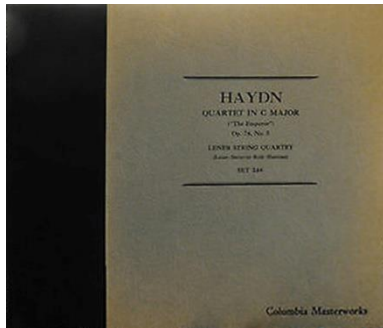
Album P-9
Latin American Music
 Xavier Cugat



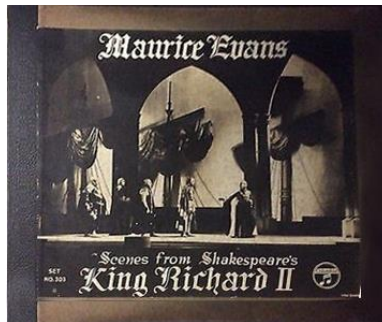
Album P-10
*African Music:
 Rhythm in the Jungle*
 Laura C. Boulton

Columbia Records before Alex Steinweiss

Steinweiss, who became Columbia's art director near the end of 1939, has such an enormous reputation that it is difficult these days to distinguish fact from fiction. While most of their musical sets in 1937-39 looked like the first one shown here, the Depression had not so impacted Columbia that they were unable to put forth any other designs. Consider these:



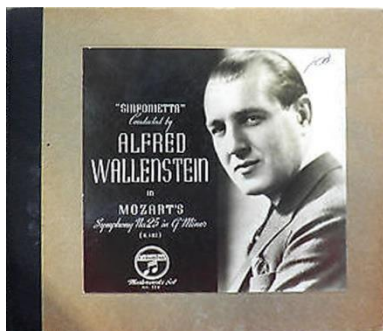
Typical Album
Masterworks Series
Typical Album Cover



Set No. 303
Richard II
Maurice Evans



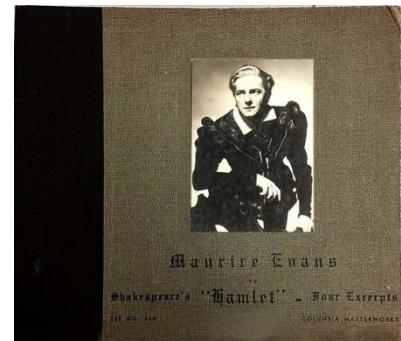
Set No. 322
Famous American Marches
The Goldman Band



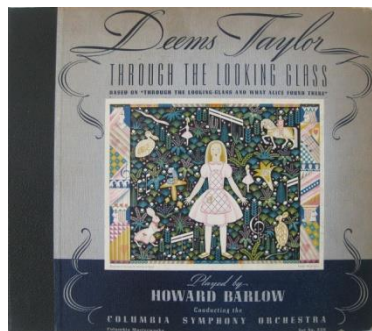
Set No. 323
Mozart: Sinfonetta
Alfred Wallenstein



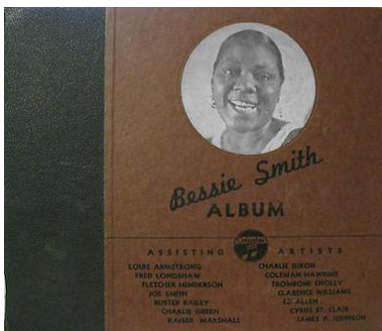
Set No. 325
Julius Caesar
Orson Welles (Mercury Theatre)



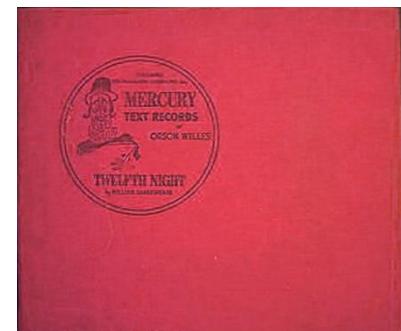
Set No. 340
Hamlet
Maurice Evans



Set No. 350
Through the Looking Glass
Howard Barlow



Set C-8
Bessie Smith Album
Bessie Smith

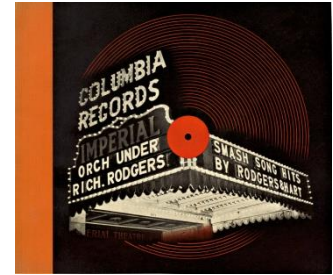


Set C-7
Twelfth Night
Orson Welles

Of the records above, the most colorful is clearly *Through the Looking Glass*. That special album appeared in January, 1939. From Steinway Piano, Columbia commissioned the use of a 1928 painting by Frank McIntosh of the "Through the Looking Glass Suite," which Steinway had used in advertisements. On this release it appears on record for the first time. This record appears to have been Columbia's first album cover to use a four-color printing process. The reproduction of the painting is on a separate sheet, which Columbia printers affixed to the covers.

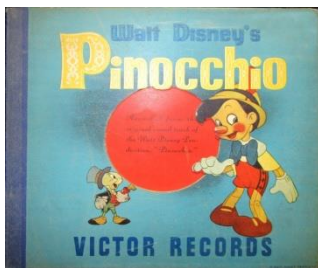
As Columbia Records was in the process of updating their image in September, 1939, to better reflect the relationship between Columbia and CBS, the company selected a young Alex Steinweiss to serve in the position of Art Director. Steinweiss told Steven Heller in 2010,

"I got this idea that the way they were selling these albums was ridiculous. These were shellac records and they were in four- or five-pocket albums to make one symphony. The covers were just brown, tan or green paper. I said: 'Who the hell's going to buy this stuff? There's no push to it. There's no attractiveness. There's no sales appeal.' So I told them I'd like to start designing covers. Dolan's response was: 'Then we've got to buy plates and start printing, and it adds cost.'"

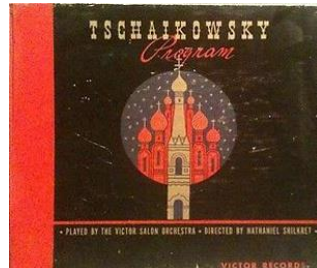


Even after Steinweiss took creative control, Columbia's use of a four-color printing process was rare at first. Instead, they used two or three colors. According to Steinweiss they did not have appropriate equipment, but he persuaded them to purchase new printing equipment. By summer, 1940, though, the Depression was mainly over, and the labels began to put more money into record cover design. (See <https://www.friktech.com/labels/First30ColumbiaAlbums.pdf> for Columbia's designs immediately before and after the first Steinweiss album.)

Meanwhile, Victor got into four-color printing right away in 1940, but rather than introducing it on every cover they used it more sparingly. While they still had some plain-looking covers, they also had some fascinating releases like these:



P-18 (02/40)



P-15 (03/40)



M-640 (03/40)



M-644 (03/40)



M-645 (04/40)



M-676 (07/40)



M-685 (08/40)



M-695 (09/40)

Decca's strategy somewhat resembled Columbia's more than it did Victor's. Nearly all of their releases from 1940 featured interesting designs, but they made the most out of two-tone or three-color processes on most releases. Even after the advent of Capitol Records in 1942, (RCA) Victor and Columbia remained bitter rivals at the top of the heap. This led up to their record-speed showdown near the end of the decade...but that is a different story.