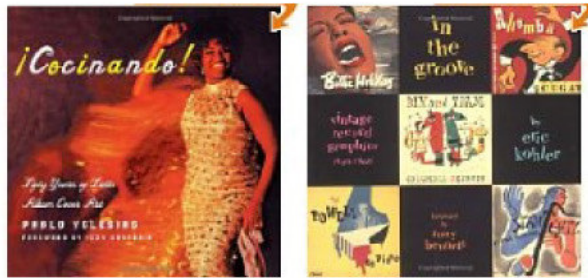


Amazing New Book of Classic Jazz Album Cover Art: At an Unbelievable Price



I have been a fan of jazz album cover art for a long time, and have written about some of my favorite cover art. I've also enjoyed earlier books devoted to cover art such as *Eric Kohler's In The Groove: Vintage Record Graphics 1940-1960*, and Pablo Yglesias' *Cocinando!: Fifty Years of Latin Album Cover Art*, the latter covering Izzy Sanabria's great covers for Fania Records.

But a new 2 volume set of album cover art has raised the bar much higher. It's called *Jazz Covers: From the 1940s to the 1990s*

Taschen, the high-end art publisher, has a reputation for first class photo and art books, all with state-of-the-art production values and superb quality overall. The German-based company, which has retail outlets here in America, has just come out with an absolutely stupendous 2-volume set of album cover art for jazz lp's spanning 50 years. Most if not all of this art was hand made by major graphic artists like Reid Miles of Blue Note, Bob Ciano of CTI, Margo Guryan of Impulse. Photographers include greats like William Claxton and Herman Leonard. The 2 large tomes also feature many more obscure albums by European jazz artists released only in Europe, such as pianist George Arvanitas, Rodolfo Alchurron, Gustav Brom, Polish jazz pianist and film composer Krzysztof Komeda, among others. Volume one features rare gems like the rarely-seen original Fontana Records cover of Miles Davis' 1957 soundtrack for Louis Malle's first film, *l'Ascenseur pour l'Échafaud* (Lift to the Scaffold). In fact, many of these classic jazz albums have been out of print or never reissued, so you may see albums you've never seen or even heard of. There were many I'd never seen, and I've been following jazz for a long time, both here and in Europe, where I once lived.

Most, if not all, of this album cover art was done pre-computer, and by hand by talented illustrators and graphic artists. The covers have a visual impact that has been lost, first with the cd, then with MP3's & ipods.. The demise would be complete were it not for record stores like Amoeba, where fans love poring through vinyl, not only for the sound but also the palpability of the vinyl medium, and of course the cover art. How ironic that the great innovator Steve Jobs, who changed the way we consume and enjoy music, only listened to vinyl at home.

The cover art in these two very hefty volumes—they'll almost break your arm off with their weight—is as timeless, stylish, and hip as the music it celebrates. What makes it even better is that it has album picks by contemporary musicians and producers like King Britt, Gilles Peterson, and Rainer Truby, as well as interviews with jazz historians like Michael Cuscuna, legendary engineer Rudy Van Gelder, Creed Taylor, and journalist Ashley Kahn.

Suggested retail price is \$59.99, already a steal. Amazon has it listed for even less. It is the best deal I've ever seen for an art book. And what a cool coffee-table book it is.