



UNIVERSAL PICTURES

By Charles Apple | THE SPOKESMAN-REVIEW

The Andrews Sisters recorded "Boogie Woogie Bugle Boy" on Jan. 2, 1941 — 85 years ago.

Featured in the Abbott and Costello movie "Buck Privates," the performance would become one of the most memorable songs of the Second World War.

**'HE MAKES THE COMPANY JUMP WHEN HE PLAYS REVEILLE'**

Comedians Bud Abbott and Lou Costello made a successful film debut in the 1940 musical "One Night in the Tropics." Executives at Universal Pictures decided that, for their next picture, they'd find a way to use a popular routine from Abbott and Costello's stage act in which they try — in their typically inept way — to learn how to march in formation.

The film would be about the newly launched peacetime draft. Popular singing trio the Andrews Sisters were cast in the film and Don Raye and Hughie Prince — who earlier had composed the hits "Rhumboogie" and "Beat Me Daddy, Eight to the Bar" for the sisters — were hired to compose music.

Among the material Raye and Prince came up with was a song about a Chicago trumpet player who is drafted and then begins playing boogie-woogie versions of "Reveille" and "Taps," much to the enjoyment of other soldiers.

The intent was for Costello to sing the song, which they originally called "Boogie Woogie Bugler." But as work progressed on the film, producers shifted gears and had Raye and Prince rework the number for the Andrews Sisters to perform wearing Army WAC outfits. Raye and Prince then wrote a fun novelty song, "When Private Brown Becomes a Captain," for Costello.

The Andrews Sisters performed "Boogie Woogie Bugle Boy" for the film and then recorded the song again in a music studio on Jan. 2, 1941, to release as a 78 RPM single.

"Buck Privates" was released in theaters on Jan. 31, 1941. "Boogie Woogie Bugle Boy" peaked that spring at No. 6 on Billboard maga-



DECCA RECORDS



zine's pop singles chart. It would later be nominated for an Academy Award for Best Original Song but would lose to "The Last Time I Saw Paris" from the musical "Lady Be Good."

In 1943, both Billboard magazine and Stars & Stripes launched efforts to find the bugler on whom Raye and Prince based the song. The publications reported the real "Bugle Boy of Company B" was Clarence Zylman of Muskegon, Michigan, who had been a trumpeter in a swing band, was drafted and then began ignoring regulations by adding boogie-woogie frills to his morning musical wake-up call.

However, this couldn't have been the case: Zylman didn't enlist in the Army until June 1942 — nearly a year and a half after the movie and the song debuted.

While "Boogie Woogie Bugle Boy" had peaked at No. 6 on the music charts of the day, it would become one of the best-remembered songs of its time. Bette Midler would remake the song on her 1972 album "The Divine Miss M," produced by Barry Manilow. Midler's version would peak at No. 8 in the Billboard Hot 100 but would land at No. 1 on Billboard's Easy Listening chart.

**THE ANDREWS SISTERS**

**LaVerne**

BORN: July 6, 1911

The eldest Andrews sister sang alto — the lowest range for women. As a teenager, she played piano for other singers. She was, most likely, the only Andrews sister who could read music.

She loved fashion and fine clothes. She usually colored her dark hair red. She typically mediated family disputes.

LaVerne died of cancer in 1967 at age 55.

**Patty**

BORN: Feb. 16, 1918

The youngest Andrews sister was considered by most observers to be the most talented. Not only did she sing lead in the trio, she was also a gifted comedian and dancer.

She continued to perform in stage shows, clubs and on cruise ships into the 21st century but gave few public interviews.

Patty died of natural causes in 2013 at age 94.

**Maxene**

BORN: Jan. 3, 1916

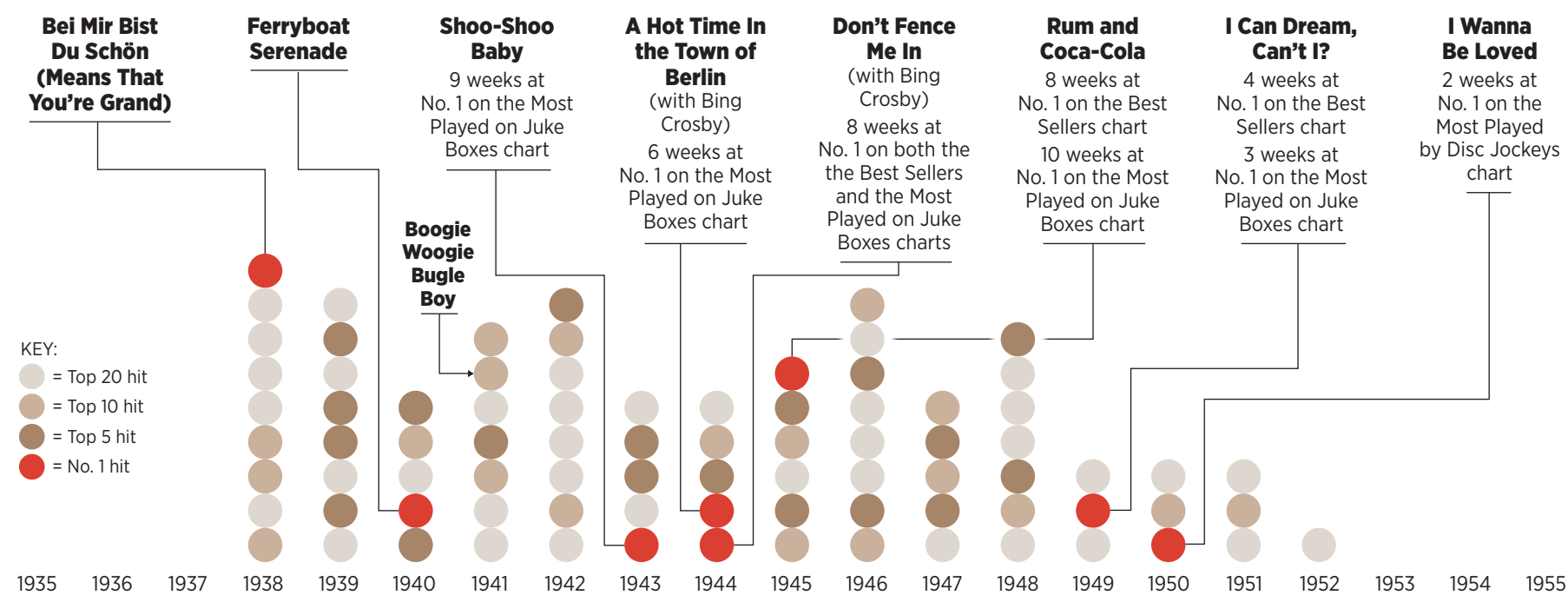
The middle Andrews sister sang soprano. She married Lou Levy, the trio's manager, in 1941 but kept it secret from the public for nearly two years.

After the sisters' breakup in 1968, she performed solo in cabarets and night-clubs. She and Patty stopped talking to each other in the 1970s.

Maxene died of a heart attack in 1995 at age 79.

**THE ANDREWS SISTERS' TOP-20 HIT SONGS**

The Andrews Sisters sold nearly 100 million records over their career. That includes eight No. 1 hit singles — although "Boogie Woogie Bugle Boy" was not one of those.



Sources: Internet Movie Database, SongFacts, the Great American Songbook Foundation, MusicTales, FamousDaily.com, Playback.fm, Discography of American Historical Recordings of the UC Santa Barbara Library, the Vocal Group Hall of Fame, Discogs.com