We silver-haired citizens often boast of a time in our culture when the words to songs actually made sense.

Many of us remember listening/watching the popular weekly broadcast of Your Hit Parade, a program featuring the newest song sensations. The show was aired on radio from 1935 to 1955, and on TV from 1950 to 1959. A magazine by the same name was studied (perhaps more diligently than school assignments) by young people during that period of our history.

With few exceptions love ballads and patriotic songs usually occupied the interest of those of us who grew up during those years. The following article, however, contains a few of those aforementioned exceptions, such as….

**Mairzy Doats**

According to Wikipedia, the novelty song, *Mairzy Doats* was recorded by Al Trace and his Silly Symphonists and first played on radio station WOR, New York. A version if it by the Merry Macs became No. 1 in March 1944.” Within the first three weeks of its release, it also became the number one sheet music seller, having sold over 450,000 copies.

“The song's refrain, as written on the sheet music, seems meaningless.

“Mairzy doats and dozy doats and liddle lamzy divey
A kiddley divey too, wooden shoe?”
However, the lyrics of the bridge provide a clue.

“If the words sound queer and funny to your ear, a little bit jumbled and jivey, Sing “Mares eat oats and does eat oats and little lambs eat ivy.” This hint allows the ear to translate the final line as “[a] kid'll eat ivy, too, wouldn't you?”

The Hut-Sut Song became a hit in the early 1940’s. First recorded by Horace Heidt and His Musical Knights, it was later sung by then “King of Nonsense Songs,” Spike Jones. It went like this…

"Hut-Sut Rawlson on the rillerah and a brawla, brawla sooit"
"Hut-Sut Rawlson on the rillerah and a brawla sooit"

Another zany melody was the Three Little Fishies Song recorded by “The Ole Professor”, Kay Kyser, and his orchestra. It was a no.1 hit in 1939, and was revived in 2012 by Ray Stevens for inclusion in his 108-song box set, The Encyclopedia of Recorded Comedy Music.

“Down in a meadow in a itty-bitty pool
Swam three little fishies and a mama fishy, too
“Swim,” said the mama fishy, “Swim if you can.”
And they swam and swam right over that dam.
Boop boop diten datem whatem choo
Boop boop diten datem whatem choo
Boop boop diten datem whatem choo
And they swam and swam right over that dam.”
And then there was Shoo Shoo Baby, made famous by the Andrew Sisters in 1944. It was about a B-17 Flying Fortress pilot saying goodbye to his sweetheart during WWII.

“Bye, bye, bye baby
Don't cry baby
Shoo, shoo, shoo baby
Do-dah do-day
Your papa's off to the seven seas.”

On a lighter note came the song, Chickery Chick. Lyricist Sylvia Dee wrote the words to the nonsense song that went to no.1 in 1945. It was played by Sammy Kaye's orchestra. Its lyrics went like this:

"Chickery-chick, cha-la, cha-la
Check-a-la romey in a bananika
Bollika, wollika, can't you see
Chickery chick is me?”

You might think that the following “non-words” come from the song, Smoke Gets In Your Eyes, but they don’t. See if you can identify them from a mirthful melody sing by David Seville back in 1958 and later made famous by the Chipmunks.

“Ooh, eeh, ooh, ah, ah, ting, tang, walla, walla, bing, bang
Ooh, eeh, ooh, ah, ah, ting, tang, walla, walla, bing, bang.”

The song that asks, Does Your Chewing Gum Lose Its Flavour? (On the Bedpost Overnight) sung by Lonnie Donegan, was released as a single in 1959, and became an instant hit on the UK Singles Chart, placing no. 3. It was a cover version of Does Your Spearmint Lose Its Flavor, written in 1924 by Billy Rose, Ernest Breuer and Marty Bloom. The Happiness Boys (Ernie Hare and Billy Jones) recorded it, as did Lulu Belle and Scotty and The Two Gilberts. The title and a few of the song’s words had to be changed because of BBC’s avoidance of using trademarked names.
The late Roger Miller who once quipped, “It took me twenty years to become an overnight success,” wrote and sang some of the era’s most hilarious nonsense songs. Miller’s You Can’t Roller Skate in a Buffalo Herd, Chug-A-Lug, Dang Me and OO-De-Lally all hit the charts in high numbers.

Dubbed the “Comedy King of Music City”, Ray Stevens has won numerous awards for his nonsense songs, which include Mississippi Squirrel Revival, Jeremiah Peabody’s Polyunsaturated Quick-Dissolving, Fast-Acting Pleasant-Tasting Green and Purple Pills, Ahab the Arab and the Streak. Stevens’s clownish vocal gymnastics are similar to scat singing.

In non-technical terms, scat singing is an innovative vocalization using non-words to fill in the spaces between refrains and choruses.

Way back in 1928, Helen Kane sang, I Wanna Be Loved by You, which used the non-word phrase, “Boop-Boop-ah-Boop.” This earned her the name of “The Boop-Boop Girl.”

During the same decade Bing Crosby crooned his way to stardom with his “Ya da da dee da da da da La da da da dee da da da da La da da da dee Just murmur da da dee da da da da And when you do She’ll answer da da dee da da dee dee,...”
Ella Fitzgerald, known as “The Queen of Jazz,” was also the queen of scat. An example of her expertise is seen in her rendition of How High the Moon.

“Boo bi yoo bi
Bi yu di di ooh dun
dabba oohbee
Boo di yoo di
Di yu di dee dee doohdun
di di oohnbee
Bu di yu dan dan dan
Dee boognbee
Aheedee doo doo abbi woo do ee
Woah ba bee ba bap beya oh
Ein bap bap dein”

Louis “Satchmo” Armstrong (pictured here) Sarah Vaughn, Cab Callaway, and Betty Carter were among the first jazz artists who mastered the art of scat singing. Each of them had his or her own particular style and few have been able to successfully imitate them.

The Golden Age of Radio and Television which spanned over three decades of entertainment gave us a variety of differing, but interrelated, styles of singing, all of which we “old-timers” remember fondly.