



Sunday, 16 June 2013

The Non-Menace Dennis

Jack Benny's show started out as a musical-variety one and when it finally went off the air 23 years later in 1955, about the only vestige of variety was Dennis Day's solo—and Day wasn't appearing on every show at that point. The enjoyable band numbers were eliminated and even the sketches disappeared for long periods of time as the show evolved into a sitcom about a radio star and his cast. That left only Day's song to give a short pause in between acts and a break for the writers' brains.

Day was a real find, having been hired after Kenny Baker deserted the show for \$2,000 a week with Texaco (and then, apparently, soon complaining he only got four minutes of air time to sing). He had virtually no radio experience but grew into Baker's role in the show, and then evolved it into much more because of his gifts for comedy. He eventually parlayed that into his own, and quite lesser, programme "A Day in the Life of Dennis Day" starting in 1947.



Here's a syndicated newspaper piece from 1943. Robbin Coons worked at one time for the Associated Press; he penned a feature story on Day for the *Radio-TV Mirror* several years later. Day's first broadcast with Benny was October 8, 1939. He lasted until April 23, 1944 before being inducted into the U.S. Navy the following day, then returned on March 17, 1946. The final Benny radio show was May 22, 1955 but Day continued with him through the television years.

Dennis Day Won Radio Fame All Because of an Appendectomy

By ROBBIN COONS

HOLLYWOOD, June 4 — Just for a change, I'm turning today to a fellow who isn't the type. His name is Dennis Day, and—he can correct me if I'm wrong—I think he's an actor by mistake.

That's all right, anyway, because he's a singer first and an actor only because—well, because he's a singer. You've been hearing him on the air with Jack Benny for four years now, and seeing and hearing him in an occasional movie, like "Powers Girl" or the one he's doing now, "Sleepy Lagoon" with Judy Canova.

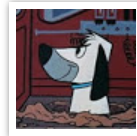
He says he has a lot of ham in his make-up, but it doesn't show. He says that's why, back in New York when his dad and mother didn't want him to take up such a flighty business as singing, he decided he'd be a lawyer. He even went to law school, and might have finished if an appendectomy hadn't broken up his course and turned him back to yodeling.

He says he has the ham. It doesn't show because he looks, talks and acts so much like a good, clean, family youngster who somehow got mixed up with the show world and, much to his amazement, is part of it.

Dennis Day turned 26 the other day. The reason you keep on hearing him sing, instead of hopping to a bugle call, is his family. He's one of six children, is sending two of them (already enlisted in naval reserve) through college, and is taking care of his aged and ailing parents. He doesn't know how much longer his deferment will last—but he does know that, traveling some 25,000 miles about the country with the Benny show, appearing at three or four camp shows a week, and broadcasting from military bases, he has never had any wisecracks tossed at him by service men.

Dennis (real name Dennis McNulty) was introduced on the Benny show as a naive, breathless kid, the butt of many jokes. He still plays that character today, though he is in fact neither breathless nor naive. You might call it naive that he was, at one time, paying out 30 per cent of his earnings to three different agents, but that's

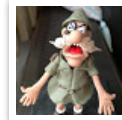
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Spencer Jordan's amazing work... we are hoping artists like Ian

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...

2 hours ago

Fernando Liera Blog Cartoons



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

safety measures. - ©2020 fernandolleracartoons.com

4 hours ago

Movies with Michael

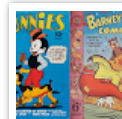


Cowboy Church #67 - Hello my friends and welcome back for another

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

7 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

show business, and slicker, older guys than Dennis have found themselves similarly peddled wholesale.
* * *

Dennis started singing when he was a boy, the only one in his family, who had the gift. He sang in the glee club at Manhattan College, but it wasn't until after appendicitis ended his law studies that he tried seriously to make a living with his songs. When Kenny Baker left Benny, Dennis tried for the spot — and nearly passed out when Benny, in person, came to hear him. Benny gave him a round-trip ticket to California to further auditions, and that was four years ago. He still calls Jack “Mr. Benny.”

If Dennis Day were “the type,” he'd be parading his talents in front of the boss constantly. As it is, only recently Benny heard him tell a dialect joke—dialect having been a quiet specialty of his for years—and that's why he's doing it on the air now.

Posted by [Yowp](#) at [07:54](#)
Labels: [Jack Benny](#)

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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...
1 day 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 -




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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