

1495. Tea For two

Backgrounds Of Svetozar Radic

"**Tea for Two**" is a 1924 song composed by Vincent Youmans, with lyrics by Irving Caesar. It was introduced in May 1924 by Phyllis Cleveland and John Barker during the Chicago pre-Broadway run of the musical *No, No, Nanette*. When the show finally hit Broadway on September 16, 1925, *Nanette* was played by Louise Groody, and her duet with Barker of "Tea for Two" was a hit. The song went on to become the biggest success of Youmans' career.

Background. Youmans had written the basic melody idea of "Tea for Two" while he was in the navy during World War I, and he used it later on as an introductory passage for a song called "Who's Who With You?" While in Chicago, Youmans developed the idea into "a song that the hero could sing to the heroine" for the musical *No, No, Nanette*. He soon after played his composition for Irving Caesar and insisted he write the lyrics then and there. Caesar quickly jotted down a mock-up lyric, fully intending to revise it later on. Youmans, though, loved the mock-up and convinced Caesar it was just right for the melody.

The phrase 'Tea for Two' was originally shouted by hawkers on the streets of 18th century England who wanted to attract business by lowering the price of a pot of tea from thruppence to tuppence.

Musical characteristics. "Tea for Two" has an A1-A2-A3-B form, a range of just over an octave, and a major tonality throughout. The song's original key was A-flat-major with a false key change to C major during the second "A" section. It is melodically repetitive (as the entire song consists of eighth and quarter notes, except for a pattern of eighth, quarter, and eighth notes which briefly emerge in the second section) and has a relatively simple harmonic progression.

Notable recordings. January 1925: The Benson Orchestra of Chicago's instrumental rendition reaches number five on the US Billboard chart and stays there for five weeks. January 1925: Marion Harris's rendition reaches number one on the US Billboard chart and stays there for 11 weeks. 1939: Art Tatum's rendition hits number eighteen on the US Billboard chart and stays there for a week. September 1958: Tommy Dorsey's rendition reaches number seven on the US Billboard chart and stays



there for twenty weeks and number five on the weekly top 50 chart from the Toronto radio station 'CHUM' and stays there for thirteen weeks.



Doris Day and Gordon MacRae as
Nanette Carter and Jimmy Smith

Tea for Two is a 1950 American musical film directed by David Butler. The screenplay by Harry Clork and William Jacobs was inspired by the 1925 stage musical *No, No, Nanette*, although the plot was significantly altered from the original book by Otto Harbach and Frank Mandel; and the music by Harbach, Irving Caesar and Vincent Youmans was supplemented by songs by other composers. The film was the first to star Doris Day, and it was the first time she danced on screen. This was director Butler and leading lady Day's second collaboration, following *It's a Great Feeling* the previous year. The two went on to work together on *Lullaby of Broadway*, *April in Paris*, *By the Light of the Silvery Moon*, and *Calamity Jane*. The Doris Day version helped the song "Tea For Two" make its final breakthrough in Europe.

Latin-Cha-Cha, T=125

Main 1

Main 2

The musical score is written for a 4/4 time signature with a tempo of 125. It is divided into two main sections: Main 1 and Main 2. The instruments and their parts are as follows:

- Bells:** Rests in Main 1; rhythmic pattern in Main 2.
- Str. (String):** Chords (B + Advanced) in Main 1; Chords (D + Advanced) in Main 2.
- Guitar:** Chord (A) in Main 1; Chord (D + Advanced) in Main 2.
- Bass:** Simple rhythmic line in both sections.
- Perc. (Percussion):** Bongos+Timbales ad lib. in both sections.
- Drums:** HH-cl. (Hi-Hat) and BD (Bass Drum) in both sections.

Programmiing instruction

A "Latin cha-cha"? Isn't it enough just to say "cha-cha"? No. Latin music (Portuguese and Spanish: *música latina*) is a term used by the music industry as a collective term for various styles of music from Latin America, Spain, Portugal and the United States. In the musician-professional area the word "Latin" means something else, special: LATIN is always spoken of when an orchestra uses the bongos, timbales and other percussion instruments in the drum section - then it is always "Latin music"! The Cha-Cha-Cha (also called Cha-Cha) is a dance of Cuban origin and is danced to the music of the same name, which was introduced by the Cuban composer and violinist Enrique Jorrin in the early 1950s. This rhythm was developed from the *danzón mambo*. In Europe - and especially in Italy - a simpler CHA-CHA form is known: Only the "cowbell" is played on every quarter note in the measure - and this alone produces the cha-cha-cha - regardless of whether other Latin percussion elements are involved or not! In my example above, even the postbeat snare is omitted - and the tambourine sounds in its place. The complete rhythm - without the cowbell - is a pure mambo - and only through the typical, even cowbell quarter sound it becomes a "LATIN-CHA-CHA"!