



**The Capitol Transcriptions (1946-1949)  
Peggy Lee (Capitol-UMe)  
by Marilyn Lester**

In an enduringly successful career, spanning well over a half-century, singer-songwriter Peggy Lee proved herself a versatile artist worthy of legend status. The celebrations for Lee's centennial year (she was born on May 26th, 1920) have already included releases of *Ultimate Peggy Lee* and *Peggy Lee Decca Rarities*; they have now been joined by *The Capitol Transcriptions 1946-1949*, a curated collection of 72 tracks featuring 55 songs. This sliver of Lee's vast legacy of recorded work is a delightful window into the career on an icon in the making; by the end of her life she'd written over 250 songs and recorded more than 1,100 masters.

This compilation is taken from the body of masters created by Lee for Capitol's Transcription Library Service: 16-inch, 33-rpm discs made exclusively for radio airplay by subscribing stations. In them, a fresh-voiced, young Lee is radiant with the talent that would shortly ripen and mature into a more assured mastery of jazz and popular music. Most of the sessions were arranged by Henry J. "Heinie" Beau (with a few by Frank DeVol) who wrote with a keen ear to the stylistic expectations of radio audiences. The musical backing for most of the transcriptions consisted of pianist Buddy Cole's Four Of A Kind with Dave Barbour (guitar), Phil Stephens (bass) and Tommy Romersa (drums). In 1949 the small group makeup was Barbour and George Van Eps (guitars), Phil Stephens (bass), Hal Schaefer (piano) and Nick Fatool (drums). These sessions were arranged by Heinie Beau and are notable for beautifully crafted enhancements and solos by Barbour.

However, for two Summer 1946 sessions the musical backing was expanded by DeVol and His Orchestra with Barbour, Stephens or Fred Whiting, Cole, Romersa or John Cyr, Skeets Herfurt, Jerome Kasper, Jules Kinsler, Ron Perry, Ted Romersa, Paul McLarand, Joseph Palange and/or Leonard Mach (reeds); Abe Benike, Uan Rasey and Irv Shulkin (trumpets); George Faye, Si Zentner and/or Paul Weigand (trombones); Richard "Dick" Perissi (French horn); Victor Arno, Joseph Livoti, Joseph Quadri, Henry Sugar and/or Walter Edelstein and Ted Rosen (violins); Jacob Kaz, Paul Lowenkron and/or Elizabeth Sugar (violas); and Fred Goerner, Joseph Saxon and Julius Tannenbaum (vocals).

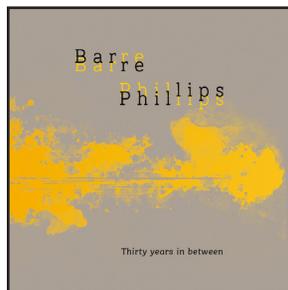
The collection is a tasty smorgasbord of tunes, with novelty songs, gospel and folk among a goodly number of standards. About half the tracks are A-list songbook fare still popular today, including "S Wonderful" (George and Ira Gershwin), "Come Rain or Come Shine" (Harold Arlen-Johnny Mercer) and "I Get a Kick Out of You" (Cole Porter), mostly arranged with a jaunty light swing. Many of the other numbers are popular songs of the day, which eventually drifted into relative obscurity, such as "The Best Man" (Roy Alfred-Fred Wise), "Just Like a Gypsy" (Norah Bayes-Seymour Simons) and "I've Had My Moments" (Walter Donaldson-Gus Kahn). Two of Lee's own works are represented, with "Don't Be So Mean To Baby" and "I Don't Know Enough About You", both co-written with then-husband Barbour.

While all of these tunes are pleasant to the ear, it's in a healthy handful-plus of numbers that Lee's promise of greatness really shines. Her abilities as a storyteller are particularly sharp in "A Cottage for Sale" (Larry Conley-Willard Robison) and "I've Got It Bad (And

That Ain't Good)" (Duke Ellington-Paul Francis Webster). She proves she can hold a torch and sing the blues with the best of them in "A Nightingale Can Sing the Blues" (Dick Charles-Lawrence W. Markes, Jr.) and "Lonesome Road" (Gene Austin-Nathaniel Shilkrat). Even the unusual choice of the traditional Irish folk standard "Molly Malone" is delivered as an impassioned story, as is the novelty tune "This Little Piggie" (Harold Lewis-Sam Coslow-Leslie Barton).

Lee can also turn a song on its head. The normally melancholy-happy song, "Blue Skies" (Irving Berlin) is infused with joy, despite its minor key, while the up-tune "I Only Have Eyes for You" (Al Dubin-Harry Warren) is given a melancholy edge. With "I Let a Song Go Out of My Heart" (Ellington-Henry Nemo-John Redmond), Lee proves to be one of the few interpreters of the Ellington songbook truly to understand how he wrote the blues into a great deal of his compositions. While there's light swing to be heard over the 55 songs, none can be considered truly jazzy. Lee does approach the idiom though, in a creative "Swing Low Sweet Chariot" (traditional). There's also a terrific novelty tune "All the Cats Join In" (Eddie Sauter-Alec Wilder-Ray Gilbert) that tips its swingin' hat to the jazz crowd.

For more information, visit [udiscovermusic.com](http://udiscovermusic.com)



**Thirty years in between  
Barre Phillips (Victo)  
by Andrey Henkin**

A few decades before what would become the art form known as jazz was birthed, another movement was applying the concepts of improvisation and individuality to the medium of painting. Impressionism, like jazz, was often done 'live', or in plein-air, and also favored 'standards', repeated subjects that would be approached differently because of the season or the available light.

The exemplar of Impressionism was Frenchman Claude Monet (1840-1926) and while series like the *Water Lilies*, *Haystacks* and *London Parliament* are most known, for this reviewer the peak of Monet's craft was his 30+ paintings of the Rouen Cathedral, done between 1892-94.

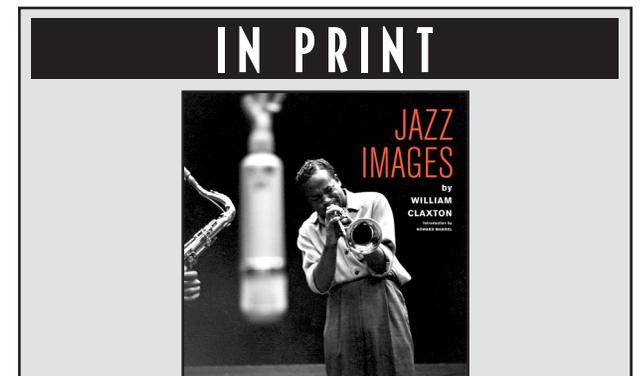
Fast-forward almost 75 years and across the channel to London in November 1968, where Barre Phillips (b. 1934) was recording what would become the first improvised solo bass album, *Journal Violone* (Opus One). What was initially not even Phillips' idea would become the totemic concept of his career. While Monet focused on his cathedral for only two years, Phillips would revisit the solo bass recital over the next half-century, season and available light replaced by age and accumulated experience.

In March 2017, Phillips, then 82, recorded what would be released as *End To End* on ECM the following year, a sort of bookend to the aforementioned *Journal Violone*, telling this reviewer at the time, "The solo albums, they're really a part of a recording history. And to me it's like [director] Robert Kramer told me one time at the end of his life, one or two months before he died, what I've done is all one film and I could dig that." Phillips did a tour of the project, one date of which was at the 35th Annual Festival International de Musique Actuelle de Victoriaville on May 17th, 2019. Victo, the in-house label of the festival, has now released that concert as *Ahoy!*, part of the two-disc set *Thirty Years in between*, partnering it with an earlier

solo Phillips Victo set, *Camouflage*, recorded in Vancouver 30 years (plus six days) earlier.

To speak of each independently is like viewing one of the cathedrals without knowing of its brethren. As Phillips said, these are a dream returned to and if there are the differences—each is a distinct facet of a larger gem—and details like recording quality or motifs, they still can and do function as a whole, taken in linearly or in an order of one's choosing. You cannot own a Rouen cathedral painting but you can and should have all of Phillips' solo recordings mounted in a place of honor within your musical museum.

For more information, visit [victo.qc.ca](http://victo.qc.ca)



**Jazz Images by William Claxton  
(Elemental Music)  
by Russ Musto**

William Claxton (Oct. 12th, 1927 - Oct. 11th, 2008) described his aesthetic as "jazz for the eyes" and branded himself "a jazz photographer" as opposed to a "photographer of jazz", developing his vision in conjunction with the improvisatory nature of the music. And, as in jazz itself, where a piece is manifested within the framework of an arrangement, Claxton's images achieved their singularity as a result of the locale in which they were photographed.

A lifelong California resident, Claxton utilized his home state's sun-drenched atmosphere to create an impressive body of work, the lively brilliance in stark contrast to the enigmatic smoky darkness of iconic peers Roy DeCarava, Herman Leonard and Francis Wolff. As quoted in Howard Mandel's introduction to this 162-page volume of 164 photos depicting more than 65 different artists, Claxton once declared, "Being on the West Coast, I wanted to bring out the fact that musicians were living in a very health conscious environment. So I purposely put them on the beach or in the mountains or on the road in their convertibles."

What may be the most familiar of all the photos, culled from Claxton's tenure as house photographer for Pacific Jazz, is Chet Baker, grasping the sail of a boat with one hand, as he holds his trumpet in the other, blowing it out into the sea. Baker appears in myriad settings in 25 different pictures, including the earliest one, from a 1953 Pasadena Just Jazz concert as a member of the Charlie Parker Quintet. Other classic shots include a young Ornette Coleman (from *The Shape of Jazz to Come*), Thelonious Monk hanging off a cable car, Sonny Rollins beneath a Mojave Desert cactus arch and the Montgomery Brothers under the Golden Gate Bridge. There are plenty of West Coast concert, club and studio photos, among them a Clifford Brown-Max Roach record date and a Cannonball Adderley Quintet show at the Monterey Jazz Festival.

A 1959-60 cross-country trip yielded striking photos of Jackie McLean performing in *The Connection* in New York; Art Blakey and Lee Morgan playing a club in Philly; Charles Mingus and Eric Dolphy hanging in Newport; and the Ramsey Lewis Trio on a Chicago boulevard. All this and so much more here to hear with your eyes.

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