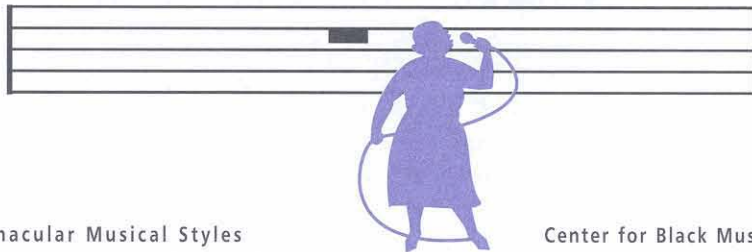


STOP-TIME!



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The Chance Label Nexus of Doowop and Jazz

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Like record labels Parrot, United, and Chess, Chance Records was an independent Chicago label that pioneered the recording of the new African-American sounds that swept the city after World War II—the electrified Mississippi blues and the doowop harmony groups. From September 1950 through October 1954,

Chance recorded 358 known sides, purchased or licensed at least twenty-four sides, and released at least eighty-three records on its own label, in addition to nine records on Sabre, its tributary.

Although blues and doowop recordings earned Chance a place in history, the company also recorded pop, jazz, and gospel. The jazz record-

The Chance label's first vocal group, The Flamingos (1953). Photograph courtesy of Robert Pruter

ings were by John "Schoolboy" Porter, the Jimmy Binkley Jazz Quintet, Chubby Jackson, Howard McGhee, and Conte Candoli. Only two of these sides have ever been reissued by anyone.

This article focuses on the doowop vocal groups recorded by Chance and the jazz accompaniment they received. The nexus of doowop, R&B, and jazz represented by this output reflected both the period and the Chance label itself. Jazz-style accompaniment would never again

be as prominent in doowop as it was on the recordings reviewed here. One reason is that during that time, jazz combos and doowop groups appeared together in nightclubs, and the arrangements used in clubs were also used in the recording studio. Another reason is that the recording industry of 1950–1954 had yet to deal with rock 'n' roll. In 1955, when doowop groups emerged as rock 'n' roll entities, the record labels—notably Chess and Vee-Jay in Chicago—consciously worked with their session men, most of whom had jazz backgrounds, to change their accompaniment style from jazz to rock 'n' roll.

The bulk of Chance's output was in the R&B field, which reflected the
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Chance remains one of the legendary labels of the golden age of rhythm and blues.

