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## PERRY COMO (1912-2001)

**Birth Name:** Pierino Ronald Como  
**Place of Birth:** Canonsburg, Pennsylvania



**Career Highlights:** In 1946, the very first year that *Billboard* magazine issued its list of top hits of the year, it was Perry Como's recording of "Prisoner of Love" (written and previously recorded by Russ Columbo) that earned the coveted No. 1 spot. (His recording of the song "Surrender" was No. 11.) One of 13 children born to Italian immigrants, Como grew up aspiring to become a barber. He opened a small shop, catering primarily to local steelworkers, at the age of 14. Even after embarking on a successful singing career, Como moved back to his hometown with his wife and infant son in 1942 to resume his hairstyling career. But he returned to show business shortly thereafter, signing a recording contract with RCA in 1943 and hosting a radio show that would transfer to television in 1948. *The Perry Como Show* enjoyed a long run on network television, offering mainstream entertainment and earning Como a reputation as an artist who celebrated traditional family values. Over the course of his career Como sold more than 100 million records, and was able to maintain his popularity even as Rock and Roll began to dominate the popular music charts.

**Recording:** "Prisoner of Love," 1946

**Questions to consider:**

- What kind of image does Como present in the picture below?
- Why might Como have been featured in an advertisement for shoe polish? What does his appearance in the advertisement suggest about the way Americans felt about him?
- How did television help Como maintain his success and popularity?
- How would you describe Como's singing style? Which audiences do you think this style of singing would most appeal to?

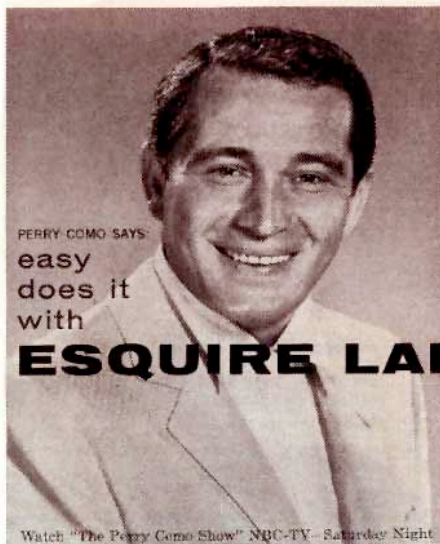
# THE BILLBOARD FIRST ANN

**The Year's Top Popular Retail Record Sellers**

RECORD	ARTIST	LABEL AND NO.	POINTS
1. Prisoner of Love.....	Perry Como	Victor 20-1814	151
2. To Each His Own.....	Eddy Howard	Majestic 7188 & Majestic 1070	150
3. The Gypsy.....	Ink Spots	Decca 18817	148
4. Five Minutes More.....	Frank Sinatra	Columbia 37048	134
5. Rumors Are Flying.....	Frankie Carle	Columbia 37069	117
6. Oh! What It Seemed To Be.....	Frankie Carle	Columbia 36892	108
7. Personality.....	Johnny Mercer-The Pied Pipers	Capitol 230	101
8. South America, Take It Away.....	Bing Crosby-The Andrews Sisters	Decca 23569	100
9. The Gypsy.....	Dinah Shore	Columbia 36964	97
10. Oh! What It Seemed To Be.....	Frank Sinatra	Columbia 36905	95
11. Surrender.....	Perry Como	Victor 20-1877	94
12. Doctor, Lawyer, Indian Chief.....	Betty Hutton	Capitol 220	86
13. Let It Snow! Let It Snow! Let It Snow!.....	Vaughn Monroe	Victor 20-1759	81

**England's Top Tunes of the Year**

SONG	ENGLISH PUBLISHER	AMERICAN PUBLISHER	POINTS
1. Cruising Down the River....	Cinephonic	*	597
2. Bless You for Being an Angel.	Noel Gay	Shapiro-Bernstein	522
3. I Can't Begin To Tell You....	Chappell	Bregman-Vocco-Conn	446
4. Primrose Hill.....	Lawrence Wright	*	358
5. Let Bygones Be Bygones.....	Feldman	*	345
6. Chickery Chick.....	Campbell-Connelly	Santly-Joy	330
7. It's a Grand Night for Singing.	Chappell	Williamson	316
8. Down in the Valley.....	Leeds	Leeds	315
9. Laughing on the Outside (Cry-Campbell-ing on the Inside).....	Connelly	BMI	305
10. Money Is the Root of All Evil.	Chappell	Sun	268
11. In the Land of Beginning Again.....	Feldman	Feist Mills	264
11. Mary Lou.....	Francis Day	Mills	264
12. Into Each Life Some Rain			
Must Fall.....	Bradbury Wood	Sun	239



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Watch "The Perry Como Show" NBC-TV—Saturday Night

Advertisement, 1958