

Satellite Records

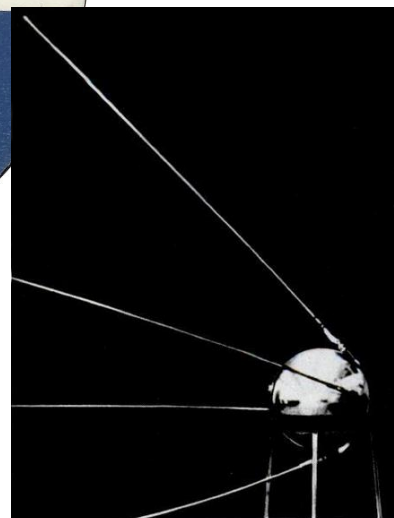
Discography

The launch of the Soviet Union's first orbital satellite, *Sputnik*, on October 4, 1957, also prompted the launch of an obsession with satellites. At least three record companies called "Satellite," began within a month of the launch.

The first of the three labels was probably Satellite out of Oklahoma City. They released a single that was an imitation of Buchanan and Goodman's break-in record called "The Flying Saucer." The Satellite recording consisted mainly of songs from 1956 and 1957 strung together to make a narrative about "Outer Space Looters."



New Satellite Label
Tees-Off 1st Release . . .
Satellite Record Co., a new label, headed by Skip Stanley with offices at 344 West 88th Street, has released its first pressing, "Satellite Baby" and "Planets." Skip Stanley, a night club and TV comic, has worked the Casa Seville at Hempstead, L. I., Cafe-of-Tomorrow in Chicago, Lake Club in Springfield, Ill., Larry Potter's Supper Club in Hollywood. Ralph Stein, formerly a &c.r. man for Flair-X Records, did the arranging on the first Satellite release, and will continue in that capacity.



SOVIET SATELLITE. Sputnik, is shown with radio antennas. The Russians have said only that the 23-inch aluminum sphere weighs 184 pounds, is filled with nitrogen to control temperature, storage batteries, radio transmitters and instruments to relay temperature and meteorite contact to earth as coded signals. Cutaway drawings so far received from U.S.S.R. are copies of U.S. concepts, not of Sputnik.

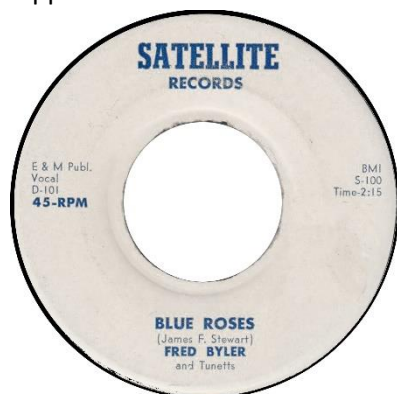
Another record label called Satellite emerged in New York City in November, being supported by singles from Skip Stanley. The most famous of the Satellite labels from 1957 was the one that Jim Stewart established in Memphis. *Cash Box* announced its existence in their issue dated November 9th, along with the fact that their first release was imminent. Three weeks later, they reviewed that single.

"Blue Roses" / "Give Me Your Love"

Fred Byler and (the) Tunetts

Satellite S-100

Approximate Release Date: November 30, 1957



Barbara McCool writes that KWEM-Memphis, Tenn. disc-jay, Fred Byler has just cut his 1st disk for Satellite Records. Tunes are tagged "Give Me Your Love" and "Blue Roses". Fred, affectionately known as the "Country Boy From Spring Creek With The Two Left Feet", does the KWEM "Hit Parade" show, 3 times daily, Mon. thru Fri., as well as other shows throughout the day. Also, adds Barbara, KWEM's Eddie Bond, has started a new 2 1/2 hour morning, 6:30 A.M. to 8:50 daily, Mon. thru Sat. show and invites artists in the Memphis area to drop in and visit with him. His other KWEM programs include a daily, Mon. to Fri., 2:30 to 4:30 show and a Sat., 11:30 to 1:30 P.M. show. He does his show every other week from Memphis' Sample Furniture Store.

FRED BYLER (Satellite 100)

C+ "GIVE ME YOUR LOVE" (1:50) [E&M BMI—N. Eastin] Both Fred Byler and the Satellite label enter the wax field with this persuasive, up beat romantic cutie. Snappy vocal backdrop supplied by the Tunetts.

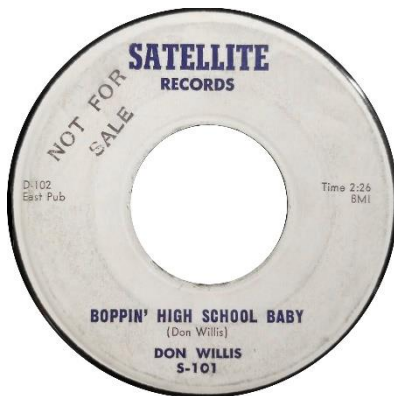
C+ "BLUE ROSES" (2:15) [E&M BMI — J. F. Stewart] Byler slows down the tempo on the lower half as he and the group softly wend their way thru a very pretty, moderate paced, romantic tear-jerker. Two pop-flavored tunes that oughta make the jocks sit up and take notice.

Satellite released only the one record in 1957 and began 1958 by recording another artist, Don Willis. Willis grew up in Tipton County (TN) and had auditioned unsuccessfully for Sun Records in 1956. Although Mercury expressed an interest in him, Willis recorded a single with nearby Satellite. It was unsuccessful, but Willis continued to record as it suited him.

**“Boppin’ High School Baby” / “Warrior Sam”
Don Willis**

Satellite S-101

Approximate Release Date: February 1958



GEORGE KLEIN	
WHEY—Millington, Tenn.	
1. Ballad Of A Teenage Queen	(J. Cash)
2. I Beg Of You	(E. Presley)
3. College Man	(B. Justis)
4. Breathless	(J. L. Lewis)
5. I'm On My Way Home	(C. Thomas)
6. This Little Girl Of Mine	(Everlys)
7. Big River	(J. Cash)
8. The Story Of My Life	(M. Robbins)
9. Boppin' High School Baby	(D. Willis)
10. I've Got Love If You Want It	(W. Smith)

A second single from Fred Byler received no promotion and vanished rapidly.

**“No Forgetting You” / “Nobody’s Darling”
Fred Byler**

Satellite S-102

Approximate Release Date: 1958



“Whisper Your Love” / “Little Fool”

Donna Rae and the Sunbeams

Satellite S-103

Approximate Release Date: summer 1958



Donna Rae (Jackson) was the co-host of Memphis TV-show, Top-Ten Dance Party. Satellite’s Jim Stewart thought that a record from her might sell well, but that instinct proved to be incorrect.

“You Drive Me Crazy” / “Say Anything But Not Goodbye”

Ray Scott and the Demens

Satellite S-104

Approximate Release Date: 1958



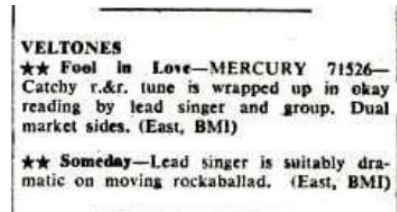
Ray Scott had written for the Donna Rae single, and Satellite pressed up his single at about the same time. However, Scott recalls it only selling about 300 copies.

Until this time, Jim Stewart had run Satellite mainly by himself. Estelle, Jim’s older sister, became involved with the company – investing money and time to make it work. The result was a move to a different studio with newer equipment. All of the business work delayed the label’s next release. Stewart decided that the move should give rise to a label redesign and to a renumbering of the series – starting over with 100.

"Fool in Love" / "Someday"
(The) Veltones

Satellite S-100 (2nd Series)

Approximate Release Date: September 1959



Mercury picked up the Veltones single in November for national distribution, but it failed to attract as much attention as everyone had hoped.

By March 1960, Satellite was on its way to yet another studio, but they were not to renumber again this time. Instead, an exciting development unfolded. National Recording Corporation (NRC) signed a distribution pact with Satellite, to distribute all of their releases more widely. The first release covered by the pact was the new Satellite 101 (see below), and Satellite changed their matrix (trail-off) numbers to coincide.

NRC-Satellite Pact

BRUNSWICK, TENN.—National Recording Corporation of Atlanta, Georgia, and Satellite Record Co. of Memphis, Tennessee, have completed negotiations regarding exclusive distribution rights of the Satellite label by N. R. C.

The first release is "Prove Your Love" and "Destiny" by Charlie Heinz.

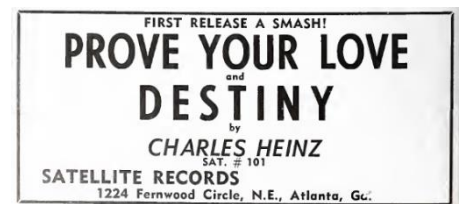
The record will be shipped to deejays and N. R. C. distributors this week.

"Prove Your Love" / "Destiny"

Charles Heinz With the Anita Kerr Singers

Satellite 101

Approximate Release Date: April 9, 1960



Unfortunately for both Satellite and NRC, National was on the verge of going bankrupt. The label limped along through 1960 before declaring bankruptcy formally in April 1961. Meanwhile, Satellite was released from their arrangement with NRC and shopped around for distributors.

“Deep Down Inside” / “Cause I Love You”

Carla and Rufus

Satellite S-102 (2nd series)

Approximate Release Date: August 15, 1960



★★★★★
CLARA AND RUFUS
 ★★★★★ **Cause I Love You**—SATELLITE 102—A fetching shouting blues, with boy and girl spelling each other in chant and response pattern, to a backing featuring a punctuating, honking horn. (East, BMI) (1:45)
 ★★★★★ **Deep Down Inside**—Another blues, slower in tempo, and with a lot of soul. Again, the accompaniment features sax and tenor. Very satisfying indeed. (East, BMI) (2:20)

CARLA & RUFUS (Atco 6177)

(B) “CAUSE I LOVE YOU” (2:45) [East-Progressive BMI —Thomas] Vocal duo gives a dynamic R&B account of the driving blueser while the combo delivers with a gospel-type sock sound. R&B audience will welcome the waxing.

(B) “DEEP DOWN INSIDE” (2:20) [East-Progressive BMI —Thomas] Wall-type blues-romantic performance by the pair and musicians.

Carla and Rufus Thomas attracted enough attention that Atlantic/Atco decided to pick up the single for national distribution.

“Suddenly” / “Nobody Cares”

Charles Heinz

Satellite S-103 (2nd series)

Approximate Release Date: October 15, 1960



CHARLES HEINZ (Satellite 1007)

(C+) “SUDDENLY” (1:48) [East BMI—Moman] The singer and rock-a-string ork go at the ditty with conventional beat vitality.

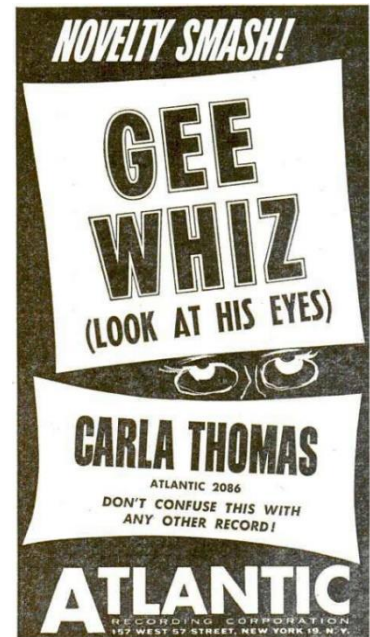
(C+) “NOBODY CARES” (2:05) [East BMI—Heinz] Ordinary doings in a tear-jerker teen vein.

"Gee Whiz" / "For You"

Carla Thomas

Satellite S-104 (2nd series)

Approximate Release Date: October 1960



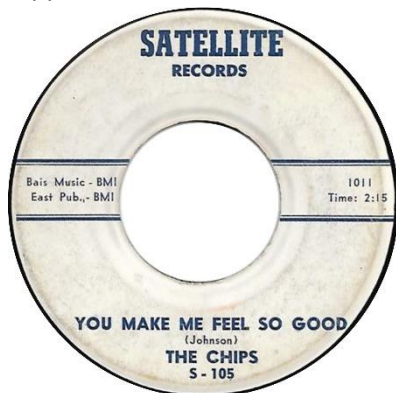
In November, Atlantic Records picked up the single for national distribution. This time, the record sold well, and Satellite was on the national map.

"As You Can See" / "You Make Me Feel So Good"

The Chips

Satellite S-105

Approximate Release Date: January 1961

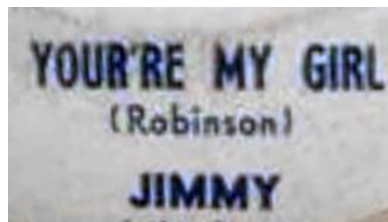


"You're My Girl" / "Night Life Blues"

Jimmy and the Spartans

Satellite S-106

Approximate Release Date: April 1961



Atlantic Handles Another Label For First Time

NEW YORK—For the first time in its history, Atlantic Records has taken over the distribution of a record for another label. The deck, reportedly hitting in Memphis, is "Last Night" by The Mar-Keys on the Satellite label. Jim Stewart, owner of Satellite, was the discoverer of Carla Thomas, of "Gee Whiz (Look At His Eyes)" fame, and brought to Atlantic, according to the label.

"Last Night" / "Night Before"

Mar-Keys

Satellite S-107

Approximate Release Date: May 1961

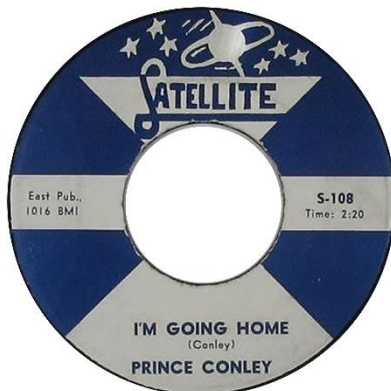


"I'm Going Home" / "All the Way"

Prince Conley

Satellite S-108

Approximate Release Date: July 1961



While the next few Satellite singles failed, the label was preparing for bigger things.

"Ain't That Love" / "The Right Girl"

Nick Charles

Satellite S-109

Approximate Release Date: September 4, 1961



"I Just Can't Learn" / "Cindy"

Hoyt Johnson

Satellite S-110

Approximate Release Date: September 1961



"The Life I Live" / "Don't Worry"

Barbara Stephens

Satellite S-111

Approximate Release Date: September 1961



This last single was the only one to have Satellite's latest address on McLemore Avenue shown on the label, although second pressings of S-107 also have the address.

"Morning After" / "Diana"

The Mar-Keys

Stax S-112

First Appearance in Trade Magazines: September 1961



**Satellite Records
Switches to Stax**

NEW YORK—Satellite Records, which is distributed nationally by Atlantic Records, has changed its label name to Stax Records.

The Mar-Keys' ("Morning After" and "Diana") new record will be released under the Stax label. The group was No. 13 on BMW's "Hot 100" last week with their first Satellite disk, "Last Night." Stax will be distributed by Atlantic through the same distributor setup (mostly Atlantic's own distrib network) used for Satellite.

Jim Stewart, who owns the Memphis-based Stax-Satellite label, also produced the Carla Thomas best-seller, "Gee Whiz, Look at His Eyes," which was purchased as a master and released by Atlantic.

With a permanent distribution plan in place with Atlantic Records, Stax released the latest Mar-Keys single and reissued the Barbara Stephens single (formerly S-111) with a new number (S-113). They also reissued the previous Mar-Keys single under its original number.



THE MAR-KEYS

Waxing for Satellite Records is a hot, new group known as the Mar-Keys. Their key to recording success is the Satellite instrumental disk tagged "Last Night," which has soared into the Top 10 of the Hot 100.

The group is comprised of Terry Johnson, drums; Steve Cropper, guitar; Don (Duck) Dunn, bass; Charles Axton, tenor sax; Don Nix, baritone; Wayne Jackson, trumpet, and Jerry Lee (Smoochie) Smith, piano and organ. The boys are from Memphis and have been together for about three years. At first they were a four-piece combo but added the brass and organist in the last year.

Until their connection with Satellite Records as artists, they played local dances and clubs and then became staff musicians for Satellite. Soon after the boys came up with their own hit disk. They were assisted by a.&r. man Chips Moman, who wrote and arranged the hit, "Last Night."

With a new label name that was a combination of **ST**ewart and **AX**ton, and with a national distribution contract in place for all new records, Stax Records became a powerful soul (R&B) label right away. Otis Redding, Rufus Thomas, and Booker T & the MGs were about to lead the label to a position only held by legends. By the middle of the decade, they were so well known that the Beatles came very close to recording their *Revolver* album at Stax. The beginning of Stax, though, was the end of Satellite: a beautiful local label that was a part of Memphis music history.

P.S. Did you hear that we nearly recorded in Memphis with Tim Stuart. We would all like it a lot, but too many people get insane with money ideas at the mention of the word 'Beatles', so it fell through! - I'll keep in touch - G.