

Parlophon Singles Label Styles



Parlophon began as a German company founded in 1896 by Carl Lindström, a Swedish inventor who lived in Berlin. Lindström made phonographs using the name “Parlophon,” and dictating machines using the name “Parlograph.” In 1911, Lindström’s company obtained controlling interest in the International Talking Machine Company – the German corporation that owned and had created Odeon Records. Lindström saw the opportunity to merge the European record manufacturing and player manufacturing markets, and to expand this new industry. During this period, records were being exported from Germany to Great Britain in increasing numbers – so that German imports consisted of a sizable portion of the British record market. Lindström endeavored to expand the production of Odeon’s discs worldwide, and after the First World War he succeeded in bringing the Odeon label to the United States, but his struggles to acquire a British company had been unsuccessful.



William Barry Owen worked for German-American inventor Emile Berliner, the man who introduced the disc record and “gramophone” in late 1887. In July, 1897, he left US-based National Gramophone Company, a subsidiary of Berliner Gramophone, to move to England. He and Trevor Williams founded the UK Gramophone Company in May, 1898 – not long after Lindström founded his Parlophon company in Germany. Their independent company became Berliner’s partner in Britain. The Gramophone Company began pressing seven-inch records billed as Gramophone Records, for which they started using paper labels in 1901. They introduced ten-inch discs called Gramophone Concert Records (1902) and twelve-inch Gramophone Monarch Records (1903), with lawsuits impacting the company throughout this period.



One of Berliner’s associates was Frank Seaman, who had managed the National Gramophone Company. Seaman left Berliner in 1899. Using technology that he “borrowed” from Berliner, Seaman founded Zon-o-Phone Records. Seaman pursued an alliance with Columbia Records, offering Columbia royalties for the stylus design in exchange for driving Emile Berliner out of business in America. The following year, a judge sided with Seaman, forcing the American Gramophone Company out of business.

Berliner and a co-defendant, Eldridge Johnson (who owned the Consolidated Talking Machine Company), counter sued. In 1901, the suit was adjudicated in their favor. As a result, since they were the ultimate winners, they founded a new company called Victor. Within two years, all of Zon-o-Phone’s American assets were handed over to Victor, while their British assets became part of Berliner’s British Partner – the Gramophone Company. This prompted an expansion and the foundation of His Master’s Voice (HMV) Records in England. The “Zonophone” name, now without hyphens, continued to be used in Great Britain as a budget-priced label.



Meanwhile, Beka Records became part of Lindström's company in 1910. Then in 1911, after taking over Odeon, Carl Lindström proposed an alliance between his German corporation and the Gramophone Company in England. By this time, Lindström had opened Parlophon records in Germany. Their logo featured a record player and a German "L" – standing for Lindström, of course. The Gramophone Company carefully considered the proposed merger, and determined that their own profits were higher than Lindström's. Since the Gramophone Company was also seeking to expand, a merger between the companies should have made sense. However, since Victor (USA) did not wish to merge with Lindström, since Gramophone was contracted to Victor for the purchase of record players, and since Eldridge Johnson of Victor planned to expand into Europe if Gramophone broke their arrangement, the merger fell through – at least temporarily.



This temporary setback in Lindström's expansion into England was met with the formation of Carl Lindström Ltd. in England on March 26, 1913. Due to the impending war with Germany, issues regarding that expansion could not be resolved until after the war ended, but Beka-Grand singles were manufactured in England in 1913. As a result of the war, the British company assets were sold off as enemy property; something similar happened in Germany to Deutsche Grammophon, the German branch of the Gramophone Co., Ltd.

The Transoceanic Trading Company opened in 1919 in Holland, thanks to Maurits Stibbe, who was the owner of an Odeon record shop in Amsterdam. The following year, all of Carl Lindström's overseas companies were being run through this Dutch affiliate. Through it, then, Lindström began operating his British office of the Beka label in England. On November 23, 1921, Lindström and Otto Heineman of General Phonograph (USA) reached an agreement allowing Lindström's companies to distribute Okeh records in Europe and to supply General Phonograph with foreign-language recordings. Now, Lindström's German record label was morphing into Parlophon. Therefore, Transoceanic founded a British branch of Parlophon on August 8, 1923. Adding an "e", the new company was christened the Parlophone Company. Parlophone produced record players and both 10-inch and 12-inch singles.



Label 23 – Large logo, record player behind logo, and no text about manufacturing.

E-5000 to E-5050?

E-10000 to E-10100?

[1923]

When Parlophone started up, the only two series were the ten-inch series (E-5000) and the twelve-inch series (E-10000). The 5000 series had red labels, and the 10000 series had blue labels. Parlophone reduced the logo in size right away, so some copies have smaller logos.



Label 23a – Smaller logo, record player behind logo. Rim print reads, “Record made by the Parlophone Co. Ltd., London.”

Apparently near the end of 1923, Parlophone initiated a series of ten-inch singles consisting of recordings from Ireland, Scotland, Wales, and Hawaii. This was the X-/E-3000 series. The X- prefix was for Irish recordings, and the label was green at first. The X- disappeared almost immediately, giving way to the red E- series beginning with E-3011. The first Parlophone singles with an R- prefix code were R-3200 through R-3210. Coming out in 1925, these were tango recordings from the Argentine Odeon (Disco Nacional) label. The R stood for “Royalty.” [1923-1929]



TANGOS (The Only Real Tango Records)
 Argentine music played by the most famous Argentine Tango Orchestras, and recorded in BUENOS AIRES
 RECORDED IN STRICTEST TANGO TIME

| | |
|--|---------------------------------------|
| R 3200 (AMIGASO (Comrade)) | The Orquesta Tipica, Roberto Firpo |
| R 3201 (SENTIMIENTO GAUCHO (Gaucho Sentiment)) | The Orquesta Tipica, Roberto Firpo |
| R 3201 (AQUELLA NOCHE (This Night)) | The Orquesta Tipica, Roberto Firpo |
| R 3202 (TIERRA MIA (My Country)) | The Orquesta Tipica, Roberto Firpo |
| R 3202 (ALFREDO (Bonds of Silk)) | The Orquesta Tipica, Francisco Canaro |
| R 3202 (LAZOS DE SEDA (Bonds of Silk)) | The Orquesta Tipica, Juan Maglio |

10-inch Double-sided 3/- each. ASK FOR SPECIAL LISTS

As an import from French Odeon, Josephine Baker also appeared in Parlophone’s R-3000 series.

Lindström’s success brought interest from Columbia Graphophone. In October, 1925, Columbia Graphophone set up Columbia International and bought out Lindström and the US Columbia Phonograph Company, giving them control of Parlophone. As Columbia expanded, one year later they purchased the Okeh label, which was owned by one of Berliner’s former partners and which had a good relationship with Parlophone already. This brought Parlophone a stronger arrangement with Okeh whereby Parlophone and Odeon manufactured and distributed Okeh’s catalog in Great Britain. This helped to orient the Parlophone catalog toward jazz recordings. March 1927 foresaw a lengthy relationship between Parlophone and Okeh, as the New Orleans Rhythm Kings appeared on the label as Parlophone R-3254, a pressing of the American single Okeh 40327.



MISCELLANEOUS VOCAL RECORDS

Considering that she is now in England, I think Sophie Tucker's record should be mentioned first of all. Frankly, it is rather disappointing as neither of the songs is one that suits her very well. *The man I love* is an excellent tune, but



In June 1928, Parlophone introduced a new series devoted (at first) to the label's relationship with American Okeh. The R-100 series eventually (1949) reused the numbers that had been used in the prior 3000 series. [1928-1929]

Label 29 – Dark Blue label with record-player behind logo; the P of Parlophone has a long serif; rim print at bottom only

The additional print on the label indicates Parlophone's participation in a scheme of retail price maintenance. With the approach of the Great Depression, small record labels all around the world were in danger of folding. Some of them sought assurances that their prices would not be undercut. Similar language would remain on Parlophone labels as long as they made 78-RPM singles.



The R-100 series split off to contain singles in the 1000s (1121, 1170, 1216 known) and in the 1500s. These singles wound up being absorbed into the R-100 series as a whole. [1929-1930]

Label 30 – Dark Blue Label with rim print at top and bottom; Parlophone is bolder, and the P is blunted.

In addition to the retail price restriction, the labels now have a statement about the public performance of copyrighted material.



This label style continued until 1946, but in 1932 the Second New Rhythm Style Series received its own special label (see below). Furthermore, some releases appeared on red labels. [1930-1948]



On April 21, 1931, as many companies were having financial problems, Columbia merged with The Gramophone Company/HMV to form Electric & Musical Industries; EMI was born. In November that same year, Abbey Road Studios opened for business.

Label 32 – Blue, Turquoise, and Gold label with rim print at the bottom.
This label was devoted to the Second New Rhythm Style Series. Other records remained on Label 30.
The rim print is in ALL CAPS and begins with “This record.”
[1932-1934]



As Parlophone issued the members of the Second New Rhythm Style Series, they began using this label for other series, including:

The 1934, 1935, 1936, 1937, 1938, 1939, 1940, 1941, 1942 Super Rhythm Style Series
The New Swing Style Series (1936/7); the Boogie Woogie Series (1939);
the Miscellany Rhythm Style Series (1939); the Jazz Classics Series (1941)

Label 32a – Blue, Turquoise, and Gold label with rim print at the bottom.
This label was devoted to the certain R&B/Jazz Series. Other records remained on Label 30.
The rim print is in Title Case and begins with “This Copyright, Patented Record.”
[1934-1935]



Label 32b – Blue, White, and Gold label with rim print at the bottom.
This label was devoted to the certain R&B/Jazz Series. Other records remained on Label 30.
The rim print is in Title Case and begins with “Copyright, Patented Record.”
In addition, “Made in England” now appears at the top. Finally, the Parlophone logo on Label 32b does not have a record player behind it; the record player appears with Labels 32 and 32a.
[1935-1942]



Anti-trust lawsuits caused EMI to sell the US branch of Columbia, and RCA (Victor) sold its shares in EMI in 1935. EMI retained the British rights to Nipper the dog, and to the HMV and Columbia labels. From that point on, Parlophone continued as a subsidiary of the larger corporation but retaining considerable autonomy. The label continued to release jazz records, but as the years went by, Parlophone became associated with home-grown British comedy record

Label 42 – Blue and White label with rim print at the bottom. “Parlophone” is now in white instead of blue. This label was used for R&B/Jazz series records.
 Early: R-2835 (2868)
 Late: R-3159
 [1942-1948]



Label 48 – Dark Blue Label with rim print all around the label.

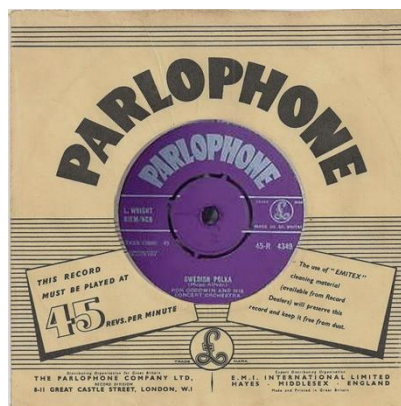
This label style continued until 1955, but R&B/Jazz series received their own special label (see below).
 [1948-1955]
 Early: R-3161
 Late: R-4074



Label B48 – Blue and Turquoise label with a much lengthier rim print.
 [1948-1956]
 Early: R-3174
 Late: R-4185



Label 53 – In 1953, Parlophone added the 45-RPM single to its list of available formats. At first, these were given their own series, prefixed with MSP – apparently standing for “Microgroove Single, Parlophone.” The MSP-6000 series remained on a purple label with gold print throughout its three-year run – after which time the 45 RPM singles were merged into the R-series and given an additional 45- prefix.



Through the summer of 1953, EMI singles used the same “large center” that appears on most American singles. However, Capitol Records in the USA had been using what it called an “optional center” since April 1951. The optional center allowed users to choose whether they wanted to play the record on a player with a small spindle, or on one with a large spindle. EMI determined that an optional center was desirable for British consumers, and they set about creating their own such center. In fall 1953, they introduced it on all of their records.

Parlophone’s design for 45-RPM singles remained the same even after they introduced the red label for 78s (see below), but in July 1956 they disbanded the MSP-6001 series and placed all new singles into the standard series (which was close to R-4200 at the time). In August, the label debuted the no-slip serrations that would be common to British singles; however, at first they appeared underneath the record label.

All Waxeries Get Go-Ahead On Cap O-C 45

HOLLYWOOD, May 12.—Capitol Records will make its 45-r.p.m. optional center available to all disk companies, effective July 1. Bill Fowler, Cap's production veepee, will mail out engineering and technical data to all labels, informing them that the O-C 45 disk center which Cap's own engineers pioneered, will be available to them at no cost.

Label launched the new 45-r.p.m. punch-out center a month ago. Innovation permits 45 pressings to be used on three-way changers with a standard spindle sans use of spindle hole fillers, while those using the regular 45-r.p.m. player, can punch out the triangular center, leaving an unfrayed center edge.



Label 53s – The gold print was difficult to read, and in June 1957 the print was changed from gold to silver. In mid-July, the date of the initial pressing started appearing on the label. Finally, in June 1958, Parlophone traded the purple backdrop in for the same red color that they were using for 78s.

Label 55 – Red label with rim print all the way around the label. The label for 78-RPM singles switched to red in late 1955, but Parlophone merged the R&B series into the other series in 1956. The result of the merge put all 78-RPM singles onto a red label. By 1960, little demand remained for the 78, and it was phased out, leaving only the 45 RPM single, which now had a label small enough to fit inside the serrations. “Recording first published” information started appearing on labels in 1957, and the 45- prefix was removed in 1963. [1955-1963] Early: R-4076



Label 63 – Black label with “Parlophone Co Ltd” rim print in Title Case. There is no “Sold in UK” statement on the label. [1963]



Label 63a – Black label with “Parlophone Co Ltd” rim print in ALL CAPS. There is no “Sold in UK” statement on the label. [1963-February 1964]



Label 63ps – Black label with “Parlophone Co Ltd” rim print.
“Sold in UK” appears in the middle of the label. Most copies have the rim
print in ALL CAPS, but a few (in error?) have the print in Title Case.
[February 1964-1965]



Label 63gs – Black label with “Gramophone Co Ltd” rim print.
“Sold in UK” appears in the middle of the label.
[1965-1969]



Label 63g – Black label with “Gramophone Co Ltd” rim print.
“Sold in UK” does NOT appear on the label.
[1969-1971]



Label 71 – Black label with “Gramophone Co Ltd” rim print.
The EMI logo appears at the bottom of the label.
[February 1972-1973]



Label 76 – Black label with “EMI” rim print.
The EMI logo appears at the bottom of the label.
[1976-1981]



Label 81 – Black label with “All Rights” rim print from left to right.
[1981-1983]



In 1982, Parlophone used a nostalgic red label on anniversary reissues of two Beatles singles. These were custom labels, however. Other Parlophone releases continued on the black label.

Label 83 – Black label with “All Rights” rim print from right to left on the label.
The new print adds “RENTING” to the list of prohibited actions.
[1983-1988]



Near the end of 1987, Parlophone removed the large “45” from its labels and centered their logo at the top.



Label 88 – Silver injection-molded label with PARLOPHONE at the top.
[1988-1989]

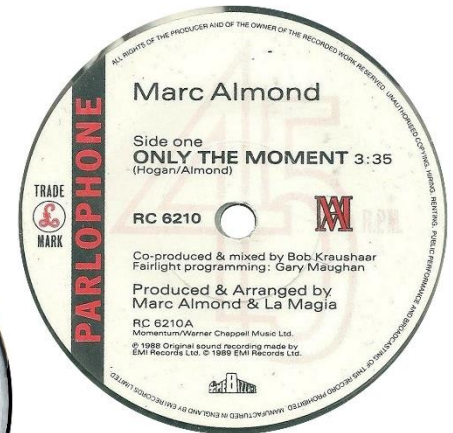
Label 83 was available at the same time, for those who preferred paper labels.



Label 89 – White and red paper label or Silver injection-molded label with PARLOPHONE at the left side.

Paper labels are relatively scarce later in the run.

[March 1989-1992]



Label 93 – Silver injection-molded label with Parlophone and logo at the top.

[1993-1994]



Label 95 – Black injection-molded label with Parlophone and logo at the top.

[1995-1997]

Beginning in 1997, Parlophone issued custom labels for those records that were available as vinyl singles.



Parlophone and the Pound Sign

Casual observers often inquire as to whether the Parlophone company logo is supposed to be the same symbol that is used in Great Britain to indicate their chief monetary unit: the Pound Sterling. The simple answer is “no,” but the matter requires more explanation.

As we have seen, in creating his logo Carl Lindström used a German black-letter Gothic form of the letter “L”. That “L”, written in a fancy form of the letter as “£,” stood for his last name.

Great Britain had been using pounds (*librae*), shillings (*solidi*), and pence (*denarii*) for many years. Since the Latin word for pound began with the letter L, the symbol for pound sterling also used an “L”. The form taken by that “L” varied, but some form of Gothic wording always appeared on early British bank notes. Eventually, the printed symbol for the British pound came to resemble the £ in the Parlophone logo almost exactly. It is quite possible that Lindström himself never saw the written symbol for the pound sterling. The symbol shown to the right appeared on a one-pound note from 1914.



Tax Codes



The Second World War began taking a financial toll on Great Britain almost immediately. Just a few weeks after John Lennon was born – on October 21, 1940 – the British government began imposing a tax on all goods except for food and children’s clothing. This tax was based on the wholesale price of the item and was to be imposed on records when they left the factory to go to the retailer. Several record companies, including the EMI group, began marking their records with the tax code to indicate what tax had been paid. If a change in the tax was anticipated, a “shotgun” approach was sometimes taken – in which more than one tax code was shown. Occasionally, a stamp was added to the record displaying the new tax code. The tax rates were highest during the war, but after the war the taxes were not repealed. Sometimes, the same rate was continued, but the prices increased; a new tax code showed that the proper tax had been paid based on the higher price.

| Date Imposed | Tax Rate | Tax Code | Used Originally on... |
|-------------------|----------|----------|-----------------------|
| October 21, 1940 | 33 1/3% | T | None |
| April 15, 1942 | 66 2/3% | DT | None |
| April 14, 1943 | 100% | TT | None |
| April 10, 1946 | 33 1/3% | ST | None |
| November 13, 1947 | 50% | LT | None |
| April 9, 1948 | 66 2/3% | DT | None |
| December 30, 1950 | 66 2/3% | AT | None |
| April 16, 1950 | 50% | NT | None |
| October 28, 1955 | 60% | RT | None |
| June 1, 1957 | 60% | XT | None |
| October 1, 1958 | 60% | UT | None |
| April 8, 1959 | 50% | ET | None |
| August 1, 1960 | 50% | WT | None* |
| July 26, 1961 | 55% | OT | None* |
| April 10, 1962 | 45% | ZT | R-4949 |
| November 26, 1962 | 45% | PT | R-4983 |
| January 1, 1963 | 25% | MT | R-5015 |
| July 1, 1963 | 25% | KT | R-5055 to R-5786 |
| January 1, 1969 | 55% | JT* | None* |

*While no Beatles singles were released prior to the imposition of the ZT tax code, some records can be found with the “shotgun” approach, showing codes as early as the WT code. Instead of changing the code after 1963, the value of the KT code changed without altering the code itself. From July 21, 1966, to March 19, 1968, the KT code represented a 27 1/2 % tax; from March 20, 1968, to November 22, 1968, the same code represented a 50% tax; from November 23, 1968, to the end of the Beatle period the tax was 55%.

After the change to 55% was imposed, consideration was given for a new tax code: JT. Although this was used on some records from Decca, EMI never did so officially. However, some Beatles records can be

found with a transitional “KJT” code – anticipating the change. The purchase tax was discontinued entirely after the introduction of the Value-Added Tax (VAT) on March 31, 1973.¹



¹ The image of the Gramophone is from *The Electrical World*, November 12, 1887, p. 255.

Parlophone Company Sleeves (on Beatles Singles)

Parlophone manufactured colorful picture sleeves for only two original Beatles singles: “Strawberry Fields Forever” and “Let it Be.” Every other Beatles single was released in a company sleeve. If a single continued to sell well, new copies of that single would be issued in the current sleeve-of-the-moment. Additionally, there were several ad-back sleeves that were available on Beatles singles at the same time as more common sleeves without ads were available. The list that follows is an attempt to identify the company sleeve(s) that most likely accompanied a single on its first day of issue.



Company Sleeve Type B



Company Sleeve Type C

| Date | Description | Nickname | Used Originally on... |
|-------------------|---|----------|-----------------------|
| 1962 | Colorful sleeve with wavy lines and Parlophone logos on one side | Type A | 45-R-4949. |
| Late 1962 | Colorful sleeve with wavy lines and Parlophone logos on both sides | Type B | 46-R-4949 |
| Late 1962-01/63 | Overlapping polygons | Type C | R-4983 |
| 02/63 to 12/64 | Green sleeve; Parlophone Co. logo at bottom; straight or curved top* | Green T1 | R-5015 to R-5200 |
| 12/64 to 06/65 | Green sleeve; Parlophone-EMI logo at bottom.** | Green T2 | R-5265 to R-5305 |
| 01/65 to 06/65 | PARLOPHONE in green across top left; Parlophone/EMI logo. *** | Green T3 | R-5265 to R-5305? |
| 12/65 to 09/66 | PARLOPHONE in black. Gramophone/EMI logo. “Fran the Fan” cartoon ad on back.@ | Green T4 | R-5305 to R-5493 |
| 03/66 to 12/66 | Green sleeve; Gramophone/EMI logo at bottom. Tokens still cost 6/ to 50/. | Green T5 | R-5493 to R-5570 |
| 12/66 to 06/67 | PARLOPHONE in green across top left; Gramophone logo and ad back. Tokens now cost 7/3 to 50/- & | Green T6 | R-5570 to R-5620 |
| 12/66 to mid 1968 | Gramophone/EMI logo at bottom. Tokens now cost 7/3 to 50/. | Green T7 | R-5655 to R-5675 |

| | | | |
|--------------|----------------------------|---------|------------------|
| 1967 | Color LP covers on sleeve | Covers | R-5620 to R-5655 |
| 1967 to 1970 | Concentric Circles design# | Circles | R-5675 |



Green Type 1

Green Type 2

Green Type 3

Type 1

*Several similar sleeves appeared during this period, in the following order:

- A. "Parlophone" text on front is 32 mm wide.
- B. "Parlophone" text on front is 27 mm wide from here on. EMI is misidentified as Electric & Musical Instruments.
- C. Same as above, but error is blotted out with a green rectangle.
- D. Same as above, but the error has been corrected to read "Industries." Some copies have "Industries" in a disturbed location, while other sleeves have it appear naturally as part of the line. (R-5015 to R-5165)
- E. Wavy top. Flaps glued on the outside. (R-5200).

Type 2

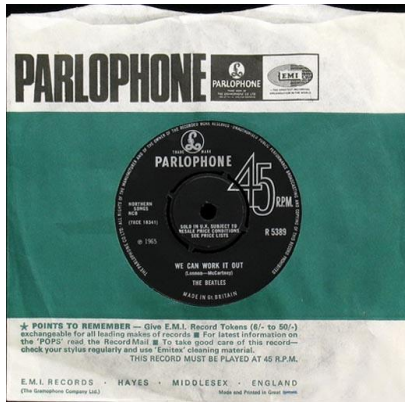
**Two similar sleeves appeared during this period. They are:

- A. "PRESENT" is in bold, wide print on back.
- B. "PRESENT" is in tall, thin print on back.

Type 3

***Two similar sleeves appeared during this period. Both have mostly-white ads for Miner's Make Up on the back. They are:

- A. Make up reference is alone on back of sleeve, in bottom right corner.
- B. Make up reference is accompanied by an instruction to write for a free sample.



Green Type 4



Green Type 5



Green Type 6

Type 4

@Three similar sleeves featuring “Fran the Fan” appeared during this period. They are:

- A. “Dear Miss Brown” letter.
- B. Fran washing her hair.
- C. Fran drying her friend’s hair.

Type 6

&Two similar sleeves featuring Miner’s Make Up on the back appeared during this period. They are:

- A. Smoothest cover-up make-up ad (R-5570)
- B. Big hit now make-up ad (R-5620)

Covers

Two designs of color “LP-cover” sleeves were also used in 1967.

- A. Latest LP is PMC 7013.
- B. Latest LP is PMC 7020.

Circles

#Two similar sleeves featuring LP’s on the back appeared during this period. They are:

- A. Goon but Not Forgotten in upper left on back. (R-5675)
- B. Hollies Greatest in upper left on back. (R-5675)

Apple Sleeves

Apple sleeves from the 1960s were issued in the following styles:

- A. Wavy Top (1968)
- B. Straight-top sleeve with thumb tab and semi-gloss finish. (1969-70)

