

Just a Gigolo

Written by bluesever
Monday, 09 September 2013 16:24 -

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"Schöner Gigolo, armer Gigolo" is a popular song from the Austrian film *Der arme Leutnant*, 1928. The song was

written by

nello Casucci

(music) and

Julius Brammer

(lyrics). In 1929 it was Americanized and given an English lyric by the legendary Tin Pan Alley songwriter

Irving Caesar,

an early partner to George Gershwin. The title was changed to

"Just a Gigolo".

Leo

Just a Gigolo

The original version is a poetic vision of the social collapse experienced in Austria after World War I, represented by the figure of a former hussar who remembers himself parading in his uniform, while now he has to get by as a lonely hired dancer. The music features a simple melodic sequence, but nonetheless has a clever harmonic construction that highlights the mixed emotions in the lyrics, adding a nostalgic, bittersweet effect. The piece was an orchestral tango with 16-bars vocal refrain.



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Leonello Casucci

Caesar eliminated the specific Austrian references and, in the often-omitted verse (but included in the 1931 recording by Bing Crosby), set the action in a Paris cafe, where a local character tells his sad story. Thus, the lyrics retained their sentimental side but lost their historic value. This became Bing Crosby's first-ever hit song as a solo artist (#12 Pop Hit).



Julius Brammer

Bandleader Ted Lewis and Louis Armstrong all recorded "Just a Gigolo" in 1931 too. Along the way, it has become a standard, recorded by jazz, pop, and folk artists.



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Irving Caesar

It was the 1956 arrangement by trumpeter **Louis Prima**'s partner, Sam Butera, that gave it the jump jive form that is its best-known arrangement and has spawned countless imitations. It was paired in a medley with another old standard,

"I Ain't Got Nobody"

(words by Roger Graham and music by Spencer Williams, 1915). Although these two songs have nothing else in common, the popularity of Prima's combination, has led to the mistaken perception by some that the songs are two parts of a single original composition.



Louis Prima

While still a member of Van Halen, **David Lee Roth** released a solo EP of standards, including his interpretation of Louis Prima's version of this track. This song was a good fit for Roth, as it went with his party-boy image and gave him an excuse to create a colorful video with lots of babes.



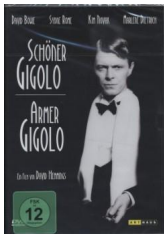
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David Lee Roth

Other notable versions of "Just a Gigolo" include the genius Thelonius Monk solo recordings of the '50s and '60s, where we get a slightly arrhythmic and dissonant point of view that brings the tune back to its original, somewhat mournful tone. Oscar Peterson gave it a moody look in 1970, merging a stride-piano left-hand with alternately bluesy and elegant right-hand runs.



David Bowie like Schöner Gigolo

Schöner Gigolo, armer Gigolo, lyrics

Schöner Gigolo, armer Gigolo, denke nicht mehr an die Zeiten, wo du als Husar, goldverschnürt sogar, konntest durch die Straßen reiten. Uniform passée, Mädchen sagt Adieu, schöne Welt, du gingst in Fransen. Wenn das Herz dir auch bricht, mach ein lachendes Gesicht! Man zahlt, und du mußt tanzen.

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