



Sunday, 4 August 2013

Jack Benny's Summer Job

Symphony orchestras and concert halls were saved by a violinist who wasn't exactly a virtuoso. He was Jack Benny.

Jack travelled the world, lifting his bow at charity fund-raisers. Jack was as serious about his violin playing in his later years as much as he was unserious about it in his childhood. He tried to play as best as he could (excepting comic interludes) and succeeded well enough to please concert audiences.

He also included music in his revue tour during the TV off-season in summer 1965. The Associated Press caught up with him and got his observations in a feature story that appeared in newspapers on July 10, 1965



Jack Benny . . . The Non-Slowdown Comic

By MARY CAMPBELL

AP Newsfeatures Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — "Why are you going into a summer theater?" Jack Benny quotes his Beverly Hills doctor as asking him. "It can't be for the money."

Benny pauses for the inevitable laugh at his legendary stinginess, and continues, "So I said to my new doctor . . ."

At 71, looking 59 and saying he feels better than the many years when he was 39, blue-eyed Jack Benny has for the first time booked himself, "An Hour and 60 Minutes with Jack Benny," (the hour a funny, rambling chat, the 60 minutes a combination of humor and violin playing) into a small theater, the Tappan Zee Playhouse in Nyack, N. Y.

"It's so intimate," he says. "The boxes are right close. I can talk to an audience like I'm talking to you.

"Of course I love the theater. If I had time this summer I'd continue to do it."

But Benny doesn't have time. He arrived in New York from playing in Las Vegas and will go right back to the West Coast to perform at Lake Tahoe and do two hour-long TV shows. After that, there are shows in London, 10 or so benefit appearances with his Stradivarius with symphony orchestras in Arizona Texas and Florida, and then maybe he'll have time for more cozy theaters like the 792-seat Tappan Zee.

Intimate Revue Is New

Asked what else is new, Benny says, "What news could I give? I've been in the business now 100 years. Well, I've never done this before — an intimate revue.

"The only other new thing is if I found the right play on Broadway, I would do it. It would have to be something I was absolutely insane about. I'd want it to use any delivery but I wouldn't want it to have anything to do with being stingy, and the Maxwell, etc. I wouldn't want it to be too stylized, so it would only fit me and not anybody else.

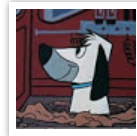
"The best picture I ever made was 'To Be or Not To Be.' If I hadn't played it, somebody else could have played it beautifully.

"If I ever made another film, I would want to make a film at my age like Chevalier, you know. Chevalier is very smart: Rock Hudson, Doris Day and Maurice Chevalier, playing the uncle, or the grandfather or the great-grandfather."

For his "Hour and 60 Minutes," Benny says, "Most of the material is new.

"I think the material has always been to a certain extent sophisticated. It has a human quality. It is about people, the frailties and faults of people, which I am supposed to have, you know. You have to have smart jokes, good sophisticated smart jokes. I think I've got them.

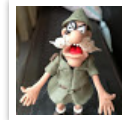
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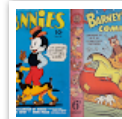
Movies with Michael



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

"My material usually doesn't fit anybody else, therefore it isn't bandied around by a lot of people, you know. Certain routines that fit other people, they have taken. You know what I do?"

"I always remember a thing Will Rogers said once when he was doing a show with Eddie Cantor. Cantor said, 'I saw a fellow doing your whole act. Aren't you going to do something about it?' Rogers said, 'Yes, I'm going to do new material for myself.'"

Nicest Thing Ever

The comedian says that Jack Benny High School in his hometown, Waukegan, Ill., is "about the nicest thing that ever happened to me."

"They didn't just rename a school. They actually built it for me. I was there for the ground-breaking."

"And I never even graduated from high school. I was thrown out the first year, because I used to skip school all the time and practice my fiddle. The principal said, 'Benny, we don't teach music here and I'm asking you to leave.' So I walked out."

For nine years, Benny has been donating his services as guest violinist with various city's symphonies, to benefit the orchestras or their pension funds.

"I love it," he says. "I'm a frustrated violinist. I'm a comedian, and the greatest, most dignified, highest-class background that a comedian can have is to walk out in tails with a violin and have 100 of the finest musicians in back of you with a, Bernstein or a Steinberg or a Szell conducting, and I do what Heifetz does, but I'm a comedian."

"It doesn't fit anybody else, except Danny Kaye, and he conducts the orchestra. If this fit eight other comedians, as nice and charitable as I'd like to be, I wouldn't like to do it."

Mentioning the same subject at his Tappan Zee Playhouse opening night, he added, "The way I play, some people even yell bravo." Later in the show, Benny said he would like to introduce just one friend down front in the audience, Helen Hayes. She stood, acknowledged applause, and said to the man on the stage, "I'm the one who's been yelling bravo."



Posted by [Yowp](#) at [07:12](#)



Labels: [Jack Benny](#)

1 comment:

 [bgrauman](#) 4 August 2013 at 16:33

This was the first summer where Jack didn't have a weekly TV series to look forward to in the fall. Other than a November special on NBC, and a guest appearance or two, Jack concentrated more on personal appearances and concerts like this....

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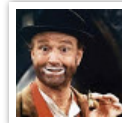
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with the Guzzler's Gin routine ...

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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

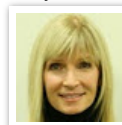
[Cartoon Research](#)

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)...

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

The ones

that were really liked wou...

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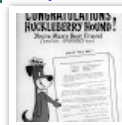
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Hanna-Barbera Birthday Did-You-Knows - 63 years ago today, some

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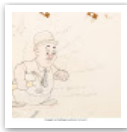
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Original animation drawing from Wabbit Twouble with color notations

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

Blog Archive

- ▶ 2020 (216)
- ▶ 2019 (376)
- ▶ 2018 (379)
- ▶ 2017 (380)
- ▶ 2016 (396)
- ▶ 2015 (389)
- ▶ 2014 (390)
- ▼ 2013 (388)
 - ▶ December (31)
 - ▶ November (31)
 - ▶ October (34)
 - ▶ September (31)
 - ▼ August (33)

[1935 is a Darb](#)
[Maurice Noble's Africa](#)
[Random Red Shots](#)
[It Sounds Sensible](#)
[Hay, That's Not Funny](#)
[Jolly Fish, Eels and Octopus](#)
[But Was it a Maxwell?](#)
[They Never Got Credit](#)
[Double Trouble Take](#)
[Hugh and Rudy's Cow](#)
[Whither Dialects](#)
[Dancing Jungle Snake](#)
[Slobbering Woody](#)
[Retirement for Benny](#)
[Bye Bye Buddy, 1935](#)
[Concentration's Bob Clayton](#)
[Flea Circus Backgrounds](#)
[What Year is It?](#)
[Long Before He Said "Come On Down!"](#)
[Dance Floor From The Dance Contest](#)
[Now You're Callin' the Jive, Jackson](#)
[Yermo For Jack](#)
[An Assistant Animator](#)
[Ptui and Ptui Junior](#)
[Zap the Cat](#)
[Stan Freberg Has a Message](#)
[The Original Allen's Alley](#)
[A Brunish Banquet](#)
[The Best Drunken Fish in Cartoons](#)
[Jack Benny's Summer Job](#)
[Giddy Goat, Star of 1934](#)
[Moving the Budgets](#)
[Odor-Able Backgrounds](#)

► [July \(33\)](#)

► [June \(34\)](#)

► [May \(33\)](#)

► [April \(30\)](#)

► [March \(36\)](#)

► [February \(29\)](#)

► [January \(33\)](#)

► [2012 \(397\)](#)

► [2011 \(106\)](#)

Labels

[Aline Mosby](#) (17)

[Art Davis](#) (33)

[Bad Luck Blackie](#) (9)

[Bob and Ray](#) (10)

[Bob Clampett](#) (82)

[Bob McKimson](#) (59)

[Bob Thomas](#) (53)

[Chuck Jones](#) (142)

[Columbia](#) (33)

[Counterfeit Cat](#) (8)

[Cynthia Lowry](#) (26)

[Dick Thomas](#) (14)

[Don Patterson](#) (17)

[Earl Wilson](#) (6)

[Erskine Johnson](#) (37)

[Felix the Cat](#) (27)

[Film Daily](#) (50)

[Fleischer](#) (154)

[Frank Tashlin](#) (24)

[Fred Allen](#) (43)

[Fred Brunish](#) (11)

[Friz Freleng](#) (137)

[Gene Deitch](#) (18)

[George Pal](#) (10)

[Grant Simmons](#) (4)

[Hanna and Barbera unit](#) (99)

[Hanna-Barbera](#) (2)

[Harman-Ising](#) (61)

[Henry Morgan](#) (13)

[Irv Spence](#) (8)

[Jack Benny](#) (454)

[Jay Ward](#) (30)

[Jimmy Durante](#) (17)

[John Crosby](#) (84)

[John Sutherland](#) (28)

[Johnny Johnson](#) (27)

[Kenny Baker](#) (6)

[King-Size Canary](#) (8)

[Laugh-In](#) (11)

[Legend of Rockabye Point](#) (6)

[Little Rural Riding Hood](#) (7)

[Magical Maestro](#) (9)

[Maurice Noble](#) (12)

[Mel-O-Toons](#) (4)

[MGM](#) (553)

[Norm McCabe](#) (5)

[Pat Matthews](#) (10)

[Paul Julian](#) (13)

[Paul Terry](#) (2)

[Sara Berner](#) (5)

[Screwy Squirrel](#) (34)

Spider-Man	(1)
Terrytoons	(84)
Tex Avery	(468)
Tom and Jerry Human	(29)
Tralfaz Sunday Theatre	(17)
Ub Iwerks	(80)
UPA	(57)
Van Beuren	(94)
Vernon Scott	(42)
Virginia MacPherson	(14)
Walt Disney	(145)
Walter Lantz	(241)
Warner Bros.	(586)
Who Killed Who	(10)

