

Harry Stewart US Records, 1946-1956

History

Harry Skarbo, of Norwegian and Swedish descent, was born on October 21, 1908, in Tacoma, Washington – being the son of Hans Hall Gustavson Skarbo and Elsie Gilbertson Skarbo of Fox Island. Elsie died before Harry's third birthday, and Hans sent Harry to be raised by the Stewart family. He grew up in the Proctor district of Tacoma and graduated from Stadium High School. He got started in radio at what was then the brand new station, KVI, in 1927. Harry remained in Washington developing his talent as an announcer until 1930 – when he set out for California. Harry could also play the banjo, but neither announcers nor banjo players were in short supply in Los Angeles, so Harry developed some comedy routines.

He worked briefly for Al Pearce and his gang (in San Francisco?) in Fall, 1932, but Pearce's program ended. Harry then set out to join a program with wider syndication, Merrymakers. When that show ended in November, 1933, Harry returned to Pearce's gang – as Yogi Yorgesson the Hindu-Swedish mystic. Harry made Yogi into a mixture of various people with whom he was somewhat familiar. One was a folk singer, Ivar Haglund, whom he had encountered in Washington. [Haglund later became more famous after he opened, in 1938, Seattle's first aquarium and an associated restaurant.] Mohandas Gandhi, the Indian religious leader, was in the news internationally in 1930 for his civil disobedience with respect to the British government. Harry Stewart was impressed by Gandhi's spirituality and combined Haglund and Gandhi into the first incarnation of Yogi Yorgesson. As Harry told interviewer Will Jones in 1950, "The thing was ripe for a comedy mystic. I thought it would be funny to have a mystic with a Swedish accent. I remembered those accents, from up north, and I practiced."

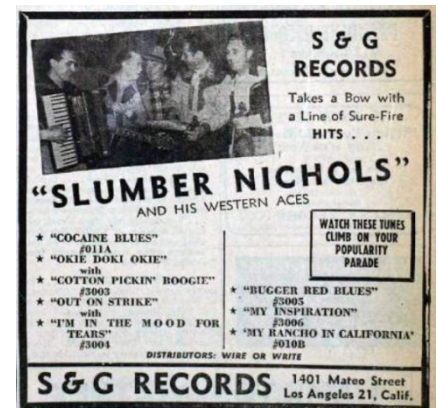
Harry appears to have used Yogi for the first time while he was on Merrymakers in 1933, but he became popular locally while he was with Al Pearce and his gang (1934-1937). In front of live audience, Harry would emerge wearing a lumberjack's shirt, Swedish boots, and a Hindu loincloth and turban. His prediction routine may have been one of the inspirations for Johnny Carson's similar character, Karnac. He would make fun of his own costume, saying about the crystal ball, "I can see my face on da udder side." His routine, like Karnac's, consisted of questions called into him by listeners. Of course, he was actually just reading a script that he had written. His son, Steve Stewart, remembered while talking to Yorgesson researcher Steven Howard, "A lady called in and asked, "My baby just swallowed some bullets, what should I do?" Yogi answered, "Give him some castor oil, and don't point him at anybody!"

By 1936, Pearce's gang was being heard as far away as Canada, and Yogi was starting to see advertisements as his own character – distinct from Al and Cal Pearce. That same year, Harry married Gretchen Sissell, who had been one of the Earl Carroll Girls – a dancer. For a few years, Yogi recorded his own program for radio broadcast. In 1939, Harry and Gretchen moved to Chicago, where Harry began to write radio scripts. After the United States entered World War Two, Harry resurrected his Yogi Yorgesson character in support of the war effort. He appeared on Chicago's station WBBM as part of the program, Victory Matinee and was soon (May, 1942) signed on to their staff – later becoming a producer. He remained a producer through 1943 (apparently going freelance work) and began perform in night clubs and to write songs, too. He wrote the words to "Humphrey, the Sweet Singing Pig" in 1943 – registering that song on March 19th; the music was supplied by Jimmy Hilliard.

Harry produced the Chicago-based program "The Sky's the Limit." That show starred actress Fran Allison – a few years before she worked with puppets Kukla and Ollie. Nineteen forty-five saw Harry do a screen test in Hollywood, but nothing came of it; he remained in radio working for NBC. In March, 1946,

Harry created a new (but familiar) character, Longfellow Larson the poetic janitor, for a radio program called "Phone Again, Finnegan." The program gained in popularity, switching from NBC to CBS, but it lost its chief sponsor and was cancelled later that year. After that, Harry returned to California – apparently bringing along one of the Finnegan musicians, Johnny Duffy. By this time, he had succeeded in getting the King's Jesters to release "Humphrey the Sweet Singing Pig" (see below).

That was when Harry wound up at S&G Records on Mateo Street in Los Angeles. In 1947, the S&G label was most famous for giving the world the song "Cocaine Blues." The first hit version of the song was released during the second week in July, 1947, but some time before that S&G pressed the original version of the recording, by W.A. Nichols' Western Aces (S&G 011). That original featured vocals by Red Arnall, the song's writer. By July 26th, S&G had sold well enough to help get the label started. S&G initiated their 3000 series, on which Yogi's first singles would be pressed. ["Cocaine Blues" was later made more famous by Johnny Cash.] Nichols' version was picked up in 1948 by Imperial Records.



In character as Yogi, Harry once described his voice as being like "a bullfrog with laryngitis."

Singles

"Humphrey, the Sweet Singing Pig"/"Mean to Me"

Shown as the King's Jesters

Vogue Picture Record R-751



Picture Disc

August, 1946

Harry is co-credited as the author for the A-side – listed as Yogi Yorgesson.

"My Clam-Digger Sweetheart"/"I Don't Give a Hoot"

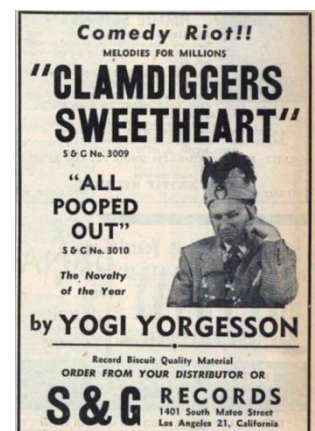
S&G 3009



SG 319/320



S & G 3009



Blue label with SG-319 and SG-320 but no number 3009
 Blue label with script logo and number 3009

1948
 1949

**“Square Dance Hulda”/“All Pooped Out”
 S&G 3010**



White label promo
 Blue label

1949

**“Root’a Toot Toot”/“You Fooled Me Once, You Fooled Me Twice”
 S&G 3011**

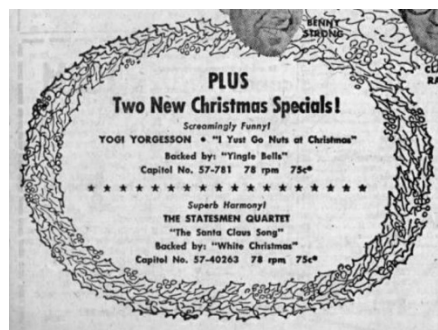


Blue label

November, 1949

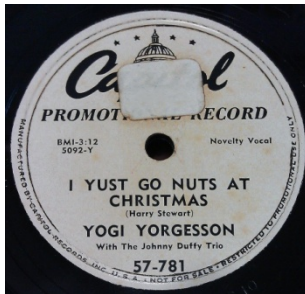
The A-side is an early version of “Real Gone Galoot,” which Yogi re-recorded for Capitol.
 This single is rare.

Yogi attracted the attention of Capitol records, who signed him to a contract on October 1st. Rather than simply reissuing his S&G material, they brought him into the studio to record two new songs. Meanwhile, S&G pressed 60,000 additional copies of Yogi’s first single and 40,000 of his second. Harry pulled out “I Yust Go Nuts at Christmas” and “Yingle Bells,” which could do well in the upcoming Christmas season. Through most of the 1950’s it remained one of Capitol’s best-selling singles of all time.



Scranton Promo (unknown date)

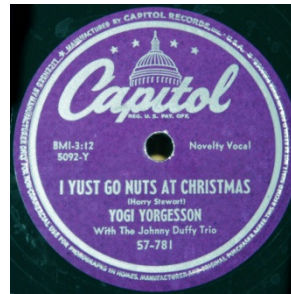
**“I Yust Go Nuts at Christmas”/“Yingle Bells”
Capitol 57-781 (and later F-781)**



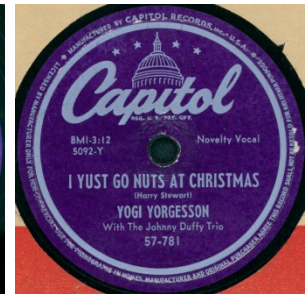
Promo



Los Angeles 78



Scranton 78 (1)



Scranton 78 (2)



Reissue 78



Scranton 45 (1)



Scranton 45 (2)



Scranton 45 (3)

White or yellow label promotional 78

November, 1949

Purple label commercial 78

November, 1949

Purple label commercial 45

December, 1949

The second label of the first pressing of the Scranton 78 has more space above “Yogi Yorgesson” on both sides.

The labels of the 45s differ slightly in the placement of the information. On one, the F of F781 is under the “ec” of “Beechwood”; on the other it is under the “ch” of “Beechwood.”

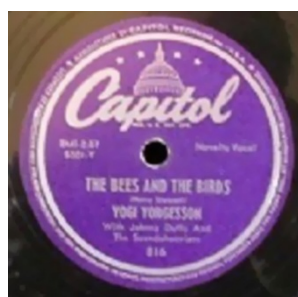
The “OC” pressing is from 1951-2.

The second pressing of the 78 came out between 1950 and 1957.

**“The Bees and the Birds”/“Real Gone Galoot”
Shown as the Golliwogs
Capitol 816 (and F-816)**



Los Angeles



Scranton

Another Capitol Smash by





Los Angeles (2)



Los Angeles (3)



Scranton 45

Purple label commercial 78

January, 1950

Purple label commercial 45

January, 1950

The second pressing (later in 1950) lacks the ring around the label.

The third pressing (probably 1950) adds the publishing credits that had been missing up to that point.

“Nincompoops Have All the Fun”/“Mrs. Yohnson, Turn Me Loose!” Capitol 1013 (and F-1013)



Promo



Los Angeles 78

Scranton 78



Scranton 45

YOGI YORGESSEN Capitol 1013	Nincompoops Have All the Fun Silly material fits well on the Scandinavian dialects of Yorgesson. Mrs. Yohnson, Turn Me Loose The Swedish novelty performer may have himself a winner in this very funny and infectious material novelty.	70--70--70--70 81--81--80--82
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White label promotional 78

April, 1950

Purple label commercial 78

April, 1950

Purple label commercial 45

April, 1950

“My Little Old Shack in Minneapolis, Minnesota”/“Someone Spiked the Punch at Lena’s Wedding”
Capitol 1216 (and F-1216)



Promo

Los Angeles 78

Scranton 78



Scranton 45

YOGI YORGESSION (J. Duffy-The Scandinavians)	
My Little Old Shack in Minneapolis, Minnesota	75--75--75
CAPITOL 1216—This parody makes an amusing side for the Hollywood Swede which should be particularly effective in the Midwestern Scandinavian belt.	
Someone Spiked the Punch	60--60--60
This side fails to provoke much humor, tho it's handled adeptly by Yorgesson.	

White label promotional 78

Purple label commercial 78

Purple label commercial 45

October, 1950

October, 1950

October, 1950

“Cookies, Pie, and Cake”/“Vot Skall We Do”
Capitol 1410 (and F-1410)



Promo

Los Angeles 78

Scranton 78



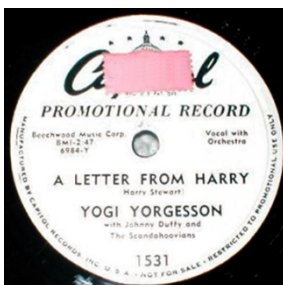
Scranton 45

YOGI YORGESSION (Johnny Duffy)	
Cookies, Pie and Cake	69--70--67--70
CAPITOL 1410—The West Coast Swede spreads his dialect thickly over a bouncier novelty both as warbler and narrator. Recitation has some swiftness, but main values are for Scandinavian neighborhoods.	
Vot Skall We Do?	70--70--68--72
Yogi knocks out an amusing novelty which should please a small circle in and out of the Scandinavian populated areas.	

White label promotional 78
 Purple label commercial 78
 Purple label commercial 45

March, 1951
 March, 1951
 March, 1951

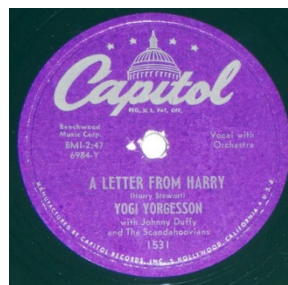
“A Letter from Harry”/“All Pooped Out”
Capitol 1531 (and F-1531)



Promo



Los Angeles 78



Scranton 78



Scranton 45 (1)



Scranton 45 (2)



Singing “All Pooped Out”

Cap 45's With Center May 7

HOLLYWOOD, April 14.—Capitol Records will start shipping 45 r.p.m. pressings equipped with its newly developed punch-out optional center May 7. Diskery's plants are converting to the new center which permits doughnut disk use on both standard spindle equipped three-way changers or the large spindled 45 r.p.m. machines. Capitol is purposely withholding consumer ballyhoo on its innovation until dealers have moved the old type 45 r.p.m. pressings. Capitol, however, will continue to ship 45 disks sans optional center until its own stock of these pressings has been exhausted.

White label promotional 78
 Purple label commercial 78
 Purple label commercial 45

March, 1951
 March, 1951
 March, 1951

Copies of the 45 with the “optional center” were made after capitol introduced the OC45 on May 7, 1951.

“The Picnic Song”/“That’s How Your Mom Became Mine”
Capitol 1734 (and F-1734)



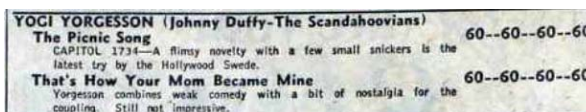
Promo

Los Angeles 78

Scranton 78



Scranton 45



White label promotional 78
 Purple label commercial 78
 Purple label commercial 45

August, 1951
 August, 1951
 August, 1951

“The Christmas Party”/“I Was Santa Claus at the Schoolhouse (for the PTA)”
Capitol 1831 (and F-1831)



LA Promo



Scranton Promo (1)



Scranton Promo (2)



LA 78



Scranton 78



Scranton 45 (1)



Scranton 45 (2)

White or yellow label promotional 78
 Purple label commercial 78
 Purple label commercial 45

October, 1951
 October, 1951
 October, 1951

“Ya, Sure, Please Excuse Me”/“Don’t Put Off Chasing Women”
Capitol 1972 (and F-1972)



Promo



Scranton 78



Scranton 45 (1)
Scranton 45 (2)

White label promotional 78
 Purple label commercial 78
 Purple label commercial 45

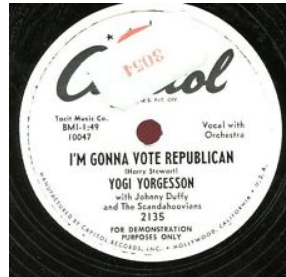
February, 1952
 February, 1952
 February, 1952

“I’m Gonna Vote Republican”/“I’m Going to Vote for a Democrat”

Capitol 2135 (and F-2135)



Promo (LA)



Promo (S)



Scranton 45

White label promotional 78
 Purple label commercial 78
 Purple label commercial 45

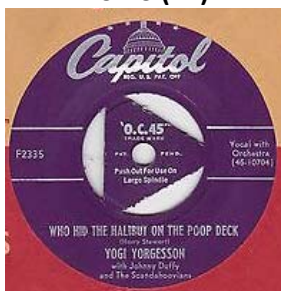
June, 1952
 June, 1952 (?)
 June, 1952

“The Object of My Affection”/“Who Hid the Halibut on the Poop Deck”

Capitol 2335 (and F-2335)



Promo (S)



Promo (LA)

Scranton 45



Yellow label promotional 78
 Purple label commercial 78
 Purple label commercial 45

January, 1953
 January, 1953 (?)
 January, 1953

“Yes, Sir, That’s My Baby”/“Yokohama Mama”

Shown as Harry Kari

Capitol 2392 (and F-2392)



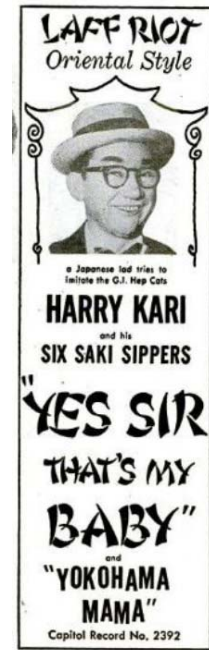
Promo (S)



Scranton 78



Scranton 45



Yellow label promotional 78
 Purple label commercial 78
 Purple label commercial 45

March, 1953
 March, 1953
 March, 1953

“Nishimoto at the Bat”/“The Love Bug Will Bite You”

Shown as Harry Kari

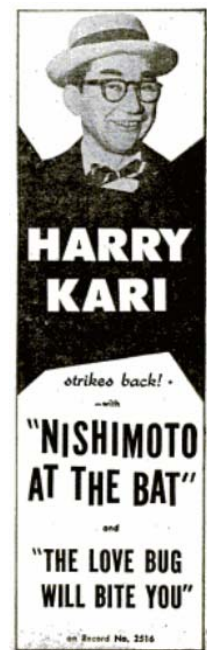
Capitol 2516 (and F-2516)



Scranton 78



Scranton 45



Purple label commercial 78
 Purple label commercial 45

July, 1953
 July, 1953

“Interested in Love” (with GeGe Pearson)/“Come Straight Home Tonight” (with GeGe Pearson)
Capitol 2552 (and F-2552)



Promo (LA)



Scranton 45

White label promotional 78
 Purple label commercial 78
 Purple label commercial 45

August, 1953
 August, 1953 ?
 August, 1953

“The Night Before Christmas”/“Oh! Oh! Don’t Ever Go”
Shown as Harry Kari
Capitol 2618 (and F-2618)



Promo (S)



Scranton 78



Scranton 45

White label promotional 78
 Purple label commercial 78
 Purple label commercial 45

October, 1953
 October, 1953
 October, 1953



“Ya Ya Ya”/“Mother-in-Law”
Capitol 2643 (and F-2643)



Promo (LA)



Promo (S)



Scranton 45

White label promotional 78
 Yellow label promotional 78
 Purple label commercial 45

November, 1953
 November, 1953
 November, 1953

“The Specialist”/“The Goose-Plucker’s Picnic”
Shown as Claude Hopper
Capitol F-2724



Scranton 45

CLAUDE HOPPER ORK
The Goose Pluckers’ Picnic74
 CAPITOL 2724 — Comedy and satire is served up on this side. It’s all about a romance which blossomed at the goose pluckers’ picnic. Good for some chuckles. (Tacet, BMI)
The Specialist.... 73
 Ditty derives from Chick Sale’s noted piece of comedy business, titled “The Specialist.” It’s a cute side, and done in good taste by Claude Hopper. (Specialist, ASCAP)

Purple label commercial 45

February, 1954

“The Egg-Laying Contest”/“The Snoring Song”
Capitol 2805 (and F-2805)



Promo (LA)



Promo (S)



Scranton 45

White label promotional 78
 Purple label commercial 45

May, 1954
 May, 1954

"I Give Up! – What is It?"/"Be Kind to the Street Corner Santa Claus"
Capitol 2978 (and F-2978)



Scranton 78



Promo 45 (S)



Scranton 45

Purple label commercial 78
 White label promotional 45
 Purple label commercial 45

September, 1954
 September, 1954
 September, 1954

"Ballad of Ole Svenson"/"Lonesome Loverboy"
Capitol 3089 (and F-3089)



Promo 45 (S)



Scranton 45

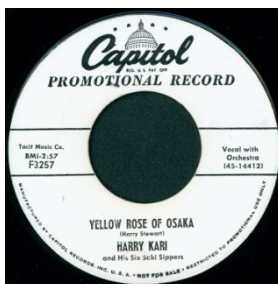


Los Angeles 45

Purple label commercial 78
 White label promotional 45
 Purple label commercial 45

April, 1955 ?
 April, 1955
 April, 1955

"Yellow Rose of Osaka"/"Ragtime Cowboy Joe"
Shown as Harry Kari
Capitol F-3257



Promo 45 (S)

Scranton 45

White label promotional 45

October, 1955

Purple label commercial 45

October, 1955 ?

“Yellow Rose of Osaka”/“Ragtime Cowboy Joe”
Shown as Harry Kari
Capitol F-3257



Promo 45 (S)

Scranton 45

White label promotional 45
Purple label commercial 45

October, 1955
October, 1955 ?

“There’ll be Some Changes Made, Mine Hare”/“Rock Around the Danube”
Shown as Klaus Hammerschmidt
Capitol F-3406



Promo 45 (S)



Promo 45 (LA)



Scranton 45

KLAUS HAMMERSCHMIDT
There'll Be Some Changes Made, Mine Hare72
CAPITOL 3406—Here's an amusing parody on "There'll Be Some Changes Made," it's all about the love life of a couple of Easter Bunnies. Logical niche is in the party disk category and for that limited market it figures there'll be chuckles aplenty. (E. E. Marks, BMI)
Rock Around the Danube...70
The oom-pah-pah boys give Johann Strauss a rock 'n' roll going over. It's a yockful burlesque on the style. (Tach, BMI)

White label promotional 45
Purple label commercial 45

April, 1956
April, 1956

“I Yust Go Nuts at Christmas”/“Yingle Bells”
Capitol F-3904



Purple label commercial 45

reissued November, 1957

Capitol reissued several of their Christmas singles for 1957, and “I Yust Go Nuts at Christmas” was among them. The single remained in print for the remainder of the vinyl period for Capitol Records. It is known to exist in the following pressings:

F3904 – purple label with small logo at top (1957)

3904 – purple label with small logo at top (1957-8)

3904 – purple label with logo at left (1959-62)

Orange/yellow swirl label (1962-68)

Target label with round logo and white dot (1971-2)

Orange label (1972-75)

Orange label with rights print (1975-78)

Purple label with “Mfd. by Capitol” (1978-83)

Rainbow label with print in color band (1983-88)

Purple label with “Manufactured by Capitol” and small logo (1988-89)

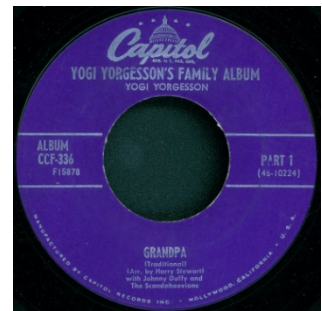
The A-side was also issued together with Stan Freberg’s “Nuttin for Christmas” as Capitol S7-57891.

45 RPM Boxed Sets



Yogi Yorgesson's Family Album
Capitol CCF-336

Contains three purple-label 45 RPM discs.
These may be found with optional center discs.



Extended Play Releases



The Trials and Tribulations of Yogi Yorgesson Capitol EAP-1-411

The first pressings feature a back cover that has a black Capitol logo at the bottom against a white background and concludes with the slogan “longer in music...lower in cost.” Later back covers are shown below the EP listings.



Dark Green Label

April, 1953



Yingle Bells Capitol EAP-1-461

The first pressings feature a back cover that has a background containing sketches of entertainers and concludes with the slogan “longer in music...lower in cost.” Later back covers are shown below the EP listings.



Dark Green Label

November, 1953

“The Christmas Party” is shown on the cover as having the title of “The Christmas Story.”

EP Back Covers

First EP on List: 416
Highest-Numbered EP: 421
Probable Date: 4/53 to 10/53



First EP on List: 421
Highest-Numbered EP: 451
Probable Date: 10/53 to 5/54



First EP on List: 448
Highest-Numbered EP: 520
Probable Date: 1954
Corner Number: P1006

First EP on List: 584
Highest-Numbered EP: 630
Probable Date: Late 1955
Corner Number: P1017



First EP on List: 442
Highest-Numbered EP: 629
Probable Date: 1955-56
Corner Number: P1018

First EP on List: 812
Highest-Numbered EP: 833
Probable Date: 1957-8
Corner Number: P1020



First EP on List: 973
Highest-Numbered EP: 1015
Probable Date: 1958
Corner Number: P1021

First EP on List: 446
Highest-Numbered EP: 1211
Probable Date: 1959

The first Yogi EP (411) is known to exist with back covers up through P1017.
The second Yogi EP (461) is known to exist with most of the back covers listed here, including the 1959 one.

Albums



Yogi Yorgesson's Family Album Capitol H-336

Purple label with "long playing microgroove" at the bottom.

Issued c. September, 1952.



The Great Comedy Hits of Yogi Yorgesson Capitol Star Line T-1620

Gold label

Issued October, 1961.



First pressings have gold labels and full-color back covers.

Later pressings (1962-1966) have all-black labels and black-and-white back covers.

Harry also appeared on the occasional "various artists" album from Capitol:

