

THE MUSIC GOES ROUND AND AROUND

New World Records 80248

The Golden Years of Tin Pan Alley: 1930-1939

The principal force that shaped the lives of Americans in the 1930s was the great economic Depression that began on October 29, 1929, and continued until a measure of recovery and stability was achieved by the New Deal, under the guidance of President Franklin Delano Roosevelt. Coincidental with the breakdown of industrial and economic machinery was a series of significant technological developments in the entertainment industry—primarily in motion pictures, commercial radio, and sound recording—which determined, to an important degree, the forms and the directions that American popular culture was to take.

Although it was in 1927 that the painted, mock-minstrel lips of Al Jolson uttered the screen's first synchronized words, "You ain't heard nothin' yet, folks," in *The Jazz Singer*, it took more than a year for the film industry, theater owners, and movie audiences to adjust to the novelty not only of pictures that could speak but of pictures that could sing as well. Then, composers, lyricists, arrangers, conductors, and musicians clearly heard the sound of money and the challenging ring of new problems issuing from Hollywood, and a new gold rush began. It seemed heaven sent. New York's Tin Pan Alley—with vaudeville in decline, the record business at its nadir, nightclubs in bankruptcy, and the musical theater in trouble—was wasting away. Suddenly, there was background music to be composed and scored, and songs to be written, conducted, and performed for use in hundreds of feature films, short subjects, serials, and even newsreels. For all involved, it became well-paid, on-the-job training. No one, after all, knew quite what would and what wouldn't work. Sound equipment was primitive, and a whole new corps of recording and acoustical technicians had to be developed and schooled. It was all new; it was all exciting; and, for the first few years, film musicals were, on the whole, quite terrible.

There were exceptions. In 1929, King Vidor made an attempt, somewhat naive but extremely daring for its time, at a "folk opera" on film, *Hallelujah*, with an all-black cast. With typical Hollywood insensitivity, that well-known "folk composer," Irving Berlin, was engaged to write the score. In the same year, *Applause*, *Broadway*, *Broadway Babies*, *Broadway Melody*, *Broadway Scandals*, *Gold Diggers of Broadway*, and several other pictures began an apparently endless stream of "backstage" musicals, all of which, including those you've seen this year, had the same plot. Most of the movie musicals of the early years of talking pictures were either clumsy attempts at filming hit Broadway musical comedies and operettas or vehicles for popular vaudeville, radio, theater, and other musical personalities. Songs, for the most part, were chosen haphazardly and rarely had anything to do with the plots. In many cases, they were taken from the backlogs of material brought along by the army of songwriters who had emigrated from New York to Hollywood.

One thing became certain in 1930. The movies most definitely had the power to create hits, and songs like "Three Little Words," "It Happened in Monterey," "Falling in Love Again," "My Ideal," "Puttin' on the Ritz," "Sing You Sinners," and "You Brought a New Kind of Love to Me," all introduced in films, became enormously popular.

By 1933, producers, directors, writers, composers, and lyricists had begun to find their way in the new medium. Rapid advances in sound recording equipment, the use of dubbing and prerecording,

and new concepts of choreography for the camera brought the film musical to a point where it showed signs of becoming an art form in its own right. Warner Brothers brought forth three astonishing musicals, *Footlight Parade*, *Forty-Second Street*, and *Gold Diggers of 1933*, featuring gloriously extravagant, cinematically brilliant, and utterly ridiculous production numbers staged by Busby Berkeley. Also common to the three films was the presence of Ruby Keeler and Dick Powell, personalities possessing magnetic mediocrity, and the infectious, skillful songs of the team of Harry Warren and Al Dubin, among them “Shuffle Off to Buffalo,” “Forty-Second Street” “You’re Getting To Be a Habit with Me,” “Shadow Waltz,” “Remember My Forgotten Man,” “The Gold Digger’s Song (We’re in the Money),” and “Shanghai Lil.”

Another 1933 film, *Flying Down to Rio*, with a score by Vincent Youmans, was notable principally for its pairing of a young ingénue, dancer-comedienne Ginger Rogers, with the veteran Broadway star, Fred Astaire. This was the beginning of a series of musical films, featuring the as yet unsurpassed dancing of Astaire and Rogers, that was not only to add wit and style to the medium but also to utilize original and consistently excellent scores by America’s leading composers and lyricists. *Top Hat* (1935), *Follow the Fleet* (1936), and *Carefree* (1938) had scores by Irving Berlin; the songs in *Swing Time* (1936) were written by Dorothy Fields and Jerome Kern; and *Shall We Dance?* (1937) had music and lyrics by George and Ira Gershwin.

As the decade moved along, as techniques sharpened, and as success patterns become evident, and even predictable, to the major studios, film musicals became more elaborate and Hollywood began to employ its own home-grown, film-oriented units of writers, composers, arrangers, and performers. Bing Crosby, who had served his apprenticeship as a singer with Paul Whiteman and then as a radio performer, established himself as a superstar in *The Big Broadcast* in 1932 and continued, for more than two decades, to reign as Hollywood’s principal hit maker. Such songs as “Please,” “Temptation,” “I’m an Old Cow Hand,” “Pennies from Heaven,” “Sweet Leilani,” “I’ve Got a Pocketful of Dreams,” “Small Fry,” “May I?,” “Love Thy Neighbor,” “Love in Bloom,” “June in January,” “It’s Easy To Remember,” “Soon,” and dozens of others were introduced by Crosby in his films. Among the many other film-musical personalities who became identified with the most important songs of the 1930s were Alice Faye, Frances Langford, Martha Raye, Shirley Temple, Nelson Eddy and Jeanette MacDonald, Allan Jones, Charles “Buddy” Rogers, Dorothy Lamour, Shirley Ross, and Tony Martin.

Hundreds of songwriters were signed to exclusive contracts by the motion picture companies, and a whole new group of composers and lyricists emerged to match Broadway and Tin Pan Alley as a source of popular song hits. Arthur Freed and Nacio Herb Brown, Mack Gordon and Harry Revel, Leo Robin and Ralph Rainger, Sam Coslow, Arthur Johnston, Johnny Burke, Johnny Mercer, Frederick Hollander, Louis Alter, John Green, Harold Adamson, Victor Young, Sidney D. Mitchell and Lew Pollack, Frank Loesser, and Burton Lane are only a few of the songwriters whose primary area of creativity during the 1930s was in Hollywood.

The quality of motion picture music was generally high during the first ten years of sound movies, and a great number of enduring songs were first heard in films. Most of them were a step above the routine output of the music publishing industry in New York but nowhere near the level of songs still being written for the theater.

The Broadway musical is traditionally the primary source of superior popular music in this country. In the 1930s—with 184 new musical comedies and revues opening in New York—it fulfilled its

customary promise. Richard Rodgers and Lorenz Hart, with nine shows; Cole Porter, with eight; Irving Berlin, with two; George and Ira Gershwin, with six; and Jerome Kern, with four, managed to continue supplying the musical theater with songs of phenomenally consistent quality. The mere listing of such shows as *Girl Crazy*, *Of Thee I Sing*, *Porgy and Bess*, *Anything Goes*, *The Boys from Syracuse*, *Roberta*, *On Your Toes*, *Billy Rose's Jumbo* [sic], *Babes in Arms*, *Music in the Air*, and *I Married an Angel*—and such songs as “Smoke Gets in Your Eyes,” “I Got Rhythm,” “Easter Parade,” “Begin the Beguine,” “Where or When,” “Embraceable You,” “This Can’t Be Love,” “Falling in Love with Love,” “Little Girl Blue,” “Heat Wave,” and “Yesterdays”—is enough to evoke not only nostalgia but wonder as well.

In addition to the Grand Masters, Broadway heard songs by such newcomers as Harold Arlen, Kurt Weill, Arthur Schwartz and Howard Dietz, Harold Rome, E. Y. Harburg, and Vernon Duke, as well as scores from England’s Noël Coward and by veterans B. G. DeSylva, Lew Brown, and Ray Henderson, Sigmund Romberg, and Vincent Youmans.

As it was in the latter years of the 1920s—and as it was to be in the 1940s, 1950s, and 1960s—Duke Ellington’s phenomenally fertile creative imagination was a significant factor in the musical life of America in the 1930s. This astonishing composer, possibly the greatest single figure in American music, recorded prolifically and appeared with his orchestra in theaters, nightclubs, and ballrooms, in films, in concerts, and on radio. His jazz compositions and popular songs were not only widely performed by popular singers and dance bands throughout the United States and in Europe but were the subject of scores of treatises, articles, and critical studies by music critics and students of popular culture.

Such compositions as “Sophisticated Lady,” “Mood Indigo,” “I Let a Song Go Out of My Heart,” “It Don’t Mean a Thing (If It Ain’t Got That Swing),” “Prelude to a Kiss,” “Lost in Meditation,” “Caravan,” “Azure,” “Echoes of Harlem,” “In a Sentimental Mood,” “Solitude,” “Drop Me Off in [at] Harlem,” “Lazy Rhapsody,” “Creole Rhapsody,” “Rockin’ in Rhythm,” and dozens of others remain fresh and exciting to this day, and several, despite uninspired lyrics by Ellington’s publisher, Irving Mills, are standards.

Despite its neglect by the intellectual community, jazz, in the 1930s, reached its peak of public acceptance as popular music through the medium of the dance band. Big-band jazz, pioneered in the early years of the decade by Fletcher Henderson, The McKinney Cotton Pickers, The Casa Loma Orchestra, and others, became a dominant factor in popular music. As the country slowly emerged from economic blight, as theaters and dance halls reopened and the record industry, aided by both the availability of inexpensive, electrically driven phonographs and the introduction of the low-priced (thirty-five cent) record, revived, music, and dance music in particular, began once more to take on the aspects of big business.

At some moment in the early 1930s, big-band jazz became “swing music,” and an era began. Perhaps it was when Duke Ellington informed us that “It Don’t Mean a Thing (If It Ain’t Got That Swing),” or, as one story has it, when England’s staid BBC, looking for another word for the suspect “jazz,” settled on “swing” as a descriptive title for one of its dance music programs. At any rate, it arrived, and Benny Goodman became King, and big-band dance music, with a jazz beat, had itself a name. In its wake came new dances and new songs about the new dances. There was also a general classification for those who danced to the new music. Remember? “Jitterbugs” was what they were called. Among the dances, swing and non-swing, figments of songwriters’ imaginations and the real

thing, were, to name a few, the Shag, the Big Apple, the Suzi-Q, the Continental, the Carioca, Truckin', the Yam, Posin', and, from England, the Lambeth Walk. In addition, dancers were "Stompin' at the Savoy," "Begin[ning] the Beguine," "Scattin' at the Kit Kat," and "Jumpin' at the Woodside." Actually, what almost everybody was really doing was the Lindy Hop.

Bands were making records again, traveling everywhere in the country playing one-night stands, and broadcasting regularly both on commercial network programs as well as on "remotes" from ballrooms, hotels, restaurants, and nightclubs. The dance orchestras, both swing and sweet, were instrumental in creating and promoting new songs, and a significant number of the important hits of the 1930s were introduced by them. In the sweet category, Guy Lombardo reigned supreme. But not far behind him in popularity were such favorites as Wayne King, Russ Morgan, Eddy Duchin, Kay Kyser, Leo Reisman, Ray Noble, Vincent Lopez, Hal Kemp, Shep Fields, Jan Garber, Sammy Kaye, Horace Heidt, and (even then) Lawrence Welk. In the swing category, the most important bands were led by Benny Goodman, Tommy Dorsey, Jimmy Dorsey, Glen Gray, Artie Shaw, Duke Ellington, Count Basie, Jimmie Lunceford, Fletcher Henderson, Harry James, Chick Webb, Andy Kirk, Earl Hines, Charlie Barnet, Bunny Berigan, Louis Armstrong, and Erskine Hawkins. Then, of course, there were the singing and "personality" band leaders—Rudy Vallee, Little Jack Little, Will Osborne, Ben Bernie, Art Jarrett, Cab Calloway, Bob Crosby, Woody Herman, and many, many more.

Because the record business had fallen off drastically in the early Depression years, radio had become the major medium of home entertainment, and twenty million listeners to a popular program was not unusual. Broadcasting, however, was a means of communication rather than an art form, and, as far as music was concerned, offered no new creative paths to be explored by composers and lyricists. The musical theater, films, the big bands, and records continued to be the media for the *introduction* of new material. However, the *promotion* of new songs on radio was absolutely necessary to insure commercial success, and the most important indicator of popularity became the weekly radio show, *The Lucky Strike Hit Parade*. On this program, which continued on radio and then on television into the 1950s, millions of Americans were, each week, kept abreast of the best-selling songs of the nation. The achievement of reaching "Number One" on *The Hit Parade* was of tremendous commercial value, and the show's listings were a reasonably accurate reflection of popular taste in music.

Apart from *The Hit Parade* and the nightly broadcasts by orchestras from their work locations, there were a number of music personalities with regular, prominently sponsored radio shows of their own during the 1930s who were, therefore, important to the music trades. Among them were Rudy Vallee, Eddie Cantor, Jessica Dragonette, Kate Smith, Bing Crosby, Paul Whiteman, Morton Downey, Russ Columbo, *The Street Singer* (Arthur Tracy), Lanny Ross, Ruth Etting, Fred Waring, Ben Bernie, Al Jolson, *The Pickens Sisters*, *The Boswell Sisters*, Frank Parker, James Melton, Jane Froman, Mildred Bailey, Julia Sanderson and Frank Crumit, and *The Mills Brothers*.

Dance music led the field throughout the decade, and, apart from Crosby, Russ Columbo, and a very few other "crooners" and popular radio personalities, bands dominated the best-selling record lists. The arrival of swing stimulated great interest in music heretofore neglected by the record-buying public, the big-band instrumental which most often featured solo passages by individual jazz musicians. Many of the Duke Ellington compositions mentioned earlier, as well as such continually popular big and small-band vehicles as "One O'Clock Jump," "South Rampart Street Parade," "Stompin' at the Savoy," "Cherokee," "In the Mood," "Undecided," "Don't Be That Way" "Yancey

Special” and “Sing, Sing, Sing,” became not only best selling records but jazz classics as well, a great number of them still in the active catalogs of the record companies.

With the big-band instrumental a new group of idols came into being— “the sidemen.” Thus working musicians like Harry James, Gene Krupa, Lionel Hampton, Tex Beneke, Glenn Miller, Bunny Berigan, and scores of others were soon to become popular in their own right as a result of their exposure to the public on records and in public appearances. Similarly, band vocalists of the 1930s, such as Perry Como, Frank Sinatra, Dick Haymes, Ella Fitzgerald, Eddy Howard, Helen Forrest, and Jo Stafford, were to become stars in the following decade when the popularity of big-band music declined.

The 1930s offered very few innovations to the sound, form, or content of popular music. The decade did, however, supply us with a very large quantity of superlative songs. Each year produced dozens of durable melodies, songs that have given every indication of continuing to live on in all the varying contexts that time might shape for them . . .

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Side One

Band 1

Stormy Weather

(Ted Koehler and Harold Arlen)

Leo Reisman and His Orchestra. Harold Arlen, vocal.

Recorded February 28, 1933. Originally issued on Victor 24262 (75329-1).

One of the more exotic arteries feeding into the mainstream of American popular music during the immediate pre- and post-Depression years was the nightclub revue, epitomized by those at the historic Cotton Club in New York’s Harlem. Featuring the most popular and indeed the greatest black performers and musicians, the Cotton Club and similar places in major cities were white-owned and –operated and for the most part restricted to white patronage. The scores for the revues were by an impressive and super-talented group of lyricists and composers, among them Dorothy Fields and Jimmy McHugh, Andy Razaf and Fats Waller, Ted Koehler and Harold Arlen, and Duke Ellington.

Koehler and Arlen wrote one of the masterpieces of our popular song literature, “Stormy Weather,” in 1933 for the twenty-second “Cotton Club Parade.” Cab Calloway was to sing it, but the producers, believing that it was more of a woman’s song, gave it to Ethel Waters. Arlen had already

recorded the song himself with Leo Reisman and his orchestra, and “Stormy Weather” was a hit by the time the Cotton Club show opened.

Reisman, whose orchestra Jerome Kern called “the string quartet of dance bands,” was a fine violinist who had been a member of the Baltimore Symphony before embarking on his career in popular music. A “society” band noted for its excellent arrangements and its very special way with show tunes, the Reisman orchestra was for several years a fixture at the chic Central Park Casino in New York (in the park opposite the Plaza Hotel). Featured with Reisman were the pianists Johnny Green, Eddy Duchin, and Nat Brandywynne and the extraordinary singer Lee Wiley.

Lena Horne sang “Stormy Weather,” a favorite of singers, in a film by the same name in 1942, and it has been associated with her ever since. It was also part of Judy Garland’s permanent repertoire.

Lyrics of this song are available from the publisher.

Band 2

How Deep Is the Ocean?

(Irving Berlin)

Bing Crosby.

Recorded October 14, 1932. Originally issued on Brunswick 6406 (B-12472-A).

It is impossible to offer an effective appreciation of Irving Berlin’s staggering contribution to American popular culture in a short paragraph. One of the best and certainly the most prolific of all our popular songwriters, Berlin (born Israel Baline in Temun, Russia, on May 11, 1888) was a consistent contributor of songs of entertainment value, merit, and power for more than half our century. Just a few titles convey something of his range and potency: “Alexander’s Ragtime Band,” “Blue Skies,” “Cheek to Cheek,” “Easter Parade,” “White Christmas,” “God Bless America,” “Oh, How I Hate to Get Up in the Morning,” “There’s No Business like Show Business,” “Say It with Music.”

As difficult to deal with concisely is Bing Crosby, whose career now spans six decades. Crosby was one of the most popular singers, recording artists, radio personalities, and movie stars of the thirties and forties. His casual charm, his relaxed humor, his typically American style, and his unerring way with a song brought him the adulation of millions. It was quite impossible to dislike Bing; he was just too friendly and sweet and uncontroversial.

There is also no way of briefly listing the songs Crosby introduced and popularized. He recorded a mind-boggling number of important songs in the 1930s and is credited with single-handedly being responsible for the success of the Decca record company.

“How Deep Is the Ocean?” is one of the few Irving Berlin songs of that period not associated with either a motion picture or a Broadway show. Berlin wrote it several years earlier than its 1931 publication date but held it back because he didn’t think it was a terribly important piece. Obviously, he was mistaken.

Lyrics of this song are available from the publisher.

Band 3

Heartaches

(John Klenner and Al Hoffman)

Ted Weems and His Orchestra. Elmo Tanner, whistling.

Recorded August 4, 1933. Originally issued on Bluebird BB B-5131 (76847-1).

In 1947 Kurt Webster, a disc jockey in Charlotte, North Carolina, on some sort of mischievous and certainly intuitive impulse began programming an old record of a catchy obscure 1931 song called “Heartaches.” Ted Weems and his orchestra had first recorded the tune for Victor in 1933 and then rerecorded it for Decca in 1938, each time featuring his virtuoso whistler Elmo Tanner, and each time achieving only limited public recognition.

But somehow, in 1947, by virtue of one of those mysterious quirks of popular taste, the 1933 recording became a tremendous hit. In response to Webster’s repeated playing, orders for the record began to swamp local dealers. Disc jockeys in other cities adopted the Weems record, and within the next twelve months more than a million copies were sold. The song reached number one on the best-seller lists.

This infectious, happy piece was written by two accomplished and prolific Tin Pan Alley veterans. Al Hoffman, the composer, in particular had a long and impressive list of commercial successes, especially nonsense and novelty songs. Among his many well-known titles are “Bibbiddi-Bobbidi-Boo,” “Mairzy Doats,” “Chi-Baba Chi-Baba,” “If I Knew You Were Comin’ I’d’ve Baked a Cake,” and “Papa Loves Mambo.”

Ted Weems’ dance band, a favorite in the Midwest during the late twenties, the thirties, and much of the forties, gained national recognition in 1929 with a major hit recording of the novelty song “Piccolo Pete.” The as widely seen in ballrooms and vaudeville theaters but was best known for its appearances on network radio shows starring such favorites as Jack Benny, Fibber McGee and Molly, and James Melton. Among the Weems vocalists who went on to careers on their own were Art Jarrett, Red Ingle, Marilyn Maxwell, and Perry Como.

Heartaches, heartaches,
My loving you meant only heartaches.
Your kiss was such a sacred thing to me,
I can’t believe it’s just a burning memory.
Heartaches, heartaches,
What does it matter how my heart
breaks?
I should be happy with someone new,
But my heart aches for you.

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Band 4

All of Me

(Seymour Simons and Gerald Marks)

Russ Columbo.

Recorded December 29, 1931. Originally issued on Victor 22903 (BS-71208-1).

The product of two Tin Pan Alley stalwarts, composer Gerald Marks and lyricist Seymour Simons, “All of Me” was introduced on radio by vaudevillian Belle Baker, featured in the dramatic film *Careless Lady*, and then recorded and performed by just about everybody. The structure of the music industry in the twenties and thirties called for the widest dissemination of a potential hit. No one singer or band could be permitted exclusive control of a song, and it was not unusual to find three or four leading recording artists competing for public favor with the same song. Sometimes the best singer won, sometimes the most powerful.

For a very short period, 1931-34, the brightest young singing star in the country was Russ Columbo, who had come into public view as a vocalist with Gus Arnheim’s band at the Cocolanut Grove in Hollywood. Handsome in the style of Rudolph Valentino, Columbo emerged as one of pop music’s first sex symbols and very quickly became a sought-after radio personality as well as a leading recording artist. His smooth high baritone, his crooning approach to ballads, and his good looks all worked together. Columbo was being made ready for the ultimate success: stardom in films. He had already made several two-reelers and had had roles in three features. His name was becoming common in gossip columns (linked romantically to Carole Lombard). Then, on September 2, 1934, Russ Columbo was killed in a bizarre shooting accident. Today we can only speculate whether his career would have developed in the same direction or to the same degree as that of his contemporary and principal competitor, Bing Crosby.

All of me,
Why not take all of me,
Can’t you see I’m no good without you.

Take my lips,
I want to lose them.
Take my arms,
I’ll never use them.

Your goodbye
Left me with eyes that cry,
How can I go on, dear, without you.

You took the part
That once was my heart,
So why not take all of me.

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Band 5

Blue Moon

(Lorenz Hart and Richard Rodgers)

Connee Boswell.

Recorded January 15, 1935. Originally issued on Brunswick 7363 (B-16642-A).

“Blue Moon” is one of those rare Rodgers and Hart songs that was not launched in either a Broadway musical or a Hollywood motion picture. Rodgers wrote the melody for Jean Harlow to sing in a film called *Hollywood Party*. The first lyric was titled “Prayer.” But Harlow never made the film, and the song was dropped. The second incarnation was called “Manhattan Melodrama,” for a film of the same name. That didn’t quite work either, and Hart wrote another lyric, “The Bad in Ev’ry Man,” for Shirley Ross to sing in the film.

Rodgers and Hart’s publisher prevailed on Hart to do still another version. “Blue Moon” was the happy result, and the sheet music became the best-selling Rodgers and Hart song up to that time.

Among the first recordings of “Blue Moon” was that by Connee (nee Connie) Boswell, whose career until the mid-thirties had been as one of the enormously popular Boswell Sisters (with Martha and Vet). The vocal group was highly regarded by musicians and jazz buffs because of its swinging approach to popular songs, and Connee especially developed a large and devoted following. She was active well into the 1950s and recorded widely with such famous musicians as Bing and Bob Crosby, Woody Herman, Red Nichols, the Casa Loma Band, and Tommy and Jimmy Dorsey. Afflicted with polio, she performed in a wheelchair for most of her career. Connee Boswell died in 1976.

Blue moon, you saw me standing alone,
Without a dream in my heart,
Without a love of my own.

Blue moon, you knew just what I was
 there for,
You heard me saying a pray’r for
Someone I really could care for.

And then there suddenly appeared
 before me
The only one my arms will ever hold.
I heard somebody whisper “Please adore
 me,
And when I looked, the moon had
 turned to gold!

Blue moon! Now I’m no longer alone
Without a dream in my heart,
Without a love of my own.

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Band 6

Ghost of a Chance

(Bing Crosby, Ned Washington, and Victor Young)

John Kirby and His Orchestra. Mildred Bailey, vocal.

Recorded June 27, 1939. Originally issued on Vocalion 5086 (24820-A).

The team of Ned Washington and Victor Young is responsible for some of the loveliest musical moments in the short but lively history of contemporary popular music. Apart from the haunting “Ghost of a Chance,” composer Young and lyricist Washington collaborated on “A Hundred Years from Today,” “Can’t We Talk It Over?,” “My Foolish Heart,” “Stella by Starlight,” and “Green Dolphin Street,” the last three adapted from dramatic themes Young wrote for films.

A brilliant violinist, conductor, and orchestrator, Victor Young boasted one of the most lyrical gifts in American music. His scores for *For Whom the Bell Tolls*, *Golden Earrings*, *Samson and Delilah*, *My Foolish Heart*, *Shane*, *Around the World in Eighty Days*, and many other memorable movies established him as the leading creator of romantic (and durable) themes in Hollywood.

Bing Crosby, who introduced “Ghost of a Chance” on records and on radio, is listed on the sheet music as a writer of the song. (It has long been a practice in the music industry to cut in singers and leaders for a percentage of the writers’ royalties for a song. But the performers have rarely served in a creative capacity.)

One of the many singers who took “Ghost of a Chance” into her repertoire was “The Rockin’-Chair Lady,” Mildred Bailey, whose radio theme song in the early 1930s was Hoagy Carmichael’s “Rockin’ Chair.” She was part Indian, and one of the two or three greatest jazz singers of our time. Her brother, Al Rinker, was one of the Rhythm Boys (with Harry Barris and Bing Crosby), who sang with Paul Whiteman’s Orchestra. From 1936 to 1939 she co-directed, with her husband Red Norvo, her own band and recorded prolifically, most often with the best jazz musicians. Mildred Bailey died in 1951, penniless and virtually forgotten. Happily, many of her recordings, as relevant today as they were in the thirties and forties, are still available not only to those who remember but also to those who may be fortunate enough to make discoveries.

I need your love so badly,
I love you oh so madly,
But I don’t stand a ghost of a chance
with you!

I thought at last I’d found you,
But other loves surround you,
And I don’t stand a ghost of a chance
with you!

If you'd surrender
Just for a tender
Kiss or two,
You might discover
That I'm the lover
Meant for you,
And I'd be true.

But what's the good of scheming,
I know I must be dreaming,
For I don't stand a ghost of a chance
with you!

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Band 7

Shoe Shine Boy

(Sammy Cahn and Saul Chaplin)

Louis Armstrong and His Orchestra.

Recorded December 19, 1935. Originally issued on Decca 685 (60250).

Louis Armstrong introduced "Shoe Shine Boy" in 1936 at Connie's Inn, a New York nightclub featuring leading black entertainers. Like the Cotton Club, Connie's was owned, operated, and patronized by whites. As noted elsewhere in this essay, prominent songwriters were engaged to write special songs and other material for these clubs' revues. Two young initiates, Sammy Cahn and Saul Chaplin, who had started their own dance band, the Pals of Harmony, and who had written a successful swing novelty, "Rhythm Is Our Business," for the Jimmie Lunceford Orchestra, were asked to write a song for Armstrong. "Shoe Shine Boy" was it.

Chaplin, who went on to become a successful producer of musical films, and Cahn, one of the most consistent writers of fine songs for movies, collaborated on a number of thirties hits, among them "Please Be Kind," "Bei Mir Bist Du Schoen," and "Until the Real Thing Comes Along."

Usually ignored in the frequent critical appraisals of Louis Armstrong is that he was a major popular singer in addition to being possibly the greatest jazz musician of our time. Armstrong's vocal sound was unmistakably his own, but so were his humor, his phrasing, his timing, and his extraordinary musical intelligence. In his later years, his performances throughout the world were as an entertainer rather than as a jazzman, and scores of popular songwriters are indebted to this remarkable artist for his distinctive and sometimes definitive performances of their work. Armstrong introduced, popularized, or became identified with a great number of songs, among them "When It's Sleepy Time Down South" (his orchestra's theme song), "Shine," "I'm Confessin'," "Shadrack," "I Can't Give You Anything but Love," "Mack the Knife," and, most recently, "Hello, Dolly."

Tho' you haven't many toys,
You don't envy any boys.
Ev'ry day's a work day,
Your work is just a game;
I'd like to sing your praise,
But I don't know your name.

You're just a shoe shine boy,
You work hard all day,
Shoe shine boy,
Got no time to play.
Ev'ry nickel helps a lot,
So, shine, shine, shoe shine boy.

You find joy
In the things you do,
Shoe shine boy,
Seldom ever blue,
You're content with what you've got,
So shine, shine, shoe shine boy.

People look at you with scorn
'Cause your clothes are worn and torn,
Still you never whine.
You keep walking up and down the
street,
Pleading with each one you meet,
"Brother, can you spare a shine?"

Shoe shine boy,
Soon the day will come,
Shoe shine boy,
Soon a tune you'll hum.
Ev'ry nickel helps a lot,
So shine, shine, shoe shine boy,
Shine, shine, shoe shine boy.

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Side Two

Band 1

The Music Goes Round and Round

(Red Hodgson, Ed Farley, and Mike Riley)

Mike Riley-Eddie Farley and Their Onyx Club Boys.

Recorded September 26, 1935. Originally issued on Decca 578 (60004-A).

In the early years of the century they were called “nut songs,” but as popular music began to be taken seriously, nonsense lyrics set to music began to be termed “novelty songs.” The 1930s had its share: “Goofus,” “A-Tisket A-Tasket,” “Cockeyed Mayor of Kaunakakai,” “Flat Foot Floogie,” “Hold Tight (Want Some Sea Food, Mama),” “Three Little Fishes,” “Hut Sut Song,” “Inka Dinka Doo,” “I’se A-Muggin’,” “Knock, Knock, Who’s There?,” “Shoot the Sherbert to Me, Herbert,” “Ti-Pi-Tin,” and the most popular of all, “The Music Goes Round and Round.” It is about as fruitful to attempt to explain flagpole sitting, silly putty, or hula hoops as to try to understand the periodic, apparently universal surge of popularity of songs like these.

West Fifty-second Street in New York was a source of tremendous musical energy during the 1930s [see New World Records NW 250: *Little Club Jazz*]. The concentration of nightclubs (most of them former speakeasies) on that street employed large numbers of singers, instrumentalists, and bands that consumed and created a great quantity of songs.

In 1935 the renowned Onyx Club began to feature a swing- and Dixieland-oriented small combo led by two veteran dance-band musicians, Eddie Farley (trumpet) and Mike Riley (trombone). The band never took itself quite seriously and resorted to novelty songs and a great deal of on-stage clowning. One of its routines had something to do with the mechanics of a brass instrument. The song was called “The Music Goes Round and Round,” and for some profoundly mysterious reason it became one of the biggest hits of the decade. So far, deep analysis of its musical structure, the lyrics, and the performances on the recording has yielded no satisfactory explanation for the song’s extraordinary popularity. But, as the sage said, that’s show biz.

Lyrics of this song are available from the publisher.

Band 2

Until the Real Thing Comes Along

(Sammy Cahn, Saul Chaplin, L. E. Freeman, Mann Holiner, and Alberta Nichols)

Andy Kirk and His Twelve Clouds of Joy. Pha Terrell, vocal.

Recorded April 3, 1936. Originally issued on Decca 809 (60972).

Owing to legal and creative webs, “Until the Real Thing Comes Along” has two publication dates and two sets of writers. In its first incarnation, in 1932, it was introduced in a revue titled *Rhapsody in Black*. It became popular, however, as a result of the recording by Andy Kirk and his Clouds of Joy, featuring the distinctively named vocalist Pha (pronounced “Fay”) Terrell.

Kirk organized his band in Kansas City in 1929 and continued playing until 1948. Principally noted for its vigorous Kansas City jazz style, the band was distinguished by the piano playing and arrangements of Mary Lou Williams, an outstanding soloist, orchestrator, and composer who went on to become one of the most influential figures in contemporary jazz. Another distinction was the band’s early use of amplified guitar. Kirk’s 1939 hit recording of “Floyd’s Guitar Blues,” featuring Floyd Smith, had a great deal to do with the subsequent rhythm-section sound of popular music.

During the 1930s, dance bands like Kirk's, with numerous late-night broadcasts from ballrooms and nightclubs throughout the country, were primary means of exposing new popular songs, and plugs on such broadcasts, especially those that reached an entire network of stations, became major sources of income to songwriters and music publishers. Since disc-jockey shows were virtually unknown until late in the decade, the national popularity of "Until the Real Thing Comes Along" can only be attributed to Kirk's broadcasts from the Midwest.

This quintessential torch song, long known to black audiences as "The Slave Song," has remained in the repertoires of numerous rhythm-and-blues singers and bands.

Lyrics of this song are available from the publisher.

Band 3

When My Dream Boat Comes Home

(Cliff Friend and Dave Franklin)

Guy Lombardo and His Royal Canadians. Lebert Lombardo, vocal.

Recorded September 17, 1936. Originally issued on Victor 25435 (0703-1).

"The Sweetest Music This Side of Heaven," long the slogan of Guy Lombardo and His Royal Canadians, a dance orchestra known to millions, characterizes the approach of this apparently indestructible institution of American entertainment.

Brothers Lebert, Victor, Carmen, and Guy Lombardo and their fellow musicians began making their distinctive kind of music in 1924, more than fifty years ago. Unpretentiously dedicated to providing uncomplicated dance music for uncomplicated audiences, the Lombardos sold more than one hundred million records from 1927 to 1950 and still maintain an enormous following.

Though occasionally sneered at by more sophisticated musicians, Lombardo music has its own integrity. It is dedicated to the traditional popular song and the hallowed American pastime of polite social dancing. It never strays from its sweet, straight, unsurprising path.

The affinity between the traditional Tin Pan Alley songwriter and the Lombardo's band is nearly ideal, and Cliff Friend and Dave Franklin were typical creators of songs perfect for the Lombardo treatment.

Together or with other collaborators, Friend and Franklin turned out a substantial number of familiar songs and more than a few memorable ones, including "The Anniversary Waltz," "You Can't Stop Me from Dreaming," "The Merry-Go-Round Broke Down," "June Night," "Then I'll Be Happy," "Time Waits for No One," "Trade Winds," and "When My Dream Boat Comes Home."

Franklin and Friend were members of a now nearly extinct breed of craftsmen. Such artisans wrote songs to order for bands, vaudeville and radio personalities, and recording artists, and under quota contracts with music publishers. They worked out of offices in Tin Pan Alley and made their rounds demonstrating and plugging their wares. They performed their songs to entertainers in dressing rooms, hotel rooms, rehearsal rooms, and steam rooms. The big score of a journeyman songwriter

was a bandleader like Guy Lombardo, and Lombardo always listened to Cliff Friend and Dave Franklin.

Dreams call to me
Over a rose-tinted sea,
I wait on the shore
For the one I adore.

When my dream boat comes home,
Then my dreams no more will roam,
I will meet you and greet you,
Hold you closely, my own.

Moonlit water will sing
Of the tender love you bring,
We'll be sweethearts forever,
When my dream boat comes home.

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Band 4

Once in a While

(Bud Green and Michael Edwards)

Martha Raye.

Recorded October 8, 1939. Originally issued on Columbia 35260 (LA2020).

Tommy Dorsey, trombone-playing leader of one of the most popular dance bands of the thirties, introduced this song as an instrumental by violinist Michael Edwards under the title “Dancing with You.” The seductive melody was then turned over to the very experienced and capable Bud Green for a suitable lyric, and Green, whose credits range from “Alabamy Bound” and “Flat Foot Floogie” to “Sentimental Journey,” came up with “Once in a While.” Dorsey recorded the song with Jack Leonard doing the vocal, and it was an instant hit.

When a song began to attract attention in the thirties, everybody joined in to cover, and versions of the tune almost invariably were made available by every record company. Copies of the song were then printed and placed on sale with photographs of different performers on separate editions. It was a big and profitable business, and by diligent promotion a song could be kept on the best-seller list for as long as a year.

One of the most impressive covers of “Once in a While” was Martha Raye’s for Columbia. What nearly everyone forgets about Martha Raye is that she is as good a singer as a comedienne. Her vocal talents were explosively brought to public attention with her performance (and subsequent recording) of Sam Coslow’s rhythm novelty “You’ll Have to Swing It,” popularly known as “Mr. Paganini,” in the motion picture *Rhythm on the Range* (with Bing Crosby) in 1936. Raye had sung in nightclubs and with bands led by Paul Ash and Louis Prima. Literally born in a theater, she made her

first appearance on stage at the age of three with her vaudeville-trouper parents in 1919, and has been working in all areas of the entertainment business ever since. Many connoisseurs of comedy feel that her performance opposite Charlie Chaplin in the film *Monsieur Verdoux* (1947) was a masterpiece.

Once in a while
Will you try to give one little thought to
 me
Though someone else may be
Nearer your heart.

Once in a while
Will you dream of the moments I shared
 with you,
Moments before we two
Drifted apart.

In love's smoldering ember,
One spark may remain.
If love still can remember,
The spark may burn again.

I know that I'll
Be contented with yesterday's memory,
Knowing you think of me
Once in a while.

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Band 5

Undecided

(Sid Robin and Charles Shavers)

Chick Webb and His Orchestra. Ella Fitzgerald, vocal.

Recorded February 17, 1939. Originally issued on Decca 2323 (65039).

A riff is a phrase played by a dance or swing band behind a solo instrumentalist or singer, or else played as a countermelody by one section of the orchestra while another section plays the dominant theme.

This off-the-cuff definition is by way of an introduction to the song "Undecided," which undoubtedly began life as a riff as did so many popular songs of the 1930s that emanated from original instrumental compositions played by bands. When a riff-tune was catchy and attractive to audiences, lyric writers were summoned, and a song was born. So it was with "In the Mood," "Stompin' at the Savoy," "Don't Be That Way," at least half of Duke Ellington's work, and hundreds of other songs born out of the creativity of musicians and composers working in the

bands of the twenties, thirties, and forties. "Undecided," composed by trumpet player Charlie Shavers and part of the repertoire of John Kirby's little band during the late 1930s, was commercial enough to move into the mainstream of popular songs, and the assignment for lyrics was given to Tin Pan Alleyite Sid Robin.

Of the many recordings made of the song version, the most notable was that by Chick Webb and his orchestra, featuring his teenaged vocalist Ella Fitzgerald. She had only recently made her debut as winner of an amateur contest at the Harlem Opera House in New York and in 1935 was hired by drummer Webb. In 1938 the Webb-Fitzgerald recording of the nonsense-novelty song "A-Ticket A-tasket" became Ella's first national hit. Considered by many fellow singers and by musicians, fans, and critics to be the best singer of popular songs and jazz ever, Ella Fitzgerald, with her matronly figure, heavy eyeglasses, and shy and awkward stage manner, continues to enthrall audiences everywhere in the western world.

First you say you do and then you don't,
And then you say you will and then you
won't.
You're undecided now,
So what are you gonna do?

Now you want to play and then it's no,
And when you say you'll stay that's
when you go.
You're undecided now,
So what are you gonna do?

I've been sitting on a fence,
And it doesn't make much sense,
'Cause you keep me in suspense,
And you know it.

Then you promise to return,
When you don't I really burn,
Well, I guess I'll never learn,
And I show it.

If you've got a heart and if you're kind,
Then don't keep us apart, make up your
mind.
You're undecided now,
So what are you gonna do?

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Band 6

Heart and Soul

(Frank Loesser and Hoagy Carmichael)

Larry Clinton and His Orchestra. Bea Wain, vocal.

Recorded February 24, 1938. Originally issued on Victor 26046 (026690-1).

During his four years as a ranking dance-band leader, Larry Clinton recorded the impressive total of 14 songs. Now virtually forgotten, Clinton was a master swing-era composer and arranger whose compositions, among them “The Dipsy Doodle,” “Satan Takes a Holiday,” “Study in Brown,” and “Midnight in a Madhouse,” were standard swing-band fare for more than a decade. He also achieved a degree of notoriety for his popular arrangements of classical melodies, the most popular of which, “My Reverie,” was adapted from “Reverie,” a piano piece by Debussy. Clinton’s orchestra featured the robust stylings of Bea Wain, one of the few vocalists of the time to have an identifiable sound.

“Heart and Soul” was heard first in a movie short featuring the Clinton band. In no way unusual in music or lyrics, it is nevertheless a nearly perfect example of the American popular song. The melody is simple, direct, and memorable. The words follow suit. The song works the first time one hears it and survives year after year after year.

To list the successes of Hoagy Carmichael and Frank Loesser together, separately, or with other writers would demand more space than we have, but we must mention “Star Dust,” “Rockin’ Chair,” “Georgia on My Mind,” “Two Sleepy People,” “Small Fry,” “Skylark,” “Praise the Lord and Pass the Ammunition,” “Spring Will Be a Little Late This Year,” “Baby, It’s Cold Outside,” “Once in Love with Amy,” and (by Frank Loesser unassisted) the scores of *Where’s Charley?*, *Guys and Dolls*, and *The Most Happy Fella*.

Carmichael, well known through his many vocal recordings as well as his frequent appearances in films and on radio and television, wrote his first songs for jazz bands in the late 1920s, among them “Riverboat Shuffle” and “Washboard Blues.” Now in his seventies, he still appears on television talk shows and at songwriters’ gatherings.

Frank Loesser, who died in 1969, began his songwriting career in 1931, principally as a lyricist. After a phenomenally successful career in Hollywood, he began writing his own music, publishing his own songs, and even co-producing his own Broadway shows. One of his last efforts, and his most ambitious, *The Most Happy Fella* is the closest a theater composer has come to the creation of native American opera since Gershwin’s *Porgy and Bess*.

Heart and soul,
I fell in love with you,
Heart and soul,
The way a fool would do,
Madly, because you held me tight
And stole a kiss in the night.

Heart and soul,
I begged to be adored,

Lost control
And tumbled overboard
Gladly, that magic night we kissed
There in the moon mist.

Oh! but your lips were thrilling,
Much too thrilling.
Never before were mine so
Strangely willing.

But now I see
What one embrace can do,
Look at me,
It's got me loving you
Madly, that little kiss you stole
Held all my heart and soul.

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Band 7

'Tain't What You Do (It's the Way That Cha Do It)

(Sy Oliver and James "Trummy" Young)

Jimmie Lunceford and His Orchestra. Trummy Young, vocal.

Recorded January 3, 1939. Originally issued on Vocalion 4582 (23905-1).

In 1939 swing was the most listened-to and danced-to music in America. The big bands were, in the language of show business, "box office." Swing records were best-sellers, and swing songs often made it to the top of the Hit Parade.

Among the favorites in ballrooms and theaters and on records was the Jimmie Lunceford band. A not terribly gifted saxophone player but a marvelous organizer and leader of musicians, Lunceford began his band-leading career in Memphis, Tennessee, in 1927, made his first record in 1930, but didn't hit his peak until the middle thirties, when his band became recognized as a disciplined, musically potent, and, most important, entertaining unit. His arrangements, mostly by vocalist and trumpet player Sy Oliver, were mellifluous, swinging, and filled with humor. Lunceford's hit recordings, many of them featuring sprightly vocal trios interspersed with solos by some of the best jazz musicians playing in bands, became mass-market favorites as well as specialized fare for the jazz fan. Among the more popular Lunceford recordings were "Ain't She Sweet," "Margie," "Cheatin' on Me," "Blues in the Night," and the riff novelties "Well All Right Then" and "'Tain't What You Do." The latter bit of infectious non-sense is by Sy Oliver and James "Trummy" Young. After his Lunceford period, Oliver became an arranger for Tommy Dorsey and then led his own band. Young, an outstanding jazz trombone player, is perhaps best known for his long stint with Louis Armstrong, from 1952 until Armstrong's death in 1974.

'Tain't what you do, it's the way that
cha do it,
'Tain't what you do, it's the way that
cha do it,
'Tain't what you do, it's the way that
cha do it,
That's what gets results.
(Repeat)

You can try hard, don't mean a thing,
Take it easy, then your jive will swing.

'Tain't what you do, it's the place that
cha do it,
'Tain't what you do, it's the time that
cha do it,
'Tain't what you do, it's the way that
cha do it,
That's what gets results.

'Tain't what you do, it's the way that
cha do it,
'Tain't what you say, it's the way that
cha say it,
That's what gets results.

'Tain't what you croon, it's the way that
cha croon it
'Tain't what you croon, it's the way that
cha croon it,
'Tain't what you croon, it's the way that
cha croon it,
That's what gets results.

If you're lonesome, and on the shelf
It's your own fault, so just blame your-
self.

'Tain't what you say, it's the place that
cha say it,
'Tain't what you croon, it's the time that
cha croon it,
'Tain't what you do, it's the way that cha
do it,
That's what gets results.

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Side One (Total time 22:17)

1. STORMY WEATHER
 (Ted Koehler and Harold Arlen) 3:16
(publ. Arko Music Corp.)
 Harold Arlen with Leo Reisman and His Orchestra

2. HOW DEEP IS THE OCEAN?
 (Irving Berlin) 3:11
(publ. Irving Berlin Music Corp.)
 Bing Crosby

3. HEARTACHES (John Klenner and Al Hoffman) <i>(publ. MCA Music, A Division of MCA, Inc.)</i> Ted Weems and His Orchestra with Elmo Tanner	2:32
4. ALL OF ME (Seymour Simons and Gerald Marks) <i>(publ. Bourne Co./Marlong Music Corp.)</i> Russ Columbo	3:07
5. BLUE MOON (Richard Rodgers and Lorenz Hart) <i>(publ. Robbins Music Corp.)</i> Connee Boswell	3:09
6. GHOST OF A CHANCE (Bing Crosby, Ned Washington, and Victor Young) <i>(Mills Music, Inc. and Victor Young Pub., Inc.)</i> Mildred Bailey accompanied by John Kirby's Orchestra	3:08
7. SHOE SHINE BOY (Sammy Cahn and Saul Chaplin) <i>(publ. Cahn Music Company/Dorsey Bros. Music Division of Music Sales Corp.)</i> Louis Armstrong and His Orchestra	3:17
Side Two (Total time 21:30)	
1. THE MUSIC GOES ROUND AND ROUND ("Red" Hodgson, Ed Farley, and Mike Riley) <i>(publ. Anne-Rachel Music Corp.)</i> Riley-Farley and Their Onyx Club Boys	2:54
2. UNTIL THE REAL THING COMES ALONG (Sammy Cahn, Saul Chaplin, L. E. Freeman, Mann Holiner, and Alberta Nichols) <i>(publ. Chappell & Co./Anne-Rachel Music Corp.)</i> Pha Terrell with Andy Kirk and His Clouds of Joy	3:00
3. WHEN MY DREAMBOAT COMES HOME (Cliff Friend and Dave Franklin) <i>(publ. Warner Brothers Music)</i> Lebert Lombardo with Guy Lombardo and His Royal Canadians	3:12
4. ONCE IN A WHILE (Bud Green and Michael Edwards) <i>(publ. Miller Music Corp.)</i> Martha Raye	2:26

5. UNDECIDED (Sid Robin and Charles Shavers)	3:15
<i>(publ. MCA Music, A Division of MCA, Inc.)</i>	
Ella Fitzgerald with Chick Webb and His Orchestra	
6. HEART AND SOUL (Frank Loesser and Hoagy Carmichael)	3:07
<i>(publ. Famous Music Corp.)</i>	
Bea Wain with Larry Clinton and His Orchestra	
7. "TAIN'T WHAT YOU DO (IT'S THE WAY THAT CHA DO IT) (Sy Oliver and James "Trummy" Young)	3:03
<i>(publ. MCA Music, A Division of MCA, Inc.)</i>	
Trummy Young with Jimmie Lunceford and His Orchestra	

Full discographic information and a complete list of the performers for each selection may be found within the individual discussions of the works in the liner notes.

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