

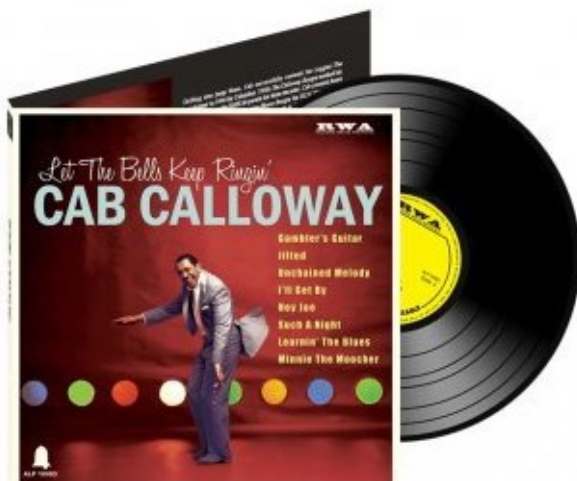
DECEMBER 2017



BIG BAND NEWS

by Music Librarian **CHRISTOPHER POPA**

LET THE BELLS KEEP RINGIN'



It sounds like a saying meant just for the holidays, but it's actually the title of a new 10-inch LP (!) of Cab Calloway's music! RWA (that is, Richard Weize Archives) catalog no. ALP 10503 collects the eight songs (*Gambler's Guitar*, *Jilted*, *Unchained Melody*, *I'll Get By*, *Hey Joe*, *Such a Night*, *Learnin' the Blues*, and *Minnie the Moocher*) which Calloway recorded for Arthur Shimkin's Bell Records in 1954-55. The songs only total 21:08 and are only available on LP (not CD).

For what it's worth, Cab kept two of the songs in his band's music library until his death: of course, *Minnie the Moocher* was one, and *Learnin' the Blues* was the other.



The RWA label has also issued nine volumes of various artists from Bell Records, covering 1952 through 1960. The performers include bandleaders Tommy and Jimmy Dorsey, Enoch Light, Larry Clinton, and Sy Oliver, along with one-time band vocalists Helen Forrest, Artie Malvin, and Sally Sweetland. Unlike the Calloway material, these were released only on CD, numbers ACD 12512 through 12520.

NOW WE'RE IN THE MILLER MOOD



This was the original album, “Christmas Serenade: In The Glenn Miller Style: featuring the Original Glenn Miller Singers” (Columbia CL 2392 / CS 9292, 1965). Recorded in Hollywood in March 1965 with such sidemen and Miller alumni as clarinetist Willie Schwartz, it has a good, modern sound.



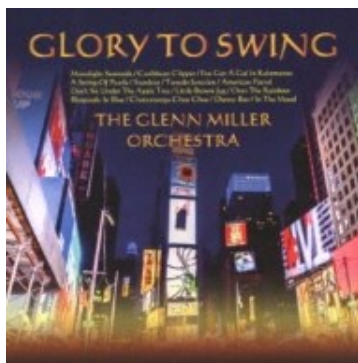
The album was well-received by the public, and received special promotion from radio station disc jockeys in the form of a green vinyl 45, *And the Bells Rang / Merry Christmas, Baby* (Columbia JZSP 111917~8).



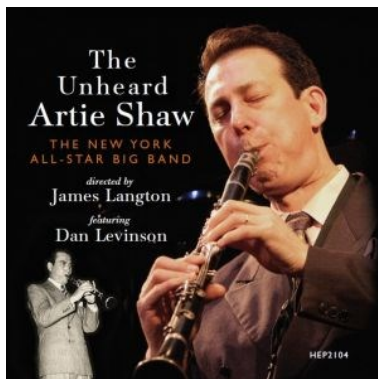
The album did come out on CD from Sony Special Products (as shown on the left), but for this holiday season, Clinck Records of Japan—nice to know that they like Tex there, too—has released it as a “mini-LP”-sized CD (as shown on the right) and restored the cover artwork closer to what it originally was. Merry Christmas, baby!



A 1937 short with bandleader Phil Harris, “Harris in the Spring,” filmed for RKO Radio Pictures, provides the title and opening for a new DVD from Alpha Video (ALP 7980D). According to the blurb on the back of the DVD, “Phil Harris has a hot date with Joan Barclay, but his band is scheduled to play the same night!” He sings *That’s What I Like About the South* in the two-reeler, but, unfortunately, the other five shorts on the disc have nothing to do with Harris... or any other bands.



Another Glenn Miller Orchestra compilation, for their annual Japan tour. This one, “Glory To Swing,” Victor VICP-65467, samples 22 selections by the Miller Orchestras led by DeFranco, O’Brien, and Hilscher—but nothing new.



An interesting project taped in August 2016, “The Unheard Artie Shaw,” Hep CD 2104, presents mostly unrecorded original arrangements done for Shaw’s 1938-39 band and now held by the University of Arizona. The 18 tunes include *Royal Garden Blues*, *And the Angels Sing*, *Stairway to the Stars*, and *Never Played Around Much*, along with others familiar to Shaw fans from his radio broadcasts, such as *Everything’s Jumpin’*, *Them There Eyes*, and *Diga Diga Doo*. The New York All-Star Big Band, directed by James Langton and featuring Dan Levinson in Shaw’s role as clarinet soloist, plays well; overall, it came out decently, though I don’t care for the vocalist imitating Billie Holiday. And I can’t help but wonder what Artie himself would have made of it, and think that this perhaps should have, instead, been done by today’s official Shaw Orchestra led by Matt Koza to generate some attention for them.

THESE ARE A FEW OF MY FAVORITE THINGS

Jingle Bells-Glenn Miller (Bluebird)

When Winter Comes-Artie Shaw (Bluebird)

Santa Claus Came in the Spring-Benny Goodman (Victor)

Fruit Cocktail (aka Dance of the Sugar Plum Fairies)-Tommy Dorsey (Decca)

I've Got My Love to Keep Me Warm-Les Brown (Columbia)

Happy Holidays-Johnny Mathis with The Count Basie Orchestra directed by Scotty Barnhart (Concord Jazz)

Let It Snow! Let It Snow! Let It Snow!-Vaughn Monroe (RCA Victor)

Greensleeves (aka What Child Is This)-Les and Larry Elgart (Columbia)

Parade of the Wooden Soldiers-Freddy Martin (RCA Victor)

Cool Yule-Louis Armstrong (Decca)

Dixieland Band From Santa Claus Land-Jimmy Dorsey (Columbia)

Winter Wonderland-Ralph Flanagan (RCA Victor)

Snowfall-Claude Thornhill (RCA Victor)

Winter Weather-Jo Stafford with Paul Weston and His Orchestra

Sleigh Ride-Tex Beneke (Columbia)

(Don't Wait 'Til) The Night Before Christmas-Sammy Kaye (Victor)

SNEAK PEEK

In 2018 you'll be reading "Big Band News" about:

Louis Armstrong

Xavier Cugat

Glenn Miller

Tommy Dorsey

Lawrence Welk

Sy Oliver

Stan Kenton

Will Bradley

Claude Thornhill

