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“Chattanooga Choo Choo”



**On February 10, 1942 Glenn Miller
was awarded the world's first gold
record for "Chattanooga Choo Choo."**

**We hope you enjoy our
"Chattanooga Choo Choo" exhibit.**

GOLD RECORD AWARD



Glenn Miller is being presented with the world's first gold record for "Chattanooga Choo Choo." The award presentation took place during his Chesterfield Broadcast on 10 February 1942 at the CBS Playhouse in New York City.

**75TH ANNIVERSARY
OF FIRST GOLD RECORD**

THE COMPOSERS

The song was written by composers Mack Gordon (lyrics) and Harry Warren (music).

[illegible]

"Chattanooga Choo Choo" was originally recorded as a big-band/swing tune by Glenn Miller and his Orchestra and featured in the 1941 movie, Sun Valley Serenade.

Big Band Tune

THE COMPOSERS

Lyricist Mack Gordon was born in Warsaw, Poland on June 21, 1904. Through the 1930's and early 1940's, Gordon collaborated with several composers including Harry Warren. He wrote and collaborated on nearly 50 film scores.

Harry Warren was born in Brooklyn, New York on December 24, 1893. Warren taught himself to play several musical instruments, including the accordion and piano. Warren went to 20th Century Fox in the early 1940's and teamed with Mack Gordon. On his 80th birthday, he was elected into the Songwriters Hall of Fame.

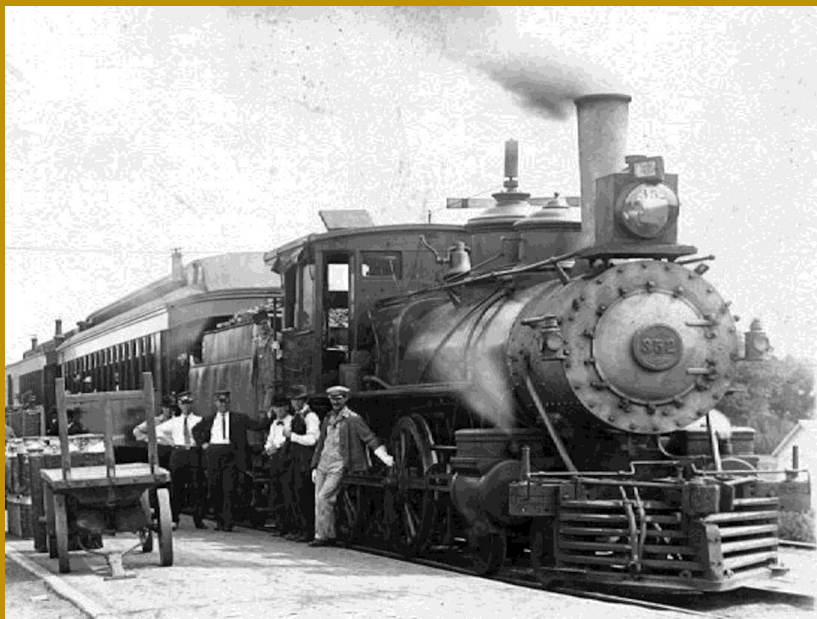
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INSPIRATION

The composers found inspiration for the song from a locomotive owned by the Cincinnati Southern Railway that traveled a route from Cincinnati to Chattanooga. A newspaper reporter wrote about the train and nicknamed it the "Chattanooga Choo Choo." Ironically, Gordon and Warren were traveling on a different train, The Birmingham Special, when their inspiration struck.



(Nodaway Valley Museum)

The original Chattanooga Choo Choo was a small wood-burning steam locomotive used by the Cincinnati Southern Railroad to run a route from Cincinnati, Ohio to Chattanooga, Tennessee. It began service on March 5, 1880 and was the first to provide non-stop service between the two cities.

LOCOMOTIVE

THE STORY IN THE SONG

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The song itself doesn't actually follow the original route of the train. Instead, it tells the fictional story of a man traveling on a coal-burning train from Pennsylvania Station in New York to Chattanooga, Tennessee (with a stop in Baltimore, Maryland) where he will meet up with his girl.

PART 1 OF SONG

THE STORY IN THE SONG

Composer and music historian, Murray Horwitz, states, “It’s really three stories within the one song.”



“I mean first of all, it’s a guy looking for the right train, and he has this dialogue with the shoeshine guy. And then there’s the story of the train trip itself from New York’s Pennsylvania Station to Chattanooga, Tennessee.”

THE STORY IN THE SONG

Horwitz continues, "And the third story is the love story, what happens when he gets off the train and asks the girl to marry him. So it's really engaging that way."



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SUN VALLEY SERENADE

The song, “Chattanooga Choo Choo” was written for the 1941 movie, *Sun Valley Serenade*, starring Sonja Henie, Milton Berle, John Payne, and Joan Davis.



(Tex Beneke)



Filming began in May of that year and the song, performed by the Glenn Miller Orchestra, featured vocals by Tex Beneke and the Modernaires.

THE MOVIE

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SUN VALLEY SERENADE

The film made its world premier on 21 August 1941 in Salt Lake City, Utah. Interestingly, the song is performed twice in the movie; first by the Glenn Miller Orchestra and then immediately followed by Dorothy Dandridge accompanied by the Nicholas Brothers (Harold and Fayard) and their high-tempo, acrobatic dancing.



Scan this QR Code with your smart phone or tablet to watch the song performed in the movie.



THE DANCERS

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The Single

“Chattanooga Choo Choo” was first performed in the movie, *Sun Valley Serenade*.

The band recorded the song at (Victor Studios) in Hollywood on 7 May 1941, shortly after the film was completed.



The song hit #1 in the USA in December of the same year and remained top of the charts for nine weeks, and sold 1.2 million copies.

SUN VALLEY SERENADE

IMPACT DURING WWII

The song's story, about a man traveling home to meet his love, resonated with many Americans during World War II, especially as loved ones were being separated due to military service.



In addition, the song's upbeat rhythm, which mimics the sounds of a train and Jerry Gray's stellar arrangement, made the song irresistible in many ways.

MILITARY SERVICE

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OPERATION “CHATTANOOGA CHOO CHOO”



Chattanooga Choo Choo was the name of a military operation during WWII. On 22 May 1944, Operation Chattanooga Choo Choo was launched. During the operation, U.S. and British aircraft conducted a bombing raid on railroads in Germany and other parts of northern Europe, forcing Germany to scramble to repair the widespread damage.

BOMBING RAID

THE FIRST GOLD RECORD



"Chattanooga Choo Choo" was not the first song to sell one million copies, but it was the first to achieve this status since Gene Austin's

"My Blue Heaven" in 1927. RCA commemorated this achievement by awarding Glenn a gold record on 10 February 1942 broadcast of the band's Chesterfield Radio Show.

Other record companies followed suit, but it did not become an industry standard until 1958 when the Recording Industry Association of America (RIAA) began issuing gold records based on certified sales figures.

ONE MILLION COPIES

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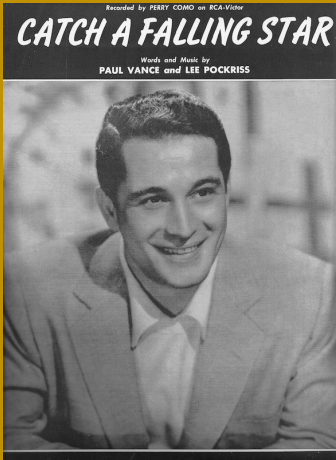
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EVOLUTION OF THE GOLD RECORD

The RIAA awarded their first Gold Record on 14 March 1958 to Perry Como for his single, “Catch A Falling Star.”



This was followed four months later by the first Gold Album Award to the cast of “Oklahoma!,” sung by Gordon MacRae.

While these awards were “originally conceived to honor artists and track sound recording sales,” writes the RIAA, “Gold & Platinum Awards have come to stand as a benchmark of success for any artist.”

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EVOLUTION OF THE GOLD RECORD

The latest evolution, the Digital Single Award, was created from the rise of digital music sales starting in the early 2000's.

Current RIAA Gold and Platinum Awards

Award	Minimum Units	Date Established
Gold	500,000	1958
Platinum	1,000,000	1976
Multi-Platinum	2,000,000	1984
Diamond	10,000,000	1999

Scan this QR Code with your smart phone or tablet to see all of the artists who have received awards.



GOLD & PLATINUM

LEGACY

Terminal Station in Chattanooga was closed in 1970. The popularity of the song, however, helped save the complex from ruin. It was later repurposed as the "Chattanooga Choo Choo vacation and entertainment complex." It also encompasses the "Glenn Miller Gardens," which is a monument to Miller and this song.



TODAY

LEGACY



Glenn Miller's version of this song was inducted into the Grammy Hall of Fame in 1996.

A search of the International Movie Database (IMDB) shows that "Chattanooga Choo Choo" was used in no less than 118 different TV show episodes and/or movies.

Two German songs about trains were adapted from this song, and both share the same opening line of "Pardon me."

TV's *I Dream of Jeannie* star, Barbara Eden, starred in a 1984 movie with the same name of this song.

POPULAR SONG

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*Pardon me, boy
Is that the Chattanooga choo choo?
Track twenty-nine
Boy, you can gimme a shine
I can afford
To board a Chattanooga choo choo
I've got my fare
And just a trifle to spare*

*You leave the Pennsylvania Station
'bout a quarter to four
Read a magazine and then you're in Baltimore
Dinner in the diner
Nothing could be finer
Than to have your ham an' eggs in Carolina*

*When you hear the whistle blowin' eight to the bar
Then you know that Tennessee is not very far
Shovel all the coal in
Gotta keep it rollin'
Woo, woo, Chattanooga there you are*

*There's gonna be
A certain party at the station
Satin and lace
I used to call "funny face"
She's gonna cry
Until I tell her that I'll never roam
So Chattanooga choo choo
Won't you choo-choo me home?*