

Sunday, 10 November 2013

The President and Jack

Harry Truman's piano playing became another subject for gentle humour on radio comedy shows while he was president but evidently Truman didn't mind too much—certainly when it came to Jack Benny. That's even though Benny chastised him at a National Press Club dinner in 1944, demanding him to keep in tempo while accompanying the comedian during a violin solo. The two played a joint benefit concert in 1958 to raise money to save the Kansas City Philharmonic. The forum on the International Jack Benny Fan Club web site mentions Benny, Jimmy Durante and Melvin Douglas were invited guests at Truman's birthday party the following year. Jack made an appearance at Truman's birthday again two years later, as you can see by the United Press International photo to the right. And they got together in 1964 in an aid drive for the Farm Hall of Fame.



Perhaps the most famous connection between the two was the former president's appearance on the Benny TV show on October 18, 1959. A column in the *Milwaukee Sentinel* about a month earlier revealed (after the show had been filmed) Benny's writers came up with the idea but the star was reluctant to ask Truman. Finally, rumours of a Truman appearance started appearing in print, Truman told a reporter he'd never been asked, so Benny finally gave the okay to ask.

The former president's appearance on the Benny show brought about some publicity from UPI (and, other media outlets) as well. Here's a piece published October 12, 1959 in the *Provo Daily Herald*.

Truman Ad Libs For Benny Show

By DOC QUIGG

NEW YORK (UPI) "Mr. President ... Mr. Benny ... can we just walk through it once please?" said Jack Benny's director Cy Berns into his headpiece in the control room and his voice crackled out over tangle of equipment where the two principles stood.

"Clear the dialogue cards. We will come up on two. Can you fade? We're ready to roll. We have a audio level. Stage manager, "Tell Mr. Benny and Mr. Truman to just project a little bit more, as if there were 300 people there. I want it for comic effect. Scene three! I want a slap stick for synch. (Whack! went the striped stick in front of the camera). Come up on camera two. Cue them in, please."

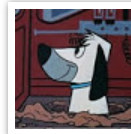
And suddenly, Harry S. Truman was on camera, his soft nasal drawl giving Benny the inside word on White House state dinners: "All the old dowagers in Washington try to get in--and some of them do."

It wasn't in the script, and as the former president kept ad-libbing in rehearsal and scene after scene, an observer in the control room said: "Why don't they tear up the script and throw it away?"

The scene was the interior of the Harry S. Truman Library in Independence, Mo. The time was last month during the taping of some 15 minutes of serious-and-spoofing byplay between Truman and Benny. The Truman-escorted Benny tour of the library will be aired on Oct. 16 on the Jack Benny show on CBS-TV. Although there was a prepared script, Benny had told Truman at the start of the two days of rehearsal and shooting: "Mr. President, you just tell me what this library is for—just what you feel. It'll be much better than anything we can write.

Truman, at 79, showed remarkable stamina on his feet for two days and redoing the scenes time and again with cheerful good humor when Berns looked at the tape and commanded a re-take. When it was all over, the former President looked to the crew: "I can't tell you how nice it's been—now, I've got to go to work."

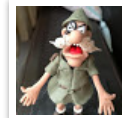
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Knox...and families of these comic artists can see these gems... - made with fimo clay I had ago and its not very easy to do...

2 hours ago

Fernando Liera Blog Cartoons



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

safety measures. - ©2020 fernandollercartoons.com

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Movies with Michael

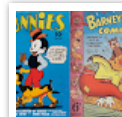


Cowboy Church #67 - Hello my friends and welcome back for another

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

6 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

"Imagine," said Benny, "He's telling US."
At the urging of the Benny staff, Truman sat down and gave them a goodbye solo, banging out a fragment of Mozart on the library grand piano. "That's part of the 16th sonata," he said. "When I was a kid, I used to play it all. So long."




Posted by [Yowp](#) at [10:55](#)
Labels: [Jack Benny](#)

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 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

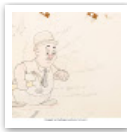
 **Cartoon Research**
In His Own Words: H.T. Kalmus on Disney in Technicolor - Suspended Animation #276 Many references may be found regarding two-strip Technicolor. I have been guilty of discussing Walter Lantz's King of Jazz (1930)...
2 days ago

 **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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