



# ARE YOU SURE

## GREAT BRITISH RECORD LABELS: FONTANA

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CD1

- THE ALLISONS *Are You Sure*  
 HOWIE CASEY & THE SENIORS *Double Twist*  
 LEE DIAMOND & THE CHEROKEES *Josephine*  
 BOBBI CAROL *It Doesn't Matter*  
 FRANK KELLY with THE HUNTERS  
*I Saw Linda Yesterday*  
 ROY YOUNG *Just Keep It Up*  
 ANITA LINDBLOM *Uptown*  
 AL SAXON *Only Sixteen*  
 SUSAN HAYWARD *You Bet I Would*  
 TERRY HALE *Those Magic Eyes*  
 JOHNNIE LEE *They're Wrong*  
 THE ECHOES *Cloak And Dagger*  
 PATTI LYNN *Tell Me, Telstar*  
 DAVE SAMPSON *Wide, Wide World*  
 DONNA DOUGLAS *Six Boys And Seven Girls*  
 GARY LANE *How Wrong Can You Be*  
 DUFFY POWER *Dream Lover*  
 BRAD NEWMAN *Stay By Me*  
 LORNE LESLEY with THE BEATNIKS *Ma, Let's Twist*  
 CAL DANGER *Teenage Girlie Blues*  
 DUFFY POWER *I've Got Nobody*  
 JIM GUNNER & HIS SIDEKICKS *Desperado*  
 THE LANA SISTERS *Cry Cry Baby*  
 CHRIS DORS & THE DEL-FI'S *They Called It Love*  
 BOB MILLER & THE MILLERMEN *My Guy's Come Back*  
 CLEO LAINE *Let's Slip Away*  
 JOHNNY (THE GASH) GRAY *Apache*  
 ACHILLES & HIS HEELS *Brigitte Bardot*  
 NANA MOUSKOURI *White Rose Of Athens*  
 ROG WHITTAKER *Steel Men*  
 MARY MAY *Our Day Will Come*  
 AL SAXON *Linda Lu*  
 BOBBY ALLEN *Your Cheatin' Heart*  
 THE HUNTERS *Teen Scene* CD2

- LEE DIAMOND & THE CHEROKEES *I'll Step Down*  
 THE HUNTERS *The Storm*  
 PATTI LYNN *Big, Big Love*  
 GARY LANE & THE GARRISONS *A Love Like You*  
 JOHNNY CARSON *The Train Of Love*  
 ROG WHITTAKER *Butterfly*  
 ANITA LINDBLOM *Mr Big Wheel*  
 ROY YOUNG *Just Ask Your Heart*  
 THE ALLISONS *Words*  
 JOHNNIE LEE *Lonely Joe*  
 DANNY HUNTER *Lost Weekend*  
 CHAQUITO & HIS ORCHESTRA & CHORUS *Never On Sunday*  
 AL SAXON *Heart Of Stone*  
 BRAD NEWMAN *This Time It's Love*  
 DAVE SAMPSON *Since Sandy Moved Away*  
 BIG PETE DEUCHAR & HIS COUNTRY BLUES *Google Eye*  
 BARRY CRYER *The Purple People Eater*  
 RIKKI PRICE *Tom Dooley*  
 THE LANA SISTERS *Ring-a-My Phone*  
 LEE & JAY ELVIN *So The Story Goes*  
 PETE GORDENO *Be My Girl*  
 DUFFY POWER *Starry Eyed*  
 LEE DIAMOND *Stop Your Crying*  
 TERRY HALE *Don't Fly Away*  
 DONNA DOUGLAS *Teddy*  
 ROY YOUNG *Hey Little Girl*  
 HOWIE CASEY & THE SENIORS *Twist At The Top*  
 THE LANA SISTERS *Someone Loves You, Joe*  
 AL SAXON *You're The Top-Cha*  
 VALERIE MASTERS *Banjo Boy*  
 MATT MONRO *I'll Never Have A Sweetheart*  
 THE ALLISONS *I'll Cross My Fingers*  
 CLEO LAINE *You'll Answer To Me*  
 MAX HARRIS with HIS GROUP *Gurney Slade*  
 (from "The Strange World Of Gurney Slade")

in this series

- WELL I ASK YOU DECCA RHGB35  
 LIKE I DO ORIOLE RHGB36  
 TELL LAURA I LOVE HER COLUMBIA RHGB37  
 VENUS IN BLUE JEANS PYE RHGB38  
 ARE YOU SURE FONTANA RHGB39  
 SHAKIN' ALL OVER HMV RHGB40

FILE UNDER Various / Pop / 50s / 60s



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RockHistory.co.uk is an on-going historical project to record the background stories and the anecdotes from the people who participated in greatest British musical explosion that started back in the 1950s and that went on to reverberate right round the world. Tales about the origins of the songs, the roots of the groups and the front of the performers. These CD releases are part of a series of multi-media release that are all linked via the www.RockHistory.co.uk

### 2CD Set RHGB 39

Released September 18th 2015



827565060894

Although perceived as a significant player in the UK record industry, albeit as a subsidiary of the fourth-largest of the majors (i.e. the Dutch-owned Philips group), Fontana was very much a latecomer to the scene. Its first UK titles did not appear until 1958 (for the first few months of its existence, releases were on 78 rpm only), and the label had effectively ground to a halt by the mid-70s. Yet it enjoys an iconic, neo-legendary reputation, largely for the handful of records it licensed from Tamla/Motown during 1961/62, long before anybody in the UK was interested, not to mention its obscure early British R&R and Instr 45s. Fontana would later go on to issue some of the more esoteric discs of the 60s, and its releases remain hugely popular among specialist collectors to this day. This compilation looks at the first five years of the label's history, concentrating - as ever - on British and European productions.

Fontana - which means "Fountain" in Italian - began life in France in 1957, essentially as a vehicle for Jazz material, and was launched in the UK in January 1958 with a schedule which comprised mainly US recordings. At that time Philips had the UK rights to American Columbia and its Epic and OKeh subsidiaries, which had hitherto been swamping its own release schedules. Consequently, Fontana's early output featured an array of artists from Screaming Jay Hawkins and Roy Hamilton at one end of the spectrum, via Marty Robbins and Sal Mineo, to Johnny Mathis and Frank Sinatra at the other (indeed, the fledgling label's first UK hits were with Johnny Mathis).

One of the earliest UK productions featured Matt Monro. He'd recorded a couple of earlier Decca singles without success and would cut further sides for Fontana after 'I'll Never Have A Sweetheart'. Other early MOR-styled Fontana singers included Rikki Price and Al Saxon, each of whom covered various US hits in their quest for UK chart glory (e.g. 'Tom Dooley', 'Only Sixteen', 'Linda Lu'), although ironically, it was the latter's dubious 'Novelty' styled revival of 'You're The Top-Cha' which provided the label with its very first home-grown chart entry toward the end of its first year.

Talking of Novelty items, while the mighty Barry Cryer's cover of Sheb Wooley's US chart-topper 'Purple People Eater' may have fallen on deaf ears in the UK, by all accounts it became a massive hit in Finland. However, rather stronger home-made fare during 1958 included saxophonist Johnny 'The Gash' Gray's rasping 'Apache' (no relation to The Shads' hit) and The Lana Sisters' truly splendid cover of Brenda Lee's 'Ring-a-My Phone'. The Lanas (whose personnel included a teenage Dusty Springfield) went on to record a charming body of work for Fontana.

But after a 'difficult' first year, Fontana began to get it all together in 1959. Artists like Larry Parnes' discovery Duffy Power ('Dream Lover', 'Starry Eyed'), Roy Young ('Just Keep It Up', 'Hey Little Girl'/'Just Ask Your Heart') and Irish songstress Donna Douglas ('Six Boys And Seven Girls') all cut great singles that year - indeed, how these three fine singers remained hit-less almost defies belief! Another excellent 1959 release came from Lee & Jay Elvin, with 'So The Story Goes', although by all accounts 'the Elvins' were actually songwriter Jerry Lordan and a friend.

During 1960 Fontana enjoyed chart action with oddities like Valerie Masters' cover of 'Banjo Boy' and Chaquito's jaunty 'Never On Sunday', originally Euro-hits for Jan & Kjeld and Manos Hadjidakis respectively. Cut from much the same cloth was Max Harris's quirky 'Gurney Slade', from Anthony Newley's even more quirky (and shortlived) TV series The Strange World Of Gurney Slade. The same year they issued one of the UK's all-time classic Instros, The Hunters' twangularly atmospheric 'Teen Scene', a disc sufficiently rare that this marks its first ever appearance on CD; their 'The Storm', released the following Summer, was very nearly its equal. Whilst we're talking Instros, Drumbeat regulars Bob Miller & The Miller-men, session guitarist George Hess's alter-ego Jim Gunner & His Sidekicks and package tour perennials The Echoes also chipped in with some real killers, the latter's 'Cloak And Dagger' in particular generating plenty of Radio Luxembourg airplay.

The label's biggest successes during 1961 were with Jazz chanteuse Cleo Laine, who made the Top 10 with the bewitching 'You'll Answer To Me', and Eurovision runners-up The Allisons, whose self-penned 'Are You Sure' sold comfortably over a million copies and topped every published UK Hit Parade except the wretched Record Retailer's.

New names on Fontana during 1962 included Brad Newman, Dave Sampson, Howie Casey & The Seniors, nineteen-year old Terry Hale (his 'Those Magic Eyes'/'Don't Fly Away' was a cracking pairing), Cal Danger, Bobby Allen, Frank Kelly & The Hunters and Big Pete Deuchar, while a host of girlie newcomers included Patti Lynn, Bobbi Carol, Mary May and Susan Hayward (whose squeaky 'You Bet I Would' was a cover of a pre-Phil Spector Ronettes' 45). Rather better-known were Welsh cabaret singer Lorne Lesley (whose 'Ma, Let's Twist' was something of a hit in Scandinavia), Swedish singer/actress Anita Lindblom and, of course, bespectacled Greek lovely Nana Mouskouri, who came to London to record this English language version of her million-selling signature song, 'White Rose Of Athens'.

Finally, a man whose time would most emphatically come later in the decade, Rog(er) Whittaker. His fine cover of Jimmy Dean's 'Steel Men' actually made the NME Top 30 in June 1962, whilst his wholly unlikely revival of Charlie Gracie's 'Butterfly', a few months later, found him operating in decidedly unfamiliar - yet surprisingly comfortable - territory!