



American Music Research Center
UNIVERSITY OF COLORADO BOULDER

GLENN MILLER

1940

“JUKEBOX SATURDAY NIGHT”

AMERICA’S NUMBER ONE BAND



Dedicated to the Glenn Miller Birthplace Society

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Glenn Miller Archives

Riding the Wave of Popularity

Following their breakthrough year of 1939, Glenn Miller and his Orchestra were atop the world of popular music and poised to become America's number one band. Their success at the Glen Island Casino and Meadowbrook Ballroom catapulted them into the national spotlight. Dozens of coast-to-coast NBC broadcasts, enthusiastic audiences and a tidal wave of positive press resulted in record-breaking RCA Bluebird record sales. A series of top ten and number one tunes positioned Glenn Miller for continued and unprecedented success.

The Cigarette That Satisfies

Liggett & Myers Tobacco Company prepared to move their weekly Chesterfield radio series over CBS on from the veteran Paul Whiteman to a younger and livelier format. "Pops" himself helped them by recommending Glenn Miller as his replacement. During this era, advertisers controlled radio programming and the tobacco companies were major sponsors of programs featuring popular music, including Camel with Benny Goodman and Xavier Cugat; Raleigh and Kool with Tommy Dorsey, Old Gold with Artie Shaw and Lucky Strike with Kay Kyser. Advertising agency Newell-Emmett recommended that the new Chesterfield series include the Andrews Sisters vocal group to bolster the promotional impact of the switch to Glenn Miller. And so, on December 27, 1939, Whiteman's announcer Paul Douglas introduced Miller and the Andrews Sisters to the CBS audience with the "Chesterfield Moonlight Serenade." As part of their plan, CBS agreed to break the half-hour weekly Wednesday night series at 8:30 p.m. Eastern time into three fifteen minute weekly programs at 10:00 p.m. Eastern time on Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday evenings. Laverne, Maxine and Patti Andrews signed on for the first thirteen weeks of the series, with all the programs originating from New York. It was understood that thereafter, when both the Miller band and the vocal group were booked for their respective road tours, that the Andrews Sisters would probably drop off the radio series; nor were they expected to become a permanent part of the Miller band.

Old, New Borrowed and Blue

The audience reaction to the band and the singers at the CBS Radio Playhouse, now the Ed Sullivan Theater, was electric. The enthusiasm was not unlike the audiences for the 1939 NBC remotes or what the Miller band by themselves were continuing to receive. The pace of the broadcasts were brisk and exciting. However, announcer Paul Douglas became ill and had to be replaced for several weeks by Ed Herlihy. No one missed a beat, but Miller had a challenge with the "Moonlight Serenade" format. This was how to feature his own singers, Ray Eberle and Marion Hutton, as well as occasionally Tex Beneke, within the time available. The producers and Glenn found ways to limit verbiage but also to fit more music into the programs.



Glenn Miller with the Andrews Sisters at CBS, January 1940

The Café Rouge

The Andrews Sisters had a featured number on each program. And on Wednesdays, “Something Old, New, Borrowed and Blue” medleys became a standard feature. In this way, Glenn could take advantage of the Andrews Sisters and also spotlight his own singers. Additionally, he and the staff worked out a good mix of popular ballads and swing instrumentals to round out the programs. The “Chesterfield Moonlight Serenade” quickly became a CBS favorite.

The Hotel Pennsylvania in New York was across the street from busy Penn Station. The hotel had hosted many successful band engagements throughout the 1930s in its Madhattan Room and Summer Roof Garden. Benny Goodman and later Tommy Dorsey had gained great exposure with lively national radio broadcasts from the Hotel Pennsylvania. For the fall 1939 season, the hotel remodeled the Madhattan Room into the Café Rouge, a more elegant nightspot. Artie Shaw and his Orchestra christened the Café Rouge on October 10 and the future for both the “King of the Clarinet” and the venue seemed unlimited.

Jerry Gray

As NBC announcers including Bill Spargrove heralded the band and the room, Artie himself had other ideas. The mercurial Shaw had succeeded Benny Goodman as America's top band only to discover Glenn Miller now nipping at his heels and Tommy Dorsey reinvigorating his band with a new style and fresh faces. On November 11, Artie walked off the Café Rouge bandstand, broke up his band and withdrew to Mexico. His seemingly abrupt but actually predictable decision had immediate effect on the music industry. Bandleaders eagerly hired Shaw's talented musicians, among them the exciting drummer Buddy Rich, who began a long and legendary association with Tommy Dorsey. Glenn's talent scouts, spouse Helen Miller and secretary Polly Haynes recommended North Carolina trumpet talent John Best to Glenn and this began a lifelong and warm relationship. But perhaps the greatest impact of Artie's withdrawal was the career of his chief arranger Generoso Graziano, the self-effacing violinist known professionally as Jerry Gray. Any examination of the Artie Shaw library from 1938 and 1939 proves the vital impact that Gray had upon Shaw's popularity. Indeed, Shaw fully expected Gray to remain available when the former planned a 1940 return along with a fresh perspective and a string section. But Jerry Gray had other ideas.



Jerry Gray (left) and Glenn Miller with songwriter Jerry Lawrence in 1941

A Marriage Made in Heaven

Before Artie Shaw's decision became public, Jerry Gray put out feelers and Glenn Miller pounced. Until now, Miller's full time arranging staff consisted of the talented Bill Finegan, supported by a distracted Miller, busy with many other matters. Glenn hired the renowned black musician Eddie Durham part-time to write important arrangements in 1939 that continued to propel the band into 1940. Although they did not know it at the time, the collaboration of Miller and Gray became "a marriage made in heaven." The historic alliance eventually produced a significant output of America's popular music during the 1940s. Gray was a fast, accurate, neat and prolific arranger. His personality and style greatly complimented Miller as well as Finegan and, later, Billy May. To the everlasting frustration of Artie Shaw, Gray's tenure with Miller was not temporary. He remained as Miller's close if not closest musical confidante until Glenn's untimely passing and beyond. Therefore, Artie ironically helped to solidify Glenn's success and ultimate legend. He gave Glenn the opportunity to enlist Jerry Gray, who became an essential component of the Miller juggernaut.



*Glenn Miller and his Orchestra with Marion Hutton singing
Café Rouge, Hotel Pennsylvania, New York, January-April 1940*

Tuxedo Junction

Artie Shaw left the Hotel Pennsylvania in a jam, but that situation changed on January 2, 1940, when Glenn Miller debuted as the second band to grace the bandstand of the Café Rouge. Almost immediately, the Miller organization made their name synonymous with the handsome room. Several nights every week, the NBC Red and Blue radio networks broadcast the Miller band from the Café Rouge in clear fidelity to listeners across North America. Between their work for Chesterfield, at the Café Rouge and in the RCA recording studios, the band had a full schedule. That only became more challenging when they opened at the prestigious Paramount Theater in New York for well-publicized and anxiously awaited stage shows, with their radio partners the Andrews Sisters. As readers will recall, Glenn and the band appeared with the Ink Spots in September and October 1939, a risky multi-racial engagement that was a phenomenal success. Now Glenn and the band were poised to cash on their achievements and newfound success. However, Glenn fell ill and was hospitalized. Tommy Dorsey and other bandleaders graciously substituted for Miller until he was able to return and lead the band.

Meanwhile, before Glenn fell ill, the band recorded their version of the historic Erskine Hawkins opus "Tuxedo Junction." Jerry Gray made an immediate impact with his treatment of the jazz classic. The week before recording "Tuxedo Junction," the band had also recorded a beautiful arrangement of Hoagy Carmichael's "Star Dust" by Bill Finegan. Not to be outdone, Jerry Gray added a new composition to the Miller library, named after their de-facto home, "Pennsylvania 6-5000," dedicated to the telephone number of their favorite hotel. As the Paramount Theater and Café Rouge engagements came to a rousing crescendo, Glenn and the band were prepared to tour the United States with their now popular sweet and swing sound and style.

Tobaccoland

The first stop for the Miller organization without the Andrews Sisters was along the Potomac. The band moved into the Wardman Park Hotel in northwest Washington, D. C., which was the home of the CBS-owned radio station WJSV (later WTOP). There, the band broadcast most of their Chesterfield programs for the next two months, as they toured the Mid-Atlantic and eastern states. Newell and Emmett representative Larry Bruff substituted for Paul Douglas as "Moonlight Serenade" announcer while the band was on the road. On May 15, the band broadcast their program from Durham, North Carolina and Duke University's new indoor gym, before a live audience of 10,000 people. Their sponsor was also headquartered in Durham, or as Glenn Miller's commercials labeled it, "tobaccoland." The popularity of the band with college students only increased during their spring appearances. This was only the beginning of a crescendo, as RCA Bluebird record sales were increasing and jukebox plays of Miller records were rising astronomically. Within weeks, the trade press reported that almost two of every three records in many jukeboxes were Glenn Miller's.



Jukebox King

At soda fountains, diners, restaurants, clubs, pubs, student unions, drugstores and arcades, Americans dropped nickels into jukeboxes to hear the latest popular records. During the summer of 1940, those records were inevitably Glenn Miller's. Little wonder that the 1941 and 1942 hit songs "Nickel Serenade" and "Juke Box Saturday Night" memorialized Miller's status as jukebox king. And in homes from coast-to-coast, Miller's primetime network program, late-night remote broadcasts and records entertained millions. The band traveled to the Midwest and a new home base of Chicago, where another CBS-owned station, WBBM, originated the Chesterfield broadcasts. Eager audiences from Ohio and Michigan to Missouri and Kansas had an opportunity to see, hear and dance to the band in person. In Glenn's native "cousin country," the band broadcast from Lincoln, Omaha and, on the Fourth of July, Des Moines, while also appearing in Cedar Rapids and Clear Lake.



*Glenn Miller and his Orchestra – Summer 1940
Panther Room, Hotel Sherman, Chicago, Illinois
(note: drum set and bandstands promote RCA records and Chesterfield)*



*Opening Night, Café Rouge, October 7, 1940
(L to R) Dick Todd, Glenn Miller, Yvette, Leonard Joy (RCA) and Dinah Shore*

Make Believe Ballroom

Riding a wave of popularity and glowing critical reviews, the band returned to New York and the Café Rouge for a return engagement. On October 7, the gala opening night and coast-to-coast NBC broadcast brought out a bevy of bandleaders including Les Brown, Sonny Burke, Eddie DeLange, Gray Gordon, Cecil Golly, Woody Herman, Johnny Long and Jan Savitt, as well as RCA recording artists Dinah Shore, Yvette and the “Bing Crosby of Canada,” Dick Todd. A preview of coming attractions happened on October 11 at the Victor Studios in New York. There, the popular vocal quartet the Four Modernaires made a record with the Miller band. The tune was “Make Believe Ballroom Time,” which was dedicated to and became the theme of Martin Block’s radio series. Block was the popular host of the program by the same name. He revolutionized the concept of the disc jockey, or a host playing records on the air with commentary, anecdotes and guests. Block’s local WNEW broadcasts were very popular. He also conducted influential semi-annual popularity polls ranking swing and sweet bands. Block’s polls received high visibility in the trade press and he was a big supporter of Glenn Miller. When Glenn won the winter 1940 poll, Block first appeared on the “Chesterfield Moonlight Serenade” to present Glenn with the award. And Block would appear again to do so several more times through September 1942.

ASCAP vs. BMI

The Four Modernaires were Ralph Brewster, Bill Conway, Hal Dickinson and Chuck Goldstein. They had been part of Paul Whiteman's band and Chesterfield radio series. Once again "Pops" Whiteman wielded some influence, and in January 1941 the quartet permanently joined Glenn Miller's organization. Their voices and enthusiasm added depth and warmth to the band. Likewise, Glenn added heft with additional musical chairs to his brass and reed sections. Never one to grow stale, Miller was continually upgrading his sound and presentation.

The radio networks and local radio stations became embroiled with the monopoly music licensing agency ASCAP (American Society of Composers, Authors and Publishers). The dispute was over how much broadcasters had to pay to present music on the air. The atmosphere grew so bitter that the radio industry started their own competitive licensing firm, BMI (Broadcast Music, Inc.). On October 10, every band broadcasting over the major networks - CBS, NBC or Mutual - were ordered to play at least two non-ASCAP tunes on each 15-minute broadcast. By January 1, 1941, all ASCAP-licensed music would be ordered off the air. Therefore, Glenn recorded and started to broadcast a substitute theme, "Slumber Song." The changing musical landscape would come to promote non-ASCAP Latin American music and artists led by Xavier Cugat. Glenn's friend and competitor Jimmy Dorsey would greatly capitalize on the development during 1941 with hits including "Amapola," "Green Eyes" and "Tangerine."



*Guitarist and vocalist Jack Lathrop with Marion Hutton and Tex Beneke
"Fresh as a Daisy," Café Rouge, November 1940*

Changes and Opportunities

But for the moment, Glenn was on top with more hit ballads including “Blueberry Hill,” “Along the Santa Fe Trail” and “A Nightingale Sang in Berkeley Square;” the latter being introduced first in England by the popular singer and future Dame Vera Lynn. As America enjoyed the summer of 1940 and headed into the fall listening to Glenn Miller, the British people, who had also discovered Glenn’s records, were under German attack. The Blitz and Battle of Britain foreshadowed the sacrifice and horror that Americans would soon come to share with their cousins. But for now, the challenge of working in BMI and other non-ASCAP music was Glenn Miller’s top priority. As well as that his effervescent and eye-catching singer Marion Hutton was now married and, by December, she would be expecting a baby. Change was in the wind for Glenn Miller.

During 1940, Glenn’s personnel were remarkably stable compared to other bands. As our beloved GMA and GMBS donor Paul Tanner remembered, it helped that they were among the highest-paid musicians in the country. However, changes were inevitable. Featured trumpet player Clyde Hurley found himself out of a job after complaining about Glenn on a train without realizing that Miller was seated behind him. Glenn got his younger brother Herb a job in associate Charlie Spivak’s trumpet section. But not before Herb, employed as Glenn’s road manager, forgot the satchel of money from an appearance in Cedar Rapids, only to realize after the overnight bus ride to Lincoln that the previous night’s earnings were missing (the satchel and funds were recovered).

But Glenn kept substantively improving and upgrading his band and music. The fast-paced tempos of hit 1939 ballads such as “Moon Love” gave way to the smoother (and slower) moods of “The One I Love.” In a development of profound significance, Charlie Barnet’s arranger and quirky ace trumpet chair Billy May joined the band. His presence was immediate and electric. On every Café Rouge broadcast, his growling trumpet inspired the band, particularly with the Jerry Gray original swing classic, “I Dreamt I Dwelt in Harlem.” But the need for non-ASCAP music spawned other Gray and Finegan works that are now beloved Miller classics, “Anvil Chorus” and “Song of the Volga Boatmen.” However, Glenn and Tommy Dorsey also resurrected a number of old tunes including Stephen Foster’s “Old Black Joe,” to less popular effect.

In addition to Billy May, another fresh musician had an immediate impact. A young string bassist from Indianapolis, Indiana named Herman “Trigger” Alpert left Alvino Rey to join Glenn. Like Jerry Gray and trombonist Jimmy Priddy, Trigger would later join Glenn’s legendary Army Air Forces Orchestra and become permanently associated with Miller. Glenn came to particularly love Trigger’s contagious warmth, enthusiasm and talent. Drummer Maurice Purtill fondly recalled how Trigger brought up the musicianship and performance of the entire band. His pace and style are evident in the rhythm section on the many well-preserved NBC sustaining and CBS commercial broadcasts in the GMA and Sony Legacy vault. Another of Glenn’s favorites who had instant impact was the jazz giant Ernie Caceres of Corpus Christi, Texas, with his upbeat clarinet and sax work and novelty vocals.

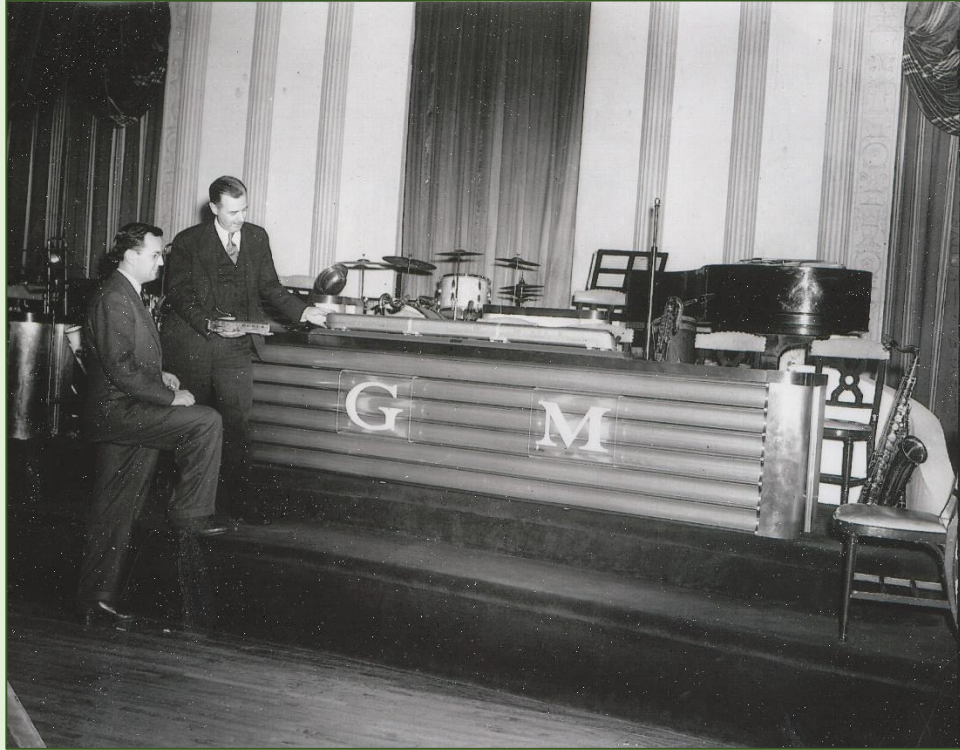


Latin American Specialty, Café Rouge. November 1940

*(L to R) Ray Eberle, Billy May, Al Klink, Willie Schwartz, Jack Lathrop, Ernie Caceres and Hal McIntyre.
Trigger Alpert is visible between Lathrop and Hutton*

The Best Was Yet to Come

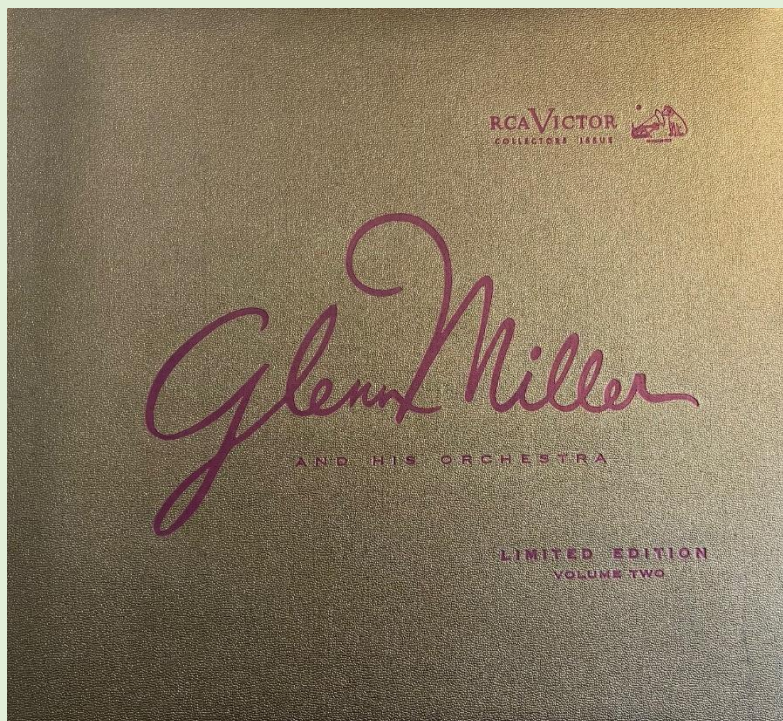
As the eventful year of 1940 drew to a close, Glenn Miller was once again comfortably established at the Café Rouge. The band had finished an RCA recording session, including Jerry Gray's tour-de-force version of Verdi's "Anvil Chorus" and Bill Finegan's interpretation of Alberto Dominguez' "Frenesi," which Artie Shaw popularized with his new band. As Barry Ulanov of *The Metronome* noted, "Glenn was deeply concerned to find richer harmonic resources for his jazz and dance band, separately and together." He was convinced that in jazz, "for the sake of rhythm, all harmony is forgotten." But Glenn never forgot about his dedication to style, balance and good taste. He told Ulanov, "stylization in music is inevitable. The style is the man. Would you say that Wagner wasn't stylized? Is Ravel criticized for being Ravel?" And so too with Glenn Miller. Described by jazz critics as stylized, Miller had the pulse of the public in his evolution as a musician and leader to present a balanced musical presentation, both swing and sweet. The popularity polls, attendance records, record sales and radio ratings verified Miller's judgment, and the best was yet to come. The 20th Century-Fox film corporation signed Glenn to appear in a movie, so it would be off to Hollywood in 1941 for Glenn and the band, with more milestone achievements ahead.



Glenn Miller receives his new and streamlined bandstands at the Café Rouge



Glenn Miller and Tex Beneke receive a Down Beat Poll Award from Editor Dave Dexter, Jr. (center)



ON THE RECORD

The Glenn Miller Archives preserves all of Glenn Miller's recordings and surviving radio broadcasts in cooperation with the Estate of Glenn Miller and Sony Legacy. A representative sampling of Glenn's tremendous 1940 output can be found with the following public releases:

12" 33 rpm record albums

Bluebird (USA)

AXM2-5534-1/2	The Complete Glenn Miller, vol. 3, 1939-1940
AXM2-5558-1/2	The Complete Glenn Miller, vol. 4, 1940
AXM2-5565-1/2	The Complete Glenn Miller, vol. 5, 1940
AXM2-5569-1/2	The Complete Glenn Miller, vol. 6, 1940-1941

RCA (England)

LFM1-7514	The Legendary Glenn Miller, Vol. 7
LFM1-7515	The Legendary Glenn Miller, Vol. 8
LFM1-7516	The Legendary Glenn Miller, Vol. 9
LSA-7537	The Legendary Glenn Miller, Vol. 10
LSA-7538	The Legendary Glenn Miller, Vol. 11

RCA (Japan)

RA-5651-70	The Legendary Glenn Miller (21 LP set)
RA 5801-20	The Legendary Glenn Miller On the Air (21 LP set)

RCA Victor (USA)

LPM-1189	The Sound of Glenn Miller
LPM-1190	This is Glenn Miller
LPM-1192/LSP-1192(e)	Glenn Miller Plays Selections from the Glenn Miller Story
LPM-1193	Glenn Miller Concert
LPM-1506	The Glenn Miller Carnegie Hall Concert
LPM-1973	The Marvelous Miller Medleys
LPM-2080	Great Dance Bands of the 30s and 40s
LPM-2767/LSP-2767(e)	Glenn Miller On the Air, vol. 1
LPM-2768/LSP-2768(e)	Glenn Miller On the Air, vol. 2
LPM-2769/LSP-2769(e)	Glenn Miller On the Air, vol. 3
LPM-3377/LSP-3377(e)	The Best of Glenn Miller
LPM-3564/LSP-3564(e)	The Best of Glenn Miller, vol. 2
LPM-3657/LSP-3657(e)	Blue Moonlight
LPM-3873/LSP-3873(e)	The Chesterfield Broadcasts, vol. 1
LPM-6101/LSP-6101(e)	Glenn Miller On the Air (3 LP set)
LPM-6100	For the Very First Time (3 LP set)
LPT-1016	Juke Box Saturday Night

LPT-1031	The Nearness of You
LPT-6700	Glenn Miller, Limited Edition and Second Pressing (5 LP set)
LPT-6701	Glenn Miller, Limited Edition, Volume 2 (5 LP set)
LSP-3981(e)	The Chesterfield Broadcasts, vol. 2
LSP-4125(e)	The Best of Glenn Miller, vol. 3
VPM-6019	Glenn Miller, A Memorial, 1944-1969

Compact Discs

Bluebird (USA)

0693-2-RB	A Legendary Performer
07863-55103-2	Glenn Miller, A Memorial
07863-61015-2	The Complete Glenn Miller and his Orchestra (13 CD set)
07863-66520-2	The Essential Glenn Miller (2 CD set)
07863-66529-2	The Spirit is Willing
09026-63900	Bluebird's Best – America's Bandleader
09026-64014-2	Platinum Glenn Miller (2 CD set)
9785-2-RB	The Popular Recordings (3 CD set)
82876-54306-2	Glenn Miller and the Andrews Sisters, The Chesterfield Broadcasts
82876-59104-2	Glenn Miller – The Centennial Collection (CD/DVD set)

Bluebird Legacy (USA)

82876-69241-2	The Essential Glenn Miller (2 CD set)
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RCA (Japan)

BVCJ-7313-24	The Legendary Glenn Miller On the Air (13 CD set)
R25J-1021-32	The Complete Glenn Miller (13 CD set)

RCA (USA)

09026-63113-2	The Andrews Sisters with the Glenn Miller Orchestra
	The Chesterfield Broadcasts, vol. 1
09026-63618-1	Falling in Love with Glenn Miller
09026-68716-2	Glenn Miller – Candlelight Miller
09026-68717-2	Glenn Miller - Miller Plays Mercer

Star-Spangled Radio Hour

In cooperation with Entercom Communications and KEZW, Denver, the GMA has presented the “Star Spangled Radio Hour: series of broadcasts since 2010. The weekly programs feature the original broadcasts of Glenn Miller and many other bands. The series continues forward in 2021 as a podcast with Denver radio legend Rick Crandall and Dennis M. Spragg. Stay tuned!

Acknowledgments

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Excerpts and information from the preparation and notes for:

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Potomac Books

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For further reading from Dennis M. Spragg and the GMA for the GMBS:

Glenn Miller, 1939, “The Year He Found the Sound”

Glenn Miller, 1941, “Keep ‘Em Flying”

Moonlight Serenade

A String of Pearls

The Army Air Forces Orchestra, 1943-2018

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Glenn Miller, Penn Station, New York