

Italian designer wins 'cool' jazz CD cover competition

Jazz always has been associated with a certain 'coolness' factor usually not attached to other music idioms, and the genre's LP coverart has been the subject of countless expensive coffee table books. By Larry Jaffee

The late trumpeter Miles Davis embodied the epitome of jazz cool. Although he died 15 years ago, Davis left behind a treasure trove of music from his 50-year career that is still seeing the light of day through the auspices of his primary label Columbia Records/ Legacy

Jazz, a division of Sony BMG Music Entertainment.

Cool & Collected, released worldwide on September 5, 2006, is the first single CD anthology to zero in on the swirling mythos of 'cool' that defines Davis, spanning 1956 to 1984, with a new previously unreleased bonus remix track to close the programme. This definitive package of all-classic selections will be supported by what Legacy says is one of the 'most aggressive multi-tiered consumer lifestyle marketing campaigns' it has ever launched.

Underscoring the 'hip' factor associated with Cool & Collected is its fascinating cover design by Bert Stefano of Instituto Europea of Design in Italy. His design won a contest arranged with top design schools in 12 countries around the world. Students from these schools created their artwork

based on Legacy's criteria for this Miles Davis album (demographics, marketing concept).

Other schools enlisted for

the design competition were: New York's School of Visual Arts; ESDI (Escola Superior de Desenho Industrial) of Rio de Janeiro; Tokyo Gakugei University; Chelsea College of Art & Design in London; Köln International School of Design in Germany; Royal Academy of Arts at the

Hague; European Volunteer Centre (CEV) of Barcelona; Instituto Europea of Design in Rome and Milan; and Instituto Europea of Design in Madrid.

Such a cross-pollination of art forms (music/art) and educational institutions of higher learning is most welcome, if not integral, for maximising commercial potential, in an age of dwindling CD sales. ●



MILES
Cool & Collected

No two copies are the same for new Beck CD

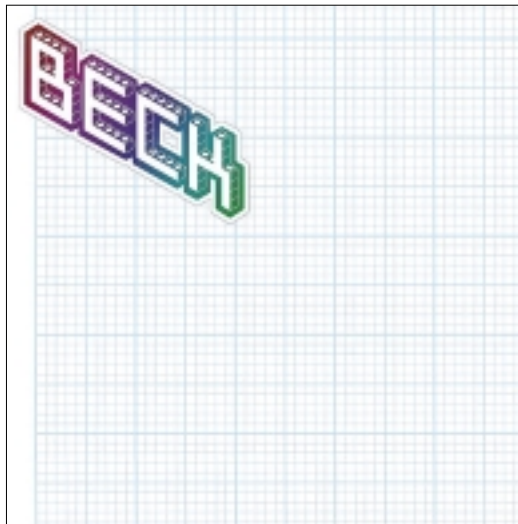
If Miles Davis represented yesteryear's 'cool,' then perhaps no other contemporary musician than Beck embodies today's hipster. By Larry Jaffee

For over a decade, Beck, whose surname is Hansen, has experimented with various cut-up musical styles and first received commercial notice over a decade ago for his hit single *Loser* and follow-up albums *Mellow Gold* and *Odelay*. His audience and stature has since grown over a half dozen albums.

On Beck's upcoming album, *The Information* (Interscope), due October 3, 2006, each CD will feature blank packaging and one of four sets of sticker sheets designed by artists from the US and Europe, allowing consumers to customise the cover however they wish. Beck himself is picking the winning sticker sets (not available at press time), and plans call for displaying the sticker designs at select art galleries.

As Beck explains in the

September 2006 *Wired* magazine cover story, "Cover art and all the paraphernalia that come with albums have always been really



important to me. I'm one of those people who needs a visual crutch for music. But that stuff is being devalued, since so many people listen on their computers.... One cool thing [with *The Information*] is that the CD cover is going to be designed so no two copies are the same. The artwork is going to be customisable. The album will come with all these little stickers – each copy of the disc will have a different set – and you'll use them to create your own version of the cover. The idea is to provide something that calls for interactivity and that's totally different from what you'll have if you just download the album."

Not surprisingly, Beck is the grandson of Fluxus artist Al Hansen, with who he collaborated on a fascinating 1998 book, *Playing with Matches*, which explores the link between art and music.

His 2005 album *Guero* won an Alex Award for Best Limited Edition, and 2002 album *Sea Change* featured four different colour schemes on the cover. ●