

1943



TIME
LIFE
MUSIC



Bogie looks preoccupied as Dooley Wilson brightens the atmosphere of Rick's Café Américain in Casablanca.

"Zeke," a frustrated Capt. Glenn Miller told Sgt. Zeke Zarchy, a trumpeter from Miller's civilian band now with his Army Air Forces orchestra, "I can buy and sell every one of these goddamn idiot officers." It was 1943. The previous fall, Miller had dissolved his civilian band and formed his armed forces orchestra to assist the war effort. His goal was to boost morale by giving soldiers the music they loved. But for a time his battles were with the older, straitlaced officers who resisted his efforts. Miller's exasperated view of his finances was correct. Though his monthly army pay was only \$200, for the six months ending February 28, 1943, he had earned \$60,000 from record royalties alone.

The tide of World War II was now favoring the Allies. In the Pacific, the Japanese fled Guadalcanal after savage fighting. In Europe, the Russian army halted Nazi forces attempting to capture Stalingrad, and Allied forces liberated Italy, forcing Axis dictator Benito Mussolini from power. In northern Africa, German general Erwin Rommel, "the Desert Fox," retreated in the face of American and British victories.

The government had instituted tough measures to boost America's defense establishment. Meat, cheese and canned foods were rationed, as were shoes. President Franklin D. Roosevelt froze wages and prices as a measure against inflation. After coal miners went on strike, the War Labor Board ordered the seizure of the mines to prevent an industry shutdown.

Among the books published in 1943 were the first firsthand accounts of the war itself: Richard Tregaskis' *Guadalcanal Diary*, Robert Scott's *God Is My Co-Pilot*, newsmen Ernie Pyle's *Here Is Your War* and Ted Lawson's *Thirty Seconds over Tokyo*.

Though many musicians joined the service and travel was restricted because of gasoline and tire rationing, the big bands remained popular—especially with zoot-suited, jitterbugging teenagers—on radio and records. Because of the American Federation of Musicians recording ban, many of 1943's top recordings had actually been cut the previous year, when the ban started. During this period, choral singers, not classified as musicians by the union, were often used in place of orchestras. In the fall of 1943, Decca became the first company to settle with the union.

Many of the year's biggest hits were tied to movies, including two by Bing Crosby. **Moonlight Becomes You**, written by the team of Jimmy Van Heusen and Johnny Burke, was featured in the 1942 comedy *Road to Morocco*, which paired Crosby with "road" companions Bob Hope and Dorothy Lamour. Van Heusen and Burke's **Sunday, Monday or Always** debuted in *Dixie*, a Hollywood biography (with Crosby and Lamour) of Dan Emmett, composer of the famous Southern patriotic song. Choirs accompanied Crosby on that number and on his duet with Trudy Erwin, **People Will Say We're in Love**, from the brand-new Rodgers and Hammerstein musical *Oklahoma!*

I Had the Craziest Dream was heard in the 1942 Betty Grable-John Payne-Cesar Romero film *Springtime in the Rockies*. It became a No. 1 record for bandleader-trumpeter Harry James, who married Grable on July 5, 1943. With vocals by Helen Forrest, the tune included the lush strings James used during the early '40s. Forrest also sang **I've Heard That Song Before**, a Sammy Cahn-Jule Styne piece whose arrangement—without the string section—was clearly aimed at James's swing-oriented fans.

Before joining Harry James, Helen Forrest sang with Benny Goodman. One of her hits with the Goodman orchestra was **Taking a Chance on Love**, which was used in the all-black 1943 film *Cabin in the Sky*. Forrest's replacement was a North Dakota girl named Norma Eggstrom, known professionally as Peggy Lee. One of her early hits with Goodman was the rough-edged blues **Why Don't You Do Right**, originally recorded in the late '30s by the Harlem Hamfats and again in 1941 by blues singer Lil Green.

Two vastly different personalities, ebullient lyricist Johnny Mercer and taciturn composer Jerome Kern, collaborated on songs for the movie *You Were Never Lovelier*. The Fred Astaire-Rita Hayworth vehicle led to Astaire's release of **I'm Old Fashioned**. When Mercer brought the song's lyrics to Kern's home, the normally reserved Kern enthusiastically summoned his wife to hear the number.

Another performer who appeared in *You Were Never Lovelier* was Spanish-born bandleader Xavier Cugat. By 1943 Cugat's orchestra, based at the Waldorf-Astoria in New York, enjoyed considerable popularity. **Brazil**, originally known as *Aquarela do Brasil*, spotlighted Cugat's unique vocal section, singers who provided wordless tonal color similar to a brass or string section.

Country music crossed over in 1943 with Al Dexter's rollicking **Pistol-Packin' Mama**. A recording artist since the late '30s, Dexter also owned the Round-Up Club, a Turnertown, Texas, bar. He wrote the song after an angry, gun-toting woman stormed into the bar looking for her philandering husband. At the time, Dexter was in danger of losing his Columbia contract. But when producer Art Satherley heard this song, he had Dexter record it in Hollywood with Gene Autry's backup musicians. Its success saved Dexter's contract.

A story, perhaps apocryphal, circulated for years that Frank Sinatra had difficulty with the simple melody of *Pistol-Packin' Mama* on the *Your Hit Parade* radio show. Whether that was true or not, Sinatra was always far more at home with romantic ballads like **In the Blue of Evening**, which he recorded with Tommy Dorsey's Orchestra.

winner for Dorsey: No. 3 in 1938, No. 5 in 1943 and No. 21 in 1944.

Two of the era's vocal groups had 1943 hits that became standards. The Mills Brothers' version of **Paper Doll** not only became one of the biggest sellers of the year but, according to *Billboard*, was the biggest non-Christmas song of the entire decade, with sales of over six million copies. The Ink Spots' **Don't Get Around Much Anymore** was a vocal version of Duke Ellington's 1940 instrumental *Never No Lament* with lyrics by Bob Russell.

Dinah Shore was solidly established by 1943, and her top hit of the year, remaining on the charts 18 weeks, was **You'd Be So Nice to Come Home To**, a Cole Porter composition featured in the Don Ameche-Janet Blair movie *Something to Shout About*. The orchestra behind Dinah was led by former Tommy Dorsey arranger Paul Weststein, who went on to greater success at Capitol Records as bandleader Paul Weston.

The realities of war were apparent in two 1943 hits. Vaughn Monroe's **When the Lights Go On Again (All Over the World)** reflected the necessity of blackouts in preventing enemy bombers from using city lights as a guide to ground targets. The Song Spinners' **Comin' In on a Wing and a Prayer** saluted the bomber pilots able to fly home despite serious damage by the enemy. The song inspired *A Wing and a Prayer*, a 1944 film about navy fliers featuring Don Ameche, Dana Andrews and Harry Morgan.

From his final civilian recording sessions before the recording ban took effect came Glenn Miller's version of **That Old Black Magic**, the Johnny Mercer-Harold Arlen number written for Paramount's 1942 *Star Spangled Rhythm*. The recording spotlighted singer Skip Nelson with the legendary vocal quartet the Modernaires. **Juke Box Saturday Night** captured the atmosphere of

at home with romantic ballads like **In the Blue of Evening**, which he recorded with Tommy Dorsey's Orchestra.

Another Dorsey hit of 1943 was actually five years old. **Boogie Woogie** was a driving big-band version of pianist Pine Top Smith's 1928 recording of *Pine Top's Boogie Woogie*, and Dorsey made his own version when the rolling piano style was just becoming popular. It became a three-time

Bing Crosby



Benny Goodman, the A

the soda shops frequented by Miller fans. Its good-natured imitations of Harry James and the Ink Spots, provided by Marion Hutton, Tex Beneke and the Modernaires, offended no one. However, some jukebox companies complained that the song portrayed their machines in an undignified light.

Lena Horne's **Stormy Weather** became her theme song after she sang it in the 1943 film of the same name, which had an all-black cast including Bill "Bojangles" Robinson, Fats Waller and Dooley Wilson. The Harold Arlen-Ted Koehler composition had previously been sung by Ethel Waters in the revue *The Cotton Club Parade*.

Dooley Wilson himself gained prominence as nightclub pianist Sam, who performs **As Time Goes By** in the 1942 classic *Casablanca*, starring Humphrey Bogart and Ingrid Bergman. Wilson's "playing it again" did not yield a hit record. Jacques Renard and Rudy Vallee had both done well with the song in 1931, after it was used in the Broadway musical *Everybody's Welcome*; and both of their recordings became hits again in 1943 following the success of *Casablanca*. However, the definitive, memorable version of the song belongs to Wilson.

—Rich Kienzle

DISCOGRAPHY

- 1. Juke Box Saturday Night** Glenn Miller and His Orchestra • *Music by Paul McGrane, lyrics by Albert Stillman. Vocals by Marion Hutton, Tex Beneke and the Modernaires. Victor 1509. Courtesy of BMG Music.*
- 2. I've Heard That Song Before** Harry James and His Orchestra • *Music and lyrics by Jule Styne and Sammy Cahn. Vocal by Helen Forrest. Columbia 36668. Courtesy of CBS Special Products.*
- 3. Don't Get Around Much Anymore** The Ink Spots • *Music by Duke Ellington, lyrics by Bob Russell. Decca 18503.*
- 4. Sunday, Monday or Always** Bing Crosby • *Music by James Van Heusen, lyrics by Johnny Burke. Backup vocals by the Ken Darby Singers. Decca 18561.*
- 5. You'd Be So Nice to Come Home To** Dinah Shore • *Music and lyrics by Cole Porter. Victor 1519. Courtesy of BMG Music.*
- 6. Let's Get Lost** Vaughn Monroe and His Orchestra • *Music by Jimmy McHugh, lyrics by Frank Loesser. Vocals by Vaughn Monroe and the Four Lee Sisters. Victor 1524. Courtesy of BMG Music.*
- 7. Boogie Woogie** Tommy Dorsey and His Orchestra • *Music by Clarence "Pine Top" Smith. Victor 26054. Courtesy of BMG Music.*
- 8. I'm Old Fashioned** Fred Astaire • *Music by Jerome Kern, lyrics by Johnny Mercer. Decca 18489.*
- 9. Stormy Weather** Lena Horne • *Music by Harold Arlen, lyrics by Ted Koehler. Victor 27819. Courtesy of BMG Music.*
- 10. You'll Never Know** Dick Haymes and the Song Spinners • *Music by Harry Warren, lyrics by Mack Gordon. Decca 18556.*
- 11. That Old Black Magic** Glenn Miller and His Orchestra • *Music by Harold Arlen, lyrics by Johnny Mercer. Vocal by Skip Nelson with the Modernaires. Victor 1523. Courtesy of BMG Music.*
- 12. People Will Say We're in Love** Bing Crosby and Trudy Erwin • *Music by Richard Rodgers, lyrics by Oscar Hammerstein II. Backup vocals by the Sportsmen Glee Club. Decca 18564.*
- 13. Why Don't You Do Right** Benny Goodman and His Orchestra • *Music and lyrics by Joe McCoy. Vocal by Peggy Lee. Columbia 36852. Courtesy of CBS Special Products.*
- 14. Paper Doll** The Mills Brothers • *Music and lyrics by Johnny S. Black. Decca 18318.*





Columbia 36652. Courtesy of CBS Special Products.

14. Paper Doll The Mills Brothers • Music and lyrics by Johnny S. Black. Decca 18318.

15. I Had the Craziest Dream Harry James and His Orchestra • Music by Harry Warren, lyrics by Mack Gordon. Vocal by Helen Forrest. Columbia 36659. Courtesy of CBS Special Products.

16. In the Blue of Evening Tommy Dorsey and His Orchestra • Music by Alfred A. D'Artega, lyrics by Tom Adair. Vocal by Frank Sinatra. Victor 27947. Courtesy of BMG Music.

17. Brazil Xavier Cugat and His Waldorf-Astoria Orchestra • Music and lyrics by Ary Barroso. With the Cugat Chorus. Columbia 36651. Courtesy of CBS Special Products.

18. Zing! Went the Strings of My Heart Judy Garland • Music and lyrics by James F. Hanley. Decca 18543.

19. Pistol-Packin' Mama Al Dexter and His Troopers • Music and lyrics by Al Dexter. Okeh 6708. Courtesy of CBS Special Products.

20. Taking a Chance on Love Benny Goodman and His Orchestra • Music by Vernon Duke, John Latouche and Ted Fetter, lyrics by John Latouche and Ted Fetter. Vocal by Helen Forrest. Columbia 35869. Courtesy of CBS Special Products.

21. Moonlight Becomes You Bing Crosby • Music by James Van Heusen, lyrics by Johnny Burke. Decca 18513.

22. Comin' In on a Wing and a Prayer The Song Spinners • Music by Jimmy McHugh, lyrics by Harold Adamson. Decca 18553.

23. When the Lights Go On Again (All Over the World) Vaughn Monroe and His Orchestra • Music and lyrics by Eddie Seiler, Sol Marcus and Bennie Benjamin. Vocal by Vaughn Monroe. Victor 27945. Courtesy of BMG Music.

24. As Time Goes By Dooley Wilson • Music and lyrics by Herman Hupfeld. Decca 40006.

Since none of the tracks in this collection were originally recorded on magnetic tape, we have used the best available lacquers or metal part sources. Digital mastering often enhances anomalies present in such vintage recordings. Every effort has been made to present this material in its truest form.

1943

- 1 **Juke Box Saturday Night**
Glenn Miller and His Orchestra
- 2 **I've Heard That Song Before**
Harry James and His Orchestra
- 3 **Don't Get Around Much Anymore** The Ink Spots
- 4 **Sunday, Monday or Always** Bing Crosby
- 5 **You'd Be So Nice to Come Home To** Dinah Shore
- 6 **Let's Get Lost** Vaughn Monroe and His Orchestra
- 7 **Boogie Woogie** Tommy Dorsey and His Orchestra
- 8 **I'm Old Fashioned** Fred Astaire
- 9 **Stormy Weather** Lena Horne
- 10 **You'll Never Know** Dick Haymes and the Song Spinners
- 11 **That Old Black Magic** Glenn Miller and His Orchestra
- 12 **People Will Say We're in Love**
Bing Crosby and Trudy Erwin
- 13 **Why Don't You Do Right**
Benny Goodman and His Orchestra
- 14 **Paper Doll** The Mills Brothers
- 15 **I Had the Craziest Dream**
Harry James and His Orchestra
- 16 **In the Blue of Evening** Tommy Dorsey and His Orchestra
- 17 **Brazil** Xavier Cugat and His Waldorf-Astoria Orchestra
- 18 **Zing! Went the Strings of My Heart** Judy Garland
- 19 **Pistol-Packin' Mama** Al Dexter and His Troopers
- 20 **Taking a Chance on Love**
Benny Goodman and His Orchestra
- 21 **Moonlight Becomes You** Bing Crosby
- 22 **Comin' In on a Wing and a Prayer** The Song Spinners
- 23 **When the Lights Go On Again (All Over the World)**
Vaughn Monroe and His Orchestra
- 24 **As Time Goes By** Dooley Wilson



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