

**ON THE SHELF**

# Album jackets make a classic fit for cool jazz

A psychedelic flowered skull laughing into the darkness. A wave of text twisted across a blank field like a quicksilver melody line. A photographic lineup of serious young men in dark suits, staring back at the viewer with jarringly direct eye contact that offers an invitation as much as a confrontation.

These are just a few of the sometimes simple but evocative images in Taschen's new book "Jazz Covers," a lush compendium of album art from more than 700 records spanning 50 years of the genre.

While jazz's important association with its iconography has been explored in the past, primarily concerning the inventive designs of Blue Note's Reid Miles, this collection probes even deeper into the look and life of jazz with a crate-digger's eye for detail.

Almost anyone who has browsed a record store could recognize the image of defiant cowboy Sonny Rollins on his 1957 album, "Way Out West." It's culture-spanning finds like the Eastern Orthodox imagery in Polish designer Zbigniew Jastrzebski's cover of saxophonist Kalaparusha Maurice McIntyre's "Humility in the Light of Creator" (1969) that are closer to the spirit of what the book's creators had in mind.

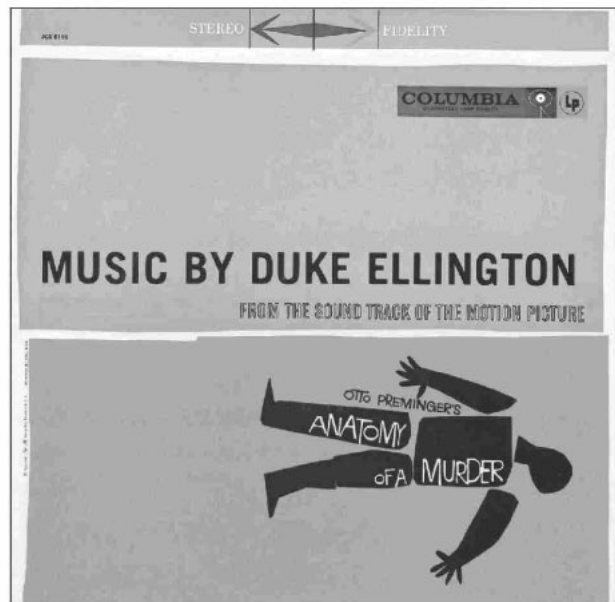
"At that time people didn't have a lot of resources," said editor Julius Wiedemann, who with Portuguese collector Joaquim Paulo compiled the book over the course of two years. "It's not like they opened Photoshop and then you do whatever you want. . . . They did great covers with very simple things."

Wiedemann and Paulo also looked to offer more than images out of context, calling on figures such as sound engineer Rudy Van Gelder, producer Michael Cuscuna and the late photographer William Claxton to help fill in the blanks surrounding the sometimes elusive figures who helped shape the story of jazz. The result is a collection that celebrates the music's boundless creativity as it inspires further exploration — even for Wiedemann, who didn't consider himself a fan before working on this book. "I got addicted to knowing more about the music," he said. "And jazz is incredible. Jazz has its own culture."

— CHRIS BARTON



**POWER:** The cover design for versatile singer Sarah Vaughan's 1963 album underscores the notion of explosiveness conveyed in the title.



**CINEMATIC:** Film title designer Saul Bass lent his touch to an album of Duke Ellington's music for 1959's "Anatomy of a Murder."