



The February 1937 issue of *New Music* announced the appearance of a new record label this way:

A new organisation has gone into the field of producing phonograph records. Musiccraft Records, Inc. (New York) announces its first releases this month: Bach's Italian Concerto played by Ralph Kirkpatrick (harpsichordist) and Mozart's Quartet in B Flat Major, K.589 played by the Perole String Quartet. The former is reviewed under Miscellaneous and the latter under Chamber Music in this issue. New releases will be issued each month.

In a leaflet which accompanies the records, Musiccraft states its policies in these words: "Musiccraft has been launched to serve two neglected fields in the literature of recorded music. First, to seek out and present at least a part of the countless works of genius long neglected or almost forgotten, and second, to present these works faithfully in the manner written and not as a medium for the display of the virtuosity or talents of a particular performer or conductor.

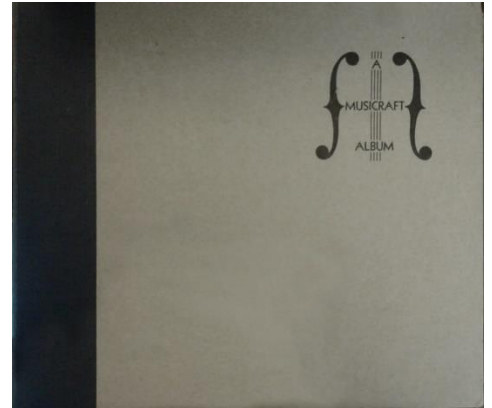
"To these ends no effort will be spared either in the selection of artists of recognised achievement in sympathy with our ideals, or in the mechanical process of recording to preserve faithfully on our discs each performance in all the fidelity that modern science has made possible."

At present there is a ready but limited market for discs of this kind. Perhaps under Musicraft's guidance a commercial as well as an artistic success may be achieved. We are sure that Musicraft may count on the support of a generous number of our readers in this seemingly altruistic endeavor.

A few months later, Musicraft began work on its first albums. Since most classical recordings contain music sufficient to span several 78-RPM records, Musicraft's foray into the production of albums was logical. At the same time, according to contemporary music magazines, the label was improving the quality of their sound reproduction.

The Standard Classical Album Cover

Most of Musicraft's classical repertoire during the early phase appeared in a "generic-looking" gray cover with "A Musiccraft Album" and the company logo on the front. This common design continued at least until the middle of 1939. As the label released records from other genres, they designed covers that were unique to those albums. When Musicraft reissued albums after the War, they often replaced the original cover designs with new ones.



Label 37

Musicraft's initial label design featured a blue rim, inside of which are the words: "Musicraft Records Inc., New York City" at the top and "Not licensed for radio broadcast" at the bottom. The blue color is a light sky blue on regular-series albums, and the backdrop is white. On the Night Life in New York and 15000 series, the backdrop is yellow, and the blue highlights are darker.



Every single and every album that Musicraft released on the label before the middle of 1942 has this label style. Every copy of every Musicraft record that has one of the later label styles came out after the company changed hands. Some Musiccraft albums are known to exist in at least four pressings.

Listings Note: In the case of classical sets where more than one work is collected onto a single album, the listings reflect the work that occupies the majority of the set.

Ernst Victor Wolff

Album 1

Contains singles 1013 to 1015

Mozart: Sonata in F Major

August 1937

American Art Trio

Album 2

Contains singles 1019 to 1022

Beethoven: Trio in C Minor

September 1937

Frenkel and Wolff

Album 3

Contains singles 1026 to 1029

Bach: Suite in A Minor

September 1937

Perole String Quartet

Album 4

Contains singles 1032 to 1034

Mozart: Quartet in D Minor

October 1937

Ernst Victor Wolff

Album 5

Contains singles 1035 to 1038

Bach: Coffee Cantata

November 1937

Carl Weinrich

Album 6

Contains singles 1040 to 1042

Bach: Trio-Sonatas

November 1937

Oxford Ensemble

Album 7

Contains singles 201 to 204

Mozart: Flute Quartets

December 1937

Albert-Leveque, Rene Le Roy, Lucien Kirsch

Album 8

Contains singles 1043 to 1044

Haydn: Trio (#30), flute, violincello, piano, D major

January 1938

Carl Weinrich

Album 9

Contains singles 1047 to 1050

Early Organ Music

January 1938

Carl Weinrich

Album 10

Contains singles 1053 to 1054

Bach: Passacaglia in C minor

January 1938

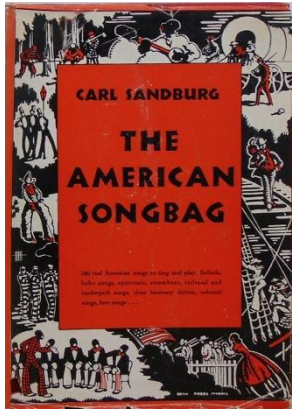
Carl Sandburg

Album 11

Contains singles 207 to 210

The American Songbag

January 1938



In 1927, Sandburg published a book containing the music to 280 folk songs. The author compiled several of the songs together into sides for this Musiccraft album. The original cover (1938) resembled those that Musiccraft employed on the label's other releases, but a portrait of Sandburg appears at the top center. The following year, Musiccraft replaced the original cover with a larger portrait of the artist; that cover lasted through the end of the early period – it being an early photographic album cover.



Ernst Victor Wolff

Album 12

Contains singles 1055 to 1057

Bach: Suite, clavier, English, No. 6, D Minor

March 1938

Kathleen Long

Album 13

Contains singles 1058 to 1060

Mozart: sonatas

March 1938

Florence Vickland, et. al.

Album 14

Contains singles 1061 to 1063

Brahms: Liebeslieder Walzer

March 1938

Ralph McLane

Album 15

Contains singles 1064 to 1066

Brahms: Clarinet Trio in A Minor

c. March 1938

Rene Le Roy and Albert-LeVeque

Album 16

Contains singles 1067 to 1070

Bach: Sonatas, flute and figured bass

April 1938

Rene Le Roy

Album 17

Contains singles 1071 to 1074

Haydn: Four Divertimenti

May? 1938

Original Cast (Mercury Theatre)

Album 18

Contains singles 1075 to 1081

In the modern sense of an “original cast recording” being a recording made during an actual live theatrical performance or performances, this may have been the first such recording to be released – *nearly in its entirety* – as a set of 78 RPM records. Recorded in April 1938 shortly before the show closed, this was the first release by the troupe headed by Orson Welles. One notes, however, that the group had already (in March) recorded performances of *Julius Caesar*, intending it for release also. That also came out in May/June 1938 (as Columbia M-235), but it consisted of highlights from four different shows, rather than an attempt at a nearly complete production. If one considers both to be original-cast recordings, then Welles seems to have been responsible for the first TWO cast albums.

Blitzstein: *The Cradle Will Rock*

May 1938



Iwan d'Archambeau

Album 19

Contains singles 1045 to 1046

Bach: *Sonata violin no. 4, E-flat minor*

September 1938

The Madrigalists

Album 20

Contains singles 211 to 215

Vocal Music of the Renaissance

September 1938

James Weldon Johnson

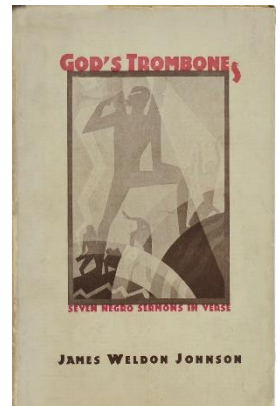
Album 21

Contains singles 1083 to 1084

The author reads from his acclaimed book.

Readings from *God's Trombones*

August 1938



Carl Weinrich

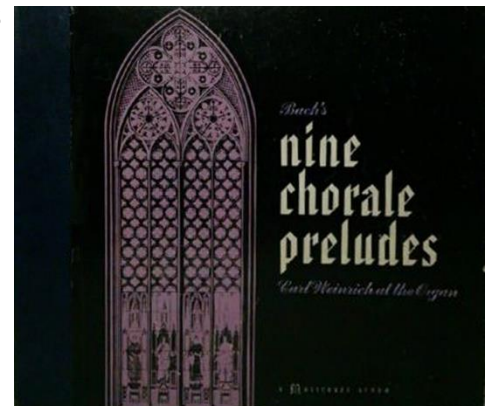
Album 22

Contains singles 216 to 220

Later cover shown.

Bach's *Nine Chorale Preludes*

November 1938



The Motet Singers

Album 23

Contains singles 5001 to 5003

Mozart: Mass in F Major

November 1938

The Motet Singers

Album 24

Contains singles 1085 to 1086

Buxtehude: Missa Brevis

December 1938

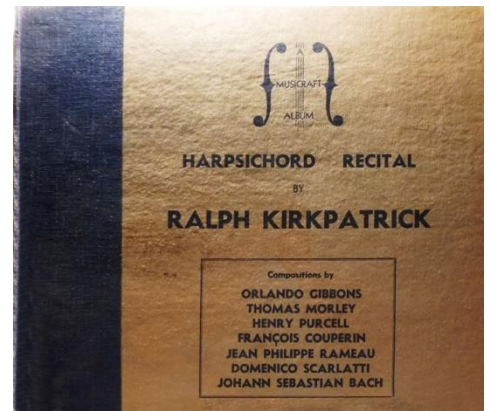
Ralph Kirkpatrick

Album 25

Contains singles 1087 to 1092

Harpichord Recital (Bach, Scarlatti, Gibbons, Purcell)

December 1938



Kurt Appelbaum

Album 26

Contains singles 1093 to 1096

Schubert: Sonata in G Major (Op. 78)

Early 1939

David Weber and Ray Lev

Album 27

Contains singles 1097 to 1099

Brahms: Sonata in F minor

April 1939

Mara Sebriansky, Edward Neikrug, George Neikrug

Album 28

Contains singles 1100 to 1102

Beethoven: trio, strings (Op. 9 #1)

April 1939

Kurt Appelbaum, Totenberg, Magg

Album 29

Contains singles 1105 to 1106

Mozart: Trio in C major

May 1939

Kurt Appelbaum

Album 30

Contains singles 1107 to 1109

Schumann: Die Davidsbundlertanze (Op. 6)

May 1939

Lead Belly

Album 31

Contains singles 223 to 227

With the songs chosen by design with a theme in mind, this was one of the first “concept albums” – if not the first. Its popularity led to the release of an album of spirituals later in the year.

Negro Sinful Songs

June 1939



Rene Le Roy

Album 32

Contains singles 1110 to 1111

Bach: Sonata in A Minor for Flute

June 1939

Sterling Hunkins (cello) and others

Album 33

Contains singles 1112 to 1115

Giorni: Trio in C Major

July 1939

Lois Wann, Ferdinand Prior, Engelbert Brenner

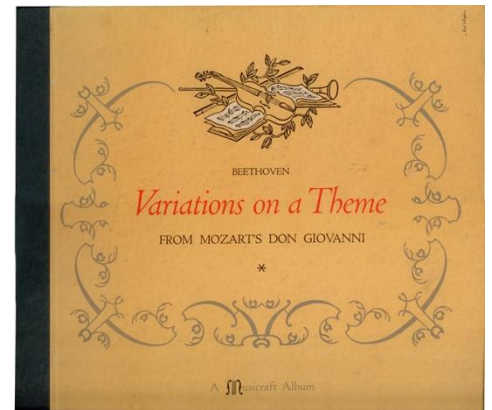
Album 34

Contains singles 229 to 229

Later cover shown.

Mozart: Variations on a Theme (from Mozart)

fall 1939



The Hampton Institute Quartet

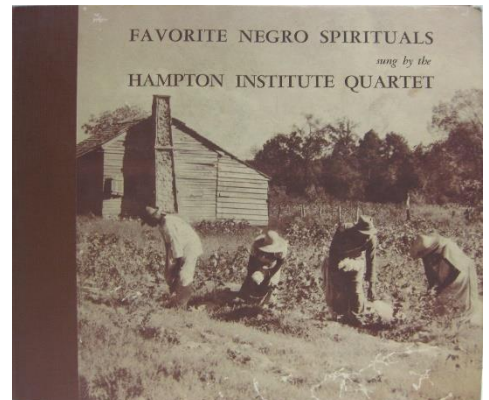
Album 35

Contains singles 230 to 234

Musicraft reused the photograph from the cover to the Leadbelly album for this set of spirituals.

Favorite Negro Spirituals

October 1939



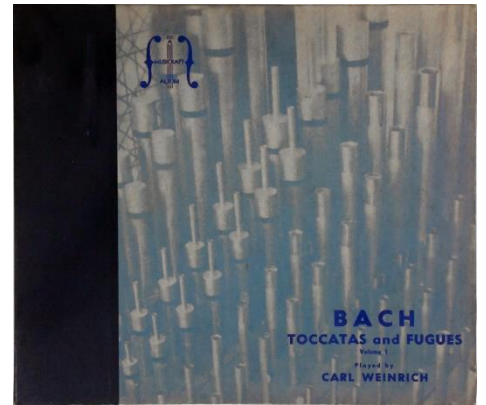
Carl Weinrich

Album 36

Contains singles 1116 to 1119

Bach: Toccatas and Fugues

November 1939



John Hoysradt

Album N-1

Contains singles 235 to 238

Night Life in New York

January 1940

The stage actor imitates famous people in this “party” album. He had supported Orson Welles in the Mercury Theatre and went on to play in dozens of movies after shortening his name to John Hoyt.

Carl Weinrich

Album 37

Contains singles 1120 to 1122

Bach: Toccatas and Fugues (Vol. 2)

January 1940

Ralph Kirkpatrick

Album 38

Contains singles 1123 to 1124

JC Bach: Concerto in E-flat (Op. 7 #5)

January 1940

Engel Lund

Album 39

Contains singles 1125 to 1128

Folk Songs of Many Lands

January 1940

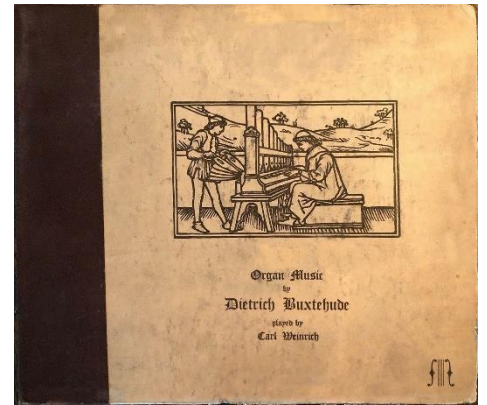
Carl Weinrich

Album 40

Contains singles 1129 to 1132

Buxtehude: Organ Music

June 1940



The Revuers

Album N-2

Contains singles 1133 to 1135

Judy Holliday (Judith Tuvim), Betty Comden, and the troupe are joined by Leonard Bernstein (piano) in this live-to-disc recording of a mini musical. The sixth side of the album is a separate piece called "Joan Crawford Fan Club."

The Girl With the Two Left Feet

May 1940



Ted Cott

Album R-1

Contains singles 15001 to 15003

Ted Cott had created the first radio quiz show for WNYC in 1938. When he moved to CBS, the show became "So You Think You Know Music." Within six months, the show was highly popular, and this album emerged.

So You Think You Know Music

Spring 1940



Sterling Hunkins

Album 42

Contains singles 1024 to 1025, originally released as singles in September 1937

Haydn: London Trio No. 1 in C Major; London Trio No. 3 in G Major

June 1940

Roman Totenberg and Adolf Bailer

Album 43

Contains singles 1136 to 1138

Brahms: Sonata No. 3 in D Minor (Op. 108)

c. June 1940

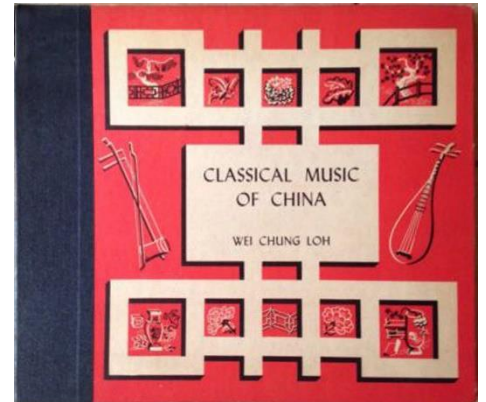
Wei Chung Loh

Album 44

Contains singles 1139 to 1142 = 239 to 242

Classical Music of China

November 1940



Perole String Quartet

Album 45

Contains singles 1017 to 1018, originally released as singles in September 1937

Dittersdorf: String Quartet (No. 6) in A Major

Late 1940

Manuel and Williamson Harpsichord Ensemble

Album 46

Contains singles 1143 to 1146

Bach: Concertos No. 1 and 3 in C Minor

Late 1940

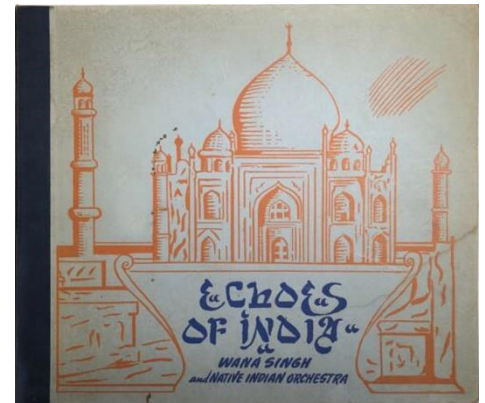
Wana Singh

Album 47

Contains singles 243 to 247

Echoes of India

Late 1940



The Josh White Trio

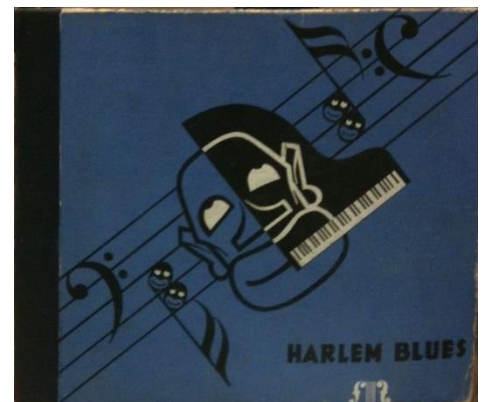
Album N-3

Contains singles 248 to 250

The third in the Night Life in New York series featured Josh White performing "Careless Love," which had been a hit single for another label (Blue Note 23). The first pressing is hard to find, but the record kept selling well for years.

The Girl With the Two Left Feet

January 1941



Manuel and Williamson Harpsichord Ensemble
Album 48

Contains singles 1147 to 1148

Vivaldi: Violin Concerto in A Major
February 1941

Manuel and Williamson Harpsichord Ensemble
Album 49

Contains singles 1149 to 1151

Handel: Oboe Concerto in G Minor
February 1941

Manuel and Williamson Harps. Ensemble **Bach: Concerto in C Major for Three Harpsichords and Strings**
Album 50
April 1941

Contains singles 1152 to 1154

With Dorothy Lane

Sidor Belarsky
Album F-1

Contains singles 1 to 4

Yiddish Folk Songs
April 1941

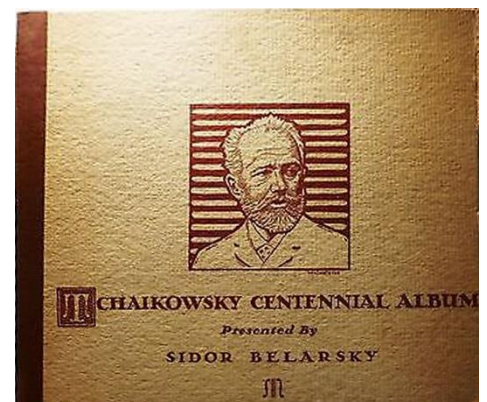
At the time, the *Jewish Daily Forward* was a progressive newspaper for Jewish people that was published in Yiddish. It was the most widely-read Yiddish newspaper in the United States.



Sidor Belarsky
Album 51

Contains singles 251 to 253

Tchaikowsky Centennial Album
April 1941



Hotel Nacional Orchestra

Album N-4

Contains singles 15004 to 15007

Cuban Rhythms

1941



Manuel and Williamson Harps. Ensemble

Album 52

Contains singles 1155 to 1157

Later cover shown.

Bach: Concerto in C Maj. for Two Harpsichords and Strings

July 1941

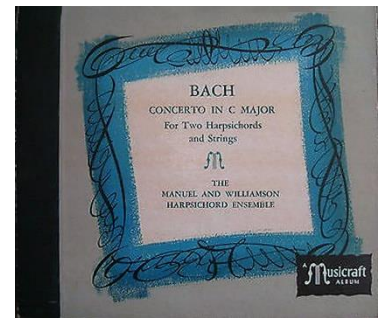
David Ross

Album 53

Contains singles 254 to 255

Readings in Lyric Poetry

March 1942 ?



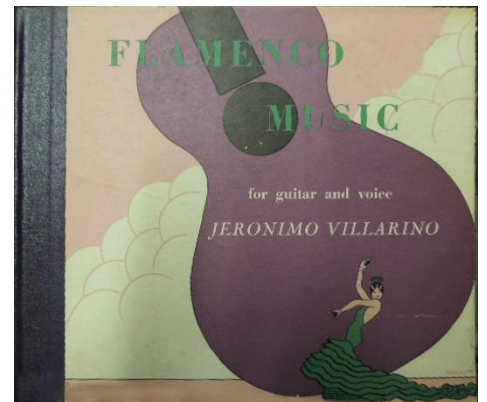
Jeronimo Villarino

Album N-5

Contains singles 258 to 261

Flamenco Music for Guitar and Voice

Late 1941



G. Marston Haddock

Album 55

Contains singles 262 to 265

English Folk Songs and Ballads

December 1941

Las Tres Guitarras

Album 56

Contains singles 266 to 268

Latin Rhythms Vol. 1

c. December 1941

Mabel Luce

Album 57

Contains singles 269 to 271

Latin Melodies

April 1942

Sidor Belarsky

Album 58

Contains singles 272 to 275

A Recital of Hebrew and Yiddish Songs

spring 1942

Suddenly, Musicraft's output ground to a halt. The label may have released more material, but with the AFM musicians' strike starting on August 1st, it was clear that no labels would be recording new music until the strike ended. The war was also taking its toll on many record labels, as the production of records became more expensive. After releasing sixty-five albums between 1937 and 1942, in early October, Musicraft declared itself bankrupt. The label's story was not over, however, for within a short period of time, Musicraft Records Inc. was to be purchased by another company. That is the story for the next web page in the series.

