

1945



TIME
LIFE



Nineteen forty-five was a year of endings—and beginnings—in America. World War II was drawing to a close. In January, Franklin Roosevelt began an unprecedented fourth term as president but died at his Warm Springs, Georgia, retreat April 12, plunging the country into mourning. When V-E Day ended the war in Europe on May 8, people danced in the streets. The fighting raged on in the Pacific until the atomic bombs were dropped on

Hiroshima and Nagasaki in early August. When Japan surrendered on August 14,

Americans again danced in the streets. The nation grew sentimental. Dreams abruptly put on hold could finally be realized. It was no coincidence that dreams were the subject of three of 1945's biggest records.

Despite a brief resurgence, the big-band era was also ending. The draft had decimated many bands, and gas and tire rationing made long-distance tours difficult. Swing was also no longer on the cutting edge of jazz; bebop, a complex new instrumental style played by small combos, attracted many swing musicians. Singers were taking over the spotlight from orchestras, a trend that continued into the rock 'n' roll era. Perry Como, Jo Stafford, Dinah Shore, Johnny Mercer and other former big-band vocalists recorded with studio orchestras made up of veteran musicians from the swing era.

Doris Day first sang with Les Brown and his orchestra in 1940 before leaving to marry. But by the mid-1940s Brown decided he wanted Doris back, and after he offered to bring along her mother and young son, she fi-

nally agreed. The results were two of the year's biggest hits: **My Dreams Are Getting Better All the Time** and **Sentimental Journey**. When Brown first played *Sentimental Journey* at the Hotel Pennsylvania in New York, the song generated so little response that the group gave up any thought of recording it. "But after we played it on a couple of broadcasts," Day remembered, "the mail started pouring in."

Few singers had the luxury of recording their own songs for their own label. One exception was Johnny Mercer. In 1942 Mercer, Los Angeles record store owner Glenn Wallichs and Broadway producer Buddy DeSylva founded Capitol Records, an independent label with a small artist roster. Mercer had five hits in 1945, three under his own name, two of them Mercer compositions recorded by others. His bluesy, strutting **Ac--Cent-Tchu-Ate the Positive** was co-authored with Harold Arlen for the film *Here Come the Waves*. Mercer discovered the title phrase, attributed to popular Harlem evangelist Father Divine, in a newspaper article. Though nominated for an Oscar, the song didn't win, but **On the Atchison, Topeka and the Santa Fe**, written with Harry Warren and a highlight of the Judy Garland movie *The Harvey Girls*, did.

Paul Weston's orchestra and his vocal group, the Pied Pipers, backed Mercer on many of his Capitol recordings, including **Candy** (which featured Jo Stafford). His ethereal **Dream** was a No. 1 song for the Pied Pipers that year. Weston recalled, "Johnny seemed dissatisfied with the sixth note, the one that falls on the word 'blue,' but

The movie In the Navy brought a little synchronized hula by the Andrews Sisters to the big screen.

I think that almost 'makes' the song and I convinced him to let it stay."

David Raksin's haunting theme for the 1944 film **Laura** received a set of Mercer lyrics after the movie's release. Clarinetist-bandleader Woody Herman sang the ballad, a departure from the up-tempo tunes he usually performed with his orchestra (nicknamed "the First Herd"), one of the first big bands influenced by bebop. As Herman later explained, "I saw the picture and heard the theme, liked it and recorded it. It was our first side on our first Columbia (recording) date. It turned out to be a hit, a gold record in fact, which is like a solid gold Cadillac when you make it on your first release."

Another clarinet-playing bandleader who occasionally dabbled in novelty vocals was Benny Goodman. After Columbia had shelved an earlier duet version of **Gotta Be This or That**, Goodman cut the song (written by his arranger Sunny Skylar) in April 1945, and the record reached No. 2 nationwide. The driving swing on this number was enhanced by legendary jazz bassist Slam Stewart, a recent addition to the Goodman band.

Stan Kenton's California-based orchestra of the late '40s leaned toward symphonic jazz, but his early music was rooted in swing. Kenton's arrangement of the novelty tune **Tampico** was originally written for vocalist Anita O'Day before she left the band in 1945. Her replacement, June Christy, recorded it in a style so similar to Anita's that a Salt Lake City waitress complimented O'Day on her performance of *Tampico* after it became a smash.

Perry Como, former vocalist with Ted Weems's orchestra, established his reputation with relaxed, romantic ballads such as **If I Loved You** from the Rodgers and Hammerstein musical *Carousel*. Composers Buddy Kaye and Ted Mossman provided the lyrics for **Till the End of Time**, based on Frédéric Chopin's *Polonaise No. 6*. *Till the End of Time* became the musical theme and title of a 1946 film about World War II veterans adjusting to civilian life starring Robert Mitchum, Dorothy McGuire and Guy Madison. Como introduced the upbeat **Dig You Later (A Hubba-Hubba-Hubba)**, which is filled with

1934 he paid Montana cowboy Bob Pletcher \$200 for the rights to his poem, which inspired *Don't Fence Me In*, intended for a movie, *Adios, Argentina*, that was never released. The song languished until producer Alex Gottlieb, shooting *Hollywood Canteen*, revived it for cowboy star Roy Rogers. Crosby's **I Can't Begin to Tell You** came from *The Dolly Sisters*, whose story line centered on a vaudeville team. The song, written by Mack Gordon and James Monaco, was performed in the



hipster slang of the 1940s, in the film *Doll Face*. Note his satirical reprise of *Till the End of Time*.

In the 1950s Harry Belafonte sold millions of records with popular versions of calypso numbers from his childhood home of Jamaica. Among the first Caribbean-flavored pop hits in 1945 was the Andrews Sisters' **Rum and Coca-Cola**, with lyrics by veteran comedian and ex-classical cellist Morey Amsterdam, best known for his longtime role as comedy writer Buddy Sorrell on *The Dick Van Dyke Show* in the 1960s.

Trumpeter Harry James's orchestra had been among the top bands since he organized it as a hard-driving swing unit in 1939. James later added strings and moved to a softer sound that emphasized ballads. A two-year Musicians Union strike against the major labels kept James—and most other artists—from doing any recording except for V-Discs, which were intended as morale boosters for American servicemen. Ten days after the strike ended in November 1944, James recorded the subtly swinging **I'm Beginning to See the Light**. With an exquisite unamplified guitar introduction by Allan Reuss, the music slowly builds to Kitty Kallen's smooth, sultry vocal. **It's Been a Long, Long Time** displays James's flair for ballads. His intense, dramatic trumpet opens the number, and Kallen's wistful vocal complements lyrics that perfectly reflect America's postwar sentiments about the returning servicemen.

Two James alumni, Dick Haymes and Helen Forrest, had a hit duet in 1945 with **I'll Buy That Dream**. Haymes, son of a famous vocal coach, put his breathtaking voice to good use in his solo recording of **It Might As Well Be Spring**, a Rodgers and Hammerstein collaboration first heard in the movie *State Fair*.

Bing Crosby, by then a seasoned veteran of the pop scene, had two 1945 hits that first appeared in films. Cole Porter's cowboy classic **Don't Fence Me In** paired Crosby with Decca's enormously popular Andrews Sisters. Though the song may have seemed a departure for the cosmopolitan Porter, its Western roots were authentic. In



movie by stars Betty Grable and John Payne. On the record Crosby was again paired with a fellow Decca artist, this time pianist Carmen Cavallaro.

Louis Jordan, whose witty, rollicking music anticipated the rhythm and blues of the 1940s and rock 'n' roll of the 1950s, was always popular with black audiences, but during the war he gained a strong following with whites as well. **Caldonia**, a major crossover success for Jordan, also



Doris Day

became a standard in Woody Herman's vocal repertoire. Although Jordan wrote the song, "F. Moore" (his then-wife, Fleecie Moore) is listed as composer. "We put it in her name," Jordan told writer Arnold Shaw in 1973, two years before his death. "She didn't know nothin' about no music at all. Her name is on this song and that song, and she's still getting money."

—Rich Kienzle

DISCOGRAPHY

*Indicates highest Billboard chart position

- 1. On the Atchison, Topeka and the Santa Fe** Johnny Mercer • Music by Harry Warren, lyrics by Johnny Mercer. Capitol 195. Courtesy of Capitol Records, Inc. No. 1*
- 2. You Belong to My Heart** Bing Crosby and Xavier Cugat and His Orchestra • Music and lyrics by Agustín Lara, English lyrics by Ray Gilbert. Decca 23413. No. 3*
- 3. Rum and Coca-Cola** The Andrews Sisters • Music by Jeri Sullivan and Paul Baron, lyrics by Morey Amsterdam. Decca 18636. No. 1*
- 4. It Might As Well Be Spring** Dick Haymes • Music by Richard Rodgers, lyrics by Oscar Hammerstein II. Decca 18706. No. 5*
- 5. My Dreams Are Getting Better All the Time** Les Brown and His Orchestra • Music by Vic Mizzy, lyrics by Mann Curtis. Vocal by Doris Day. Columbia 36779. Courtesy of CBS Special Products. No. 1*
- 6. There! I've Said It Again** Vaughn Monroe and His Orchestra • Music and lyrics by Redd Evans and Dave Mann. RCA Victor 1637. Courtesy of BMG Music. No. 1*
- 7. Tampico** Stan Kenton and His Orchestra • Music and lyrics by Allan Roberts and Doris Fisher. Vocal by June Christy. Capitol 202. Courtesy of Capitol Records, Inc. No. 3*
- 8. There Goes That Song Again** Russ Morgan and His Orchestra • Music by Jule Styne, lyrics by Sammy Cahn. Decca 18625. No. 4*
- 9. It's Been a Long, Long Time** Harry James and His Orchestra • Music by Jule Styne, lyrics by Sammy Cahn. Vocal by Kitty Kallen. Columbia 36838. Courtesy of CBS Special Products. No. 1*
- 10. If I Loved You** Perry Como • Music by Richard Rodgers, lyrics by Oscar Hammerstein II. RCA Victor 1676. Courtesy of



Louis Jordan, grand reaper of the righteous riff

*lyrics by Oscar Hammerstein II. RCA Victor 1676. Courtesy of BMG Music. No. 3**

11. Candy Johnny Mercer, Jo Stafford and the Pied Pipers • Music and lyrics by Mack David, Joan Whitney and Alex Kramer. Capitol 183. Courtesy of Capitol Records, Inc. No. 1*

12. A Little on the Lonely Side Frankie Carle and His Orchestra • Music and lyrics by Dick Robertson, James Cavanaugh and Frank Weldon. Vocal by Paul Allen. Columbia 36760. Courtesy of CBS Special Products. No. 4*

13. Gotta Be This or That Benny Goodman and His Orchestra • Music and lyrics by Sunny Skylar. Columbia 36813. Courtesy of CBS Special Products. No. 2*

14. I'll Buy That Dream Helen Forrest and Dick Haymes • Music by Allie Wrubel, lyrics by Herb Magidson. Decca 23434. No. 2*

15. I Can't Begin to Tell You Bing Crosby • Music by James V. Monaco, lyrics by Mack Gordon. Decca 23457. No. 1*

16. Till the End of Time Perry Como • Music and lyrics by Buddy Kaye and Ted Mossman. Based on Chopin's Polonaise No. 6 in A Flat. RCA Victor 1709. Courtesy of BMG Music. No. 1*

17. I'm Beginning to See the Light Harry James and His Orchestra • Music and lyrics by Harry James, Duke Ellington, Johnny Hodges and Don George. Vocal by Kitty Kallen. Columbia 36758. Courtesy of CBS Special Products. No. 1*

18. Ac-Cent-Tchu-Ate the Positive Johnny Mercer • Music by Harold Arlen, lyrics by Johnny Mercer. Capitol 180. Courtesy of Capitol Records, Inc. No. 1*

19. Caldonia Louis Jordan and His Tympany Five • Music and lyrics by Fleece Moore. Decca 8670. No. 6*

20. Laura Woody Herman and His Orchestra • Music by David Raksin, lyrics by Johnny Mercer. Columbia 36785. Courtesy of CBS Special Products. No. 4*

21. Dream The Pied Pipers • Music and lyrics by Johnny Mercer. Capitol 185. Courtesy of Capitol Records, Inc. No. 1*

22. Don't Fence Me In Bing Crosby and the Andrews Sisters • Music and lyrics by Cole Porter. Decca 23364. No. 1*

23. Sentimental Journey Les Brown and His Orchestra • Music and lyrics by Bud Green, Les Brown and Ben Homer. Vocal by Doris Day. Columbia 36769. Courtesy of CBS Special Products. No. 1*

24. Dig You Later (A Hubba-Hubba-Hubba) Perry Como • Music by Jimmy McHugh, lyrics by Harold Adamson. Victor 1750. Courtesy of BMG Music. No. 3*

1945

- 1 **On the Atchison, Topeka and the Santa Fe**
Johnny Mercer
- 2 **You Belong to My Heart**
Bing Crosby and Xavier Cugat and His Orchestra
- 3 **Rum and Coca-Cola** The Andrews Sisters
- 4 **It Might As Well Be Spring** Dick Haymes
- 5 **My Dreams Are Getting Better All the Time**
Les Brown and His Orchestra
- 6 **There! I've Said It Again**
Vaughn Monroe and His Orchestra
- 7 **Tampico** Stan Kenton and His Orchestra
- 8 **There Goes That Song Again**
Russ Morgan and His Orchestra
- 9 **It's Been a Long, Long Time**
Harry James and His Orchestra
- 10 **If I Loved You** Perry Como
- 11 **Candy** Johnny Mercer, Jo Stafford and the Pied Pipers
- 12 **A Little on the Lonely Side**
Frankie Carle and His Orchestra
- 13 **Gotta Be This or That**
Benny Goodman and His Orchestra
- 14 **I'll Buy That Dream** Helen Forrest and Dick Haymes
- 15 **I Can't Begin to Tell You** Bing Crosby
- 16 **Till the End of Time** Perry Como
- 17 **I'm Beginning to See the Light**
Harry James and His Orchestra
- 18 **Ac-Cent-Tchu-Ate the Positive** Johnny Mercer
- 19 **Caldonia** Louis Jordan and His Tympany Five
- 20 **Laura** Woody Herman and His Orchestra
- 21 **Dream** The Pied Pipers
- 22 **Don't Fence Me In** Bing Crosby and the Andrews Sisters
- 23 **Sentimental Journey** Les Brown and His Orchestra
- 24 **Dig You Later (A Hubba-Hubba-Hubba)** Perry Como



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