

A Belgian-French Beatles connection: The Magical Odéon MO-series

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A lot of (Belgian) collectors are not aware what these singles are about. In fact these juke-box singles from the MO-series, on the Odeon-label, were made in France exclusively for the Belgian market in 1964 and 1965. Four series were made: *MO 20005*, *MO 20006*, *MO 20007* and *MO 20008*. 'MO' stands probably stands for: 'MONO ODEON' or 'MICROSILLON ODEON'. Most of the singles were pressed on a custom **dark green** 'rainbow' ODÉON label. However there's one pressing on an **orange** Odéon label and there's a Belgian pressing on a **purple** ODÉON label. Anyway these juke-box singles are very hard to find in France but – with a little luck- you still can find them in Belgium¹.

Let's have a look at these four interesting MO 2000X-series and their variants!

1. *Hold Me Tight /All My Loving* - MO 20005: 4 types



Type 1: very rare orange label



Type 2: **super rare green variant of the orange label**. (Collection Knut Uller)
Serial number "MO 20005" on the label has the **same font style** as on the orange label type 1.

¹ With the exception of the single *We Can Work It Out/Day Tripper* MO 20008. See chapter 4.



Type 3 : green label, no '7' before 'MO'.



Type 4 : green label + '7' before 'MO'

The font style of the serial numbers "MO 20005" on the labels of type 3 & 4 are not the same as on the orange label type 1 and green label type 2.

2. *I Saw Her Standing There/Till There Was You*: 1 type MO 20006



A-side



B-side

The credits for the song on this single are *McCartney-Lennon* instead of *Lennon-McCartney*. The MO 20005 and MO 20006 series have 'LES BEATLES' under the song title.

3. *Rock And Roll Music /I'm A Loser* : 6 types! MO 20007 & MO 20.007

This French export single on a dark **green** Odeon label, was a huge success.

Type 1 & 2 were, as we explained, 'Made in France'. EMI-ODEON France made a mistake however. The timing for *Rock and Roll Music* (**2'33**) on the A-side is wrong. **2'20** is the correct timing for *Rock and Roll Music*. **2'33** is the timing for *I'm A Loser* on the B-side. Type 2 with dot is very very hard to find.



Type 1: no 'dot' in the serial number



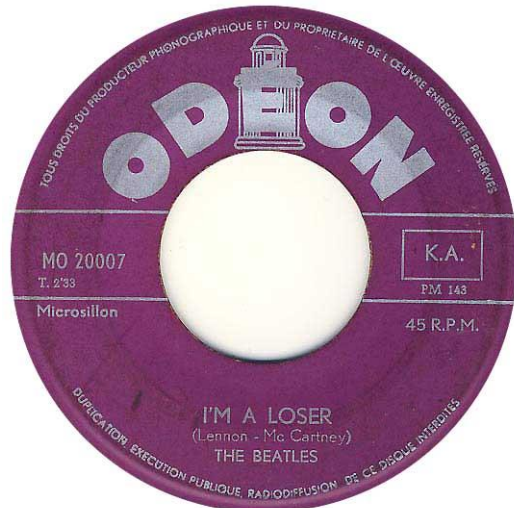
Type 2: with 'dot' in the serial number

Gramophone Belgium, distributor of Belgian Beatles singles in Brussels, decided to press its own *Rock And Roll Music* MO 20007 single on a **purple** ODEON label, probably in april 1965. It's the only Belgian Beatles single on a 'rainbow'-type ODEON label. From now on we see 'THE BEATLES' instead of 'LES BEATLES' on the label. *Rock And Roll Music /I'm A Loser* was a very popular Beatles single in Belgium. The single stayed four months (May - June - July - August 1965) in the Belgian hit parade. Highest position: 3. The single was pressed at SOBEDI Gent Belgium.

Type 3, 4, 5 have only slightly different labels. Look for example at **K.A.** and **K. A.** and the position of 'I'm A Loser' versus 'Lennon-McCartney'. Type 6 however is a real surprise and an exception.



Type 3: Belgian Odéon label **K.A.** on A-side



+ **K.A.** on B-side.



Type 4: Belgian Odéon label **K. A.** on A-side
+ dropped 'M' in 'R.P.M'



+ **K. A.** on B-side.



Type 5: Belgian Odéon label **K.A.** on A-side



+ **K. A.** on B-side.



Type 6: small centre hole (print on label is same as type 3). This is the only known Belgian Beatles pressing with a small centre hole.

Characteristics for this Belgian pressing are:

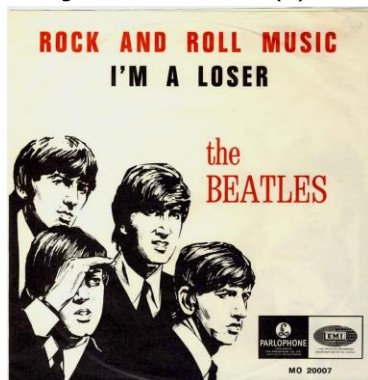
- Gramophone Belgium made the same mistake as EMI France! They copied the wrong timing (**2'33**) for *Rock and Roll Music* on the A-side. As we mentioned before, **2'20** is the correct timing.
- The use of the abbreviation 'K.A'² on the label instead of 'BIEM'.
- In Belgium there were never ridges around the rim. See details below.
- Purple label
- 'MADE IN FRANCE' is not printed on the label below.
- Handwritten vinyl matrix number *PM 142/ PM143*³. French pressings have machine stamped matrix numbers.



No ridges around the rim (B)



Ridges around the rim (Fr)



This Belgian single was sold in one of these 3 Belgian sleeves. The picture sleeve on the left is one of the rarest Belgian sleeves. Sometimes the French single MO20007 with a green Odéon label was sold in this sleeve. Other Belgian EMI/Gramophone sleeves are printed in the book *'Beatles in Belgium'*.

² 'K.A.' means 'Keep Account'. EMI/Gramophone Belgium calculated the difference between the copies that were manufactured and the copies that were sold. The real sales figures were then given to SABAM, the Belgian copyrights organisation, who calculated the mechanical copyrights and paid it ± every 6 months to MCPS (Mechanical Copyright Protection Society) in the UK. MCPS transferred the money (minus administration fee) to Northern Songs (for *I'm a loser*). Dick James and Charles Silver from Northern Songs collected some 50%+ 10% administration fee(!). The rest (40%) was split between Lennon, McCartney and Brian Epstein.

³ 'PM' stands for Pathé Marconi. The handwritten matrix indicates that Gramophone Belgium probably used a French 45T as the source.

4. *We Can Work It Out/Day Tripper* : 1 type MO 20.008



A few years ago around 2002– and as a surprise to a lot of collectors- this single was discovered in Norway by the Belgian Beatles collector, Luc Porte, who owns a copy. In December 2010 a second single was discovered in France by a French collector and in december 2012 a third single was sold on Ebay France. In 2013 a fourth single was discovered by a French collector.

Again there's a dot in the serial number **MO 20.008** on the label on the right side. Here you can see the two labels (collection Luc Porte- Belgium). On the left we see the number **7XCE 18341**. The prefix '**7PM**' has disappeared.

If someone else owns this super rare item... please let me know!

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French Odeon singles were either sold in a green or yellow French Odéon company sleeve.

Early issued MO-singles were also sold in a Belgian dark blue '*spirograph*' Gramophone company sleeve.



⇐ French Odéon sleeves

⇐ Belgian Spirograph sleeves

Other French export singles for Belgium.

Yves Montand, famous French singer and actor, was very popular in Belgium in the fifties. A lot of Yves Montand singles were made by Odeon France for export to Belgium.

The prefix "7" was already used in the fifties. Below you see the labels of an Odéon single from april 1955 with serial number **7 MO 1145**.

The single was sold in the music shop MUSICA in Kortrijk/Courtrai (Belgium).

We can assume that the label with prefix '7' in the first Beatles single **7 MO 20005** is the oldest.



Of course there were several other MO-Odeon singles by Yves Montand and other French artists, like Leo Ferré, Eddie Warner, Marcel Merkes, Emile Noblot, Marie Jose, ...

In the seventies, the MO-Odeon label disappeared and Odeon released a rare Yves Montand single for the Belgian market in the 'Club 21'-series⁴. Now we see a very rare black Odeon label + Belgian serial number 4C 006 90164 + SABAM (Belgian Copyright society).

Vinyl matrix numbers are French: M3 290579 7 ARE 1045 21 / M3 290580 7 ARE 1046 21 (machine stamped) + Belgian matrixnumbers: 4C 006 90164MA / 4C 006 90164MB (handwritten).



For the nice extra scans thanks to :

Knut Uller, Luc Porte, Geert Verbrugghe, Stephan Fremon, Jeremie Viala and Christian Capdevila.

References:

La France et les Beatles (E. Krasker & Jean-Claude Hocquet)

Beatles in Belgium (R. Develtere)

Northern Songs: The True Story of the Beatles Song Publishing Empire (B.Southall & R.Perry)

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⁴ There is also a very rare Belgian George Harrison single *Bangladesh /What is life/ My Sweet Lord* (Apple 4C006 05095) from 1972 in a 'Club 21' sleeve.