

vogue record sold for \$1.05. Columbia, Decca, Victor and others were selling records for \$0.50! Combined with cost, the lack of a cohesive catalog and the lack of "big" names also probably contributed to Vogue's demise.

But what really got me interested in the records were the illustrations. The beauty of the Vogue Picture Records is truly *in* the record.

Each record contains artwork that either illustrates the song or evokes the "feeling" of the song. And with the wide variety of songs, artists and genres there's an equally wide variety of images and styles. For example, *The Boy who Cried Wolf* has a cartoonish wolf in a top hat talking to a young shepherd while *Rhapsody in Blue* is more realistic with a deep blue background and elegant white grand pianos.



But the artwork also ranges from the simple and elegant to the evocative. Compare the above records with these two for *You Took Advantage of Me* and *I Surrender Dear*.



Yes, that *is* a woman in handcuffs and that *is* a woman with a heart on a silver platter.

Like I said, these records are beautiful and fun to study. But this also causes a problem. You can't look at and listen to the records simultaneously. The records were sold in glassine sleeves, so there was no additional cover art for individual records. Tom Saffady paid a lot for the artwork, but practically, did the art work add to the experience or justify the greater cost to the consumer? Probably not, in my opinion. If you are like me, one of the things you love to do when listening to music is to thumb through the album's liner notes and study the cover illustrations. And sadly, you just can't do that with the Vogues.

- [December 2012](#)
- [November 2012](#)
- [September 2012](#)
- [August 2012](#)
- [July 2012](#)
- [June 2012](#)
- [May 2012](#)
- [April 2012](#)
- [March 2012](#)
- [February 2012](#)
- [January 2012](#)
- [December 2011](#)
- [November 2011](#)
- [October 2011](#)
- [September 2011](#)

Posts by Category

- [Announcements](#) (1)
- [Authors](#) (32)
- [Amber Moore](#) (4)
- [Barbara Brooker](#) (1)
- [Lucy Mulrone](#) (2)
- [Michele Combs](#) (3)
- [Nicole Dittrich](#) (8)
- [Patrick Midtlyng](#) (4)
- [Susan Kline](#) (10)
- [Behind the Scenes](#) (4)
- [Collections](#) (35)
- [Events](#) (3)
- [Projects](#) (23)
- [SU Grad Students](#) (13)

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You could use them as display pieces, but then you run the risk of washing out the lush illustrations, like this example of / *Love You in the Daytime Too*.



Regardless though, the Vogue Picture Record is a unique slice in the history of the record business. And the short period of production, combined with the aftermath of bankruptcy makes it difficult to say exactly how many Vogue Picture Records were actually produced.

Interested in learning more about Tom Saffady, Sav-Way industries and The Picture Records? Check out the Association of Vogue Picture Record Collectors at <http://www.voguepicturerecords.org/> and Edgar L. Curry's excellent history and discography *Vogue: The Picture Record (2nd Ed)*. 1998. All pictures from the SU Collection

7 Responses to “Cover Art, Schmover Art: Vogue Picture Records”

1. **Carl Johnson** Says:
[November 23rd, 2011 at 3:58 pm](#) 

There was a brief vogue (sorry!) for picture discs in the early '80s as well, and of course the same problems arose — can't look at it and play it, don't want to just hang it on the wall. But generally that's what I would do, transfer the music to cassette and only look at the discs from that point on.

That pulp art is wonderful, and I'm betting that if they're not signed, someone familiar with the pulp magazines of that time would be able to identify the artist.
2. **peacay** Says:
[November 24th, 2011 at 10:13 am](#) 

I think it's <http://www.voguepicturerecords.org>
3. **peacay** Says:
[November 24th, 2011 at 10:15 am](#) 

Ooh... actually, I think it's: <http://voguepicturediscs.blogspot.com/>
4. **Ed Basl** Says:
[February 13th, 2012 at 10:23 pm](#) 

I have done a lot of personal hobby research to identify the Vogue artists who did the illustrations in the records. See <http://www.voguepicturerecords.org/artwork.html>. The artists previously only known by the cryptic or partial signatures in the artwork itself: Corbett, Sprink, Richard Harker, Wirts (also Bill Wirts or Will Wirts on some), R. Forbes, M. Kanouse, and Dorothy

Lee Beals (only on a demo 12 inch Vogue of Bingo Bango Bongo), have been identified through finding family, who were mostly unaware of this small segment of commercial art that their parents were involved in. Their full names are Ruth Corbett Brent, Walter F. Sprink, William J. Wirts, Robert Forbes, Richard F. Harker, Max B. Kanouse and of course Dorothy Lee Beals. I missed meeting any of the artists personally, just barely. I was able to confirm after I started my research in 1999 that I had in fact been in the Phoenix area while Robert Forbes was still alive in 2000, but I didn't actually find his personal information and confirm his identity until after 2002 when I found his obituary. While Dorothy had her full name in the record itself, she was still one of the last artists to be confirmed in my searches. Each has a very interesting story. The Vogue artwork was a very small part of their lives. Unfortunately, the <http://www.AVPRC.org> website went dormant after three of my articles had been published in their monthly newsletters, but they were never added to the site itself as hoped for. One day, I'll publish all seven articles for those who remain interested in the Vogue picture records and their short-lived history. I am still looking for one other Vogue artist named Carl Reynolds, Jr. As best I can determine so far, he only did the three page color foldout artwork in the 1945-1946 Billboard Encyclopedia Annual, Seventh Edition. I do not believe he did any of the records though. While I have found other artwork of his published in several old British periodicals from that era and he can also be found by his artwork in numerous patents through the Patent Office for many inventions from the Detroit, Michigan area in the 1950s, I have not been able to confirm a birth or death date to then begin a confirmed search for family or relatives to be shown his artwork with the signature to then positively identify his signature. If anyone knows this Carl Reynolds Jr., and can assist with confirming his identity or finding his family, it would be appreciated. Enjoy the Vogues and their history.

5. **Ed Basl** Says:

[February 13th, 2012 at 10:55 pm](#)



The <http://www.AVPRC.org> link should be changed to <http://www.voguepicturerecords.org/> for the AVPRC organization site in my previous note.

Also, I'm not sure where the conclusion: "Tom Saffady paid a lot for the artwork" came from, but my research from the few family members that were aware of their parents Vogue work, explain that it provided very modest income as a very small part of their commercial artwork.

You also note: "You could use them as display pieces, but then you run the risk of washing out the lush illustrations, like this example of I Love You in the Daytime Too (R775)." This particular one color light brown record of R775, like the R781, light green tinted record, and the R782, light blue tinted record, were all printed this way, and not just a result of being faded from use. It is simply the way they were originally manufactured. As you properly mention though, the color can fade in all of them somewhat from just hanging in sunlight.

Recently, one of the most comprehensive Vogue picture record collections was offered for sale. I wish I could have afforded it. I don't know if the collector would still sell it. If the University has funds to buy the full collection, it would be well worth it. If you have further interest in that full collection, including many one of a kind, limited release and demo Vogues, I would gladly put you in contact with the collector.

I enjoyed your article.

6. **Ed Basl** Says:

[February 13th, 2012 at 11:30 pm](#)



R780 is the light blue tinted record, not R782. I shouldn't rely on my memory.

7. **Pamela Robinson** Says:

[June 28th, 2012 at 8:00 pm](#)



I have a Vogue Picture record in perfect condition. It is # R758 and it has a different picture on each side. The artist on it is Marion Mann on both sides.

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