

TIMELINE (#19A)

TRIBUTE TO GLENN MILLER ALUMNI & FRIENDS

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

1. On March 13, 2011 I attended the **Tribute to Glenn Miller Alumni and Friends** professional stage show at the Theatre or the Performing Arts in Escondido, California
2. Shortly after this performance, I recorded my experiences for my own files and sent copies to some musically-inclined relatives and friends.
3. This timeline also includes brief reviews and histories of the performers, references four You Tube videos and includes a photograph of the featured performer.

PERFORMERS

GLENN MILLER ORCHESTRA

Glenn Miller was killed in 1944 during World War II while flying across the English Channel. It is generally accepted that, in the heavy fog, an airplane flying directly over his plane dumped its bomb load on him. Tex Beneke, who played tenor saxophone and sang for Miller, took over the orchestra in 1946. (At that time, Henry Mancini was the pianist.) He led the orchestra for many years but died in 2000 in Costa Mesa, California.

Obviously, none of the current 15-piece orchestra ever played with Glenn Miller. Unlike a similar show I saw several years ago, there was no one in the audience who had performed with him. Although the present show featured the "All New Tex Beneke Orchestra," it is unlikely that any of the members played with Tex Beneke, either. Their leader said that he had visited Mr. Beneke at his home several times. Over the years, such replacement orchestras have attempted to maintain the classic "Glenn Miller sound," and the current group did a good job.

THE MODERNAIRES

The original "Modernaires," sang with "American's Number One Dance Band," Glenn Miller and his Orchestra starting in 1941. This quintet featured a female lead singer named Paula Kelly. They were famous for singing many popular songs such as "Prefidia," "Kalamazoo," and "Chattanooga Choo Choo." The current group of "Modernaires," a quartet, is comprised of Paula Kelly Jr. (a daughter), one of her sisters and 2 men. They sang all these songs plus many more and sounded wonderful.

THE FOUR ACES

The "Four Aces" male singing quartet was just excellent. They sang many of the songs made famous by the original "Four Aces" and did them very well. As their finale, they sang "Love is a Many Splendored Thing." They announced that it was their favorite song and the one most often requested (by a large margin). To understand why, just listen to such lyrics as *"Love is nature's way of giving, a reason to be living, the golden crown that makes a man a king."*

The "Four Aces" were extremely popular throughout the 1950s when they sang many famous songs. These included 2 Academy Award winners: "Three Coins in a Fountain" (1954) and "Love is a Many Splendored Thing" (1955), as well as "Stranger in Paradise" from the musical "Kismet." None of the quartet that sang on 3/13/11 was part of the original "Four Aces." Over the years all 4 original members were replaced at least once. Some of the current members have been with the group for many years. For example (in "Love is a Many Splendored Thing" below), the current lead singer (second from right, stock of white hair), announced that he recently celebrated his 58th wedding anniversary. Their objective throughout the years has been to maintain the "sound" of the original "Four Aces." Their appearance and "sounds" can be compared by clicking on the following two YouTube videos:

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0HveyC6_6fM&feature=related "Stranger in Paradise"

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=teuQEoEWPpA&feature=related> "Love is a Many Splendored Thing"

MARY LOU METZGER

Mary Lou Metzger, one of the younger performers, served as a part-time master of ceremonies. She also sang a few songs and did some soft-shoe dancing. She used to sing and dance for many years with the Lawrence Welk Orchestra. (I'm not familiar with her work there). She did a good job, looked outstanding, was super-perky, and changed her costumes about 6 times in each performance.

ANNA MARIA ALBERGHETTI

Although all the performers were talented, the highlight of the show was the operatic singer and actress Anna Maria Alberghetti. She was born in Pesaro, Italy, on May 15, 1936; so she is 3 months younger than I am.

Here are some of the things she told us about herself:

1. Her father was a professional cellist and opera singer.
Her mother was a piano accompanist.
2. She was a child prodigy, and at age 6, she sang in concert on the Isle of Rhodes with a 100 piece orchestra.



Anna Marie Alberghetti
(Age 74), 2010

3. She made her New York concert debut at Carnegie Hall in at age 13, in 1950.
4. Ms. Alberghetti appeared on the Ed Sullivan TV show a record 53 times.
5. She made her first movie in 1951. She has only been in a limited number of movies. She joked that she was "in 10,000 Bedrooms" with Dean Martin - but only in the movies.
6. In 1961, she won a Tony Award as Best Actress for the Broadway musical "Carnival." She has starred in many musicals since then.
7. She has twice appeared on the cover of "Life" magazine.

With her angelic voice, she sang a medley from "The Sound of Music," an Italian medley, and "Memory" from "Cats." How wonderful!! She brought her own piano accompanist. She congratulated the band which had received her music only 3 hours before today's show.

In the lobby after the show I bought one of her CDs and she autographed it. She only said "thank you" and shook my hand while holding her signing pen in hers. She is diminutive and seems to be something of a diva (in both the positive and negative sense). She is nowhere near as personable as Shirley Jones. All the songs she sang today are included on this CD which I listened to on the way home.

Anna Maria sings (when young and old) on the following YouTube clips:

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=G8_WYgtWwis (Young)

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yPKX7UTCvIU&feature=related> (Old)