

In search of the Belgian 'My Bonnie/The Saints' single.

In search of the Belgian 'My Bonnie/The Saints' single 1961-1964

(by R. Develtere ©2012)

On 22 and 23 June 1961 the Beatles recorded seven songs for Bert Kaempfert Produktion in the Frederich Ebert Halle in Harburg-Hamburg: *My Bonnie*, *Nobody's Child*, *The Saints*, *Take out Some Insurance On Me Baby (If You Love Me Baby)* and *Why* as the backing band (Beat Brothers) for Tony Sheridan. *Cry for a shadow* and *Ain't she sweet* were performed by The Beatles alone¹.

For a start, Kaempfert decided to release *My Bonnie* and *The Saints* (2 traditionals) because no rights had to be paid. Musicians: Tony Sheridan (vocals & leadguitar), John Lennon (guitar), Paul McCartney (bass, background screaming), George Harrison (guitar) and Pete Best (drums). Engineer: Karl Hinze. Producer: Bert Kaempfert.

Where can we find the Belgian 'My Bonnie/The Saints' single? A chronological overview.

October 23, 1961: 'My Bonnie/The Saints' Germany Polydor NH 24 673 -Rock.

Version 1 or AA²(2:38): 'Rock' version + slow German spoken intro '*Mein Herz ist bei dir nür...*' (35 sec.). Comes in a black and white sleeve with picture of Tony Sheridan. 'Beat Brothers' (= The Beatles) on the orange Polydorlabel.



January 5, 1962: 'My Bonnie/The Saints' UK Polydor NH66833

Version 2 or AB (2:35): It has the slow English spoken introduction: '*My Bonnie lies over the ocean...*' (32 sec.). The first time ever we see the words 'The Beatles' on a record label!³ Company sleeve.



MY BONNIE
(Trad. arr. Sheridan)
TONY SHERIDAN
& THE BEATLES

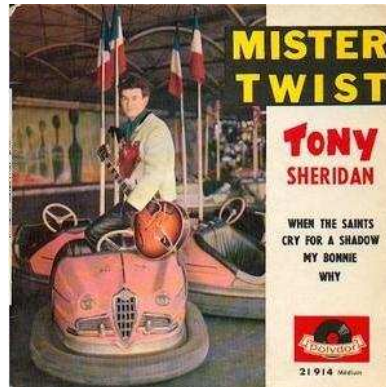


This original UK Polydor label differs from the June 1963 reissue. Look at the 'ampersand' before 'THE BEATLES'

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January 26, 1962: 'Mr Twist' EP France Polydor EP EPH 21 914.

Although this is not a single, it's worth mentioning it. Unbelievable but true, in France, on this 'Tony Sheridan' EP we can hear 4 recordings from the June 1961 sessions. (*When*) *The Saints*, *Cry For A Shadow*, *Why* and 'My Bonnie' with the slow German intro (version 1 or AA). On this record we hear -for the first time and 8 months before the release of *Love Me Do*- The Beatles as a group on 'Cry For A Shadow', although we don't see the words 'Beat Brothers' or 'Beatles' on the sleeve or label.⁴



February 1962: 'My Bonnie/The Saints' Germany Polydor 24 673 –Twist.

Version 2 or AB . 'Twist version', with slow English intro.

Comes in black and white sleeve with picture of Tony Sheridan+ addition of 'TWIST'.



April 1962: 'My Bonnie/The Saints' USA Decca. Pink label 31382.

Ultra rare promotional copy, sent to radio stations. Version 2 or AB with slow English intro.

Decca company sleeve.



In search of the Belgian 'My Bonnie/The Saints' single.

23 april 1962: 'My Bonnie/The Saints' USA multicolour Decca label 31382

Version 2 or AB with slow English intro. Vinyl matrix numbers: DGG 66833 a/b (DGG= Deutsche Grammophon Gesellschaft). 66833 is the catalognumber of the January 1962 UK record. This is the first commercial US record with the Beatles (Beat Brothers) on it⁵. No success in the charts.



June 1963: 'My Bonnie/The Saints' reissue Polydor UK NH66833

This 1963 reissue has a common '&' before 'THE BEATLES' and a smaller print type on the label. For the last time Tony Sheridan is mentioned as the main artist on this Orange Polydor label. UK Company sleeve.



January 27, 1964: 'My Bonnie/The Saints' USA MGM K-13213

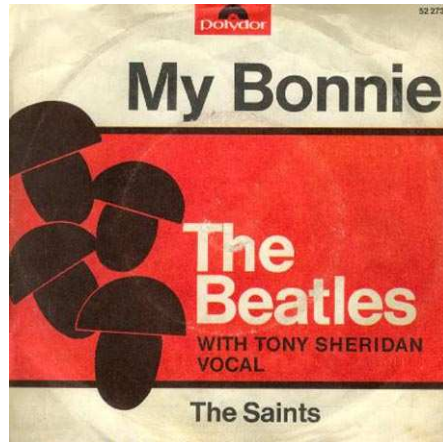
Second US release. Versie 3 or A (2:03): 'My Bonnie' without slow intro. The reason why Polydor dropped the spoken intro from 1964 on, is not so clear⁶. From the beginning of 1964 we also see a change on the label and sleeve: 'THE BEATLES with Tony Sheridan'....



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March - April, 1964: 'My Bonnie/The Saints' Germany, France and Belgium: Polydor NH 52273. A nice trio !

Version 3 or A (2:03): 'My Bonnie' without intro. New red Polydor label + 'Pilzenkopf'sleeve



Germany

Version 1 or AA: 'My Bonnie' with German intro!⁷ New red Polydor label + Company sleeve



France

Version 3 or A (2:03): 'My Bonnie' without intro.

Here we have the rare and only Belgian Beatles single on an orange Polydor label. Soon afterwards Polydor Belgium will use the red Polydor labels. Only 1563 copies were pressed by Polydor Belgium. There are three labelvariants!⁸ It was the first Belgian record to mention the name of 'The Beatles' on the sleeve.⁹



Belgium

On these three 'Polydor NH 52273' releases 'Tony Sheridan' is printed in small characters. From now on The Beatles are the stars. Poor Tony!

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From the beginning of 1964 Polydor will start to release singles and LP's all over the world with the songs the Beatles recorded as a backing group of Tony Sheridan almost 3 years earlier. On most of these releases The Beatles are the big artists and Tony Sheridan isn't mentioned anymore. For unknown reasons since 1964 the English and German intro on 'My Bonnie' was dropped.

There are three Belgium Polydor LP's, released in the seventies, where you can find these eight Sheridan/Beatles recordings from 1961 and 1962: *Portrait of the Beatles* (Polydor 2418 162), *The Beatles First* (Polydor Contact 2483124) and the double LP *The Beatles Album* (Quality Sound Series 2670115).



More than 30 years after it's initial release we hear *My Bonnie* in stereo – **version 2 (AB)** - on the Anthology 1 CD/LP (November 1995). And finally **version 1 (AA)** is released on the double CD *Beatles Bop-Hamburg Days* (Bear Family Records 2001).

June 1962 : LP 'My Bonnie' Tony Sheridan Germany, Polydor 46612 LPHM (mono) or SLPHM 237112 (stereo)



This is the first LP on which the Beatles perform! Only on *My Bonnie* (with English intro) and *The Saints* and for the first time ever in STEREO. On the back of this LP there's some publicity for the LP 'Try a little tenderness' (1961, POLYDOR 46359 LPHM) of our Belgian Jazz musician Toots Thielemans. Toots will meet The Beatles in New York in February 1964 to promote Rickenbaker guitars.

- ¹ On 24 may 1962 they also recorded *Sweet Georgia Brown* and *Swanee River* in Studio Rahlstedt in Hamburg. *Swanee River* (the Beatles version) was probably lost at Bert Kaempfers' house and never commercially released. Conclusion: a total of 8 Kaempfert/Polydor recordings were done in 1961-62.
- ² This code is also used in the books *From Cavern to Starclub* (1998) and *Les Beatles - Enquête sur un Mythe* (2003). *My Bonnie* was a traditional. Why make different versions? It was probably the idea of the German publisher, Alfred Schacht. As a publisher he earned ± 50% of the rights, according to Sheridan. He could publish *My Bonnie* 2 times by making two different intro's. Sheridan was the author of the English intro and Kaempfert wrote the lyrics for the German intro. This made him co-author of the song! Clever guy! On some labels on the Polydor singles from 1961 and 1962 we can see the credits: *Trad./Sheridan/Bertie*. Bernd 'Bertie' is the pseudonym for producer Bert Kaempfert. Anyway Alfred Schacht (and his company Tonika Musikverlag) made a lot of money as the publisher of the song. Kaempfert was also partner in the Tonika Publishing Company.
- ³ Can this really be under Brian Epstein's influence? He only met The Beatles for the first time at the Cavern on November 9, 1961 and had a first official meeting with them on December 6, 1961. On December 10, 1961 they accepted him as their manager. Could he convince Polydor England to change the name on the label in this short time? The Beatles only signed a real contract with Epstein on January, 24 1962.
- ⁴ This EP will be reissued again by Polydor France in 1964, in a new different sleeve with 'Les Beatles' on it.
- ⁵ Around the same time there was a Canadian release on a black DECCA label. Surprisingly there was even a 'My Bonnie/The Saints' single release in Japan and Greece in 1962 on the Polydor label.
- ⁶ The only exception is the French single *My Bonnie /The Saints* Polydor NH 52273 from march/april 1964. Polydor France used the master from the Tony Sheridan EP 'Mister Twist' Polydor 21914 from January 1962.
- ⁷ Polydor France used the master from the Tony Sheridan EP 'Mister Twist' Polydor 21914 from January 1962.
- ⁸ *The Beatles in Belgium!*, page 31-32. (R.Develtere 2008)
- ⁹ For more information see 'The Beatles in Belgium!' (R.Develtere).