

= Are You Lonesome Tonight ? (song) =

" Are You Lonesome Tonight ? " is a song which was written by Roy Turk and Lou Handman in 1926 . It was recorded several times in 1927 ? first by Charles Hart , with successful versions by Vaughn De Leath and the duet of Jerry Macy and John Ryan . In 1950 the Blue Barron Orchestra version reached the top twenty on the Billboard 's Pop Singles chart .

In April 1960 , after Elvis Presley 's two @-@ year service in the United States Army , he recorded the song at the suggestion of manager Colonel Tom Parker ; " Are You Lonesome Tonight ? " was Parker 's wife , Marie Mott 's , favorite song . Its release was delayed by RCA Records executives , who thought the song did not fit Presley 's new (and publicized) style . When " Are You Lonesome Tonight ? " was released in November 1960 it was an immediate success in the U.S. , topping Billboard 's Pop Singles chart and reaching number three on the R & B chart . A month after the song 's release , it topped the UK Singles Chart . Presley 's version was certified gold by the Recording Industry Association of America in 1961 and upgraded to double platinum in 1992 .

" Are You Lonesome Tonight ? " was later recorded by several other artists , with versions by Donny Osmond and Merle Haggard becoming top @-@ twenty hits on the pop and country charts respectively . Billboard ranked " Are You Lonesome Tonight ? " number 81 on its " Hot 100 All @-@ Time Top Songs " list in 2008 .

= = Composition and early versions = =

The song was written in 1926 by vaudevillians Lou Handman and Roy Turk with three verses , followed by a spoken bridge . They based the bridge on a line in Ruggero Leoncavallo 's *Pagliacci* , and " You know someone said that the world 's a stage . And each must play a part " refers to " All the world 's a stage " from William Shakespeare 's *As You Like It* . This recitation is printed on the inside back cover of the original 1927 sheet music , and is sung on Stanley Kirbys recording in 1928 , Al Jolson 's recording in 1949 and Blue Barron recording in 1950 (US top 20 hit) . Billboard reported in 1960 its discovery that it was written by songwriter and vaudeville pianist Dave Dreyer .

Several versions of " Are You Lonesome Tonight ? " were recorded in 1927 . The first , by Charles Hart , was recorded on May 9 and released on Harmony Records (431 @-@ H) as the B @-@ side of " Sweet Marie " . On June 13 , Vaughn De Leath recorded the song as the B @-@ side of " It 's a Million to One You 're in Love " for Edison Records (Ed @-@ 52044) . De Leath had the first hit version of the song , which peaked at number four in November . On July 10 , 1927 , the Newport Society Orchestra recorded the song with Irving Kaufman the vocalist ; it was released on Harmony Records (511 @-@ H) with " I 'm Walkin ' On Air " . A version by the duet of Jerry Macy and John Ryan was released on Okeh Records (Ok @-@ 40866) as the B @-@ side of " Carolina Mine " . Henry Burr 's version peaked at number ten , and Little Jack Little had a hit with the song for Columbia Records . The Carter Family recorded it in 1936 , changing several elements of the original version . Although Gene Austin included the song in his shows during the 1930s , he never recorded it .

In March 1950 , the Blue Barron Orchestra released " Are You Lonesome Tonight ? " with " Penny Wise and Love Foolish " on the B @-@ side , and it peaked at number nineteen on Billboard 's Top Pop Singles chart . In April Don Cornell released a version without the narrative bridge as the B @-@ side of his RCA Victor single , " Stay With the Happy People " . Billboard called it a : " dreamy waltz ... (that) gets effective treatment (on the recording) " . Based on votes sent to Billboard , the song received 78 points from disc jockeys , 78 from record dealers , 79 from jukebox operators and 78 points overall ; on the magazine 's 100 @-@ point scale , it was rated " Good " . Al Jolson recorded a version with the spoken bridge on April 28 , 1950 , in Los Angeles ; Gordon Jenkins conducted the orchestra . With " No Sad Songs For Me " on the B @-@ side , it was released by Decca Records in June . According to Billboard , although the version was " revived " by Jolson 's " schmaltz style " his recitation of the bridge was " hamboned " . Based on votes sent to the magazine , the song received 71 points from disc jockeys , 71 from record dealers and 71 from jukebox operators ; with an overall score of 71 , it was rated " Good " . In 1959 , Jaye P. Morgan released the

song on MGM Records , with " Miss You " on the B @-@ side , and her version peaked at number 65 on Billboard 's Pop Singles chart .

= = Elvis Presley 's version = =

At the peak of his success in 1957 , Elvis Presley received his draft notice and was inducted into the Army on March 24 , 1958 . During the final months of his service , Presley began experimenting with new material in anticipation of his return to recording . Friend Charlie Hodge taught him to improve his breathing and expand his vocal range , and by the end of his deployment in Germany , Presley had added a full octave to his range . He returned to the United States on March 2 , 1960 , and was honorably discharged (with the rank of sergeant) on March 5 .

Presley 's first recording session after his return was scheduled for March 20 , and RCA 's Studio B had recently been equipped with a new three @-@ track recorder . To improve the recording of Presley 's voice , engineer Bill Porter had Telefunken U @-@ 47 microphones installed in the studio . A follow @-@ up session was scheduled for April , and the singer left for Miami to tape The Frank Sinatra Timex Show : Welcome Home Elvis .

During the selection of material for the sessions Presley 's manager , Colonel Tom Parker , suggested that he record " Are You Lonesome Tonight ? " . The favorite song of Parker 's wife , Marie Mott , the manager 's suggestion was the first and only time he intervened in his singer 's choice of repertoire . Mott knew the song from Gene Austin 's act , since he was managed at the time by her husband . Presley returned to the studio with his band , consisting of Scotty Moore , drummer D. J. Fontana , pianist Floyd Cramer , guitarist Hank Garland , bassist Bobby Moore , percussionist Buddy Harman and The Jordanaires , on April 3 .

After the eight songs Parker needed for Elvis Is Back ! were recorded , Presley moved on to his manager 's request . At 4 am on April 4 the singer began recording " Are You Lonesome Tonight ? " , accompanied by acoustic guitar , drums , bass and the backup group . He asked everyone else in the studio to leave the session , told Chet Atkins to turn the lights out and performed the song with the spoken bridge . After the second take Presley said to producer Steve Sholes , " Throw that tune out ; I can 't do it justice " . Sholes told engineer Bill Porter to ignore Presley 's order and asked the singer to do a new take , explaining that the Jordanaires had bumped into their microphone stand while recording in the dark . Presley performed the song once more , and that take became the master for the single .

= = = Release and reception = = =

" Are You Lonesome Tonight ? " was not released for several months while RCA executives decided if the ballad reflected Presley 's new style , but they and Parker ultimately decided to release the song . It was released as a single on November 1 , 1960 , with " I Gotta Know " on the B @-@ side , and pressing was assigned to plants in New Jersey , Indianapolis and Los Angeles . Copies (with a sleeve featuring a smiling Presley in a chartreuse shirt against a blue background) were sent to 5 @,@ 000 disc jockeys . Orders for the single began at 900 @,@ 000 copies the first week and climbed to 1 @,@ 200 @,@ 000 during the second .

The song debuted on Billboard 's Top 40 at number 35 on November 14 , moved a week later to number two and topped the chart by November 28 (replacing Maurice Williams and the Zodiacs ' " Stay ") . Presley 's 15th chart @-@ topping single , it held the top position until January 9 , 1961 . " Are You Lonesome Tonight ? " peaked at number three on the R & B chart , remaining on it for ten weeks . The song topped the Cash Box singles chart and reached number 45 on the Cash Box country singles chart . A month after its UK release it topped the UK Singles Chart . Three months after its release , the single had sales of two million copies worldwide ; that year , the Recording Industry Association of America certified it gold .

A November 7 , 1960 Billboard review called Presley 's rendition a " warm and touching performance " . In a later review , AllMusic praised Presley 's vocal range , calling " Are You Lonesome Tonight ? " a " tender ... sugary ballad ... full of soul and intense and intimate power "

defining " one of Presley 's darkest moments " .

= = = Legacy = = =

The success of " Are You Lonesome Tonight ? " made the song one of Presley 's live staples . He performed it live for the first time on March 25 , 1961 , at a Bloch Arena benefit in Honolulu for the USS Arizona Memorial , Presley 's one of four live performances between his return from the Army and his shift in career focus to acting .

Returning to music in 1968 , Presley included the song on his playlist for the NBC special Elvis and performed it live the following year during his first Las Vegas engagement . A version of the song , recorded on August 26 and documenting Presley altering the words of the narration and laughing through the rest of the bridge , was released in 1980 as part of the Elvis Aaron Presley box set . In 1982 , " Are You Lonesome Tonight ? " was a radio hit in the United Kingdom and reached number 25 on the British Singles Chart . Presley included the song in his 1972 documentary , Elvis on Tour , and the 1977 CBS special Elvis in Concert .

On March 27 , 1992 , the RIAA certified " Are You Lonesome Tonight ? " double platinum . In 2008 (the 50th anniversary of Billboard 's Hot 100) , the song was number 81 on the magazine 's " Hot 100 All @-@ Time Top Songs " list .

= = Later versions = =

Frank Sinatra recorded " Are You Lonesome Tonight ? " without the spoken bridge for his 1962 album , All Alone , and the Lettermen included the song on their 1964 album She Cried . Pat Boone recorded a version (also without the spoken bridge) in 1966 for his album , Memories . Doris Day recorded the song on June 6 , 1967 , for The Love Album .

Italian singer , Bobby Solo , recorded it both in English and Italian in the 1960s . " Ti senti sola stasera ? " can be viewed on YouTube.com.

Donny Osmond 's 1973 version is a B @-@ side to When I Fall in Love. and Merle Haggard 's cover on his 1977 album My Farewell to Elvis peaked at number 12 on Billboard 's Top Country Singles . A 1983 version by John Schneider peaked at number 53 on the Country Singles chart . In 1989 Sam Kinison performed a version of the song on The Tonight Show , substituting a bitter rant for the Shakespeare @-@ inspired bridge . Bryan Ferry 's version of " Are You Lonesome Tonight ? " was part of the soundtrack for 1992 's Honeymoon in Vegas .

= = Chart performance = =