

## Verve: The Sound of America

*Richard Havers*

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#727326 in Books imusti 2013-11-04Original language:EnglishPDF # 1 11.20 x 1.80 x 8.90l, 4.96 #File Name: 0500517142400 pagesThames Hudson | File size: 71.Mb

**Richard Havers : Verve: The Sound of America** before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Verve: The Sound of America:

14 of 15 people found the following review helpful. Poor quality binding makes this a poor purchase. By crispy critter  
Mainly one star for the construction of the binding which is very substandard. Skip to end of this review for more on that ,however the book has other issues-I found major frustration in that the album covers, By David Stone Martin are really super but they do not match up with the brief thumbnails on each artist. Illinois Jacquet gets 7 paragraphs followed by Nat Cole with 5 paragraphs and then one must look through the whole volume to find the album covers by these artists- Some of these biographies seem phoned in, and often there is no mention of the verve sessions that individual artists recorded.I opened the book to Jacquet, when I first got the book, as Im really interested in "Swings The Thing" release, yet,one must look through the entire book to find his albums. The bio does not mention anything about the details of the sessions done, and this is true for majority of artists. The photos are great, but the

book is frustrating to research individual artists. The index is no help, as in this 500 page book the index has only a 3 (!) page index. This is unacceptable. The Bios are confusing, take Clifford Brown: possibly the greatest post bop trumpeter of all time, the photo of Clifford is from a Blue Note recording and the essential albums noted on the page are sessions on Emarcy (Mercury), reissued by Verve, Norman Granz work with Clef and later Mercury notwithstanding. Dinah Washington is another artist whose Mercury sides are essential, and the book represents these sides as Verve, when they only own these sides-years after the recordings. For the majority of casual listeners of jazz one might think these were Verve artists. Am I the only one to think this is wrong to include them in a book about Verve? Shameless? Confusing to say the least. Verve often went for a very commercial sound, many albums today sound really dated. Listen to Blue Note, Mercury, Argo, Prestige, Riverside, and the myriad smaller labels, etc, the least of which stand tall. That said, so many key sides are on Verve, like Ella whom Granz managed and did the great songbook series, Oscar Peterson, Louis Armstrong who did the 2 famous records with Ella, The Jam Session LPs with Parker et al are historic, there is no need to claim other artists on Mercury etc as their own. If one looks at this set as a history of Jazz in general then it has more currency. Norman Granz moved to Europe in '59 and sold the label in '60. Granz lesser known Jam Session series are to me the finest things done by the label. Last and most important to readers of this review -the quality of the book is horrible. I set it on my shelf to read at a later date and the binding self destructed just sitting on my shelf. The binding literally tore itself apart from the weight of the book. The whole front ripped away from the cover. A lot of work went into this and I appreciate beautiful reproductions of albums etc., but the paper seems cheap, and the construction is substandard. Another reviewer mentioned thick cover boards, and nothing could be further from the truth. It is the cheapest cardboard imaginable. It is Chinese made, and the construction is possibly the worst I have seen. (I have many many large format music books) This should have been made for the ages, as it will never be done again. Shame on Verve for approving this. It could have been fantastic. Just a good quality book with all the Verve covers would have been more useful, as the text is incomplete and confusing and obviously made for a mass market that knows little about jazz. I am no expert so please don't flame me, but in the last days of physical media this book will go down as the final word, sadly. 4 of 4 people found the following review helpful. excellent book for all Jazz fans By Peter Neski This a well designed book with great photos and a nice history of Norman Granz labels, if there is anything wrong with the book is its geared to the average fan and includes way too many history's of artist who had too little to do with Verve records. Instead I would have spent more time with true Verve Greats like Ben Webster or Stan Getz, Sarah Vaughan and Dinah Washington really aren't Verve artists, and never had a record on Verve, instead that space could have been used better. There's nothing much on Lee Konitz a real Verve artist!! instead we get Nina Simone? a real screw up in an other fine book. 16 of 18 people found the following review helpful. BEAUTIFULLY PRODUCED LOOK AT GRANZ' VERVE RECORDS LABEL By Stuart Jefferson "Without (Granz) there could have been no modern jazz, cool or turbulent." Nat Hentoff. "Jazz came to America 300 years ago--in chains." Paul Whiteman. "The whole reason for Jazz at the Philharmonic was to take it to places where I could break down segregation." Norman Granz. Yes, I know this book is pretty expensive--but it's very well done. From the thick boards used for the covers (there's no jacket), to the many quality reproductions of photographs and album covers (in both color and bw), to the paper stock and font, this is a quality book. And the text is intelligent, informative, and works well in conjunction with the graphics. Suffice to say, if you're a jazz fan and/or especially a fan of artists who've recorded for Norman Granz' labels (Verve, Clef, Nogram) you'll probably like this book. Artists who've recorded for Granz include Duke Ellington, Ella Fitzgerald, Louis Armstrong, Stan Getz, Charlie Parker, Count Basie, Ben Webster, Jimmy Smith, George Benson, Billie Holiday, Astrud Gilberto, Dizzy Gillespie, Wes Montgomery, and many more, both on stage and in the studio. And these artists and a number of others are represented here in this great book on Verve Records. Included are one page essays (with a full page photograph of that artist on the opposite page) of artists like Armstrong, Ellington, Holiday, Jacquet, Krupa, Lester Young, Nat King Cole, Flip Phillips, Parker, Hodges, and many more. Plus there's an essay on David Stone Martin (a personal favorite), who designed a number of iconic album covers which are highly collectable. A number of years ago a book was published on his artwork which I wish would be published again. His individual style was a good fit for jazz of the period. Beginning with a Forward by Herbie Hancock ("The music on Verve will never die; it documents the lifeblood of our culture."), the story of the Verve label is laid out chronologically. Starting with the beginnings of jazz and then into "Jazz On Wax" about the earliest days of jazz recording, and ending with "Verve Forever The 1970's And Beyond" with the music of Diana Krall as the last featured artist, this book tells the story of Norman Granz, his labels, and jazz. The short written pieces are designed to enhance the many (and I mean many) illustrations that make up this book--and vice-versa. One of the several nice touches is a timeline of jazz beginning in 1896, and continuing through the decades well into the Twentieth Century. There's also many quotes from musicians and critics that deepen the jazz feel of that particular period. Below is a very tiny sampling. "You can't play anything on a horn that Louis hasn't played." Miles Davis. "I don't have a definition of jazz...you're just supposed to know it when you hear it." Thelonious Monk. "Life is a lot like jazz...it's best when you improvise." George Gershwin. "Jazz music is deeper than people think." Illinois Jacquet. But this is primarily a visual history of Verve/jazz with the essays adding depth of detail to the visuals. Besides the many beautifully reproduced photographs of the artists--both on stage and in the studio--there's the

history of the label through the many visually stunning album covers and various LP labels that Verve produced. And many are reproduced here in fine color reproductions--though to fit them all in the book there's several to a page--so the graphics can't be appreciated to the full extent they deserve. But seen as a whole, the visual quality of Verve recordings is very impressive. This book is primarily aimed at the die-hard jazz fan/record collector. But if you're a jazz fan who simply enjoys the music (like most of us) this book is still worth having in your library. In many respects the story of the Verve label is the story of jazz. Norman Granz was responsible for promoting jazz early on ("Jazz At The Philharmonic" concerts and recordings) on a wide international scale. Plus he treated musicians with respect in an age of racism. Yes the book is a self-serving pat on the back. But jazz and jazz fans would be much poorer except for Granz' efforts on behalf of jazz. Verve was (and is) one of the best jazz labels in the history of the genre, and Granz' ground-breaking concerts set the tone for others to follow. And this fine book reminds us of that--as if jazz fans needed reminding. A fine book. For an in depth look at Norman Granz and jazz, check out the book "Norman Granz: The Man Who Used Jazz For Justice". It's a look into the whole era of jazz beginning early with Granz' formation of his label and producing concerts, musicians and racism, and Granz' fight for equality for jazz artists.

The entire story of jazz from its earliest days in New Orleans to the 1970s and beyond told through archival material from Verve, the genre's most important label Verve signed practically every major jazz artist of the 1950s and 1960s and is home to some of the greatest music ever recorded. Charlie Parker, Count Basie, Billie Holiday, Dizzy Gillespie, Oscar Peterson, and Ella Fitzgerald all released records through Verve. This superb new volume presents some of the rarest records and unseen ephemera from the label that helped define the world of jazz. Hundreds of the best examples of iconic seven-inch, ten-inch, and twelve-inch records appear, along with publicity reports, news clippings, ledger books, telegrams, and contracts. The ultimate music guide, the book includes features on key artists as well as infographics and timelines that reveal the connections between leading artists and Verve. Looking beyond the music scene, the book discusses segregation in America, the missions to take jazz to Europe and the world, the clubs, the places, and the people who made jazz vital. Commentary from the biggest names in jazz today, including some of Verve's own artists, complements the text. 1,200 illustrations in color and black and white

From the label that signed America's jazz legends in the 50s and 60s, a look at the music, its stars and its continuing influence. - People Richard Havers focuses on key acts like Charlie Parker as well as lesser-knowns. - Billboard One of the more engrossing books on the history of jazz record labels. . . . does admirable work in exploring segregation and racial tension and provides brisk profiles of the generations of artists who recorded for the label. - Sunday Denver Post If someone made an important contribution to jazz, they were probably signed by Verve. . . . How there's a new book by Richard Havers, *Verve: The Sound of America* . . . which explores its rich heritage in vivid photographs and illustrations. - Women's Wear Daily A magnificent new release documenting the history of one of America's greatest record labels. . . . *Verve: The Sound of America* captures the spirit of jazz, a quintessentially American genre of music. . . . for any fan of jazz music who would undoubtedly spend hours on end poring over this voluminous delight. - Hip Hop is Read A lovely and solid coffee table book. . . . Would make a great gift for anyone who likes jazz. - The Nation Havers documents and illustrates the history of one of our finest record labels. - Broadway World Will appeal to anyone interested in mainstream jazz and the graphic art that is spawned. - Library Journal Well worth acquiring for the priceless photos. - LA Jazz Scene Record covers are only a portion of *VERVE: The Sound of America* . . . but the collection hits all the right notes. It's a fascinating portrait of [founder Norman] Granz, who fought a war against segregation through music, and of Verve artists. The studio and documentary photographs are a draw, but nothing can beat the covers for eye appeal. - Steven Heller, *The New York Times Book Look[s] at Granz and Verve's musical legacy*. - DownBeat [A] glorious volume commemorating one of the premier record companies of jazz from its founding by one of the great impresarios of jazz, Norman Granz. - Jazzhouse Diaries Gives an in-depth overview and has interesting photographs throughout. - DurhamRegion.com A fitting tribute. Beautifully written and illustrated, it . . . offers a fascinating glimpse into American musical culture. - KCRW FM: Rhythm Planet Every jazz fan will love having *Verve: The Sound of America* (Thames Hudson, 2013), or the newly released *Blue Note: Uncompromising Expression* (Thames Hudson/Chronicle Books, 2014). . . . Celebrating the jazz masterpieces that came wrapped in cellophane, carefully placed in bins, ready to give our lives pleasure and joy, these books are reminders of the greatness of our musical heritage and the wonderful teams of talented people who made our recording industry the best of all time. - Jazz Police About the Author Richard Havers is a consultant to Universal Music on jazz and has curated box sets including ?Louis Armstrong: Ambassador of Jazz and Ella Fitzgerald?: *The Voice of Jazz*. He has written extensively on the topic of 20th-century music and pop culture. His previous books include ?Verve, ?Bill Wyman's Blues Odyssey, and ?Sinatra.?????? Herbie Hancock is the great American jazz pianist, keyboardist, bandleader, and composer.