



THE GREAT ESCAPE! *

****“Anything that is good jazz is a great escape. When you’re involved in playing or listening to great jazz, no one can get to you.” -Woody Herman**

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Presented by: www.dixieswing.com

Glenn Miller, The Man Behind His Music

By Browser Ray Krysl

Glenn Miller was a bandleader whose music has weathered the passage of time from when he was considered the best in his field during the big band era in the late 1939's and 1940's. He led all bandleaders with eleven hits on the Hit Parade and came in second among all performers behind Bing Crosby who had sixteen hits. Billboard College Surveys rated his band the No. 1 favorite band for the years 1940, 1941 and 1942.

He had a short life; he was only forty years old when his plane was lost over the English Channel in December 1944 while a major in the Army Air Corps. To my knowledge, he is the only big band leader to die while serving in the armed forces of this country.

However, what was he really like as a person?

Bing Crosby, in the foreword to George T. Simon's biography on Glenn, "Glenn Miller and his Orchestra", says that he was a good friend from their early days when Bing sang with the Dorsey Brothers Orchestra and Glenn was in the trombone section in the band. During World War II, Bing sang with Glenn's AAF Orchestra in London. Bing writes, "About the best thing I can remember about Glenn personally, was his innate taste and class. He loved good things – musically and in his personal life. Although he came from Colorado, I believe his taste in clothes and life-style was definitely Ivy League. A most attractive man and, of course, tremendously gifted.

Simon in his biography states that he knew Glenn to be "an honest, sensitive, strong-willed, straight-ahead sort of guy" He goes on to say, "As I got to know him better, I began to recognize that he was not only dynamic but also difficult to understand. His world of all blacks and all whites, but few grays, was encased in an exasperatingly brittle hard shell. Though always deeply dedicated to the public's understanding and appreciation to his music, he allowed only a few privileged friends the opportunity to understand and appreciate the man who had created it. I should add that Simon met Glenn when he was with the Ray Noble Orchestra in the mid-1930-s and helped Glenn organize his first bands. In fact, Simon played drums in one of Glenn's first recordings. Simon continued his interest with Glenn and his music throughout Glenn's career.

Born Alton Glenn Miller March 1, 1904, he dropped the name "Alton" because he didn't like the way it sounded when his mother would call him. When he went into the service, the "Alton" returned, and he was known then as "Captain" and later "Major" Alton Glenn Miller.

In the early 1900's, music was the main form of recreation for the family; his mother played the organ and Glen was given a mandolin to play. His older brother, Deane, was given a cornet and played in some orchestras during his

younger days until he gave it up to become a dentist. Glenn quickly gave up the mandolin (not many offers from bands for mandolin players). When he was in high school, the band director gave him a trombone that Glenn would pay for by doing odd jobs. And this would start him on his career.

His love for music overtook studying although he did engage in sports, especially football. When it came time for him to graduate from high school, he was out of the state looking for a band job that didn't materialize. His mother had to accept his diploma at the graduation ceremonies and the principal commented, Maybe you should get it, anyway; you probably worked on it more than he did."

Glenn matriculated at the University of Colorado but spent only three quarters there. His love for music and playing with dance bands was so great he had no time for studying. Incidentally, he took a harmony course during that last quarter. He got a grade of 50!

His big break came when he got a job playing and arranging with Ben Pollack in 1926. Ben said that Glenn arranged a song like writing a letter; he was that quick. Benny Goodman was also in the band at that time and he and Glenn roomed together. The two wrote a song called "Room 1411", probably their room number. Glenn stayed until Ben hired another trombone player called Jack Teagarden and Glenn left deciding that it was time for him to do some freelancing.

However, Glenn and Teagarden did get to play together with Red Nichols and his Five Pennies on recording dates. Glenn wrote the verse to "Basin Street

Blues" and Jack sang it along with the chorus on a Charleston Chasers record in 1931 (Benny led the Chasers on several recording dates at that time). When Jack formed his own band, he added this song to his portfolio and along with playing the trombone sang it many times thereafter.

Glenn organized the Smith Ballew band (Ballew was primarily a singer and very popular at the time). The band broke up in New York in 1933 and four members of the orchestra along with the female vocalist Glenn hired in Denver were left stranded. At this time, the Dorsey Brothers were putting together an orchestra to go out on the road and Glenn managed to hire them all in the new Dorsey Brothers orchestra. He himself joined the band. However, he could not stand the fighting between the brothers, so he decided to leave and form the Ray Noble Orchestra in 1935. Ray was from England but could not bring his own musicians because the American musicians union would not stand for it. So, Glenn was given the job of employing all American musicians for the new orchestra.



Miller: Continued from page 1...

While with the Noble band, he composed "Miller's Tune" which later became "Moonlight Serenade". And while there, he also discovered the Miller sound, a trumpet playing along with the sax section but an octave higher. This was fine as long as Pee Wee Irwin played the trumpet but when he left the Noble band, Glenn could not find another trumpet player to do the same. So he assigned the job in desperation to Johnny Mince to play it on his b-flat clarinet instead. But it wasn't until Glenn had his second band and hired Willie Schwartz to play clarinet that the "Miller sound" came to full function. By the way, the Miller sound didn't develop because the trumpet player spilt his lip as was stated in the "Glenn Miller Story" movie. This movie, by the way, was full of many inaccuracies but it did portray one accurate fact: Glenn and wife Helen were completely in love with each other.

After the Noble days, Glenn, with Simon's help, formed his own band in 1937. Unfortunately, some of the members were heavy drinkers and couldn't be relied on to be at their best during engagements. Glenn himself was not a drinker but when things would go wrong, he could go on a bender. Glenn told Simon that after a few drinks he could easily turn into a pretty rough and unattractive character. So he avoided drinking completely especially in later years.

The band folded after the New Year's Eve gig that year. Glenn lost his life savings and became despondent.

However, after some prodding from Chummy MacGregor and Hal McIntyre, piano and clarinet players, respectively, from his old band and some financial help from wife Helen's parents who took out a second mortgage on their home, he decided to try again. But this time he was determined not to hire any heavy drinkers! So in the spring of 1938, he started his new band that would be a success. This band lasted only until September 1942, when Glenn enlisted into the Army Air Corps.

The new musicians were primarily unknown at that time although MacGregor and McIntyre returned. Glenn would have the musicians rehearse and rehearse and rehearse. He would see that they were dressed properly including handkerchiefs in their front pockets. They found him to be a tough taskmaster but they respected him because he worked as hard as they did. Marion Hutton, the female vocalist, found him to be a father figure to her. She was picked instead of sister Betty because she was more laid back and fitted the All-American girl image that he was looking for.

To go into all the remarks that the musicians told about Glenn would take several pages. Glenn was not the type to give out compliments but Helen told Simon, "He wouldn't tell Bill Finegan, one of his arrangers this, but he was very excited about the lovely arrangement Bill did on a certain song."

But Glenn was also a good businessman. Tommy Dorsey gave him money when he began his second band. When the band could afford it, Glenn repaid Tommy. When Tommy learned that this was only considered a loan and not an interest in the band, he became infuriated. Tommy then decided to finance Bob Chester to compete with Glenn.

After the orchestra became well known, Glenn set his own fee schedule for ballroom engagements. He would ask for

a guarantee on a certain attendance amount and a percentage of the admissions thereafter. This caused a little problem for him when the band played at the Hollywood Palladium while it was in California filming "Sun Valley Serenade". Beginning long before their engagement, the Palladium had issued many complimentary tickets for 'Plugs', and many people had been saving them for the Miller opening. A tremendous crowd, filled with movie celebrities, critics, reporters, and disc jockeys attended one of the biggest big-band openings of all time. When Glenn found out that the take was less than the attendance, he insisted that all the "freebies" be "paybees" and he got his way. From then on, everyone had to pay including the musicians wives, including Helen Miller herself. The move paid off handsomely in dollars. During the first of a three-week engagement, the band set a new Palladium record. Needless to say, when the band returned the following year to do the movie "Orchestra Wives", it did not play at the Palladium.

Realizing that World War II was soon going to include our country, Glenn in 1941 ordered Tom Sheils, his business manager, to buy 250 mutes and store them to be used whenever they were needed by band members. He knew that during the war, these might not be available.

And speaking of the war, he devoted more time to the armed forces. He began his Saturday afternoon Sunset Serenade broadcasts where the kids could attend for only the price of a U.S. Savings stamp. He donated records and radio phonographs to various training camps, all of this coming out of his own pocket.

Even that was not enough for him to do for the war effort. Being turned down by the Navy because of bad eyesight, he turned to the army in October 1942. From then on, he was assigned the task of assembling an air force band.

What a tremendous air force band he assembled! He found many musicians who before they went into service played with just about every major band including his own. He included a string section, some members of which came

from symphony orchestras. He insisted on playing the popular songs of the time, even when the band was marching. Ray McKinley, the drummer in the orchestra, along with arrangers Perry Burgett and Jerry Grey took the popular W.C. Handy tune and turned it into the "St. Louis Blues March." A couple of other songs were turned into marches. This infuriated some of the higher-ups who insisted on the usual Sousa marches to be played during parades as in the past. Glenn shot back. "Are you still using the same planes and equipment as in World War I, too?"

He and Helen adopted two children during the war years, Steven and Jonnie. By the time Jonnie came to the Miller home, Glenn was overseas so he never saw her. Steven and Jonnie can generally be found attending the Glenn Miller Festival held in Clarinda, Iowa every June.

I've only scratched the surface on all of his accomplishments. It took George Simon several hundred pages to detail more of them

Such was the man who went to war with our servicemen, but unlike many of them who came back home, he did not.



"Miller, Glenn." Online Photograph. Encyclopædia Britannica Online. 8 Apr. 2008 <http://www.britannica.com/eb/art-12990>.

The Tale Behind the Tune

What Made Caldonia's Big Head So Hard...

When you look at the label of Louis Jordan & the Tympani Five's "Caldonia", you'll see the name of *Fleecie Moore* there as composer, even though she had nothing to do with the song. Louis was married to Moore at the time *he* wrote the tune and he gave it to her as a gift. Later on, as sometimes happens, love did not carry the day and the two got divorced. Louis wanted the song back. Fleecie said, "Nothing doing", and continued to collect the royalties. According to Jordan at the time, "Fleecie Moore's name is on it, but she didn't have anything to do with it.



She didn't know nothin' about no music at all...and she's still getting the money." Here's what Louis wrote:

*"Walkin' with my baby she's got great big feet
She's long, lean, and lanky and ain't had nothing to eat
She's my baby and I love her just the same
Crazy 'bout that woman 'cause Caldonia is her name.
Caldonia ! Caldonia !
What makes your big head so hard?
I love her, I love her just the same
Crazy 'bout that woman 'cause Caldonia is her name."*

Adding injury to insult, when Louis first recorded "Caldonia", on January 19, 1945, Decca, his label, decided not to release it right away. In the meantime, Woody Herman happened to hear Jordan live at the Paramount Theater in New York, went wild over the tune, and recorded his own smash version February 26, 1945 with his First Herd. By the time Decca wised up, RCA had also put out a big selling version by Erskine Hawkins in June of '45 that cut into Louis' sales.

Also, it's a fact that The Tympani Five most often had more than five members. . .and usually no tympani. Jordan was one of the best selling artists of the 1940's and we're happy to say that his and other swing music is finding a following among the CD buying young people again today. Somewhere...Fleecie is smiling.

Mission Statement

This newsletter, created by Bob Knack and friends, remembers The **Browsers on the ABC network, Bob's radio shows on WJGG-AM 1530, Elmhurst, Illinois; and contains articles for all aficionados of big band, swing and traditional jazz worldwide. It is an attempt to fill the void left when periodicals such as the **Browser's Notes ceased to publish. We will concentrate on, but will not be limited to, fun-to-read articles on the music from "back in the day". Initially, we intend to publish as an E-letter only. Letters, articles, suggestions or any help whatsoever is appreciated. Send inquiries to bobknack@hotmail.com or PO Box 642012, Chicago, Illinois 60664.

B&W printed copies of past and this current issue are also available in booklet form for \$2.00 each from the above PO Box.

****A Browser** is a dedicated devotee of the truly American art form known as the Big Band. Some years ago, Phil Holdman, founder, often visited record shops seeking rare examples of LP's and 78's to add to his extensive collection. Here, he also met other collectors who sought similar discs or tapes. Phil's wife, Alberta, named the group "The Browsers" because "they are always browsing in record shops."

We wish to acknowledge the many contributions made by readers to help defray expenses.

"I don't know anything about running a newspaper; I just try everything I can think of."

-Charles Foster Kane

Bring The Excitement of "That Championship Season" to Your Next Party...



Pictured: T. Bartlett E. Wilkinson T. Buttermann J. Kuncl J. Blegen

The Cubs Dixieland Band has been playing the 'friendly confines' of Wrigley Field for over a quarter of a century. Our foot-tapping aggregation consists of Trumpet, Trombone (or Tenor Sax), Clarinet, Banjo, and Tuba. We have appeared on TV hundreds of times over the years on many local and nationally broadcast programs.

The band performs at any kind of function, limited only by your imagination, including picnics, Bar-B-Qs, pool parties, Mardi Gras, conventions and wedding receptions. We have even performed at funerals. We appear in Cubs uniform unless otherwise specified. **Book the band for your next event!**

Contact Ted at TBBands@aol.com for details.

[Click here to see the Cubs band in action!](#)

Baseball Trivia

1. Famous midget Eddie Gaedel pinch-hit for the St. Louis Browns in 1951. What number did he wear on his uniform and who did he pinch hit for?
2. Name the well-known pitching brothers who won three games in one day.
3. Jimmy Piersall hit his 100th home run for what team?
4. Name three pitchers with more than 30 lifetime homers.

-Compiled by Phil Holdman

Answers on page 8.



The Cubs last won a World Series 100 years ago in 1908. As Jack Brickhouse once said, "Anyone can have a bad century."

Remembered 45s

1956 Was a Year of Transition

Peyton Place was a bestselling book, The Wizard of Oz aired for the first time on TV. The New York Yankees beat the Brooklyn Dodgers in the World Series, a first-class stamp was three cents, the big screen featured, Giant, The Searchers, Around the World in 80 Days and The King and I, band leader Tommy Dorsey died and American pop music was about to change forever. Here are the Billboard number one singles for 1956, the year the music changed:

“Memories Are Made of This”: **Dean Martin** #1 on 1/11/56, (Capital 3295). Dean was in the process of breaking up the comedy team of Martin and Lewis the year this became the first number-one of the year. Composer Terry Gilkyson, a member of The Weavers folk group was one of the back-up singers on the record.

“Rock and Roll Waltz”: **Kay Starr** #1 on 2/18/56, (RCA 6359) Kay goes back to the big band era having made two records with Glenn Miller, filling in for an ill Marion Hutton, “Baby Me” and “Love with a Capital U.” This was the first number one hit with “Rock and Roll” in the title.

“Lisbon Antigua”: **Nelson Riddle** #1 on 2/25/56 This hit was propelled with an appearance in the motion picture “Lisbon” starring Ray Milland and Maureen O’Hara. The song was brought to Riddle’s attention after being a hit by a Mexican band. He came up through the big bands of Charlie Spivak, Bob Crosby and Tommy Dorsey.

“The Poor People of Paris”: **Les Baxter** #1 for four weeks on 3/24/56. (Capital 3336) Baxter once sang with Mel Torme’s Mel-Tones and counted this as his only number one. It was unusual because it meant that two instrumentals topped the charts back-to-back.

“Love Me Tender”: **Elvis Presley** After this, 1956 quickly became the year of Elvis with “Heartbreak Hotel”, (RCA 6420), eight weeks on the charts, “I Want You, I Love You, I Need You”, (RCA 6540), one week, “Don’t Be Cruel/Hounddog” (RCA 6640), eleven weeks #1, and “Love Me Tender” (RCA 6643), five weeks at #1. Elvis made his network television debut on “Stage Show” over CBS, which was a Dorsey Brothers hosted summer replacement show for Jackie Gleason’s variety program. During the rest of 1956, the only artists able to knock Elvis out of the number one spot were:

“The Wayward Wind”: **Gogi Grant** #1 on 6/16/56 (ERA 1013) six weeks at #1. Her name was changed from Audrey Brown by RCA’s Dave Kapp.

“My Prayer”: **The Platters** #1 on 8/4/56. (Mercury 70893) The first black artists to have a number one Billboard hit. Finishing off this year of musical transition was:

“Singing the Blues”: **Guy Mitchell** #1 on 12/8/56. (Columbia 40769)

The big bands dominated the ten years between 1935 and 1945. When the bands faded after WW II, the pop singers, many with big band resumes took over. However, by 1956 and the advent of Elvis, it was plain to see that Rock and Roll was here to stay!

Source: The Billboard Book of Number #1 Hits. Fred Branson, Billboard Publications.



Mike Baker
and the
Forgotten 45s

This is the best radio station in Chicago right now !!!! I listen everyday. I really enjoy the old music, the Sounds of Sinatra (etc)... By the way...I am only 53 yrs old, but your format takes me back to a much simpler time when that old music came from a lot of radios in the morning on the southwest side of Chicago. I can smell the A&P bakery on 47th Street as I type...thanks.

Mike Skwira
Burbank, IL.

News: Is Vinyl making a comeback? The British Phonograph Industry (BPI) reports that sales of 7" singles (45 rpm) surpassed the one million mark recently.

In response to your many requests: The Browsers theme song "Browsin' by Ronnie Kole is still available at www.ronniekole.com

Our congratulations to Ronnie on the recent unveiling of his statue in New Orleans's Music Legends Park.

Recommended Chicagoland Happenings...

Disc Jockey "Rowdy" Ron Richter plays big band and jazz the second Sunday of every month at his new location, Gusto Italiano Ristorante, 1470 Waukegan Road, Glenview, IL 60025 Tel: (847) 729-5444 Fax: (847) 729-5447 4:00 PM - ? Attendees are invited to bring a favorite CD to play and comment on. Call ahead. Details subject to change.



“The Browsers”, experts in the big band era, now meet the last Wednesday of every month @ 6:30 PM “for pizza, beer and good conversation”. The group is pleased to announce their newest headquarters: Marie’s Pizzeria & Liquors, 4129 W. Lawrence, Chicago. Dues are six dollars and include a share of the pizza. Details subject to change

On the Radio: Carousel Bandstand: (Thursday 10 to 11 a.m.): “Ken Meyer draws from his own vast, personal music library to present an hour of the best of the big bands, standards and great vocals of that golden era of music. Ken also presents many of the big band radio shows from the Aragon, Waldorf Astoria, and network radio studios.
[WEPS-FM 88.9, Elgin, Illinois.](http://www.weps-fm.com)

Letters E-mails, Errata Etc...

I enjoy reading the newsletter. I'm glad to come across the name Ray McKinley, to me a much under-appreciated drummer. I always enjoyed working with "Mac," and he (unlike some bandleaders) took no guff from the audience. He'd take requests as long as they were asked for politely, but woe to those who tried to browbeat anyone in the band.

-Eric Schneider



Browser Perry Huntoon Takes on Mariah

Thought you might find the following letter posted by the Chicago Tribune online of interest:

Mariah Carey Still Has a Long Way To Go- March 31, 2008

The note in the Personals section of the Tribune ("Making her way to the top," March 31) to the effect that Mariah Carey, with 18 No. 1 hits, is now tied with Elvis Presley and closing in on the Beatles for the most No. 1 hits in the rock era, can only bring a smile to those who remember the dominance of one singer in the pre-rock era.

Bing Crosby, whose style set the standard for subsequent male recording stars like Frank Sinatra, Perry Como, Dean Martin and Tony Bennett, had an astounding 40 No. 1 hits on the Billboard charts over a twenty year period, including the largest selling record of all time, "White Christmas." Now, that's a record unlikely to be topped anytime soon. Mariah Carey has a long way to go.

---Perry Huntoon
Naperville, Illinois



Dear Great Escape:

I just love big band, especially Count Basie!

-Jodi Kerns



I have a hundred questions for the Browsers-who was the only piano player beside Duke who was invited to conduct the Ellington Band?

Where was Ramsey Lewis' first professional engagement in Chicago?

-Dr. Jerry Field

Editor's note: OK, Browsers and fans can you answer the above for Dr Field? Let's hear from you. bobknack@hotmail.com or: PO Box 642012, Chicago, Illinois 60664

Dear Great Escape;

My Brother in upstate NY sent me the data on The Great Escape. A fantastic evening reading and recording the seven newsletters. Am anticipating the upcoming copies. Will get these seven copies up to my brother.

My 5 years in the Pacific in WW2 are full of memories of those stars and songs of the swing era.

Keep up the good work.

-Philip Geer

A Must for Your Collection! Ted Buttermann's Neo-Passé Band Live At The Village Tavern



Pictured L to R: Russ Phillips, Scott Black, Dave Elias, Ronnie Baron, Ted Buttermann

© 2001 dixieswing.com

CD Baby Price: \$15.00

Order now, supplies are limited!

Four rhythm; piano, bass, guitar and drums, and one of four different world-class horn players on each track .

The over 73 minutes of music includes:

- 1 When You're Smilin',
- 2 The One I Love,
- 3 Sweet Georgia Brown,
- 4 China Boy,
- 5 On The Alamo,
- 6 I Can't Believe That You're In Love With Me,
- 7 After You've Gone,
- 8 These Foolish Things,
- 9 Rosetta,
- 10 Undecided,
- 11 Let Yourself Go,
- 12 Three Little Words,
- 13 It All Depends On You,
- 14 Some Of These Days,
- 15 Lester Leaps In

Ted's band, with a four-man rhythm section, and a rotating horn player, usually stays in a mellow relaxed swing mode. The group, particularly with a clarinet lead, often has the sound of a small group Benny Goodman session.

Ted recorded the band over several weekends between February and June of 2001 and thus captured the best of four Chicago area musicians on the front line. With 15 standards featured over a generous 73+ minutes, the average tune plays for over five minutes, affording the horn players ample room to show their talents.

Eric Schneider, well known around Chicago, played with Basie for a couple years in the early 80's. A wonderful. Perhaps underrated talent, Eric has the ability to take a tune and swing hard with seemingly little effort. Featured on six of the tunes on the CD, Eric takes "Three Little Words" at a nice mid-tempo on the tenor and just rolls with it in very much a Chu Berry style. On "China Boy", he switches to soprano and can be compared favorably to Sidney Bechet. Kim Cusack, long time veteran of the Salty Dogs, plays clarinet on three tunes while Stu Genovese is the featured tenor on "Sweet Georgia Brown" and "These Foolish Things". Russ Phillips, son of Russ, Sr. who played trombone with Louis Armstrong's All-Stars after Teagarden left, capably offers a change of pace with his trombone on three titles notably, "Undecided".

With a rock solid rhythm section, this band cooks. Highly recommended for lovers of small group swing.

--Perry Huntoon

International Association of Jazz Record Collectors Journal

www.cdbaby.com for ordering info or

[Click to See the Neo Passé Band in Action!](#)

Marian McPartland Celebrates Her 90th Birthday

by Browser Joe Carlton

Marian McPartland, one of the Grand Dames of Jazz celebrated her 90th birthday on March 20 at Dizzy's Club-Coca Club in New York City. Many of her musical friends attended. When I heard of this celebration, it reminded me of the time that I met and listened to Marian while she played the piano in the company of her late husband Jimmy McPartland and others. It was in the spring of 1946 and I was a senior in high school. Marian had just come to the US as a 28 year old war bride.

Jimmy's daughter was in the same high school I was attending and lived with Jimmy Lannigan and his family in Lombard, IL. A good friend of mine, future Browser Larry Maloney, was friendly with Jimmy's daughter (and I am afraid I have forgotten her name as she was a cute chick - alas) told us that her Dad and new bride were going to be in town and have a little jam session that evening. We were invited to be there. When we arrived, Jimmy was there in his USO uniform with his trumpet, Marian was at the piano and Lannigan played the bass.

Both Jimmy's had played with the Chicago Austin High Gang, which had many soon to be famous jazz players such as Bud Freeman, Frank Teschemacher, Dave Tough, Eddie Condon and others. Jimmy had served in the US Army, was discharged in 1945 but stayed overseas in the USO, playing at bases in Europe. It was during this time that Marian and Jimmy met and soon wed at an army base in Germany. They returned to this country early in '46 and that's when all of us met.

That evening in Lombard, we were also joined by a young clarinet player at Lannigan's but once again, my memory fails me as to his name. My friend Larry had brought along an early recording device that at 78 rpm, could record on a little floppy disc, about 4" across. He asked Marian to play something so he could record it, which she did and that might have been the very first recording Marian McPartland ever made. I was in a whirl; this was high cotton for a young music lover.

However, what impressed me the most was Marian who was so graceful and ladylike. She was so pleasant to speak to; could play a really hot piano and she made a lasting impression on me, so that for years I listened to and tape-recorded her "Piano Jazz" programs every Sunday on NPR. Play on, dear lady, play on.

Editor's Note: Author and quizmaster Joe Carlton has written an excellent book, "THE BROWSERS AT LARGE: Phil Holdman's Tall Tales and True." This book containing lots of stories by Phil and other Browsers, along with many, many photos, is still available. Phil and his cadre of big band experts aired a popular big band trivia show on the ABC network with Eddie Hubbard for over twenty years. If interested, please send your check for \$17.00 made out to Joe Carlton, 317 Cottage Avenue, Glen Ellyn, IL 60137 and your copy will promptly be mailed to you.

The Jazz Clubs Present...

The St. Louis Jazz Club: An outstanding web site and club with lots of events and info. Next: The Old St. Louis Levee Band, Sunday, June 8, 2 PM Bel-Air Bowl.

www.stlouisjazzclub.org

Swing band...

FOR RENT



Pictured from left: Russ Phillips, Ted Buttermann, Scott Black and Eric Schneider

Specializing in swing music of the 30s and 40s, ala Benny Goodman the group is versatile and their repertoire reaches back to the 20s and onward to the 50s, 60s, and some later, excluding rock.

The band performs at any kind of function limited only by your imagination. This includes picnics, Bar-B-Qs, pool parties, Mardi Gras, conventions and wedding receptions. The band consists of piano, bass, drums, rhythm guitar and features a variety of horn players on different occasions including reed players, trumpets, trombones, vibes, and other instrumentalists from time to time. Expect guest artists to sit in occasionally!



Pictured from left: Ronnie Baron, Ted Buttermann, Bob Neighbor, Freddie Rundquist

[Check out the Ted's song list here! They know 'em all!](#)

To book the Neo-Passé contact Ted at
TBBands@dixieswing.com

Greasy Sack News

Bing, Joe Venuti and the Ponies

This first item was sent in by Las Vegas bandleader Walt Boenig...

Jazz violinist Joe Venuti was quite a character whose friendship with Bing went back to the days when they were both with the Paul Whiteman Orchestra in the 20s.

Bing was president of the Del Mar racetrack between Los Angeles and San Diego and one day at the track, he ran into Joe. "Hey, Bing" Joe said. "Lend me a couple hundred bucks. I've got a sure thing: number 4 in the fifth."

"Joe," Bing replied, "That nag will be lucky to finish. If he does, there's a soap truck waiting at the finish line for him."

"Just \$200, Bing, I've got it straight from the jockey."

So, Bing peeled off a couple hundred and gave it to Joe. Number 4 finished first in the fifth and paid 15-to-one. Bing looked for Joe and found him in the clubhouse bar holding forth to all who would listen about how he'd handicapped the horse and won a bundle.

"Hi, Joe." Bing greeted. Joe said, "Hey, Bing...here's a couple hundred bucks...sing us a chorus of "White Christmas." Bing could never tell this story without collapsing in laughter.

<http://www.waltboenigbigband.com/>



Kenton Alumni Spring Tour Concerts

The Mike Vax band featuring Alumni from the 1956 – 1978 Stan Kenton Orchestras hit the road for their Midwest tour April 21 – 30 2008. The band makes tours around the United States every year, and does jazz cruises and festivals. According to the website <http://www.bigbandjazz.net>, the band performs some of the well-known music of the Stan Kenton Orchestra; plus in keeping with Stan's insistence on not just performing nostalgia type music, they also perform new material written in the Kenton style.



Morsels: Benny Goodman's 1938 Carnegie Hall jazz concert ticket prices ranged from 85 cents for the upper balcony to \$2.75 for the boxes, a little less than New York Philharmonic patrons paid for the same seats... Benny was known for his many eccentricities making for some great stories. If you've heard any, send them to us for use in our future article on "The King of Swing. bobknack@hotmail.com, Or PO Box 642012, Chicago, Illinois 60664.



The Glenn Miller Orchestra was due to begin its third of four movies for 20th Century Fox, "Blind Date" in November of 1942. However, as Captain Miller entered the Army Air Force in September of that year never to return, America had to make do with only two Miller band flicks, "Sun Valley Serenade" and "Orchestra Wives".



The Herman Herd played a concert at the Oakbrook (Illinois) Mall on July 9, 1986. In his own inimitable style, Woody introduced the next tune. "We would like to now play a lovely composition by John Coltrane called "Central Park West". The tune is much lovelier than the park because I got mugged there three times!"

-Compiled by Bob Knack

Who Was Irving Mills?

By Browser Joe Carlton

Yes, who was Irving Mills? He's credited with helping Duke Ellington compose many of what I thought were Duke's own songs, such as "The Mooch", "Ring Dem Bells", "Mood Indigo" and "Rockin' Rhythm" starting in 1929 and continuing into the late 1930s. In Duke's autobiography, "Music Is My Mistress" he is also credited as "author" of at least 46 other songs. Now, I don't know exactly what Duke means by the term "author" but it does show that Irving and Duke had a close relationship.

However, in skimming over Duke's autobiography, I didn't see ONE MENTION of Irving's name. It must be in there but it sure isn't prominent. Strange, isn't it!! Irving had handled Duke's bookings up until 1939 and according to the book "The Big Bands" by George T. Simon, it was thought by Simon that that was due to the fact that Irving had great faith in the band during its early days. In the book "Duke" by Derek Jewell, the author felt that Irving had the knack "to pick up the complete rights to original blues from needy musicians at twenty dollars a time. Mills offered them their first recording sessions - four numbers at a time - and under a handful of different names (the Jungle Band, the Whoopee Makers, the Harlem Footwarmers as well as Duke Ellington, depending on the label.)" It was after this that Mills then became each band's manager.

Jewell continued, "No manager ever battled harder for his artist than Mills did. He had been a song plugger, then a singer in cinemas and finally a megaphone vocalist like Rudy Vallee in dance halls, before he concentrated on management and music publishing. Mills was almost a parody of his profession: squat, burly, pugnacious, a waver of fat cigars, and a fast-talking, excitedly gesturing hustler". Nevertheless, there were also some adverse comments about the Mills-Ellington arrangement. In George T. Simon's book, he commented, "For a while during 1937, the band recorded on the Master label, which was run by Mills who had long been associated with Ellington in a business capacity and who, for reasons best known to Ellington, shares composer credits on a great many of Duke's hit tunes published by Mills Music. Some years ago, I was invited by a friend to come with him to a party at Mills' Hollywood mansion. 'I want you to notice one thing', he said, 'and that's that huge expanse of red carpeting that covers the ground floor. That's Duke's blood.' "

So, the mystery of Irving Mills continues. It is my personal thought that Irving Mills helped Duke Ellington in the beginning and in order for Duke to get his music published and recorded had to give Irving Mills composer credit. Remember those residuals. However, after Duke became so successful, why did he continue this relationship? Irving Mills, to my knowledge, never wrote one musical note.



Ketter's Corner

By Browser Warren Ketter...

♪ Cab Calloway was the drummer in his early band called the Missourians.

♪ Orchestra leader Lud Gluskin was known as the Paul Whiteman of Europe.

♪ Red Norvo started out as Kenneth Norville.

♪ Basie's tasty tune "Corner Pocket" done as a vocal turns into "Until I Met You".

♪ To avoid contract problems, Charlie Parker used the name Charlie Chan on some recordings.

Let Every Man Read My Epitaph

by Bob Knack

I read where jazz trumpeter Adolphus "Doc" Cheatham was so much identified with the song "I Guess I'll Get the Papers and Go Home" that it is etched on his tombstone. He died June 2, 1997, after playing a set at Washington's Blues Alley jazz club, a week before his 92nd birthday. Try as I might, I couldn't find any proof of this in my research, but I did find out a lot about epitaphs, eulogies and last words of others while searching.

The epitaph on Frank Sinatra's headstone reads "The Best Is Yet To Come". It was reported that at his funeral, friends and family members placed the following and other items in his coffin: a pack of Camels with a Zippo lighter, ten dimes, Tootsie Roll candies, Black Jack chewing gum, a roll of wild cherry Life Savers, and a mini bottle of Jack Daniel's. There was a provision in Frank's will that if anyone contested it, they automatically were disinherited.

Many of you are aware of the epitaph "And The Angels Sing" appearing on Johnny Mercer's gravestone. His wife Ginger has an equally loving inscribed tribute, "You Must Have Been A Beautiful Baby." Mercer's first song, written when he was only fifteen years old was "Sister Susie Strut Your Stuff". It was the first of well over 1,000 songs he contributed to the Great American Song Book.

Before they wheeled Buddy Rich into the operating room for some serious surgery, a nurse asked him if he was allergic to anything. "Yes", replied Rich, "Country and Western music." "The World's Greatest Drummer's" stone in Westwood Memorial in Los Angeles reads; "One Of A Kind".

As he was just about to lead a radio remote from the Hollywood Palladium in 1944, Les Brown realized that his trombone man, Sy Zentner was nowhere to be found. The staff announcer was filling time on the air while Sy was finally located. The announcer was given a "thumbs up", and in the intro he slipped in "Now, here's that band of renown"...and the moniker stuck. Les died in 2001, after leading his big band well into the 1990's, longer than any one else in big band music. His stone reads, "A Man Of Renown".

There is no inscription on the tombstone of Nat "King" Cole aside from "Nat Cole, 1919-1965. He was eulogized beautifully, however, after his passing on February 15, 1965. At the funeral, Jack Benny offered this remembrance: "Sometimes death is not as tragic as not knowing how to live. This man knew how to live -- and how to make others glad they were living." The mausoleum where Cole rests in Forest Lawn Memorial Park also contains the graves of Marie McDonald, Gene Raymond, Alan Ladd, Clara Bow, George Burns & Gracie Allen, and Jeanette McDonald.

It is rumored that an inscription on Louis Armstrong's stone reads, "Louis was born poor, died rich and never hurt anybody". There is no such passage on Armstrong's headstone, however. Those lines about him were written by Duke Ellington and appear in his book, "Music is My Mistress". Louis resting place in Queens' Flushing Cemetery has a stone that simply reads "Satchmo".

Occasionally, someone's last words are as interesting as any eulogy that follows. Bing Crosby died doing one of the things he loved best. After a day on the links, Crosby collapsed right after telling his buddies, "That was a great round of golf, fellas". Actor Humphrey Bogart, who went on to his "big sleep" In 1957, reportedly said in his final breath, "I should never have switched from scotch to martinis".

Another prominent thespian, George Sanders, made certain his last words were remembered. In his suicide note of 1972 Sanders bid us this farewell: "Dear World, I am leaving

you because I am bored. I am leaving you with your worries. Good luck."

Finally, "On the Whole, I'd Rather Be in Philadelphia" is not written on the headstone of comedian W. C. Fields as is popularly thought. Fields' stone at Forest Lawn in Glendale, California simply reads "W.C. Fields/1880-1946." Shortly before his death, a friend was startled to find the non-religious W.C. sitting on his front porch reading a bible. When questioned about it, Fields explained that he was merely "looking for loopholes". He died on Christmas day.

Here Is A List Of Famous Headstone Epitaphs Worth A Mention:

Frank Sinatra: "The Best Is Yet To Come"
Sammy Davis Jr: "The Entertainer, "He Did It All"
Dean Martin: "Everybody Loves Somebody Sometime"
Johnny Mercer: "And The Angels Sing"
Ginger Mercer: "You Must Have Been A Beautiful Baby"
Harry James: "He's Gone On The Road For One-Nighters With Gabriel"
Les Brown: "A Man Of Renown"
Jackie Gleason: "And Away We Go"
Edward Kennedy Ellington: "Duke"
Thomas F. Dorsey Jr. "Tommy": "The Sentimental Gentleman"
Harry Lillis "Bing" Crosby: "Beloved By All"
Ray Coniff: "Somewhere My Love"
Nick Ceroli, (drummer for the Tijuana Brass): "The Music Comes First"
Rodney Dangerfield: "There Goes The Neighborhood"
Sammy Cahn: "Sleep With A Smile"
Burns & Allen: "Together Again"
Buddy Rich: "One Of A Kind"
Mel Blanc: "That's All Folks"
Ernie Kovacs: "Nothing in Moderation"
Merv Griffin: "I Will Not Be Right Back After This Message"



Baseball Quiz Answers

1. The number on his uniform was 8 1/2. He batted for Francis Saucier.
2. Gaylord Perry won two games in relief and his brother, Jim Perry, pitched and won a complete game.
3. The New York Mets.
4. Wes Ferrel (38) Bob Lemon (37) Red Ruffing (36) Warren Spahn (35)