

Norgran Records

By the start of 1954, Norman Granz's label, Clef Records, was doing so well that his distributors were unable to keep up with the demand. Therefore, on February 6th Granz announced that he would be transferring the "cool jazz" artists from Clef to a new label named after himself: Norgran.

Norgran immediately began releasing singles and ten-inch albums, and series of twelve-inch LPs soon followed. All of the 10" LPs were released on the same yellow label with black print, with the exception of two albums by Chico O'Farrill – numbered 27 and 28 – that had deep green labels with silver print and which were identified as part of a "Dance Series." The Dance Series albums also featured a logo showing people dancing, instead of the usual trumpet player.

Norgran proved to be a popular place for Jazz, and by the end of 1955 Granz had the capital to start up two new labels, one of which – Verve Records – was to be devoted to reaching the popular-music market. By early 1956, the success of Verve and the other labels pushed Granz to the conclusion that if he combined his labels into one larger label he would essentially have a "major" label. At that point, Norgran was cancelled entirely, and the labels were all moved under the Verve umbrella. The releases on Norgran attained somewhat of a legendary status in the years that followed. These pages cover the ten-inch albums numbered 1 through 32.

All Granz Disks Under Verve Banner

HOLLYWOOD — In an open bid for "major" status based on volume of approximately \$2 million in 1956, the Norman Granz disk operation will henceforth be consolidated under one label, Verve Records.

Granz, president of the four labels he operates, Verve, Clef, Norgran and Down Home, disclosed that both Clef and Down Home will be released under the Verve banner in the future. Clef works, however, will be released in a "Clef Jazz series" identified by the trademarked figure of a trumpet player, while Dixie material will be released in a "Down Home" series. The Norgran line will be dispersed with entirely, with no future releases planned for the label.

According to Granz, a majority of disk volume today is done by album sales. "With a catalog of approximately 500 albums, we feel

(Continued on page 16)

GRANZ STARTS UP NEW NORGRAN JAZZ LABEL

NEW YORK, Feb. 6.—Norman Granz is starting a new label, Norgran Records, that will function as another jazz label in addition to Clef.

Talent for the new label will consist of about half of the jazz names that are now on Clef and under contract to Granz. The new label will be ready within a month.

The reason for starting Norgran Records, according to the impresario, is that the Clef label was too full of talent, and Clef releasing records at a rate close to that of a regular pop diskery, distributors were unable to handle adequately all of the releases

that came out each month. Norgran will not be sold thru the same distributors as Clef, but thru other indie distributors.

Clef records will retain, in the main, artists who could be classified as in the swing tradition. Norgran will handle the cooler crowd. This will be the Clef lineup: Gene Krupa, Count Basie, Oscar Peterson, Charlie Parker, Illinois Jacquet, Teddy Wilson, Art Tatum, Roy Eldridge, Flip Phillips, Benny Carter, Billie Holiday, the Jam Session series and the "Jazz at the Philharmonic" series.

Norgran will handle: Dizzy (Continued on page 24)

Granz Cuts Catalog Price to 98c Each

To Launch Two New Labels February 1, To Be All-Pop; Down Home Dixieland Verve

By BILL SIMON

HOLLYWOOD, Dec. 24.—In a major break of the EP price structure, Norman Granz last week cut his combined catalogs, including about 500 EP packages, to 98 cents per disk.

Simultaneously, Granz revealed his plan to launch two new record labels on February 1. Currently, he owns Clef and Norgran—both of which are jazz labels.

According to Granz, the 98-cent price is effective "immediately" and "permanently." He intends to hold his regular length 78's and 45's at 59 cents per.

New Labels.
Granz' new labels will be Verve, which will be an all-pop operation, and Down Home, which will

specialize in Dixieland jazz as opposed to the swing-modern idioms of Clef and Norgran. The Down Home label and catalog actually is not new, having been purchased by Granz two years ago. It has been inactive, however.

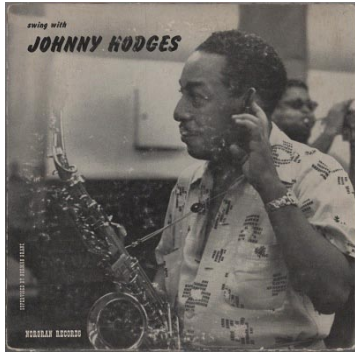
While Granz himself will run the Down Home deal, the Verve set-up will be directed by the currently high-riding arranger Buddy Bregman.

The latter will have a free hand to sign artists and select material and will also do most of the arranging. He will share some of the cleffing, however, with Benny Carter, a long-time Granz property.

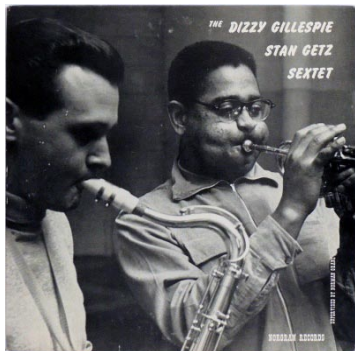
Verve Roster
The Verve roster, in addition to new pop artists, will carry a number of the Granz jazz stars whom the impresario feels have a strong chance in the pop market. These include Count Basie and his warbler Joe Williams, Buddy Rich, Anita O'Day and Gene Krupa.

Under Granz' aegis, Krupa will re-form a big dance band. Granz' folk singer Stan Wilson also will move to Verve. Bregman himself will slice a series of mood music albums. The first new artist signed is Toni Harper, formerly with Columbia. She'll cut her first Verve date this week.

Norgran Ten-Inch Albums



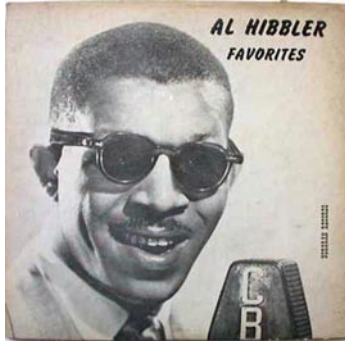
MGN-1 Johnny Hodges *Swing With Johnny Hodges*
 Recording Dates: 1/15/51; 1/13/52; 12/11/52
 Release Date: BB February 27, 1954



MGN-2 The Dizzy Gillespie Stan Getz Sextet *Sextet*
 Recording Dates: 12/9/53
 Release Date: BB February 27, 1954



MGN-3 Buddy DeFranco *The Music of Buddy DeFranco*
 Recording Dates: 4/15/53; 4/20/53
 Release Date: BB February 27, 1954



LESTER YOUNG WITH THE OSCAR PETERSON TRIO76 (2-10')
 Program MGN 5, 6

It has been a long time since the Pres has shown off more attractive tenor work than he does on these two LP's with the Oscar Peterson Trio, consisting of Peterson, Barney Kessel and Roy Brown. Young's tenor work on these new waxings is more exciting and swinging than ever and his fans are sure to get a kick from them. And on all of the selections the fine work of the Peterson Trio stands out, with the pianist getting much chance to show off his own first-rate musicianship. The first LP contains "Ad Lib Blues," "I Can't Get Started"; "Just You, Just Me," and "Almost Like Being in Love." The other includes "Tea for Two," "Indians" and "On the Sunny Side of the Street." Good wax.

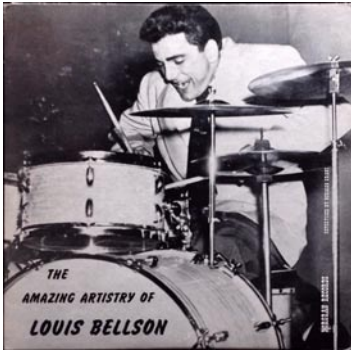
MGN-4 Al Hibbler *Favorites*
 Recording Dates: 4/1/52; 9/30/53
 Release Date: May, 1954



MGN-5 Lester Young *With the Oscar Peterson Trio (#1)*
 Recording Dates: 8/4/52
 Release Date: BB June 19, 1954
 Original Pressing: The front cover does not have "#1" printed on it, and there are no stickers.
 Later Pressings: The second pressing has a sticker reading #1; the third pressing has #1 printed on it. One often finds copies with a "Hi-Fi Recording" sticker.



MGN-6 Lester Young *With the Oscar Peterson Trio (#2)*
 Recording Dates: 8/4/52
 Release Date: BB June 19, 1954
 Original Pressing: The front cover does not have "#1" printed on it, and there are no stickers.
 Later Pressings: Later Pressings: The second pressing has a sticker reading #1; the third pressing has #1 printed on it. One often finds copies with a "Hi-Fi Recording" sticker.



THE AMAZING ARTISTRY OF LOUIS BELLSON72
 (1-10")
 Norgran MGN 7
 It's rare that a drummer gets a whole LP to himself, but Louis Bellson is considered one of the top drummers around today and he gets a chance to show off his skill on this new release. The set contains five tunes, including three originals, "Percussionistically Speaking," "A Pearl for Louie" and "Copasetic," plus two standards, "Fascinatin' Rhythm" and "All God's Chillun Got Rhythm." Bellson comes thru brilliantly on drums, helped by a group of fine musicians, including Ralph Martin, Don Elliot, Bob Paterson and Joe Puma. For fans of the drummerman.

MGN-7 Louis Bellson *The Amazing Artistry of Louis Bellson*
 Recording Dates: 02/54
 Release Date: BB June 26, 1954



MGN-8 The Charlie Ventura Quartet *The Charlie Ventura Quartet*
 Recording Dates: 12/22/52; 1/5/53
 Release Date: c. May/June, 1954



MGN-9 Chico O'Farrill *2nd Afro-Cuban Jazz Suite*
 Recording Dates: 1/21/51; 11/24/51
 Release Date: c. May/June, 1954
 Original Pressing: The front cover reads "Clef Records."
 The second pressing has a large Norgran sticker over Clef Records; the third has a smaller sticker.



MGN-10 Benny Carter *The Urbane Mr. Carter*
 Recording Dates: 12/31/53; 1/4/54
 Release Date: c. June, 1954



MGN-11 Bernard Peiffer *Bernard Peiffer et son Trio*
 Recording Dates: 3/12/52; 3/31/52; 4/4/52; 5/23/53
 Release Date: c. June, 1954 (listed in *American Record Guide* in September, 1954)



MGN-12 Don Byas *(L'Inimitable) Don Byas et ses Rythmes*
 Recording Dates: 7/4/50; 4/10/52
 Release Date: CB August 7, 1954

"L'INIMITABLE DON BYAS ET SES RYTHMES"—Norman Rice
 N-12 (1-10" L.P.) List: \$5.95
 LAURA: SOMEBODY LOVES ME; OLD FOLKS; RIVIERA BLUES; SHOKE GETS IN YOUR EYES
 I COVER THE WATERFRONT; TALK OF THE TOWN; A PRETTY GIRL IS LIKE A MELBOY
 Don Byas, born American, and who made a fair reputation with his st.
 Basie and Andy Kirk aggregations, had to leave these shores to recross
 his jazz reputation. Byas, who has been in France for eight years has
 been accepted by France as a native. He has created a style all his own
 offers a series of eloquent treatments on both sides that should sit
 American fans much pleasure. Recordings were made in France.



SLIM GAILLARD—"Wherever He May Be"—Norgren MG N-13 (10" LP)
 List: \$3.85
 I CAN'T GIVE YOU ANYTHING BUT LOVE; YOU GOOFED, MAKE IT DO; THIS IS MY LOVE;
 I'M IN THE MOOD FOR LOVE; YO YO YO; CHICKEN RHYTHM; GO MAN GO.
 One of today's most fascinating and humorous performers is the one and only Slim Gaillard. His comedy in music, his unique phases, and the "crazy" way he plays every band instrument has earned him a most loyal following. He's been held over at almost every night spot he's appeared in. Slim dishes up eight pieces of musical nonsense and comedy on this Norgren platter. The artist has a limited following, but every fan of his finds it a must to get everything the "jivester" cuts.

MGN-13 Slim Gaillard *Wherever he May Be*
 Recording Dates: 5/12/51; 8/51; 7/52; 12/53
 Release Date: CB July 3, 1954



THE EXCITING LOUIS BELLSON—Norgren Records MGN 14 (1-10" LP)
 List: \$3.85
 SKIN DEEP; LORIS; CANTON HALL SWING; FOR EUROPEANS ONLY; PHALANGES.
 When Norman Granz named this release "The Exciting Louis Bellson" he chose an exceedingly appropriate title. Supported by a large aggregation, Bellson performs a series of colorful and well developed skin pyrotechnics that amaze. The album is planned to spotlight the Bellson solos. Although no credits are given to the other members of the band, solo and ensemble work lend much to the general enjoyment of the platter.

MGN-14 Louis Bellson *The Exciting Louis Bellson*
 Recording Dates: 7/53; 2/54
 Release Date: CB July 27, 1954



MGN-15 Al Hibbler *Al Hibbler Sings Duke Ellington*
 Recording Dates: 2/11/54; 2/19/54
 Release Date: September, 1954 (mentioned CB 9/25)



MGN-16 Buddy DeFranco *Pretty Moods*
 Recording Dates: 4/7/54
 Release Date: High Fidelity 09/54

BUDDY DE FRANCO

Pretty Moods
 NORGRAN MG N-16. 10-in. 22 min. \$3.95
 Buddy De Franco, clarinet; Sonny Clark, piano; Gene Wright, bass; Bobby White, drums.
Tenderly; Loner Man; Deep Purple; Yesterday; If I Should Lose You.

Buddy De Franco is in the great tradition of jazz clarinet men and he proves it very convincingly on this disk. These selections are not (except for *Yesterday*) fast and flashy show pieces on which a swift fingered virtuoso may show off. They are ballads taken at a gentle pace, a vastly difficult and dangerous matter for a jazz soloist to undertake as De Franco's contemporaries — particularly his colleagues of the reed section — prove almost every time they drag their dreadful way through such an effort. De Franco, however, is a musician of impeccable taste and unusual ability and he invests his imaginative and lyric interpretations of these numbers with charm, vitality and understanding. No small part of the pleasure afforded by this disk is its utter lack of pretension.

MGN-17 Unreleased/Unknown

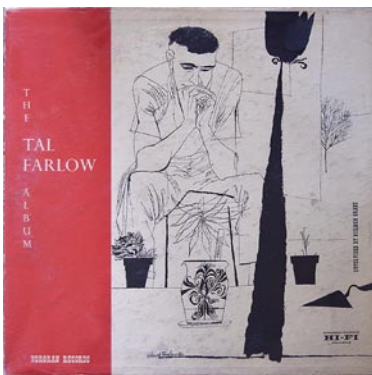


MGN-18 Dizzy Gillespie-Stan Getz Sextet *Volume 2*
 Recording Dates: 12/9/53; 5/25/54
 Release Date: BB September 18, 1954

DIZZY GILLESPIE, STAN GETZ SEXTET, ALBUM 278 (1-10")

Norgran MGN 18

If this type of jazz package needs description, it is a merger of the bop and cool schools featuring a pair of great soloists and a rhythm section of Max Roach, Herb Ellis, Oscar Peterson and Ray Brown. The success of the first such package speaks well for the potential of this one. Four selections include "Siboney," "One Alone" and "Girl of My Dreams." Should sell quite well.



MGN-19 Tal Farlow *The Tal Farlow Album*
 Recording Dates: 6/2/54
 Release Date: CB September 4, 1954

THE TAL FARLOW ALBUM—Norgran Records MG N-19 (1-10" L.P.)

List: \$3.85

IF THERE'S SOMEONE LOVELIER THAN YOU, WITH THE WIND AND THE RAIN IN YOUR HAIR, MY OLD FLAME, GIBSON BOY, YOU AND THE MUSIC, LOVE NEST, BLUES IN THE CLOSET, EVERYTHING I'VE GOT.

This album introduces a new name to most jazz buyers. Tal Farlow shows, through this issue, that he belongs with the better known figures in jazz. His guitar work is fresh and strikes with an individuality that should rank him with top guitar names in the jazz field. Complementing Farlow are Oscar Pettiford, bass; Barry Galbreath, guitar; and Joe Morello, drums.

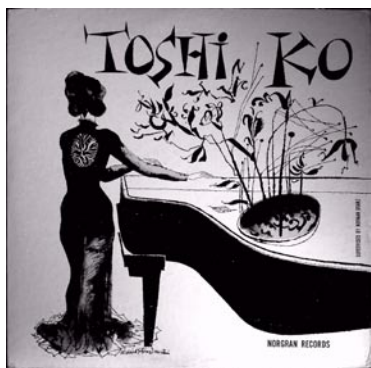


AN EVENING WITH CHARLIE VENTURA AND MARY ANN MCCALL 79
(1-10")
Norgran MGN-20
The familiar music-making talents of Ventura on tenor sax are linked here with the less familiar ones of singer Mary Ann McCall. Miss McCall, in the years after the war, became a favorite of West Coast jazzmen, and made a few highly respected recordings against solid jazz backgrounds. Hers was always an instrumentalist's attack, and in these new recordings, more than ever, her husky voice inflects with the authority and precision of a jazz musician, who works "inside" the ensemble and not in front of it. Ventura's playing in his solos has his customary spontaneous rhythm and expressive phrasing. His colleagues here are top-notch and each makes noteworthy contributions: Bob Carter on bass, Sonny Igoe on drums, and Dave McKenna on piano. Dealers will find this an easy package to sell to modern jazz enthusiasts.

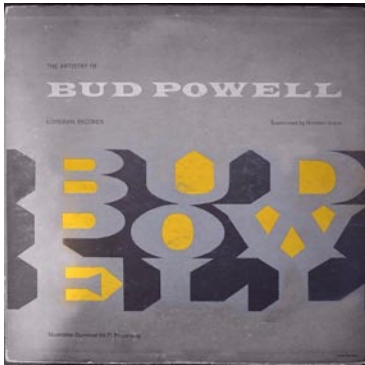
MGN-20 Charlie Ventura and Mary Ann McCall *An Evening With Charlie Ventura and Mary Ann McCall*
Recording Dates: 6/7/54
Release Date: BB September 11, 1954



MGN-21 Benny Carter *The Formidable Benny Carter*
Recording Dates: 9/18/52; 9/19/52
Release Date: September, 1954 (listed in *American Record Guide* in October, 1954)



MGN-22 Toshiko *Toshiko*
Recording Dates: 11/13/53; 11/14/53
Release Date: BB September-October, 1954
The label gives the title as *Toshiko's Piano*.



THE ARTISTRY OF BUD POWELL ...65
 (1-10")
 Norgran MGN-23

It's been a long time since the label issued a set by Bud Powell. This new release features the pianist on a fine collection of standards (and one Powell original, "Buttercup") such as "Moonlight in Vermont," "Spring Is Here," "Time Was" and "My Funny Valentine." Powell plays them competently, but his work here is not up to previously released cuttings. However, he has many fans and they will be interested in this release. The liner notes by Norman Granz are discerning.

MGN-23 Bud Powell *The Artistry of Bud Powell*
 Recording Dates: 6/2/54; 6/4/54
 Release Date: BB October 30, 1954



THE WORKSHOP OF THE GEORGE WALLINGTON TRIO—Norgran Records MG N-24 (1-10" LP) List: \$3.85

BEFORE DAWN; A NIGHT IN TUNISIA; IF I LOVE AGAIN; YOUR LAUGHTER; THOROUGH-BRED; WITHOUT RESERVATION; MORNING DEW; BUEMAN'S HOLIDAY.

George Wallington, working with such tonflight artists as Dizzy Gillespie, Joe Marsala, Charlie Parker, Georgie Auld, Kai Winding and many others, has slowly but surely carved a niche for himself in the modern jazz field. His nimble fingering, writings, and arranging ideas are put forth on this album and the results are such that they should result in sales to the modern jazz fan. Wallington is aided by Arthur Taylor on the drums and Curly Russell on bass. Of the eight pieces performed, five are Wallington originals.

MGN-24 George Wallington Trio *The Workshop of the George Wallington Trio*
 Recording Dates: 6/10/54
 Release Date: CB October 16, 1954



THE SIX65
 (1-10")
 Norgran MG N-25

"The six" are pianist Tommy Goodman, Tenorman Bob Wilber, trumpeter Johnny Glasel, drummer Eddie Phye, trombone man Porky Cohen and bass man Bob Peterson. All have much experience with jazz and commercial orks, as well as—in the case of arrangers Goodman and Glasel—solid classical background. The group has an object in this new album to bridge the gap between traditional and modern jazz. They try hard here and the stuff they turn out is intriguing. It is doubtful, tho, if it is intriguing enough to interest more than a few cool fans or two-beat music lovers. Let's mark this down as an interesting experiment that could lead the way for better things in the future.

MGN-25 The Six *The Six*
 Recording Dates: 4/54
 Release Date: BB January 26, 1955



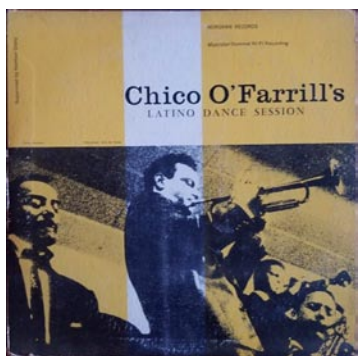
THE SWINGING BUDDY RICH73
 (1-10")
 Norgran MGN-26
 Any in search of some ultra, ultra drum pyrotechnics need look no further than this package of Rich and cohorts in a swinging reading of originals and standards. One side features Rich, Benny Carter, Georgie Auld, Bob Lawson, Harry Edison, Milt Bernhart, John Simmons and Jimmy Rowles; the other has Rich, Willie Smith, Bob Poland, Edison, Bernhart, George Wiggins and Joe Comfort.

MGN-26 Buddy Rich *The Swinging Buddy Rich*
 Recording Dates: 8/21/53; 8/27/54
 Release Date: BB October 16, 1954



CHICO O'FARRILL'S LATINO DANCE SESSION; MAMBO DANCE SESSION68
 (2-10")
 Norgran NGN 27, 28
 The label has come up with two bright dance sets by the Chico O'Farrill crew that could get action in these days when the Latin beat is creating so much excitement. The O'Farrill crew, one of the exciting new orks around today, does a fine job on both of these sets, one containing only mambos and the other a collection of tangos, sambas, rumbas, et. al. The ork, a large swinging crew with a Latin beat, features solid ensemble work, sparked by a biting brass section. The Latino collection includes "Siboney," "Cachita," "You Stepped Out of a Dream" and "Munquita Linda." The mambo sets includes "Quiereme Mucho," "Vaya Con Dios" and "L.A. Mambo." These two waxings inaugurates the firm's new dance series.

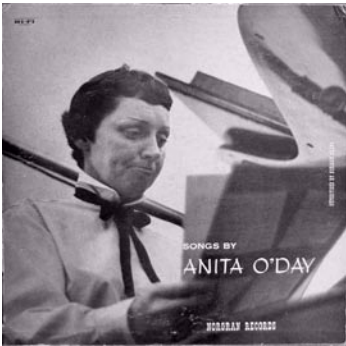
MGN-27 Chico O'Farrill *Mambo Dance Session*
 Recording Dates: 4/22/54; 4/23/54
 Release Date: BB November 27, 1954



MGN-28 Chico O'Farrill *Mambo Dance Session*
 Recording Dates: 4/16/54; 4/21/54
 Release Date: BB November 27, 1954



MGN-29 Kenny Drew *The Ideation of Kenny Drew*
 Recording Dates: 9/2/54
 Release Date: c. early 1955



MGN-30 Anita O'Day *Songs by Anita O'Day*
 Recording Dates: 4/15/54; 6/28/54
 Release Date: BB January, 1955 (reviewed in *Saturday Review*)

MGN-31 Chico O'Farrill Title not known
 Recording Dates: 9/7/51; 11/24/51
 Release Date: Apparently unreleased, but combined in 1957 with another LP into an album for Verve.



MGN-32 Jack Costanzo *Afro-Cuban Jazz North-of-the-Border*
 Recording Dates: 12/17/54
 Release Date: spring, 1955