

JazzWax

Marc Myers writes daily on jazz legends and legendary jazz recordings

March 17, 2012

Weekend Wax Bits



I'm happy to announce that my book, ***Why Jazz Happened***, will be published in November by the University of California Press. The countdown begins! [Pictured above: *Book* by Saul Leiter, 1980s]

Why Jazz Happened is the history of jazz from 1942 to 1972—with an unusual twist. Instead of telling the story of jazz's golden age solely as a series of jazz-related events—musicians come to town, record new albums, etc.—my book looks at how major non-jazz events during this period forced jazz styles to change.

More information to come about ***Why Jazz Happened***—as well as pre-order information and sneak peaks at the content as the months roll on. The cover is fabulous, and I'll share it with you as soon as the art department has finished fine-tuning the design.

Rhoda Scott. Rina Sherman has completed a documentary on organist Rhoda Scott. (My interview with Rhoda is [here](#).)

I'm not quite sure what Sherman wants you to do [at this page](#), but I suspect the "buy" button will help you along.

Sheila Jordan radio. Jazz musician and writer Bill Kirchner will host "Jazz From the Archives" on Sunday on WBGO in New York. This week's subject: singer Sheila Jordan. The program will include a rare recording of Sheila singing with Bill's nonet. The show airs Sunday from 11 p.m. to midnight (EDT) and can be accessed from anywhere in the world by [going here](#) to WBGO's site.



Hip-hop and jazz. As I discussed in this space last Sunday and in my conversation with Robert Glasper, there's an interesting jazz-rap fusion emerging between black jazz and hip-hop artists, who add different flavors and styles to the jazz artists' vision. [Photos above and below from Bruce Davidson's *Subway*]



On Thursday, I received an email from Byron Pearson, a rapper and DJ. Byron sent along audio clips on how he has combined jazz tracks with his rap. The result is quite interesting (you can reach him by email here: steelhear@hotmail.com). Let Byron fill you in:

"*Ecclesiastes* is my favorite book of the Bible. I feel it speaks to the true human condition better than any other. I took the basic message of each chapter and interpreted them into hip-hop verses. Each of the 12 verses my *Emcees Ecclesiastes* is an interpretation of one of the 12 chapters. Then I split them over existing jazz tracks. I selected jazz tracks because I think this music is the best way to capture the vibe I'm trying to create, and because I love the music."



Here's Christian Scott's *The Uprising* with Byron's rap on top. Fascinating stuff. To hear all of the tracks in Byron's collection, simply click on the link above and select Byron's different jazz-rap tracks from the right-hand column of frames...

Booker's Place. Director Raymond De Felitta is about to release his latest film—a black-and-white documentary entitled *Booker's Place: A Mississippi Story*. In short, Raymond revisited the Southern town used as a backdrop for a documentary his father Frank directed in the 1960s to shed light on the racial tensions and terror of segregation. I saw *Booker's Place* several months ago, and it's a very powerful piece of work. The film tells the story of how a backwater town changed after Frank De Felitta's documentary was aired on TV, and how one of the subjects in the film wound up dead. I can tell you this: *Booker's Place* gives you a vivid feel for what life was like under segregation just 50 years ago and how expendable black Americans' lives were back then.

Booker's Place will premiere at New York's Tribeca Film Festival in April. Raymond is posting about the film at his blog, [*Movies Til Dawn*](#).



Buddy Collette. Jim Eigo of [*Jazz Promo Services*](#) sent along this beautiful clip of [*Moonlight in Vermont*](#). Dig Al Viola. What taste! And Buddy is superb, as always. Todd Selbert tells me this is from Bobby Troup's *Stars of Jazz* television show...

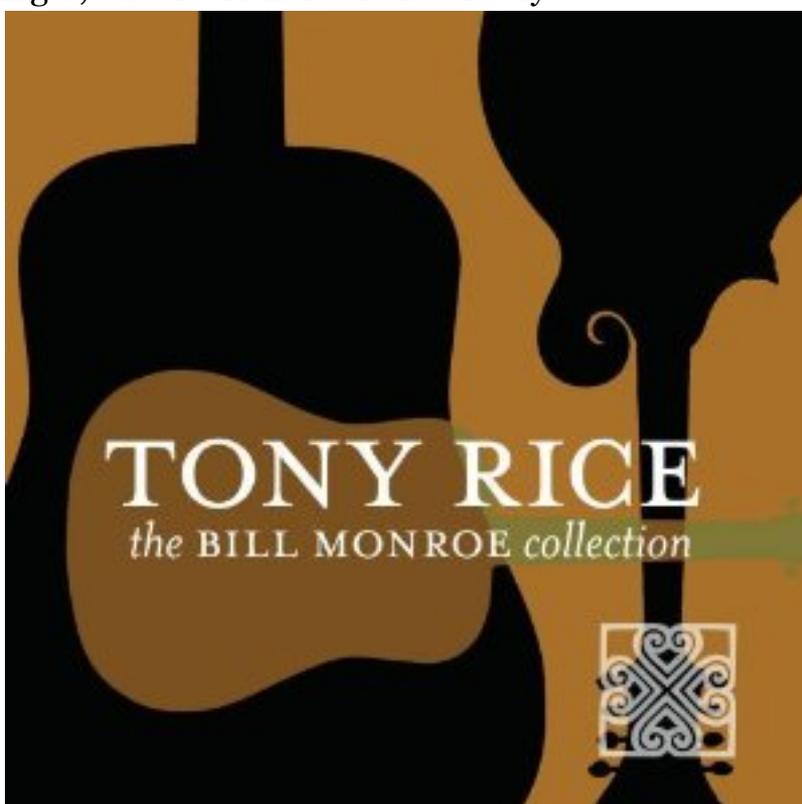
[Mi piace](#) [Condividi](#)

Ayelet Dekel is an Israeli blogger who pens *Midnight East*. Dig her [*write up*](#) of baritone saxophonist Ronnie Cuber, who was just there on tour.

CD discoveries of the week. I'm always leery of new CDs by vocalists that cover American Songbook standards. In most cases the efforts feel tired and forced. A big exception is Jane Scheckter's ***Easy to Remember*** (Doxie), a slam-bang collection of songs and swing. There's huge taste in the arrangements, and the musicians were splendidly chosen—Tedd Firth (piano), Jay Leonhart (bass), Peter Grant (drums) with special appearances by Bucky Pizzarelli, Warren Vache, Harry Allen and Aaron Weinstein. Most important, Scheckter has a wonderful, warm voice that fully understands how these songs were meant to be sung convincingly. She enters standards with just the right amount of optimism, never drifting into over-selling the lyrics or trying to mimic past singers. Instead, this album, with all of its finesse, sounds as though it's a newly found recording from the early '60s. Sample *How Little We Know* and *Will You Still Be Mine*. Easily the finest Songbook album of the year.

Bluegrass legend Bill Monroe is given a threshed-hay tribute on Tony Rice's ***The Bill Monroe Collection*** (Rounder). Guitarist Rice is a mighty picker and singer, and tracks here are flawlessly

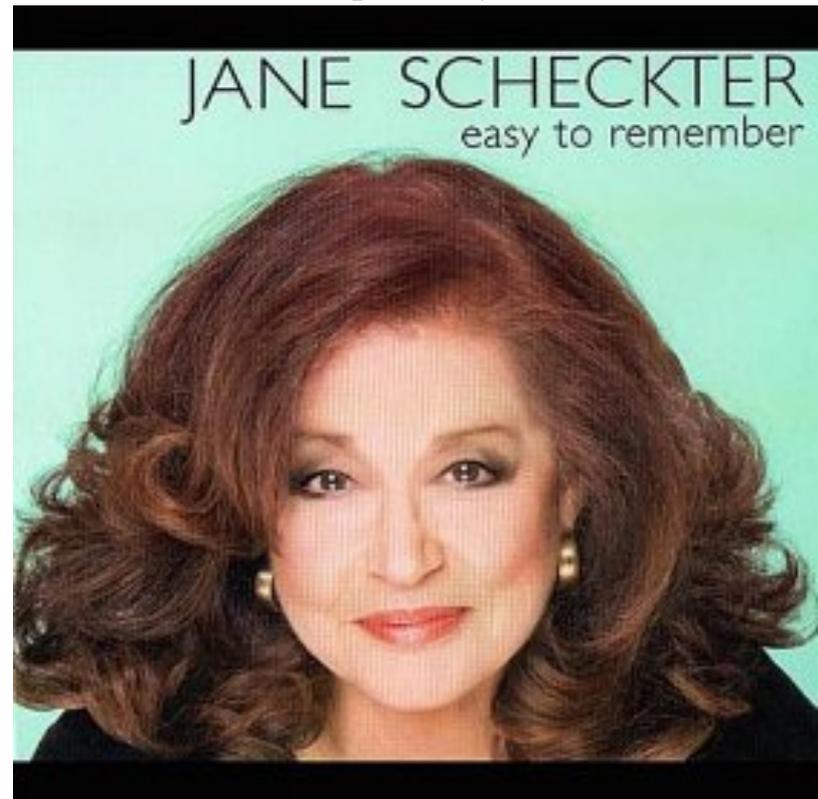
spirited and touching. There are '50s folk touches in Rice's voice, and his delivery betrays his deep passion for the music's history and Monroe's legacy. Sample *What You Are Lonely*, *Stoney Lonesome* and *Gold Rush*. This is music for an early summer's

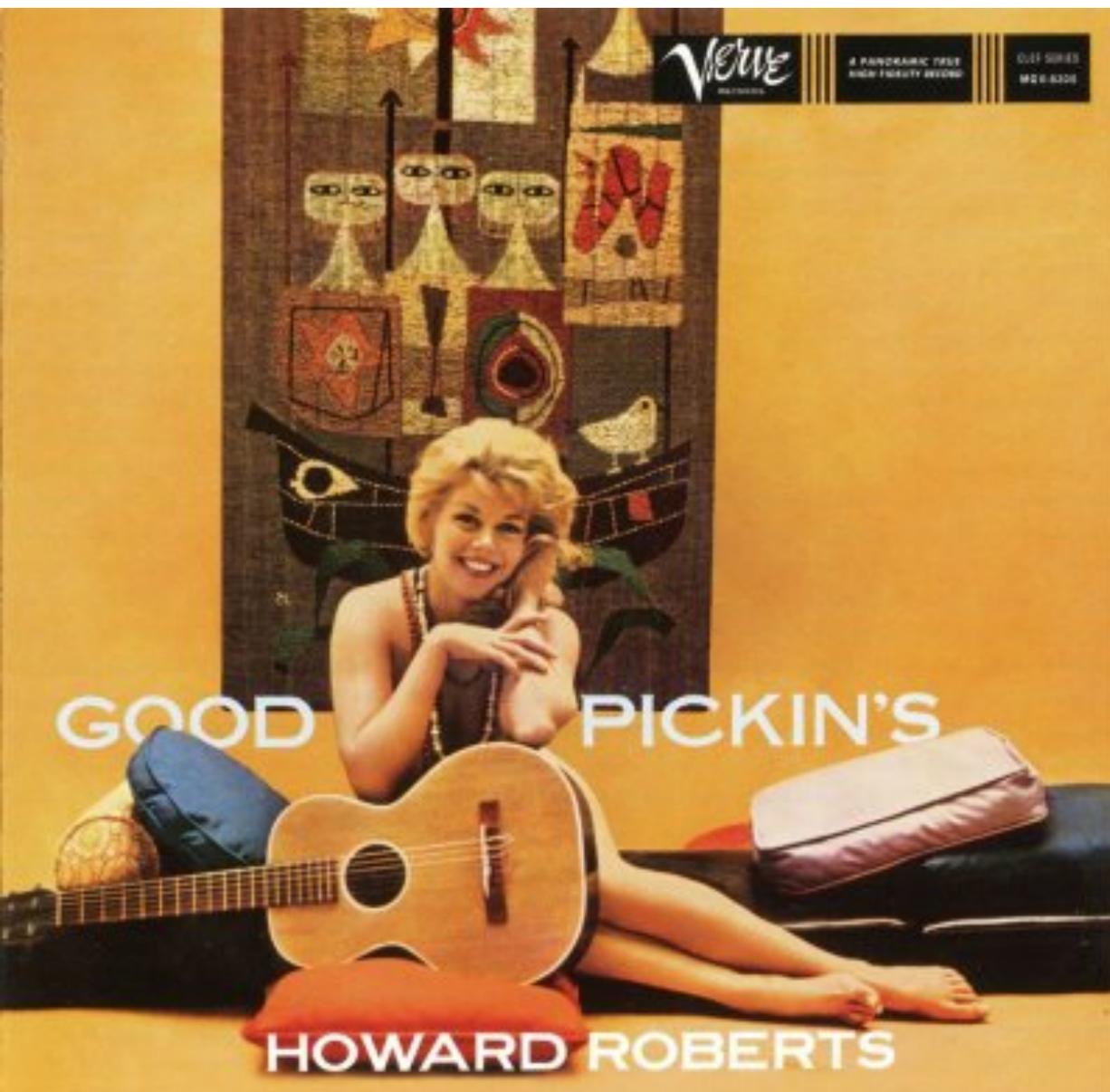
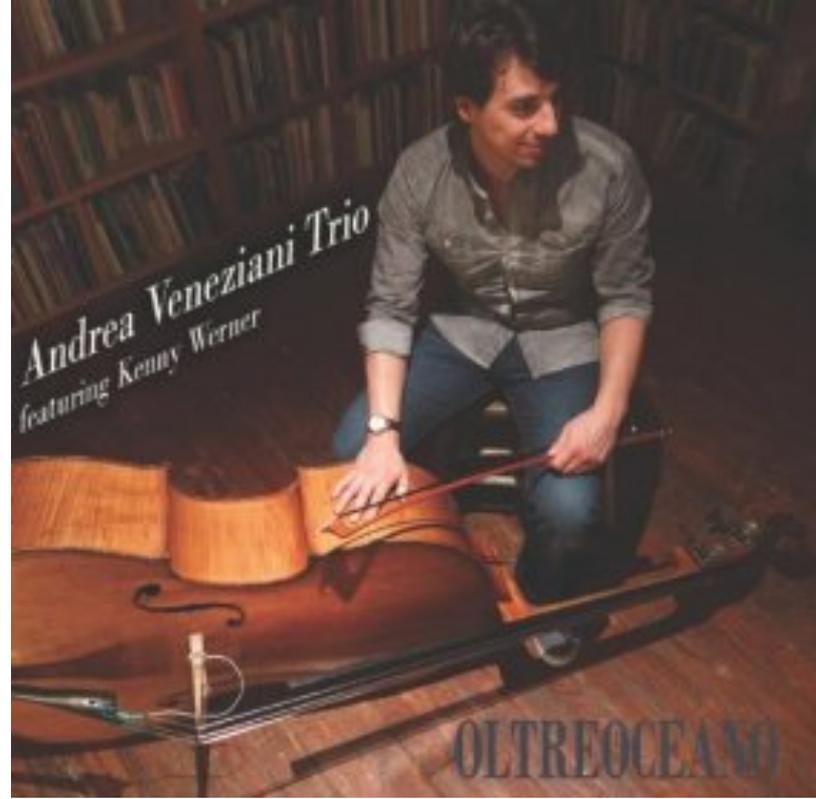


day, just after the first lawn is cut and friends are over the house lingering long to catch the last stretch of sun.

The Andrea Veneziani Trio's ***Oltreoceano*** features exemplary work by pianist Kenny Werner, who always strives for beauty. Bassist and leader Veneziani has a warm upright tone here reminiscent of the famed Bill Evans' bassists. What makes Veneziani's tone so rich is its warmth and ability to accompany like a vocalist rather than a metronome. Drummer Ross Pederson also displays a feathery tenderness that is more playful than domineering. Speaking of Evans, the trio takes on *Time Remembered*, and it's about as good as covers of the song go. Also here are Charlie Parker's *Segment* and Thelonious Monk's *Pannonica*.

Oddball album covers of the week. Naked was a popular cover theme for art directors in the 1950s. Well, not quite naked, but you get the drift. Various tricks were used to mask the nudity—or models were positioned in a way so that album covers could remain store-legal. Interestingly, art typically was added to emphasize beauty, taste and form over, well, plain old hubba-hubba-hubba.





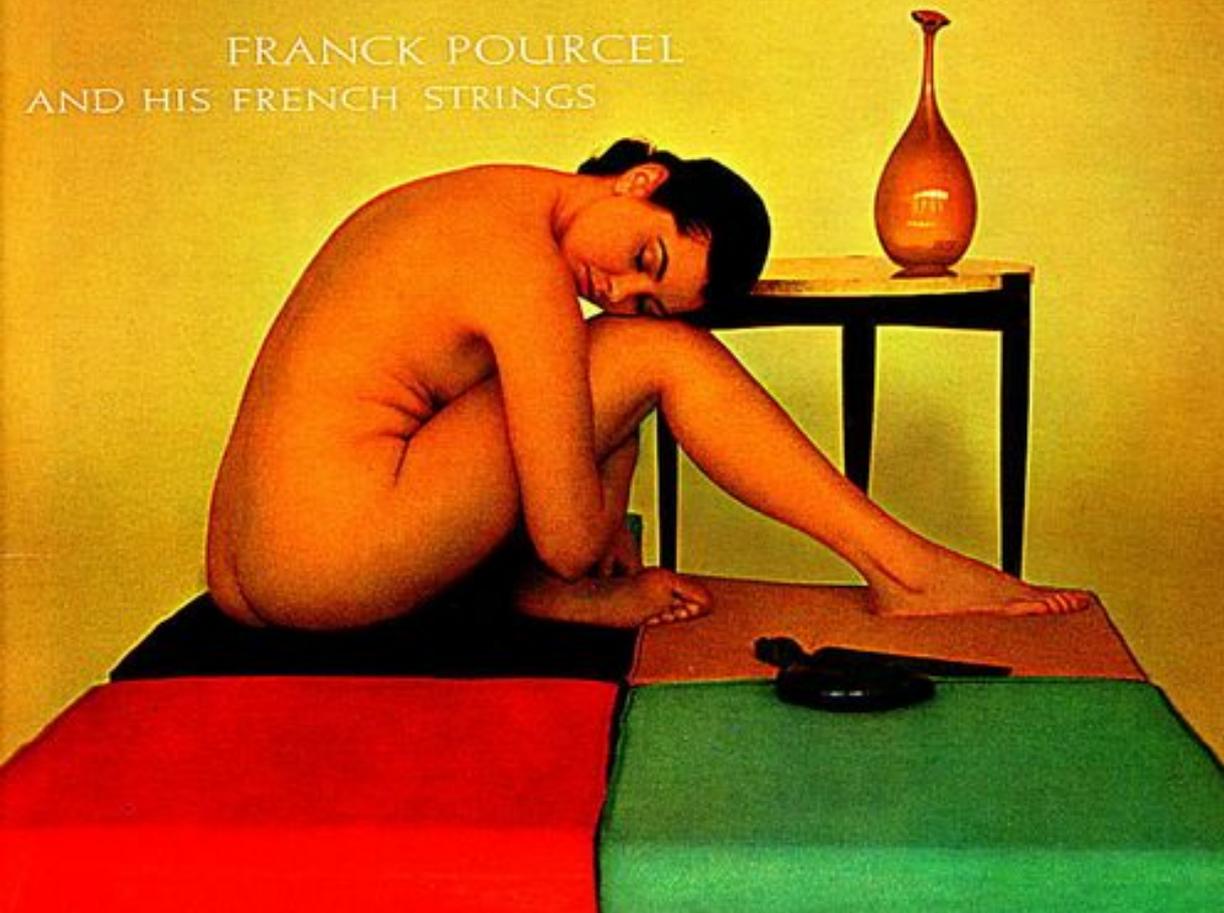
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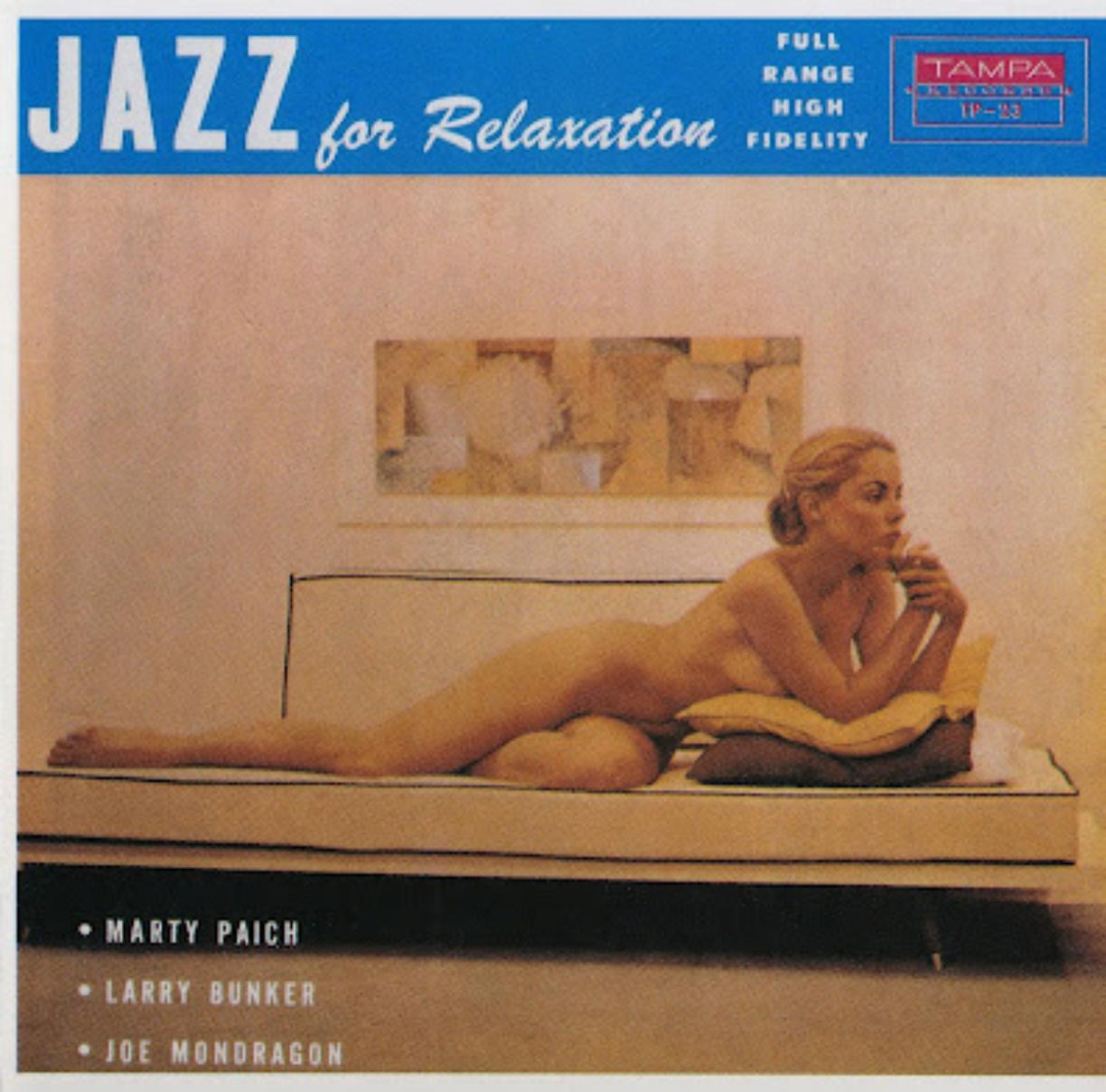
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LES BAXTER'S
LA FEMME

FRANCK POURCEL
AND HIS FRENCH STRINGS





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"Jazz for Relaxation"? How are we supposed to relax with all these naked ladies lying around?!!

But seriously!! I look forward to learning more about your new book. I like the "non-jazz event" angle already.

Posted by: [T.K. Tortch](#) | [March 17, 2012 at 03:39 PM](#)



Yep, those covers, respectively the pictured ladies are indeed beautiful, and therefore far from being just, err, odd.

I'm looking forward to some significant excerpts from your book. I'm very curious.

Since all music is connected with its sociopolitical environment, it will be interesting to learn which - from your point of view - non-jazz events made the music change.

Posted by: [Brew](#) | [March 17, 2012 at 03:59 PM](#)



Subway musicians lol. i ride the subways here. they're all annoying. they just seem great because they're wearing dark glasses and it's free.

Posted by: [John P. Cooper](#) | [March 17, 2012 at 10:08 PM](#)



Looking forward to the book Marc; I'm hoping that autographed first edition copies will be made available to loyal JazzWax readers...?

Posted by: [Rick M](#) | [March 18, 2012 at 12:09 PM](#)



I just KNOW you'll be doing some signings here in NY - I'll be on line.

I enjoy your looking-at-the-big-picture views when they occasionally appear here. While I don't always see it just the way you do, I always find your positions to be well thought out, defensible, and thought provoking.

Maybe I'll buy two copies.

Posted by: [Rab Hines](#) | [March 18, 2012 at 01:54 PM](#)

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