

Esoteric Records

Jerry Newman's importance to jazz recordings began in January, 1941. That was when he started taking his recording equipment to Minton's Playhouse, at the Hotel Cecil, in Harlem. There Newman recorded concerts featuring Thelonious Monk, Kenny Clarke, Charlie Christian, Dizzy Gillespie, and others. He put those recordings away until later. Newman kept making recordings – sometimes in his home, and five years after Charlie Christian's death he worked with Vox Records to get some of his recordings of Christian released in a 78 RPM album.

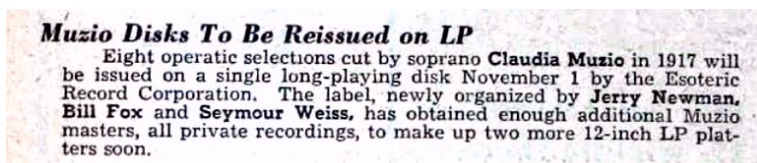
In 1949, Newman had the "crazy" idea of putting out discs that "nobody'd want to buy." His term for this was Esoteric Records, but at first it was just a gag. Then he ran into opera singer Claudia Muzio's former secretary and was able to get permission for Newman to release some of her old singles for the Edison Record Company as long-playing albums. He got together with Bill Fox, his partner in the Greenwich Music Shop and Seymour Wyse, who worked in the shop. Together they cooked up the idea of releasing Muzio's recordings under their own label. Wyse (a close friend of Jack Kerouac) suggested the name "Counterpoint," but Newman favored "Esoteric," and that was the name that they took.



The following Edison singles became the first Esoteric LP:

- 82224 "Se Forse L'Angelo Fedele"
- 82300 "Figlio del Sol, Mio Dolce Amor"/"Lascia Ch'io Pianga"
- 82309 "Egli È Bel, Come Il Ciel"/"Se Vano, Se Vano È Il Pregare"
- 82320 "Dove Son?"/ "Mercè, Dilette Amiche"
- 82324 "Je Dis, Que Rien Ne M'Épouvante"

Billboard carried the announcement of the new company in its October 29, 1949, issue.



Conceptually, they could press up a few hundred copies of an LP and sell them in their record store. For the next year and a half, Newman recorded albums for Esoteric, occasionally traveling to locate interesting talent. He had been itching to release jazz records and took the opportunity to purchase from Vox the right to release the recordings that he had made at Minton's. The first album from that material became the first in the Esoteric Jazz Series.



Jazz and Folk Series To Be Marketed by Reichhold's Vox Firm

NEW YORK, May 10.—Henry Reichhold's Vox diskery, which heretofore has specialized in longhair disks, will market a new hot jazz and folk line to be known as the Spotlight Series. Diskery has worked out an agreement with French Polydor and other European labels for reciprocal leasing of masters and will use much of the foreign material for the releases. Initial importation was six Louis Armstrong sides, made in France in 1934, to be packaged in an album for release this month.

Spotlight Series also will feature waxings taken from the broadcasts of *Saturday Night Swing Session*, weekly aired on local station WNEW, with first featuring Charlie Ventura, Buddy Rich, Bill Harris and other current hot jazz faves, due out in a month. Diskery has two other albums due for release this month, one a package featuring guitarist Charlie Christian taken from transcriptions cut at a private jam session, and the other waxing featuring the Alec Wilder Octet.

Series will be directed by Vice-President Larry Green and Bill Simon, former general manager of Gotham Records.

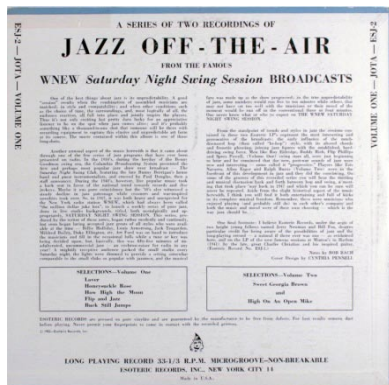
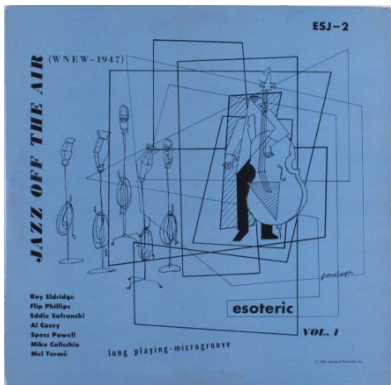
Long-Playing Albums, Jazz Series



ESJ-1 Charley [sic] Christian *Jazz Immortal*
Release Date: BB March 31, 1951

Sandwiched in between ES-503 (December, 1950) and ES-504 (August, 1951) was this first jazz release. At first it was available in red vinyl (as ES-502 and 503 had been), but most copies were on black vinyl.

CHARLEY CHRISTIAN, JAZZ IMMORTAL (1-10") **72**
Esoteric (33)ESJ-1
Recorded by jazz fan Jerry Newman at a jam session at Minton's in Harlem in 1941, the music herein contained was first released by Vox in a schellac album; Newman, now a partner in Esoteric, bought back the masters and put out the session on LP. The music is landmark stuff—a historic recording, but as live and thrilling as ever. One side is free-wheeling on "Stompin' at the Savoy," the other an up blues called "Swing to Bop." Christian's electric and electrifying guitar work is the feature. As Leonard Feather's liner notes point out, he plays "ideas that later emerged in the Benny Goodman Sextet as 'Flying Home,' 'Gone With What Wind,'" and other such characteristic foreshadowings of the new jazz. Minton, one of the cradles of bop, drew such players as Thelonious Monk, Joe Guy and Kenny Clarke, all of whom accompany Christian here, and whose chords, runs and beat patterns bridge the music of the swing and bop eras. A solid sales prospect in the jazz area.
JUKES N. S. JOCKS
Jazz jocks can build interesting segs on these sides which run 10 minutes each.



ESJ-2 Various Artists *Jazz Off-the-Air, Vol. 1*
Release Date: BB March 1, 1952 (Advance)

... Esoteric Records obtained a group of off-the-air jazz masters from Vox Records and will issue them in two LP sets. Disks were made from jam sessions aired over New York's Station WNEW in 1947, and feature such jazz stars as Flip Phillips, Roy Eldridge, Charlie Ventura, Buddy Rich, Bill Harris, Allen Eager, Fats Navarro and Ralph Burns. The pair of LP's will be marketed by the middle of February.

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Would Nix Poetry Disk Exclusives

NEW YORK, Jan. 26.—Esoteric Records, indie longhair and jazz diskery, has filed a brief with the House Judiciary sub-committee on copyrights asking for a change in the proposed copyright amendment bill (HR 3589), so that recording rights in non-dramatic literary works will be subject to the same type of compulsory copyright license as those now governing musical selections. In the proposed copyright amendment bill, non-dramatic literary works are brought under copyright protection for the first time, but Esoteric claims that, as the amendment now stands, a disk firm that receives the right to record poetry from a publisher has the right to record that work exclusively, and it cannot be waxed by any other diskery.
According to Esoteric attorney Nathan Samuelson, Congressman Bryson (writer of HR-3589) informed the firm that this was the first time that the difference in present compulsory licensing laws on musical selections and the proposed copyright laws on literary works had been brought to their attention. Esoteric Records has released one album of poetry by Yeats, and it is understood that additional poetry disks have been recorded.

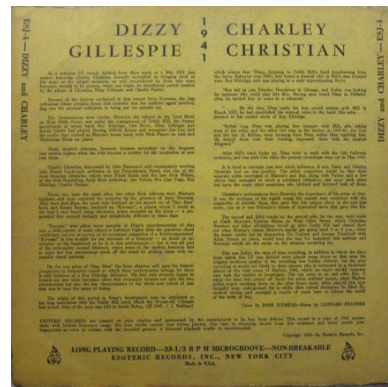
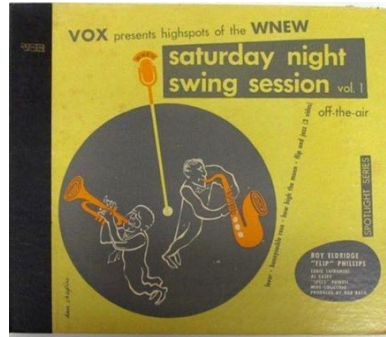


JAZZ OFF THE AIR, VOL. II — Charley Ventura-Allen Eager-Bill Harris-Chubby Jackson-Buddy Rich-Fast Navarro-Ralph Burns-Al Valente (1-10") **70**
Esoteric (33) ESJ-3
Sweet Georgia Brown; High on an Open Mike. This off-the-air session originally was released by Vox Records as part of a series several years ago, pre-LP. The slicings make a lot more sense in the uninterrupted long play form and point up that the particular selections in this set are worthy of more consideration than they originally were accorded. The work of tramist Bill Harris alone should meet with much gleeful reception from the jazz set, to which this set will best appeal. Ventura, Eager, Burns, etc., contribute some sound modern improvisational conceptions. Packaging is first-rate and the reproduction has improved considerably over the original 78 issue.

ESJ-3 Various Artists *Jazz Off-the-Air, Vol. 2*
Release Date: BB March 1, 1952 (Advance); March 29 (Review)

HOT JAZZ ALBUMS
Jazz Off the Air Vol. 1 Album (1-10")—Ray Eldridge-Flip Phillips-Eddie Safrancki-Al Casey-Sweets Powell-Mike Colicchio-Mel Torme—Esoteric (33) ESJ-2.
Jazz Off the Air Vol. II Album (1-10")—Charley Ventura-Allen Eager-Bill Harris-Chubby Jackson-Buddy Rich-Fast Navarro-Ralph Burns-Al Valente—Esoteric (33) ESJ-3.

The Off-the-Air sessions had been, along with the Charlie Christian memorial album, members of Vox's "Spotlight Series." By this time also, Esoteric was hiring RCA-Hollywood for its mastering.



ESJ-4 Dizzy Gillespie/Charley Christian *Dizzy Gillespie/Charley Christian 1941*
 Release Date: 1952
 A collection of more of the Minton's recordings.



Child's Garden of Verses (Esoteric 10-in. ESJ-5, \$4.00.) Seymour Barab has set to music twenty-four of the best known poems by Robert Louis Stevenson. A thoughtful and sensitive musical production which will probably have more appeal to grownups than to children.

An Elizabethan Songbag for Young People (Esoteric 10-in. ESJ-6, \$4.00). Of special interest to children interested in part singing, this record is a delightful introduction to music of the Elizabethan period.
 EMMA DICKSON SHEEHY

ESJ-5 Seymour Barab *A Child's Garden of Verses*
 Release Date: High Fidelity March, 1954



ESJ-6 The Primavera Singers *An Elizabethan Songbag for Young People*

Release Date: *High Fidelity* March, 1954

Esoteric had just recorded two albums with the Primavera Singers, who were part of the New York Pro Musica Antiqua. That included their recent album of *English Medieval Christmas Carols* (ES-521). Newman and Fox released this LP as part of the jazz series.



ESJ-7 Al Haig Trio *The Al Haig Trio*

Release Date: *BB* September 18, 1954



THE AL HAIG TRIO71
(1-10")
Esoteric ESJ 7
Haig, a pianist who was among the first to gain recognition in the first years of the post-World War II jazz revolution, has seemingly been lost in the shuffle the past few years. This LP reminds us what he had (and still has) to contribute in the way of ideas and musicianship. His precise, expressive phrasing, and his vital beat are as refreshing as ever. In his choice of material, Haig has dug into the files and come up with some of the prettier standard tunes like "Autumn in New York," "Body and Soul" and "Moonlight in Vermont." It is instructive to compare his work on these with his treatment of "Royal Garden Blues." This venerable motif never had it so good. Haig is assisted by the fine bass work of Bill Crow and the drumming of Lee Abrams. Jazz collectors will welcome the return of Haig to the ranks of the active jazzmen.



ESJ-8 Chinin de Triana, Perez Garcia, Ricardo Blasco *Artistry in Flamenco*

Release Date: *BB* December 18, 1954

ARTISTRY IN FLAMENCO (1-10")—
Esoteric ESJ 868
A colorful package of flamenco-styled guitar playing which should appeal to collectors in its special market. Four of the selections are instrumental, while Chinin de Triana provides an exotic note on several plaintive vocals. Excellent technical reproduction and fine performances by De Triana, Perez Garcia and Ricardo Blasco. All three artists were, at the time of the recording, members of Jose Greco's company.



ESJ-9 Rusty Dedrick *Rusty*
 Release Date: BB May 28, 1955

At about the end of the year, Esoteric began folding their jazz series into the main line. After all, it had featured music from other genres since the beginning of 1954. Likewise, members of the 2000 series were reissued into the main ES-500 series.

RUSTY 76
 Rusty Dedrick, Trumpet (1-10")
 Esoteric ESJ 9
 It fully distributed and displayed, this set will make the public aware of a new, giant-size jazz talent. Dedrick appears to be a blend of Berigan, Louis Armstrong and Miles Davis. His tone is full and pure in the manner that has accounted for Rubby Braff's recent popularity, but his musical invention goes much further. Dedrick shows talent also as a writer in both semi-legit and jazz idioms, and as an arranger for winds. Some of the numbers here feature him with wind ensemble, and others with rhythm alone. His rhythm section consists of Dick Hyman, piano;

What follows is a list of the members of the 500 series and of the 2000 series:

ES-500 Series

- | | | |
|-----|---------------------------------|--|
| 500 | Claudia Muzio | Eight Operatic Arias |
| 501 | Dimitri Mitropoulos | Schonberg: Serenade (Op. 24) |
| 502 | Claudia Muzio | The Duse of Song (red or black) |
| 503 | New York Brass Ensemble | Seven Canzonas of Giovanni Gabreli (red or black) [5012] |
| 504 | Harold Gomberg (oboe) | Britten: Fantasy Quartet for Oboe and Strings (Op. 2) [5108] |
| 505 | New York Woodwind Quintet | French Woodwind Music |
| 506 | Lou Harrison | The Only Jealousy of Emer |
| 507 | Marilyn Mason | Schonberg: Variations on a Recitative/Satie: Mass for the Poor |
| 508 | Claudia Muzio | The Duse of Song (Volume Three) |
| 509 | Nicanor Zabaleta | Harp Music |
| 510 | Paris Philharmonic Orchestra | Socrate: Symphonic Drama |
| 511 | Rene Leibowitz | Roussel: The Spider's Feast/Sandman |
| 512 | Rene Leibowitz (conductor) | Beethoven, Mozart, Schubert |
| 513 | Sonar Senghor African Troupe | African Tribal Music and Dances |
| 514 | Ghent Oratorio Society | Flemish Choral Music |
| 515 | New York Pro Musica Antiqua | Handel: Music for Ancient Instruments and Soprano Voice |
| 516 | The Primavera Singers | Banchieri: Festino |
| 517 | The Harpsichord Quartet | The Harpsichord Quartet featuring Sylvia Marlowe |
| 518 | Warren Galijour/Pasquier Sextet | Poulenc: Le Bal Masqué/Francaix: Sérénade Bea [HiFi 5405] |

- 519 New York Pro Musica Antiqua Blow: An Ode on the Death of Mr. Henry Purcell/Purcell:
Selected Vocal and Instrumental Works [<https://academic.oup.com/mq/article-abstract/XL/2/279/1128466?redirectedFrom=fulltext>]
- 520 New York Pro Musica Antiqua Thomas Morley: Elizabethan Madrigals
- 521 The Primavera Singers English Medieval Christmas Carols
- 522 Marilyn Mason Thomson: Variations on Sunday School Tunes/Sessions:
Chorales
- 523 Nicanor Zabaleta Harp Music, Vol. 2
- 524 Nicanor Zabaleta Harp Music, Vol. 3
- 525/6 Richard Dirksen [BB 540424] Beethoven: Variations, Bagatelles, Pieces for Piano
- 527 Royal Greek Festival Company Panegyris: Greek Folk Songs and Dances
- 528 The Harpsichord Quartet Bach/Handel
- 529 Various Artists Africa: Music of the Balinké/Music of the Baoulé
- 530 Various Artists Stefan Wolpe
- 531 Royal Greek Festival Company Panegyris (Vol. 2): Island and Mountain Songs
- 532 Sonny Berman Jazz Immortal 1946 (white label)
- 533 Alec Templeton Trio/Quartet Pastorale [HiFi 5502, newspapers 5412]
- 534 Larry Carr Sings Verse and Chorus
- 535 New York Pro Musica Antiqua Songs of Henry Purcell (white label) [BB 550205]
- 536 Pierrette Champoux French Canadian Folk Songs (new label)
- 537 Various Artists Africa: Music of the Princes of Dehomey (new label)
- 538 Various Artists Shivaree! (new label) [HiFi 5603]
- 539 Seymour Barab A Child's Garden of Verses, Reissue of ESJ-5
- 540 New York Pro Musica Antiqua Children's Songs of Shakespeare's Time
- 541 Sarita Gloria Schubert: Love Songs/Gay Songs (new label)
- 542 Nicanor Zabaleta Anthology of Harp Music, Vol. 4 (new label)
- 543 'El Pili' (Pedro Jimenez) Flamenco (new label), Reissue of ES-2001
- 544 El Niño de Almadén/Carlos Ramos Danzas y Canciones de Andalucía
- 545 Harry and Jeanie West Smoky Mountain Ballads (new label)
- 546 The Renaissance Chorus Motets
- 547 Toraia Orchestra of Algiers Music of the Arab People (new label), Reissue of ES-2002
Also found on black label.
- 548 Charlie Christian/Dizzy Gillespie The Harlem Jazz Scene – 1941 (black label)

ES-2000 Series

- 2000 Warren Galijour Poulenc: Le Bal Masqué (red vinyl)
- 2001 'El Pili' (Pedro Jimenez) Flamenco
- 2002 Toraia Orchestra of Algiers Music of the Arab People
- 2003 Toraia Orchestra of Algiers Music of the Arab People, Volume 2
- 2004 Iawa and Bora Indians Music of the Upper Amazon (new label)



ES-1501 Series (Samplers)

1501	Nicanor Zabaleta	Zabaleta Harp Sampler (black label)
1502	Various Artists	Baroque Sampler
1503	Various Artists	A Siena Pianoforte Sampler (black label)



By the middle of 1957, Jerry Newman wanted to expand his recording business, while Bill Fox wanted to continue to release records. Bill took over Esoteric and converted it into Counterpoint by September of that year. The three sampler albums came out just before the transition from Esoteric to Counterpoint.

Esoteric Bill Splits With Stereo Jerry

NEW YORK — Bill Fox and Jerry Newman, partners in Esoteric Records and recording studios, have split up their operations. Fox has become sole owner and operator of Esoteric label, and Newman has taken over the recording business.

Newman's enterprise, dubbed Stereo Sound Studios, will remain in the same location, and has installed stereo equipment. In addition, Newman has started a school of tape editing, wherein he teaches complicated splicing, general microphone use, basic electronics and a brief outline of sound recording.

Esoteric's first project under the new regime will be the re-issuing on 12-inch LP's of several historic jazz sets, formerly on 10-inch. These include material by Dizzy Gillespie and the late Charlie Christian.

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Esoteric Goes Counterpoint

NEW YORK — Esoteric Records is changing its name to Counterpoint Records. The change in title of the firm name marks an increased emphasis on pop, jazz and classical disk material, according to Bill Fox, mahoff of the label. Pop a.&r. chief, Rudy De Saxe, has already set single recording dates for Serena Shaw. The label also plans fall release of 10 stereo tapes including material in folk, jazz and classical ittioms.