

# Warner Bros. Singles Labels

Prior to 1958, there was no record company associated with motion picture giant, Warner Brothers. It was the general practice at the time for WB stars to record for other companies. However, in late 1956 Tab Hunter recorded "Young Love" – a song that hit #1 on several *Billboard* charts in January, 1957. That single had been released on Dot Records (45-15533), and Dot was owned by motion picture rival Paramount Studios. The song was on the charts for six months, and Dot followed that record up with two more singles: "Ninety-Nine Ways" (Dot 45-15548) and "Don't Let it Get Around" (Dot 45-15657). Warner Brothers was bothered by Paramount's apparent capitalization on one of their own stars, and Warner Bros. Records was formed.

## WB58

The first Warner single was The Smart Set's "Bye Bye, Blackbird": numbered 5001. Vitaphonic was the sound-on-disc process that was associated with Warner Brothers between 1926 and 1930. The coined word, "Vitaphone," was kept alive by WB in several forms – this being one of them. Promotional singles had white label with black print and promotional markings. The occasional stereo single had a gold label and an "S" prefix. The pink label lasted until January, 1960. The last single on this label style was 5142, Tab Hunter's "Black Coat" – which was also the first record on the new style.



## WB Singles to Get Face-Lift

HOLLYWOOD — Warner Bros. Records is dressing up its single disks' label in a new four-color pattern consisting of a bright red field with the spindle hole ringed in yellow, chartreuse and blue. New singles look will be launched with Tab Hunter's "Black Coat" platter. Label will also feature bolder type twice the size of that previously used in listing song titles, artists and playing time. New sleeves will accompany the multi-hued labels.

Project was completed by WB merchandising director Joel Friedman after extensive research with the actual styling created by AET director Ken Kim. According to Friedman, purpose of the change is to give the WB singles greater identity and enhance label legibility.

## WB60

Warner Bros. Records announced a change in label style in the January 11, 1960, issue of *Billboard*. The new label was bright red with arrows pointing out from the center. Promotional labels were usually white – with the arrows. This label style lasted through the second week of December, 1964, with the single (approximately) numbered 5495. The promotional singles for the last few records were on the new style.



## WB64

For the orange label with arrows, Warner Bros. Records resized their logo and placed it at the top of the label, leaving more room for the publishing information – but the label copy was drastically reduced in size. In February, 1967, the numbering suddenly changed from 5901 to 7001. "Cotton Candy Sandman" by Harper's Bizarre (WB 7172) was released in February, 1968, and may have been the last record on this label style.



### WB68

Warner Brothers was sold to Seven Arts Ltd. in 1967, prompting a label that did not occur until February, 1968 – possibly due to a surplus of blank labels. The new label style was green with a “W7” logo in orange and blue. Mono discs were still being made, but these were few in number; there were also a few white-label promo-only releases in mono. Warner Brothers also purchased Atlantic Records in 1967, although Atlantic retained its leadership.



### WB70

In 1969, Kinney National Company bought Warner Brothers, and the “W7” logo disappeared in February, 1970, after the old label supply was exhausted. The new labels were still green, but they now featured the more familiar WB logo at the top. In November, 1971, the company added a WB- prefix to its singles. America’s “Only in Your Heart” (WB 7694) was one of the last singles on this style. It came out in early April, 1973.



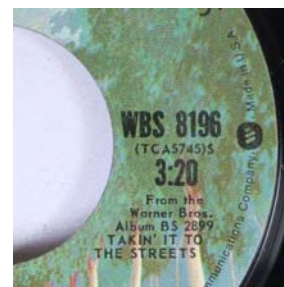
### WB74

As 1974 began, a new label style was introduced. This one featured a street scene based on a photograph of a street in Burbank, California. Like earlier labels, the new style had print around the rim of the label indicating that the record company was “a subsidiary and licensee” of the larger Warner Brothers company. In August, 1974, the numbering jumped from WB 7839 to WBS 8000. The label style ended in April, 1975 with single WBS 8088.



### WB74w

In 1975, the company decided to promote its affiliation with Warner Communications. The company’s address and the Warner Communications “W” logo were placed in the rim print. One of the last records on this label was single WBS 8695, “How You Gonna See Me Now” by Alice Cooper – in December, 1978.



### WB79

At the beginning of 1979, Warner Bros. switched to a cream-colored label with horizontal lines across it. The address information now ringed the entire label, and the Warner Communications logo was placed at the bottom. The numbering jumped from 8870 to 49001 in July, 1979, and jumped again from about 49887 to 50001 in January, 1982. This label style carried Warner Brothers through the end of the “prefix” era; the last single with a prefix appears to have been Devo’s “Through Being Cool” (WBS-50048) in April, 1982.

Following this in May, an additional “7” was added to the beginning of the catalog number, and the numbering leapt back to the 29900’s. Thus, Van Halen’s “Dancing in the Street” had the number “7-29986.”



### WB83

The cream label with lines continued until approximately single 7-29687 in March, 1983, although some singles had the “lines” label as late as May. After that, the label style changed for what would appear to be the final time. This label style retains its cream-colored background, but the horizontal lines have been removed and replaced with a watermark of the WB logo, which was moved to the right side. New number series were opened up as well, with WB counting backward from 29600. Additionally, the rim print was removed entirely. UPC (bar) codes were added to most labels at the end of 1986. The style remained until the end of the 45 RPM single period at the close of 1989, with special releases appearing since then on various label styles.

# Warner Bros. Album Labels

Prior to 1958, there was no record company associated with motion picture giant, Warner Brothers. It was the general practice at the time for WB stars to record for other companies. However, in late 1956 Tab Hunter recorded “Young Love” – a song that hit #1 on several *Billboard* charts in January, 1957. That single had been released on Dot Records (45-15533), and Dot was owned by motion picture rival Paramount Studios. The song was on the charts for six months, and Dot followed that record up with two more singles: “Ninety-Nine Ways” (Dot 45-15548) and “Don’t Let it Get Around” (Dot 45-15657). Warner Brothers was bothered by Paramount’s apparent capitalization on one of their own stars, and Warner Brothers Records was formed.

## WB58

The first album from the new label was the soundtrack to *For Whom the Bell Tolls*. That first label style continued until 1963. Mono labels were gray; stereo labels were gold; and promotional labels were white with the logo in light blue. You’ll notice that these early labels promote their sound as “Vitaphonic.” This was a tip of the hat to the sound-on-disc process for motion pictures that was associated with Warner Brothers between 1926 and 1930. The coined word, “Vitaphone,” was kept alive by WB in several forms – this being one of them. Stereo copies of the early albums also sported a disclaimer on the label stating that stereo records should be played on stereo phonographs. The last known album on this label style is currently W-1485.



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## WB63

In 1963, Warner Brothers purchased Reprise Records – home to the label’s founder, Frank Sinatra, and his associates. At about this same time, the Warner Brothers label dropped the reference to “Vitaphonic,” and the mono label switched from gray to gold. This label style began (approximately) with catalog number W(S)-1486 and continued until approximately album number W(S)-1728 in 1968. That album, *Hooray for the Salvation Army Band* by Bill Cosby, is one of a few to show the upcoming W7 logo on the cover.

### WB67

Warner Brothers was sold to Seven Arts Ltd. in 1967, prompting a label change by September. The new label style was green with a “W7” logo in orange and blue. Mono discs were still being made, but these were few in number; there were also a few white-label promo-only releases in mono. Warner Brothers also purchased Atlantic Records in 1967, although Atlantic retained its leadership. Warner Brothers had always had two series, the “W” series and the “B” series, but these had shared a common numbering scheme. In 1968, the two series were separated, and the “B” series was advanced to number 2500. The W7 label lasted until approximately WS 1828 in 1969.



### WB69

That year, Kinney National Company bought Warner Brothers, and the “W7” logo disappeared. The new labels were still green, but they now featured the more familiar WB logo at the top. The green label continued from about album WS1827 in 1970 through 2WS-1966 in 1972, when the “W” series was merged into the “B” series, which continued on the green label to BS- 2763 at the end of 1973. By then, Warner Brothers had become WEA (Warner/Electra/Atlantic), and Warner Communications had been created.



### WB74

As 1974 began, a new label style was introduced. This one featured a street scene based on a photograph of a street in Burbank, California. Like earlier labels, the new style had print around the rim of the label indicating that the record company was “a subsidiary and licensee” of the larger Warner Brothers company. The label style began with BS-2764.



### WB74w

Sometime in 1976, the company decided to promote its affiliation with Warner Communications. The company’s address and the Warner Communications “W” logo were placed in the rim print. The street scene remained until about album BSK-3174 in 1978.



### WB79

At the beginning of 1979, Warner Brothers switched to a cream-colored label with horizontal lines across it. The address information now ringed the entire label, and the Warner Communications logo was placed at the bottom. This label style carried Warner Brothers through the end of the “prefix” era. The last LP to carry a series/price prefix was approximately album BSK-3685 in 1982.

Following this, an additional “2” was added to the beginning of the catalog number, and a separate “1” was affixed to denote a vinyl LP. Thus, the next album was “1-23686.” Reissues of earlier albums were given the additional “2.” Sometimes, the additional “1” was placed at the end, such as “23686-1.” This seems to have been confusing, for occasionally a record may be found having the “1” in different places on the cover and label.

### WB83

The cream label with lines continued until approximately album 1-23924 in 1983. After that, the label style changed for what would appear to be the final time. This label style retains its cream-colored background, but the horizontal lines have been removed and replaced with a watermark of the WB logo. Additionally, the rim print was removed entirely. The style remained until the end of the vinyl period in 1990, with album 26163-1, Little Feat’s *The Mambo*.

