



Sunday, 22 June 2014

Carnegie Hall in Bloom

During the last 20-or-so years of his life, Jack Benny turned years of jokes about his bad violin playing and turned them into box office gold with charity concerts for dozens of symphony orchestras and their venues.

Benny's parents hoped when he was a boy, he would develop into a concert violinist. But the young Benny Kubelsky wasn't interested in the practice required. He could play well enough for a vaudeville act when he got into show business, but the violin became a prop when he turned to comedy. And it became part of his radio persona in the '30s, with his cast members, guest stars and other comedians ragging him for his (deliberate) bad playing.

His fame—or infamy, perhaps—when it came to his musicianship was put to good use for the first time when he played on the hallowed stage of Carnegie Hall in 1943. The plot of his radio show of January 17, 1943, revolved around his coming performance. It was his first charity benefit; one for the Infantile Paralysis Fund.

Jack wrote about it, somewhat in character (he takes a shot at Fred Allen), in a column published by the *Niagara Falls Gazette* on July 10, 1943, some months after it took place.

Guest Column: Jack Benny's Musical Debut

Hello, Folks! This is Jack Benny writing. It seems a little peculiar to face the grinning keys of a typewriter instead of a cold, impersonal microphone, and, besides, I'm tired as I've been up all day. Well, anyway . . . I'd like to tell you about something that happened to me in New York—something few people believe even if I insist on telling about it at every opportunity. (Often making my own openings.)

I played the violin in Carnegie Hall!

A certain alleged comedian, and others of his ilk, have made a good many disparaging remarks about my ability to bring anything but discontent to a violin. I want you to know I studied this belabored instrument for many years and during my first nine years in vaudeville made a good coffee-and-doughnut living with no other medium than this same bit of glued wood and hank of horse hair. But so much for my early Baliban & Katz background.

While in New York during my recent tour of the army camps in the East I was invited to appear at Carnegie Hall along with several other artists to play at the President's Birthday concert for the benefit of the Infantile Paralysis Fund. The date was January 17, 1943, and there was one evening that had the New York music critics hanging on the ropes.

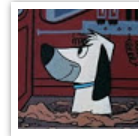
Deems Taylor was master of ceremonies for the evening and did a very decent job of introducing Isaac Stern, Jan Peerce, Jarmilo Novotna, Oscar Levant, Gladys Swarthout and did an awfully good job of announcing the intermission.

Needless to say, by this time I had tuned my fiddle to within an inch of its life and had read the program a dozen times to reassure myself that it really did say (and here I am quoting so help me!): "Concert debut of Jack Benny, accompanied by Oscar Levant." Intermission was over, and Isaac Stern came back for a couple of numbers and a fellow named Ezio Pinza sang three songs and then he and Gladys Swarthout did a duet and then there was a great hush in this tremendous hall. Even with all those thousands of people you could hear a pin drop—in fact I heard two drop—and Deems stepped out and said, "Here it is."

Never have I been more graceful as I glided across the well-worn boards of that hallowed edifice and nodded before the tremendous ovation accorded me. About that time Oscar Levant came skulking out from the wings and seated himself at the grand piano, forgot something and went back and brought out a cymbal which he placed beside the piano. Cool, poised and perspiring slightly. I awaited the first crashing chord which was to make history at Waukeegan, Illinois.

Suddenly like a tiger Levant leaped at the piano (a bit of a show-off, Oscar) and started the introduction to my solo. After some ten minutes of this sort of thing I look inquiringly over my shoulder in time to see him smack the cymbal a nasty blow and decided to await my turn. In a moment it was there, my cue, and I was in the

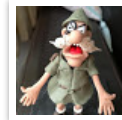
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Knox...and families of these comic artists can see these gems... - made with fimo clay I had ago and its not very easy to do...
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Fernando Liera Blog Cartoons



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safety measures. - ©2020 fernandollercartoons.com
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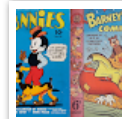
Movies with Michael



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

groove. With only the slightest rasp as my bow touched the strings, I went firmly and serenely into that old familiar classic —“Love in Bloom.”



Posted by [Yowp](#) at [06:12](#)

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

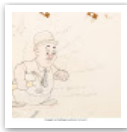
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Yowp

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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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