

# Imperial Singles Labels

L. R. (Lew) Chudd and Max Feirtag are setting up expansive plans for their new Imperial Record Company. Imperial waxings are featuring folk, hillbilly and children's tunes. Chudd and Feirtag are also distributing Discos Imperiales, presenting prominent Latin American artists on south-of-the-border melodies. Chudd is currently in New York making organizational plans for his Imperial Transcription Company. Lew is a veteran waxster in these parts.

CHUDD, LEWIS, 1911 - Amor infiel; words by Max Feirtag. © 9-4-46; M. Feirtag and L. Chudd, Los Angeles; EU39902.

—Apasionado de ti; words by Max Feirtag. © 8-20-46; M. Feirtag and L. Chudd, Los Angeles; EU39692.

—Ani es Chihuahua; words by Max Feirtag. © 8-20-46; M. Feirtag and L. Chudd, Los Angeles; EU39693.

—La bola; words by Max Feirtag. © 11-4-46; M. Feirtag and L. Chudd, Los Angeles; EU52039.

—Buscando olvido; words by Max Feirtag. © 8-20-46; M. Feirtag and L. Chudd, Los Angeles; EU34651.

—Caminito de Chihuahua; words by Max Feirtag. © 12-9-46; M. Feirtag and L. Chudd, Los Angeles; EU55870.

—Carinito; words by Max Feirtag. © 12-9-46; M. Feirtag and L. Chudd, Los Angeles; EU55867.

—El cortado; words by Max Feirtag. © 12-9-46; M. Feirtag and L. Chudd, Los Angeles; EU55869.

—Cosas del destino; words by Max Feirtag. © 8-20-46; M. Feirtag and L. Chudd, Los Angeles; EU34694.

—Debo alejarme; words by Max Feirtag. © 12-12-46; M. Feirtag and L. Chudd, Los Angeles; EU56129.

—Juego mi suerte; words by Max Feirtag. ©

Imperial Records of Los Angeles incorporated on June 29, 1946, and started in August. At the time they primarily recorded folk dances from masters that were provided to them and hired local Chicanos to record Mexican music. Although this music credited authors such as “Jesus Ramos” and “Victor Cordero,” the *Catalogue of Copyright Entries* for musical compositions in 1946 shows that all of the songs were credited to Lewis Chudd and Max Feirtag – the owners of Imperial Records – with Feirtag contributing the lyrics.

The new label began soliciting local singers. Fernando Rosas had released three singles for the local (LA) label, Discos Mexico immediately prior to cutting discs for Discos Imperiales. Imperial also recorded several singles with the popular group, Los Madrugadores.

The company was first mentioned in the October 19, 1946, issue of Billboard, as distributing a folk line and a line of Chicano music labeled Discos Imperiales. The folk line started its numbering with 1000, while the Latino line began with 100.

## DI46

The first Discos Imperiales label was orange with dark print. There was no manufacturer address at the top of the label.

## DI47

At around single 115, Discos Imperiales added “Made in USA” and the company address to the top of the label. Later that year – possibly as early as catalog number 147 – the label was changed to Imperial, and earlier pressings were reissued onto the IM47 label, below.

Meanwhile the folk dance line (1000 series) had been using a custom label. It, too, was folded into the standard Imperial label.



## IM47

About to expand from its status as a label catering to Mexican music and folk dance, Imperial introduced the orange label. Singles at least through 1038 are known on this label in the folk category. Imperial Records recorded its first R&B artist, Dick Lewis, in fall, 1947 and released one R&B single on the orange label before determining that the label should be red instead.



**Poison Gardner, currently working at Culver City's Toddle House, waxed initial sides for Imperial label. . . .**

**IM47a**

There were several variations of the red label with five stars under Imperial. The first variant, from late 1947, gives the address as 137 North Western Avenue, as the orange label had done. Singles 5002 through 5008, and possibly 5009 and 5010, were pressed on this label style. The catalog number appears in a small typeface at the left, with -A and -B suffixes. [The magazine clipping at the top of this page is from the October 4, 1947, issue of *Billboard*.]



**IM48**

By the beginning of the next year, Imperial's address was shown as 137-139 North Western Avenue, and the size of the catalog number was increased. The -A and -B suffixes remained at least through 5028. At least by 5037 the suffixes had been discarded. The label style continued at least to single 5170.



The early 45 RPM singles from Imperial were blue and had the Western Avenue address on them. The label lasted until 1954, when a Hollywood address replaced it. At the beginning (late 1950?), the 45's corresponding to 78's in the 1000 series were assigned to a 6000 series. By March, 1951, Imperial was releasing the most popular members of their "Hillbilly" series (8000's) as 45's. In January, 1952, Imperial began issuing R&B singles in the new format. When these came out they had a 45- prefix, and at the start only the most popular singles were released as 45's.



LET'S RIDE THE IMPERIAL BANDWAGON FOR '52

**5165 LIL' SON JACKSON**  
**UPSTAIRS BOOGIE**  
**ALL MY LOVE**

**5167 FATS DOMINO**  
ALSO AVAILABLE ON 45 RPM—45/5167  
**YOU KNOW I MISS YOU**  
**I'LL BE GONE**

**5168 MARY WALLACE**  
**I'M HUNCHED**  
**REAL FINE DADDY**

Only **IMPERIAL** has the Original

By the Writer  
**BILLY BRIGGS**  
WITH STRING BAND

**"Chew Tobacco Rag"**

AVAILABLE ON 2 SPEEDS—78 AND 45  
RECORD NO. 8104—78 NO. 8104—45

**IMPERIAL RECORD CO., INC.**  
6425 HOLLYWOOD BLVD., HOLLYWOOD 28, CALIF.



**IM50**

In June-July, 1950, Imperial was in the process of moving. They made a batch of labels showing the manufacturer as Imperial Record Company but showing NO address. They also added "REG US PAT OFF" to the label to indicate that their patent had come back. Although the move was a quick one, Imperial kept this label with no address until 1954 – at least until single 5279.





**IM54**

In spring, 1954, Imperial added their address on Hollywood Blvd. to the top of the label. This change did not last long, however, for by summer it was gone.

The 45 RPM counterpart, however, kept the Hollywood address until August, 1955. At this time the prefix for 45's was also changed from 45- to X-.



**IM54a**

When Imperial removed the statement about non-commercial use of the record, they also enlarged the rim print and removed the address in the process. The manufacturer is shown now as Imperial Records Inc. This label for 78's lasted until approximately number 5358 in August, 1955. [3000 series are black.]



**IM55**

After several minor label changes, Imperial changed the company logo, removed the rim text and banding, and essentially created an entirely new design for the first time since the label began. This label continued past the end of the 78 RPM period (single 5553, from 1958, is known).



**IM58**

Some 78 RPM singles numbered in the high 5400's and 5500's have black labels instead of the usual red – even if the typefaces are the same as on the red label. These seem to be later pressings – corresponding to the new 45 RPM label, but they might simply be copies made on whatever label blanks were available at the time.





That new label style began in July, 1958, with approximately single 5531. It was black with a color spectrum at the top of the label. Some pressing plants added the words "Imperial Records, Inc." and "Hollywood USA" to the label, but others did not. By September, 1961, Imperial was dropping the X- prefix for 45 RPM singles; however, some pressing plants kept the "X" all the way to October, 1963.

During the third week in August, 1963, Liberty Records bought Imperial from Lew Chudd. Chudd informed *Billboard* (8/24/63) that he intended to leave the record business and go into broadcasting. Max Feirtag, on the other hand, started up Flip Records in 1965. As Imperial prepared for a new label style, the main series jumped in its numbering from 5984 to 66001 at the end of September, 1963. Only records 66001 to 66003 and 66012 were pressed in this label style prior to the change to the new one.

### IM63

The month of October, 1963, saw another completely new design adorn Imperial singles. Associated with the purchase of Imperial by Liberty Records, the new labels have an "IR" logo at the left side and sport rim print declaring "A Subsidiary of Liberty Records, Inc. Los Angeles, California." Two colors, white and hot pink, adorn the left side of the label containing the Imperial logo.



### IM66

The new label, starting with approximately 66160 in February, 1966, features a red Imperial logo with "a product of Liberty Records" underneath it. The rim text has been altered slightly to read "A Division of Liberty Records..." instead of "a subsidiary." The white and pink motif was replaced with lime green. Some pressing plants show the record with an IM- prefix.

### IM69

After Transamerica became the parent company to both Liberty and United Artists, *Billboard* reported a gradual shift in the two companies' operations (06/22/68). This led to the creation of "Liberty/UA" in August, 1969. The UA label adopted a similar change in January, 1970.



Most Imperial artists migrated to the Liberty label in 1970, and aside from reissues the Imperial label stopped issuing singles.



Billboard dates:

460629 = different Imperial Records, out of Chicago. Also mentioned in 1947.

480124 = ad on page 83 (5011, 5013, and 5022; 8019)

480221 = 5012, 5014, 5015, 5016 (all advance); 8006, 8024 (all advance)

480501 = Imperial defies ban

490312 = Imperial 5034 (advance), 5036

490716 = Imperial 8058, 8061

500121 = 10,000 copies of the Fat Man sold in New Orleans in ten days.

The numbers to the 78 RPM albums tend to be 6000 series records, indicating that the 45's probably came out later.

# Imperial Album Labels

For Imperial, 78 RPM album sets began in summer, 1947, and continued at least until 1951. Some of their releases include:

FD-1 Canadian Legion Pipe Band, *Scottish Folk Dances* (contains singles 1027-1030)

FD-2 James O'Flynn, *Irish Folk Dances* (contains singles 1039-1042)

FD-3 Manuel Acuña, *Spanish Folk Dances* (contains singles 1001, 1003, 1013, 1014)

FD-4 Erik Lundquist *Baltic Folk Dances* (contains singles 1035-1038) orange label

FD-5 Vladimir Niedzielski, *Russian Folk Dances* (contains singles 1019-1022)

FD-6 Manuel S. Acuña, *Mexican Folk Dances* (contains singles 1002, 1004, 1015, 1016)

FD-7 Yascha Borowsky, *Russian Gypsy Dances* (contains singles 1023-1026)

FD-8 Harley Luse *Square Dances Without Calls* (contains singles 1031-1034)

FD-9 Harley Luse *American Folk Dances* (contains singles 1043-1046)

FD-10 Dominick Saragusa, *Italian Folk Dances* (contains singles 1052-1055) **October, 1947**

FD-11 Juan Torrado, *Samba Album* (contains singles 1047-1050) **October, 1947**

FD-14 Manuel Acuña, *Spanish Folk Dances* (contains singles 1071-1074)

FD-15 Carl Myles, *Square Dances With Calls* (contains singles 1077-1080)

FD-22 Eva Decker *Square Dance* (contains singles 1092-1095)

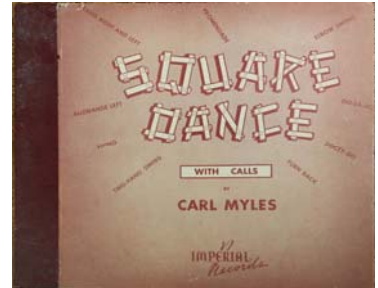
FD-23 Rhine Winkler *German Folk Dances* (contains singles 1100-1103)

FD-24 Bill Mooney *Square Dances Without Calls* (c. March, 1949) (contains singles 1096-1099)

FD-25 Bill Mooney *Square Dances Without Calls* (contains singles 1104-1107)

FD-26 Lee Bedford, Jr., *Square Dances With Calls* (contains singles 1108-1111) 1950

FD-34 Robert Hamilton (contains singles 1180-1183) 1951



## IM50

Approximately in late 1950, Imperial Records released their first long-play ten-inch records: FD-501 to FD-505.



Imperial FD-101 to FD-105 came out at the beginning of 1951 – as indicated in the February issue of *Let's Dance!* By that time FD-506 to FD-514 were also listed as available.

The 3000 series seems to have begun at the beginning of 1951 also, since IM-3002 was relatively new and available in March.



The early labels were either blue or red with an address of 137-139 North Western Avenue at the bottom. Some records were on red vinyl – particularly in the 3000 series. Some white label promogrooves were released in early 1954.



In 1955, Imperial decided to reorganize all of their LP's into a twelve-inch series: the 9000 series.

### IM56

The first album label in the 9000 series, LP-9001, is mentioned in the July 28, 1956 issue of *Billboard*. This maroon label continued through LP-9042, which came out in summer, 1957. By the middle of October, the new label (IM 57) was in place.



### IM57



Preceding a similar change in singles styles by over half a year, Imperial switched to a new album label in October, 1957 with LP-9043 and LP-9044. The new label was black with a color spectrum at the top of the label. Some pressing plants added the words "Imperial Records, Inc." and "Hollywood USA" to the label, but others did not. In September, 1958, Imperial issued its first batch of twelve stereo LP's, including *Alfred Hitchcock's Music to Be Murdered By*. The stereo labels were black and silver with "IMPERIAL STEREO" across the top. At the time, stereo albums were given separate numbers in the 12000's that

did not connect with their counterparts in the 9000 series. After another batch of twelve albums in November, 1958, Imperial was fully committed to stereo, and most albums thereafter that were not reissues of earlier records were issued in both mono and stereo. Beginning with album 9174 in 1962, the stereo numbering corresponded with mono (12174).

Some albums were made in the USA for export to other countries. These had a yellow Imperial label.



During the third week in August, 1963, Liberty Records bought Imperial from Lew Chudd. Some Imperial albums began to transition to a new label style, but albums coming out as late as mid-November (*Sandy Nelson Plays*, LP-9249) are still found with label IM57.

### IM63

The month of October, 1963, saw another completely new design adorn Imperial singles. Associated with the purchase of Imperial by Liberty Records, the new labels have an "IR" logo at the left side and sport rim print declaring "A Subsidiary of Liberty Records, Inc. Los Angeles, California." Two colors, white and hot pink, adorn the left side of the label containing the Imperial logo.



### Imperial Hops Stereo Disk Bandwagon

HOLLYWOOD—Latest to hop aboard the stereo bandwagon will be Imperial Records with the release of 12 noncompatible stereo packages in September. Price will be \$4.95 for the stereodisks. If the market's stereo demands warrant it, Imperial will issue another dozen in November and will be able to add another six stereo releases prior to Christmas.

The first 12 stereo albums set for September release are "Alfred Hitchcock's Music to be Murdered By," issued this month in regular LP form; "Ralph Edwards' This Is Your Life"; "They're Playing Our Song," by Ralph Flanagan and orchestra; "Favorite American Marches," "African Drum Beat," Fats Domino, Slim Whitman and Ernie Freeman albums which will be cut next month; two jazz albums which have not been selected yet, and two mood music LP's with big orchestras.





### IM66

The new label, starting approximately in May, 1966, features a red Imperial logo with “a product of Liberty Records” underneath it. This is the logo that had appeared in that form on LP covers since 1965. The rim text has been altered slightly to read “A Division of Liberty Records...” instead of “a subsidiary.” The white and pink motif was replaced with lime green. Older mono labels seem to have run out more quickly, and by summer the new ones had replaced them entirely; however, some stereo label blanks of IM63 appear as late as November (LP-12321).

At the end of the mono/stereo run in 1968, covers were made showing the stereo number exclusively. Mono copies – mainly used as promos – have stickers adhered to the cover indicating that they are in mono. The last known mono/stereo LP was LP-9386.

### IM69

After Transamerica became the parent company to both Liberty and United Artists, *Billboard* reported a gradual shift in the two companies’ operations (06/22/68). This led to the creation of “Liberty/UA” in August, 1969, beginning with LP-12447.



Most Imperial artists migrated to the Liberty label in 1970, and aside from reissues the Imperial label stopped issuing albums. The last new album, *Slim Slo Slider* by Johnny Rivers (LP-16001), was reviewed in *Billboard* in the July 18, 1970, issue.

