Andrews Sisters & Glenn Miller Orchestra - The Chesterfield Broadcasts 2 (1940)

01. Introduction
02. The Little Red Fox (N'ya N'ya Ya Can't Catch Me)
03. Ciribiribin
04. South Of The Border
05. It's A Blue World
06. The Woodpecker Song
07. Well, All Right!
08. South American Way
09. Little Brown Jug
10. Little Sally Waters
11. I Want My Mama (Mama Yo Quiero)
12. Three O'Clock In The Morning
13. Sweet Potato Piper
14. (Down By The) O-HI-O (O-My-O!)
15. Let's Have Another One (Before We Say Good-Night)
16. Joseph! Joseph!.mp3
17. Runnin' Wild.mp3
18. Run, Rabbit, Run!
19. Do I Love You
20. Farewell Blues
21. Closing Announcements

Another 5-star effort from BMG's reissue team of Paul Brizzi (CEDAR restoration), Jay Newland (digital mastering), and John Snyder (production). If you've already purchased "The Chesterfield Broadcasts, Vol. 1" by the same crew, by all means get the new 2-disc complete effort. If this is your first encounter with the on-air pairing of Glenn Miller's great orchestra and the Andrews Sisters, then you're in for a treat.

To back-track for those who are new to this material, a quick bit of history. The Glenn Miller band, fresh off of its triumphs at the Glen Island Casino and Meadowbrook ballrooms--dance meccas and live-broadcasting plums for any up-and-coming bandleader in the late 30s--was picked in the Fall of 1939 to replace Paul Whiteman's orchestra as Liggett & Myers choice to headline their Chesterfield cigarettes-sponsored radio serial. Miller had already scored several hit Bluebird/Victor singles during 1939, and was rising steadily in the popularity polls. Nevertheless, it was deemed prudent by the sponsor to team the Miller band with the hugely popular Andrews Sisters, America's leading girl-group sensation. "The Girls" had several seasons of Decca hits under their belt, and it was reasoned that the one-two punch of the Miller Band with the Andrews Sisters just couldn't miss. These broadcast recordings, made between late December, 1939, and late March, 1940, document their shared run over the CBS network. By mid-March, it was deemed that the Andrews Sisters contract would not be renewed due to personal problems in the Sisters' family which made them increasing hard to handle, as well as the obvious fact that Miller was quite able to carry the weight of the program.

The discs themselves are programmed to simulate a continuous broadcast experience, with applause and announcements tightly segued together between tunes taken from separate shows. Announcers Ed Herlihy (later of Kraft Cheese fame), and Paul Douglas (later a B-movie "heavy" in the late 40s/ early 50s) handled the speaking chores, along with Miller. The material runs the gamut, everything from Miller's recent instrumental hits of the past several months, plus outings with current pop tunes handled by band stars Ray Eberle, Marion Hutton, and Tex Beneke, as well as the most complete assemblage of Andrews Sisters performances that could be successfully drawn from the period covered. Thus, you get a pretty good snapshot of what the casual listener would have heard every Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday night from 10-10:15 pm on CBS. Hits like "In the Mood," "Little Brown Jug," and "Tuxedo Junction" alternate with fun novelty numbers done in the classic Andrews Sisters style, including many of their hits from their past few seasons like "Bei Mir Bist du Schoen." Included is the very rare solo performance of Patti Andrews singing "I Love You Much Too Much," occasioned by a family brawl in the Andrews' hotel suite involving their parents, Maxine's beau Lou Levy of Decca Records, and Patti's companion Vic Schoen, arranger for the Sisters and erstwhile bandleader for their records. When it came time for the broadcast that evening, only Patti made it to the radio studio.

Comments given regarding the sound of the broadcast recordings for the "Volume 1" compilation hold true with the 2-disc set being offered here. A word of warning for those offended by occasional surface noise: it's not eliminated here via excessive filtering. As before, the safety tapes made by RCA in the early 60s of all the Miller estate's broadcast material are the source for the tunes presented. Quality varies, depending on the condition of the original 78 rpm recording disc, many of which were of the fragile glass-cored/ acetate-covered variety. Some performances are astonishingly clear and balanced, while others still display significant

surface scratch or amplifier hum. It's a mixed bag in that respect, but it's worth noting that noise-reduction and equalization are never used heavy-handedly. Hats off to those engineers who understand that noise and music signal can be occasionally inseparable. No attempt was made to lop off the entire upper range and bass end to eliminate scratch/hiss and rumble. These were reference recordings made at Miller's request for later reviewing by himself and others, made by a dubbing service in New York that utlized direct-line feeds from the networks. We're lucky that RCA taped what they had when they did, as deterioration could not be arrested.

Presentation and liner notes are models of their kind. All relevant personnel listings, broadcast dates, and production notes are given. Also included is an extended reminiscence by Chummy MacGregor, the band's pianist. Listeners and collectors who want to supplement the information contained would do well to seek out a copy of John Flower's "Moonlight Serenade," his exhaustive bio-discography of the Miller band from beginning to end, including all known broadcasts and recordings. It's long out of print, but can be obtained used.

Now, if only some kind person at BMG would take note: there's a ready audience for any quality packaging of Miller material. BMG is sitting on a veritable treasure trove of network and sustaining broadcast recordings made by the band, many of which haven't been reissued since the 1950s. As evidenced by the collection reviewed above, the tape masters of that material seem eminently serviceable. 2004 is Glenn Miller's centennial year....need I say more? Get off your duffs, folks, and "do right" by one of your biggest guns! Until that time, though, we listeners and collectors will dutifully snatch up what's seen fit to release. --- DAVID A. FLETCHER (Richmond, Va United States)

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