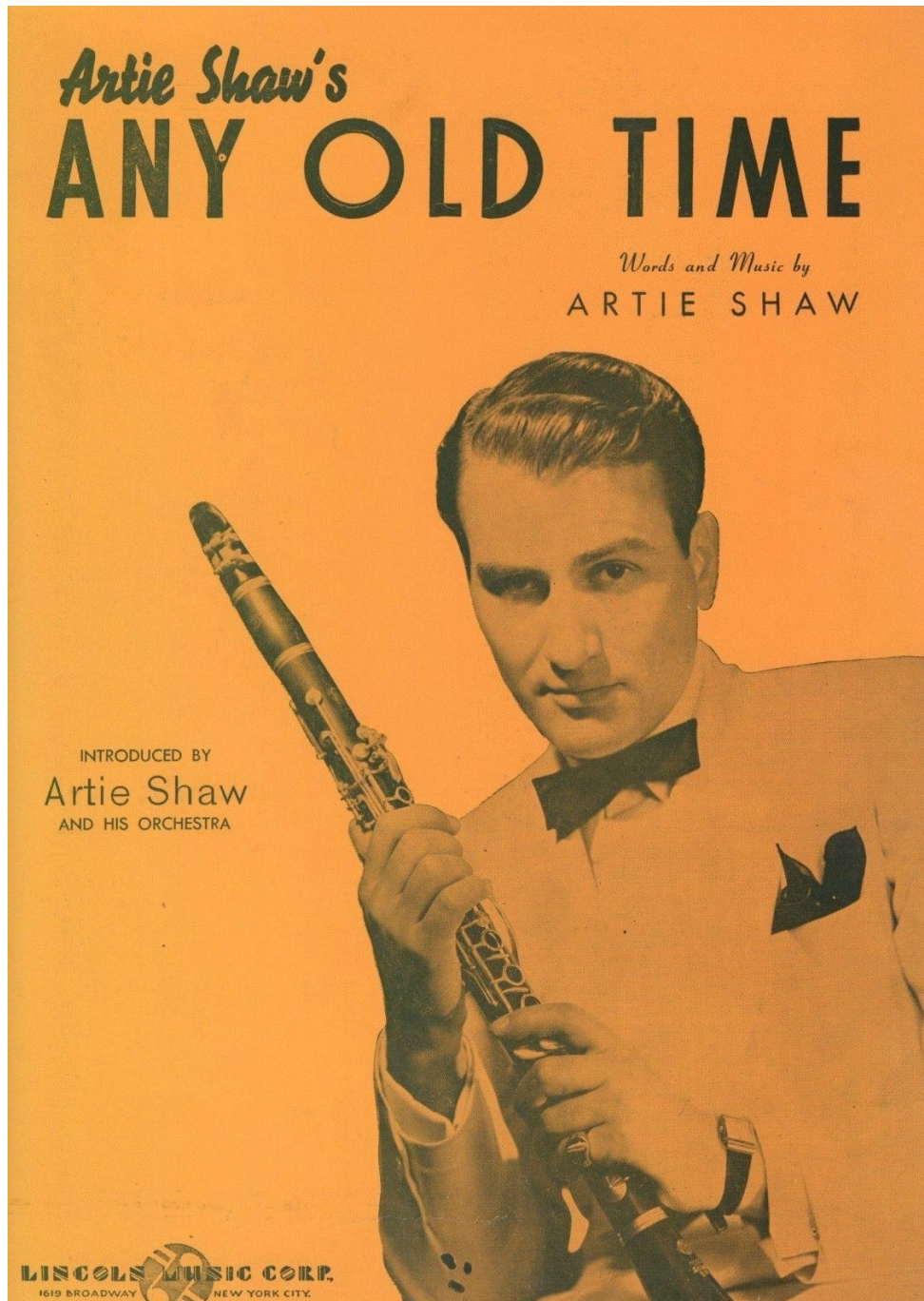


Artie Shaw's all-time biggest hit, *Begin the Beguine*, was the very first side that he and his Orchestra cut for Bluebird Records, on July 24, 1938. It was the "B" side of a swing version of Rudolf Friml's operatic song, *Indian Love Call*, which had been predicted as the hit. *Indian Love Call* was well-received, but *Beguine* sold the whole record and has been selling ever since.



Shaw said that he wrote *Any Old Time* "to welcome Billie Holiday into the band"; it's not as simple as that.

At the end of 1937, Shaw was without a commercial recording contract while he decided how to change the sound of his band going forward. They did, however, make some transcriptions for Thesaurus for radio play, including the first recording of *Any Old Time*, with Anita "Nita" Bradley who was drummer Cliff Leeman's wife, as vocalist on February 15, 1938.

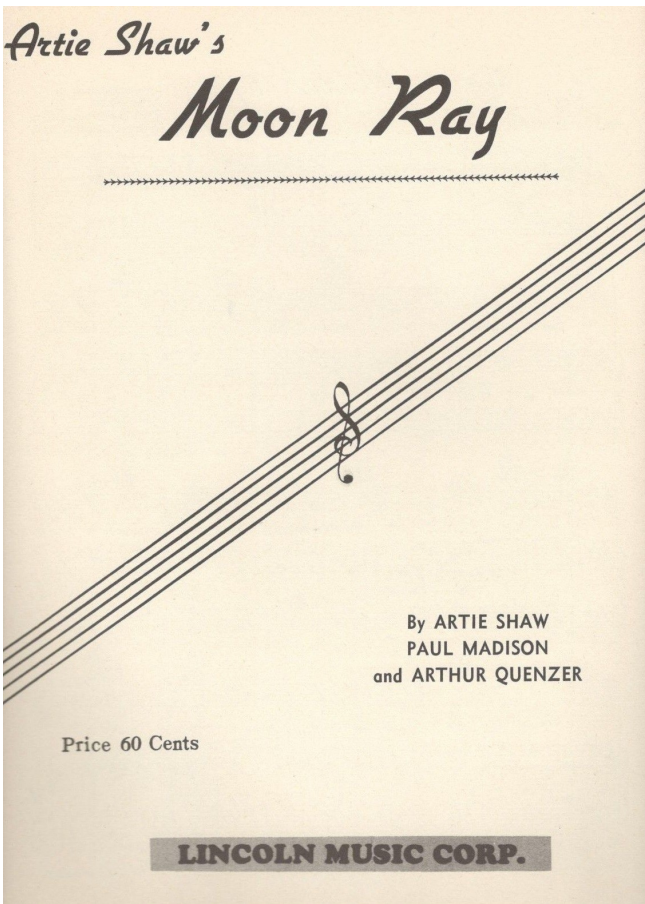
Holiday didn't join Shaw and his Orchestra until about a month later at the Roseland State Ballroom in Boston, Massachusetts. Their commercial record of *Any Old Time* was done for Bluebird on July 24, 1938, and turned out to be Holiday's one and only recording with the band.



Artie Shaw and three of the female vocalists who worked with his band in 1938, Nita Bradley, Billie Holiday, and Helen Forrest.



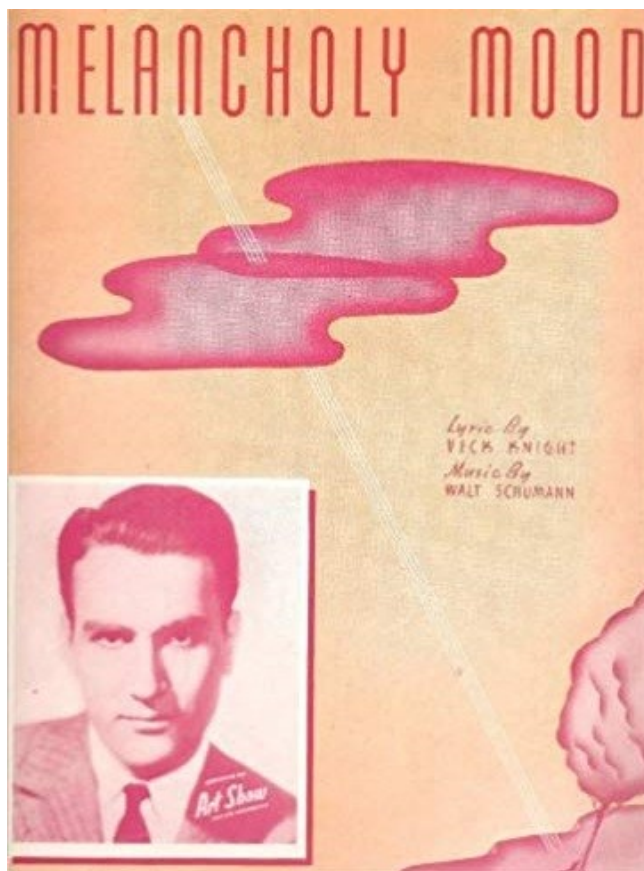
Artie Shaw and his Orchestra, with vocalist Helen Forrest (1917-1999), recorded *They Say* on December 19, 1938. It also became a #1 record for Shaw, but note how the sheet music still called him “Art.”



Shaw liked to claim that *Any Old Time* was the only instance where he wrote the music, the words, and the arrangement for a song. But that wasn't true, and *Moonray* is a fine example of his skill with all three components - not to mention the lovely tone of his clarinet.



Artie Shaw, "The King of the Clarinet"  
with drummer Buddy Rich (1917-1987) and pianist Bob Kitsis (1917-2004).  
Guitarist Al Avola (1914-2000) is obscured, behind Shaw, in the photo.



Despite the song's gloomy lyrics, *Melancholy Mood* was one of a whole batch of excellent selections which Artie Shaw and his Orchestra recorded in June 1939, at the peak of their talent and fame as the top band in the United States. His *Melancholy Mood* made it into the top 10 that fall.



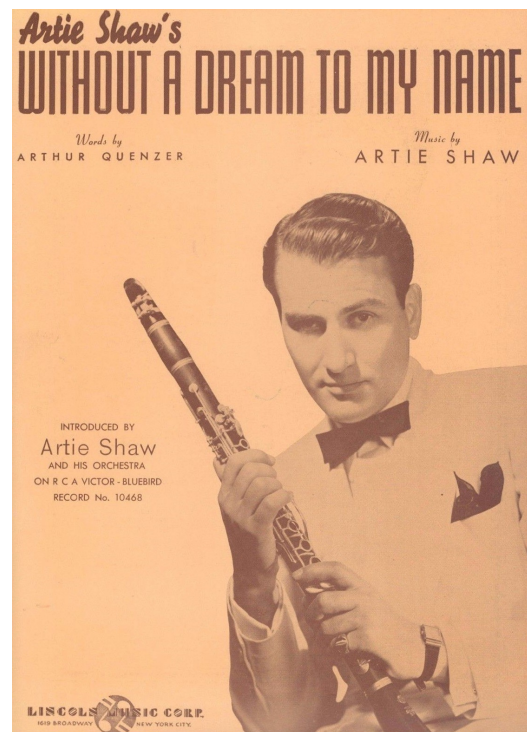
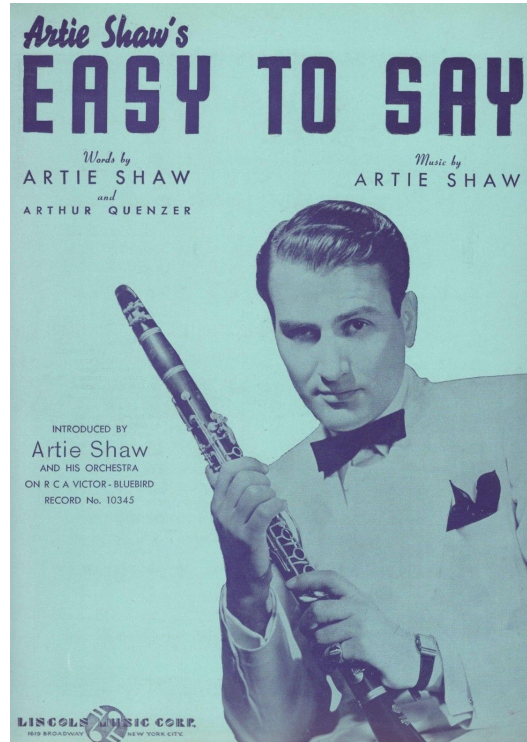
With the extreme popular success of Artie Shaw and his band, Hollywood came knocking in 1939 with "Dancing Co-Ed," a lightweight MGM vehicle co-starring 18-year-old blonde Lana Turner (1921-1995), who later married Shaw, five days after her 19th birthday.





Tunes played in the film included *Ev'rything Is Jumpin'*, *One Foot in the Groove*, and *Non-Stop Flight*, each composed by Shaw.

He personally thought little of the movie (or the film industry in general), and later quipped, "Talk about abortions--boy, that was long before they were legal."



Two more of Artie Shaw's 1939 Bluebird records, *Easy to Say* and *Without a Dream to My Name*, were both published as piano / vocal sheet music. Both were written by Shaw and Arthur Quenzer (1905-1986), a reedman and lyricist who first met Shaw when they were in Irving Aaronson's band in 1930.





Artie Shaw's personal choices as his best records or ones that achieved what he wanted were sometimes illuminating; one of his own picks was *Chantez Les Bas (Sing 'em Low)*, recorded for Victor Records on September 7, 1940, with a nine-piece string section in Shaw's band.

He and African-American composer William Grant Still (1895-1978) arranged the tune

"He's the guy who worked with me on the arrangement of 'Frenesi,' but I like this much better, even though 'Frenesi' was the record that took off," Shaw said in 1992.



Artie Shaw used a studio band to record *And So to Bed*, with lyrics by Johnny Mercer (1909-1976), for Musicraft Records on October 17, 1946. Vocalists on the session were Mel Tormé (1925-1999) and his Mel-Tones, and in the band were former Shaw trumpeters Ray Linn (1920-1996) and Zeke Zarchy (1915-2009), pianist Dodo Marmarosa (1925-2002), and drummer Nick Fatool (1915-2000).



Also recorded on the same date was *Don't You Believe It, Dear*, a Shaw composition with songwriter Johnny Lehmann (1920-2000).

The sheet music image shown above is from the United Kingdom and correctly spells his last name, as per Broadcast Music, Inc. (BMI), with two n's.

# MY LITTLE NEST OF HEAVENLY BLUE

*Frasquita Serenade from "Frasquita"*

LYRIC BY

MUSIC BY

**SIGMUND SPAETH**

**FRANZ LEHÁR**



**EDWARD B. MARKS MUSIC CORPORATION**  
RCA Building, Radio City, New York

Artie Shaw's last chart single, *My Little Nest of Heavenly Blue*, recorded with singer Connee Boswell (1907-1976) for Decca on August 1, 1952, including former 1938-39 Shaw band pianist Bob Kitsis back for the session, as part of Shaw's Gramercy 5.

## **source acknowledgements:**

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The Estate of Artie Shaw with A. Edward Ezor, Attorney to Mr. Shaw