

Bing Crosby - Only The Number 1's (2004)

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1. *Swinging On A Star* 2. *Moonlight Becomes You* 3. *Don't Fence Me In* 4. *Pennies From Heaven* 5. *I Can't Begin To Tell You* 6. *Alexander's Ragtime Band* 7. *Brother, Can You Spare A Dime?* 8. *Only Forever* 9. *I Love You* 10. *Sweet Leilani* 11. *The Moon Got In My Eyes* 12. *Please* 13. *Love In Bloom* 14. *Sunday, Monday Or Always* 15. *Bob White (Watcha Gonna Swing Tonight?)* 16. *You Must Have Been A Beautiful Baby* 17. *Play A Simple Melody* 18. *Now Is The Hour (Maori Farewell Song)*

Although it's an interesting idea for a compilation, Only the Number 1's doesn't earn many points for execution. Yes, all 18 of the songs included were stunningly popular for Bing Crosby during the '30s or '40s, and it makes for a pretty solid best-of compilation (the sound on this K-Tel disc is a far muddier matter). But the fact remains that charts were a very different thing before 1955 than after then, and number one hits were very difficult to quantify. Even more important, there were a raft of songs that were more popular for Crosby during the same time -- a partial list would have to include "White Christmas," "June in January," "Red Sails in the Sunset," "Too Marvelous for Words," "Out of Nowhere," and "San Fernando Valley." All in all, not a great way to discover the sublime power of one of the 20th century's greatest voices. --- John Bush, Rovi

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