



# Perry Como

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# Overview

Full Name: Pierino Ronald “Perry” Como

Born: May 18, 1912

Died: May 12, 2001

Hometown: Canonsburg, Pennsylvania



# Early Life

- 7th child of 13 children
- His parents were Italian immigrants
  - He did not speak English until beginning school
- Took music lessons at a very young age
  - Played trombone, guitar, and organ.
  - Never had vocal training as a child.
- Earliest ambition was to become the best barber in town
- Married high school sweetheart Roselle Beline at the age of 21 and had three children
  - Roselle passed in 1998 and Como never remarried



## Musical Beginnings

- First began touring at the age of 21 while working as a singing barber
- Mid-1930's: performed with Ted Weems's Orchestra on Weems's radio show "Beat The Band"
- 1942: Hosted CBS radio show "Supper Club"
- 1943: Gained contract with RCA Victor Records, started his work in Hollywood
  - Appeared in the film "Something for the Boys" this same year



## Musical Style

Como's singing is known for being smooth and good-natured, such as in "Hot Diggity". His relaxed personality was also reflected in his singing style. Como gave Bing Crosby credit as an influence for his voice and singing style. He sang over soft instrumentals and background vocal ensembles, such as in "Catch a Falling Star." Como focused more on his sound rather than singing and performing with invigorating energy.



# Acting Career

- Como starred in three films
  - *Something for the Boys* (1944)
  - *Doll Face* (1945)
  - *If I'm Lucky* (1946)
- On the topic of his movie career...
  - "I was wasting their time and they were wasting mine"-Perry Como
- Como's television presence was much more successful
  - *Supper Club*
  - *Sing to Me* 1955 - 1959
  - *The Perry Como Show (Kraft Music Hall)* 1959 - 1967
  - Throughout his television career, Como won five Emmy Awards



# Como's Life on Television

Como's career on television took off when NBC approached him about putting his radio show, *Chesterfield Supper Club* on television on December 24th, 1948.



NBC was so pleased with the results that they extended experimentally televising the show through August 1949.

*Chesterfield Supper Club* became an official television program on September 8th, 1949 and aired for half an hour on Sunday nights

*Chesterfield Supper Club* was renamed *The Perry Como Chesterfield Show* when Perry moved to CBS in 1950

The program aired three times a week for 15 minutes each episode

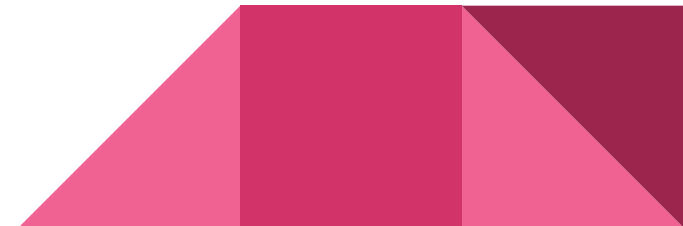
## Como's Life on Television (cont.)

Como signed a 12-year contract with NBC in April of 1955 for *The Perry Como Show*, which debuted on television on September 17, 1955.

After airing for only two months, the show rated as number seven in the Nielsen Top Ten

Como was approached by Kraft Foods company in early 1959 about becoming the new host for their television program named *Kraft Music Hall*.

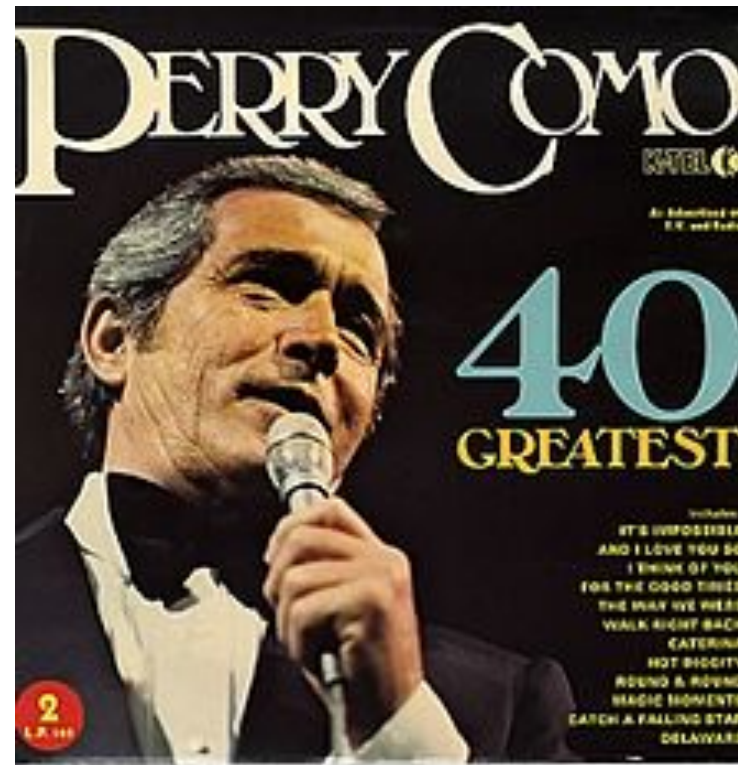
Como signed a \$25 million two-year contract with Kraft, which was a record-breaking deal at that time





# Top Hits

- Till The End of Time
- Catch a Falling Star
- It's Impossible
- Magic Moments
- And I Love You So
- Papa Loves Mambo
- For the Good Times
- Hot Diggity
- Home for the Holidays



Como had 148 total charted hits, with 14 #1 hits. He ranked as the #5 best selling music artist of the 1950s, behind only Elvis Presley, Frank Sinatra, Nat King Cole, and Miles Davis.

## Till the End of Time

“Till the End of Time” was Como’s first and biggest hit. He recorded a rendition for the film *A Song to Remember*. Como’s rendition was released in 1945 and spent 11 weeks at #1.



[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KFXA\\_-2cIYU](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KFXA_-2cIYU)

# Notable Awards and Honors

1956- Peabody Award

1959- Grammy for Best Male Vocal  
Performance

1955-1959- 5 Emmys

1990- Inducted into the Academy of  
Television Arts & Sciences Hall of  
Fame

2002- Grammy Lifetime Achievement  
Award

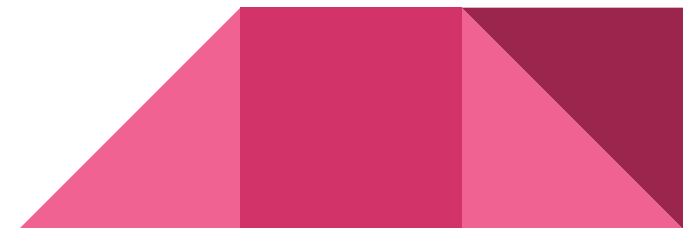


# Artists Influenced by Como

**Frank Sinatra** was motivated to leave the Tommy Dorsey orchestra and begin a solo career in 1942 after Perry Como's successes with the Ted Weems orchestra

*"Mr. Como was with Ted Weems, a then-popular orchestra leader, and he is still such a wonderful singer. I thought if I don't make a move out of this band and try to do it on my own soon, one of these guys will do it, and I'll have to fight."*

*-Frank Sinatra*



# Life Outside of Entertainment

Perry Como lived a respectfully mellow and tame lifestyle outside of entertainment, especially in comparison to the controversial lifestyles of many other famous musicians of that time.

He was married to Roselle Como for 65 years until she died in 1998. They were the parents of several adopted children.

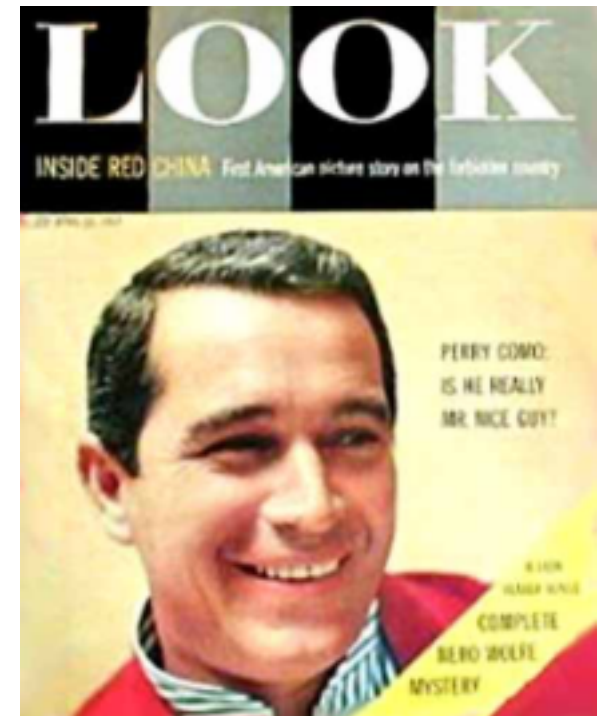
During the prime of his career, he made no appearances in clubs for 26 years, concentrating on his TV show, recordings, and family instead.



## Life Outside of Entertainment

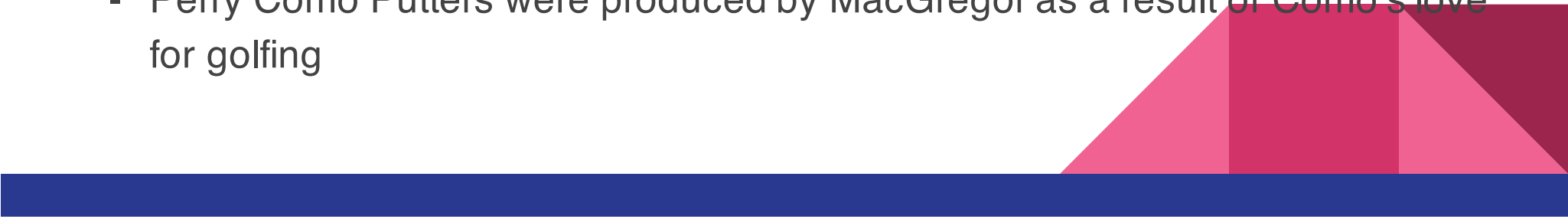
*“Como is the only TV performer with a price tag of more than a million dollars a year who has no enemies and no embarrassing eccentricities and whose personal life has always been unblemished by gossip.”*

*- Joe McCarthy (Look Magazine Writer)*



*“Perry Como: Is He Really Mr. Nice Guy?” - Look Magazine, 1957*

# Life Outside of Entertainment (Personal Style)

- Como preferred casual clothing and was known for his “casual cardigan” look
    - On the topic of Como’s casual style, Bing Crosby described him as “*the man who invented casual*”
  - Named one of the Best Dressed Men in 1946
  - Had his own line of sports/casual men’s clothing through Bucknell (1950’s)
  - Perry Como Putters were produced by MacGregor as a result of Como’s love for golfing
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## Perry Como's Decline in Popularity

As music, television entertainment, and the American lifestyle began to adopt a more egocentric lifestyle, the unpretentious and humble personality of Perry Como was gradually replaced in entertainment. However, Como was accepting of his decline in popularity, unlike other entertainers who fight tooth-and-nail to stay in the headlines. Como welcomed his decline in the same way he welcomed his rise to the limelights.





# Como's Death

Como died at the age of 88 on May 12, 2001

He passed away in his sleep in his home in Jupiter Inlet Colony, Florida

Como reportedly suffered from symptoms of Alzheimer's disease prior to his death



*"50 years of music and a life well lived. An example to all."*  
- RCA Records' memorial in *Billboard* magazine

## Perry Como's Legacy

Perry Como was a very popular entertainer with massive successes in music, radio, and television. He set innumerable precedents in these entertainment industries and made significant impacts within them as well. Como's humble lifestyle ensures that he will be remembered for his impacts within entertainment rather than controversies.

*"I was a barber. Since then I've been a singer. That's it."*

-Perry Como



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# Links for Pictures

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