The single-faced Purple label[4], priced between the Red and Black labels, made its debut in February 1910. The star of this vaudeville-oriented series was the Scottish comedian Harry Lauder, who recorded the initial offerings in the United States in December 1909. These replaced his earlier imported sides that had been issued as a part of the Overseas 52000 / 58000 Black label series. Other artists appeared a short time later and included Victor Herbert's Orchestra, Nora Bayes and Jack Norworth, Lucy Isabelle Marsh, Blanche Ring and George M. Cohan. Polar explorers Robert Peary and Sir Ernest Shackleton, poet James Whitcomb Riley and actor Robert Hilliard contributed some spoken-word selections. The 10" issues were numbered in the 60000 block (Figure VI-8, left) while the 12" records were assigned the 70000 block (Figure VI-8, right). The note "COPYRIGHT 1910 VICTOR TALKING MACHINE CO." is found in very fine print at the lowest edge of the label on the earliest Purple label pressings (Figure VI-9).

Figure VI-8. A pair of early Purple label releases, on 10" (left) and 12" (right) discs. ca. 1910

Figure VI-9. A closeup of the "COPYRIGHT 1910" notice at the bottom edge of the label on the first Purple label issues.

What Were the Patents?

| Number | Date Granted | Issued to: | Brief Description |
|---|---|---|---|
| 534,543 | Feb. 19, 1895 | Emile Berliner | Groove-driven Reproducer |
| 548,623 | Oct. 29, 1895 | Emile Berliner | Disc Record and its Manufacture |
| 739,318 | Sept. 22, 1903 | Eldridge R. Johnson | Paper Record Label |
| 749,092 | Jan. 5, 1904 | Ademor Petit / F.M. Prescott | Double-faced Sound Record |
| 778,976 | Jan. 3, 1905 | Eldridge R. Johnson | Affixing Tablets to Sound Records |
| 896,059 | Aug. 11, 1908 | Eldridge R. Johnson | Elliptical Groove / Even Depth |



Two new double-faced series primarily featuring imported operatic selections appeared in 1911. The earliest offerings of the ten-inch 45000 series and twelve-inch 55000 series consisted chiefly of recordings made in Milan and Paris by a number of Gramophone Co. Black label artists, whose appearance on Victor's Red Seal would have created problems with royalty payments. The first pressings in these series actually appeared with a *purple* label[5] (Figure VI-10), but the color was changed to blue almost immediately following their introduction (Figure VI-11). Most of the early imported Blue labels were targeted at the Latin American market and sold in small quantities, which accounts for their scarcity in the United States today (Figure VI-12).

While the vast majority of Blue label releases during the Patents label period were imported recordings, a few domestically recorded selections and re-assignments from the 64000 Red Seal series are also found. In May 1913 (by which time catalog numbers 45050 and 55040 had been reached) the Blue label series was shifted primarily to domestic recordings and sales in the U.S. rose quickly as a result.

Figure VI-10. A very early 55000 (Blue label) series appearing with a purple label. ca. 1911

Figure VI-11. An early pressing of #45000, the first release in the 10" Blue label series. ca. 1911

Figure VI-12. A three-line Patent label pressing in the 12" 55000 series. The earliest Blue label records were aimed chiefly at the Latin American market. ca. 1912

70036—Lucia—*Sextette, Act II* Donizetti

By Victor Opera Sextette

The number is sung in Act II, in what is called the "Contract Scene." *Lucy* is about to be forced by her brother into a loveless marriage with young *Sir Arthur*. Being told that her lover is false, she cares little what becomes of her and passively signs the marriage contract. Almost fainting, she is being supported by her faithful maid and her family adviser, *Raymond*, when suddenly *Edgar*, the lover of *Lucy*, and the deadly enemy of her brother, appears at the back of the room and gazes on the unhappy *Lucy*, who is unable to meet his glance. The dramatic silence is broken by the commencement of the sextet, as *Edgar* and *Sir Henry*, with suppressed emotion, sing their short duet:

HENRY AND EDGAR:
Traitor vengeance what reserveth,
What thus stays my sword to scabbard?
Is't affection that still remaineth,
And each angry thy's enthralleth?
Of mine own blood { thou'rt / I'm } heiress,
And despair { my / her } heart doth whiten,

EDGAR:
Yet ungrateful one I love thee still!

HENRY:
And remorse my breast doth fill!

LUCY: (despairingly)
I had hop'd that death had found me!
And in his dear letters bound me,
But he comes not to relieve me!
Ah, of life will none bestow me?

RAYMOND AND ALICE:
Ah, like a rose that withers on the stem,
She now is hovering 'twixt death and life!
He who for her by pity is not stirr'd,
Has of a tiger in his breast the heart.

ARTHUR:
Hence, thou traitor, hence he-rike thee,
Ere our rage shall a'vengeless thee!

The "Descriptive Back" which appeared on some Black, Purple and Red Seal issues in the early 1910s contained the lyrics and occasionally some background information on the selection.