



A new song means hours of strenuous playing for Hoagy. Until he gets the melody, he accompanies himself with a wordless mumbo-jumbo.

HARRIET ARNOLD



A rebel against many things, including "barbers who cut your hair too short in back," the star-dust man trims his own—as well as that of his two sons, above.

HARRIET ARNOLD

Star-Dust Troubadour

By PETE MARTIN

HOAGY CARMICHAEL, movie actor, radio performer and composer of some sixty songs, among them *Old Rockin' Chair*, *Old Buttermilk Sky*, *Am I Blue?*, *Georgia on My Mind*, *I Get Along Without You Very Well*, *Little Old Lady*, *Small Fry*, *Thanks for the Memory*, and *Hong Kong Blues*, as well as that classic theme song of the love-smitten, *Star Dust*, describes his entrance into the world thus:

"On a dull November day near the turn of the century a child was born in a small four-room cottage at the southern end of Grant Street in Bloomington, Indiana. My mother's mother, Grandma Robison, was there to rub my head back into shape and pour stuff into my eyes. I've been uncomfortable ever since."

The statement is not just Hoagy yakety-yaketying for the sake of making a wry crack. The Carmichael seen on the screen and heard on the air is a slowpoke, a lazybones. Privately he is introverted and intense to the point of acute discomfort. He once wrote a song called *Two Sleepy People*—about a girl and boy much too much in love to say good night. Hoagy himself is two people, but only one of them is sleepy.

When his nonchalant performances on the screen or air waves bring him critical acclaim, Hoagy stalls off a comfortable state of mind by brooding about

how much better he would have been if the cutters hadn't scissored his best song or kicked his most effective footage around, or by bawling himself out for delivering his radio lines too fast.

The saying about him: "He's got so many careers he has to make a date with himself to turn out a tune," is not wholly an exaggeration. Handling the success that has come his way after many a frustrating detour keeps him mighty active. For Hoagy is big business now. It takes him quite a spell just to mention the sources from which his current income rolls in.

His singing, done in a Southern Indiana drawl that sounds as if it were being strained through a rust-caked trombone instead of a human larynx, has caught on with the juke-box crowd like crazy. It is a solid click with disk buyers and movie-goers. He gets wads of fan mail from both bobby and nylon soxers, many of whom write that they infinitely prefer him to either Sinatra or Crosby. As many singers work on the theory that it's profitable to imitate his highly stylized song delivery as there are cartoonists who woo affluence by aping the artists who draw Superman and Flash Gordon. In short, at the moment Hoagy is as hot as a two-dollar trumpet.

When, in accepting the Oscar for producing the best movie of 1946, the world's No. 1 name fumbler,

Once kicked out of a college quartet because he couldn't sing, Hoagy Carmichael is now not only a famous composer (*Star Dust*, *Old Rockin' Chair*) but a radio and movie star to boot.

Sam Goldwyn, recited the names of the actors who had helped him make *The Best Years of Our Lives* memorable, the audience held its breath in delighted anticipation. Sam navigated all the nomenclatural shoals without a mishap, except Hoagy's. Then he came through nobly. He referred to Hoagy as "Hugo Carmichael."

Hoagy wasn't amused. The proceedings were going out over a national hookup, and he complained that it was tough for a guy to spend a lifetime familiarizing the public with his name, only to have an unreasonable facsimile of it receive such publicity.

All the evidence proves that he was unnecessarily worried. Hoagy and his compositions are known wherever jazz music is played. In the United States, the trade calls numbers like *Star Dust* swing standards. In England, they are known as "evergreens."

Up to mid-June of this year the Carmichael recording of *A-Huggin' and A-Chalkin'* had sold 750,000 platters. His recording of *Old Buttermilk Sky* was doing as well. He gets a royalty of three cents a record, which means that those two recordings alone made him \$45,000. This did not include his writer's royalty of a fraction more than one half cent on all records made of his songs by all compa-



Merle Oberon and Hoagy discuss their next picture with Director Cromwell. Carmichael only recently learned to read music, does it slowly and haltingly.



Hoagy and Lauren Bacall in *To Have and Have Not*, the picture that launched his movie career. His rendition of *Hong Kong Blues* was a hit.

ies. By the same date *Old Buttermilk Sky* had sold 659,000 sheet-music copies, on which Hoagy's cut was five cents a copy.

Hoagy has an ASCAP rating of AA, which brings him an average of \$20,000 a year. AA—Irving Berlin, Cole Porter and the late George Gershwin are also listed AA—is as high as such ratings go. ASCAP means the American Society of Composers, Authors and Publishers, and an ASCAP rating is based on how many times a song written by one of its members is played by a band, selected by a juke-box addict before dropping in his nickel or used as part of a broadcast. Fees for such use are collected by ASCAP and passed along to its members.

Hoagy's price tag for movie work is \$5000 a week. To all of this he adds his revenue from his weekly radio show, from his guest appearances on other radio shows—this year they will bring him in about \$20,000—and fees for endorsing such items as radiophonograph combinations, hats, beer, a writing paper called "Star Dust." There is also the money he makes through selling his songs for use in movies.

The paradox of the easygoing Carmichael versus the broodingly intense Carmichael is only one of several such contradictions in his life. He is a top-flight pluggier of popular songs, yet he was booted out of a quartet at Indiana University because he couldn't sing for sour apples. Hoagy describes his singing as, "I do it the way a shaggy dog looks. . . . I figure there is hair hanging on my voice." And he says he has "Wabash frogs and sycamore twigs" in his throat.

Hoagy isn't the only one who finds describing the way he sings an intriguing challenge. According to John Crosby, radio reviewer for the *New York Herald Tribune*, "Hoagy has a voice like a tired rasp, although it provides a pleasant and relaxing fifteen minutes. . . . He sings as if he were lying on a hammock, dressed in a warm sweater and his oldest flannels, on the verge of falling asleep."

The secret of Hoagy's song-plugging effectiveness lies in his phrasing. Phrasing means establishing a wedding between words and music as they're sung. "I talk a song to you so you know exactly what it means and says," he explains. "I'm a guy who tries to enunciate."

Some women claim he possesses the sexiest male voice they ever heard. In the opinion of one distaff writer, he is "an extraordinarily tasteful idiomatic jazz singer. . . . His style is a restrained off-blue." While they were at it, the music analysts also described Hoagy's person. According to them he is "a dark-haired, brown-eyed fellow with foxy features . . . an Indiana Jimmy Walker."

Mere mention of some of the tunes he has written is calculated to start millions of people to humming, but when he faces a microphone, Hoagy can't remember the lyrics of his own songs. He has to have the words written out for him.

By his own admission, he is no great shakes as a piano player. "My playing has deteriorated," he complains. "I can't honestly say it amounts to playing any more. I just finger my own little compositions. If they are slow enough, I don't have to finger fast. And I oompah the bass against my own vocalizing." Only recently has he learned to read music. He still does it slowly and haltingly. He sweats out the notes on the sheet as a lip-moving child sweats out the sentences in a first reader.

The list of Carmichael paradoxes seems endless. Among the repeat customers who went back to see the movies *To Have and Have Not*, *Canyon Passage* and *Johnny Angel* for a second or even a third helping, there were many who went to see Hoagy do his character bits rather than watch Lauren Bacall, Humphrey Bogart, George Raft and Randy Scott star in those pictures. Yet, his only previous experience as an actor was as a monkey in a college skit in the annual Christmas Showdown at Indiana University. His act required him to stay aloft on a limb,

clad in a union suit, for fifteen minutes. After that, he descended to deliver his single line of dialogue to the keeper of the monkey house: "Where've you been all this time, daddy?"

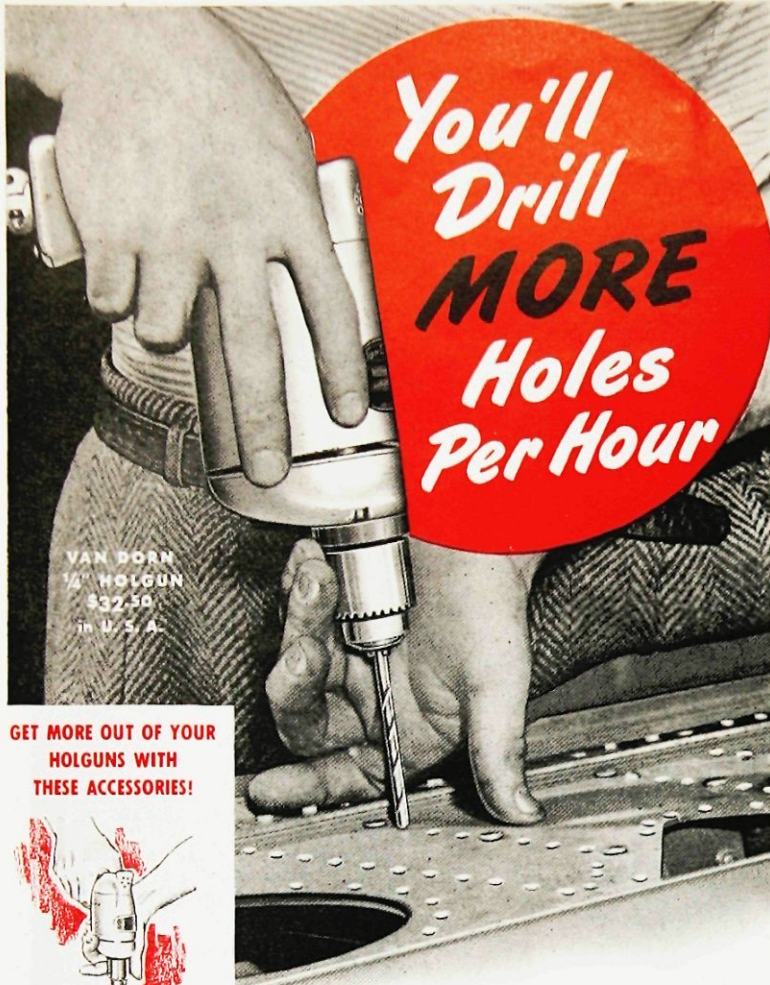
Hoagy's memory of this incident is not too clear, but, apocryphal or not, assiduous researchers dug it up and have labeled it fact.

When he was married, the members of his wedding party pooled their resources to speed him on his honeymoon. He had forgotten to draw any money from the bank for that purpose. Yet he was canny enough to shake down Opportunity for a sizable chunk of gold when that unpredictable visitor finally rapped at his door.

Last season his Sunday coast-to-coast program, *A Visit to Hoagy's*, during which he plugs a product called the *Fifth Avenue Candy Bar*, was rated as a successful one. It has been described as having "quiet informality," as being "as All-American-sounding as Fibber McGee." Yet his dislike for radio work approaches a phobia.

Hoagy's method of selecting the songs he sings on his weekly broadcast is to sit in his own home and warble a dozen or more tunes to his producer over the phone. From these, five are chosen. This procedure helps to keep the more abrasive aspects of radio out of his hair. There are no clockers standing around with stop watches, no tongues clucking worriedly over whether or not the program will overflow its allotted fifteen minutes.

Another pianist, Buddy Cole, helped him out on his fifteen-minute air show; or rather, Hoagy occasionally helped him. Cole carried most of the show's piano burden. He played a grand, while now and then Hoagy beat it out on an upright. There has been an upright in his life ever since he can remember. "I can't seem to get anything out of a grand," he says. "My fingers are trained for an upright's action. I like the way its keys go up and flop back." (Continued on Page 114)

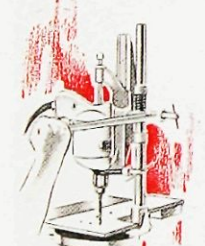


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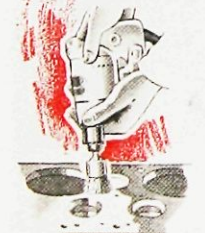
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STAR-DUST TROUBADOUR

(Continued from Page 23)

In the beginning there was "the old golden oak." "That golden-oak upright was very important to me," Hoagy says. "Back in Bloomington, Indiana, we didn't have much of this world's goods, but the golden oak with mother playing it while all of us listened kept the Carmichaels together. When we went away, it was something to come back to."

Hoagy's mother played for the Indiana University fraternity and sorority dances. "She took me with her to those parties when I was little," Hoagy says, "and I slept on two chairs placed side by side."

One day a back-lot baseball game was rained out. Young Hoagland—his mother and his grandparents called him that, although no one else did—came home feeling let down. Hurling his baseman's glove into a corner, he wandered into the parlor and drummed on the keys of the golden oak with his fists. Through the dripping rain he heard the college carillonner play Indiana Frangipani in the campus bell tower. "I started picking out the notes with one finger," Hoagy remembers. "To my amazement, I found I was picking them out accurately. That day an incompetent sixty-pound third baseman died. The piano had me."

His mother showed him the simple construction of the bass and the fifth until his ear wouldn't let him play a sour note. After listening to her, Hoagy groped for the chords she'd fingered, then sought the ones she hadn't played that were there in the upright waiting to be discovered.

The Carmichaels lived in half of a double house. A thin wall separated

them from the folks next door. Young Hoagy's heels stomping on the floor as he rode the piano pedals must have driven his neighbors crazy. But they were gentle, kindly folk, patient with a kid trying to learn. They never beefed.

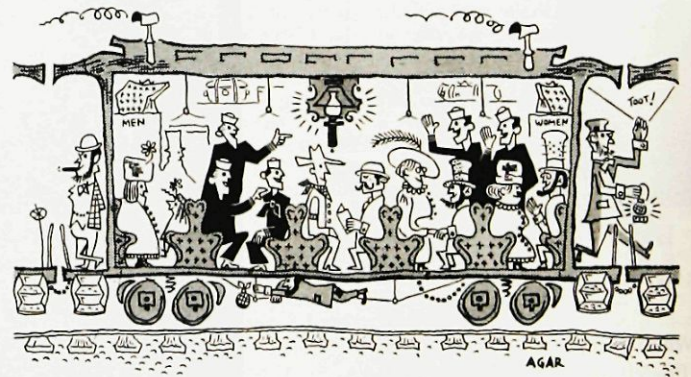
When the piano tuner left after one of his visits, Hoagy tore the golden oak down and tuned it himself. He tried to make it sound tinny. He fixed it so a string here and there would be slightly off key and give out a "whanging" sound.

Carmichael, Senior, was in the hack business and had a fast line of rubber-tired conveyances for hire. Hoagy's father moved to Indianapolis, then to Montana, then back to Bloomington; finally to Indianapolis again. In 1916 Hoagy entered Manual High in Indianapolis, but the school filled him with rebellion rather than learning, and he quit. ("I parted from Manual High with neither of us grieving.") After Manual he ran a cement mixer and worked in a slaughterhouse.

Came World War I. Studying the Army weight requirements, he loaded up with water and bananas until he was a few ounces above the minimum poundage, but en route to the recruiting headquarters he shrank and his skinny body failed to balance the scales. Undismayed, he kept on trying. One day he made it. The day was November 10, 1918. He drilled for a whole hour the next morning. Then the war was over.

His first conception of what jazz could be like came to him in Indianapolis from a long-fingered Negro boy named Reggie Duval. "Reggie featured a broken rhythm and a flighty and unfinished syncopation," Hoagy says. "He stressed the afterbeat and laughed with the keys, as unrestrained and unreserved as a hyena." It was Reggie who told Hoagy, "I want that

(Continued on Page 116)



Sign of the Times

A P O S T W A R A N E C D O T E

AT the peak of the war's transportation strain, when the railroads were putting all their old coaches back on the road, I rode with a group of naval men from one station to another. Our group was put in two cars, both of which, we decided, must have been built long before we were born. We examined the odd, narrow windows, the converted gas lamps, the straight seats and tiny rest rooms in each car, but we couldn't decide which car was the older. During lunch the argument grew

hot, with riders of each car claiming loudly that theirs was more ancient. At last we decided to appoint an inspection committee, which would go through both cars and make a final decision. Just about this time, one of the men in my car slipped away. Later, when the committee inspected the car, we discovered the reason for his sudden exit. There, midway on the car wall, was a neatly printed message: PLEASE DO NOT SHOOT BUFFALO FROM THESE WINDOWS.

—CHARLES W. HYATT.

(Continued from Page 114)

harmony to holler. Never play anything that ain't right. You may not make any money, but you'll never get hostile with yourself."

Despite such interludes, Hoagy was lonely for Bloomington. In January, 1919, with ten painfully scraped-together dollars as capital, he returned there to re-enter high school. He lived with his Grandma Robison. Before long the president of his high-school fraternity heard him doodling away on a piano in the fraternity rooms while another fraternity brother stroked a set of drums.

The president's reaction was immediate: "Let's throw a dance! I'll give you guys five bucks apiece if we take in that much."

That night Hoagy played in an upstairs hall over a hardware store. "I took a deep breath and hit the keys," he says. "And the building began to roll. The dance was on." There were twenty couples present when the dance began. Soon there were thirty. In the end, couples were being turned away.

The fraternity next heard of a hot Negro band in Louisville—Jordan's—and signed it to play for a dance. Hoagy learned still more about jazz from Jordan. "He hit the notes on the head and made them pop at you," he says.

In the summer of 1921 Hoagy met George Johnson, a Chicago boy. "He showed me how a saxophone should be played," Hoagy says. "It was done smoothly, but with an occasional jerk to accent a beat here and there. He had got it from the New Orleans Rhythm Kings, who had come up from New Orleans to play at the Friars Inn in Chicago."

Hoagy couldn't wait until he went to Chicago to hear the New Orleans Rhythm Kings. "When the cornet player played his notes they smacked me in the face at unexpected moments. They went right through my gizzard and dropped on the floor, making my feet jump."

But the greatest single influence in his life was a Davenport, Iowa, boy named Bix Beiderbecke. Bix played cornet for a band called the Wolverines. Hoagy first heard Bix's cornet on the Indiana University campus when the Wolverines played there for an SAE dance. To Hoagy, the notes Bix blew were as clean as a mallet hitting a chime. "Bix showed me that jazz could be musical and beautiful as well as hot," says Hoagy. "He showed me that tempo doesn't necessarily mean fast. He had perfect pitch. He could tell the pitch of a healthy burp in the next

room and pick it out on the piano unerringly."

Hoagy's hero-worship of Bix was so all-consuming that he bought a cornet and tried to master it until he blew his lips raw. In self-defense his fraternity brothers hid the cornet in a chandelier.

On September 15, 1922, he entered the university, where he was pledged Kappa Sigma. He had entered Indiana to study law, but before long he assembled a band of his own, Carmichael's Collegians. The Collegians played everything by ear. Their ambition was to play hot licks and play them clean. They liked to throw their saxophones and drumsticks in the air. During those spasms Hoagy pushed the piano stool aside and assumed the position of a praying mantis to play while the drummer tossed his drumsticks aloft and chewed his tongue.

The rest of his seven-piece band could read music, but once they teamed up with Hoagy they seldom saw written music again. It was difficult to follow his lead. At first he played a lot of black keys and flats. Then, when they got used to that, he changed over and did most of his playing in sharps. They called their music "sock" music or "dirt," which meant that they accentuated the second and fourth beats instead of the first and third. They "doodled" the harmony and improvised on the tune.

Musicians passing through Indianapolis stretched their journey as far as the university campus at Bloomington. Word had got around that the kids there "had something" when it came to accentuating the afterbeat. "In my day, college boys were inventing things musically," Hoagy claims.

It was a time of kicking over the traces, of yeast working in those who had lived through a world war. Hoagy and a group of kindred souls were the moving spirits of the revolt against conformity on the Indiana campus. As far as Hoagy was concerned, the revolt had its expression in "sock" music and in associating with a rampantly uninhibited group of students who called themselves the Bent Eagles. William Moenkhaus was founder and chief spokesman, and Wad Allen, now director of publicity for the Johns-Manville Corporation, was a Bent Eagle too.

The headquarters of the Bent Eagles was the Book Nook, a campus restaurant. In its past the Book Nook might have contained books, but when the Bent Eagles discovered it, it was equipped with booths, a beat-up player piano, coffee, egg sandwiches laced with catsup, wedges of lemon-meringue

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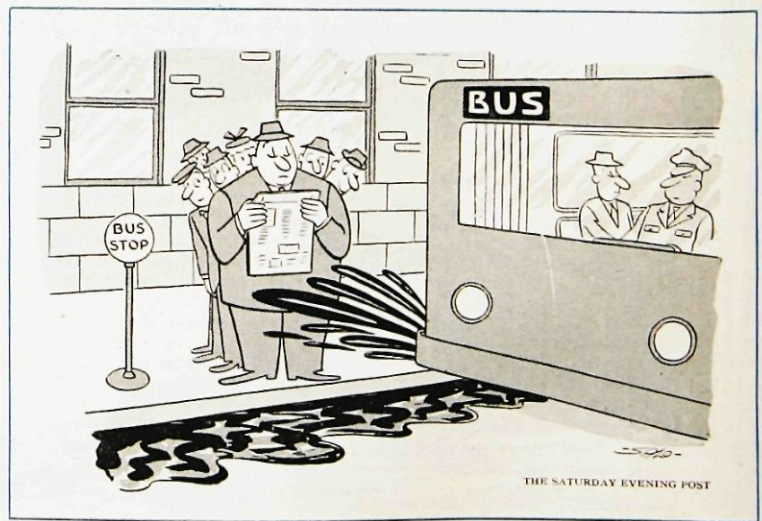
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pie and tables—no books. It was owned by a long-suffering Greek named Pete Costas.

Afternoons in the Book Nook found Hoagy flogging the piano while Moenkhaus composed and read aloud a playlet entitled, *Thanksgiving Comes But Once a Dozen*, or a eulogy beginning: "The years have pants!" The Bent Eagles thought he was a genius. Lovingly they quoted the line they thought his best: "I just saw a cow go by . . . one by one."

Wad Allen says of Hoagy, "Every time he got interested in learning how to do something, his friends thought he was going crazy before he mastered the problem. When he puts his mind to something he really gets on the outside of it before he lets go." At Indiana, sitting at the feet of Prof. Paul V. McNutt—later national commander of the American Legion and High Commissioner to the Philippines—Hoagy tried to get on the outside of such things as torts and misdemeanors.

Neither Hoagy nor the other members of his band thought of themselves as musical professionals. After making a few recordings of their dance rhythms for a record manufacturer in Richmond, Indiana, named Gennett—Gennett records are now collectors' items—they received a telegraphed invitation to come to New York to record for Brunswick, then a large disk producer. That wire scared them half to death. They didn't go.

But something was gnawing at Hoagy. He wanted to know how to compose a tune. One winter he left college and joined a small band in Florida to play at private parties. At such a party he heard Irving Berlin play his latest song. Berlin played it with charm, but Hoagy noticed that the author of *Alexander's Ragtime Band* felt for the ivories uncertainly. *Hoagland*, he told himself, *if anyone who plays that feebly can write that nobly, you can write a song too.*

Back in Bloomington, studying law once more, the idea of composing still simmered in him. That simmering caught up with him in the Book Nook. His fingers picked out a phrase. He played it again and again, until the monotony of his playing emptied the Nook. Before supper he had it. When Bix heard the melody he suggested that the Wolverines record it for Gennett. It's title was *Riverboat Shuffle*.

One morning Hoagy drifted into the Book Nook again. All that day he tried to capture a tune. The harmony he pulled from the keys sounded like a colored mammy washing a stack of dirty clothes. He called it *Washboard Blues*.

Curt Hitch and his Happy Harmonists, a band that played in the Wolverines' style, recorded it for Gennett. Before that recording the technician discovered that *Washboard Blues* was twenty seconds short. Hitch suggested that Hoagy put in a piano solo. In five minutes, Hoagy dreamed one up. Years later, when a movie studio needed a song in a hurry, he took that eight-bar solo and built it into a song. Johnny Mercer wrote the lyrics for it. It was called *Lazy Bones*.

Hoagy was graduated in law at mid-term in 1926. His family had moved to Florida—everybody in the world, it seemed, was either moving to Florida or voyaging to Europe, student third class—and Hoagy decided to join them and hang out his shingle. His work in West Palm Beach consisted of helping to sew legal patches on the pants of the real-estate boom when they grew tattered and tramplike. Even that didn't last long. After playing in ten-

cent dance halls for two months to keep eating, he went back to Indiana.

He met Paul Whiteman when Whiteman's band came to Indianapolis. Bix Beiderbecke was a member of the Whiteman organization, and introduced Hoagy to the Rhythm Boys. Bing Crosby was one of them.

Whiteman's greeting was, "I've heard a lot about you, little fella." Despite the fact that any reference to Paul's bulk was regarded as lese majesty, Hoagy replied, "I've heard a lot about you, too, big boy." But Whiteman liked Hoagy's spirit.

Whiteman had heard the recording of *Washboard Blues*. He led Hoagy to a piano and said, "Sing it." The upshot of his singing was an invitation from Whiteman to go to Chicago and sing for the record Whiteman had promised the Victor Company to make of *Washboard Blues*. Hoagy didn't find out until later that Whiteman had Bing Crosby all warmed up and ready to do his singing for him if he weakened.

On a visit to Bloomington just before the opening of the university's fall term, the melody of *Star Dust* floated into his head. Walking through the university campus late one night, he was conscious of the brightness of the Milky Way and of the North Star hanging low above the trees. He sat on the "spooning wall" while a phrase of whistled music stole from his lips. He ran back to the Book Nook, excitement driving him. "Got to use your piano," he told the proprietor.

Stu Gorrell, Hoagy's roommate at Indiana, named the melody. To Stu, it sounded like the dust from stars drifting down through a summer sky. Somewhat later Hoagy wrote the original lyrics. It took him twenty minutes. Two years passed before Mitchell Parrish, a member of the staff of a music-publishing house, polished them and put them into their final form.

Trying to be a lawyer in Indianapolis didn't work out for Hoagy, and he gave it up. Folks wanted him to write music or play it. Some who know him best think he is still sad because he isn't an attorney.

With the law behind him, he found himself playing second piano with an itinerant band. Then he decided to have a try at Hollywood. He started out in an upper berth with a couple of suits and a few songs under his arm. He had thought of one of those songs, *Old Rockin' Chair*, early one morning swimming in a Bloomington reservoir. He tried the movie studios without success; but he wasn't lonely. Paul Whiteman and his band were there making *The King of Jazz*, and with Whiteman were Bix Beiderbecke and Bing Crosby. Hoagy beat his way back to New York on the special train that carried the Whiteman outfit East. He slept in an upper berth with Bing.

In New York he lived in a cubbyhole in Greenwich Village. "I figured at least twenty old men had died in that house during the hundred years it had existed," he says. In such surroundings he wasn't liking New York fast, but he stuck it out, doing a little recording and arranging for practically no dough. After the '29 crash he went to work as a third-string banker. He third-stringed as an investment analyst and in the trust department of the Chase National Bank and the S. W. Straus Company. When bonds began to fold, people kept coming in to scream, "Why are my bonds worth so much less?" Hoagy was supposed to pacify them. When the bottom fell out of Wall Street he took another job in a

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SHOES

(Continued from Page 117)

music-publishing house as an arranger.

For years Star Dust had set no worlds afire. Suddenly it was seized upon joyfully by musicians and vocalists. It was recorded by Isham Jones, Louis Armstrong and the Boswell Sisters, and was reissued in sheet-music form. It has since sold 1,000,000 sheet-music copies. Some homes have three or four versions of it in record form. Tens of thousands of college boys and girls have walked out into the moonlight from waxed dance floors to plight their troths under its melting influence. To date, Hoagy says it has paid him over \$200,000 in ASCAP money. Although it was written in 1928, the royalties from it still bring him more than \$5000 a year.

This past August a Gallup poll, delving into the habits, manners, and likes and dislikes of the American public, came up with the information that America's three best-liked songs are Star Dust, Let Me Call You Sweetheart, and Peg o' My Heart.

For Hoagy the next few years were a blend of many things good and bad. Bix Beiderbecke died. Bix had reached the top, but he heard notes in his head he couldn't blow out through his cornet. Hoagy thought that finding that out killed him.

Hoagy wrote Lazy River, Georgia on My Mind, and for a Broadway musical revue starring Beatrice Lillie, Little Old Lady. His Lazy Bones, with lyrics by Johnny Mercer, sold 15,000 copies a day and helped pull Tin Pan Alley out of the depression. He also met an attractive girl, Ruth Meinardi, and married her.

After his marriage, at Ruth's urging, Hoagy decided to have another try at Hollywood. He made a two-reeler as part of a series featuring musicians, then moved to the Paramount lot as a song writer. He wrote Small Fry and Two Sleepy People for that studio. Between 1936 and 1939 he contributed songs to such films as Anything Goes; Sing, You Sinners; Thanks for the Memory; and St. Louis Blues.

Slim Hawks, the wife of movie producer Howard Hawks, was responsible for giving him his big chance—a part in To Have and Have Not. Before that he had been briefly in a movie called Topper—so briefly the audience saw only the back of his head.

"Slim is a neighbor and one of my best friends," Ruth Carmichael says. "She came over to see us one day while Hoagy was on a stepladder helping the gardener. He hadn't shaved for two days. His corduroys were rolled up and his hair was down over his face. Slim took one look at him and said, 'You ought to be in pictures.'" Her husband had already been thinking of Hoagy for the part of Cricket, a hot-piano player in a Martinique honky-tonk, for his next film, but up to that point Hawks's thinking had only got to the point of deciding, "Hoagy might be a good actor because he makes such screwy faces when he sings." When Slim went to work on him that cinched it. To Have and Have Not marked the debut of a new Carmichael.

A newspaper writer, inspired by the previous labeling of Lauren Bacall as The Look, Frank Sinatra as The Voice, and Marie McDonald as The Body, tagged Hoagy The Throat. Hoagy's Hong Kong Blues had been written in 1938, but when Hoagy played and sang it in To Have and Have Not, it started rolling like a snowball down a cliff. At one point after its release, records of Hong Kong Blues were selling 25,000 daily. The song finally racked up a

sale of more than 500,000 disks. Sheet-music sales of Carmichael compositions jumped 30 per cent.

All of this helped him purchase a home set in three acres of tidily manicured land at a cost of more than \$100,000. It is U-shaped and built around a swimming pool. Its windows look out over yellow-striped beach chairs and purple jacaranda trees. The carefully guarded Carmichael children—Randy Bob, seven, and Hoagy Bix, nine—sleep in a small house at the far end of the pool. Hoagy cuts his own hair and has barbered his sons' hair

★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

IT TAKES A HEAP

By Robert Paul Smith

I have a little painter who's as sweet as he can be,
And he'll be glad to paper, and to plaster, and to spackle,
And all he wants from me is a great big fee
And a lien on my leg
And an eye
And a knee.

I know a little plumber, too, he couldn't be much more nice,
And he'll be glad to plumb, and to kitch, and to lav,
And all he asks of me is a great fat price
And first call on my kidney
And my liver
And my lights.

I have a little lawyer man, who couldn't be any kinder,
And he'll be glad to search and negotiate and such,
And the only thing he wants is a king-sized binder
And divvies on my calf
And my left rear
Grinder.

I am a little mortgagor who has a great big mortgagee,
He'll bury me in dollar bills for any term of years,
And the only thing he wants in addition to his searching fee
Is a little firm priority
On half a dozen
Vertebrae.

But my soul, sir, my soul—homeless, pure and lonely—
Belongs to the real-estate agent only.

★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

since their birth. He quit going to barbers because "they cut a man's hair too short in back."

According to Ruth Carmichael, Randy Bob is already "terrific" on the piano. "He used to go to the piano and pick things out for himself, just as Hoagy once did on the golden oak. Hoagy made up his mind he wouldn't push him into being a pianist. Finally he begged his dad to let him take lessons and Hoagy consented. He has all of Hoagy's mannerisms at the piano, and his chording is amazing."

Not only is Hoagy now trying to "get outside of" acting, as he once tried to get outside of law, he also applies his intense brand of perfectionism to golf and tennis. In his second year as a golfer he broke eighty over the difficult Bel Air course.

Some time ago, at the Bel Air Country Club, he made a hole in one. The other members of his foursome suggested an adjournment to the nineteenth hole for a celebration. Hoagy said, "I think I'll try to do it again." It wasn't a gag. He was dead serious.

Hoagy's first radio program was for the Safeway grocery-store chain. Lingan A. Warren, president of Safeway, one of Hoagy's admirers, sold the idea of building a radio program around him to the producer of the radio spot. New York writer and editor Harry Evans—now editorial director of the Family Circle magazine—was signed to write Hoagy's radio script. "As I saw it, the best way for him to achieve informality was by having the announcer appear to be a guest in Hoagy's home," Evans says. "The trouble was, Hoagy has a very active imagination. Instead of being content to open the spot by saying 'Hello, folks,' he had radio ideas you couldn't have put across with eighty-five men and a boy." For his orchestra he hired a group of men, all of whom now have their own orchestras. They loved working with Hoagy. They managed to run up about five hours of jam-session overtime at every rehearsal. The overtime on one rehearsal alone cost \$1200. After the Safeway hour, Hoagy took the air for Luden's Cough Drops.

Last year, he found time to write an autobiography, The Star-Dust Road. It is chronologically chaotic, but otherwise extremely effective. A large portion of it is devoted to giving credit to those who helped jazz grope and thump its way into being. Hoagy thinks that the best dance band ever assembled was the Jean Goldkette Band that played in Detroit's Greystone Ballroom. In it, among others, were Joe Venuti, the Dorseys, Bix Beiderbecke and Frank Trumbauer.

He has sold Star-Dust Road to the Mary Pickford-Buddy Rogers-Ralph Cohn Company to be made into a movie. Hoagy will star in the picture and, adding another activity to those already crowding his life, will also help produce it. Those who like their movie Carmichael neat say that, given that much screen room to move around in, he'll come out of it a full-fledged star.

On November 23, 1946, to celebrate the publication of Hoagy's autobiography, Ralph F. Gates, governor of Indiana, proclaimed Hoagy Carmichael Star-Dust Road Day. Indianapolis and Bloomington turned out as for a Hoosier-Buckeye big game. When Hoagy ate, it was necessary to put screens up before restaurant windows to keep people from pushing their way in and slashing themselves on broken glass. The phones in his hotel room and in his mother's home rang continuously until some good Samaritan finally removed them from their hooks. A Bloomington newspaper said, "Around here, Hoagy could fill an auditorium with a capacity of 10,000."

Hoagy visited a new cocktail room named the Star-Dust Bar, made two recital appearances in Indianapolis, a broadcast—assisted by his mother—and recited one verse of Ain't God Good to Indiana, set to his own music.

Because he writes primarily to please himself, Hoagy's music is not easy for others to play. According to a friend who has known him for years, "In Hoagy's case, when he manages to distill the essence of the special something that's his, it's too complicated to be popular. When he comes up with only a fragment of it, it's half-baked. When he hits in between those two, it's sheer genius."

THE END

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