

The Billboard
MUSIC POPULARITY CHARTS

PART XII



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Honor Roll of Popular Songwriters

No. 9—JOE HOWARD

By Jack Burton

WHEN it comes to vim, vigor and vitality, Joe Howard is the undisputed champion of Tin Pan Alley.

"Joe is ageless!" Mrs. Howard declared in 1946 when her husband was 68 years old and celebrating his 60th year in showbusiness. Mrs. Howard should know. She's Joe's eighth wife.

Born in New York in 1878 on Mulberry Street, a district then terrorized by the Five Points Gang, Joe learned early in life how to take a beating and come back fighting. The beating was administered daily by his father, "Big John" Howard, who ruled both his saloon and his son with a sawed-off billiard cue. Joe took it until he was eight years old and then, following his mother's death, ran away from home and found a temporary refuge in a Catholic orphanage where he was both a choir and altar boy.

A month later, when "Big John" discovered his son's hideout, Joe beat him to the punch by hopping a west-bound freight that landed him in Kansas City, Mo. Here he sang in Snavely's Saloon and Billiard Parlor, sold newspapers and slept in a roomy packing case for a month.

Again Joe hit the road, making St. Louis his next port of call, and within a week he was being billed as "Master Joseph, the Boy Soprano," at a local variety theater. Then he joined up with a traveling repertoire company, playing Little Eva in *Uncle Tom's Cabin* until the troupe was stranded in St. Joseph, Mo.

Joe's westward trail subsequently led to Dodge City, Tombstone and Virginia City, where he sang in frontier dance halls, and finally to Denver, where the boy soprano, now 16, started the first lap of his matrimonial marathon. He eloped to a near-by Gretna Green with Ida Burt, who was doing a dancing act in the theater where Joe was playing. This first of eight marriages lasted only 24 hours. Then an irate mother-in-law had it annulled.

The following year Joe formed a song-and-dance team with Ida Emerson, 19-year-old soubrette. They played Leadville, Cripple Creek and other Colorado mining camps. They hit the big time in 1885, first at the Olympic Theater, Chicago, and later at Minor's Bowery Theater, Koster and Bials, Tony Pastor's and Niblo's Gardens, New York. That year the wedding bells rang for Joe a second time when he married Ida Emerson at the Little Church Around the Corner.

First Million Copy Song

At the age of 18 Joe Howard was definitely on the way up in show business and in 1899 he wrote his first million-copy song, *Hello, My Baby*. Six years later he started composing scores for a series of musical comedies that gave LaSalle Theater in Chicago the same rating that Weber & Fields Music Hall had enjoyed a decade before in New York—the home of sure-fire hits.

Between 1905 and 1911, the former boy soprano wrote the music for 18 productions that had their premiere in Chicago and then toured the country, several with No. 1 and No. 2 companies. His collaborators were Will Hough and Frank Adams, two students at the University of Chicago, who found writing the books and lyrics for comic operas a quicker and far more profitable way of working their way thru college than selling subscriptions for magazines.

Charles K. Harris, who published all the LaSalle Theater music, estimated that Joe Howard made \$2,000,000 in royalties during the 1900-1910 decade, and when asked where all the money went, he replied:

"Just change one word in the title of a Strauss waltz, and you've got the answer: "Wine, women and alimony."

For when Joe Howard became the toast of Chicago and points east, he suddenly acquired an insatiable thirst for champagne. Women flocked to the handsome minstrel who wrote and

Brief biographies of the great writers of popular music, complete with . . .

- . . . CHRONOLOGICAL LIST OF THEIR GREATEST SONGS
- . . . PUBLISHERS (Where no publisher listed, song is in Public Domain)
- . . . BACKGROUND DATA ON SELECTED SONGS
- . . . MAJOR LABEL RECORDINGS AVAILABLE ON SONGS

This anthology of American popular music, which covers mainly a 60-year period from 1890 to the present day, is based on 20 years of research by the author, a former newspaper, magazine and advertising copy writer who has made the study of popular music his hobby.

This anthology does not attempt to list the complete output of these writers. Instead the song listing is restricted to those titles that have gained either top ranking or appreciable popularity.

In the musical comedy and film musical fields, however, the complete scores will be listed in order to provide something new and vitally needed in an anthology of this kind: A comprehensive record of stage and motion picture songs.

Songs are listed according to the date of their original copyright, the stage musical songs according to the year such musicals were produced, and the film songs according to the year of their public release.

All songs that have attained a sheet music sale of a million or more copies, according to the most authentic and unbiased records available, are marked with an asterisk (*).

In the publisher listing, the name of the present publisher and not the original publisher is given, and songs now in the public domain (titles first copyrighted in 1892 or before) have no publisher credit.

In the listing of song recordings, no so-called collector's items are given, and while such a list is representative, it makes no pretensions of being complete.

sang such songs as *I Wonder Who's Kissing Her Now*. And Joe's matrimonial record, which ties Tommy Manville's at this writing, was not cheaply achieved as a glance at the following statistics will show:

In 1905, after divorcing Ida Emerson, Joe married Mabel Barrison, the ingenue of the LaSalle Theater Stock Company, whose wedding present was a \$35,000 home at Paw Paw Lake with a private spur line on the Pere Marquette that cost \$10,000 more. A year later, for an anniversary gift, he built the Barrison Theater at Waukegan, Ill., where, incidentally, Jack Benny made his debut as a violin virtuoso in the orchestra pit.

After Mabel Barrison's death, Joe married Mabel McCane. They were divorced within a year. Mrs. Joe Howard the fifth was Irma Kilgallen, daughter of a Chicago steel magnate and the divorced wife of the Count of Benfort. Joe's sixth marriage—to Ethelyn Clark in 1918—ended in a divorce in 1924, and four years later Joe was writing alimony checks for Anita Case, whom he married in 1927.

In the fateful years of 1929, Joe revived *The Time, the Place, and the Girl* in Chicago with "Bathhouse John" Coughlin, former overlord of the First Ward, as his angel. Joe lost \$70,000 personally on the production but gained his eighth wife, Mary Ramo, a 20-year-old dancer in the show. They had \$40 in cash be-

tween them when they boarded the bus for New York.

But an old trouper like Joe Howard can stretch \$40 a long way. He had the right connections that gave him a helping hand along the comeback trail. He also had his "pipes," an ingratiating personality and a repertoire of well-remembered songs. But he had to come back the hard way.

He worked six and eight shows daily in neighborhood theaters when vaudeville was slowly dying, and after the funeral of the two-a-day got a job as an entertainer at Bill's Gay Nineties, a New York spot that appeals to a clientele with nostalgic memories. And then on Christmas Eve, 1938, Joe discovered there really was a Santa Claus—a little guy with a big heart named Billy Rose, owner of the noted Diamond Horseshoe, where the composer of *Hello, My Baby*, and *I Wonder Who's Kissing Her Now* got headline billing once more as in the old Palace days.

It wasn't long before Joe Howard was back in the money, taking down \$20,000 annually as emcee of the *Gay Nineties* radio program and making as much again from stage appearances at motion picture houses during the war years. And last year this ageless minstrel made his television debut as a guest star on several video programs in addition to acting as emcee of the *Gay Nineties Revue*, a weekly American Broadcasting Company (ABC-TV) feature presentation.

★ ★ ★ JOE HOWARD'S GREATEST SONGS AND RECORDINGS AVAILABLE ★ ★ ★

Popular Songs

- 1897—ON THE BOULEVARD
Joe Howard Music Publishers.
- 1899—HELLO, MY BABY
T. B. Harms Company.—Robbins Music Corporation.
(Available in Decca's Gay Nineties Album A-696, Frank Luther, Century Quartet and Orchestra.)
- 1902—HONEY, WILL YOU MISS ME WHEN I'M GONE
Joe Howard Music Publishers.
ON A SATURDAY NIGHT
Words by Andrew J. Sterling. Edward B. Marks Music Corporation.
- 1904—GOOD-BYE, MY LADY LOVE
Mills Music, Inc.
(Available on Decca record 25152, Russ Morgan's Orchestra.)
- 1905—CENTRAL, GIVE ME BACK MY DIME
Edward B. Marks Music Corporation.
- 1906—I'M GONNA LEAVE YOU
Edward B. Marks Music Corporation.
- 1918—SOMEWHERE IN FRANCE IS THE LILY
Words by Philander C. Johnson. M. Witmark & Sons.

Stage Musicals

- 1905—THE ISLE OF BONG BONG
Book and lyrics by Will Hough and Frank Adams, with a cast that included Florence Holbrook, Cecil Lean, Annie Kayser, Dave Lewis and Al Shean.
OH, THE DEUCE! WHAT'S THE USE!
MY UNCLE SAMMY
DIPLOMACY
BROWNIES

- ASK THE MAN
I'M LONESOME FOR YOU
IF I WERE THE MAN IN THE MOON
MY ILLINOIS
HEAP LOVE
THE UMPIRE
Book and lyrics by Will Hough and Frank Adams, and co-starring Florence Holbrook and Cecil Lean.
LET'S TAKE A TROLLEY RIDE
I WANT A GIRL LIKE YOU
YOU LOOK AWFUL GOOD TO FATHER
HOW'D YOU LIKE TO BE THE UMPIRE?
CLORINDA JACKSON
THE BIG BANSHEE
DRUMS OF THE FORE AND AFT
THE SUN THAT SHINES ON DIXIELAND
CROSS YOUR HEART
THE QUARTERBACK
HIS HIGHNESS, THE BEY
Book and lyrics by Will Hough and Frank Adams with Al Shean in the starring role.
THE KITTY AND THE OWL
SWEETHEARTS OF BOYHOOD DAYS
HONOLULU
IN OLD KANKAKEE
THE LAND OF NOD
IN ORANGE BLOSSOM LAND
DRINK TO THE GLORIOUS NIGHT
LOUIE
JULIE DOOLEY

- 1906—THE DISTRICT LEADER
Book by Joe Howard, who starred in the production that included Mabel Barrison and Dave Lewis in the cast.
WON'T YOU BE MY GIRLIE?
YOU ARE THE SWEETEST GIRL I KNOW SO
MAKE YOUR OWN SUNSHINE
A HEART TO LET
WHAT'S THE USE OF DREAMING?

- (Available on Decca record 24110, Danny Kaye and the Darby Singers.)
- 1907—THE LAND OF NOD
Book and lyrics by Will Hough and Frank Adams, with a cast headed by Mabel Barrison, William Norris, Knox Wilson, Carrie DeMar and Joe Howard.
THE BELLE OF BALDHEAD ROW
WHEN YOU CROW TIRED
YOU'RE JUST A PAPER DOLL
DEAR HEART
SAME OLD MOON
THE GIRL YOU DREAM ABOUT
CINDERELLA
THE TIME, THE PLACE AND THE GIRL
Book and lyrics by Will Hough and Frank Adams, with a cast headed by Florence Holbrook, Cecil Lean, Olive Vail and Arthur Deagon.
I DON'T LIKE YOUR FAMILY
BLOW THE SMOKE AWAY
DIXIE, I LOVE YOU
IT'S LONESOME TONIGHT
THURSDAY IS MY JONAH DAY
THE WANING HONEYMOON
DON'T YOU TELL
THE GIRL QUESTION
Book and lyrics by Will Hough and Frank Adams, and co-starring Georgie Drew Mendum and Junie McCree.
THERE IS NO PLACE LIKE HOME
WHEN EYES LIKE YOURS LOOK INTO EYES LIKE MINE
IT'S GOOD-BYE, PAL
THE OLD BUCK AND WING
I HATE TO WORK ON MONDAY
OH, CEE! BE SWEET TO ME, KID
- 1908—THE FLOWER OF THE RANCH
Book and lyrics by Will Hough and Frank Adams, and co-starring Mabel Barrison and Joe Howard.

- THAT'S WHAT A FELLOW DOES
THE PAJAMA AND THE NIGHTIE
WATCHING THE BLUE SMOKE CURL
BABY LOU
CALIFORNIA
IN THE DAYS OF '49
MY LOLA MAID
JUST SAY YOU CARE
WORRIED
HONEYMOON TRAIL
Book and lyrics by Will Hough and Frank Adams, and starring Vera Michelena.
ONE LITTLE BOY HAD MONEY
NOTHING TO DO BUT NOTHING
I'D LIKE TO STEAL THE MOON
WHEN I FEEL LIKE LOVING
WHOSE LITTLE GIRL ARE YOU?
I DON'T WANT A MILLION DOLLARS
YOU CAN'T BE A FRIEND TO EVERYBODY
HONEYMOON TRAIL
- 1909—THE GODDESS OF LIBERTY
Book and lyrics by Will Hough and Frank Adams, with a cast headed by May DeSousa, Frances Damarest and Edward Abels.
TAXI
TUMMY-TUMMY-TUM
DON'T CHOOSE A GIBSON GIRL
PLEASE KEEP ME YOUNG IN YOUR HEART
OSKEE WOW WOW!
THE GODDESS OF LIBERTY
HERE'S TO YOUR LAST GIRL
WHERE ARE THEY NOW?
IF ALL THE MOONS WERE HONEYMOONS
LONELY
THE HAUNTED POOL
A STUBBORN CINDERELLA
Book and lyrics by Will Hough and