Dorsey, Tommy (1905-1956) Encyclopedia Article

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A trombone-player known for his warm, silken tone on ballads as well as upbeat improvisations, Tommy Dorsey, "The Sentimental Gentleman of Swing," led one of the most versatile orchestras of the big band era. With its premier jazz stars, the band could swing with the best, and none equaled its style on slow ballads, as sung by Frank Sinatra and Jo Stafford.

By age 25, Tommy had become a successful free-lance radio and recording star, and in 1933 he and his brother Jimmy formed the Dorsey Brothers Orchestra. Within two years Tommy left to start his own orchestra. His band's best-selling record was the swinging *Boogie-Woogie,* selling over four million copies, but the most requested number was the poignant "I'll Never Smile Again." The brothers reunited in 1953.

Further Reading:

Atkins, Ronald, editor. *All That Jazz.* New York, Carlton, 1996.

Balliett, Whitney. *American Musicians.* New York, Oxford Press, 1986.

Simon, George T. *The Big Bands.* New York, MacMillan, 1974.