

1947



TIME
LIFE
MUSIC



Hoagy Carmichael

On December 26, 1947, New York radio personality Bob Smith, host of the children's show *Triple B Ranch*, appeared on the premiere broadcast of NBC's new television program *Puppet Playhouse* with his unseen character "Elmer," who hid in a desk and chortled his opening line: "Howdy doody, boys and girls!" The show did so well that within months "Elmer," now a marionette renamed "Howdy Doody," and Smith, known as "Buffalo Bob," were making television history.

TV was in its infancy in 1947. The four networks, NBC, CBS, ABC and Dumont, broadcast only a couple of hours weekdays and Sundays, but not on Saturdays. The slim fare included shows like *Gillette Cavalcade of Sports*, *Small Fry Club* and *Kraft Television Theater*.

In a year that saw the invention of the transistor and the breaking of the sound barrier, the hit parade was dominated by sentimental ballads and novelty tunes. And though the big-band era enjoyed a brief Indian summer that year, the jazzier, more swinging numbers of a couple of years earlier were scarce.

From the late '30s, Count Basie's orchestra created an incredible body of classic big-band jazz instrumentals and became one of the truly great names in swing. Ironically, their only chart topper wasn't a jazz number but the novelty **Open the Door, Richard!**, sung by trumpeter Harry "Sweets" Edison and trombonist Bill Johnson. Written by jazz saxophonist Jack McVea with help from bassist Frank Clarke to fill out a McVea record date in December 1946, the song was also released by seven other artists in 1947, including the Pied Pipers and country singer Hank Penny.

Former Glenn Miller tenor saxophonist-vocalist Tex Beneke, fronting an orchestra managed by the Miller estate, remained an appealing vocalist on **A Gal in Calico**, a tune used in the movie musical *The Time, the Place and the Girl*, starring Dennis Morgan and Jack Carson. The arrangement was based on the Miller sound, right down to the Modernaires-style background vocals of the Crew Chiefs.

Bandleader and singer Eddy Howard, former vocalist with the Dick Jurgens Orchestra, rode a wave of success in 1947 that had begun the previous year with *To Each His Own*. Having left Columbia for Majestic Records, Howard stuck to a formula that worked in his previous hits, singing the lead in the easygoing **I Wonder, I Wonder, I Wonder** with a vocal trio.

Nineteen forty-seven's most unusual No. 1 hit was **Heartaches** by the Ted Weems Orchestra, featuring the whistling of Elmo Tanner. *Heartaches* sounded dated amid the smoother, more sophisticated sounds of the '40s, and with good reason—Weems had recorded it in August 1933! A North Carolina disc jockey resurrected it, and it wound up selling two million copies.

As Weems recalled the earlier recording, "The publishers of 'Heartaches' had been begging us to put the tune on the air. So one night we introduced it . . . with that corny sort of half-rumba rhythm and with all those effects. After the broadcast, the writers and the publisher really let me have it. They claimed I was ruining their song . . . the wrong interpretation and all that. We never heard from them after that . . . not even to say that maybe I wasn't such a complete idiot after all."

Among 1947's more offbeat artists was Dorothy Shay, known as "the Park Avenue Hillbilly" because of her penchant for singing decidedly rural songs while dressed in lavish gowns and backed by a full orchestra. **Feudin' and Fightin'**, from the Broadway musical *Luffing Room Only*, fit Shay's clever approach perfectly.

Al Jolson's dramatic, expansive stage performances and numerous recordings throughout the teens and Roaring Twenties made him one of America's great entertainers and paved the way for many other vocalists. But after the early '30s, younger, more modern singers like Bing Crosby derailed his popularity.

Jolson's career took a dramatic upswing in the wake of the 1946 film *The Jolson Story*. On the film's sound track the singer re-created his classic numbers and introduced **Anniversary Song**, which became a standard. Written by Jolson and Saul Chaplin and backed by Morris Stoloff's orchestra, it gave Jolson a top-10 hit for the first time in 17 years.

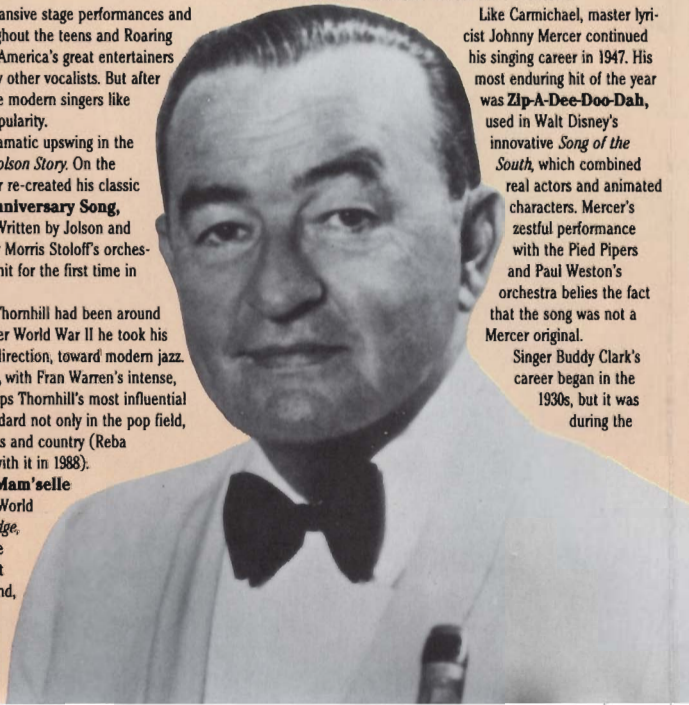
Pianist-arranger Claude Thornhill had been around since the late 1930s, but after World War II he took his unit in a more progressive direction, toward modern jazz. **A Sunday Kind of Love**, with Fran Warren's intense, sensual vocal, proved perhaps Thornhill's most influential recording: It became a standard not only in the pop field, but also in rhythm and blues and country (Reba McEntire had a top-10 hit with it in 1988).

The atmospheric ballad **Mam'selle** was originally heard in the World War I drama *The Razor's Edge*, starring Tyrone Power, Gene Tierney and Clifton Webb. It became a smash for Art Lund, an ex-Benny Goodman vocalist formerly known by his real name, Art London. The song was the first substantial success for MGM

Master songsmith Hoagy Carmichael, composer of the standard *Stardust* and a gifted vocalist and actor himself, had his biggest hit in 1947—a nonoriginal song. **Huggin' and Chalkin'** was written by Clancy Hayes and Kermit Goell, and featured a typically relaxed Carmichael vocal with backup from the Chickadees and Vic Schoen's orchestra.

Like Carmichael, master lyricist Johnny Mercer continued his singing career in 1947. His most enduring hit of the year was **Zip-A-Dee-Do-Dah**, used in Walt Disney's innovative *Song of the South*, which combined real actors and animated characters. Mercer's zestful performance with the Pied Pipers and Paul Weston's orchestra belies the fact that the song was not a Mercer original.

Singer Buddy Clark's career began in the 1930s, but it was during the



Records, which had just
begun releasing
material in February
of 1947.



1940s that his career took off in earnest. **Linda** paired him with the gifted British-born bandleader Ray Noble, who had written numerous '30s standards including *Cherokee* and *The Very Thought of You*. Clark scored again that year with the enduring **Peg O' My Heart**, a number that went back to *The Ziegfeld Follies of 1913*.

One of Vaughn Monroe's 1947 hits came from a popular movie that also hearkened back to the past. **I Wish I Didn't Love You So**, written by legendary songsmith Frank Loesser, was featured in *The Perils of Pauline*, a biography of silent-film star Pearl White starring Betty Hutton. Another of Monroe's hits, the romantic **Ballerina**, was forever associated with him and held the No. 1 position for 10 weeks.

Like many vocal stars, Margaret Whiting, daughter of composer Richard Whiting, first attracted attention singing with orchestras, including those of Freddie Slack, Billy Butterfield and Paul Weston. On **Guilty**, her first top-10 hit, she was accompanied by an ensemble led by former Glenn Miller arranger Jerry Gray.

Since the late '30s, Frankie Laine had struggled to succeed as a singer, but it wasn't until 1947 that he finally made it with **That's My Desire** backed by Mannie Klein's All Stars, a studio jazz group led by the veteran trumpeter. Among the musicians were trombonist Si Zentner, ex-Benny Goodman tenor saxophonist Babe Russin and guitarist Gene Van Eps.

Before World War II, saxophonist Sam Donohue led his own band, and while in the navy he took over Artie Shaw's navy jazz unit following Shaw's discharge. After the war, he reformed his own band and had several successful records, including the ballad **I Never Knew**, written by veteran songwriter Gus Kahn and bandleader Ted Fio Rito (also a hit for Gene Austin in 1926). Donohue's version spotlighted Bill Lockwood and the vocal group the Blue Hues.

Though Nashville's days as a country music recording center were just dawning in 1947, the year's top pop hit was created there:

Near You by pianist and veteran bandleader Francis Craig. Craig, part of the family that controlled Nashville radio station WSM and the Grand Ole Opry, first recorded

DISCOGRAPHY

1. **Open the Door, Richard!** Count Basie and His Orchestra • Music by Jack McVea and Don Howell, lyrics by "Dusty" Fletcher and John Mason. Vocals by Harry Edison and Bill Johnson. RCA Victor 2127. Courtesy of BMG Music.

2. **A Gal in Calico** Tex Beneke with the Miller Orchestra • Music by Arthur Schwartz, lyrics by Leo Robin. Vocals by Tex Beneke and the Crew Chiefs. RCA Victor 1991. Courtesy of BMG Music.

3. **Linda** Ray Noble and His Orchestra • Music and lyrics by Jack Lawrence. Vocal by Buddy Clark. Columbia 37215. Courtesy of CBS Special Products.

4. **A Sunday Kind of Love** Claude Thornhill and His Orchestra • Music and lyrics by Barbara Belle, Louis Prima, Anita Leonard and Stan Rhodes. Vocal by Fran Warren. Columbia 37219. Courtesy of CBS Special Products.

5. **Anniversary Song** Al Jolson • Music and lyrics by Al Jolson and Saul Chaplin. Based on Ianoanovic's *Danube Waves* (1880). Decca 23714. Courtesy of MCA Records, Inc.

6. **Chi-Baba Chi-Baba (My Bambino Go to Sleep)** Perry Como • Music and lyrics by Mack David, Al Hoffman and Jerry Livingston. Backup vocals by the Satisfiers. RCA Victor 2259. Courtesy of BMG Music.

7. **Zip-A-Dee-Do-Do-Dah** Johnny Mercer and the Pied Pipers • Music by Allie Wrubel, lyrics by Ray Gilbert. Capitol 323. Courtesy of Capitol Records, Inc.

8. **Fendin' and Fightin'** Dorothy Shay • Music by Burton Lane, lyrics by Burton Lane and Al Dubin. Columbia 37189. Courtesy of CBS Special Products.

9. **That's My Desire** Frankie Laine • Music and lyrics by Carroll Loveday and Helmy Kresa. Mercury 5007. Under license from PolyGram Special Products, a Division of PolyGram Records, Inc.

10. **I Wish I Didn't Love You So** Vaughn Monroe and His Orchestra • Music and lyrics by Frank Loesser. Backup vocals by the Moon Maids. RCA Victor 2294. Courtesy of BMG Music.

11. **Mam'selle** Art Lund • Music by Edmund Goulding, lyrics by Mack Gordon. MGM 10011. Under license from PolyGram Special Products, a Division of PolyGram Records, Inc.

12. **Heartaches** Ted Weems and His Orchestra • Music by Al Hoffman, lyrics by John Klenner. Whistling by Elmo Tanner. RCA Victor 2175. Courtesy of BMG Music.

13. **Civilization (Bongo, Bongo, Bongo)** Danny Kaye and the Andrews Sisters • Music and lyrics by Bob Hilliard and Carl Sigman. Decca 23940. Courtesy of MCA Records, Inc.

14. **Managua, Nicaragua** Freddy Martin and His Orchestra •

family that controlled Nashville radio station WSM and the Grand Ole Opry, first recorded with his orchestra in 1925. He performed for years over WSM and used both Snooky Lanson and Dinah Shore as vocalists at various times.

In 1946, Jim Bulleit, owner of the Nashville-based Bullet label, began a pop music series to complement his country, gospel, and rhythm and blues releases, and recorded the Craig orchestra performing their theme, *Red Rose*. Georgia disc jockey Cal Young flipped the record over and played *Near You*, sung by Craig's blind vocalist Bob Lamm. It became a phenomenal success, remaining in the No. 1 position for 17 weeks. At one point Bullet engaged 40 pressing plants to meet the demand. *Near You* eventually became the theme song for Milton Berle's *Texaco Star Theater* television program.

—Rich Kienzle

- 14. Managua, Nicaragua** Freddy Martin and His Orchestra • Music by Irving Fields, lyrics by Albert Gamse. Vocals by Stuart Wade and ensemble. RCA Victor 2026. Courtesy of BMG Music.
- 15. I Never Knew** Sam Donohue and His Orchestra • Music by Ted Fiorito, lyrics by Gus Kahn. Vocals by Bill Lockwood and the Blue Hues. Capitol 405. Courtesy of Capitol Records, Inc.
- 16. Across the Alley from the Alamo** The Mills Brothers • Music and lyrics by Joe Greene. Decca 23863. Courtesy of MCA Records, Inc.
- 17. Peg O' My Heart** Buddy Clark • Music by Fred Fisher, lyrics by Alfred Bryan. Columbia 37392. Courtesy of CBS Special Products.
- 18. Gully** Margaret Whiting • Music and lyrics by Gus Kahn, Harry Akst and Richard A. Whiting. Capitol 324. Courtesy of Capitol Records, Inc.
- 19. Near You** Francis Craig and His Orchestra • Music by Francis Craig, lyrics by Kermit Goell. Piano solo by Francis Craig; vocal by Bob Lamm. Bullet 1001. Courtesy of Bullet Records.
- 20. Ballerina** Vaughn Monroe and His Orchestra • Music and lyrics by Bob Russell and Carl Sigman. RCA Victor 2433. Courtesy of BMG Music.
- 21. When You Were Sweet Sixteen** Perry Como • Music and lyrics by James Thornton. Backup vocals by the Satisfiers. RCA Victor 2259. Courtesy of BMG Music.
- 22. You Do** Dinah Shore • Music by Josef Myrow, lyrics by Mack Gordon. Columbia 37587. Courtesy of CBS Special Products.
- 23. I Wonder, I Wonder, I Wonder** Eddy Howard and His Orchestra • Music and lyrics by Daryl Hutchins. Majestic 1124. Under license from PolyGram Special Products, a Division of PolyGram Records, Inc.
- 24. Huggin' and Chalkin'** Hoagy Carmichael • Music and lyrics by Clancy Hayes and Kermit Goell. Backup vocals by the Chickadees. Decca 23675. Courtesy of MCA Records, Inc.

Bandleader
Freddy Martin

1947

- 1 **Open the Door, Richard!**
Count Basie and His Orchestra
- 2 **A Gal in Calico** Tex Beneke with the Miller Orchestra
- 3 **Linda** Ray Noble and His Orchestra
- 4 **A Sunday Kind of Love**
Claude Thornhill and His Orchestra
- 5 **Anniversary Song** Al Jolson
- 6 **Chi-Baba Chi-Baba (My Bambino Go to Sleep)**
Perry Como
- 7 **Zip-A-Dee-Doo-Dah** Johnny Mercer and the Pied Pipers
- 8 **Feudin' and Fightin'** Dorothy Shay
- 9 **That's My Desire** Frankie Laine
- 10 **I Wish I Didn't Love You So**
Vaughn Monroe and His Orchestra
- 11 **Mam'selle** Art Lund
- 12 **Heartaches** Ted Weems and His Orchestra
- 13 **Civilization (Bongo, Bongo, Bongo)**
Danny Kaye and the Andrews Sisters
- 14 **Managua, Nicaragua**
Freddy Martin and His Orchestra
- 15 **I Never Knew** Sam Donohue and His Orchestra
- 16 **Across the Alley from the Alamo** The Mills Bros.
- 17 **Peg O' My Heart** Buddy Clark
- 18 **Guilty** Margaret Whiting
- 19 **Near You** Francis Craig and His Orchestra
- 20 **Ballerina** Vaughn Monroe and His Orchestra
- 21 **When You Were Sweet Sixteen** Perry Como
- 22 **You Do** Dinah Shore
- 23 **I Wonder, I Wonder, I Wonder**
Eddy Howard and His Orchestra
- 24 **Huggin' and Chalkin'** Hoagy Carmichael



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The Author: Rich Kienzle is the author of *Great Guitarists*, a collection of essays devoted to the most influential jazz, country and rock players. He is also a contributing editor to *Country Music* magazine and *Rock & Roll Disc*.

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