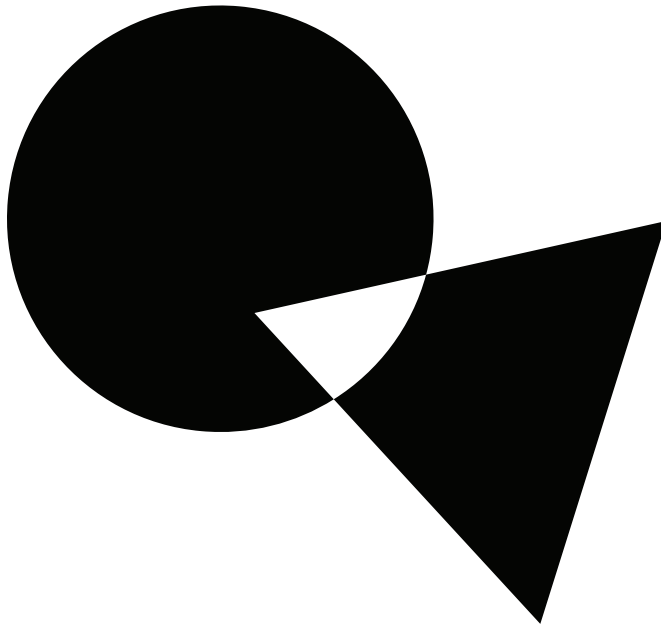
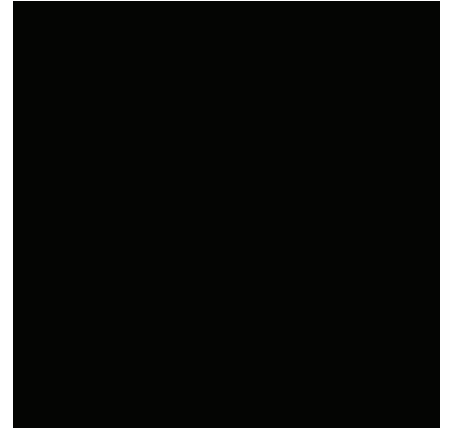

THE SHAPE OF S^oUND

20 Designers
100 Record Covers

N^BSP



Curated by
Scott Lindberg

May 2nd —
July 18th, 2019

When I first began working as a graphic designer, I would often find myself in need of inspiration. The internet was in its infancy, and the few websites featuring design material were just getting their start. Of course there were design periodicals, but they only provided a small snapshot of the current state of our industry. And that is when I began to seek out examples of design to keep in my studio, both to serve as inspiration for my own work and to be a reminder of who came before me.

My collection is primarily consumer-level design objects — things intended for the public masses, and widely available on the resale market. Book covers were most easily accessible given their prominence in American homes. Posters, while accessible, seemed an extravagance since only very few designers are ever given that much space to fill with images. So the 144 square inches of design on the front of record sleeves became my go-to object for reference.

The 1950s were a pivotal time for record art. The music industry was just beginning to establish rules for how the LP format could (and should) be merchandised, which left quite a bit of room for experimentation with cover graphics. Most were designed to appeal to Middle America, with a simple masthead across the top detailing the artist and title and, more often than not, a photograph of that artist to fill the space. But in some places — mainly Jazz releases, but also some Classical titles — a Modernist approach was able to seep into the lexicon.

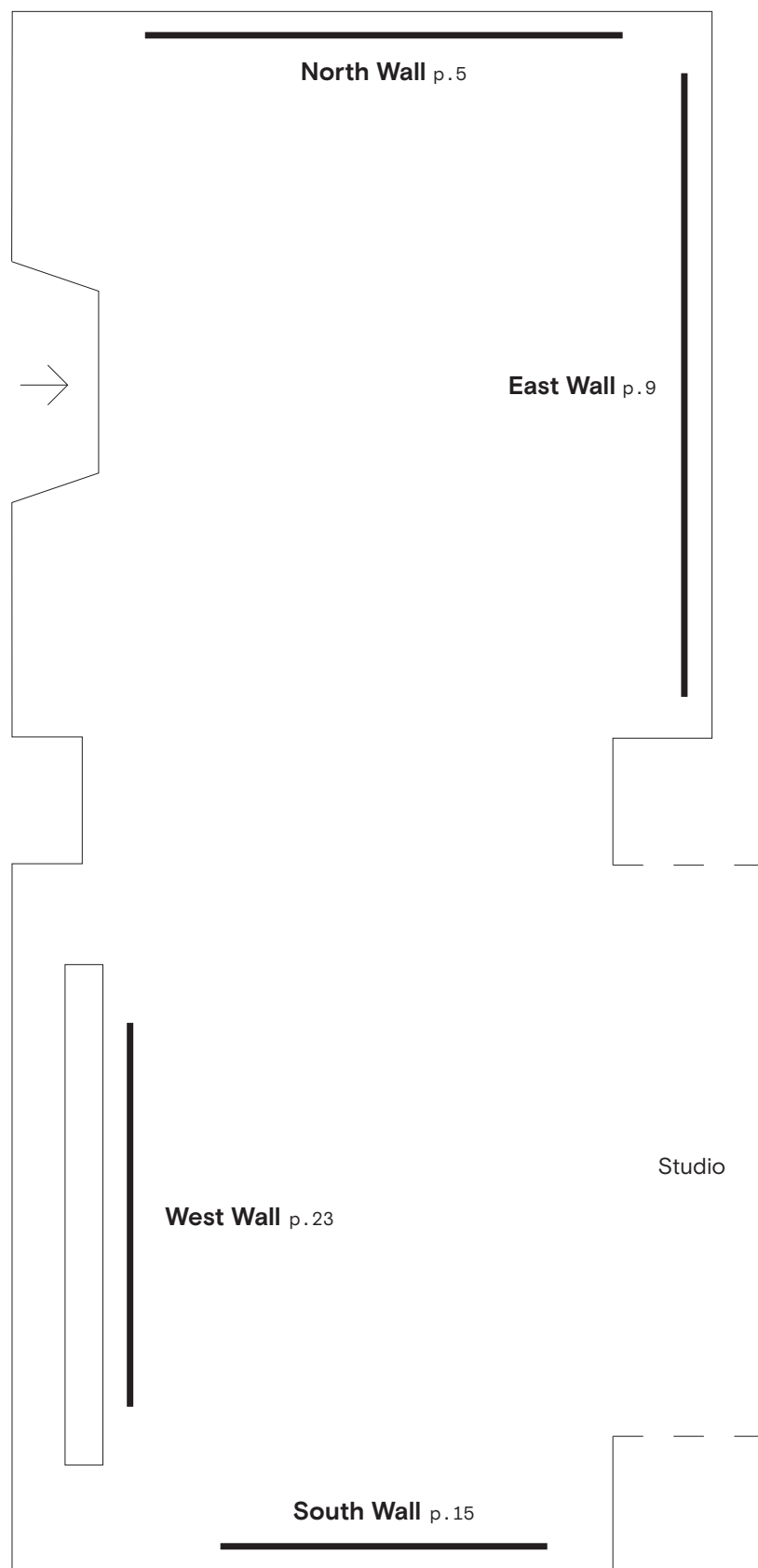
A few record publishers were willing to give their designers the leeway to emote the music through sleeve graphics. In the era of hard-edge painting, Abstract Expressionism, and other Modernist art movements, non-representational abstraction provided an alternate way for designers of the period to communicate the feeling of the music, and use shape to describe sound.

The Shape of Sound is a survey of these types of works from my personal collection, gathered over the past couple decades. It is by no means a comprehensive study of abstract record sleeves, but simply provides a window of 100 examples through which we can view some of the solutions that 20 designers came up with to solve increasingly complex problems, resolving formal Modernist approaches with a need to connect with the consumer.

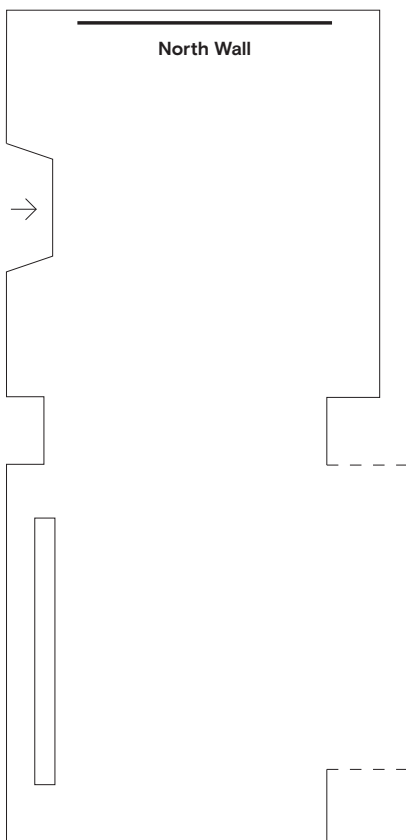
Scott Lindberg

Curator, *The Shape of Sound*

Situation Plan



North Wall



Frank Parisi



Frank Parisi designed dozens of LP sleeves for Avon & Urania Records in the 1960s. His sharply geometric illustration style for this series is predominantly representational in nature. A handful of examples, however, are purely formal arrangements, presumably in response to the music itself.

1. **Haydn: Sinfonia Concertante in B Flat, Op. 84; Trumpet Concerto in E Flat; Overture No. 4 in D Major**
The Hamberg Chamber Orchestra
Urania Record Corp. [US 5129], circa 1956–59
2. **Johann Strauss: Sparkles in Hi Fi**
Vienna Philharmonic Symphony
Urania Record Corp. [US 58009], circa 1956–59
3. **Rhapsody**
Ferrante and Teicher
Urania Record Corp. [US 58011], circa 1956–59
4. **Accent On Tenor**
Coleman Hawkins
Urania Record Corp. [US 41201], circa 1956–59



Richard Van Tieghem



American designer, illustrator, and sculptor Richard Francis Van Tieghem (1929–1992) designed in excess of two dozen pieces for Desto Records in the early to mid-1970s. The sumptuous curvilinear forms bifurcated by thin bands of color featured in many of his compositions mimic the shape of stringed instruments. Van Tieghem was father of electronic musician & percussionist David Van Tieghem, who collaborated with experimental rock artists Laurie Anderson, Brian Eno and David Byrne. Van Tieghem lived in Ridgewood, NJ at the time of his death.

1. **Benjamin Britten: Seven Sonnets of Michaelangelo, Op. 22; Canticle II, Abraham and Isaac, Op. 51**
Martin Katz, piano
Desto Records [DC 7127], circa 1972
2. **Peter Mennin: Symphony No. 4 “The Cycle” for Chorus and Orchestra**
Carl Czerny: Concerto for Piano — Four Hands and Orchestra in C Major, Op. 153
Jean & Kenneth Wentworth, pianists.
Camerata Singers and Symphony Orchestra
Desto Records [DC-7149], 1973
3. **Henry Brant: Crossroads**
Glen Glasow: Rakka
Lou Harrison: Concerto in Slendro
Daniel Kobialka, violin
Desto Records [DC-7144], 1972
4. **Luciano Berio: Sincronie for String Quartet**
Ezra Laderman: Stanzas for Chamber Orchestra
Lenox String Quartet
Desto Records [DC-7129], circa 1972



Erik Nitsche



Born to arts-minded parents amid the rampant Modernism of early 20th century Switzerland, Erik Nitsche (1908–1998) was exposed to design from an early age. The eventual development of his crisp layouts, clean typography, and geometric compositions were certainly influenced by — if not directly inspired from — the presence of family friends including Bauhaus instructor Paul Klee, as well as the rationalist aesthetic starting to develop across Europe. Nitsche emigrated to the United States in 1934, amid pre-war rumblings. After stints on both coasts, he began his historic relationship with General Dynamics. Appointed art director in 1955, Nitsche spent the next decade solidifying his mark on the design world.

In 1950, just prior to his work with General Dynamics, Nitsche was contracted by Decca Records to design covers for its “Gold Label” series, which would exceed 220 titles by 1953. This series of record art would include many of the same elements he’d later employ in those iconic General Dynamics posters and reports. *Gebrauchsgraphik* Number 11 (1951) sums up this body of work by lauding that it “... requires a high degree of versatility and ingenuity to find new and optically impressive solutions for these continually varying themes. Without exaggeration we may say that Erik Nitsche has solved his task splendidly.”

Nitsche’s output spans the entire breadth of the design industry, from identity and packaging, to children’s books and postage stamps. He was inducted into the New York Art Directors Club Hall of Fame in 1996.

1. Schubert: Symphony No. 8 in D Minor “Unfinished”

Handel: Royal Fireworks Music
The Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra
Decca Records [DL 9696], 1953

2. Mozart: Piano Concerto No. 9 in E Flat Major, K.271; Fantasia in C Minor, K.475

The Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra
Decca Records [DL 9525], 1951

3. Beethoven: Symphony No. 7 in A Major, Op. 92

The Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra
Decca Records [DL 9690], 1953

4. Rachmaninoff: Symphony No. 2

Leningrad Philharmonic Orchestra
Decca Records [DL 9874], 1956

5. Brahms: Variations on a Theme by Haydn

Franck: Symphonic Variations
Amsterdam Concertgebouw Orchestra
Decca Records [DL 9542], 1951

6. Bela Bartók: Violin Concerto

The Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra
Decca Records [DL 9545], 1951

7. Tchaikovsky: Symphony No. 5

The Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra
Decca Records [DL 9519], 1951

8. J.S. Bach Concerti for Piano: No. 1 in D Minor; No. 5 in F Minor

The Zimmler String Sinfonetta
Decca Records [DL 9601], 1952

9. Tchaikovsky: Piano Concerto No. 1

The Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra
Decca Records [DL 9605], 1952

10. An Andrés Segovia Program

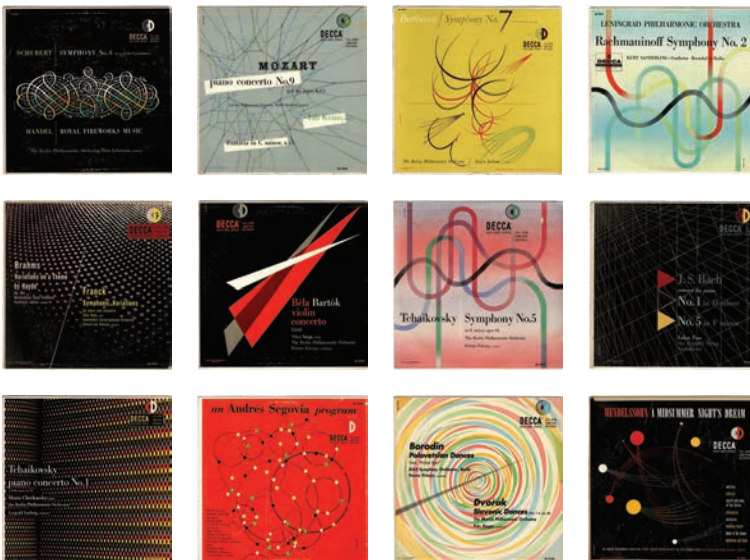
Andrés Segovia
Decca Records [DL 9647], 1952

11. Borodin: Polovetsian Dances

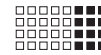
Dvorak: Slavonic Dances
RIAS Symphony Orchestra, The Munich Philharmonic Orchestra
Decca Records [DL 9546], 1951

12. Mendelssohn: A Midsummer Night's Dream

The Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra
Decca Records [DL 8516], 1951



A. F. Arnold



A.F. Arnold was a prominent member of the mid-twentieth century design community, appearing in *Graphis*, *IDEA*, and many other high profile design publications through the 1950s and 60s. His work was featured in Ladislav Sutnar's seminal *Design For Point of Sale*, a 1952 examination of store display design, as well as a 1949 exhibition of poster design at the Museum of Modern Art in New York, titled *Poster Design: New Posters From 16 Countries*.

Arnold's work for the music industry blossomed in 1953, when Epic Records hired him to produce artwork for their line of jazz and classical offerings. This body of work — consisting of approximately 50 pieces — relied heavily on abstraction, both illustrated and through manipulated photography.

Melding his artistic abilities with a passion for education, Arnold also contributed multiple toy designs to MoMA exhibitions. One of these pieces, a sculptural paperboard puzzle, was featured in 1953 alongside the work of Pablo Picasso, Joan Miró, Ben Shahn and Jean Dubuffet. Arnold expanded this concept into the "Giant Builder" construction set, scaled up to allow multiple children to build together. This work was eventually featured in "Experiments in Creative Art Teaching," a 1960 progress report from the Museum of Modern Art's Department of Education looking into ways for arts educators to bring modern design concepts to the classroom.

1. Liszt: Sonata in B Minor; Sonetto del Petrarca No. 104

Alexander Uninsky, piano
Epic Records [LC 3027], circa 1954

2. Mozart: Concerto No. 3 in G Major for Violin and Orchestra; Concerto No. 4 in D Major for Violin and Orchestra

Arthur Grumiaux, violin.
The Vienna Symphony Orchestra
Epic Records [LC 3060], circa 1954

3. Schubert: Rosamunde

The Vienna Chamber Choir
The Vienna Symphony Orchestra
Epic Records [LC 3063], circa 1954

4. Orazio Benevoli: Festmesse Für 53 Stimmen

Franz Sauer, organ
The Vienna Symphony Orchestra
Epic Records [LC 3035], circa 1954

5. Rachmaninoff: Concerto No. 2 in C Minor for Piano and Orchestra, Op. 18

Coor de Groot, piano.
Epic Records [LC 3009], circa 1953

6. Chopin: 24 Etudes, Op. 10, Op. 25

Alexander Uninsky, piano
Epic Records [LC 3065], circa 1954

7. Lalo: Le Roi D'Ys Overture; Norwegian Rhapsody; Namouna Ballet Suite No. 1

L'Orchestre Des Concerts Lamoureux
Epic Records [LC 3049], circa 1954

8. Bizet: L'Arlesienne Suites Nos. 1 and 2

L'Orchestre Des Concerts Lamoureux
Epic Records [LC 3018], circa 1953

9. Massenet: Scènes Pittoresques; Scènes Alsaciennes

L'Orchestre Des Concerts Lamoureux
Epic Records [LC 3053], circa 1954

10. Strauss & Von Suppé: Overtures and Waltzes

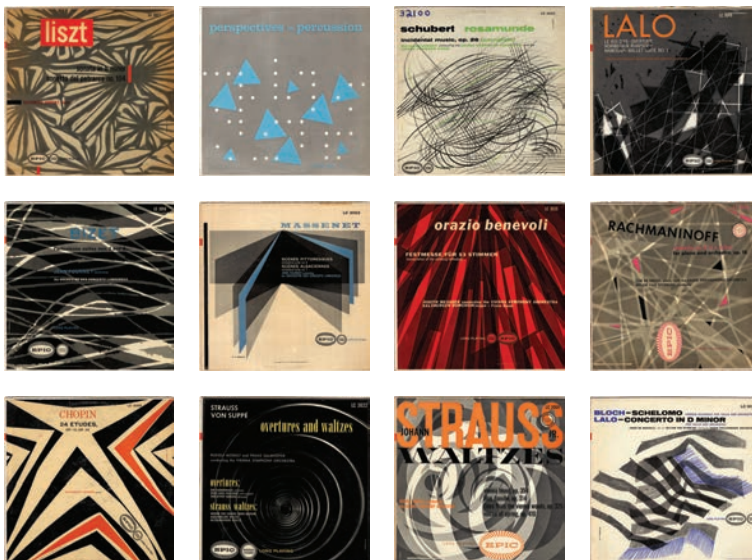
The Vienna Symphony Orchestra
Epic Records [LC 3022], circa 1953

11. Johann Strauss Waltzes

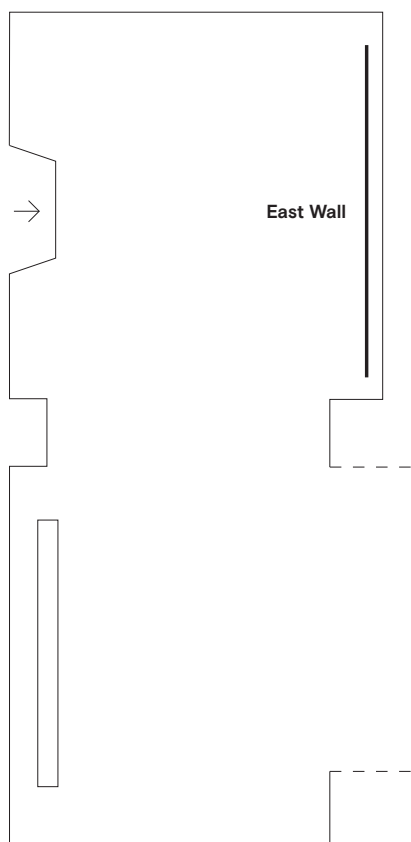
The Vienna Symphony Orchestra
Epic Records [LC 3004], circa 1953

12. Bloch: Schelomo / Lalo: Concerto in D Minor

Tibor de Machula, cello
The Hague Philharmonic Orchestra
Epic Records [LC 3072], circa 1954



East Wall



M. Peter Piening



Bauhaus-educated designer M. Peter Piening (1908–1977) studied under Laszlo Moholy-Nagy before eventually being awarded his PhD from the University of Berlin in 1931. After a short stint with the Ullstein publishing house, he moved to Paris where he spent several years working as a freelance designer. Piening fled Europe for the United States in 1934, where he worked as Art Director for N. W. Ayer and J. Walter Thompson as well as *Fortune* magazine (1942–46), and was on the editorial staff of *Life* magazine. His distinct graphic style shows a decidedly Bauhaus influence, with a tendency towards geometric experimentation.

This style carried through into his work for the American Recording Society. ARS was founded in 1951 as the first non-profit subscription music service in the United States, launched by a grant from Columbia University's Alice M. Ditson Fund. Despite an emphasis on contemporary American composers, the company's early jacket artwork tended to be anything but contemporary. Piening came on shortly after the company was founded to redesign the existing jackets and add further titles to the line, turning previously simplistic sleeve art into vibrant and dynamic Cubist abstractions, dividing space and image into flat fields of primary color.

Beyond his work as a practicing designer, Piening was also a design writer and arts educator, teaching at the New York Art Students League, New York University, and Syracuse University.

1. Leo Sowerby: *Prairie; From the Northland*
American Recording Society Orchestra
American Recording Society [ARS 14], 1952

2. Henry Brant: *Symphony No. 1*
Burrill Phillips: Selections from McGuffey's Readers
American Recording Society Orchestra
American Recording Society [ARS 38], 1953
(attributed)

3. Ernest Bloch: *Trois Poemes Juifs*
Victor Herbert: Concerto For Cello And Orchestra
American Recording Society Orchestra
American Recording Society [ARS 24], 1952
(attributed)



Ronald Clyne



Self-taught designer Ronald Clyne (1925–2006), starting drawing at about age 8, but it was as a teenager that he began collecting pulp horror and science fiction magazines — a medium that would inspire and influence him throughout his career. His 1930s and 1940s book covers for Arkham House — the horror publisher that popularized the work of H.P. Lovecraft — featured realistic illustration and calligraphic typography. While his penchant for realistic illustration would fade by 1950, this same hand-drawn lettering continued to make appearances in his work over the next several decades.

In the field of album art design, Clyne was extremely prolific. His work was featured on sleeves for Columbia, Urania, Vanguard, Westminster, and most prominently Folkways, among many others. His earliest album art was produced for Columbia Records in 1951, as a freelance artist working for Monogram Art Studios. Monogram had contracted with Columbia during a period when the company had no permanent art director, and took on the redesign of a large portion of the company's catalog. After ties with these larger companies were cut, some of the freelance artists — including Clyne — stayed on with the Columbia on a contract basis to continue producing jackets for their classical music library.

Clyne's work for Columbia was typified by a geometric division of space, with pattern produced by woodcut ornament, typographic dingbat, paper marbling, and other methods creating the bulk of the image. With diverse visual elements through the series, Clyne was able to make an interesting and cohesive body of work that was still able to deliver individually striking images from sleeve to sleeve. It was the bringing together of these varied visual design elements into a single image that Clyne found compelling, once noting "A record cover should be seen at a glance. You shouldn't have to study different sections of it. You should see the total instantly."

This ability to build a visual language served all of Clyne's music industry clients well. While purely formalist abstractions appear throughout the breadth of his work, Clyne was able to fluidly create a distinct aesthetic for each individual publisher he worked with. This is undoubtedly most true for the body of work for which Clyne is best known, the over 500 covers he produced for Moses Asch and Folkways Records. Asch gave Clyne unilateral control of the work he produced for Folkways, which was typified of duotone photographs overprinted on colored paper stock, with simple typographic title banners. Like his early book covers inspired by a teenage pulp magazine collection, this body of work was greatly inspired by Clyne's adult collecting fascination: Melanesian folk art from New Guinea and Vanuatu.

Clyne's work for Folkways has been widely exhibited, but the rest of his output has been largely ignored until now.

1. Popular Overtures and Dances

Columbia Broadcasting Symphony
Columbia Records [RL 3030], 1952

2. Berlioz: *Symphonie Fantastique*

The Cleveland Orchestra
Columbia Records [RL 3059], circa 1953

3. Sound Patterns

Folkways Records [FX 6130], 1953

4. 20th-Century Masterpieces of the Vienna School

Zurich Chamber Orchestra
Vanguard Stereolab [VSD 71117], circa 1965

5. Sibelius: *Symphony No. 2 in D Major, Op. 43*

Philharmonic-Symphony Orchestra of New York
Columbia Records [RL 3045], circa 1952

6. Debussy: *La Mer*; *Preludes a L'Après-Midi d'un Faune*

Ravel: *Introduction and Allegro for Harp*
Philharmonic Orchestra
Columbia Records [RL 3055], circa 1953

7. St. Saëns: *Symphony No. 3 in C Minor, Opus 78*

Vienna Philharmonic Symphony
Urania Records [UR 105], circa 1955

8. Offenbach: *Gaite Parisienne*

London Philharmonic
Urania Records [US 5111], circa 1959

9. Richard Strauss: *Ein Heldenleben (A Hero's Life), Op. 40*

The Cleveland Orchestra
Columbia Records [RL 3048], circa 1952

10. Rachmaninoff: *Symphony No. 2 in E Minor*

Philharmonic Symphony Orchestra of New York
Columbia Records [RL 3049], circa 1953

11. Antheil: *Ballet Mechanique*

Chavez: *Toccatta for Percussion*

Hovhannes: *October Mountain*

Lopresti: *Sketch for Percussion*

Los Angeles Contemporary Music Ensemble
Manhattan Percussion Ensemble
Urania Records [US 5134], circa 1959

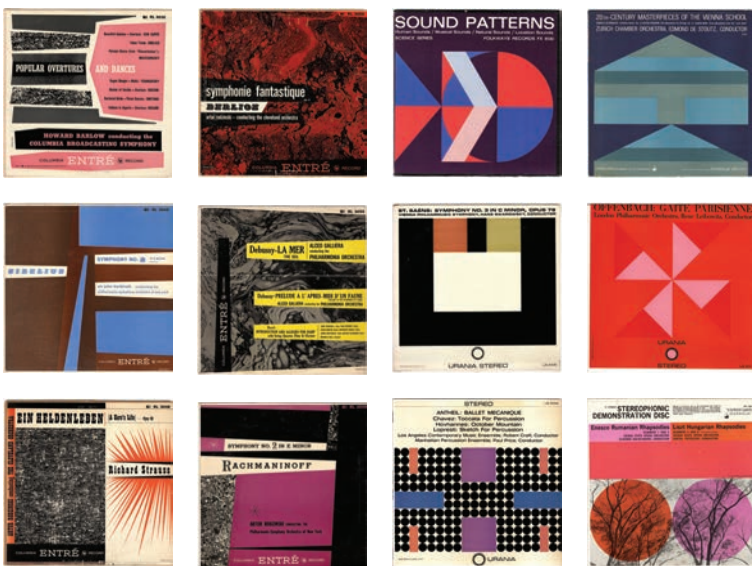
12. A Unique Stereophonic Demonstration Disc

Enesco: *Rumanian Rhapsodies*

Liszt: *Hungarian Rhapsodies*

Vienna State Opera Orchestra

Vanguard Stereolab [BGS 70659], 1961



Jon Henry



The career of Philadelphia native Jon Henry (1916–1990) was a balancing of design and fine art, equally creating design for business and showing fine art in galleries. Henry was educated at the Philadelphia College of Industrial Arts and The New School in New York, before spending 1949–50 studying in the studio of Abstract Expressionist painter Robert Motherwell. As a fine artist, Henry worked primarily as a painter and collagist, showing at New York’s Camino Gallery in 1959 and continuing to exhibit his artwork across the United States for the next three decades.

Henry’s design work was always closely tied to the music industry. As Art Director for Grey Advertising he was responsible for the promotion of many high profile Jazz artists, including Benny Goodman, Bud Powell, Stan Getz, and others. As an album cover designer, Henry repurposed his collage-based approach to fine art, frequently employing fragmented imagery and photographic manipulation in his jacket designs. The influence of Robert Motherwell is also evident in his design work, particularly the two examples included in this exhibition.

A jazz guitarist himself, Henry’s gallery artwork was also often intertwined with music and musical concepts. For *The Cry of Jazz*, a 1970 multimedia installation for the Department of History at the State University of New York (SUNY), Henry created imagery by overlapping images from six projectors along with a Jazz soundtrack. Of his art, Henry wrote that his interest lies in “color shapes placed at random — consciously and spontaneously developed, modified or eliminated, until an exciting balance and interplay between negative and positive areas occur.” He imbued his images with a sense of surprise, something also greatly important to the Jazz music he loved so much.

Henry retired to Gainesville, FL, in 1987 where he continued to make art until his death in 1990.

1. Tito Rodriguez And The Mambo

Tito Rodriguez
RCA Victor [LPM 1080], 1955

2. Stravinsky: Rite of Spring

World Wide Symphony Orchestra
RCA Camden [CAL 110], circa 1955



Alvin Lustig



Alvin Lustig (1915-1955) was a design generalist who believed in the “power of design when applied to all aspects of life.” His work spans many genres of design — including industrial, graphic, and interiors — but he is perhaps most well known for his New Classics series of book jackets for New Directions.

After apprenticing briefly at Frank Lloyd Wright’s Taliesin in 1935, Lustig began a series of experimental and nonrepresentational letterpress illustrations composed of typographic slugs and blanks. While this work was considered radical at the time, it was not the type of radicalism that critics feared. Informed by modern art, these abstract geometric shapes would form the basis of much of his subsequent work, particularly in record sleeve design.

Lustig’s record sleeves employed many of the same devices as his book cover designs: crisply modernist type playing a supporting role to an expressive illustration that reinterprets the musician’s or composer’s intent. More interested in evoking a “feeling” than directly communicating the content beneath the covers, the dozen or so sleeves designed by Lustig distill the music down to its visual equivalent.

By age 39 Lustig had completely lost his vision due to diabetes, but continued to produce work by describing to his assistant the color and geometries, based on objects he kept around his home and studio. He passed away in 1955, and was posthumously presented the AIGA Lifetime Achievement award in 1993.

1. Vivaldi

Jean-Pierre Rampal, Pierre Pierlot, Robert Gendre, Paul Hongne, & Rovey Veyron-Lacroix
The Haydn Society [HSL 82], 1953

2. Arnold Schönberg: A Survivor from Warsaw; Kol Nidre, Op. 39

Second Chamber Symphony
Vienna Symphony Orchestra
Columbia Masterworks [ML 4664], 1953

3. J.S. Bach: Suite for Flute and Figured Bass in C Minor

Vivaldi: **Concerto for Flute, Oboe, Violin, Bassoon and Figured Bass in G Minor; Sonata for Flute and Figured Bass in D Minor**
Jean-Pierre Rampal, Pierre Pierlot, Robert Gendre, Paul Hongne, & Rovey Veyron-Lacroix
The Haydn Society [HSL 80], 1953

4. Mozart: Piano Concerto in C Major, KV 467; Piano Concerto in A Major, KV 414

Chamber Orchestra of the Danish State Radio
The Haydn Society [HSL 1054], 1952



Rudolph de Harak



As a young designer in the 1940s, Rudolph de Harak (1924–2002) was inspired, along with Alvin Lustig, Saul Bass, and others, to form the Los Angeles Society for Contemporary Designers with a goal to shift Los Angeles out of the shadows of New York and other prominent East Coast design centers. De Harak attended the New York City School of Industrial Arts, followed by a tour of duty as an Infantryman in World War II. By 1950 he had moved back to the East Coast, where he worked as a promotion art director for *Seventeen* magazine and briefly in an advertising agency before starting his own firm.

Freelancing in 1950 on a contract with Monogram Art Studios, Rudolph de Harak published his first record sleeve. These early pieces were softly modernist, with ethereal cloud-like forms and hand-drawn line work. By 1961, however, his approach became formalist, as is evidenced by the approximately 50 hard edge geometric and abstract expressionist record sleeves he designed for Westminster Records. In embracing classical modernist tenets, he utilized his visuals in an attempt to unearth the “hidden order” within the project. This approach spilled over into a large series of book covers for publisher McGraw-Hill, which at 350 titles became one of his most significant bodies of work.

Also an educator, de Harak taught for several decades at Cooper Union, and was a visiting scholar at Yale, Alfred University, Parsons, and the Pratt Institute. In his sixties, de Harak as many other designers of his era turned to abstract art as an outlet for creativity without the limitations and strains of the corporate design world. De Harak is a member of the 1989 Art Directors Club Hall of Fame, and received the AIGA Medal in 1992.

1. Sounds From the Alps

Inge & Rudi Meixner
The Nussdorfer Schrammein
Westminster Recording Company [WST 15057],
circa 1961

2. Nothing But Percussion

Byron Parker
Westminster Recording Company [WP 110],
1961

3. Nothing But Percussion, Vol. 2

Bobby Christian
Westminster Recording Company [WP 6131],
1961

4. Rossini Overtures, Volume 2

Orchestra dell'Academia de Santa Cecilia
Westminster Recording Company [XWN 18944],
circa 1961

5. Beethoven: Quartet Op. 59, No. 2

Janacek Quartet
Westminster Recording Company [XWN
18936], circa 1961

6. Beethoven: Quartet Op. 59, No. 3; Quartet Op. 18, No. 4

Smetana Quartet
Westminster Recording Company [XWN 18937],
circa 1961

7. Testing Testing Testing: A Comprehensive Tool for Testing Equipment

Westminster Recording Company [SRX],
circa 1961

8. Hermann Scherchen Conducts: Trumpet Concerti

Vienna State Opera Orchestra
Westminster Recording Company [XWN 18954],
1961

9. Scherchen Conducts: The Brandenburg Concertos Numbers: 1 & 2

Vienna State Opera Orchestra
Westminster Recording Company [WST 14114],
circa 1961

10. Lalo: Symphonie Espagnole

Wienawski: Violin Concerto No. 2
Julian Olevsky
Westminster Recording Company [XWN 18938],
circa 1961

11. Ancient & Modern

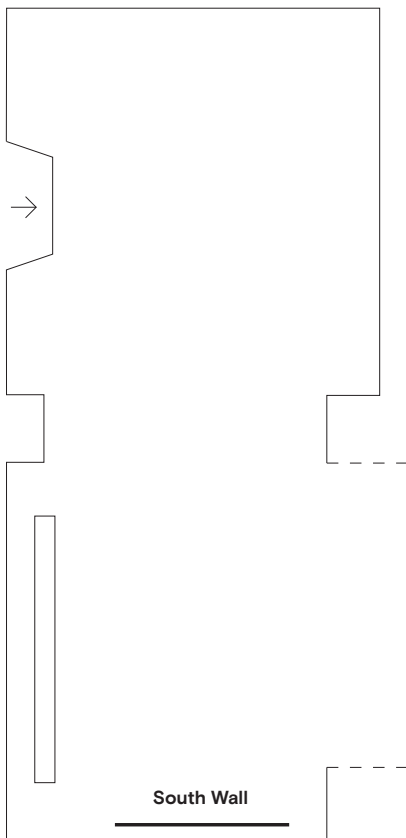
High Fidelity Brass
Westminster Recording Company [WST 14113],
circa 1961

12. Vivaldi/Gloria

Vienna Academy Chorus
Westminster Recording Company [WST 14139],
circa 1961



South Wall



S. Neil Fujita



Sadamitsu “S. Neil” Fujita (1921–2010) was born in Hawaii of Japanese parents. In 1942, shortly after enrolling in Chouinard Art Institute (now CalArts), he was forced to relocate to a internment camp after the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor. During his incarceration, he worked as art director for the camp’s newspaper, the *Heart Mountain Sentinel*. A year later he enlisted in the United States Army, and finally completed his studies at Chouinard after being discharged on completion of his combat tour. In 1949, Fujita joined influential advertising agency N. W. Ayer in Philadelphia. When speaking of his influences during these formative years, Fujita reminisced, “When I was going to art school I liked the work of Paul Rand, but also Tomayo, Klee, Picasso, Braque.” His personal artwork took cues from these Modernist masters, typically in the form of bright, bold and colorful abstraction.

In 1954, Fujita started work as Director of Design at Columbia Records, on request of art director William Golden, despite having no experience in the music industry. Until that time, there were a handful of outside agencies doing all the cover art for Columbia, but Golden wanted to bring this work in-house and tasked Fujita with forming this new department. Fujita cancelled plans to study in Italy to accept the position, and would eventually be directing in excess of 800 pieces per year. For some of these sleeves, Fujita hired friends — including prominent artists Andy Warhol and Ben Shahn — to provide illustrations. For others, Fujita himself would act as photographer.

Fujita most flourished as an artist when working with Jazz records. In a 2010 interview, he explained “Jazz called for abstraction, a certain kind of stylization...” And the abstractions he painted were typically influenced to some extent by the music they were meant to promote. “Before I did Dave Brubeck’s ‘Take Five,’” explained Fujita, “somebody said that the group was returning from a tour of Asia. I had recently returned from the service with armed forces intelligence in the Western Pacific and I had been through East Asia, the Philippines and Calcutta, so I borrowed some colors and shapes that seemed to go with the mood.” Of these paintings, Fujita’s contemporary Milton Glaser summarized “It was a kind of synthesis of Bauhaus principles and Japanese sensibility.”

After leaving Columbia out of boredom, Fujita started his own studio to concentrate on book jackets. These pieces, unlike his Jazz-influenced abstractions, were mainly typographic. Best known for his designs for *In Cold Blood* and *The Godfather*, Fujita explained “I didn’t just design the type for those book jackets; I drew it with my quill pen, using India inks and dyes.”

In 1963 he was asked to form a subsidiary of public relations firm Ruder and Finn, and as a result founded Ruder, Finn and Fujita. A decade later he simplified the name to Fujita Design. Fujita, also an educator, taught at the Philadelphia Museum College of Art, Pratt Institute, and Parsons School of Design in New York City.

1. Schoenberg: Quintet for Wind Instruments
The Philadelphia Woodwind Quintet
Columbia Records [ML 5217], 1957

2. Glenn Gould: Berg; Schoenberg; Krenek
Glenn Gould
Columbia Records [ML 5336], 1959

3. Time Out
The Dave Brubeck Quartet
Columbia Records [CS 8192], 1959

4. Far Out, Near In
Johnny Eaton
Columbia Records [CL 996], 1957



Sam Suliman



Designer and illustrator Sam Suliman's work is instantly recognizable by his simplified and abstracted representational shapes and bright colors. Primarily working for the recording industry, Suliman designed record sleeve art for both high production and budget labels through the 1950s and 60s, including Coronet, Baronet, Celebrity, Directional Sound, Parade, Silver Seal, Spin-o-rama, and Mercury Records.

Suliman created some of his most strikingly geometric abstract work as production director for Directional Sound, taking inspiration from both the simplified forms of the instruments used in the recordings as well as the syncopated rhythms of the music itself. These experimental percussion-heavy recordings, as well as the gatefold sleeves that housed them, were a direct response to — and highly influenced by — the series of percussion records being published by Command Records during the same time period.

In addition to his work in the music industry, Suliman also designed film titles for three motion pictures in the UK, produced by Ameran Films from 1964 to 1966.

1. Percussion Classics

The Hamburg Philharmonic
Directional Sound [DS 5004], circa 1960

2. Jazz & Swinging Percussion

Bill Berry
Directional Sound [DS 5002], circa 1960

3. Brass Band Bash

The Regimental Band Of The Windsor Guards
Directional Sound [DS 5008], circa 1960

4. Percussive Sound Of The Big Band

John Evans And The Big Band
Directional Sound [DS 5003], circa 1960

5. Sizzling Strings, Castanets & Percussion

Don Luis Quintero & The Madrid Festival Orchestra
Directional Sound [DS 5007], circa 1960

6. Potent Percussion

Don Catelli And The All Stars
Directional Sound [DS 5010], circa 1960



Emmett McBain



Designer and advertising executive Emmett McBain (1935–2012) was born in Chicago, and began taking classes at the Art Institute of Chicago at the surprising age of 12. He studied at the Ray Vogue School of Commercial Art before enrolling in the American Academy of Art in 1954, while concurrently taking night classes at the IIT Institute of Design. McBain began his career in 1956 with Vince Cullers Advertising, the first African American-owned advertising agency in the United States. After a year, he joined Playboy Records as Assistant Art Director, where he was quickly promoted up the ranks.

McBain went on to found McBain Associates in 1959, where he continued to work with music industry clients, most notably the Mercury Record Corporation. With approximately 75 covers to his credit by age 24, McBain was already a significant voice in recording industry graphics. Most of his work consisted of dynamic and colorful typographic arrangements, but in 1960 McBain produced a series of formalist abstract covers for Ultra Audio to promote wide range stereo to the consumer market, presumably in response to the success Command Records was seeing from its similar line of offerings.

As one of very few African American designers in the mid-century, McBain's co-founding of Burrell-McBain Advertising was groundbreaking for the African American community. Its founding paralleled —and was symbiotic with — the rise of the Black Arts Movement, and McBain took this opportunity to support, empower, and celebrate people of color. Known for his successful marketing campaigns for the tobacco, automotive, skin care, liquor, and recording industries, many of which were specifically designed for the African American community, McBain positioned himself as the most influential Black advertiser and designer of his era.

McBain was awarded the AIGA Gold Medal in 2017, and has been honored by the Art Directors Club of Chicago, the Art Directors Club of Detroit, and the Society of Typographic Arts. His work is represented in the permanent collection at the Smithsonian National Museum of American History.

1. Dynamic Twin Pianos

Ferrante & Teicher
Ultra Audio [WWS 8504], 1960

2. Guitars, Woodwinds & Bongos

Al Caiola And Orchestra
Ultra Audio [WWS 8503], 1960



George Giusti



Italian educated designer George Giusti (1908–1990) emigrated from his home in Milan to the United States in 1939. Upon his arrival, he began a collaboration with Herbert Matter on the Swiss Pavilion for the 1939 New York World's Fair. For over 40 years, Giusti designed for magazines including *Fortune*, *Graphis*, *Holiday*, *Interiors*, and *Time*, as well as producing scores of packaging, book jackets, and music recording covers.

The work Giusti produced for Command Records was the pinnacle of his playfully surreal approach. While his earlier work for Command tended to be whimsical and colorful hand-drawn abstractions, several of his later designs for the company employed geometrically abstract, three-dimensional bas relief metal sculptures in copper, brass, and stainless steel, similar in execution to some of his magazine cover illustrations for *Holiday*.

Giusti always intended to bridge the gap between design and art in his work, as is evident in his abstract and futuristic approach to visual communication. Giusti has been awarded numerous commendations and citations for his work, including his selection as the 1958 Art Director of the Year by the Art Directors Club of New York.

1. A Special Something: 12 Big Beautiful Songs
The Ray Charles Singers
Command Records [RS 914 SD], 1967

2. The New Sound Of Today's Big Band
Doc Severinsen
Command Records [RS 917 SD], 1967

3. Explosive Brass Impact Vol. 2
Warren Kime & His Brass Impact Orchestra
Command Records [RS 919 SD], 1967



Gerry Olin



During the 1960s, Gerry Olin designed a handful of LP sleeves for labels including Command, Capitol, Westminster, 20th Century Fox, and Tetragrammaton Records. While virtually all the record sleeves we know she designed are figural in some respect, her earliest known work was also her most abstract. Published in 1960 by Command Records under the art direction of Charles E. Murphy, her cover for *Pertinent Percussion Cha Cha's* is formed from irregular circles and parallelograms in pink, purple, and gold arranged into abstract sequences representing dancing couples. Subsequent sleeves by Olin tended to be more traditionally illustrated or photography-based. Her work for Command was included in the 2009–2010 exhibition “Albers/Albums” at Minus Space in New York.

1. Pertinent Percussion Cha Cha's
Enoch Light and the Light Brigade
Command Records [RS 33–814], 1960



Will Dressler



Will Dressler was active in the early 1960s designing album art for Stereo-Fidelity and Somerset Records. The two pieces Dressler designed for Somerset were highly influenced by Josef Albers' work for Command Records, with simple, repeating geometric forms, approximating the rhythm and syncopation of the music contained on the albums.

1. Perspectives in Percussion, Volume 1

Skip Martin

Somerset Records [SF 13200], 1961

2. Perspectives in Percussion, Volume 2

Skip Martin

Somerset Records [SF 13300], 1961



Brownjohn, Chermayeff & Geismar



In 1956, Robert Brownjohn joined Ivan Chermayeff and Tom Geismar to form the design firm of Brownjohn, Chermayeff & Geismar. Brownjohn was a product of the Institute of Design in Chicago, formerly known as the New Bauhaus, while Chermayeff and Geismar both hailed from Yale. The firm became known for its print work and typographic experimentation, but by 1959 Brownjohn's heroin use forced him to leave the firm and move to London in hopes of receiving treatment for his addiction. He died in 1970 at the age of 44.

Record sleeves produced by these three designers tend to fall fairly neatly into three primary categories. Their typographic covers include Brownjohn's kinetic altered type experiments as well as purely formal Swiss-style type settings by Chermayeff and Geismar. Ivan Chermayeff is widely known for his collage work, which also made appearances on many of their record covers. But their purely abstract iconographic designs are the pieces we focus on for this exhibition. The geometric abstraction featured on these sleeves is not far afield from the boldly abstract logos they famously designed for major corporate clients — bold, simple, non-representational symbols meant to evoke instead of describe.

The firm of Chermayeff & Geismar & Haviv continues to exert its prominence in the design industry to this day. Some of their prominent clients include NBC, Mobile, PBS, the Smithsonian, National Geographic, and Chase Bank among many, many others. Chermayeff and Geismar are both AIGA Gold Medalists. Ivan Chermayeff passed away in 2017.

1. Percussion and Brass

The Grand Award All Stars

Grand Award Record Co. Inc. [GA 255 SD],

1960

(Chermayeff & Geismar)

2. Bongos, Flutes, Guitars

Los Admiradores

Command Records [RS 33-812], 1960

(Brownjohn, Chermayeff & Geismar)



Saul Bass



While most of us remember Saul Bass as the designer behind the seminal Alfred Hitchcock film titles and posters of the 1950s and 60s, his importance to the design industry surpasses the medium of film. He was also responsible for the classic identity designs of Wesson, Minolta, United Airlines, and AT&T among others. Bass studied under Gyorgy Kepes at Brooklyn College, and began his career in the print industry making posters for film ads. After his 1954 collaboration with Otto Preminger to design the film poster for *Carmen Jones*, however, Bass's career skyrocketed into the world of movie title sequence design where he continued to break ground over the course of five decades.

Of the few dozen record sleeves designed by Saul Bass, most were soundtrack LPs which simply repurposed his iconic title sequence, advertisement, and poster art. Two rhythmic geometric examples, included in this exhibition, stand out in particular as purely formal compositions.

And even though Bass was among the first to disagree with the tenet that graphic design and film are closely related fields, he excelled at both and left behind him an unparalleled legacy in both arenas of the graphic arts when he passed away in 1996 of non-Hodgkin's lymphoma.

1. **Tone Poems of Color**

Frank Sinatra
Capitol Records [W 735], 1956

2. **Blues & Brasse**

Elmer Bernstein
Decca Records [DL 8686], 1956



Barbara Jean Brown (Peters)



Barbara Brown Peters (née Barbara Jean Brown) designed two beautiful LP sleeves for Command Records, both greatly influenced by Josef Albers' orderly constructions of geometric shapes, sequenced to evoke a musical rhythm. Command was one of the very few record labels to include biographical information about the sleeve art's designer on most of their jackets, but for some reason failed to do so on the two jackets Brown designed for the company. Brown's work for Command is close enough stylistically to that of the British Op Art textile designer of the same name to warrant conjecture that they're one in the same, although definitive evidence of this hunch has not been established to date.

1. **Persuasive Percussion, Volume 2**

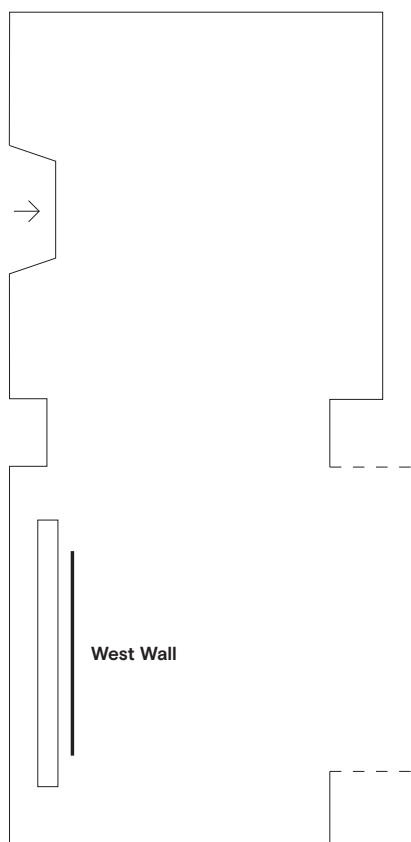
Terry Snyder and the All Stars
Command Records, [RS 33-808] 1959

2. **Barbara Brown**

Provocative Piano, Volume II
Dick Hyman and His Orchestra
Command Records [RS 824 SD], 1961



West Wall



Charles Murphy



Charles Murphy (1933–2005) studied under Bauhaus master Josef Albers at Yale before accepting an invitation from Enoch Light to partner with Command Records as design director for Light's breakthrough recording series. Murphy spent 1959 through the mid-1960s working with Light to produce a graphically advanced series of album designs that played off of Bauhaus concepts and geometric abstraction. Light explained that he “felt we had a new way to present popular music to America. This not only required a new concept in recording, but a new cover concept as well.” Over the course of his career with Command, Murphy supervised such great designers as S. Neil Fujita, George Giusti, and Josef Albers himself, among others. Murphy’s own work for Command tended towards avant garde representations of musical instruments, often in watercolor, to bold geometric assemblies directly inspired by Albers.

1. The Persuasive Trombone of Urbie Green
Urbie Green and His Orchestra
Command Records [RS 815 SD], 1960

2. Persuasive Percussion, Volume 4
Enoch Light
Command Records [RS 830 SD], 1961

3. Two Pianos & Twenty Voices
Lew Davies and His Orchestra
Command Records [RS 813 SD], 1960

4. Beethoven: Symphony No. 1 in C Major, Opus 21; Symphony No. 2 in D Major, Opus 36
The Pittsburgh Symphony Orchestra
Command Records [CC 11024 SD], 1964



Josef Albers



Josef Albers' (1888–1976) wide-ranging work encompassed industrial and graphic design, furniture, typography, photography, printmaking, and poetry. His most significant achievements, however, were in abstract painting and theory.

Albers began serious experiment in the arts in 1920 as a student at the Bauhaus, where in 1925 he was the first student to be asked to join the faculty as a “Master.” When the Bauhaus closed under Nazi pressure in November 1933, Albers emigrated to the United States and developed the visual arts curriculum at the newly established Black Mountain College. In 1949 he left Black Mountain College to join the Yale University School of Art faculty as chairman of the Department of Design.

In 1959, he was invited by musician and recording artist Enoch Light to design sleeve art for a series of percussion records developed using conceptual recording techniques, including stereophonic sound and the use of 35mm magnetic tape. In all, Albers designed 7 jackets for the series — under the art direction of Charles Murphy, who studied under Albers at Yale — as a visual response to the sound of these records “bouncing” back and forth in the room. While these were not the first nonrepresentational geometric abstract sleeves, they are arguably the most well known and influential examples in the genre. Command, known for crediting their designers in the album liner notes, praised Albers as “one of America’s foremost contemporary painters.”

In 1963 Albers published his seminal work *Interaction of Color*, which continues to be a cornerstone text of color theory. He was the first living artist, in 1971, to be granted a solo retrospective at the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York. Albers continued work on his other major contribution to the world of art and design, an in-depth series of color studies titled *Homages to the Square*, until his death in 1976.

1. Provocative Percussion, Volume 3
Enoch Light and the Light Brigade
Command Records [RS 821 SD], 1961

2. Persuasive Percussion, Volume 3
The Command All-Stars
Command Records [RS 817 SD], 1960

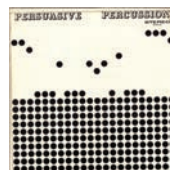
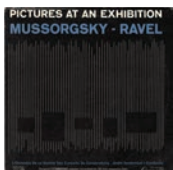
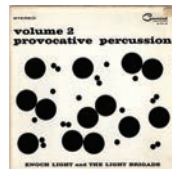
3. Provocative Percussion, Volume 2
Enoch Light and the Light Brigade
Command Records [RS 810 SD], 1959

4. Mussorgsky-Ravel: Pictures at an Exhibition
L'Orchestre Conservatoire
Command Records [CC 11003 SD], 1961

5. Magnificent Two-Piano Performances: Mozart, Mendelssohn, Schubert
Leonid Hambro and Jascha Zayde
Command Records [CC 11060 SD], 1961

6. Provocative Percussion
The Command All-Stars
Command Records [RS 806 SD], 1959

7. Persuasive Percussion
Terry Snyder and the All Stars
Command Records [RS 800 SD], 1959



Scott Lindberg, Curator

Scott Lindberg is a freelance graphic designer and design historian based in Edmonds, WA. From 2011 to 2018 he ran New Documents, a shop specializing in important 20th century graphic design objects. During this time he partnered with seminal American designer and illustrator Seymour Chwast to sell pieces from the Push Pin Group archives. Scott's personal design collection has been featured in magazines, books and exhibitions, both nationally and worldwide.

About Non-Breaking Space

Non-Breaking Space is a not-for-profit exhibition space by Civilization devoted to showcasing important works of graphic design.

www.non-breaking.space

About Civilization

Civilization is a design practice that builds identity systems, digital experiences, printed materials, environmental graphics, exhibitions and campaigns that are engaging, empathetic, sustainable and create meaningful connections. The studio works on a variety of projects for public, private and non-profit clients that share their commitment to creating positive change. The practice is a recipient of the National Design Award for Communication Design from the Cooper Hewitt, Smithsonian Design Museum in honor of "excellence, innovation, and enhancement on the quality of daily life." Their internationally recognized work is included in the permanent collection of the SFMOMA and the Milton Glaser Design Archives at SVA, has won numerous awards, including a Webby Award for Best Activist Website, and is regularly featured in print publications as well as most major global media outlets such as The Guardian, The New York Times, The Huffington Post and NPR.

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