Specialty Records



Ben Siegel and Art Rupe started with Premier Records in Los Angeles in late 1943, where Siegel coauthored songs for such using stars as Nat "King" Cole. The label released three singles during the first half of 1944 and then experienced trouble. In late September, Premier announced that it was becoming Atlas Records, while Siegel and Rupe started up a company together. Juke Box Records was formally a label associated with the United Record Company — no doubt leaving room for expansion.

Juke Box released just one single near the end of the year, and that one came out with no fanfare.

Juke Box United Record Company 2304 West Seventh Street Los Angeles 5, Calif. United Record Co.

Home Office:
2304 West 7th Street, Los Angeles 5, Ca

Home Office Executives:
Arthur N. Rupe, Recording Director
Benjamin O. Seigel, Sales Manager

"Boogie #1" / "When He Comes Home to Me" Sepia Tones

Juke Box UR-100

Recorded on August 21, 1944, and released: late 1944



The first pressing sported a white label with red print – a combination that only appeared on this particular single. Before the end of the year, Juke Box had switched to a black label with silver print.



As the year's end, United decided to promote their record nationally. As they did so, they traded the B-side in for a song with "Blues" in the title.

"Boogie #1" / "Sophisticated Blues" **The Sepia Tones**

Juke Box UR-100

First Appearance in Trade Magazines: January 13, 1945



THE SEPIA TONES (Juke Box)

THE SEPIA TONES (Juke Box)
Baggie No. 1—FT.
Sophisticated Blues—FT.
Still another new record label coming
from Hollywood quarters, this marker
is made expressly for the juke boxes.
However, this first issue holds little
promise for the phono ops as a waxwork
dedicated to their specialized needs.
Apart from the title to identify the label,
there's little in either side to characterize the music as effective for the music
boxes. The Sepia Tones, a West Coast
combo, is a small unit comprising plano,
organ, sax and drums, with the tenor
man doubling on clary. For both the
traffic-stopping Boogie No. 1 and what
is subtlely titled as Sophisticated Blues,
it's mill-run music and music making,
with every man taking a chorus but
none creating enough interest to arrest
attention.

Save where the Seoia Tones may manifest

none creating enough investor or attention.

Save where the Sepia Tones may manifest some sort of a personal following, there is little in this first release of the Juke Box label to excite the juxe box fans.

The first pressing with the new B-side promoted the artist in large, bold type. Despite lackluster reviews, the single continued to sell. Juke Box billed it as being part of a "Hot Classic Series." They also added their address to the label.





The next pressing reduced the size of the artist name.



Around July or August (1945), Juke Box changed their backdrop to red with silver print.





The last pressing on Juke Box was made after September (1945). It removed all references to United.

"My Baby's Blues" / "Kansas City Boogie" The Blues Man

Juke Box UR-101

First Appearance in Trade Magazines: July 28, 1945





MY BABY'S BLUES......The Blues Man.....Juke Box UR-101

KANSAS CITY BOOGIE......The Blues Man.....Juke Box UR-101

The first pressing of the second Juke Box single listed the artist as "The Blues Man"; his name was George Vann. After the record was released, buyers seemed to prefer the B-side, and later ads promoted it.





Red with silver print.



No references to United.

Al Middleman, formerly with Hit and Elite Record firms, has taken over the Juke Box label of the United Record Company here and will come out with a new label of his own, called Sterling. Ben Siegel and Art Rupe, former heads of Juke Box, join Middleman in the new disk outfit. In setting deal with Siegel and Rupe, Middleman gained access to presses. Middleman will press here and in the East, releasing a new platter every three weeks. His Sterling record will sell for 75 cents. Some records under the Juke Box label may be released later. Sterling label will cover popular and race

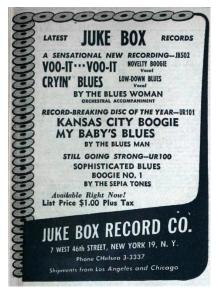
At the end of August (1945), Al Middleman became a partner in the Juke Box label, bringing with him records to press on the company's new Sterling and Memo labels. United essentially disappeared, and for a short time the Juke Box label stopped pressing new singles.

"Voo-It! Voo-It!" / "Cryin' Blues" The Blues Woman

Juke Box JB-502

First Appearance in Trade Magazines: November 17, 1945





The Sterling label had taken over the 100 series by this time – beginning again with SR-100, and Memo was using series numbered in the 1000s and 3000s, so Juke Box picked up at 502.

"Milton's Boogie" / "Groovy Blues" Roy Milton

Juke Box JB-503

First Appearance in Trade Magazines: January 26, 1946



This is one of two simultaneous releases signaling the involvement of Roy Milton with Juke Box Records. Milton was an up-and-coming blues star who scored hits immediately with both singles. Red label.



Juke Box began the new year with a label redesign. Trading red in once again for black, they also removed the print from around the rim of the label.

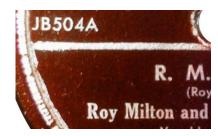
"R. M. Blues" / "Rhythm Cocktail" Roy Milton

Juke Box JB-504

First Appearance in Trade Magazines: January 26, 1946







First pressings appear to have accidentally labeled both sides as B-sides. It may be that "Rhythm Cocktail" was originally under consideration for A-side status. "RM Blues" was a hit for Milton, though, earning him great notoriety. Red label.



Like its counterpart, above, single JB-504 was reissued onto a black label by the middle of spring (1946).

"Not on the First Night" / "The Laziest Gal in Town" Frankie and Her Boys

Juke Box JB-505

JB 505

NOT ON THE FIRST NIGHT

FRANKIE AND HER BOYS

First Appearance in Trade Magazines: May 6, 1946



This single was an unusual repressing of two A-sides from Frankie Trumbauer, a *male* orchestra leader. The vocalist, billed on the original Varsity singles (8225 and 8223) as Fredda Gibson, was actually Frieda Lipschitz, going by "Fredda" instead of "Frieda." She later dropped Fredda and modified her last name – becoming far better known as Georgia Gibbs. The Varsity singles came out originally in 1940.





"JUKE BOX" SCORES WITH THREE TERRIFIC TWISTERS

JB-507

I'M A SPECIALIST — MY LOVE'S A COUNTRY GAL By Johnny Ryan and His Orchestra LIST PRICE \$1.00 plus tax . . . Distributors in Principal Cities

JB-506 PINE TOP'S BOOGIE WOOGIE ECCENTRIC RAG

By the Bailey Swing Group

7 WEST 46th STREET

NEW YORK 19, N. Y.

JB-505 NOT ON THE FIRST NIGHT THE LAZIEST GAL IN TOWN

By Frankie and Her Boys

JUKE BOX RECORD CO., Inc.

"Pine Top's Boogie Woogie" / "Eccentric Rag" The Bailey Swing Group

Juke Box JB-506

First Appearance in Trade Magazines: May 6, 1946





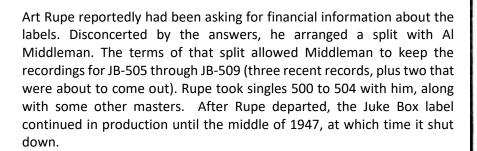


"I'm a Specialist" / "My Love's a Country Gal" Johnny Ryan

Juke Box JB-507

First Appearance in Trade Magazines: May 6, 1946





Meanwhile, Rupe started up a new label of his own: **Specialty**. The first five releases on Specialty were repressings of the five previously-released Juke Box singles that Art Rupe owned. Roy Milton left to form his own label, on which he rereleased the material that Juke Box had debuted. Specialty, meanwhile, charted a new course.

The original (black) labels show the address of the label as 2719 W. Seventh Street. Ads first appeared in issues dated 08/10/46.







Rupe Sells Out Juke Box • Sterling Piece; Says Obie Is in Deal

HOLLYWOOD, Aug. 3.—Art Rupe, who tied his juke box record company to a partnership arrangement with Al Middleman over a half year ago in a deal which included Middleman's Sterling Records, has just sold out his entire interest to Middleman. Rupe keeps a batch of masters in the deal which he will turn, out under a new label called Specialty. Dissension is said to have come about when Rupe called for a count of firm's take

Confusing the situation was Rupe's remarks that Eli Oberstein, current recording talent chief for Victor Records, was part of Juke Box-Sterling Records, along with Middleman and himself. Middleman and Oberstein were partners in the ex-Hit Record Company which they sold to radio set interests who renamed the label Majestic Records, and it was generally thought in the trade at that time that the Middleman-Oberstein partnership had ended completely.

Rupe's Specialty label may run into conflict with Specialty series offered by the major waveries. ters which Rupe will take with him into his new set-up include sides by the Sepia Tones, the Blues Man, the Blues Woman, Buddy Banks and Roy Milton orks. Distribution deal for Specialty is being worked out, with the possibility that Jack Gutshall will handle the line. In transferring the masters to Rupe, the agreement is that the Juke Box Record Company cannot order any more pressings made after June 28, 1946, and after Juke Box disposes of current inventory of numbers, which are said to include a side (R. M. Blues) which has been listed consistently in The Billboard's Most Played Race Records Chart, Specialty will press sides exclusively.

"Homesick Blues" / "Blues at Midnight" The Blues Man/ Jump Jackson

Specialty SP-505

First Appearance in Trade Magazines: November 23, 1946



Recorded in September and released two months later, this was the first new release from Specialty Records.

"Rainy Day Blues" / "Red Light" Jump Jackson

Specialty SP-506

First Appearance in Trade Magazines: November 23, 1946



Later copies (1948 on) have black labels.

Despite information online stating that Specialty did not move to its new offices for a considerable time after the company's startup, every known copy of every Specialty single numbered 505 or higher features the new address at 311 Venice Blvd., leading to the conclusion that Specialty moved into their new offices sometime in the autumn of 1946 – possibly when the recording sessions began for these singles.

"Alley Cat Woman" / "Night Life Blues" The Blues Man/ Jump Jackson

Specialty SP-507

First Appearance in Trade Magazines: No show (Released c. 11-12/46)



Recorded in September 1946.

"Ice Cream Freezer" / "Jumpin' at the Sunset" The Blues Man

Specialty SP-508

First Appearance in Trade Magazines: No show (Released c. 11-12/46)



Recorded in September 1946.

"Worryin' Blues" / "All Alone Blues" Jump Jackson

Specialty SP-509

First Appearance in Trade Magazines: No show (Released c. spring/47)



In March 1947, Roy Milton returned to record for Specialty. The label made great use of his skills, reissuing earlier records and recording four new songs right away.

"True Blues" / "Camille's Boogie" Roy Milton

Specialty SP-510

First Appearance in Trade Magazines: June 28, 1947





"Red Light" / "It Should Never Have Been This Way" Roy Milton

Specialty SP-511

First Appearance in Trade Magazines: no show



This is a reissue of Roy Milton 101/102 from November 1946.

"The Rockin' Boogie" / "Blues for Sale" Joe Lutcher

Specialty SP-512

First Appearance in Trade Magazines: no show (June 1947)



This single did not sell well; however, Specialty reissued it as it was apparent that Lutcher was going to sign with Capitol Records in September. The new single has catalog number 303. See below.

"I'll Always be in Love With You" / "Sunny Side of the Street" Roy Milton

Specialty SP-513

First Appearance in Trade Magazines: March 22, 1947





"Blues in My Heart" / "Groovin' With Joe" Roy Milton

Specialty SP-514

First Appearance in Trade Magazines: March 22, 1947





"Mr. Fine" / "Rainy Day Confession Blues" Roy Milton

Specialty SP-515

First Appearance in Trade Magazines: March 22, 1947







"Little Boy Blue" / "Them There Eyes" Roy Milton

Specialty SP-516

First Appearance in Trade Magazines: March 22, 1947





The songs on the four Milton singles numbered 513 through 516 were originally released on the Roy Milton label. These were numbered as Roy Milton 103A (November 1946), 104A/B (December 1946), 110A (February 1947), 111A/B (February/March 1947), 201A/B (March 1947). Although Roy Milton brought the masters with him to Specialty, the Roy Milton label continued to sell his earlier records – prompting Specialty to advertise that he recorded for them exclusively. At that point it seems, the Roy Milton label became known as Miltone.

At this point, Specialty moved the catalog number to the bottom of the label.



"When I Grow Too Old to Dream" / "Pack Your Sack...Jack" Roy Milton

Specialty SP-517

First Appearance in Trade Magazines: no show (May 1947)





The A-side was issued as Miltone 202 in May 1947, at about the same time as this record. Miltone released the B-side later (as 219B). Camille Howard is the vocalist.

"Big Fat Mama" / "Thrill Me" Roy Milton

Specialty SP-518

First Appearance in Trade Magazines: September 29, 1947



"Rockin' Boogie" / "Blues for Sale" Joe Lutcher

Specialty SP-303

First Appearance in Trade Magazines: September 29, 1947



At this point, it became clear that Specialty was preparing a whole new series of records. That series was scheduled to launch at the start of 1948, even as there was discussion of a recording ban by the American Federation of Musicians when the contract with them ended on December 31st. The Labor Management Relations Act of 1947 – passed over President Truman's veto on June 23rd – outraged the leaders of the union. As the end of the year approached and being forbidden from "striking," the discussion went toward simply not recording. It seems that the 300 series was originally going to be designed around Gospel music, with two singles by Joe Lutcher wedged in between music of the other genre. The series was marked by black labels – instead of the red labels found on the popular 500 series. Was the real distinction now a difference in price?

As time passed in 1948, the two series overlapped one another.



"What's the Use" / "Roy Rides" Roy Milton

Specialty SP-519

First Appearance in Trade Magazines: December 13, 1947



"I Can't Stop It"/ "Troubles Good-bye" Jimmy Liggins

Specialty SP-520

First Appearance in Trade Magazines: December 13, 1947



"These Old Bones" / "I'm in His Care" The Southern Harmonizers

Specialty SP-300

First Appearance in Trade Magazines: no show (c. January 1948)



"What's The Use" (2:55)

"Roy Rides" (2:45)

ROY MILTON ORCH.

(Specialty 519)

Pair of sides aimed at race spots, spill out by the hot Roy Milton crew, with this duo bound to keep the phonos hot with Roy's stuff. It's "What's The Use" on the topside, with Roy piping in shuffle beat while a piano rolls. On the flip, the crew pick up the metro to offer a hep intsrumental affair that may catch on. Grab Milton on the phonos and you've got coin action.

"Troubles Goodbye" (2:20)

"I Can't Stop It" (2:53)

JIMMY LIGGINS

(Specialty 520)

● More mellow music for the race spots—with Jimmy Liggins offering "Troubles Goodbye" and "I Can't Stop It" in fine vocal styling. Jimmy's pipes pitch way down low on the pair — done up real brown throughout. Instrumental accompaniment offered is effective with the spotlight shining on Jimmy all the way. The pair is there for the asking — go to it.

"What Are They Doing in Heaven" / "Until I Found the Lord" The Southern Harmonizers

Specialty SP-301

First Appearance in Trade Magazines: no show (c. January 1948)



"Canaan" / "My Lord is Waiting All the Time" The Southern Harmonizers

Specialty SP-302

First Appearance in Trade Magazines: no show (c. January 1948)



"The Traffic Song" / "Society Boogie" Joe Lutcher

Specialty SP-304

First Appearance in Trade Magazines: no show (c. January 1948)



Specialty SP-304 may have come out at the same time as or shortly after SP-303; however, since the trade magazines do not mention its release then, and since the label does not mention the price, it may have come out in January 1948.

"Cadillac Boogie"/ "Tear Drop Blues" Jimmy Liggins

Specialty SP-521

First Appearance in Trade Magazines: January 24, 1948



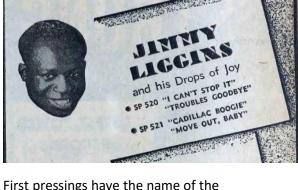


"Keep a Dollar in Your Pocket"/ "My Blue Heaven" Roy Milton

Specialty SP-522

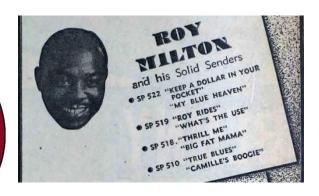
First Appearance in Trade Magazines: January 24, 1948





First pressings have the name of the backup band in ALL CAPS; later copies have the name in Title Case.





"I'm Standing on the Highway" / "I'll Tell It" The Pilgrim Travelers

Specialty SP-305

First Appearance in Trade Magazines: January 24, 1948







"Gospel Boogie" / "Stretch Out" The Pilgrim Travelers

Specialty SP-306

First Appearance in Trade Magazines: January 24, 1948







First pressings show the title as "Gospel Boogie." Later copies have that subtitle but correct the title to read "Everybody's Gonna Have a Wonderful Time Up There."

"Move Out Baby"/ "Rough Weather Blues" Jimmy Liggins

Specialty SP-523

First Appearance in Trade Magazines: January 24, 1948 (sort of)









At the end of January, Specialty announced the release of "Move Out Baby" as the B-side of single 521 (see the above ad). However, when SP-521 appeared on the market, the B-side was "Tear Drop Blues." That latter song is mentioned as the B-side in magazines from April, suggesting that both singles were ready by that time, and by June 19th both singles appear in ads with the correct B-sides. More confusingly, Specialty decided to withdraw single 523 altogether – replacing it (in July) with the same pairing, labeled 525. This coupling is scarcer.

"I've Had My Moments"/ "Train Blues" **Roy Milton**

Specialty SP-524

First Appearance in Trade Magazines: April 24, 1948





"You Don't Love Me" / "X-Temperaneous Boogie" **Camille Howard**

Specialty SP-307

First Appearance in Trade Magazines: April 24, 1948





"Well-Well-Baby" / "Rock That Voot" **The Nelson Alexander Trio**

Specialty SP-308

First Appearance in Trade Magazines: June 19, 1948





ROY MILTON SOLID SENDERS (Roy Milton) (Specialty SP-524)				
Train Blues Not much lyrically but side exhudes rhythm enough to pull juke coin.	68	69	65	71
Pve Had My Moments Not much of a song: neat tenor sax spot.	55	54	55	56

"I've Had My Moments" (2:42) "Train Blues" (2:23)

ROY MILTON (Specialty 524)

• Roy Milton and his crew come through for ops in a big way here with a duo dab of wax for ops with race spots. Sparkling the top deek with hush-hush treatment, Roy sets pipes to spin off an alluring touch to "I've Had My Moments". Disk appears to be extremely attractive, and should come in for a load of coin once it gets around. Background music by the group blends adequately to boom this deck all the more. Roy pulls a switch on the flip to go off to the other end with a ton of hot and holler. Stuff is tailor made for the fast set that love to jump. Keep in mind Milton's sensational popularity and then run out and get next to larity and then run out and get next to this bit.

"You Don't Love Me" (2:50) "X-Temperaneous Boogie" (2:45)

CAMILLE HOWARD (Specialty 307)

(Specialty 307)

• Another hot and heavy platter for this diskery with ivory-thrush Camille Howard on top for the spotlight. The gal's pipes spill in flavored tones on this top deck, "You Don't Love Me" with the metro weaving in slow mellow timing to blend to perfection. Slight quiver and catch in her tonsils makes you wanna listen all the more. Stuff is aimed at ops with race spots, with this deck beckning coin play galore. Flig has Camille offering some pleasant boogie that rolls along in top notch metro bound to suit the likes of the jump set. Phono fans that go for some good piano rhythms surely won't be disappointed with tihs piece. Both sides will fill your phono with coin.

Later pressings say she is "playing the piano with rhythm accompaniment."



"He Will Remember Me" / "Good News" The Pilgrim Travelers

Specialty SP-310

First Appearance in Trade Magazines: June 19, 1948



Later pressings omit the reference to their "Walkin' Rhythm" Spirituals.

"Move Out Baby"/ "Rough Weather Blues" Jimmy Liggins

Specialty SP-525

First Appearance in Trade Magazines: July 10, 1948



This was the last red-label single, and the 500 series vanished for six years.

"He Knows How" / "God Rode" The Golden Keys Quartet

Specialty SP-311

First Appearance in Trade Magazines: July 24, 1948



"Move Out Baby" (2:41) "Rough Weather Blues" (2:51) JIMMY LIGGINS (Specialty 525)

• Here's a blue ribbon package for music ops. It's Jimmy Liggins on deck with a pair that spell coin play all over the lot. Jimmy runs to his excellent form on the pair, with the top deck "Move Out Baby" in the limelight. Wax spills in bounce fashion, with some mellow beat behind. Flip, just what the title indicates has Jimmy in fine voice telling us about those "Rough Weather Blues." Both sides will score like mad—and make the kids dig for silver.

"Fat Meat" / "Put Me Down Blues" Jim Wynn

Specialty SP-312

First Appearance in Trade Magazines: July 17, 1948



JIM WYNN GROOVE MASTERS (Specialty SP 312) Put Me Down Blues (Bob Simms)	52	51	51	55
Trite blues material, routine performance. Fat Meat (Ted Shirley) Poer recording balance, with ork muffling vocal.	51	50	50	54

Specialty mentioned this recording in an ad on January 24^{th} but did not release it until late July or early August.