

JAZZ LINES PUBLICATIONS

Presents

YULETIDE MEDLEY 2

RECORDED BY THE GLENN MILLER ORCHESTRA

ARRANGED BY DAVE WOLPE

FULL SCORE

JLP-7964

TRADITIONAL

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A NOT-FOR-PROFIT JAZZ RESEARCH ORGANIZATION DEDICATED TO PRESERVING AND PROMOTING AMERICA'S MUSICAL HERITAGE.



THE JAZZ LINES FOUNDATION INC.

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GLENN MILLER ORCHESTRA SERIES

YULETIDE MEDLEY 2 (1988)

Glenn Miller Biography:

“A band ought to have a sound all of its own. It ought to have a personality.” – Glenn Miller

Alton Glenn Miller was born in Clarinda, Iowa on March 1, 1904. But it was in North Platte, Nebraska, several years later that Glenn actually got his musical start when, one day, his father brought home a mandolin. Glenn promptly traded it for an old battered horn, which he practiced every chance he got. In fact his mother worried, “It got to where Pop and I used to wonder if he’d ever amount to anything.”

In 1923, Miller entered the University of Colorado, although he spent more time traveling to auditions and playing where and whenever he could. After flunking three of his five courses one semester, Glenn dropped out to concentrate on his career as a professional musician. He toured with several orchestras and ended up in Los Angeles where he landed a spot in Ben Pollack’s group, a band that included a guy named Benny Goodman. Here, Miller also got the chance to write some arrangements. Arriving in New York City, he soon sent for, and married his college sweetheart, Helen Burger in 1928, and for the next three years, earned his living as a free-lance trombonist and arranger.

Miller played and recorded with the likes of Tommy and Jimmy Dorsey (who on several of their records, featured an up-and-coming singer by the name of Bing Crosby), Gene Krupa, Eddie Condon and Coleman Hawkins. In addition, during that time, Glenn cut 18 sides for Goodman, and also worked for radio studio conductors like Victor Young, Carl Fenton and Jacques Renard. In 1934, Miller became the musical director of the Dorsey Band, and later went on to organize The Ray Noble Orchestra, which included such players as Charlie Spivak, Pee-wee Erwin, Bud Freeman, Johnny Mince, George Van Eps and Delmar Kaplan, among others.

In April 1935, Glenn Miller recorded, for the first time, under his own name. Using six horns, a rhythm section and a string quartet, he recorded *Moonlight on the Ganges* and *A Blues Serenade* for Columbia. But selling only a few hundred records, he continued his position with the Noble Orchestra. In 1937, Glenn Miller stepped out to form his own band. There were a few recordings — one for Decca and one for Brunswick — a couple of week-long stints in New Orleans and Dallas, and many one-nighters, but it was not to be. Though the group would play one more date several days later in Bridgeport, Connecticut, Glenn gave his men their final notice on New Year’s Eve at the Valencia Ballroom in York, Pennsylvania. Broke, depressed and having no idea what he was going to do, he returned to New York City.

It is said that Miller could never remember precisely the moment he decided to emphasize his new reed section sound. But it was during this disheartening interim, that he realized the unique sound — produced by the clarinet holding the melodic line while the tenor sax plays the same note, and supported harmonically by three other saxophones — just might be the individual and easily recognizable style that would set his band apart from all the rest.

Formed in March 1938, the second Glenn Miller Orchestra — which would later include the likes of Tex Beneke, Marion Hutton, Ray Eberle, Paul Tanner, Johnny Best, Hal McIntyre, and Al Klinck — soon began breaking attendance records all up and down the East Coast. At the New York State Fair in Syracuse it attracted the largest dancing crowd in the city’s history. The next night it topped Guy Lombardo’s all-time record at the Hershey Park Ballroom in Pennsylvania. The Orchestra was invited by ASCAP to perform at Carnegie Hall with three of the greatest bands ever — Paul Whiteman, Fred Waring and Benny Goodman — and created more of a stir than any of them.

There were record-breaking recordings, as well, such as *Tuxedo Junction*, which sold 115,000 copies in the first week. *In the Mood*, and *Pennsylvania 6-5000*, all appearing on the RCA Victor Bluebird label. In early 1940, Down Beat Magazine announced that Miller had topped all other bands in its Sweet Band Poll, and capping off this seemingly sudden rise to the top, there was, of course, *Glenn Miller’s Moonlight Serenade* radio series for Chesterfield cigarettes which aired three times a week over CBS. In 1941, it was off to Hollywood where the band worked on its first movie, *Sun Valley Serenade*, which introduced the song — and soon-to-be million selling record — *Chattanooga Choo Choo*, and featured the Modernaires and the Nicholas Brothers. Then came *Orchestra Wives*. But the war was starting to take its toll on many of the big bands as musicians, and the rest of country’s young men, began receiving draft notices. On October 7, 1942, Alton Glenn Miller reported for induction into the Army and was immediately assigned to the Army Specialist



Corps. His appointment as a Captain came after many months of convincing the military higher-ups that he could modernize the army band and ultimately improve the morale of the men. His training complete, he was transferred into the Army Air Corps, where he ultimately organized the Glenn Miller Army Air Force Band. Miller's goal of entertaining the fighting troops took another year to be realized, but in late 1943 he and the band were shipped out to England.

There, in less than one year, the Glenn Miller Army Air Force Band engaged in over 800 performances. Of these, 500 were broadcasts heard by millions. There were more than 300 personal appearances including concerts and dances, with a gross attendance of over 600,000. But Glenn was not to participate in the final six months of these activities.

In the Fall of 1944, the band was scheduled to be sent on a six-week tour of Europe and would be stationed in Paris during that time. Miller decided to go ahead, in order to make the proper arrangements for the group's arrival. And so, on December 15th, Glenn Miller boarded a transport plane to Paris, never to be seen again.

In his book *Glenn Miller & His Orchestra*, George Simon wrote this about the man: "His favorite author was Damon Runyon. His favorite book was the Bible. Spencer Tracy and Olivia de Havilland were his favorite movie actor and actress. His big loves were trout fishing, playing baseball, listening to good music, sleep and money. His pet hates were bad swing, early-morning telephone calls (he liked to sleep from 4 am to noon), and the phrase 'goodbye now.' His favorite quotation, one he stated, was not from the Bible, nor from Runyon, but from Duke Ellington: 'It Don't Mean a Thing If it Ain't Got that Swing!'"

Background:

(from the liner notes to the LaserLight CD release)

At last...and so long overdue...the 'sound' and the 'swing' of the Glenn Miller Band of the forties...the songs and holiday joys of Christmas...a celebration by dedicated alumni of the Glenn Miller Orchestra. A Tribute.

It's over eighty years since the immortal Glenn Miller disappeared just before Christmas on December 15, 1944. His Orchestra, in the too-short run under his personal leadership, had recorded only one Christmas song (*Jingle Bells*, October 20, 1941). Dedicated fans around the world are certain that had he lived through World War II, he would have recorded a complete album of the best-loved music of the holiday season.

It's over fifty years now since the original idea for this collection took root. It was no brainstorm dreamed up by marketing experts, no conclusion reached after a survey of potential sales with no great anticipation of financial rewards. The seed for this memorial was planted on a band bus – the Glenn Miller Orchestra bus – circa the late 1960s. Dale Thompson and Richey Barz, then members of the road band (Buddy De Franco was the leader) were sitting next to each other. As often happened, the conversation got around to the "What-do-you-think-Glenn-would-be-recording-now-if-he-was-still-around?" stage. One or the other sputtered: "How about an album of Christmas songs?"

Through the years though, that big band bus and similar conveyances that carried the Glenn Miller Orchestra (kept alive and swinging and ever-popular under the aegis of the late David Mackay, Glenn's attorney, and his son, David Mackay, Jr.) acted as a 'cocoon' while the idea blossomed. Every musician who toured with those Miller organizations was inoculated with the dream including John La Barbera, one of the trumpet players on that same bus.

As time passed, the feeling for such an album grew and grew and grew.

Two decades later, Richard Wilhoite, one of the horde of Glenn Miller buffs around the world, heard about it all from Dale. His instant reaction: "Let's do it...now!"

So the 'WBLT' combination came together and took hold. (No, 'WBLT' is not diner shorthand for "with bacon, lettuce, and tomato." It simply stands for Wilhoite, Barz, La Barbera and Thompson.) A list of desirable players was drawn up. There were a few requisites: musicians had to be working currently, only alumni of the Glenn Miller Orchestra would be recruited, each individual had to have recognized and outstanding talent, each veteran had to be able to take a leave-of-absence from his current gig, and, of course, be available to come to New York to record. The reaction from each and every alumnus called was immediate, "Of course! Count me in. When? Where?" So they headed from Las Vegas, Los Angeles, Washington, D.C., Nashville, Pittsburgh, Florida, Rochester, Eastern Pennsylvania, and Sydney, Australia to join the players already in New York City.

The average age of this band was about 40, the length of time each player performed with the Glenn Miller Orchestra ranges from six months to seven years. Larry O'Brien (originally with the Miller unit led by Ray McKinley) was himself the leader just a few seasons back, and was once again. The experience involved in recreating the authentic Miller sound totalled more than 102 years. Familiarity. Feeling. Lasting enthusiasm. Wish fulfillment. A reunion. Dedication. Commitment. A celebration of the past and present. Look at the repertoire here. 21 Christmas standards that were around when Glenn was still alive and more recent compositions he might have recorded if he had not been lost. Plus a brand-new contribution, by members of this group – the title song of the album. *In the Christmas Mood* - 65 minutes of musical memories, of good cheer, of the most enduring sound of the Swing Era big bands arranged and performed by alumni of the Glenn Miller Orchestra - the collection that each Miller Orchestra member is certain is the album Glenn Miller would have recorded...if only he had had the time.

The first recording, *In the Christmas Mood*, was released under the LaserLight label in 1991. It was so successful that a second recording, *In the Christmas Mood II*, was produced and later released in 1993. Then, in 1997, *In the Nutcracker Mood* was released featuring big band adaptations of the Tchaikovsky classic ballet accompanied by other holiday favorites. By the close of the Christmas season of 1996, *In the Christmas Mood* received a Platinum Record Award (sales exceeded 1,000,000 units) and *In the Christmas Mood II* received a Gold Record Award (sales exceeded 500,000 units) and eventually all three recordings have sold over 3,000,000 units.

Dave Volpi (Known Professionally as Dave Wolpe) Biography:

Dave Wolpe was born in San Bernardino, CA on July 16, 1936. He attended John Muir High School and Junior College in Pasadena, CA before joining the U.S. Air Force in 1954. He served in Texas and France and was honorably discharged in 1958. After spending time in Washington, D.C., Dave joined the U.S. Army in 1959 serving in Fort Knox, KY, Stuttgart, Germany, Colorado Springs, CO and Fort Meade, MD. While Dave wrote his first musical arrangement in high school, it was his time in Stuttgart that he developed a passion for arranging. He was in the NORAD band, then the U.S. Army Field band where he was an arranger, trombone player, and later, the first and only enlisted leader of the U.S. Army Studio band - a traveling 17-piece jazz band working directly for the Army recruiting command at the Pentagon. He retired from the Army as a Sergeant Major in 1976.

Dave continued arranging, playing trombone and piano in the Baltimore/Washington, D.C. area. In 1979, he moved to Los Angeles, and realized a childhood dream: he was hired as the lead trombonist with Les Brown and The Band of Renown. In 1982, Dave moved to Orlando where he met his wife Kim (they were married for 39 years) and played trombone in the Disney World Band. He produced many arrangements for Disney World shows including many for Disney Paris.

Over his career, Dave arranged compositions for Columbia Records, Warner Brothers, Disney, and many others. He was the primary arranger of The Glenn Miller Orchestra's holiday recordings *In the Christmas Mood*, *In the Christmas Mood II* and *In the Nutcracker Mood*, which to date have combined sales of over three million copies achieving Platinum and two Gold Record Awards. The music from these recordings have been used in numerous TV shows, commercials and movies including *While You Were Sleeping*, *The Family Stone* and *Little Fockers*.

Musicians from around the world are familiar with Dave's arrangements. He left a legacy in the music industry, where many consider him as one of the greats in big band arranging. His arrangements will be played and appreciated for years to come. When he wasn't writing, playing, composing, or visiting with fellow musicians, Dave enjoyed carpentry, drawing, vintage cars, watching classic movies, and traveling with his wife Kim. Dave Volpi passed away on October 24, 2022.

Dale Thompson Biography:

Dale Thompson started his career in music as a professional trumpet player. He began playing trumpet at age 11 and joined the American Federation of Musicians (A.F.M.) in 1959 at the age of 13 and has proudly remained an active member of the AFM ever since (60+ years). He graduated from Emmaus High School (Emmaus, PA) in 1963 and attended San Francisco State College. While in San Francisco, he played with the Escovedo Latin Jazz Band, Del Cortney's Raiders band and for 2 summers, for the Vive Les Girls Show at the Nevada Lodge in North Shore Lake Tahoe until he ran away with a circus in the fall of 1966.

He then joined the Glenn Miller Orchestra (G.M.O.) under the direction of Buddy DeFranco in November 1967 and stayed with the band until 1973 when he joined the Sam Donahue Orchestra at the Nugget Casino Showroom in Sparks (Reno), NV. During these years he performed in every state in the U.S.A. and worked with many well-known entertainers on numerous world tours. In 1981 he was elected president of the Reno Musicians' Union, Local 368 until he was hired by the A.F.M. International President in 1986 to work in the A.F.M. west coast office in Hollywood, CA. In 1988 he joined the Band & Orchestral Division of Yamaha as a District Manager and in 1991 was promoted to the position of National Sales Manager.

Between the years of 1988 and 1997 Thompson produced and performed on a series of Glenn Miller Orchestra Christmas Recordings (recorded in New York City with all former and present G.M.O. musicians). These three albums (*In the Christmas Mood*, *In the Christmas Mood II*, and *In the Nutcracker Mood*) have sold over 4 million copies. Numerous selections from these recordings have been used in movie soundtracks, television shows, commercials, and heard everywhere during the holiday season.

In 2001 Dale joined the Guitar Center organization as Vice President of Development for a newly acquired business, American Music Group. In 2005 American Music Group merged with Music & Arts (both were acquired and became divisions of Guitar Center) where he was promoted to Vice President of Affiliate Sales where he remained until retirement in 2015. In 2016 National Education Music Company (N.E.M.C.) hired Thompson as a consultant to assist with the development of a five year growth strategy which led to his employment as Vice President of Development in 2017 until once again retiring at the end of 2020. In 1979 while working with Debbie Reynolds in Reno, NV, Dale met Geri Thompson, a professional violinist. They were married in Lake Tahoe in 1981. Geri remained a professional violinist and is regularly performing in the hotel/casino showrooms and various other performance venues in Las Vegas, NV. Dale and Geri have two wonderful daughters, Kelly and Tracy, who are both now married and also live in Las Vegas.

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