

Glenn Miller Orchestra

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Genres Big band, Jazz, Swing

Years active 1937–1942

Labels Bluebird

Website www.glennmiller.com/index.php

Past members Glenn Miller · Tex Beneke · Al Klink · Al Mastren · Alec Fila · Babe Russin · Barney Bigard · Billy May · Bob Price · Bobby Hackett · Buddy DeFranco · Charles Frankhauser · Chummy McGregor · Clyde Hurley · Dale McMickle · Doc Goldberg · Ernie Caceres · Erskine Hawkins · Eddie Durham · Frank Carlson · Frank D'Annolfo · Hal McIntyre · Jimmy Abato · Jimmy Priddy · Johnny Best · Legh Knowles · Marion Hutton · Maurice Purtill · Paul Tanner · Ray Eberle · Richard Fisher · Rolly Bundock · Tommy Mack · Trigger Alpert · Wilbur Schwartz

The Glenn Miller Orchestra was a swing/jazz big band formed by Glenn Miller in 1937. It was arranged around a clarinet and tenor saxophone playing melody, while three other saxophones played the harmony. This arrangement was different from usual and allowed Miller to develop his own style and sound, which made him and his orchestra one of the greatest of the swing era.

History

Miller originally formed a band around 1935–36. They sang with Brunswick Records, but struggled with financial troubles[3] and the band folded in 1937. But they reformed in 1938, and under new management they got significant radio airplay and achieved a large amount of success.[4] Through Miller's demand for professionalism at all times, perseverance, hard work, and musical genius, he created his own distinctive style, different from the regular swing bands of the time, which earned him 70 top ten singles in just four short years[5] - and launched the band to the uppermost heights of popularity.

Musical success

Beginnings: 1938

On 7 September 1938, he made his first recordings with his newly reformed band. They were "My Reverie" and "King Porter Stomp" released on record 7853 on RCA's sublabel Bluebird. Miller was not yet famous, and made less than 10 recordings with his band for the rest of that year.

Glen Island Casino: Summer 1939

In March 1939, The Glenn Miller Orchestra was given its big break, when they were chosen to play the summer season at the prestigious Glen Island Casino located in New Rochelle, New York. On 17 May 1939, they played their first songs of the night. By the end of their summer season, they had nationwide attention. They were famous.

Nationwide popularity: 1939–42

1939

Miller was enormously popular and the rest of 1939 only got better. On 4 April 1939, Miller and his Orchestra recorded "Moonlight Serenade". What many consider to be his second most famous record, (only behind "In the Mood" which was recorded later that year) the song helped Miller and his orchestra become even more popular- by staying on Billboard for 15 weeks and peaking at number 3- and was the band's greatest song at that time. It was the 5th overall most popular song for 1939. Miller's most famous song "In the Mood" was recorded 1 August 1939 and later became popular in 1940.

1940

1940 was a very popular year for Miller, as he earned himself 31 top ten hits and unsurpassed popularity. On 5 February 1940, Miller recorded "Tuxedo Junction". As a number one hit for Miller, it was overall at number 7 for the National Hit Parade, and sold 115,000 copies within the first week. In April, "Pennsylvania 6-5000" was released and that too became an instant jazz standard. A lot of these songs would also be featured in the 1941 motion picture Sun Valley Serenade. "In The Mood" recorded in 1939, became supremely popular. It led the Record Buying Guide for 13 weeks and stayed on Billboard's charts for 30. "In the Mood" would eventually, in 1983, be inducted into the Grammy Hall of Fame. It is considered one of the (if not the) greatest instrumental song of the swing era.

The band's most popular songs are became very popular and recorded a number of chart successes — among these were the ever-popular "Moonlight Serenade", "In the Mood", "Tuxedo Junction", "Pennsylvania 6-5000", "Chattanooga Choo Choo", "A String of Pearls", "At Last", and "(I've Got a Gal In) Kalamazoo."

Radio success

In the early 1940s, Miller's orchestra had an hour-long program on NBC-Blue, 5-6 p.m. Eastern time on Saturdays. A review in Billboard commented, "Unusual length of the program allows Miller to display all the top items in his library."

Past members

Glenn Miller

Tex Beneke

Al Klink

Al Mastren

Alec Fila

Babe Russin

Billy May

Bob Price

Bobby Hackett

Charles Frankhauser,

Chummy McGregor,

Clyde Hurley

Dale McMickle

Doc Goldberg

Ernie Caceres

Frank Carlson

Frank D'Annolfo

Hal McIntyre

Jimmy Abato

Jimmy Priddy

Johnny Best

Legh Knowles

Maurice Purtill

Paul Tanner

Ray Eberle

Richard Fisher

Rolly Bundock

Tommy Mack

Trigger Alpert

Wilbur Schwartz

Discography

Singles

1939: "Moonlight Serenade"

1939: "In the Mood"

1940: "Tuxedo Junction"

1940: "Pennsylvania 6-5000"

1941: "Chattanooga Choo Choo"

1941: "A String of Pearls"

1941: "At Last"

1942: "(I've Got a Gal In) Kalamazoo"