

Jack Benny

Jack Benny (1894-1974), an enormously successful regular network radio personality in the 1930s, made a smooth transition to television. The weekly TV show **THE JACK BENNY PROGRAM** aired from 1950 to 1965 and its comedy revolved around the Benny persona, which had been developed over two decades of performing. His radio and TV shows consisted of a continuing sketch comedy, where he played the role of a vain, well-mannered and stingy (eternally "39") bachelor, stoically suffering life's little tragedies, surrounded by a zany entourage. Benny has been characterized as, "not one who said funny things but one who said things funny."

Benny's family donated to UCLA his personal, professional, and business papers, as well as a collection of his television shows. The comedian's film and television careers are widely represented in the Archive collections. They include seven films made for Paramount in the 1930s and 1940s: **COLLEGE HOLIDAY**, **THE BIG BROADCAST OF 1937**, **ARTISTS AND MODELS**, **ARTISTS AND MODELS ABROAD**, **MAN ABOUT TOWN**, **LOVE THY NEIGHBOR** and **BUCK BENNY RIDES AGAIN**. There are more than 220 episodes of the **JACK BENNY PROGRAM**, including the debut program and several specials broadcast after the series ended its regular run. The University



Jack Benny, a performer whose career spanned multiple decades, found popular commercial success on radio, television and film.

Research Library's Special Collections holds the Jack Benny papers. The collection includes 900 radio scripts and electrical transcriptions from 1932 to 1955 and 296 television scripts for **THE JACK BENNY PROGRAM**. There are also scrapbooks, business correspondence, photographs, and production stills for the years 1929-1940.

COLLECTION PROFILE

Jack Benny

Films

(this is only a partial list – consult the Archive Research and Study Center for further listings)

Taxi Tangle (1931). Paramount Publix Corp. Director, Aubrey Scotto. Based on a story by Clyde North. Study Copy: VA2501 M

To Be or Not to Be (1942). Romaine Film Corp. Director, Ernst Lubitsch. Writers, Melchior Lengyel, Ernst Lubitsch and Edwin Justus Mayer. Study Copy: VA19050 M

It's in the Bag (1945). Manhattan Productions, Inc. Director, Richard Wallace. Writers, Lewis R. Foster and Fred Allen. Study Copy: VA14558 M (UCLA Film and Television Archive Preservation)

Television Programs

(this is only a partial list – consult the Archive Research and Study Center for further listings)

The Jack Benny Program (1950-10-28). CBS. Pilot. Study Copy: VA7059 T

The Jack Benny Program (1951-04-01). CBS. Guests: Claudette Colbert, Robert Montgomery and Basil Rathbone. Study Copy: VA7058 T

The Jack Benny Program (1953-10-25). CBS. Guest: Humphrey Bogart. Study Copy: VA1014 T

The Jack Benny Program (1954-03-21). CBS. Guests: Bing Crosby and George Burns. Study Copy: VA9355 T

The Jack Benny Program (1958-09-21). CBS. Guest: Gary Cooper. Study Copy: VA3900 T

The Jack Benny Program (1960-12-11). CBS. Guests: Mr. and Mrs. Jimmy Stewart. Study Copy: VA5050 T

The Jack Benny Program (1962-02-18). CBS. Guests: Rock Hudson and Hugh Downs. Study Copy: VA2663 T

The Jack Benny Program (1963-01-15). CBS. Twilight Zone Sketch. Study Copy: VA7779 T

The Jack Benny Program (1965-04-16). NBC. Smothers Brothers Show. Study Copy: VA9325 T

Print Resources

(for more information consult the UCLA Arts Library)

Benny, Jack and Joan Benny. *Sunday Nights at Seven: The Jack Benny Story*. New York: Warner Books, 1990.

Jack Benny: The Radio and Television Work. The Museum of Television and Radio. New York: Harper-Perennial, 1991.

Related Resources

The Department of Special Collections unit of the UCLA Libraries Collection holds various materials related to Jack Benny in the Jack Benny Papers, 1930-1974 collection. For more information, please contact Special Collections: (310) 825-4988.