

Vee-Jay Singles Labels

Although it had been around without releasing any records for a few months in 1953, Vee-Jay Records was first mentioned in the July 11, 1953, issue of *Billboard* magazine, where there was a brief statement about the label starting up and signing both Jimmy Reed and the Spaniels. This was also the first reference to the Spaniels in the magazine. That group's first single, VJ-101, sold so well that it was also distributed by Chance Records – another Chicago label – as Chance 1141. Their second single, VJ-103, was made quickly available in October, and two more singles from the new label came out in December. Jimmy Reed's first single for the label came out in January, 1954 – establishing the new record company as an important Chicago business.



VJ53

The first of all Vee Jay labels had a silver splash at the top with Maroon letters, and a maroon bottom half. The label-specific information was in silver. The 78 RPM label design would always be based on this one.

The first label for 45 RPM singles had the Vee Jay script logo at the top in silver on a maroon background. Around the label was a thin circle. This label lasted *as it was* until the end of 1956 (around single VJ 224).



VJ53a

In late December, 1956, Vee Jay added "Made in U.S.A." to the labels of their singles, although occasional later labels omit this accidentally. This label lasted until about VJ-288 in July, 1958.



VJ53t

This maroon script label is slightly different from the one above. The label has a thicker silver band around it. Also, the abbreviation "TRADE MARK REG" appears under the "Vee" of "Vee-Jay." Singles continued to be released on this label until the middle of 1960. VJ-353 appears to have been the last single to have been released on the maroon label with trade mark.



VJ60

In 1960, Vee Jay modernized to a more colorful label that allowed more space for information. That label featured Vee-Jay's new "oval logo" against a black background. Around the perimeter of the label is a rainbow color band. Although the newer "brackets logo" was introduced in October, 1963 (see below), this label style continued to appear until all of the printed labels ran out – some time in Spring, 1964.



VJ63

After Randy Wood took over as president of Vee-Jay, the brackets logo began to appear on Vee-Jay albums. Due to financial problems, some front covers featuring oval logos had been designed earlier and appear on albums that were issued as late as January, 1964, but the brackets label was intended to be "original" to all releases from October, 1963, on.

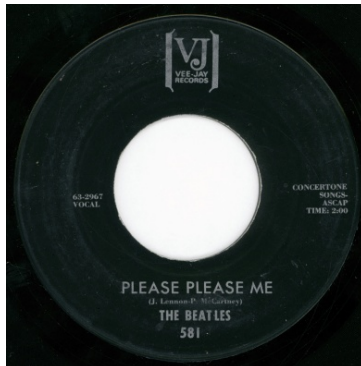
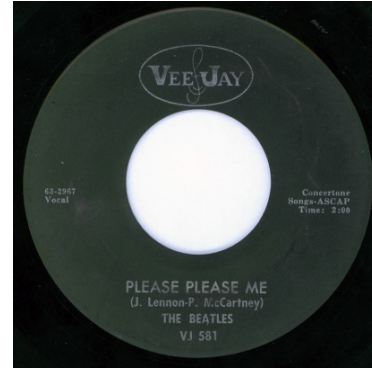
Single VJ-719 by the Four Seasons in February/March, 1966, was the last original single released by Vee Jay. After that time, further financial struggles forced the company to offer no new releases.



VJ64

During the height of Vee-Jay's success in 1964, Vee Jay contracted out to several other companies to produce labels. Therefore, albums from this period can be found with labels other than the "official" brackets label. These include:

- all black label with "VEE JAY" across the top (64-51)
- all black label, all white label, or all yellow label with "VJ" and "Vee Jay Records" at the top (64-21, 31, 41)
- all black label with oval logo (64-61)
- all black label or all purple label with brackets logo (64-71, 81)
- all black label with silver bars and brackets logo (64-91)



Vee-Jay Album Labels

This label guide covers album labels by Vee-Jay Records from the release of the first Vee-Jay LP in 1957 or 1958 until the company declared bankruptcy in 1966. Vee Jay was revived during the 1970's, and some of the labels from that period are shown where they have been located. Nearly every Vee-Jay label style was a "classic," as you will see below.



VJ57

The first of all Vee Jay labels was maroon-colored and featured "Vee-Jay" in script across the middle of the label. The first Vee-Jay album may have been released in late 1957 (?), and it has matrix numbers from 1957, but it first appeared in *Billboard* in the April 14, 1958, issue.



Album LP-100, which appears on the Kats Karavan gold label, was released by Vee Jay c. 1959. Album LP-101 appeared in November, 1959, on both the Tempus label and the Vee Jay label (see BB 11/30/59). The Vee Jay label has this label style.

There are two variations of the script label. This variation, which began with the first LP, has a thin band around the edge of the label. There is nothing written underneath the word "Vee-Jay." Based on the dating for Vee-Jay singles, only the first six albums should exist on this label. However, albums 101, and VJLP-1001 through VJLP-1016 may all occur on this label style. [Verified: all except 1007 and 1011.] During the early period, Vee-Jay albums were often manufactured by RCA. Apparently the albums pressed by RCA Victor for Vee Jay continued to carry this label style until the rainbow label came along. These have the RCA matrix number on the label.

Stereo was introduced in 1958, and the corresponding stereo label was silver or gold.



VJ57t

This maroon script label is slightly different from the one above. The label has a thicker silver band around it. Also, the abbreviation "TRADE MARK REG" appears under the "Vee" of "Vee-Jay." This second album label corresponds to a similar label for singles. The singles label in this style began in mid-1958, and so the above label style and this one appear to have been used on LP's at the same time...by different factories. These earlier albums are known to exist on the "trade mark" label: 1006; 1007; 1008; 1010; 1011; 1012; 1015. VJLP-1022, the last album issued on the script label in 1960, is likely to exist only on the "trade mark" script label.



These earlier albums are known to exist on the "trade mark" label: 1006; 1007; 1008; 1010; 1011; 1012; 1015. VJLP-1022, the last album issued on the script label in 1960, is likely to exist only on the "trade mark" script label.



Albums VJLP-1019, 1020, and 1021 actually came out after VJLP-1022 and are not believed to exist on the script label.

VJ60

In August, 1960, Vee Jay modernized to a more colorful label that allowed more space for information. That label featured Vee-Jay's new "oval logo" against a black background. Around the perimeter of the label is a rainbow color band.

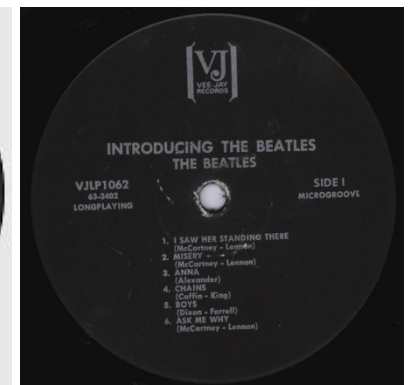
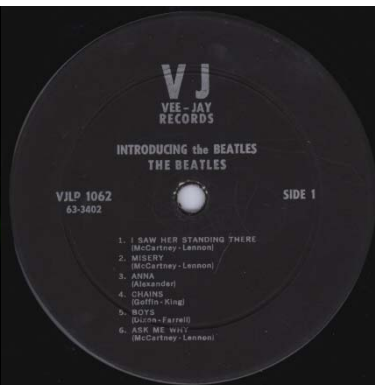
Although the newer "brackets logo" was introduced in October, 1963 (see below), this label style continued to appear until all of the printed labels ran out – some time in Spring, 1964. On stereo labels, the word "stereo" may appear at the top of the label above the logo or on one side of the label.



VJ63

After Randy Wood took over as president of Vee-Jay, the brackets logo began to appear on Vee-Jay albums. Due to financial problems, some front covers featuring oval logos had been designed earlier and appear on albums that were issued as late as January, 1964, but the brackets label was intended to be "original" to all releases from October, 1963, on.

Album VJS-1154, issued in 1965, was the last original album released by Vee Jay. After that time, further financial struggles forced the company to offer no new releases.



VJ64

During the height of Vee-Jay's success in 1964, Vee Jay contracted out to several other companies to produce labels. Therefore, albums from this period can be found with labels other than the "official" brackets label. These include:

- all black label with "VEE JAY" across the top (64v)
- all black label with "VJ" and "Vee Jay Records" at the top (64j)
- all black label with oval logo (64o)

- all black label with small brackets logo (64b)

Vee-Jay was bought out of bankruptcy in 1967. Throughout the 1970's, Vee-Jay reissued earlier material on solid-color labels with a brackets logo on top. The company also issued new Jazz and Gospel LP's beginning in 1974. The artist's name and title appear together underneath the brackets logo. This label style continued until Vee-Jay stopped pressing new LP's in about 1979.

Also in 1979, Vee-Jay reissued their Beatles interview album on a nostalgic "rainbow label." These copies, however, have "STEREO" on the cover; 1964 pressings were in mono. That album, *Hear the Beatles Tell All* was also reissued onto a picture disc.



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