You Are My Sunshine

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"**You Are My Sunshine**" is a popular song first recorded in 1939. It has been declared one of the state songs of Louisiana as a result of its association with former state governor and country music singer Jimmie Davis. The song is copyright 1940 *Peer International Corporation*, words and music by Jimmie Davis and Charles Mitchell.[1] According to a 1990 article by Theodore Pappas, the original song was written by Oliver Hood.[2]

"You Are My Sunshine"	
Written by	Oliver Hood, member of "Rice Brothers' Gang" (Paul Rice, Riley Puckett, Oliver Hood, Pud Brown)
Published	1939
Written	1933
Language	English
Form	Ballad
Original artist	Pine Ridge Boys (1939)
Recorded by	Rice Brothers Gang (1939) Jimmie Davis (1940)

"My Only Sunshine"	
Song by The Beach Boys from the album *The Smile Sessions*	
Released	November 1, 2011
Genre	Baroque pop
Length	1:04
Label	Capitol
Composer	Haven Gillespie/Oliver Hood
Producer	Brian Wilson
Cover versions	
Brian Wilson	
***The Smile Sessions* track listing**	
19 tracks	

Side one

1. "Our Prayer"
2. "Gee"
3. "Heroes and Villains"
4. "Do You Like Worms (Roll Plymouth Rock)"
5. "I'm in Great Shape"
6. "Barnyard"

History

Two versions of "You Are My Sunshine" were recorded and released in 1939 prior to Jimmie Davis' version. The first was recorded for Bluebird Records (RCA-Victor's budget label) on August 22, 1939 by The Pine Ridge Boys (Marvin Taylor and Doug Spivey), who were from Atlanta.[3] The second was recorded for Decca Records on September 13, 1939 by The Rice Brothers Gang.[4] This group was originally from north Georgia, but had relocated to Shreveport, Louisiana, where they were performing on the city's KWKH radio station. The version by Jimmie Davis was recorded for Decca Records on February 5, 1940.[5]

Davis and Charles Mitchell are the credited songwriters of "You Are My Sunshine". Davis bought the song and rights from Paul Rice and put his own name on it, a practice not uncommon in the pre-World War II music business.[2] Some early versions of the song, however, do credit the Rice Brothers. According to some accounts, clarinetist Pud Brown was also involved with the Rice Brothers for the song's origin or first arrangement.

Davis said that for some time he had been enthusiastic about the song and had unsuccessfully tried to convince record companies to record it before finally making his own 1940 record of the song. Davis' version was popular and was followed by numerous

other covers, including those of Bing Crosby and Gene Autry, whose versions made the number a big hit.

Davis emphasized his association with the song when running for governor of Louisiana in 1944,[6] singing it at all his campaign rallies, while riding on a horse named "Sunshine". His authorized biography, *You Are My Sunshine: The Jimmie Davis Story*, was published in 1987.

The 1940 version by Davis has been added to the National Recording Registry in the Library of Congress on March 21, 2013 for long-term preservation.[7]

The Pine Ridge Boys

Rice Brothers Gang

Jimmie Davis with Charles Mitchell's Orchestra

7. "My Only Sunshine (The Old Master Painter / **You Are My Sunshine**)"
8. "Cabin Essence"

Side two

9. "Wonderful"
10. "Look (Song for Children)"
11. "Child Is Father of the Man"
12. "Surf's Up"

Side three

13. "I Wanna Be Around / Workshop"
14. "Vega-Tables"
15. "Holidays"
16. "Wind Chimes"
17. "The Elements: Fire (Mrs. O'Leary's Cow)"
18. "Love to Say Dada"
19. "Good Vibrations"

The song has been covered numerous times -- so often, in fact, that it is "one of the most commercially programmed numbers in American popular music."[6] The song, originally country music, has "virtually lost" its original country music identity, and "represent[s] both the national flowering of country music and its eventual absorption into the mainstream of American popular culture."[6] In 1941, it was covered

by Gene Autry, Bing Crosby, and Lawrence Welk.[6] Ray Charles had a hit with his 1962 cover of the song.[6] It was covered by Ike and Tina Turner, Aretha Franklin, Johnny Cash, Brian Wilson, and children's musician Elizabeth Mitchell among many others.[6]

See also

- List of number-one R&B singles of 1962 (U.S.)
- List of number-one R&B singles of 1963 (U.S.)

References

1. ^ CD liner notes: Disney Children's Favorites 4, 1990 Disney Records
2. ^ *a b* Rosemont Records: The 'Theft' of an American Classic (http://www.rosemontrecords.com/historical.html)
3. ^ Russell, Tony, and Bob Pinson. Country Music Records: A Discography, 1921-1942 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), p. 697.
4. ^ Russell, Tony, and Bob Pinson. Country Music Records: A Discography, 1921-1942 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), p. 746.
5. ^ Russell, Tony, and Bob Pinson. Country Music Records: A Discography, 1921-1942 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), p. 304.
6. ^ *a b c d e f* Stephen Deusner, "'You Are My Sunshine': How a Maudlin Song Became a Children's Classic" (http://www.salon.com/2013/05/26/you_are_my_sunshine_how_a_maudlin_song_became_a_childre *Salon.com*, May 26, 2013.
7. ^ "Simon & Garfunkel song among those to be preserved" (http://www.cfnews13.com/content/news/cfnews13/news/article.html/content/news/articles/ap/201 CFN13. Retrieved 21 March 2013.

- "Joel Whitburn's, Presents, Top R&B/Hip-Hop Singles: 1942-2004", 2004 (Record Research) pg. 113

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