

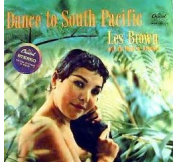
## Les Brown Band of Renown – Dance to South Pacific (1958)

Written by bluesever

Thursday, 01 April 2010 17:09 - Last Updated Thursday, 15 January 2015 22:54

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## Les Brown Band of Renown – Dance to South Pacific (1958)



Side 1:

- 01) *Honey Bun*
- 02) *Happy Talk*
- 03) *Some Enchanted Evening*
- 04) *The Lonliness Of Evening*
- 05) *A Wonderful Guy*
- 06) *Bloody Mary*

Side 2:

- 01) *Bali Hai*
- 02) *Dites-Moi*
- 03) *Younger Than Springtime*
- 04) *This Nearly Was Mine*
- 05) *There Is Nothin' Like A Dame*
- 06) *I'm Gonna Wash That Man Right Outa My Hair*

Arranged By: Les Brown, Sonny Burke, Don Bugley, J.Hill, Frank Comstock, Billy May, Wes Hensel.

Les was born on March 14, 1912 and was raised in Tower City, PA, the son of R.W. Brown, a baker and musician. (Quoting Les' own words) "My father's love was music, but he was a baker so we could eat." R.W. played soprano sax in a sax quartet that performed the popular music of the day, the marches of John Phillip Sousa. Since Sousa was known as 'The March King', R.W. earned the sobriquet, 'March Prince'. As the son of the March Prince, Les Brown was playing music almost as soon as he could walk. By the age of nine, Les joined his first pro band playing using R.W.'s soprano sax, but was hindered by his lack of proper attire: "The only problem was that I didn't have any long pants at the time. A guy lived next door to us who was 16 and very short. I borrowed his pants so I didn't have to play in shorts."

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By 14, Les Brown was already a seasoned professional, and he started what would be the first of many bands; 'The Royal Serentadore'. Although the sax remained his main interest, Les also studied and mastered the classical clarinet while at Ithaca Conservatory of Music. (Years later, Les said he ended his solo clarinet playing career after listening to Benny Goodman, Artie Shaw, Jimmy Dorsey, and Woody Herman, and decided that he "wasn't in their class as a soloist and never would be.") After Ithaca Conservatory, he enrolled at Duke University and performed with the 'Blue Devils' for four years, taking over as leader in his junior year. The final performance of Les, and the Blue Devils, was in 1936 at Budd Lake, NJ, the hometown of Georgia Claire De Wolfe. Two years later, in September of 1938, Claire and Les became husband and wife.

Les took jobs arranging for the bands of Isham Jones, Larry Clinton and others, but he was keen to lead his own band again, and with the help of two 'angels', a new Les Brown band was born. His first big hit was a novelty tune written by Ben Homer and "deejay" Alan Courtney. It was "Joltin' Joe DiMaggio" based on Joe DiMaggio's amazing 56-game hitting streak that had the entire U.S.A. talking that summer of 1941. Les wasn't able to record the song for two years, however, due to a musician's union recording ban imposed in 1942.

As soon as the recording ban was lifted, Les and the band great vocals by Henry "Butch" Stone (sax and vocals), and Doris Day, whose recording of "Sentimental Journey" became the perfect theme song for all the young men returning home from the war. It remained the number one song in the country for sixteen weeks, stayed on the Hit Parade for months, and has since become an undeniable standard in the lexicon of what composer Alec Wilder called 'American Popular Song'.

By this time, the band was known as "Les Brown and the Band of Renown", a name born on the spot when the band was about to perform live one night on the radio from the Palladium. Since the 60s, Les and his band have never stopped performing. They have continued making records and still perform about 60 dates a year making them the oldest existing band in America. In April of 1996, the Guinness Book of World Records awarded Les with the distinction of being the leader of the longest lasting musical organization in the history of popular music. Les' band is also very well remembered for the amount of traveling and radio shows they did with famed comedian Bob Hope. ---bigbands.org

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