



Smithsonian

National Museum of American History Kenneth E. Behring Center

Guide to the Francis Wolff Jazz Photoprints

NMAH.AC.1238

David Haberstich

2018

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Collection Overview

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| Repository: | Archives Center, National Museum of American History |
| Title: | Francis Wolff Jazz Photoprints |
| Date: | 1953-1966 |
| Identifier: | NMAH.AC.1238 |
| Source: | Cuscuna, Michael (Donor) |
| Creator: | Wolff, Francis, 1907?-1971 (Photographer) |
| Extent: | 0.5 Cubic feet (1 box) |
| Language: | English . |
| Summary: | Collection consists of photographic prints from negatives by the eminent jazz photographer Francis Wolff, depicting such greats as Miles Davis, John Coltrane, Thelonious Monk, and other important artists. |

Administrative Information

Acquisition Information

Gift of Michael Cuscuna, Mosaic Images, June 3, 2011.

Processing Information

Collection processed by David Haberstich. 12 prints shown in the "The Blue Note Photographs of Francis Wolff," Archives Center exhibition space, National Museum of American History, April 1-July 1, 2016; David Haberstich, curator.

Preferred Citation

Francis Wolff Jazz Photoprints, Archives Center, National Museum of American History. Gift of Michael Cuscuna.

Restrictions

Collection is open for research.

Conditions Governing Use

Michael Cuscuna retains copyright. Archives Center cost-recovery and use fees may apply when requesting reproductions.

Biographical / Historical

Wolff (born 1907 or 1908 in Berlin, Germany, died March 8, 1971 in New York City) was a record company executive, photographer and record producer. After a career as a commercial photographer in Germany, Wolff emigrated to the United States in 1939. In New York his childhood friend Alfred Lion, had co-founded Blue Note Records in the

same year, and Wolff joined Lion in running the company. During Lion's war service, Wolff worked for Milt Gabler at the Commodore Music Store, and together they maintained the company's catalog until Lion was discharged. Until Lion retired in 1967, Wolff concentrated on the financial affairs of the business and only supervised occasional recording sessions produced during his visits to Europe. For the last four years of his life, when Blue Note was no longer an independent label, Wolff shared production responsibilities with pianist and arranger Duke Pearson. Wolff took photographs during the recordings sessions, usually shot during session rehearsals, throughout the period of Lion's involvement in Blue Note Records. They were used on publicity material and LP album sleeves, and have continued to be used in CD reissue booklets. [Redacted from Wikipedia entry.]

Scope and Contents

Twenty-five silver gelatin photographic prints (on fiber-based paper, 20" x 16") from negatives by the eminent jazz photographer Francis Wolff, depicting such greats as Miles Davis, John Coltrane, Thelonious Monk, and other important artists. Descriptions of prints supplied by the donor, Michael Cuscuna.

Arrangement

Collection is arranged into one series.

Series 1: Photoprints, 1953-1966

Names and Subject Terms

This collection is indexed in the online catalog of the Smithsonian Institution under the following terms:

Subjects:

Jazz
Jazz musicians -- 1950-2000 -- United States

Types of Materials:

Black-and-white photographic prints -- Silver gelatin -- 1950-2000

Names:

Blue Note Records
Coltrane, John, 1926-1967
Cuscuna, Michael
Davis, Miles
Monk, Thelonious

Container Listing

Series 1: Photoprints, 1953-1966

Box 1, Item 1 [Art Blakey at his January 24, 1962 session for "The African Beat" \(Blue Note\) at the Van Gelder Studio, Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey, 1962 January 24](#)

Box 1 [Art Blakey at his January 24, 1962 session for "The American Beat" at the Van Gelder Studio, New Jersey \[black-and-white photoprint\], 1962](#)
 1 Item (paper 20" x 16".; Silver gelatin on paper; 36.5 x 36.0 cm. on)
 Photographer: Wolff, Francis, 1907?-1971
 Donor: Cuscuna, Michael
 Mosaic Images
 Language: English.
 Notes: AC1238-0000001 (AC Scan)
 Copyright held by Michael Cuscuna, Mosaic Records.
 Displayed in "The Blue Note Photographs of Francis Wolff,"
 National Museum of American History, April 1-June 30, 2016;
 David Haberstich, curator.
 Names: Blakey, Art, 1919-1990
 Blue Note Records
 Topic: Jazz
 Jazz musicians -- 1950-2000 -- United States
 Drums
 Genre/Form: Later prints
 Photographs -- 1950-1960 -- Black-and-white photoprints --
 Silver gelatin
 Culture: African Americans

Box 1, Item 2 [Clifford Brown at his August 28, 1953 session for "The Clifford Brown Sextet \(Blue Note\) at Audio-Visual Studios, New York City, 1953 August 28](#)

Box 1 [Clifford Brown at his August 28, 1953 session for "The Clifford Brown Sextet \(Blue Note\) at Audio-Video Studios, New York City \[black-and-white photoprint\], 1953](#)
 1 Item (paper 20" x 16".; Silver gelatin on paper; 36.5 x 36.0 cm. on)
 Photographer: Wolff, Francis, 1907?-1971
 Donor: Cuscuna, Michael
 Mosaic Images
 Language: English.
 Notes: AC1238-0000001 (AC Scan)
 Copyright held by Michael Cuscuna, Mosaic Records.
 Displayed in "The Blue Note Photographs of Francis Wolff,"
 National Museum of American History, April 1-June 30, 2016;
 David Haberstich, curator.
 Names: Brown, Clifford

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|---------------|--|
| | <p>Topic: Blue Note Records Jazz Jazz musicians -- 1950-2000 -- United States Trumpet</p> <p>Genre/Form: Later prints Photographs -- 1950-1960 -- Black-and-white photoprints -- Silver gelatin</p> <p>Culture: African Americans</p> |
| Box 1, Item 3 | Ron Carter at Sam Rivers's May 21, 1965 session for "Contours" (Blue Note) at the Van Gelder Studio, Englewood Cliffs, N.J., 1965 May 21 |
| Box 1 | <p>Ron Carter at Sam Rivers's May 21, 1965 session for "Contours" (Blue Note) at the Van Gelder studio, New Jersey [black-and-white photoprint], 1965 1 Item (paper 20" x 16".; Silver gelatin on paper; 36.5 x 36.0 cm. on) Photographer: Wolff, Francis, 1907?-1971 Donor: Cuscuna, Michael Mosaic Images</p> <p>Language: English. Notes: AC1238-000001 (AC Scan) Copyright held by Michael Cuscuna, Mosaic Records. Displayed in "The Blue Note Photographs of Francis Wolff," National Museum of American History, April 1-June 30, 2016; David Haberstich, curator.</p> <p>Names: Carter, Ron, 1937- Blue Note Records</p> <p>Topic: Jazz Jazz musicians -- 1950-2000 -- United States</p> <p>Genre/Form: Later prints Photographs -- 1950-1960 -- Black-and-white photoprints -- Silver gelatin</p> <p>Culture: African Americans</p> |
| Box 1, Item 4 | Paul Chambers at John Coltrane's September 15, 1957 session for "Blue Train" (Blue Note) at the Van Gelder Studio, Hackensack, N.J., 1957 September 15i |
| Box 1, Item 5 | Don Cherry and Henry Grimes at Cherry's December 24, 1965 session for "Complete Communion" (Blue Note) at the Van Gelder Studio, Englewood Cliffs, N.J., 1965 December 24 |
| Box 1, Item 6 | Ornette Coleman at his Sept. 9, 1966 session for "The Empty Foxhole" (Blue Note) at the Van Gelder Studio, Englewood Cliffs, N.J., 1966 September 9 |
| Box 1 | <p>Ornette Coleman at his September 9, 1966 session for "The Empty Foxhole" (Blue Note) at the Van Gelder studio, New Jersey [black-and-white photoprint], 1966 1 Item (paper 20" x 16".; Silver gelatin on paper; 36.5 x 36.0 cm. on) Photographer: Wolff, Francis, 1907?-1971 Donor: Cuscuna, Michael Mosaic Images</p> |

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| | <p>Language: English.</p> <p>Notes: AC1238-0000001 (AC Scan) Coleman playing violin. Copyright held by Michael Cuscuna, Mosaic Records. Displayed in "The Blue Note Photographs of Francis Wolff," National Museum of American History, April 1-June 30, 2016; David Haberstich, curator.</p> <p>Names: Coleman, Ornette Blue Note Records</p> <p>Topic: Jazz Jazz musicians -- 1950-2000 -- United States Violin</p> <p>Genre/Form: Later prints Photographs -- 1950-1960 -- Black-and-white photoprints -- Silver gelatin</p> <p>Culture: African Americans</p> |
| Box 1, Item 7 | John Coltrane and Lee Morgan at Coltrane's Sept. 15, 1957 session for "Blue Train" (Blue Note) at the Van Gelder Studio, Hackensack, N.J., 1957 September 15 |
| Box 1, Item 8 | J.J. Johnson and Miles Davis at Davis's session of April 20, 1953 for "The Miles Davis All Stars" (Blue Note) at WOR Studios, New York City., 1953 April 20 |
| Box 1 | <p>J.J. Johnson and Miles Davis at Davis's session of April 20, 1953 for "The Miles Davis All-Stars" (Blue Note) at WOR Studios, New York City [black-and-white photoprint], 1957</p> <p>1 Item (paper 20" x 16".; Silver gelatin on paper; 36.5 x 36.5 cm. on)</p> <p>Photographer: Wolff, Francis, 1907?-1971</p> <p>Donor: Cuscuna, Michael Mosaic Images</p> <p>Language: English.</p> <p>Notes: AC1238-0000001 (AC Scan) Copyright held by Michael Cuscuna, Mosaic Records. Displayed in "The Blue Note Photographs of Francis Wolff," National Museum of American History, April 1-June 30, 2016; David Haberstich, curator.</p> <p>Names: Davis, Miles Johnson, J.J., 1924- Blue Note Records</p> <p>Topic: Jazz Jazz musicians -- 1950-2000 -- United States</p> <p>Genre/Form: Later prints Photographs -- 1950-1960 -- Black-and-white photoprints -- Silver gelatin</p> <p>Culture: African Americans</p> |
| Box 1, Item 9 | Eric Dolphy at his Feb. 25, 1964 session for "Out to Lunch" (Blue Note) at the Van Gelder Studio, Englewood Cliffs, N.J., 1964 February 25 |

Box 1, Item 10

Curtis Fuller at his June 16, 1957 session for "The Opener" (Blue Note) at the Van Gelder Studio, Hackensack, N.J. This became the album's cover image. (Missing), 1957 June 16

Box 1

The Opener [Curtis Fuller] [black-and-white photoprint], June 16, 1957, 1957
1 Item (paper 20" x 16".; Silver gelatin on paper; 36.5 x 36.0 cm. on)
Image(s): [The Opener \[Curtis Fuller\] \[black-and-white photoprint\], June 16, 1957.](#)

Photographer: Wolff, Francis, 1907?-1971

Donor: Cuscuna, Michael
Mosaic Images

Language: English.

Notes: AC1238-0000001 (AC Scan)

Curtis Fuller at his June 16, 1957 session for "The Opener" at the Van Gelder Studio, New Jersey. Recording session with Mobley, Timmons, Chambers, Taylor. Fuller plays trombone and smoke curls above his head. This photograph became the album's cover image.

Copyright held by Michael Cuscuna, Mosaic Records.

Displayed in "The Blue Note Photographs of Francis Wolff," National Museum of American History, April 1-June 30, 2016; David Haberstich, curator.

Names: Fuller, Curtis, 1934-
Blue Note Records

Topic: Smoke
Trombone
Jazz musicians -- 1950-2000 -- United States

Genre/Form: Later prints
Photographs -- 1950-1960 -- Black-and-white photoprints --
Silver gelatin

Culture: African Americans

Box 1, Item 11

Dexter Gordon and Freddie Hubbard at Gordon's May 6, 1961 session for "Don' All Right" (Blue Note) at the Van Gelder Studios, Englewood Cliffs, N.J., 1961 May 6

Box 1

Dexter Gordon and Freddie Hubbard at Gordon's May 6, 1961 session for "Doin' All Right" (Blue Note) at the Van Gelder Studio, New Jersey [black-and-white photoprint], 1961

1 Item (paper 20" x 16".; Silver gelatin on paper; 36.5 x 36.0 cm. on)

Photographer: Wolff, Francis, 1907?-1971

Donor: Cuscuna, Michael
Mosaic Images

Language: English.

Notes: AC1238-0000001 (AC Scan)

Copyright held by Michael Cuscuna, Mosaic Records.

Displayed in "The Blue Note Photographs of Francis Wolff," National Museum of American History, April 1-June 30, 2016; David Haberstich, curator.

Names: Hubbard, Freddie, 1938-

Topic: Gordon, Dexter, 1923-1990
Blue Note Records
Trumpet
Jazz
Jazz musicians -- 1950-2000 -- United States
Saxophone

Genre/Form: Later prints
Photographs -- 1950-1960 -- Black-and-white photoprints --
Silver gelatin

Culture: African Americans

Box 1, Item 12

Joe Henderson at the Blue Note offices, New York City in October 1963. This became the cover image for his album "Our Thing" (Blue Note)., 1963 October

Box 1

Joe Henderson at the Blue Note offices, New York City in October 1963 [black-and-white photoprint], 1963
1 Item (paper 20" x 16".; Silver gelatin on paper; 36.5 x 36.0 cm. on)
Photographer: Wolff, Francis, 1907?-1971
Donor: Cuscuna, Michael
Mosaic Images

Language: English.

Notes: AC1238-000001 (AC Scan)
Henderson is shown smoking a cigarette, with curling smoke.
Copyright held by Michael Cuscuna, Mosaic Records.
This became the cover image for Henderson's album "Our Thing" (Blue Note).
Displayed in "The Blue Note Photographs of Francis Wolff," National Museum of American History, April 1-June 30, 2016; David Haberstick, curator.

Names: Henderson, Joe, 1937-
Blue Note Records

Topic: Smoking -- 1930-1980
Cigarettes -- 1950-2000
Jazz
Jazz musicians -- 1950-2000 -- United States

Genre/Form: Later prints
Photographs -- 1950-1960 -- Black-and-white photoprints --
Silver gelatin

Culture: African Americans

Box 1, Item 13

Freddie Hubbard at Andrew Hill's October 8, 1965 session for "Compulsion" (Blue Note) at the Van Gelder Studio, Englewood Cliffs, N.J., 1965 October 8

Box 1, Item 14

Kiane Zawadi and Howard Johnson at Hank Mobley's March 18, 1966 session for "A Slice of the Top" (Blue Note) at the Van Gelder Studio, Englewood Cliffs, N.J., 1966 March 18

Box 1, Item 15

Philly Joe Jones at an August 1957 rehearsal for "John Jenkins with Kenny Burrell" (Blue Note). He did not appear on the album., 1957 August

Box 1, Item 16

Hank Mobley and Pepper Adams at Mobley's Oct. 20, 1957 session for "Poppin" (Blue Note) at the Van Gelder Studio, Hackensack, N.J., 1957 October 20

Box 1

Hank Mobley and Pepper Adams at Mobley's October 20, 1957 session for "Poppin" (Blue Note) at the Van Gelder Studio, New Jersey [black-and-white photoprint], 1957

1 Item (paper 20" x 16".; Silver gelatin on paper; 36.5 x 36.0 cm. on)

Photographer: Wolff, Francis, 1907?-1971

Donor: Cuscuna, Michael
Mosaic Images

Language: English.

Notes: AC1238-0000001 (AC Scan)

Copyright held by Michael Cuscuna, Mosaic Records.

Displayed in "The Blue Note Photographs of Francis Wolff," National Museum of American History, April 1-June 30, 2016; David Haberstich, curator.

Names: Adams, Pepper
Mobley, Hank
Blue Note Records

Topic: Saxophone
Jazz
Jazz musicians -- 1950-2000 -- United States

Genre/Form: Later prints
Photographs -- 1950-1960 -- Black-and-white photoprints --
Silver gelatin

Culture: African Americans

Box 1, Item 17

Alfred Lion and Thelonious Monk at Monk's May 30, 1952 session for "Genius of Modern Music" (Blue Note) at WOR Studios, New York City., 1952 May 30

Box 1

Alfred Lion and Thelonious Monk at Monk's May 30, 1952 session for "Genius of Modern Music" (Blue Note) at WOR Studios, New York City [black-and-white photoprint], 1952

1 Item (paper 20" x 16".; Silver gelatin on paper; 36.5 x 36.0 cm. on)

Photographer: Wolff, Francis, 1907?-1971

Donor: Cuscuna, Michael
Mosaic Images

Language: English.

Notes: AC1238-0000001 (AC Scan)

Copyright held by Michael Cuscuna, Mosaic Records.

Displayed in "The Blue Note Photographs of Francis Wolff," National Museum of American History, April 1-June 30, 2016; David Haberstich, curator.

Names: Lion, Alfred
Monk, Thelonious
Blue Note Records

Topic: Jazz
Jazz musicians -- 1950-2000 -- United States

Genre/Form: Later prints

Photographs -- 1950-1960 -- Black-and-white photoprints --
Silver gelatin
Culture: African Americans

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| Box 1, Item 18 | Thelonious Monk at Sonny Rollins's April 14, 1957 session for "Sonny Rollins Volume II (Blue Note) at the Van Gelder Studio, Hackensack, N.J., 1957 April 14 |
| Box 1, Item 19 | Lee Morgan at John Coltrane's September 15, 1957 session for "Blue Train" (Blue Note) at the Van Gelder Studio, Hackensack, N.J., 1957 September 15 |
| Box 1 | <p>John Coltrane and Lee Morgan at Coltrane's September 15, 1957 session for "Blue Train" (Blue Note) at the Van Gelder studio, New Jersey [black-and-white photoprint], 1957</p> <p>1 Item (paper 20" x 16".; Silver gelatin on paper; 35.5 x 36.0 cm. on)</p> <p>Photographer: Wolff, Francis, 1907?-1971</p> <p>Donor: Cuscuna, Michael Mosaic Images</p> <p>Language: English.</p> <p>Notes: AC1238-0000001 (AC Scan) Copyright held by Michael Cuscuna, Mosaic Records. Displayed in "The Blue Note Photographs of Francis Wolff," National Museum of American History, April 1-June 30, 2016; David Haberstich, curator.</p> <p>Names: Morgan, Lee Coltrane, John, 1926-1967 Blue Note Records</p> <p>Topic: Jazz Jazz musicians -- 1950-2000 -- United States Saxophone Trombone</p> <p>Genre/Form: Later prints Photographs -- 1950-1960 -- Black-and-white photoprints -- Silver gelatin</p> <p>Culture: African Americans</p> |
| Box 1, Item 20 | Bud Powell and his son John Earl Powell at a December 1958 rehearsal at Birdland, New York City for Powell's "The Scene Changes" (Blue Note). This became the cover image for the album., 1958 December |
| Box 1, Item 21 | Max Roach at Sonny Rollins's December 16, 1956 session for "Sonny Rollins Volume One (Blue Note) at the Van Gelder Studio, Hackensack, N.J., 1956 December 16 |
| Box 1, Item 22 | Wayne Shorter at Lee Morgan's February 15, 1964 session for "Search for the New Land" (Blue Note) at the Van Gelder Studio, Englewood Cliffs, N.J., 1964 February 15 |

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| Box 1, Item 23 | Wayne Shorter and McCoy Tyner at Shorter's April 29, 1964 session for "Night Dreamer" (Blue Note) at the Van Gelder Studio, Englewood Cliffs, N.J., 1964 April 29 |
| Box 1, Item 24 | Horace Silver at the November 23, 1955 session for "The Jazz Messengers at Café Bohemia (Blue Note) (Missing), 1958 April 7 |
| Box 1 | <p>Horace Silver at the November 23, 1955 session for "The Jazz Messengers at Cafe Bohemia (Blue Note) [black-and-white photoprint], 1955 1 Item (paper 20" x 16".; Silver gelatin on paper; 35.5 x 36.0 cm. on) Photographer: Wolff, Francis, 1907?-1971 Donor: Cuscuna, Michael Mosaic Images Language: English. Notes: AC1238-0000001 (AC Scan) Copyright held by Michael Cuscuna, Mosaic Records. Displayed in "The Blue Note Photographs of Francis Wolff," National Museum of American History, April 1-June 30, 2016; David Haberstich, curator.</p> <p>Names: Silver, Horace, 1928-2014 Cafe Bohemia Blue Note Records</p> <p>Topic: Jazz Jazz musicians -- 1950-2000 -- United States Piano</p> <p>Genre/Form: Later prints Photographs -- 1950-1960 -- Black-and-white photoprints -- Silver gelatin</p> <p>Culture: African Americans</p> |
| Box 1, Item 25 | Jimmy Smith and Donald Bailey at Smith's April 7, 1958 session for "Cool Blues" (Blue Note), live at Small's Paradise, New York City., 1958 April 7 |

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