

It is believed that the very first pressings or demonstration labels were titled simply "Long Playing Record" and appeared with a rather conventional black label (see photo at right). Almost immediately however, Victor adopted the name *Program Transcription* to market the new records.

The Program Transcription releases appeared in both 10" and 12" sizes, and bore either a Gold or Silver label. Revolution speed was 33 1/3 rpm. Minor variations within each color are distinguished by the border around the label and the corporate listing style. Catalog numbers were prefixed with an "L," or an "AL" for those records arranged for an automatic changer. The Program Transcriptions were pressed in both "Victrolac" and conventional shellac, the former being favored for the manual "L" records and the latter pressing material for the automatic "AL" sets.

Nine series were initially offered, but were shortly pared to only three. Those series remaining in the catalog through the end of the 1930s appear in the chart below with an asterisk preceding the listing. The few groupings in the "LM" and "LAM" prefixed Musical Masterpiece series were also short-lived.



Possibly the first style of Victor's Long Playing Record, or a demonstration pressing before the name "Program Transcription" was adopted. ca. Fall, 1931

RCA Victor's Program Transcriptions 1931-1940

Silver Label (Classical / Semi-Classical)

L-1000 to L-1006	10" double-faced	\$3.00
L-4500 to L-4512	10" double-faced	\$1.75
L-7000 to L-7005	12" double-faced	\$4.50
L-11600 to L-11752	12" double-faced	\$3.00
L-11600-S	12" single-faced	\$1.50

Gold Label (Semi-Classical / Popular)

* L-16000 to L-16033	10" single-faced	\$0.85
* L-24000 to L-24033	10" double-faced	\$1.50
* L-35000 to L-35005	12" double-faced	\$2.25
L-36000	12" single-faced	\$1.25
67-2000	12" Picture Record	\$3.00



The first *Program Transcription* label used a Garamond Italic font for the title and artist listing (above left). Shortly thereafter, Victor adopted a sans-serif font called "Vogue" (above right).

While RCA Victor had great hopes for the Program Transcriptions, things didn't turn out quite as hoped. On the early issues, the sound tended to waver in pitch and surface noise was high. Most of these problems were soon corrected, and by mid-1932, the sound of the Program Transcription was nearly as good as the standard 78. However, the damage had been done and buyers declined to give them the second chance they deserved.

As if these liabilities weren't enough, they were launched at the absolute depth of the Depression. Not only had conventional record sales nearly halted, but the only new machines Victor offered which were capable of playing the Program Transcriptions were large and expensive. A special gear reduction turntable was made available that "could be placed on your old phonograph," but few of these were sold. Sales of the Program Transcriptions started slowly, then got worse. By the end of the decade, the Victor Program Transcription was all but a memory, with only about a dozen titles remaining in the catalog.



The 10" silver label Program Transcriptions appeared with several different label styles including one featuring hourglasses around the outer border.



Lower-priced gold label releases featured semi-classical and popular selections. This single-faced Ellington disc offered three different selections.

The last Program Transcription releases were aimed at the Funeral Parlor trade. ca. 1939-1940