

Positive Feedback

It's the real thing — collector finds rare "Rum And Coca-Cola" Vogue picture disc

They're considered some of the most eye-catching records sought after by collectors. Vogue picture discs, with their colorful illustrations creatively depicting a song's title on a 10-inch, 78 rpm vinyl canvas, became almost instant collectibles when they were released from May 1946-April 1947. Detroit's Sav-Way Industries created a staggering 74 releases in less than a year, featuring era-friendly acts such as Art Mooney, Patsy Montana, Joan Edwards, and Art Kassel.

"While I was growing up my Dad had some 78 rpm records that I used to play," said a Seattle, Wash., Vogue collector, who asked not to be identified. "In the pile was one record that stood out from the rest — a very colorful recording of 'Blue Skies' (Vogue R726)."

Unfortunately, there is no known documentation of Sav-Way Industries officially confirming its discography or the number of each record the company produced, making it hard to estimate the discs' values. However, even with the lack of qualifying proof, the market for Vogue picture discs has remained healthy, with most readily available records consistently selling for hundreds of dollars and the scarcer offerings going for upward of \$10,000.

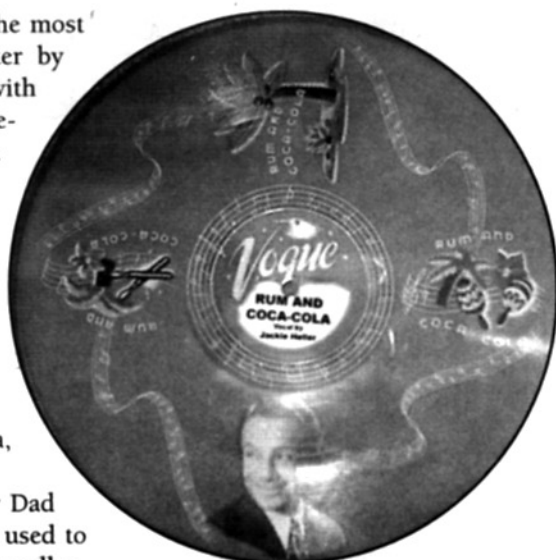
"I was surprised several years ago when, on eBay, a very rare Vogue R784 ("Queen For A Day" and "At The End Of A Perfect Day" by Art Kassel And His Orchestra) came up for auction," said the Seattle collector. "Two collectors wanted it really badly. It went for over \$11,000."

Then there are the prototypes.

In 1945, before the company mass-produced its picture discs, Sav-Way made several prototypes, never intended for public release. If there is in fact, a Holy Grail for Vogue enthusiasts, these limited-edition discs are some of the rarest.

On March 20, 2006, one of these unique samples appeared on eBay. The bright red disc adorned with palm trees and musical notes was titled "Rum And Coca-Cola" and features Jackie Heller on one side and Patsy Montana on the other. Two months earlier, a similar recording appeared on eBay and fetched an impressive \$3,050.

"This is thought to be a prototype record to show what the company's future product might look like and to promote product interest," said the Seattle collector. "It's a bit of early Vogue history." All eyes, including those of the Seattle-area collector, were on the latest trial recording to publicly surface. "Since eBay has been on the scene, collecting



Vogues has become easy," he said. "I used to put ads in the paper and sit down and write to different record stores and people around the country inquiring if they had any Vogue Records. I picked up many Vogues this way."

Almost immediately the rare Vogue find attracted worldwide interest. Collectors from Switzerland, Germany, Italy and Belgium quickly escalated the bidding. The universal interest didn't surprise the Seattle collector. "There are a lot of big picture-record collectors in Europe. Many of the rare records that have sold on eBay have gone out of the U.S. It's a little sad but inevitable." He has personal experience regarding the statement. In February, he was outbid on a copy of "Waiting For The Train To Come" and "I Can't Begin To Tell You" by Shep Fields And His Orchestra (R715). "I couldn't believe that I could be outbid at \$4,000, but I was," he said. "These records are going for incredible prices. I think people are surprised, but these records are really rare and they don't come up for sale very often."

On March 27, 2006, the rare Vogue disc wasn't headed overseas but to Seattle with a final bid of \$5,015. "This is now my most costly record — it may be the rarest one that I own, too," the Seattle collector admitted. "This disc will be added to my collection. I used to put them on the wall, but since we have moved twice I don't know if I will do that again. They do display wonderfully, except you have to have two copies of each record!"

Have you discovered a rare find for your collection on an online auction site? I would love to know about it. Drop me a line via my Web site, www.isle-of-write.com. There you will also find an archive of past columns.

Web site of interest: www.voguepicturerecords.org.

— Lisa Wheeler