

Sunday, 1 July 2012

Doris Singleton

There are few people who appeared in adult roles on the Jack Benny radio show still with us, and Doris Singleton was one until this past week. She died at the age of 92.

Doris picked up the role of Pauline, Mary's maid, when the Benny show decided to bring it back on February 15, 1948. The character had an interesting evolution. Butterfly McQueen had played Butterfly, Mary's maid. Columnist Leonard Lyons reported on July 31, 1944:

Butterfly McQueen, the film actress who has been appearing on Jack Benny's program, will not return to the show next season. Miss McQueen likes working for Benny, receives high pay and says that her experiences with the show have been pleasant ones. She isn't returning because she refuses to play the role of a maid, feeling that this is a reflection upon her race.

The following season, a new maid named Pauline appeared, portrayed by Pauline Drake (later one of umpteen Miss Duffys on "Duffy's Tavern," thanks to Keith Scott for the identification), but she disappeared after a few scattered episodes. Why Benny decided to bring her back more than two years later is a mystery, as is why the audience would believe that Mary could afford a maid if the stingy Benny character grossly underpaid her.

Pauline didn't stay around long again, but it's not like Singleton needed the work. She had regular comedy roles on radio with Jack Paar, Alan Young (moving with the show to television) and on "December Bride" (not moving with the show to television). And, on TV, her list of credits is long, appearing with Bob Hope, Bing Crosby and Eddie Cantor. Of course, her most famous recurring role was Carolyn Appleby, the competitive, somewhat stuck-up neighbour on "I Love Lucy."

Doris was quite different than a lot of the women regularly working in supporting roles on network radio comedy. Her characters generally weren't over the top, not like characters played by the likes of Sara Berner, Elvia Allman or Bea Benaderet. She seemed to get a lot of straight parts and, like most people in radio, moved between drama and comedy (she sang as well).

Profiles of non-starring actors were rare in newspapers, but Doris rated one, a syndicated piece dated June 24, 1952.

Doris Singleton Has Never Repeated 1942 Radio Fluff

By TOM E. DANSON

HOLLYWOOD. Doris Singleton, well known radio actress, and more recently heard on the CBS "December Bride" series, will never forget her radio debut as an actress back in October 1942. Doris told me about the embarrassing incident the other day during a rehearsal. It happened when she was reading a commercial on the [Lux] Radio Theater series. She was to have said: "My very dear friend, Somerset Maugham, says . . ." The actress, with a good case of "jitters," fouled her line and said: "Monerset Saum"—and then, on her second try, blurted out "Monerham Set!"

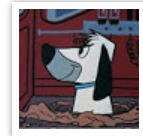
Amid the hilarious laughter of the studio audience, William Keighley, the "Radio Theater" producer, answered: "Yes, he must be a VERY dear friend of yours!"

In the years that have gone by since this gigantic "fluff," years in which the actress has appeared on hundreds of coast-to-coast radio programs, Doris has "wood-shedded" diligently, (a term actors use for studying their roles), to make sure that she'd never again duplicate that "Radio Theater" performance!

Doris is a native of Buffalo, N. Y., but has lived most of her life here in Southern California, a graduate of New York City's American Academy of Dramatic Arts, the actress prepared during 1940-42 for her eventual



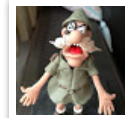
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Peter Gray's Comics and Art



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Knox...and families of these comic artists can see these gems... - made with fimo clay I had ago and its not very easy to do...
4 hours ago

Fernando Liera Blog Cartoons



Vehicle Verification Centers of Mexico City will reopen in August with COVID

safety measures. - ©2020 fernandollercartoons.com
6 hours ago

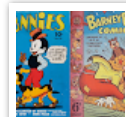
Movies with Michael



Cowboy Church #67 - Hello my friends and welcome back for another

service of cowboy church. Today's musical selection begins with Gene Autry singing "Dear Hearts and Gentle Pe...
9 hours ago

Termite Terrace headlines



Question for All You Cartoon Collectors! - OK so I've been doing some

looking around. Bosko apparently had a comic book and I'm wondering if any of you know of

appearances on "Radio Theater" working as a vocalist with Art Jarrett's orchestra. Having studied classical dancing, Doris made solo appearances with the Ballet Theater Co. in New York and Philadelphia, in addition to somehow working in a season of summer stock in Massachusetts. "Those two years," Doris told me, "found me doing everything but running a newspaper route!"

She is married to radio writer-producer Charles Isaacs, who for the last season has been handling the Jimmy Durante writing chores. Doris says Charlie is her favorite hobby.

Here's another column from 1952 where Doris gets a brief mention.

SEVERAL SUFFER PAINFUL OR EMBARRASSING INJURIES

TV Getting Downright Perilous For Comedians

By VIRGINIA MACPHERSON

United Press Hollywood Writer

HOLLYWOOD, Jan. 4 —Ask any top comedian, the television racket is getting downright dangerous.

The customers aren't throwing tomatoes—yet—but in the past few weeks Ed Wynn. Allan Young [sic], Bob Hope, Jimmy Durante, Martha Raye and Milton Berle have all suffered what turned out to be painful injuries...or some that were so embarrassing it was just as bad.

And the sponsors are getting worried. In the movies they hire stunt men to do the rough stuff for the \$5,000-a-week big shots. But in TV the celebrities have to do it themselves.

Want Gags On Film

That's why everybody's hollering for a chance to put their gags on film.

Charles Isaacs and Jack Elinson, two boys who dream up funny things for Jimmy Durante to do on TV, think it's the only way to keep alive what good comedians there are left. "Jimmy used one gag in a show that scared us stiff," Isaacs said. "He climbed on a fence, tied a knot in some long underwear and slid down it.

Taped Him Up

"Now, Jimmy's no Boy Scout. He can't even tie a very good knot. We begged him to drop the whole thing...but not him. Soooo...he swung out like a sailor, fell six feet and bruised his hip and arm. We had to tape him up for the show."

On another program the "Schnozz" went long-hair on his fans with a pair of crashing cymbals. Only his aim wasn't very good. He crashed himself instead. Time out while they stitched up his thumb.

Ed Wynn tried to play "Samson" to Dorothy Lamour's "Delilah" in a TV skit a while back, stumbled over scenery and broke two bones in his foot. Bob Hope took on Jack Dempsey for one round of prize-fighting and wound up so winded he couldn't crack a joke for almost a full minute. But Allan Young's really the hard-luck kid of TV. He threw himself into a hot love scene with Doris Singleton during a rehearsal and sprained his neck.

"My own wife," Isaacs grinned. "But Allan managed to make the show that night. And halfway through the script he fell through a wall and sprained his ankle!"

Breaks Shoulder Strap

Martha Raye was doing pratfalls one night when her shoulder strap broke. She did the rest of her act clutching her neckline.

And last week Berle got squirted with whipped cream and a sack of flour, a gag that turned mighty un-funny when the flour got in his eye and closed it up tight.

"Being hilarious is a terrific risk sometimes," Elinson says. "And you can't do a letter-perfect five show anyway. It ought be all on film. . .then for the dangerous stunts you can hire doubles and keep your actors alive for the laughs."

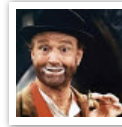
Doris recorded a three-hour interview about her career with the Archive of American Television. You can watch her talk about her radio career below and check out all six parts [HERE](https://traffaz.blogspot.com/2012/07/doris-singleton.html).



additional covers you could share! ...

17 hours ago

Way Too Damn Lazy To Write A Blog



Born on July 18, 1913 - Red Skelton - *Today's post commences

with the Guzzler's Gin routine ...

1 day ago

News From ME

Sorry... - As far as I know, I do not have any diseases. I just have too much to deal with right now so I won't be blogging much if at all. I'm postponing all the web...

2 days ago

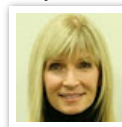
Cartoon Research

In His Own Words: H.T. Kalmus on Disney in Technicolor - Suspended Animation #276 Many references may be found regarding two-strip Technicolor. I have been guilty of discussing Walter Lantz's King of Jazz (1930)...

2 days ago

AFRTS Archive

Mary Turner 1985 - Mary Turner today Mary Turner really rocked the house.



Normally when any of the jocks got a reaction, it'd be split.

The ones

that were really liked wou...

4 days ago

The World of Knight



TONIGHT, 11:54 PM. - COPYRIGHT 2020 BY MILTON KNIGHT

4 days ago

Yowp



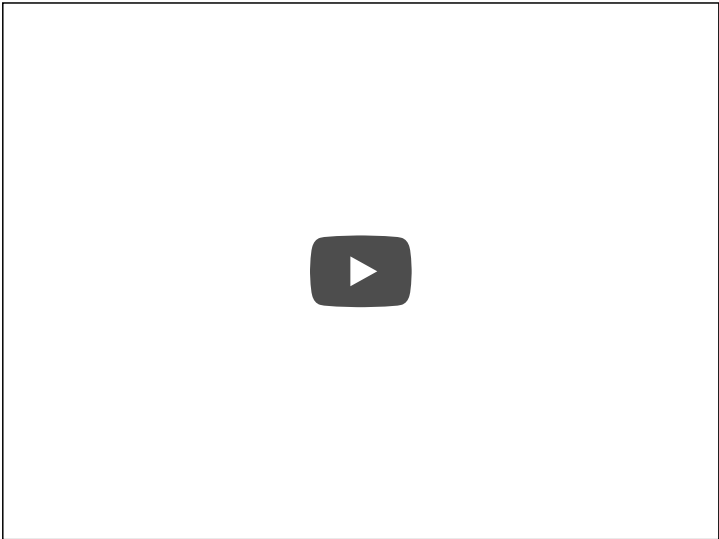
Hanna-Barbera Birthday Did-You-Knows - 63 years ago today, some

forms were signed by George Sidney, Bill Hanna and Joe Barbera creating what eventually became the biggest TV cartoon operation i...

1 week ago


Supervised By Fred


Avery: Tex Avery's Warner Brothers Cartoons Wabbit Twouble: A Small Addendum to An Outstanding Podcast -



Posted by [Yowp](#) at [02:07](#)
Labels: [Jack Benny](#), [Virginia MacPherson](#)


3 comments:

 **Pokey** 2 July 2012 at 00:58
Her death has made thr rounds of some Facebooks, incl.Shu Shostak and mine, but she's more known, and mention on Stu'd Facebook, for O l;ove Lucy...which she wound up more knwon for, but then several Jack Benny stars, Frank Nelson, particularly, crossed over to Lucy's TV show//Steve
[Reply](#)

 **Pokey** 2 July 2012 at 01:00
And I wasn't rreally a aware of her appearance on Benny, maybe because she became more known for Lucy's show in later years..? Steve
[Reply](#)

Anonymous 8 July 2012 at 00:44
Doris is always known as Lucy's nemesis in I love Lucy..I think she made her own landmark in the industry. there's a new app in facebook called Evertalk. i hope someone can also make a memorial page of her there. <https://apps.facebook.com/evertalk>
[Reply](#)

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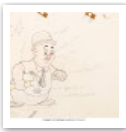
Garth (Google) ▾

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Preview

☐ Notify me

 Original animation drawing from Wabbit Twouble with color notations for the ink and paint department. Release date: 12/20/41 Availability: Looney Tunes Gol...
3 weeks ago

Mark Kausler's CatBlog
[The Lady and the Tiger](#) - From the Cathy Hill Archive of Unpublished Comics comes "The Lady and the Tiger". This story was drawn before Cathy started the "Mad Raccoons" series. U...
4 weeks ago

What About Thad?
[Cartoon Logic Podcast](#) - And yet another distraction from this brick and mortar blog... I've entered the world of podcasting with renowned animation director and historian Bob Jaques...
10 months ago

 **Likely Looney, Mostly Merrie**
[That's all, folks!](#) - My posts have gotten thinner over the years. I'm aware of that. I've been hopeful for a long time, that I can remain active with blogging and sharing furth...
1 year ago

 **Dr. Grob's Animation Review**
[The Flying Man](#) - 'The Flying Man' is a very short absurdist film in which a man drops his coat to take a swim in mid air. Another man with a dog drops by, tries the same th...
2 days ago

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