

Introduction

Welcome to “The Greatest Hits Explained”. My name is Michael Winter and I’m the host and editor of the show. I’m a German American passionate music lover and if you’re one, too, ready to dive deep into the world of music history with me, awesome.

No matter where you are on this beautiful planet, no matter what time zone you’re in or what you’re doing right now (maybe you’re in your car, maybe on a train, a plane, in your home or in the gym) – I’m glad you’re here and I’m really looking forward to this journey together. This show is not directed at people in a specific country – rather, it is a show that will hopefully find you on any of the 7 continents Asia, Africa, Europe, Australia, North America, South America or even Antarctica. Just drop me a note from one music lover to another – I hope to hear from all of you. Always remember that music is one of the major positive forces that connects us all as it doesn’t know any borders.

Today, we’re gonna talk about one of the most recognizable popular songs and big band titles ever recorded: “In The Mood” by Glen Miller. And while the center of this episode is the song itself, you’ll hear me explore Glen Miller’s life and a number of interesting details about some of his contemporaries as well. That’s how I usually approach things – by picking a memorable song that made history and then I not only analyze the song but everything around it, too, with a noticeable German accent. I hope that works for you. Also, being a music lover and not a historian, I always do my best to provide you with the most accurate information I find on the web and other sources and if there should ever be any mistakes, they are not intentional and please point them out to me.

You’re gonna hear *some* music and sound effects in this show – that is music and sound effects that I purchased the reasonably priced licenses for. But, unfortunately, I’m not able to actually play Glen Miller’s “In The Mood” for you. We’re gonna discuss the song a lot, yes, but since the song is considered copyrighted material, I would need to spend astronomical dollar amounts on licensing to be able to play it here which is impossible from a budgetary perspective. Nevertheless, I can promise that discussing and exploring the song together with me will be almost as exciting as listening to it. This, by the way, is a common challenge for podcasts and one that will hopefully soon be solved in a creative and effective way by the music industry.

Well, so let me now take you by the hand and embark together with you on an unforgettable journey with a focus on the 1930s and 1940s. After this episode, you’ll know everything about Glen Miller’s eternal classic “In The Mood” – and more.

First, we’re gonna shine a light on the political and cultural situation the world was in when the song was released before we focus on the music by discussing the song, its production, success and reception. After that, we’ll get to know the artist, Glen Miller, a lot better and we’ll also explore more of the musical aspects related to “In The Mood” and the big band music genre per se. The grand finale will then be a quick exploration of the song’s legacy.

No matter what year you’re in while listening to this, Glenn’s and, therefore, the song’s story is a testament to the fact that there is no shortcut to success. It takes a lot of hard work, dedication, skills and failures to be able to leave a legacy as Glenn Miller did with this song and with his whole catalog of unforgettable music. We will also see that, although us humans sometimes have the tendency to idolize

celebrities a bit too much (and, I must admit, I'm not immune to this behavior), Glenn Miller was not perfect. Not at all. No celebrity is if you think about it. He was a musical genius, a great businessman, a loving husband and father but after all he was a complex human just like you and I with all his flaws. Some contemporaries of his, for example, confirmed that he was a strict disciplinarian who knew how to rule his troops. Saxophonist Hal McIntyre once said that Glenn was "the coldest fish that ever lived". Cornetist Bobby Hackett, on the other hand, once said that Glenn was "a brilliant man, an honorable man". People who knew him confirmed that he could be super charming when he was relaxed but that he could become "tough as nails" and "cold as ice" when he was aggravated or angry and that his conversations could be earthy and peppered with salty language. Like any other human being, he had folks that liked or even loved him and there were folks who disliked him. It's the combination of all his achievements in music and business as well as the mark he left on people's lives that made him the legend that he is.

The Times

"In The Mood" was recorded and released on the eve of World War 2. At a time when the world was staring into the abyss of a war like no one had ever seen before. The deadliest military conflict in the history of humanity on our planet. A war that, when it ended in 1945, would have cost the lives of 70-85 million people and both injured and traumatized many, many more. A war that left deep scars for countless families around the globe and to this day serves as a dire warning for our current and all future generations to come. A warning that far right-wing, authoritarian ultra-nationalism characterized by dictatorial power, forcible suppression of opposition and strong regimentation of society and the economy is not a system we, as a human race, can tolerate. On this planet, there is no space for a disdain for liberal democracy and the parliamentary system, antisemitism, racism, xenophobia, eugenics, pseudo-scientific theories or the discrimination because of someone's sexual orientation, gender, etc. We are all born equal. As Frances Wright said: Equality is the soul of liberty; there is, in fact, no liberty without it.

"In The Mood" was recorded on August 1st, 1939 – exactly one month before Germany's invasion of Poland on September 1st, 1939 which marked the beginning of World War 2. One week before September 1st, 1939, on August 23rd to be precise, the foreign ministers of Nazi Germany and the Soviet Union, Joachim von Ribbentrop and Vyacheslav Molotov, met in Moscow to sign the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact which was a written guarantee of peace by each party towards the other, and a declared commitment that neither government would ally itself to, or aid an enemy of the other party. It was this agreement that made Adolf Hitler think he could invade Poland without having to fear that the Soviet Union would attack Germany. On August 26th, Hitler determined the 1st of September to be the day of his invasion in Poland.

"In The Mood" was then released on September 15th, 1939. An important day in the context of World War 2. At that time, the Soviets had a five-month-long undeclared war with Japan in the Far East. On September 15th, 1939, the Ambassadors of the Soviet Union, Vyacheslav Molotov, and Japan, Shigenori Tōgō, completed an agreement to end that conflict, and the Nomonhan cease-fire went into effect on September, 16th 1939. Now that Soviet premier Joseph Stalin didn't have to deal any longer with a "second front" threat from the Japanese, he ordered his forces into Poland on September, 17th 1939. The Soviet Red Army invaded Eastern Poland, the territory that fell into the Soviet "sphere of influence" according to the secret protocol of the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact. This was a secret addendum to the pact that only few knew about. Nazi Germany and the Soviet Union already had plans how they would split up Poland. This marked the entrance of the Soviet Union into World War 2. The Soviet diplomacy justified this step

with the lie that they were "protecting the Ukrainian and Belarusian minorities of eastern Poland since the Polish government had abandoned the country and the Polish state ceased to exist". Things should take a turn for the worse later when Nazi Germany invaded the Soviet Union on June 22nd, 1941 as part of "Operation Barbarossa". For most Americans, the war was more or less far away in 1939 and still in early 1940. The USA established a combined air and ship patrol of the United States Atlantic coast, including the Caribbean, on September 4th, 1939. President Franklin D. Roosevelt declared the United States' neutrality on September 5th and declared the naval patrol a Neutrality Patrol. US President Roosevelt's initiation of the Neutrality Patrol, which in fact also escorted British ships, ordered U.S. Navy destroyers to first actively report U-boats and then to "shoot on sight". While this meant that the US wouldn't be directly involved in combat, it was a small first step towards an involvement in World War 2. The US eventually formally entered World War 2 after the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor on December 7, 1941.

Released in 1939, "In The Mood" entered the US charts in early 1940. Therefore, the initial success of the song needs to be seen not only in the context of World War 2 which basically broke out along with its release. Not only was this a time when the world was about to experience World War 2, it was also the post-depression era where people were trying to have a good time whenever they could, party as much as they could and leave the worries of the Great Depression behind which started with the market crash in 1929. It was the dawning of a new age, probably best manifested in the 1939 New York World's Fair which opened on the 30th of April and closed on October 27th of the following year. The fair basically accompanied both the release and the charts success of "In The Mood". Its motto was "The World of Tomorrow" – a vision of a future America – and it was held in the Flushing Meadows–Corona Park in Queens. The demonstrations of countless wonders showed how technology would help to bring about a better and brighter tomorrow. The famous scientist and author Carl Sagan is one great example that shows what an impact the World Fair had on people back then. In his books and interviews, he often stated how his visit to the World's Fair helped shape his vision of science in society.

To summarize, when "In The Mood" was released and when it saw its first charts success, the USA emerged from the long dark decade that followed the Great Depression with a newly found optimism, drive and thirst for life, fun and big plans for the future. Little did anyone back then know that the world – including the US – was headed for the worst disaster it had ever seen – World War 2.

Although there was a healthy portion of optimism in the air at the time, the United States were far from perfect. For example, it took another 70 years, until 2009, before the first African American became the 44th president of the United States. This is just one example. And today, the United States of America are still on its journey. Still growing up. Still learning and improving every single day.

The Song & Production

The first time the world heard “In The Mood” played by Glen Miller and his band was on July 26th 1939 at the “Glen Island Casino” ballroom in New Rochelle, New York, located on the Long Island Sound. At that time, only the best and most popular bands were featured there. Glen Miller had just opened at the casino in May of 1939 and his shows at the casino were produced as live radio shows which introduced the “Glen Miller Sound” to US listeners from coast to coast.

The Glen Island Casino, with its softly lit main ballroom on the second floor that had high French-style windows overlooking the water as well as natural wood walls, represented glamour and prestige like few other casinos at the time. It was the place to be. Unfortunately, it’s a place that no longer is. The building was later redesigned and the casino replaced by the Glen Island Country Club. The first rendition of “In The Mood” from the “Glen Island Casino” ballroom was even broadcasted on the radio over NBC’s Blue Network.

It is said that the song found a group of loyal fans both among the dancers at the “Glen Island Casino” ballroom and the radio audience really quick. The song was perfect for the jitterbug, a then very popular swing dance that had come up in the early 20th century and that had a certain pelvic motion as one of its core elements; even the 1939 movie “The Wizard of Oz” had a jitterbug-style dance scene which didn’t make it into the final version of the film though – too bad.

“In The Mood” was recorded on August 1st, 1939 for the RCA Bluebird label at the RCA Victor Studios located at 155 East 24th Street in Manhattan, between Lexington and Third Avenues in New York City and it was released on September 15th, 1939th. It became score 248 in the Miller Library.

Imagine what Manhattan was like on that 1st of August in 1939. It was a Tuesday and, as usual, New Yorkers were doing their thing on this hot and humid summer day. The weather station located in Central Park recorded a maximum temperature of 94 degrees Fahrenheit during the day and a minimum temperature of 74 degrees Fahrenheit at night. It was a typical summer day and night in Manhattan. Little did the musicians and studio technicians know when they left their hotels and homes for the RCA Victor studios that morning and when they kissed their spouses, partners and kids good-bye that they were about to write music history. When they arrived at the studio, we can assume, they were all sweaty and ready for a lengthy recording session.

The RCA Victor Studios were *the* swing era recording studios back then and a lot of famous songs were recorded there. The Victor Recording Company had acquired the property at an auction in early 1928 from Fiss, Doerr & Carroll’s, a company that operated a horse auction market in the building in the latter part of the 19th and early part of the 20th centuries. The building that Fiss, Doerr & Carroll’s had occupied was seven stories tall and built in 1907. Their business was to supply horses for the New York transit system, and later for use by the U.S. military in World War I.

Victor constructed two recording studios in the ground floor space of the building that opened their doors around 1930. Prior to the activation of its 24th Street recording studio in New York, Victor Records made most of its recordings at an old church near its record manufacturing plant location in Camden, New Jersey, and also at three other studios in the Camden Victor facility. It also made a few recordings in New York in the studio of radio station WEAJ. The two new studios were referred to as studios A and B and sometimes as studios 1 and 2. Studio B was the smaller of the two and was used for piano and chamber

music recordings. Studio A was larger and could accommodate groups of up to 35 musicians. Glen Miller and his band were assembled in Studio B where they made music history when they recorded “In The Mood” there.

When “In The Mood” was recorded, 15 members of the “Glen Miller Orchestra” were present. There was a control room that serviced both studios, as well as a small area for guests. These areas were separated by walls of double-glass panels. Access between the recording studios and the control room was through adjoining doors. There was no access from the guest area into either of the studios or the control room. Both studios had large entrance doors that would allow movement of grand pianos in and out of them. Victor was acquired by the Radio Corporation of America – or short RCA – in 1929 and the recording studio became the RCA Victor’s recording studio as part of this acquisition. By the way, RCA Victor made recordings in this space until 1968, when it moved its recording studios to a much larger facility at 110 West 44th Street, just west of Sixth Avenue. The building in which the 24th Street studio was housed was sold in 1968 to what was then the City College of New York. They used the building until 1998, when it was razed.

Let’s spend a moment or two on RCA’s Bluebird label – the one that “In The Mood” was released on. Bluebird Records was a record label that was known for its low-cost releases, primarily of blues, jazz and swing in the 1930s and 1940s. It was founded in 1932 by Eli Oberstein, an RCA Victor executive, as a lower-priced RCA Victor subsidiary label. Bluebird concentrated on producing and selling music inexpensively. It created what came to be known as the “Bluebird Sound”, which influenced rhythm and blues and early rock and roll. Bluebird competed with other budget labels at the time. Records were made quickly and cheaply. The “Bluebird Sound” came from the session band that was used on many recordings to save money. In the case of Glen Miller, it was different, obviously. He had his own orchestra.

Success & Reception

“In the Mood” was on top of the US charts for an unbelievable 13 straight weeks in 1940. Imagine, that is more than 3 whole months. It also resurfaced on different music charts in 1943. And here’s the dilemma: The true chart success of the song is a little bit difficult to nail down. Although it topped the jukebox charts for 13 weeks, it never entered the top 15 on the sheet music chart, which really determined the success of a song at the time. Nevertheless, it is safe to say that “In The Mood” was one of – if not the – biggest hit in 1940.

Radio, the hottest medium at the time, was instrumental in making the song a huge success. As we discussed a bit earlier in the show, the radio broadcasts from the “Glen Island Casino” introduced the “Glen Miller Sound” to audiences from coast to coast in the US. It literally spread the Glenn Miller sound across the country. During June 1938 and between December 1938 and January 1939, for example, Glen Miller and his orchestra had nationwide radio broadcasts over the NBC Red and Blue networks that transported their unique swing sound from the Paradise Restaurant in New York into countless living rooms. There were also national broadcasts from Frank Dailey’s Meadowbrook in the spring and fall of 1939. In the months and years following the song’s release, Glenn Miller and his Orchestra would perform and broadcast the song 62 times on their CBS program “Chesterfield Moonlight Serenade”, on “Coca Cola Spotlight Bands” and on remote broadcasts for NBC and Mutual. The “Chesterfield Moonlight Serenade”,

for example, aired from December 1939 to September 1942 and Glen Miller's band was featured three times a week during a quarter-hour broadcast, paired at first with the wildly popular Andrews Sisters.

At a time when people couldn't watch movies from the comfort of their living room, another important medium in the 1940s was cinema. "In The Mood" was included in the 1941 20th Century Fox movie "Sun Valley Serenade" which featured Glen Miller and his band alongside with John Payne, ice skating star Sonja Henie, Lynn Bari, Milton Berle, Joan Davis, Dorothy Dandridge and the Nicholas Brothers. Filmed between March and May of 1941, this movie played another huge role for the song's success at the time. The musical score was written by famous composer Harry Warren and lyricist Mack Gordon. By the way, the movie also featured Glenn's hit "Chattanooga Choo Choo". Glenn convinced the folks in Hollywood to give him and his band a real role in the movie instead of the usual segments for bands that were limited to musical performances. Very smart. Glenn and Helen spent some time in California while the movie was shot and they must have liked it so much that they purchased a property in Monrovia east of Los Angeles with plans of moving there permanently. Many more movie appearances of "In The Mood" followed later on which helped the song not only survive from one decade to the next but also become more and more popular and iconic.

What also helped was the fact that the song triggered a lot of cover versions by other artists. By the end of the year 1940 alone, there were six major label versions of "In The Mood" on the market. Two noteworthy versions are one with singing by the Four King Sisters released in November of 1939 and one by singer Paula Kelly together with Al Donahue and his Orchestra. None of the cover versions took one bit away from "In The Mood" though which was strong enough to stand on its own. If anything, they helped extend the lifespan of the original song.

Miller took "In the Mood" with him when he entered military service, and he performed it often at live concerts with his "Army Air Force Orchestra" between 1943 and 1945 in the United States, the United Kingdom and in Europe. The Army Air Forces (abbreviated as AAF) Orchestra played and / or recorded "In the Mood" for broadcast on 21 occasions.

And, as we discussed already a little bit earlier, when "In The Mood" was released, the USA had just emerged from the long dark decade that followed the Great Depression with a newly found optimism, drive and thirst for life, fun and big plans for the future. "In The Mood" with its risqué title and irresistible dance rhythm was the perfect song for that time. Recorded on the eve of world war 2, "In The Mood" went on to symbolize the 1940s, World War II and the entire Big Band Era like no other song before or after it.

The Artist

Glen Miller had assembled an amazing orchestra that recorded "In the Mood" together with him. Let's now get to know the other 14 fellas before we spend some time on Glen Miller himself.

- First of all, we have Glenn Miller, of course who, by the way, played the 1st trombone on the song in addition to his directing work.
- 1st trumpet: Dale "Mickey" McMickle.
- 2nd trumpet: Clyde Hurley, a self-taught trumpet player who did the trumpet solo in the song.
- 3rd trumpet: Legh Knowles. He went on to become the chairman of Beaulieu Vineyard, one of California's most famous wineries and a passionate spokesman for all California wines.
- 2nd trombone: Paul Tanner who later became a professor at UCLA.
- 3rd trombone Al Mastren: Glen Miller's lead trombonist.
- Hal McIntyre: 1st alto saxophone. A gifted musician who was hired by Glen Miller after lasting only ten days in Benny Goddman's band.
- Wilbur Schwartz: 2nd alto saxophone. In the late 1950s and early 1960s, among other things, he performed as a session musician on several Dean Martin and Frank Sinatra albums.
- 1st and 2nd tenor saxophones: Gordon "Tex" Beneke and Al Klink
The section-mates can be heard trading two-measure tenor solo exchanges in the song.
- Harold Tennyson: Alto and baritone saxophone.
- On the piano: J. Chalmers "Chummy" MacGregor who was the pianist in The Glenn Miller Orchestra from 1936 to 1942.
- Richard Fisher on the guitar.
- Rowland "Rolly" Bundock played the bass. He would later be heard in the movie scores for movies such as "The Pink Panther", "Oliver", "Breakfast at Tiffany's", "Spartacus" and "Jaws".
- And: Maurice "Moe" Purtill who was the drummer for the Glen Miller orchestra. For some reason, he didn't want to discuss his time in the band later in life. Why remains a mystery.

There you go. 15 of the finest swing era musicians the world has ever seen. By the way, it is an urban legend that Glen Miller required soloists to play the solos on "In the Mood" and other arrangements in exactly the same manner every time they were performed.

Now let's spend some time on Glen Miller himself. While the overall focus of this show is Glenn Miller's song "In The Mood", Glenn Miller's life was too exciting not to dive deeper here and get to know the man behind the music and some of his contemporaries that contributed to the phenomenon.

Glenn Miller had many talents. He was a big-band trombonist, an arranger, a composer and a bandleader. In fact, he was the best-selling recording artist from 1939 to 1942, leading one of the best-known big bands. Beyond "In the Mood", his recordings included "Moonlight Serenade", "Pennsylvania 6-5000", "Chattanooga Choo Choo", "A String of Pearls", "At Last", "(I've Got a Gal In) Kalamazoo", "American Patrol", "Tuxedo Junction", "Elmer's Tune" and "Little Brown Jug". In just four years, Glenn Miller scored 16 number-one records and 69 top ten hits - more than Elvis Presley who had 38 top 10 hits and the Beatles who had 33 top 10 hits.

But first things first. Alton Glenn Miller was born to Lewis Elmer Miller, an itinerant carpenter, and Mattie Lou Miller (maiden name Cavender), a schoolteacher, at 601 South 16th Street in Clarinda, a small rural town in Iowa on March 1st, 1904. The parents of Glenn's dad had moved to the Clarinda area in 1870.

At one time, Glenn stated that he couldn't stand his name Alton. He said "I couldn't stand the name Alton. I can still hear my mother calling for me across the field. I just hated the sound of that name. That's why I've always used Glenn instead."

Glenn had three siblings. Two brothers Dr. Elmer Deane Miller and John Herbert Miller and one sister Emma Irene Wolfe. Glenn was the second child. In 1909, the family sold their home in Clarinda for \$1,275 and moved to Tyron, Nebraska to homestead 640 acres of land under the Kincaid Act of 1904. In the fall of 1912, they moved to Hershey, Nebraska and then in July, 1913 back to North Platte, Nebraska which was just 35 miles away from Tyron. In 1916, they moved to Grant City, Missouri which had a population of around 1,300 back then. In Grant City, Glenn got a job shining shoes at John Mosbarger's cleaning and pressing and soon he had made enough money from this job, from milking cows and from mixing concrete to buy his first trombone which he played in the town orchestra. His first performance was as a 13-year old playing the trombone in the school orchestra. He played cornet and mandolin, but he had switched to trombone by 1916. He once said that the trombone was his first love. In 1918, the Miller family moved again, this time to Fort Morgan, Colorado, where he went to high school. During his senior year he became interested in "dance band music" and he was so taken that he formed a band with some classmates. In high school, Glenn played football and the trombone. He was a good football player and even honored by the Colorado High School Sports Association as all-state end or, in other words, "the best left end in Colorado" at the end of his senior year.

Except for Math and Latin, his grades were not the most impressive. By the time he graduated from high school in 1921, he had decided to become a professional musician. He even skipped the graduation ceremony because he prioritized a band job in Laramie, Wyoming. At the end of the day, that gig failed to materialize but he still missed his graduation. His mother went to the graduation though and received Glenn's diploma from the high school principal who commented on Glenn's absence saying "maybe you are the one who should get this anyway; you probably worked harder on it than he did."

Glenn spent hours and hours practicing playing his trombone as a young boy and man; on Glenn's official website, his mother is quoted saying about it "It got to where Pop and I used to wonder if he'd ever amount to anything." Well, I'd say the practicing did indeed pay. His mother, by the way, got to live to see her son's huge success – born in 1873, she died in 1963. Glenn's dad, however, died shortly before Glenn's career peaked – born in 1867, he passed away in 1936 after years of struggling with depression and intermittent employment. Some think that it was Glenn's awareness about those struggles that made him such a hard worker. While his dad didn't get to experience Glenn's huge success that would soon follow, he nevertheless lived long enough to see his son become an exceptionally fine and successful musician.

In 1923, around one and a half years after his high school graduation, Glen Miller entered the University of Colorado in Boulder but after spending most of his time away from school, attending auditions and playing any gigs he could get, he eventually dropped out of college to pursue a career in music. While enrolled at college, he played the trombone in Boyd Senter's band. Boyd was a jazz musician, clarinet and saxophone player and bandleader from Nebraska who went on to sell sporting goods in Michigan after the swing era. Glenn also played in the band of his fellow student Holly Moyer who was a World War I Navy veteran and taught Glenn a great deal about style, grooming and presentation. All things that would

come in handy later. Before Glenn left college for good, he would leave school to tour with the Jimmy Joy (Maloney) band. There was just too little time for studying.

Over the next five years, Glen self-studied composing and toured with several groups including Holly Moyer again and Tommy Watkins which took him all the way to Mexico and then California. He settled in Los Angeles where he played for Max Fischer's band at the Forum Theatre and also for Victor Young's and Ben Pollack's groups.

Landing a gig with the Pollack band as a trombone player and for arranging was a huge deal for Glenn as they were one of the most influential and idolized bands back then. They had a number of very young and talented musicians including Bix Beiderbecke and the famous Benny Goodman. Benny and Glenn actually became roommates. The Pollack band worked in Chicago a lot and one of their number one venues was the Blackhawk, a famous restaurant in the Chicago Loop from 1920 to 1984. There, they also recorded for Victor records.

During the month of March in 1928, the band went to play and stay in New York city and there, something happened that would determine the future course of Glenn's career: While playing the trombone as the main soloist for John Pollack's band, a new member, Jack Teagarden, one of the best trombonists at the time, joined the band. After that, Glen Miller's solos were cut drastically which he didn't like very much. As a result of this event, he realized that his future was in arranging and composing.

The same year, 1928, Glen and his college sweetheart, Helen Dorothy Berger, who was from Boulder, Colorado, were married in New York City. On October 6th to be precise. Miller had already been working in New York City together with his band and to bring their long-distance friendship to a successful conclusion, Helen eventually moved there from Colorado after Glenn found out that she was dating someone else and that she was "practically engaged." Helen was from a very prominent pioneer Boulder family whose relatives were among the first graduates of the infant University of Colorado. Her father was Boulder County Clerk, Fred W. Burger. She played a very important role in his life always supporting his career. It seems they were quite happy together. They adopted two children as Helen could not bear children after a serious illness that required a major surgery: Steven and Jonnie Miller. Helen passed away in 1966. His son Steven Davis, who lived from 1943 until 2012, loved his dad's music and all big bands of that era, joined the U.S. Marines at an early age, was an accomplished gunsmith, later became a police officer in California and music administrator for the Glenn Miller estate. His daughter Jonnie Dee Miller Hoffman worked as a secretary, was a busy stay-at-home-mom and in 1989 was able to purchase the home in Clarinda, Iowa where her father was born 85 years earlier.

Over the next few years, after marrying Helen in 1928, Glenn worked as a freelance trombonist and writer in several bands. In New York City, he was able to work for recording studios, for the radio and with Broadway productions which helped him grow his experience immensely. He worked in George Gershwin's orchestra, for example, and even wrote parts for Gershwin's "Girl Crazy." He also played with Red Nichols who was a jazz trumpeter, Victor Young, Carl Fenton and Jacques Renard.

In 1932, Smith Ballew, a singer, invited Glenn to form a band and go on tour. He gladly accepted.

In 1934, he worked as a trombonist, arranger and composer for "The Dorsey Brothers". Glenn recruited a couple of wonderful musicians for the band and eventually became their music director. Soon enough

though he was fed up with this engagement because he oftentimes ended up being caught in the middle between Jimmy Dorsey and Tommy Dorsey who had their fair share of arguments.

In 1935 then, Glenn assembled an American orchestra for British bandleader Ray Noble, developing the arrangement of lead clarinet over four saxophones that became a major characteristic of his big band. The reason he got this job was the fact that Noble couldn't bring his own musicians over to the United States because the musicians' union would not allow him to do so. The band started to play at the iconic Rainbow Room atop the RCA Building in Manhattan's Radio City which indicates Glenn must have done a good job assembling the band. In the same year, on April 25th, Glenn Miller reached an important milestone in his career when he recorded for the very first time using his own name for Columbia records together with Bunny Berigan, Eddie Miller and Johnny Mince. This was quite a productive time for Glenn with one example being the song "Moonlight Serenade" which he wrote during this phase. Over the next year, the relationship with Ray Noble cooled down. One of the reasons was that Ray wanted to pay the musicians less money which they – led by Glenn – thanked Ray with a walk-out. Next were recording sessions with Freddy Rich, Ben Pollack again and Vincent Lopez.

During the second half of 1936 and the early months of 1937, Glenn Miller started to keep an eye out for musicians that he could hire for his own band. Glenn and Helen analyzed both the advantages and disadvantages of hitting the road again and they concluded that they should do it. He was so excited by touring with his own band that he even turned down an offer by the Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer studios in Hollywood that wanted him to join their music department.

The year was 1937 when Glen compiled several arrangements and formed his first band. Named "Glenn Miller and his Orchestra", the rehearsals kicked off in February of 1937 and on May 7th, they had their first gig at the Terrace Room of the Hotel "New Yorker". Also, they recorded a few songs for the Decca and Brunswick labels. Ten days after their first gig, on May 17th, they commenced their first steady engagement which was at the Raymor Ballroom in Boston. Other stops on the road were the Roosevelt Hotel in New Orleans where they opened on June 17th, the Adolphus Hotel in Dallas where they took off for on August 27th and the Hotel Nicollet in Minneapolis before returning to the Raymor Ballroom in Boston. Four more recordings for Brunswick followed in the month of November. Glenn still didn't earn money with his band but at least they were out there so people would see and hear them and they also gained more and more experience by being on the road. Glenn's booking agency was Rockwell-O'Keefe and he wasn't happy with them after having lost around \$30,000 up to that point. In his opinion, they weren't giving him neither enough radio time nor good enough bookings. Tommy Dorsey, with whom Glenn had worked in the past, offered him a loan which he accepted – probably reluctantly but gladly. Tommy didn't just give Glenn the money though. There was one important condition and that was that Glenn would accept Tommy's agent, Arthur Michaud, as his new agent. Tommy wasn't really selfless here and his motive seems to have been to get Glenn to move over to Tommy's agency, the Music Corporation of America. After failing to distinguish itself from the many bands of the time, Glenn's band broke up after its last show at the Ritz Ballroom in Bridgeport, Connecticut on January 2, 1938. Glenn had given them notice two days earlier in York, Pennsylvania on December 31st, 1937. Not only was the band not able to distinguish itself enough from other bands, there were quite a few characters on board which qualify as prima donnas and which made things harder than necessary. And, of course, there was substance abuse. In addition, Glenn was about to hop over to Tommy Dorsey's agency and he had to adhere to a 90-day cancellation notice after giving his band members notice which, it turned out, wasn't even needed.

At that point, after all the touring and the dramas on tour, Glenn found himself in a state of nervous exhaustion which was made worse by the fact that his wife had become seriously ill and needed a major surgery that would prevent her from bearing children.

Now Glenn knew that he needed to find his very own and unique sound if he wanted to be successful. Disappointed, he returned to New York. Soon it turned out that Glenn's booking agency Rockwell-O'Keefe was not easy to get rid of. His account manager there was Mike Nidorf who really believed in Glenn and wouldn't let him leave. He fought for his client and Nidorf and managed to bring Simon "Cy" Shribman, who was the operator of the Boston Ballroom, on board as an investor. Mike's idea was to get Glenn enough money to be able to pay Tommy Dorsey's loan. Dorsey and Miller had slightly different perspectives on that money, it seems. While Miller considered it a loan, Dorsey thought it was more – kind of an ownership stake. Without this situation settled, Mike Nidorf scored a success as he was able to keep Glenn at Rockwell-O'Keefe. This doesn't mean that Glenn and Tommy wouldn't talk to each other. Glenn even played gigs for Tommy as part of some sort of free-lancing agreement; one example here are the NBC Raleigh-Kool cigarette broadcasts that Glenn played. Glenn continued to make plans for his next band. Both him and Helen didn't want to give up on their dream of a successful band and close friends of the couple also encouraged them to keep going. Glenn knew that he didn't want to be Benny Goodman's and Tommy Dorsey's competitor by forming a classic swing band. What he had in mind was, what he called, a sweet band that would be able to play the modern swing sound people wanted to hear at the time but also have a quite unique and identifiable sound. He wanted give the world a sound that he had formed while working with Ray Noble; a sound that would rely on precise musicianship from his band and his elegant arranging style. Eventually, Mike Nidorf of his booking agency Rockwell-O'Keefe helped Glenn start over again and thanks to this, he was able to pay out Tommy Dorsey which freed him from both Tommy and Arthur Michaud.

It was on and the timing was perfect because big bands had evolved into the hot thing in 1938. Benny Goodman, Tommy Dorsey, Count Basie and Artie Shaw were big and they played Carnegie Hall among other popular venues. More names emerged: Jimmy Dorsey, Bob Crosby, Larry Clinton, Jimmie Lunceford, Duke Ellington and Chick Webb - to name a few - were also capturing the public's imagination. Glen Miller was about to compete not only against those big bands but also against sweet bands such as the ones by Hal Kemp, Kay Kyser, Sammy Kaye, Guy Lombardo and many more.

After trying a couple of things to lock down his new style, he decided to make the clarinet play a melodic line with a tenor saxophone holding the same note, while three other saxophones harmonized within a single octave. This was called the "clarinet lead" approach and it was *the* new key element of his characteristic sound. An important step towards success in this regard was when Glen hired saxophonist Wilbur Schwartz and had him play the lead clarinet instead of saxophone. George T. Simon, who discovered Wilbur Schwartz for Glenn, later said: "Willie's tone and way of playing provided a fullness and richness so distinctive that none of the later Miller imitators could ever accurately reproduce the Miller sound." Isn't it amazing how one musician can make such a difference? Unbelievable. In the late 1950s and early 1960s, Schwartz could later be heard as a session musician on a couple of Frank Sinatra and Dean Martin albums in addition to other work with legends like Ella Fitzgerald, for example.

In addition to Wilbur Schwartz, Glenn rehired Hal McIntyre for the sax and, for the piano, he hired John C. "Mac" ("Chummy") MacGregor who was an old friend of his. Next, he brought on guys like Gordon "Tex" Beneke for the sax and vocals, Ray Eberle for vocals and Paul Tanner for the trombone.

With this new sound combination, Glenn Miller found a way to differentiate his band's style from the many bands that existed in the late thirties. Miller talked about his style in the May 1939 issue of *Metronome* magazine: "You'll notice today some bands use the same trick on every introduction; others repeat the same musical phrase as a modulation into a vocal. We're fortunate in that our style doesn't limit us to stereotyped intros, modulations, first choruses, endings or even trick rhythms. The fifth sax, playing clarinet most of the time, lets you know whose band you're listening to. And that's about all there is to it."

What really helped Glenn in developing his own and unique style was his mathematic mind. As stated previously, his math grades were way more impressive than most of his other grades in high school. In the 1930s, Glenn had been a student of Dr. Joseph Schillinger – a famous Ukraine-born composer, music theorist and composition teacher who originated the Schillinger System of Musical Composition which is a mathematic method for music composition. That is why Glenn's math skills came in very handy here. Other students of Schillinger were George Gershwin and Glenn's friends Tommy Dorsey and Benny Goodman but especially Glenn, who was very committed to these studies, was able to develop a discipline and understanding that allowed him to take a balanced view of music ahead toward both his standard 16/18 piece swing band and ultimately to his large concert orchestra in the military.

The newly formed band had their first performance at the Paradise Restaurant in New York in June of 1938. The evening was broadcasted live on NBC which allowed listeners across the country to hear this new and magic sound.

Things took off in September 1938, when Glenn Miller and his band began recording for the Bluebird label, a subsidiary of RCA Victor. This was made possible by Eli Oberstein, the recording chief of RCA Victor, believing in and signing Glenn. Eli, once described as "a colorful wheeler-dealer", was responsible for establishing the influential Bluebird record label in the 1930s and later owned a succession of small labels in the 1940s and 1950s. His only child Maurice "Obie" Oberstein, by the way, later also became a record company executive who spent most of his career in England where he was once credited as "one of the chief architects of the modern UK record industry". Anyway, Eli's decision to sign Glenn would soon turn into gold for the label and start one of the most successful recording runs in musical history.

Things were going well now for Glenn and Helen. He was fully funded, had a recording contract in his suitcase and him and his band were playing concerts that were even broadcasted on national radio via NBC.

The band saw one more important addition when Glenn discovered 19-year-old singer Marion Hutton to join his band. Marion would stay with the band on and off for four years until the band disbanded. When Glenn hired her, she was underage and so Glenn and his wife Helen became Marion's legal guardians. In an interview, Marion once said "He was like a father because I never had a father." Marion's father abandoned the family when she and her sister were both young and he later even committed suicide. Marion was an important member of the band as she had both an amazing presence on stage and a contagious enthusiasm that made the whole band just more exciting to watch and listen to. In the 1970s, while in her late fifties and long after her time with the Glenn Miller band, she went back to school to earn two psychology degrees. In 1981, after having struggled with addictions themselves, Marion Hutton and her husband founded Residence XII, a drug addiction center in Kirkland, Washington, to help alcoholics and addicts. She was the executive director until her death from cancer in 1987 at the age of 67.

Glenn and his new band got a lot of practice and a crowd of young followers by playing for students at campuses across the Northeast of the US. It was during this phase when Glenn's booking agent Mike Nidorf introduced Glenn's band to Michael DeZutter who was the manager of the Glen Island Casino in New Rochelle, New York. Playing at this important venue would definitely be a huge step forward for Glenn and his orchestra. The manager of the Glen Island Casino agreed and Nidorf booked the band there for the whole 1939 summer season. In addition, they played gigs at the Meadowbrook Ballroom in Cedar Grove, New Jersey in March and April of 1939. It is assumed that the opening night performance at the Glen Island Casino attracted a record-breaking crowd of around 1,800 people. Also, NBC would broadcast their show on the radio almost daily to a nationwide audience. The band played the whole season from May 17th until August 24th, 1939 there and after that they had turned into one of the top three bands in the United States.

The band's popularity – especially among young people – grew and grew. Glenn Miller and his Orchestra were now on track to become national superstars. The RCA label saw things coming and had Glen and his band record a number of songs including "Moonlight Serenade" before they started their Glen Island Casino concerts. That's what I call foresight.

Glenn's band was now complete after he had also hired trumpet player Dale "Mickey" McMickle and Maurice "Moe" Purtill right before the Glen Island Casino concerts started. One indicator of how stressful the time at the Glen Island Casino must have been is a story about Marion Hutton collapsing in July of 1939 so that she had to be replaced by singer Kay Starr for some time. Marion and the band really gave all they had to give.

In 1939, Time magazine noted, "Of the twelve to 24 discs in each of today's 300,000 U.S. jukeboxes, from two to six are usually Glenn Miller's." The song "Tuxedo Junction" sold 115,000 copies in the first week. Glenn's success in 1939, the year that "In The Mood" was recorded and released, culminated with an appearance at Carnegie Hall on October 6th with Paul Whiteman, Benny Goodman and Fred Waring also on the schedule.

A gentleman named Eddie Durham, an African American composer whom we'll get to know better a little later when we'll talk about "In The Mood" specifically, was one of the main reasons for Glenn Miller's success in 1939. How come, you may be wondering. Well, Eddie just had that special sound that was perfect for the band and the time. Eddie just had it. This here is a good opportunity to point out that Glenn Miller's band was never racially integrated. Yes, he hired a couple of talented African American composers and writers but that was about it. While this may have been more than other white band leaders did at the time, in that sense, he still really wasn't a successful celebrity who would consciously use his status and fame to help improve the status quo towards improvements in terms of the situation people of color had to endure at the time. In hindsight, this sounds like a missed opportunity but it's hard to tell from afar if Glenn really thought about things the way we would today, if he thought that what he did was a good first step already, if he actively wanted to avoid noise so he wouldn't lose fans, if he really wanted to change things but couldn't for some reason or, and that's the least likely option to me, if the racial implications of having a whites-only band didn't even cross his mind. It's all speculation at this point and we'll probably never know. The next paragraph may help shed some more light into this.

The rest of 1939 remained busy for Glenn and his musicians as they would perform at the Paramount Theatre in New York for the first time in the fall. Glenn knew that this concert was a huge chance for him to reach and convince a predominantly young audience with his musical style. For this, Glenn teamed up

with a hot new African American vocal group: The Ink Spots. At that time, doing so as a white bandleader involved a certain risk because of the social prejudices that haunted the country back then. Well, the crowd loved the combination of Glenn Miller and his Orchestra and the Black Ink Spots. A lot of this success goes back to arranger Eddie Durham whom Glenn had asked to write a couple of arrangements for the Ink Spots for free so they would blend in perfectly with the Glenn Miller sound.

In November, towards the end of 1939, Glenn managed to hire Jerry Gray who was Artie Shaw's chief arranger and Johnny Best who was Artie's trumpet pro. Jerry was out of work for some time because Artie felt the need to spend some time in Mexico before revamping his band in 1940. This was probably one of those vacations he wished he hadn't taken. Jerry Gray became Glenn's chief arranger and wrote hit after hit.

1939 was a phenomenal year for Glenn and his band thanked him the huge success they've experienced that year with a brand new 1940 Buick with a GM-1 license plate.

From December, 27th 1939 to September 24th 1942, Miller's band performed three times a week during a quarter-hour broadcast titled "Chesterfield Moonlight Serenade" for Chesterfield cigarettes on CBS radio - for the first 13 weeks with the Andrews Sisters and then on its own. The reason for the Andrews Sisters involvement was that the Liggett and Myers Tobacco Company that produced the Chesterfield cigarettes, their advertising agency Newell-Emmett and CBS were not willing to bet on Glenn only at first. Needless to say, it became clear very soon that Glenn was more than able to carry the show without the Andrews Sisters. The CBS show was on air every Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday at 10:15 p.m. Eastern Time and allowed Glenn to be heard in living rooms across the whole country. Luckily, Glenn had the Harry Smith Company record all the shows for his private use and so most of those shows have survived to this day. Glenn continuously worked on improving the show and its format. As part of his efforts, he introduced a format that he called "Something Old, Something New, Something Borrowed, Something Blue" – basically medleys that he played with his band every Wednesday night during 1940. It was very important to him that the shows had as little talk but as much music as possible. I'm sure the listeners thanked him that.

Another radio opportunity opened up in early 1940 when NBC broadcasted his concerts at the Café Rouge of the Hotel Pennsylvania in New York.

From January 1940 on, Americans across the country were able to hear Glenn Miller and his band a stunning six to seven times a week across all the networks.

1940 was another busy year for the band: In April, they moved to Washington, DC. In June, they moved to Chicago and toured the Midwest before they returned to New York in August. In October, they were back in New York at the Café Rouge at the Hotel Pennsylvania. On top of all this, they played more concerts all over the country. During the fall, Glenn successfully continued to expand his band by hiring trumpet players Ray Anthony and Billy May as well as arranger Charlie Barnet who all helped fine-tune the famous Glenn Miller sound even further.

In 1941 then, singer Marion Hutton got married and became pregnant. She was replaced by Dorothy "Dot" Claire who was with the band of Bobby Byrne. Claire and the band never really got warm with each other and she eventually ended up suing Glenn. The situation ended with a settlement and Claire reuniting with Bobby Byrne. On the vocals side, Glenn hired Hal Dickenson, Bill Conway, Ralph Brewster and Chuck Goldstein who were known as the Modernaires. The guys were hip and innovative and, more importantly, Glenn was able to successfully integrate them into his band – both regarding the music but also the chemistry between his new vocal group and his existing band. Marion Hutton rejoined

the band in August and she continued to tour with them across the country. In October 1941, the band was back at the Café Rouge at the Hotel Pennsylvania in New York for a 14-week gig that would earn the band \$41,750. Not bad. And around that time, Glenn convinced another musical genius to join his band: Cornet player Bobby Hackett.

Starting in 1941, the war was becoming a bigger and bigger topic for Glenn. In 1941, his first band member, Trigger Alpert, was drafted and replaced by Doc Goldberg who was with the Will Bradley-Ray McKinley band. Glenn started to dedicate time and music to military personnel during his radio shows and in August 1941, he started a one-hour Saturday afternoon feature at 5:00 p.m. Eastern Time on NBC that he called "Glenn Miller's Sunset Serenade." When President Roosevelt asked Congress to ask for and receive a Declaration of War against Japan one day after the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor on December 7, 1941, Glen and his band were at the RCA studios in New York to record a string of successful hits such as "Moonlight Cocktail". This event really upset Glenn and with this feeling, he had something in common with the American people and millions of other shocked people from around the world.

The year 1942 would bring dramatic changes in Glenn's life. The year started with another successful stay at the Café Rouge at the Hotel Pennsylvania to name only one example.

On February 10th, 1942, RCA Victor presented Miller with the first gold record for "Chattanooga Choo-Choo". Also in early 1942, another musician, arranger George Williams, was hired.

Then, the band went back to Hollywood to shoot their second movie "Orchestra Wives" there between March 17th and May 24th. On the way home, they played gigs for military personnel that was stationed along the route back east. By that time, RCA had moved Glenn and his band from the lower-priced RCA Bluebird label to the higher-priced RCA Victor label. June and July of 1942 were spent mainly in and around Chicago where Ray Eberle left the band to be replaced by Skip Nelson.

Between 1940 and 1942, Glenn had more Top 40 hits than any other artist in the same timeframe.

"In the Mood" was Miller's biggest instrumental hit and most-requested number. Per his original RCA recording contract, Miller received \$175.00 for recording "In the Mood." His contract was renegotiated after "In the Mood" became a hit, and he received retroactive royalties for it (and other recordings he made for Bluebird records before the success of "In the Mood"). In its original release and subsequent re-releases by RCA, "In the Mood" far surpassed one million single record sales.

While Glenn's success continued and the Second World War raged on overseas, he was becoming more and more restless. Glenn decided to include more and more patriotic content into his record and radio shows. He thought there was more he could do to help the US with its war effort. Glenn had seen other artists volunteer and was increasingly determined to do more himself. His advantage was that he already had access to both radio and film through his radio shows and movie appearances. Both mediums played a major role in both informing and entertaining the masses at home and stationed overseas during the war.

In 1942, when Glen was at the peak of his civilian career having earned both fame and lots of money, he decided to join the US army. Among other things, this would mean he would lose his weekly income of between 15,000 and 20,000 US dollars.

Eddie Peabody, a fellow musician and World War I veteran, helped Glenn with his application to the United States Naval Reserve which he sent on June 20th, 1942.

Glenn knew that he couldn't just leave all his obligations behind and join the army. Therefore, his initial plan was to honor all the contracts he had with his band members, the new Fox movie deal for at least three more films between 1943 and 1945, his 3-year renewal for the Chesterfield radio show as well as a long-term RCA recording deal. That wasn't just easy to realize.

At 38, Miller was too old to be drafted and so the Navy declined Glenn's application and offer to volunteer using the following words: "You have not established to the satisfaction of the Navy Department that your particular qualifications fit you for a mobilization billet in the Naval Reserve." Basically, the Navy was telling him that they did not need his services and that he was not good enough or too old for them. Glenn was deeply disappointed but didn't give up.

Miller then wrote a letter to Army Brigadier General Charles Young. He persuaded the United States Army to accept him so he could, in his own words, "be placed in charge of a modernized Army band". This led to an interview in Washington, DC that Glenn was granted followed up by his physical examination on August 24th. On September 10th of 1942, the long-awaited telegram from the army reached Glenn's office at Room 3001 in the RKO Building at 1270 Sixth Avenue in New York City. It read: "Captain Glenn Miller, your appointment announced, reporting date October Seven, full details reach you with orders, congratulations and good wishes, Howard C. Bronson, Music Officer." We have to assume that the army knew exactly what they would want to use Glenn Miller's services for. At the end of the day, they had to gain a lot from one of the most successful and well-known artists of the time. They couldn't have asked for a better vehicle than Glenn to communicate with the American people, to build their morale during the war as well as to recruit young people into the Air Force. Specifically, General. H. H. Arnold, who was the Commanding General of the Army Air Forces, was keenly interested in communicating to the public the purpose and needs of the Army Air Forces (abbreviated as AAF) and to recruit young people into the aviation service.

Glen told his band about the news while they were rehearsing for another Chesterfield radio show. Imagine the look on their faces that day. It must have been a very sad situation. After he was accepted into the Army, Miller's civilian band played its last Chesterfield radio show on September 24th and its last concert at the Central Theatre in New Jersey, on September 26th, 1942 which was also their last "Coca Cola Spotlight Bands" radio show as the concert was broadcasted live - the last song played by the Miller civilian band was "Jukebox Saturday Night". This was the end of Glenn Miller and his Orchestra as the world knew it at that time. But Glenn was far from slowing down.

His patriotic intention of entertaining the Allied Forces with the fusion of virtuosity and dance rhythms in his music earned him the rank of captain from the get-go and he was soon promoted to major by August 1944.

Glenn reported at Omaha to the Seventh Service Command in Omaha, Nebraska on October 7th, 1942 as a captain in the Army Specialist Corps. He had a short officer training course in Fort Meade, Maryland and then, in December 1942, was soon transferred to the Army Air Forces where he initially served as an assistant special services officer for the Army Air Forces Southeast Training Center at Maxwell Field, Montgomery, Alabama.

In January 1943, Glenn was moved to the Army Air Forces Technical Training Command (abbreviated as AAFTC) at Knollwood Field in Southern Pines, North Carolina.

The way Glenn himself saw his future in the army was as a morale and band builder. He envisioned a network of great Air Force bands that he would organize by selecting specific musicians from the draft, for example, and that would be able to play both marching and swing music. Major General Walter R. Weaver, the commander of the AAFTC, had given Glenn unprecedented authority for any requests related to personnel and resources. They really wanted Glenn to succeed no matter what. Glenn's official title was Director of Bands, Training, for the AAFTC. He had the authority to assign himself for duty at the AAF Basic Training Station #7 in Atlantic City, New Jersey. He knew that a lot of musicians from the New York area were sent there for basic training in the army and so it would be easy for him to recruit them there for his bands. In addition to this, he also had other musicians who served in the AAF around the US reassigned to work for him. He even provided musicians who were not drafted yet with steps that explained how they could get reassigned to him. A few folks he had worked with before and whom he reunited with in the army were Jerry Gray, Trigger Alpert, Zeke Zarchy and Jimmy Priddy. His authority basically enabled him to get almost anyone he wanted from big band or jazz band musicians to concert orchestra and any other musicians. He made sure to have a good mix of both veterans and relative newcomers that worked well together as a team.

Famous actor and singer, or shall we call him entertainer, Frank Sinatra, was in contact with Glenn and he would have been assigned to Glenn hadn't he been classified 4-F which translates to "registrant not acceptable for military service under the established physical, mental or moral standards" because of a perforated eardrum.

Glenn had a such a rich pool of talent that he had to even send great candidates to one of the other new bands being formed in the AAF instead of working with them in his own elite band. One such example is composer, conductor, arranger and pianist Henry Mancini who is considered to be one of the greatest composers in the history of film; he won four Academy Awards, a Golden Globe, twenty Grammy Awards and a posthumous Grammy Lifetime Achievement Award in 1995. Having access to multiple bands allowed Glenn to easily replace musicians in his own elite band or to expand his own band as needed. What a luxury. He established a band, stationed in New Haven, that had evolved from the 16-to-18 person dance band size to a large concert orchestra with jazz and dance band elements which allowed them to play anything from classics to jazz. We're not gonna go into all the details around the great band members he had in his elite army band but rest assured – they were the best of the best.

Later in 1943, Glenn had to move to Fort Worth Texas as his AAF Technical Training Command and the AAF Flying Training Command were both merged into a new unit, the AAF Training Command. What Glenn was building at that time was called the "Band of the Training Command of the Army Air Forces under the direction of Captain Glenn Miller". The band was being prepared for radio shows and recording sessions and Glenn also formed a marching band within his large orchestra that would play at official events. This was not another boring marching band, of course; his marching band took popular hits and played them as jazz-oriented tunes. Examples include "St. Louis Blues" or "Blues in the Night".

Glenn's attempts at modernizing military music were met with some resistance from tradition-minded career officers but his fame and support from other senior leaders within the military allowed him to continue. There's a famous story about a military official scolding Glenn for allegedly ruining traditional Army marching music. Glen is said to have replied: "Tell me, Major, are we still flying the same airplanes that we did in 1917?". What a great response, wasn't it?

In June of 1943, the band started to test a couple of radio shows which were broadcast over the Boston CBS station WEEI – the radio show was called “I Sustain the Wings” and designed to both entertain with its music but also to let the public know what’s going on in the armed forces and, last but not least, to get young folks interested in the army. After the testing, the full CBS network aired the show on Saturday afternoons from mid-July on. And on September 18th, it moved to the full NBC network. The time then changed to 6PM and 11:30PM Eastern Time on Saturdays and so the band had to commute every week from New Haven to New York. For some time, the band used Friday afternoons to record an NBC program titled “Music from America” which targeted foreign listeners. Very smart. The show had no announcements so that foreign radio announcers could introduce the music in their own languages. And in addition to his own shows, Glen Miller and his band made numerous guest appearances which allowed them to reach even more people.

In October of 1943, Glenn added another medium to his portfolio that allowed him to get his music to the troops better: A medium called “V-Discs” which were recordings he and his band made at the RCA Victor studios between October 1943 and January 1944 that were sent to military personnel worldwide. From January 1944 on, radio broadcasts were used for those discs and so the band didn’t have to do special recordings for it any longer which saved them some time.

Glenn wanted more. He made plans to take his orchestra overseas. This was no easy task, of course, as he had become such an important asset in the US. Not only did he help boost morale, he also helped the army raise a lot of money as part of his bond tour appearances. And there was another thing that made Glenn hesitate: Glenn and Helen managed to adopt their son Steven after years of trying to have children on their own. When Steven was 1, his parents kicked off the process of adopting a second child which would be Jonnie.

Eventually, Glen was allowed to form a 50-piece Army Air Force Band and take it to England in the summer of 1944, where he gave 800 performances. What had made this possible was the intervention of General Dwight Eisenhower who was literally a Glenn Miller fan and, in the spring of 1944, ordered General Raymond F. Barker, the leading official of the US headquarters in England, named “SHAEF” which stands for “Supreme Headquarters, Allied Expeditionary Force”, to start conversations with the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) in London and the Armed Forces Radio Service (AFRS) in Los Angeles with the goal of ultimately creating a new broadcasting service with American, British and Canadian programming for allied military personnel. There were a couple of roadblocks along the way and at one point, Eisenhower even asked the UK’s Prime Minister Winston Churchill to intervene which eventually led to a compromise and the birth of the new service called “Allied Expeditionary Forces Programme of the BBC” or short “AEFP”. Glen was then offered the opportunity to transfer to the SHAEF along with his radio production unit which Glenn gladly accepted.

It was General Eisenhower again, who sent a letter to General Arnold of the Army Air Forces asking him to transfer Glenn and his radio production unit – including at least 62 members of the AAF Training Command orchestra – from New Haven to England to become the American Band of the Allied Expeditionary Force. The Allied Expeditionary Forces Programme of the BBC – or short AEFP – went live one day after D-Day on June 7, 1944.

Glen left New York for London by air on June 18 and his band followed him one day later by sea for a 6-day trip across the Atlantic Ocean aboard the “Queen Elizabeth” which had been turned from an ocean liner into a troop transport.

During Miller's stay in England, he and his band were first headquartered in a BBC Radio office at 25 Sloane Court in London. That area of London was hit hard by German bombers and after a bomb landed three blocks away, Glenn decided to relocate everyone to Bedford, 50 miles north of London. In doing so, he was supported by a Lieutenant Colonel named David Niven who would later become one of the biggest movie stars of all time. The day after Glenn and his crew departed London, a V-1 flying bomb exploded a few feet in front of his former office. The office was demolished and at least 70 of his former officemates were killed.

While in England, where Glen was promoted to the rank of Major in 1944, by the way, he and his orchestra played countless gigs, their radio shows and any guest appearances were a hit and they recorded a series of records at Abbey Road Studios. They had a really tough schedule as the demand for their performances grew and grew and grew. And not only did the American soldiers enjoy Glenn's music, nope, also the British public literally fell in love with Glenn and his AEF orchestra. According to some sources, even Princesses Elizabeth (who wasn't Queen Elizabeth the second at that point) and her sister Margaret were Glenn Miller fans. Born in 1926 and 1930, Elizabeth and Margaret were both teenagers at the time.

In summarizing Miller's military career and impact on the folks stationed overseas, 8th Air Force commander Lieutenant General Jimmy Doolittle told Glenn at the end of a July 1944 concert in England, "next to a letter from home, your organization is the greatest morale booster in the European Theater of Operations", also known as the ETO.

The soldiers in Europe were the perfect audience for Glenn as they missed home and his music would provide them with a "touch of home"; also most of the soldiers hadn't heard or seen live music in a while. The band played at hospitals, for troops that just got back from combat and for soldiers who were about to go to war. Being a part of the Army Air Forces, the band's concerts for AAF and RAF aircrews were especially touching as both the orchestra members and members in the audience knew that some of the folks present that evening might soon be killed or wounded on combat missions over Europe.

Despite all the success Glenn had in England, there were times when he was homesick. Who wouldn't be. To cope with this, he built a model of the ranch home that he planned to build in California after the war. Two guys from his orchestra, Steve Steck and Carl Swanson, helped Glenn with the model. Contemporaries of Glenn confirmed that he spoke about his plans for after the war quite often and that he offered the members of his orchestra to a job with him in California. Glenn even wrote and performed a song titled "'I'm Headin' for California" that expressed his emotions.

While Glenn really liked his time in England, Glenn wanted to get closer to the front lines and so his next plan, which he shared with his military leaders, was to make the orchestra available for personal appearances with the ground troops on leave in the Paris area. What helped Glenn here was that his superiors had already agreed to move assets of the "Allied Expeditionary Forces Programme of the BBC" or short "AEFP" including Glenn and his orchestra to Paris as soon as they would be able to arrange broadcasting facilities and logistics there. In September 1944, moving the "AEFP" including Glenn and his orchestra to Paris was approved upon completion of AEFP broadcasting facilities there. There were a couple of concerns within the BBC and the military that needed to be dealt with, of course. One of them was that there were only a couple of telephone transmission lines between England and France – primarily used for essential military communications – which they could use to send the "AEFP's" signal back to the BBC London from where the program would then be broadcasted over their submitters.

To play safe and prepare for potential issues with the transmission lines, Glenn agreed to pre-record six weeks' or , in other words, 84 hours' worth of programming by his full orchestra and various sub-units. Glenn knew that this was a lot to ask from his team and so he decided to let them vote. This wasn't something the folks were keen to do but since they really wanted to move to Paris as soon as possible and play safe at the same time, they unanimously voted for extra shifts in order to accomplish this recording marathon between November 20 and December 12 in addition to their regular radio schedule.

Word had gotten out and so the soldiers stationed in France were already looking forward to welcoming Glenn Miller and his orchestra there. The plan was to introduce them with a live broadcast from Paris on Christmas Day that would also be transmitted back to the United States.

Speaking of the United States, Helen, Glenn's wife, informed him around that time that the couple's second adopted child, Jonnie, would soon be arriving at their house and become the newest member of the family. Needless to say, Glenn was as excited as can be and couldn't wait to get home to see and hug his daughter for the very first time.

The plan was for Glenn's orchestra to fly to Paris on Saturday, December 16th. There were open issues with the group's lodging plans and so Lieutenant Colonel Niven – yep, that Niven – told Miller to go to Paris before his orchestra to work things out. A celebrity like Glenn wasn't allowed to just travel on any plane. Any trips by celebrities had to be approved as the army wanted to make sure they would be safe and not captured by enemies who could use them a trophies. Glenn got approved to leave England for France from Bovingdon aboard a scheduled Air Transport Command flight around Thursday, December 14th. There was some buffer built into the schedule to account for bad weather and other potential surprises.

Glenn wanted to travel on Wednesday, December 13th but all flights that day were cancelled due to bad weather. Things didn't look better on Thursday, December 14th – again, all flights that day were cancelled. That day, Glenn got a call from Lieutenant Don Haynes who put Lieutenant Colonel Norman F. Baessell on the line whom Haynes had just met at lunch at Milton Ernest Hall in Bedfordshire. Lieutenant Don Haynes was the one in charge of finding quarters for Glenn and his orchestra in Paris. Lieutenant Colonel Norman F. Baessell was responsible for building a new strategic air depot – an important matter. Haynes and Baessell had become friends. Baessell told Glenn that his chances to be able to travel on Friday, December 15th would be slim since he would probably be bumped by higher priority officers on the list. What the men didn't know was that the army had already reissued Glenn's ticket for Sunday, December 17th. Working on important matters for the army, Baessell was able to authorize his own flights. He offered Glenn to travel with him indicating that the weather was looking better for the next day and expressing confidence that they would be able to get to Paris by Friday afternoon. Glenn gladly accepted Baessell's kind invitation and inquired if Haynes could pick him up in London. Glenn, Haynes and Baessell spent Thursday evening having dinner together and playing poker with other officers at Milton Ernest Hall near Bedford.

On the next day, Friday, December 15th, 1944 after lunch, Sgt. Edward McColloch, who was the driver for the service command chief Colonel James Early picked up Glenn at Milton Ernest Hall and drove him to the aerodrome at the RAF Twinwood Farm in Clapham on the outskirts of Bedford. Baessell's pilot, J. R. Stuart Morgan, had let them know that he would be on his way coming from an air depot to pick up Glenn and Colonel Baessell.

The visibility was restricted that day and the weather was overcast at 2,000-3,000 feet. The aerodrome was not fogged, however, and so the UC-64 Norseman aircraft landed routinely and idled its engine while it waited for its passengers to embark.

After Glenn and Baessell had boarded the single-engine plane, it departed from Twinwood Farm on runway 23 at 1:55PM British Summer Time. Glenn's chain of command had no clue he was going to be on this flight. A short time later, the aircraft, together with Glenn, Baessell and their pilot Morgan disappeared while flying over the English Channel. Neither the aircraft nor the three men were ever seen again.

Glenn's orchestra didn't know about this tragedy yet. And neither did his wife. The orchestra and Lieutenant Haynes arrived at the Paris, Orly aerodrome on Monday, December 18th instead of the 16th due to delays. They were quite surprised not to see Glenn upon their arrival. When Haynes contacted the "Supreme Headquarters, Allied Expeditionary Force" also known as SHAEF, about Glenn's whereabouts, they had no idea that Glenn had already left for Paris together with Baessell. The SHAEF contacted the service command at Milton Ernest Hall and these guys then contacted the 35th Air Depot Group at Abbots Ripton. It turned out that the 35th Air Depot Group at the 2nd Strategic Air Depot in Abbots Ripton had already filed a missing aircraft report on December 16th as they were not able to locate neither the aircraft nor pilot Morgan. Also, they didn't know that there had been passengers on board. It was then when the SHAEF, Haynes and his orchestra realized that the plane must have gone down, probably over the English Channel. The 35th Air Depot Group then modified their missing aircrew report to add Miller and Baessell as passengers of the aircraft.

Glenn's wife Helen received a telegram with the horrible news on December 23rd which was delivered in-person by AAF officers from Washington and she also received a personal telephone call from General H. H. "Hap" Arnold. She was devastated. This also meant that Glenn would never see his second child Jonnie who he was looking so much forward to seeing for the first time as well as seeing his son Steven again. Glenn left behind his wife Helen and his two adopted children Steven and Jonnie. He was posthumously awarded the Bronze Star, presented to his wife Helen in a ceremony held on March 24th, 1945. After receiving the tragic news about Glenn, Helen received a very touching Christmas greeting that Glenn had recorded for her on December 6th, and in which he talked about how much he wants to return to his family to resume their life together at their future home in California. Helen followed through on Glenn's and her plans and eventually moved to California where she would raise their two kids. Helen passed away unexpectedly in Pasadena in 1966 at the age of 64.

Glenn's disappearance was not made public until December 24th, 1944, when the Associated Press announced Miller would not be conducting the scheduled BBC-broadcast "AEF Christmas Show" the following day; the special went on the air as scheduled with the band's deputy leader Sergeant Jerry Gray standing in for Miller. Since Glenn had pre-recorded his voice parts before flying to France, listeners heard his voice until 6PM British Time on December 24, when the SHAEF issued a communiqué announcing Glenn's disappearance. Glenn's orchestra would eventually return home to the US in August,

At an official gathering towards the end of 1945 in Washington DC, where General Eisenhower and General Arnold told the musicians that their successful work was done, Eddie Cantor, the MC of the event said this about Glenn:

“Glenn Miller was a very wonderful man who led a very wonderful band. As a civilian, he led an orchestra that for three and a half years was the number one band in America. Glenn could have stayed here in America. He could have stayed and made himself a lot more money, and then, if he wanted to, he could have retired an independently wealthy man. But he chose not to. He was an extremely patriotic man and he felt an intense obligation to serve his country that had gone into war. So he disbanded his great orchestra, and he formed an even greater one. Still, he could have remained here in America. But again, he chose not to. Instead, he chose to take himself and his orchestra overseas, to where he felt he could do the most good for our fighting men. And what a tremendous morale-building job he and his men did over there. And now this great band is back here with us this evening, but without its most important member, Major Glenn Miller himself. For, as we know all too well, he made the supreme sacrifice for his country. But he will never be forgotten, for always we will have the sound of the great music that he created. And now, it is an extreme honor for me to present to you this evening the Glenn Miller Army Air Forces Band under the direction of Sergeant Ray McKinley.”

As the orchestra was then playing the first few chords of their hit “Moonlight Serenade”, President Harry Truman got up and led the entire audience in a standing ovation for the orchestra. An unprecedented gesture and recognition from the President of the United States of America. This event helped many in the orchestra finally realize what they had done for their country and that they had written music history together.

There are a couple of conspiracy theories surrounding his death but none of these theories have stood up to scrutiny. Here are the three most prominent ones about what might have happened to Glenn Miller: 1) he was assassinated after Dwight D. Eisenhower sent him on a secret mission to negotiate a peace deal with Nazi Germany; 2) he made it to Paris, where he died of a heart attack in a bordello; 3) his plane was hit and destroyed by bombs dumped from Allied bomber planes returning from an aborted raid over Germany. In 2014, the Chicago Tribune reported that despite many theories that had been proposed, Miller's plane probably crashed because of its carburetor, which was of a type known to ice up in cold weather. Also, records showed that the single engine aircraft had recently been serviced but it's not clear if this had to do anything with the plane's disappearance.

The 8-week investigation that the army conducted itself back then came to the conclusion, that

- (a.) Major Glenn Miller boarded the wrong plane on the wrong day without the knowledge or approval of his chain of command;
- (b.) the aircraft had likely been either flown into the water due to pilot disorientation;
- or (c.) had experienced an unrecoverable mechanical failure flying at or below 1,500 feet, possibly due to carburetor icing or other another cause;
- and (d.) with marginal and deteriorating weather conditions a contributing factor in any case.

Let's spend a minute to pay tribute to the late Major Glen Miller before we return to analyzing Glen Miller's great classic “In The Mood”.

The Music

“In The Mood” has become one of the most famous swing and big band era songs of all time. Actually, it is *the* swing era anthem.

Swing music, or simply swing as it's called, is a form of popular jazz music developed in the United States that dominated in the 1930s and 1940s. The name swing came from the “swing feel” where the emphasis is on the off-beat or weaker pulse in the music. Swing bands usually featured soloists who would improvise on the melody over the arrangement. The danceable swing style of big bands and bandleaders such as Glen Miller and Benny Goodman was the dominant form of American popular music from 1935 to 1946, a period known as the “swing era”. Before, there was no mass audience for swing as it was viewed with ridicule and looked upon as a curiosity. After 1936, big bands rose to prominence playing swing music and they held a major role in defining swing as a distinctive style. Swing was typically played by a big band which is a type of musical ensemble of jazz music that usually consisted of ten or more musicians with four sections: saxophones, trumpets, trombones and a rhythm section.

As with many new popular music styles, Swing was met with some resistance because of its improvisation, tempo, occasionally risqué lyrics and frenetic dancing. Among fans of both jazz and "serious" music, Swing was sometimes regarded as light entertainment, more of an industry to sell records to the masses than a form of art.

Big Bands contributed a lot to uplifting morale during World War 2. Many musicians served in the military and toured with US troops at the front, with Glenn Miller losing his life while traveling between shows. Many bands suffered from the loss of personnel and, therefore, their quality declined during the war years. Swing music began to decline in popularity during World War 2 but saw a revival in the late 1950s and 1960s with the resurgent Count Basie and Duke Ellington orchestras and with pop vocalists such as Frank Sinatra and Nat King Cole.

The trend away from big band swing in the 1940s was accelerated by wartime conditions and royalty conflicts: In 1941 the American Society of Composers and Producers (ASCAP) demanded bigger royalties from broadcasters and the broadcasters refused. Consequently, ASCAP banned the large repertoire they controlled from airplay, severely restricting what the radio audience could hear. ASCAP also demanded a pre-approval of set lists and even written solos for live broadcasts, to assure that not even a quoted fragment of ASCAP repertoire was broadcast. Those restrictions made broadcasting swing much less appealing. Big band swing managed to remain popular during the war years but the resources required to support it became problematic.

Wartime restriction on travel, coupled with rising expenses, curtailed road touring. The manpower requirements for big swing bands placed a burden on the scarce resources available for touring and were impacted by the military draft. In July 1942, the American Federation of Musicians called a ban on recording until record labels agreed to pay royalties to musicians. That stopped recording of instrumental music for major labels for over a year, with the last labels agreeing to new contract terms in November 1944. In the meantime, vocalists continued to record backed by vocal groups and the recording industry released earlier swing recordings from their vaults, increasingly reflecting the popularity of big band vocalists. In 1943, Columbia Records re-released the 1939 recording of “All or Nothing at All” by the Harry James Orchestra with Frank Sinatra, giving Sinatra top billing.

The recording found the commercial success that had eluded its original release. Small band swing was recorded for small specialty labels not affected by the ban. These labels had a limited distribution centered in large urban markets, which tended to limit the size of the ensembles with which recording could be a money-making proposition. Another blow fell on the market for dance-oriented swing in 1944 when the federal government levied a 30% excise tax on "dancing" nightclubs, undercutting the market for dance music in smaller venues.

Let's now shift our attention back to the song itself to investigate its origins. And here's the major spoiler upfront: "In The Mood" was not written by Glen Miller. It is basically a mash-up of different parts from earlier works that eventually made it to him. Let's explore the story now. Bear with me, please. Things are getting a bit complicated here. I divided the evolution of "In The Mood" into 10 steps. Let's go.

1.)

The first recording that contained elements that resembled what would a couple of years later become "In The Mood" was a song called "Clarinet Gateway" also known as "Third Alley Breakdown" which was recorded by the Jimmy O'Bryant Washboard Wonders also known as O'Bryant's Washboard Band on Paramount Records in the June of 1925. You really have to pay close attention to hear the resemblance but it is definitely there. This record has matrix number P-2148 and was issued as Paramount 12287. It was made by a four-piece band including O'Bryant playing the clarinet, accompanied by a piano, a cornet and someone playing a washboard.

2.)

The next one up in the evolution of the title was the song "Tar Paper Stomp" recorded by "Wingy Manone's Orchestra" for Champion records on August 28th, 1930. The record has matrix number G16951 and was issued initially as Champion 16153. The group was otherwise known as Wingy Manone and his Orchestra. Decca acquired Champion in 1935 and reissued the song on the Decca label crediting "Wingy Manone and his Orchestra". A number of jazz historians agree that this song was really the beginning of "In The Mood". You don't need to pay too close attention to hear the resemblance immediately.

3.)

Next in line was Fletcher Henderson who recorded elements of the riff heard in "Tar Paper Stomp" as "Hot and Anxious" for Columbia on March 19th, 1931 as matrix W 151443-1 and it was issued as Columbia 2449-D under the group name "The Baltimore Bell Hops". Fletcher Henderson led one of the most popular African American orchestras of the 1920s and early 1930s. "Hot and Anxious" was composed and arranged by Henderson's brother Horace Henderson.

4.)

Don Redman and his Orchestra also recorded "Hot and Anxious". Their version was recorded for the Brunswick label on June 28th, 1932 as matrix B 12006-A and it was issued as Brunswick 6368. Redman had played saxophone for Fletcher Henderson and was a pioneering swing arranger. There is some "scat" – which is wordless singing – on the Redman recording but no lyrics were sung.

5.)

Then, saxophonist Joe Garland entered the stage. He wrote arrangements and played in the saxophone section for the "Mills Blue Rhythm Band". Garland composed and arranged a tune that he titled "There's Rhythm In Harlem" for the "Mills Blue Rhythm Band", which also included notable musicians J. C. Higginbotham playing the trombone, Henry "Red" Allen on the trumpet and Edgar Hayes on the piano, among others. The Garland chart, which contained fragments of music that would later appear in his composition "In the Mood," was recorded by the "Mills Blue Rhythm Band" on July 9th, 1935 for Columbia. It has matrix number CO 17797-1 and was issued as Columbia 3071-D.

6.)

When Edgar Hayes, who played the piano for the "Mills Blue Rhythm Band" formed his own band in 1937, Joe Garland went with him. Garland composed and arranged the work that we essentially know to be "In the Mood" probably sometime in 1937. Edgar Hayes and his Orchestra recorded the Garland chart for Decca on February 17th, 1938. It is matrix number 63297-A and was released as Decca 1882-B. Prior to the Hayes recording, only brief glimpses of the "riff" which would become familiar with "In the Mood" can be heard in the various recordings mentioned above. The Hayes recording is the first version of the future "In the Mood" that bears a definite resemblance to what would become the definitive Glenn Miller version.

7.)

On March 16, 1938, "Joe Marsala and his Chicagoans" jumped into the picture with a recording titled "Hot String Beans," which featured a young Buddy Rich on the drums. Although played at a much slower tempo, this tune bears a resemblance to the Garland/Hayes "In the Mood". This one has matrix number M781 and was issued as Vocalion 4168.

8.)

Joe Garland, who in 1937 composed and arranged the version that bears a definitive resemblance to what would become the definitive Glenn Miller version, copyrighted "In the Mood" in the June of 1938. In November of 1938, he sold the song to bandleader Artie Shaw. Shaw chose to present it initially as a six-minute instrumental arrangement by Jerry Gray that closely followed the Edgar Hayes recording of Garland's arrangement. The Shaw version was at first played at a much slower tempo than the Hayes recording and the forthcoming Miller adaptation. Shaw broadcast the chart several times over NBC radio remotes and on his "CBS Old Gold Melody and Madness" program to lukewarm audience receptions. Although Shaw would shorten the piece and speed up the tempo after several performances, he never made a commercial recording of it.

9.)

A few months later, Wingy Manone reemerged and went into the RCA studios on April 26, 1939 to record an essentially updated version of "Tar Paper Stomp" for Bluebird. The tune was titled "Jumpy Nerves." It is matrix number BS-0036537-1 and was issued as B-10289.

10.)

In June of 1939, "In The Mood" finally made it to Glenn Miller. He purchased what was likely the Joe Garland arrangement of "In the Mood" - as recorded by the Edgar Hayes band - probably in the June of 1939. He then tasked arranger Eddie Durham to work out a revision of it for his band. Durham was a pioneering swing arranger who had worked with many Afro-American territory bands in the 1920s and early 1930s. He played trombone and guitar in addition to arranging and began to become a recognized first-rate arranger while he was with Jimmie Lunceford's band from 1935 until 1937 and then played a major role in shaping the music of the early Count Basie band between 1937 and 1938. By 1938, Durham was working as a free-lance arranger in New York and in 1939, Lunceford had agreed to loan Durham to Glenn. His arrangements found their way into the libraries of many bands including Artie Shaw's and Glenn Miller's. Durham penned most of the up-tempo, jazz-swing charts that propelled the 1939 Glenn Miller band to popularity first at the "Meadowbrook Ballroom" in Cedar Grove, New Jersey in the spring of that year and shortly after that at the "Glen Island Casino" in New Rochelle, New York including many NBC broadcasts from that venue. Significantly, the overall feel of Glenn Miller's classic recording of "In the Mood" has a 4/4 Basie-Durham feel, not a 2/4 Lunceford-Durham feel. This was remarkable and somewhat of a departure from the norm as, to this day, a lot of experts and enthusiasts say that Miller oftentimes sounded like Lunceford. Durham, who worked for both, was probably the obvious reason for that.

In the end, Miller, Durham and Miller's pianist/sometime arranger J. C. "Chummy" MacGregor cobbled together the Miller arrangement of "In the Mood" as a sort of committee, though evidence indicates that Miller's role as editor was paramount. He initially trimmed the Garland chart down to a four-and-a-half-minute instrumental broadcast performance length, and then to a three-minute and thirty-seven second recording session length, in order to fit on one side of a ten-inch 78 rpm record. The maximum recording time available on those ten-inch 78s was 3 minutes and 43 seconds.

Miller recorded "In the Mood" for the RCA Bluebird label at RCA Victor Studio 2, New York on August 1st, 1939. It is matrix number BS-038170-1 and was issued as Bluebird B10416-A and paired on the Bluebird disk with "I Want to Be Happy" which was recorded at the same session.

What we hear in Glenn Miller's arrangement of "In the Mood" are riffs, and plenty of them, built on a blues harmonic foundation, as the basic motive of the piece. It is also noteworthy that Miller set a medium swing tempo, a bit slower than that used by Edgar Hayes.

After an eight-bar introduction that starts with unison saxophones, the Miller arrangement unfolds with riffs played by the saxophone section, punctuated by brief bursts of brass. The next section follows with a different riff, for a slight contrast. This leads into a brief band transition which brings on Miller's two tenor saxophone soloists who provide yet another contrast. Tex Beneke plays first, his sound bright and edgy. Al Klink follows, with a bigger, broader sound. Their two-bar exchanges leave them barely enough space to do anything beyond a few rhythmic bursts of notes. But as we know, time was at a premium for this recording. Another transitional fanfare played by the band springs trumpeter Clyde Hurley into his swaggering sixteen-bar solo which is excellent: Hurley had a nice, fat trumpet tone, a good upper register, fine jazz ideas and a good, strong swing. Immediately after Hurley finishes, the riff from the first section reappears but it is now handled quite differently: The dynamic level of the saxophones is much lower and the saxophone riffs are now punctuated by pedal tones played by the three trombones in unison. And this quieter segment is followed by two even quieter ones. By doing this, Miller has brilliantly contrasted the

recurring saxophone riff theme with the low trombone pedal tones and the teasing upward figure whispered by the trumpets presaging the finale. The finale starts with bursts of brass and the final riffs have everyone in the band playing at fortissimo. Lead trumpeter Dale “Mickey” McMickle handles the final ascent into the ending brilliantly. Miller’s pianist and friend, Chummy MacGregor, took credit for the explosive ending, but based on available evidence – the original score with Miller’s and Durham’s handwriting on it –, it appears that Eddie Durham actually wrote it out.

There are a number of great live performances of the song that still survive – issued by Sony (BMG, RCA) and various independent labels. For example,

- the show “Sunset Serenade” on NBC Blue from November 22, 1941;
- the “Chesterfield Moonlight Serenade” show on CBS from December 31, 1941;
- the “I Sustain the Wings” show on CBS from July 17, 1943
- and another “I Sustain the Wings” show on NBC from March 4, 1944.

Glen Miller had the big band sound down to a science – a fact that caused some of his critics to say that his impeccably performed music was boring. I think Glen Miller’s success speaks for itself and he’s not to blame more than any modern-day producer who figured out a hit formula. And it seems he was fine having found and using his own special formula as he once replied to a negative review by John Hammond with the following words: “Why do you judge me as a musician, John? All I’m interested in is making money.” While this may have indeed happened, I’m not sure if these words are a complete and true representation of Glenn’s feelings towards making music. It was clear that he was a music lover and that, while money motivated him to a large extent, the guy just *had* to make music. That, it seems, was his passion. Maybe that answer was just his way of coping with and deflecting criticism. Benny Goodman once called Glenn “a pedestrian trombonist”. Coming from Benny, this assessment was either motivated by envy or it was 100% accurate. But that doesn’t really matter now because Glenn understood better than any other fellow musician at the time what the young crowds wanted to hear and dance to.

The Lyrics

Glen Miller’s original version was instrumental only. There is another version though that Joe Garland wrote down the music for and Andy Razaf provided the lyrics for which was covered by multiple artists. The lyrics of that version were perceived as a little bit racy at the time as they consist of a woman telling the listener about an encounter with a man who had let her know that he was in the mood to have sex. Obviously, this storyline was summed up nicely in the title “In The Mood”. To prove to you that nothing serious ever happened in the song, I’m now gonna read the first two verses plus the chorus to you – at the cost of sounding amazingly stupid while doing so:

Who's the loving daddy with the beautiful eyes
What a pair o' shoes, I'd like to try 'em for size
I'll just tell him, "Baby, won't you swing it with me"
Hope he tells me maybe, what a wing it will be
So, I said politely "Darling may I intrude"
He said "Don't keep me waiting when I'm in the mood"

First I held him lightly and we started to dance
Then I held him tightly what a dreamy romance
And I said "Hey, baby, it's a quarter to three
There's a mess of moonlight, won't you share it with me"
"Well" he answered "Baby, don't you know that it's rude
To keep my two lips waiting when they're in the mood"
In the mood, that's what he told me
In the mood, and when he told me
In the mood, my heart was skipping
It didn't take me long to say "I'm in the mood now"

In the mood for all his kissing
In the mood his crazy loving
In the mood what I was missing
It didn't take me long to say "I'm in the mood now"

End of lyrics. The net is, there's a whole lot of teasing going on which contributed to the success of this risqué version which was covered by other artists later.

The Legacy

The 1940 hit song "In the Mood" by Glenn Miller is the most successful swing instrumental of all time and one of the most significant pieces of music ever recorded.

Recorded on August 1st, 1939 on the eve of world war 2, it has come to symbolize the 1940s, World War II and the entire Big Band Era like probably no other song before or after it.

Beyond that, "In The Mood" has stood the test of times. It is a timeless classic that, despite its Big Band sound, never gets old. No matter what year it is when you're listening to this: Sit back and enjoy "In The Mood" after listening to this show and you'll see that, in some way, it still sounds modern and timeless.

Being a cover and therefore not the original version itself, the Glen Miller version was also covered numerous times by other artists. This indeed contributed to the song's status as a classic that transcends time. Two versions stand out: Glen Miller's original instrumental and the one I mentioned already – the one that Joe Garland wrote down the music for and Andy Razaf provided the lyrics for. They all helped extend the lifespan of the song.

And so did all its movie appearances. Here's a quick list of notable movies that featured "In The Mood" in one way or the other after its 1941 movie debut in "Sun Valley Serenade":

- "The Glenn Miller Story" starring Jimmy Stewart and June Allyson
- Woody Allen's "Radio Days"
- "Hope and Glory"
- "The Philadelphia Experiment"
- "Wild at Heart"
- "The Radioland Murders"
- "Shining Through"

- “The Black Dahlia”
- “1941”
- “The Way We Were”

And beyond classic movies, it appeared in places such as “90210”, “Dr. Who”, “The Simpsons” and “Narnia: The Voyage of the Dawn Treader”.

In 1983, the song found its way into the Grammy Hall of Fame.

In 1999, National Public Radio (NPR) added “In the Mood” to their “top 100 list of the most important American musical works of the 20th century”.

And in 2004, it was added to the Library of Congress National Recording Registry confirming that “In the Mood” is a “culturally, historically, or aesthetically significant” song.

Therefore, my request to you: If aliens do exist and should they ever visit planet earth, please do me a favor and play this song for them. Then, I think they will understand what humans are all about.

The Good-Bye

This was another episode of “The Greatest Hits Explained” with me, Michael Winter, your host and editor of the show.

Please note that you can find a link to the sources I used for this show in the show description. Also, I’m mentioning all the sources I used at the very end of this show. As I explained during the intro, this show is based on my personal research of sources I found online and otherwise. Therefore, I owe a lot of thanks to the authors of these original sources. I have used both paraphrased and literal content and quotes from these sources without declaring them during the show as it would have taken away from the flow. In no way was this intended to claim that I came up with all the original content. I see my job as putting together and processing the content from a variety of different sources in a way that it creates a new and exciting narrative that wouldn’t necessarily be possible using the single sources alone in an unprocessed way.

And if there’s anything that I pronounced incorrectly, please forgive me. I did my best.

I hope you enjoyed this musical journey through the 1930s and 1940s to explore many interesting facts around the song “In The Mood” by Glen Miller and his Orchestra as well as the artist himself.

If so, please subscribe and make sure to also check out and tune in to other episodes of “The Greatest Hits Explained”.

Until then, stay safe and have music in your heart.

Outro

If you liked this show, please subscribe, leave a review, a like, a comment – whatever applies to the specific platform on which you’re listening to this. I appreciate it.

Sources

And finally, here's a list of sources I used for this show. A big thanks goes out to all the authors of these sources. Please note that I have used both paraphrased and literal or verbatim content and quotes from the following fine sources as appropriate.

<Please see the separate sources PDF doc for the sources.>