


1948



TIME
LIFE
MUSIC

A black and white studio portrait of singer Peggy Lee. She is shown from the chest up, wearing a light-colored, off-the-shoulder top. Her blonde hair is styled in soft, voluminous curls. She has a slight smile and is looking towards the camera. The background is a simple, dark studio backdrop.

*Peggy Lee sealed her lasting popularity in 1948 with a No. 1 song, **Manana**.*

On March 22, 1948, disc jockey Jerry Marshall was broadcasting his *Music Hall* radio program over WNEW in New York City when music librarian Al Trilling handed him a new 10-inch 78. Marshall, noting the name on the label, immediately cued it on a turntable and announced, "Here's a winner — a song everybody is going to love."

The song was **Nature Boy** by Nat "King" Cole. By the time the record ended, enthusiastic listeners had jammed the WNEW switchboard. Soon *Nature Boy* reached the top of the charts, a position it held for eight weeks. Its minor-key, atmospheric theme and romantic feel, different from most pop recordings of the day, made it the kind of song people not only enjoyed listening to but also talked about.

Even greater interest was sparked by *Nature Boy*'s composer, bearded, long-haired eden abhez (who spelled his name without capital letters). A real-life "nature boy," the Los Angeles resident had once walked across the continent, and he advocated natural foods and the simple life long before they became fashionable. He got the song backstage to Cole, via the singer's valet, at a 1947 appearance by the King Cole Trio. When Cole decided to record the tune, he had to track down abhez.

Although it wasn't apparent at first, abhez had based his melody on *Schweig Mein Hartz* (*Be Calm, My Heart*), written by Yiddish composer Herman Yablokoff more than a decade earlier. A lawsuit by Yablokoff established such clear similarities between the melodies of his song and *Nature Boy* that a judge ruled that Yablokoff should share in the royalties.

Not only did *Nature Boy* inspire parodies like *Serutan Yobb* by Red Ingle and the Natural Seven, but Frank Sinatra, Sarah Vaughan and Dick Haymes each recorded the song — without instrumentalists. A choir backed Sinatra; Vaughan and Haymes sang it unaccompanied. The reason: the 1948 recording ban.

The previous year, American Federation of Musicians president James C. Petrillo, unable to resolve contract disputes with the record companies, had called for nonsinging musicians to strike on January 1, 1948. Marathon recording sessions were scheduled throughout late 1947 to stockpile material before the ban went into effect. Singers who recorded during the strike could be backed only by other vocalists or by harmonica players (who were not covered by the union).

Other events of greater importance also took place that year. Indian leader Mahatma Gandhi was assassinated. The nation of Israel was founded. President Harry Truman staged a come-from-behind campaign to beat Republican Thomas Dewey in the November presidential election.

Norman Mailer's classic World War II novel, *The Naked and the Dead*, was published. Baseball great Babe Ruth died, and Joe Louis retired from boxing after 25 title bouts spanning 11 years. One other 1948 event — and not the least important — was the invention of a 12-inch long-playing record, which held up to 12 songs, developed by Peter Goldmark of Columbia Records.

Commercial television came into its own in 1948 as four networks (NBC, CBS, ABC and Dumont) began carrying full

schedules of programs. On June 8, *Texaco Star Theater*, a vaudeville-style program centered on a previously obscure stage and film comedian named Milton Berle, debuted on NBC. It quickly became TV's first major variety show and a Tuesday-night ritual for the nation. The sudden popularity of "Uncle Miltie," also dubbed "Mr. Television," helped sell millions of TV sets.

Capitol Records also came into its own in 1948. The label had five enormous hits in addition to *Nature Boy*. Gordon MacRae's swinging **Hair of Gold, Eyes of Blue** was written by big-band-vocalist-turned-songwriter Sonny Schuyler, who wrote under the name Sunny Skylar. Creative arranging gave the choral accompaniment by the Starlighters a big-band sound behind MacRae.

Following her departure from the Benny Goodman orchestra, Peggy Lee had three top-10 records (and several others in the top 20) at Capitol in the years 1945-1947. Nineteen forty-eight, however, saw back-to-back Lee hits. The first, the smoky, romantic **Golden Earrings**, took its title from a film starring Ray Milland and Marlene Dietrich. The second was the lighthearted, Latin-flavored **Manana**, written by Lee and her husband, jazz guitarist Dave Barbour. *Manana* became one of the year's biggest sellers and was far different from the torch songs Lee later excelled with. The brief electric guitar solo is by Barbour himself.

Trombonist Pee Wee Hunt had made his reputation in Glen Gray's Casa Loma Orchestra, and he stayed there 14 years before starting his own band. The pop standard **Twelfth Street Rag** featured pianist Carl Fischer and was an excellent vehicle for Hunt's unsubtle but rousing brand of Dixieland. Finally, Capitol's Margaret Whiting, daughter of composer Richard Whiting, had her first No. 1 record in 1948 with **A Tree in the Meadow**, penned by British composer Billy Reid.

Other artists did equally well on the 1948 hit parade. On the heels of his massive success with *Near You* the previous year, Nashville's Francis Craig managed a strong follow-up with **Beg Your Pardon**. Like *Near You*, it spotlighted Craig's piano and vocalist Bob Lamm.

Bing Crosby's **Now is the Hour**, subtitled the *Mauri*

Dear. Released on the small Rondo label, it stayed at No. 1 for seven weeks. Within two months, Griffin had another hit with the same number when Rondo reissued the original instrumental (intended mainly for use at ice-skating rinks), with an overdubbed vocal by Jerry Wayne. This version reached No. 2 and remained there for another seven weeks, a double hit that set the stage for Griffin's long association with Columbia through the '50s and '60s.

In 1948 only a few of the remaining big bands played progressive jazz, and one of them was Woody Herman's famous Second Herd, which he formed after disbanding his First Herd in 1946. Drawing on progressive young arrangers like Ralph Burns and Neal Hefti, Herman placed the band on the cutting edge of the bebop movement. His ear for gifted musicians uncovered such innovative bop instrumentalists as trombonist Bill Harris and saxophonists Stan Getz and Zoot Sims. Herman's version of **Sabre Dance**, based on the *Gayane Ballet Suite* by Khachaturian, intermingled the traditional theme of the composition with jazz interludes.

— Rich Kienzle

DISCOGRAPHY

1. **Manana** Peggy Lee • Music and lyrics by Peggy Lee and Dave Barbour. Capitol 15022. Courtesy of Capitol Records, Inc.
2. **On a Slow Boat to China** Kay Kyser and His Orchestra • Music and lyrics by Frank Loesser. Vocals by Harry Babbitt and Gloria Wood. Columbia 33330.
3. **Because** Perry Como • Music by Guy d'Hardelot. Lyrics by Edward Teschemacher. RCA Victor 2653. Courtesy of BMG Music.
4. **Sabre Dance** Woody Herman and His Orchestra • Based on Khachaturian's *Gayane Ballet Suite*. Columbia 38102.

Bing Crosby's **Now Is the Hour**, subtitled the *Maori Farewell Song*, was adapted from a traditional New Zealand song titled *Heareere Ra*. Replacing the orchestra that normally backed Crosby was the Ken Darby Choir. *Now Is the Hour* remained a sentimental favorite: In 1949 it was sung at a farewell party for high-school graduate James Dean, who was leaving his hometown of Fairmount, Indiana, to study drama in Los Angeles.

The movie *Paleface*, a Western comedy starring Bob Hope as a frontier dentist and Jane Russell as Calamity Jane, accounted for **Buttons and Bows**, which reached No. 1 for Dinah Shore. In the film, Hope and Russell sang the Jay Livingston-Ray Evans number as a duet; Shore's version featured accompaniment by the Happy Valley Boys.

Bandleader Art Mooney specialized in sing-along versions of "golden oldies." In 1948 Mooney revived both **I'm Looking Over a Four Leaf Clover**, which had reached No. 2 in 1927 for guitarist-vocalist Nick Lucas, and **Baby Face**, a smash for Jan Garber's orchestra back in 1926. Mooney wasn't alone in reviving old hits. Dick Haymes successfully re-recorded Walter Donaldson's **Little White Lies** (a chart topper for Fred Waring's Pennsylvanians in 1930) with the vocal group Four Hits and a Miss and Gordon Jenkins' orchestra.

The durable team of Sammy Cahn and Jule Styne was responsible for Doris Day's **It's Magic**. Recorded before the ban, the lush, romantic ballad was complemented by the velvety strings of George Siravo's orchestra. Day had two more hits with crooner Buddy Clark: **Love Somebody** and composer Frank Loesser's *My Darling, My Darling*, from the Broadway musical *Where's Charley?*

Loesser had a second hit song in 1948: **On a Slow Boat to China**, performed by veteran bandleader Kay Kyser, with vocalists Harry Babbitt and Gloria Wood. It was Kyser's final appearance on the charts; a consistent hitmaker since 1935, he had maintained a successful orchestra through the entire big-band era.

Organist Ken Griffin, who began his career accompanying silent movies in theaters during the Roaring Twenties, had his first charting record in 1948 with **You Can't Be True**,



5. You Were Only Fooling (While I Was Falling in Love)

The Ink Spots • Music by *Larry Fortine*, lyrics by *William E. Faber and Fred Meadows*. Decca 24507. Courtesy of MCA Records, Inc.

6. Maybe You'll Be There

Gordon Jenkins and His Orchestra • Music by *Rube Bloom*, lyrics by *Sammy Gallop*. Vocals by *Charles La Vere* and chorus. Decca 24403. Courtesy of MCA Records, Inc.

7. Love Somebody

Doris Day and Buddy Clark • Music and lyrics by *Jean Whitney* and *Alex Kramer*. Columbia 38171.

8. Beg Your Pardon

Francis Craig and His Orchestra • Music and lyrics by *Francis Craig and Beasley Smith*. Piano solo by *Francis Craig*; vocal by *Bob Lamm*. Bullet 1012. Courtesy of Bullet Records.

9. Little White Lies

Dick Haymes with Gordon Jenkins and His Orchestra • Music and lyrics by *Walter Donaldson*. Backup vocals by *Four Hits and a Miss*. Decca 24280. Courtesy of MCA Records, Inc.

10. A Tree in the Meadow

Margaret Whiting • Music and lyrics by *Billy Reid*. Capitol 15122. Courtesy of Capitol Records, Inc.

11. I'm Looking Over a Four Leaf Clover

Art Mooney and His Orchestra • Music by *Harry Woods*, lyrics by *Mort Dixon*. Banjo solo by *Mike Pingatore*; vocals by the *Ensemble*. MGM 10119. Under license from *PolyGram Special Products*, a Division of *PolyGram Records, Inc.*

12. Nature Boy

Nat King Cole • Music and lyrics by *Eden Ahbez*. Capitol 15054. Courtesy of Capitol Records, Inc.

13. Twelfth Street Rag

Pee Wee Hunt and His Orchestra • Music by *Euday L. Bouman*. Capitol 15105. Courtesy of Capitol Records, Inc.

14. I'll Dance at Your Wedding

Ray Noble and His Orchestra • Music by *Ben Oakland*, lyrics by *Herb Magidson*. Vocal by *Buddy Clark*. Columbia 37967.

15. Golden Earrings

Peggy Lee • Music by *Victor Young*, lyrics by *Jay Livingston and Ray Evans*. Capitol 15009. Courtesy of Capitol Records, Inc.

16. Serenade of the Bells

Swing and Sway with *Sammy Kaye* • Music and lyrics by *Kay Tivomey, Al Goodhart and Al Urbano*. Vocals by *Don Cornell, the Kaydets and choir*. RCA Victor 2372. Courtesy of BMG Music.

17. You Can't Be True, Dear

Ken Griffin • Music by *Ken Griffin* and *Hans Otten*. Rondo 128.

18. Buttons and Bows

Dinah Shore and Her Happy Valley Boys • Music and lyrics by *Jay Livingston and Ray Evans*. Columbia 38284.

19. Hair of Gold, Eyes of Blue

Gordon MacRae and the Starlighters • Music and lyrics by *Sunny Skylar*. Capitol 15178. Courtesy of Capitol Records, Inc.

20. Tootie Ootie Dootie (The Yodel Polka)

The Andrews Sisters • Music by *Arthur Beul*, English lyrics by *Vaughn Horton*. Decca 24380. Courtesy of MCA Records, Inc.

21. Baby Face

Art Mooney and His Orchestra • Music and lyrics by *Benny Davis and Harry Akst*. MGM 10156. Under license from *PolyGram Special Products*, a Division of *PolyGram Records, Inc.*

22. Until Tommy Dorsey and His Orchestra

• Music and lyrics by *Jack Fulton, Bob Crosby and Hunter Kahler*. Vocals by *Harry Prime, the Clark Sisters and the Tuxen Criers*. RCA Victor 3061. Courtesy of BMG Music.

23. It's Magic

Doris Day • Music by *Jule Styne*, lyrics by *Sammy Cahn*. Columbia 38188. Courtesy of CBS Special Products.

24. Now Is the Hour

Bing Crosby • Music and lyrics by *Dorothy Stewart, Clement Scott and Maeava Kithau*. Backup vocals by the *Ken Darby Choir*. Decca 24279. Courtesy of MCA Records, Inc.





Margaret Whiting

The Ink Spots

1948

- 1 **Manana** Peggy Lee
- 2 **On a Slow Boat to China** Kay Kyser and His Orchestra
- 3 **Because** Perry Como
- 4 **Sabre Dance** Woody Herman and His Orchestra
- 5 **You Were Only Fooling (While I Was Falling in Love)**
The Ink Spots
- 6 **Maybe You'll Be There** Gordon Jenkins and His Orchestra
- 7 **Love Somebody** Doris Day and Buddy Clark
- 8 **Beg Your Pardon** Francis Craig and His Orchestra
- 9 **Little White Lies** Dick Haymes with Gordon Jenkins and His Orchestra
- 10 **A Tree in the Meadow** Margaret Whiting
- 11 **I'm Looking Over a Four Leaf Clover** Art Mooney and His Orchestra
- 12 **Nature Boy** Nat King Cole
- 13 **Twelfth Street Rag** Pee Wee Hunt and His Orchestra
- 14 **I'll Dance at Your Wedding** Ray Noble and His Orchestra
- 15 **Golden Earrings** Peggy Lee
- 16 **Serenade of the Bells** Swing and Sway with Sammy Kaye
- 17 **You Can't Be True, Dear** Ken Griffin
- 18 **Buttons and Bows** Dinah Shore and Her Happy Valley Boys
- 19 **Hair of Gold, Eyes of Blue** Gordon MacRae and the Starlighters
- 20 **Tootie Oolie Doolie (The Yodel Polka)** The Andrews Sisters
- 21 **Baby Face** Art Mooney and His Orchestra
- 22 **Until** Tommy Dorsey and His Orchestra
- 23 **It's Magic** Doris Day
- 24 **Now Is the Hour** Bing Crosby



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