

THE WAR YEARS



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*Warm, robust Kate Smith, shown here in *This Is the Army*, achieved such popularity on radio and recordings that President Franklin Roosevelt once said of her: "Miss Smith is America."*

THE WAR YEARS

When World War II began overseas in 1939, America was rebounding from the Great Depression. Most Americans, looking forward to better times, remained emotionally uninvolved in the conflict as it raged in Europe. But in 1940 things became serious as Germany and Japan made major inroads. France fell; England was under siege; American shipping was attacked in the North Atlantic by German U-boats; and the Japanese conquered much of Asia. In response to the threat of war, the draft was revived. Music, too, began to reflect the new uncertainty, although the good times of the big-band era continued—until December 7, 1941, changed everything forever.

In 1940 the Will Bradley Orchestra, co-led by former recording-studio trombonist Bradley and drummer-vocalist Ray McKinley, gained enormous popularity with their boogie-woogie tunes, based on the black-derived piano style. **Scrub Me, Mama, with a Boogie Beat** was their second boogie hit in a row and featured McKinley's engaging vocal, Freddie Slack's piano and a trombone break from Bradley himself. Their sound gave them a commercial identity, and the boogie sound remained popular through the entire war. Bandleader Glenn Miller, an old friend of both men, once told Bradley and McKinley, "You guys sure have got that [boogie-woogie] market cornered."

Miller was America's top bandleader in 1940. Less jazz oriented and more commercial than Benny Goodman or Artie Shaw, he had a phenomenal 45 charting records in 1940. **A Nightingale Sang in Berkeley Square**, taken from the British musical *New Faces*, was his final hit of 1940. Sung by Ray Eberle, it exemplified the Miller band's lush sound.

Artie Shaw's **Dancing in the Dark**, from the musical *The Band Wagon*, spotlighted the new, larger orchestra Shaw formed after returning from a long stay in Mexico in 1940. **Blues in the Night**, recorded by Woody Herman, became one of the most memorable compositions by the team of Harold Arlen and Johnny Mercer. The song was written for a 1941 film of the same name, featuring Richard Whorf, Lloyd Nolan, Jack Carson and Priscilla Lane as members of a luckless jazz combo. The memorable opening line, "My mama done tol' me. . . ." was originally placed elsewhere in the song. At Arlen's suggestion, Mercer moved it up front. Since Herman's orchestra was known as "the band that plays the blues," *Blues in the Night* was a particularly appropriate choice.

Glenn Miller's 1942 **American Patrol** was a patriotic instrumental transformed into a wartime swing number by arranger Jerry Gray. It hinted at the unique march-tempo arrangements of tunes like *St. Louis Blues* Miller created in 1943 following his enlistment in the Army Air Forces, where he formed his innovative, morale-boosting military band.

Kate Smith's rendition of Irving Berlin's **God Bless America** was a hit in 1939, in 1940 and again in 1942, during the surge of patriotic fervor after Pearl Harbor. Berlin wrote the song for a 1918 World War I musical titled *Yip Yip Yaphank*, but edited it from the show and shelved it until he gave it to Smith. Berlin wrote another patriotic show in 1942, *This Is the Army*, with a plot involving soldiers staging a musical. From it came **This Is the Army, Mr. Jones**, recorded by Hal McIntyre with former Glenn Miller guitarist Jack Lathrop on vocals. (In 1941 Miller gave the leadership of this band, which he formed and partly owned,

to McIntyre, his former alto saxophonist.)

Country singer Elton Britt's **There's a Star Spangled Banner Waving Somewhere**, the chronicle of a crippled mountain boy wanting to do his part for the war effort, was actually co-written by New York City-based country songwriter Bob Miller under a pseudonym. In 1942 it became one of the first country recordings to cross over to pop success, earning the first gold record (signifying a million in sales) for a country artist.

Not all hits were war-related. Nostalgic escapism was apparent in **When You Wore a Tulip and I Wore a Big, Red Rose** by Judy Garland and singer-dancer Gene Kelly. The duet was used in the 1942 Busby Berkeley musical film *For Me and My Gal*, which gave Kelly his first starring role.

On August 1, 1942, American Federation of Musicians president James C. Petrillo barred all instrumental musicians from recording because of a dispute with record companies over royalties paid to musicians. Musicians could make only records earmarked for the troops. As a result choirs, not orchestras, backed many singers.

Bing Crosby's 1943 version of Rodgers and Hammerstein's **Oh! What a Beautiful Mornin'**, from their groundbreaking musical *Oklahoma!*, was one such recording. The sole backing for this duet with singer Trudy Erwin came from a male choir known as the Sportsmen Glee Club. Perry Como's 1944 version of the Americanized German number **Lili Marlene** also featured choral backing.

Benny Goodman's 1943 instrumental **Mission to Moscow** was recorded in late July of 1942, just before the ban started. Written by his 19-year-old pianist-arranger Mel Powell, the instrumental was named after the 1943 movie based on U.S. ambassador Joseph Davies' experiences in the Soviet Union. Other hits came from Hollywood's war-related films. *Since You Went Away*, a dramatic 1944 look at the home front, with Claudette Colbert, Joseph Cotten and Monty Woolley, revived **Together**, which had first charted in 1928. The 1944 version was sung by Helen Forrest and Dick Haymes.

Both Dorsey brothers, Tommy and Jimmy, did well with their respective orchestras. Jimmy

Bing Crosby. Bing was backed by guitarist Les Paul's Trio, who became popular in the early '40s on Fred Waring's radio program. Paul's delicate arpeggios and solo work demonstrate his skill as a guitarist before he developed the innovative electronic enhancements that marked his later records with his wife, singer Mary Ford.

Former Benny Goodman vocalist Peggy Lee also had help from a talented guitarist—husband Dave Barbour—on **Waitin' for the Train to Come In**. This sultry, bluesy tune, Lee's first solo hit, was co-written by New York disc jockey Martin Block, host of the *Make-Believe Ballroom* radio show, and composer Sunny Skylar.

Even nonwarlike romantic songs were popular in 1945. Trumpeter Billy Butterfield first gained attention for his solo on the Bob Crosby Orchestra's 1939 ballad *What's New?* His 1945 version of **Moonlight in Vermont** had a similar intimacy. The vocalist was Margaret Whiting, who sang on other artists' recordings before her own career took off. Accompanying Butterfield were three Bob Crosby alumni: bassist Bob Haggart (playing guitar), alto saxophonist Matty Matlock and tenor saxophonist Eddie Miller, along with ex-Benny Goodman trumpeter Chris Griffin and trombonist Cutty Cutshall. Also present was trombonist Will Bradley.

When the war ended, the big-band era faded as solo singers, often former band vocalists, took the spotlight and many band musicians settled into small groups or did radio



1944 version was sung by Helen Forrest and Dick Haymes.

Both Dorsey brothers, Tommy and Jimmy, did well with their respective orchestras. Jimmy Dorsey's **They're Either Too Young or Too Old**, a humorous lament about the lack of eligible men due to the draft, was sung by vocalist Kitty Kallen. Bette Davis originally sang it in the all-star 1943 Warner Brothers musical *Thank Your Lucky Stars*. A similar movie from 1944 was *Falbour the Boys*, which yielded Dinah Shore's *I'll Walk Alone*.

Tommy Dorsey's 1944 **I'll Be Seeing You** had been recorded in 1940 when Frank Sinatra sang with the Dorsey band. The song got little attention when it was released that year as the B side of another Dorsey recording. It finally soared upon its re-release two years after Sinatra left Dorsey and became a star in his own right. Other wartime songs had traditional origins. Tony Pastor's 1945 recording **Bell Bottom Trousers**, with vocal choruses by Ruth McCullough and Pastor himself, was based on a traditional sea chantey with lyrics modernized for the times.

The war's long-awaited end came in 1945, first with V-E Day to mark the surrender of Germany on May 8, then with V-J Day to mark Japan's capitulation on August 14. Songs began to reflect the anticipation of wives and families eager for the return of husbands, fathers and sons.

One tune reflecting this anticipation was **It's Been a Long, Long Time**, penned by the venerable team of Jule Styne and Sammy Cahn and a hit for both Harry James and



The Mills Brothers patented a smooth, mellow sound that kept them on the charts for almost 40 years.

and recording work. By 1945 trombonist Bradley had returned to session work after he and Ray McKinley dissolved their boogie-woogie band. Their friend Major Glenn Miller had been lost over the English Channel late in 1944. Sergeant Ray McKinley took over the leadership of Miller's AAF Band, then based in France, for the duration of the war. With peace came new beginnings for the entire nation—and for its music.

—Rich Kienzle



DISCOGRAPHY

- 1. This Is the Army, Mr. Jones** Hal McIntyre and His Orchestra • *Music and lyrics by Irving Berlin. Victor 27952 (1942). Vocal by Jack Lathrop. Courtesy of BMG Music.*
- 2. When You Wore a Tulip and I Wore a Big, Red Rose** Judy Garland and Gene Kelly • *Music by Percy Wenrich, lyrics by Jack Mahoney. Decca 18480 (1942). Courtesy of MCA Records, Inc.*
- 3. It's Been a Long, Long Time** Bing Crosby • *Music by Jule Styne, lyrics by Sammy Cahn. Decca 18708 (1945). Courtesy of MCA Records, Inc.*
- 4. Dancing in the Dark** Artie Shaw and His Orchestra • *Music by Arthur Schwartz. Victor 27335 (1941). Courtesy of BMG Music.*
- 5. I'm Making Believe** The Ink Spots and Ella Fitzgerald • *Music by James V. Monaco, lyrics by Mack Gordon. Decca 23356 (1944). Courtesy of MCA Records, Inc.*
- 6. Moonlight in Vermont** Billy Butterfield and His Orchestra • *Music by Karl Saessdorf, lyrics by John Blackburn. Capitol 182 (1945). Vocal by Margaret Whiting. Courtesy of Capitol Records, Inc., under license from CEMA Special Markets.*
- 7. Bell Bottom Trousers** Tony Pastor and His Orchestra • *Music and lyrics by Moe Jaffe. Victor 1661 (1945). Vocals by Ruth McCullough and Tony Pastor. Courtesy of BMG Music.*
- 8. I'll Be Seeing You** Tommy Dorsey and His Orchestra • *Music by Sammy Fain, lyrics by Irving Kahal. Victor 1574 (1944). Vocal by Frank Sinatra. Courtesy of BMG Music.*
- 9. Waitin' for the Train to Come In** Peggy Lee • *Music and lyrics by Sunny Skylar and Martin Block. Capitol 218 (1945). Courtesy of Capitol Records, Inc., under license from CEMA Special Markets.*
- 10. Put Another Chair at the Table** The Mills Brothers • *Music and lyrics by Richard Nelson and Cecil Gant. Decca 18663 (1945). Courtesy of MCA Records, Inc.*
- 11. I'll Walk Alone** Dinah Shore • *Music by Jule Styne, lyrics by Sammy Cahn. Victor 1586 (1944). Courtesy of BMG Music.*
- 12. He Wears a Pair of Silver Wings** Kay Kyser and His Orchestra • *Music by Michael Carr, lyrics by Eric Maschwitz. Columbia 36604 (1942). Vocal by Harry Babitt. Under license from Sony Music Special Products, a Division of Sony Music Entertainment, Inc.*
- 13. American Patrol** Glenn Miller and His Orchestra • *Music by F. W. Meacham. Victor 27873 (1942). Courtesy of BMG Music.*
- 14. They're Either Too Young or Too Old** Jimmy Dorsey and



Leader of the Herd, Woody Herman

Columbia 36004 (1942). Vocal by Harry Belafonte. Under license from Sony Music Special Products, a Division of Sony Music Entertainment, Inc.

- 13. American Patrol** Glenn Miller and His Orchestra • *Music by F. W. Meacham. Victor 27873 (1942). Courtesy of BMG Music.*
- 14. They're Either Too Young or Too Old** Jimmy Dorsey and His Orchestra • *Music by Arthur Schwartz, lyrics by Frank Loesser. Decca 18571 (1943). Vocal by Kitty Kallen. Courtesy of MCA Records, Inc.*
- 15. Blues in the Night (My Mama Done Tol' Me)** Woody Herman and His Orchestra • *Music by Harold Arlen, lyrics by Johnny Mercer. Decca 4030 (1941). Vocal by Woody Herman. Courtesy of MCA Records, Inc.*
- 16. Lili Marlene** Perry Como • *Music by Norbert Schultze, English lyrics by Tommie Connor. Victor 1592 (1944). Courtesy of BMG Music.*
- 17. Together** Helen Forrest and Dick Haymes • *Music and lyrics by Ray Henderson, B. G. DeSylva and Lew Brown. Decca 23349 (1944). Courtesy of MCA Records, Inc.*
- 18. When the Swallows Come Back to Capistrano** The Ink Spots • *Music and lyrics by Leon Rene. Decca 3195 (1940). Courtesy of MCA Records, Inc.*
- 19. Scrub Me, Mama, with a Boogie Beat** Will Bradley and His Orchestra • *Music and lyrics by Don Raye. Columbia 35743 (1940). Vocal by Ray McKinley. Under license from Sony Music Special Products, a Division of Sony Music Entertainment, Inc.*
- 20. Mission to Moscow** Benny Goodman and His Orchestra • *Music by Mel Powell. Columbia 36680 (1943). Under license from Sony Music Special Products, a Division of Sony Music Entertainment, Inc.*
- 21. Oh! What a Beautiful Mornin'** Bing Crosby and Trudy Erwin • *Music by Richard Rodgers, lyrics by Oscar Hammerstein II. Decca 18564 (1943). Backup vocals by the Sportsmen Glee Club. Courtesy of MCA Records, Inc.*
- 22. A Nightingale Sang in Berkeley Square** Glenn Miller and His Orchestra • *Music by Manning Sherwin, lyrics by Eric Maschwitz. Bluebird 10931 (1940). Vocal by Ray Eberle. Courtesy of BMG Music.*
- 23. There's a Star Spangled Banner Waving Somewhere** Elton Britt • *Music and lyrics by Paul Roberts and Bob Miller. Bluebird 9000 (1942). Courtesy of BMG Music.*
- 24. God Bless America** Kate Smith • *Music and lyrics by Irving Berlin. Victor 26198 (1940). Courtesy of BMG Music.*

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- 3 **It's Been a Long, Long Time** Bing Crosby
- 4 **Dancing in the Dark** Artie Shaw and His Orchestra
- 5 **I'm Making Believe** The Ink Spots and Ella Fitzgerald
- 6 **Moonlight in Vermont** Billy Butterfield and His Orchestra
- 7 **Bell Bottom Trousers** Tony Pastor and His Orchestra
- 8 **I'll Be Seeing You** Tommy Dorsey and His Orchestra
- 9 **Waltin' for the Train to Come In** Peggy Lee
- 10 **Put Another Chair at the Table** The Mills Brothers
- 11 **I'll Walk Alone** Dinah Shore
- 12 **He Wears a Pair of Silver Wings** Kay Kyser and His Orchestra
- 13 **American Patrol** Glenn Miller and His Orchestra
- 14 **They're Either Too Young or Too Old** Jimmy Dorsey and His Orchestra
- 15 **Blues in the Night (My Mama Done Tol' Me)** Woody Herman and His Orchestra
- 16 **Lili Marlene** Perry Como
- 17 **Together** Helen Forrest and Dick Haymes
- 18 **When the Swallows Come Back to Capistrano** The Ink Spots
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- 20 **Mission to Moscow** Benny Goodman and His Orchestra
- 21 **Oh! What a Beautiful Mornin'** Bing Crosby and Trudy Erwin
- 22 **A Nightingale Sang in Berkeley Square** Glenn Miller and His Orchestra
- 23 **There's a Star Spangled Banner Waving Somewhere** Elton Britt
- 24 **God Bless America** Kate Smith

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The War Years was produced by Time-Life Music in cooperation with BMG Music. Digitally remastered at Digiprep; Dan Hersch, engineer.

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TCD-135 HPD-24

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.