

Sunday, 11 January 2015

A Benny Warm Up

Jack Benny's radio show may have been pretty funny, but he didn't trust his studio audience to watch it cold. Like many other shows, there was a warm-up before the curtain went up.

Many newspaper articles described Benny's broadcast, but here's one from 1940 that talks about the pre-broadcast. George Tucker was a syndicated columnist based in New York. Benny broadcast from the Big Apple on April 21th, 27th and May 5th. This story was published in the *Poughkeepsie Eagle News* of May 7th so, presumably, Tucker was in the audience for one of those three shows.



Dennis Day had joined the show in the 1939-40 season. It seems odd on Tucker's part to assume the audience didn't know what Rochester looked like as Eddie Anderson had appeared in movies and there was plenty of newspaper publicity revealing his real name.

Man About Manhattan

By GEORGE TUCKER

NEW YORK, — Sometimes Jack Benny's broadcasts are even funnier to look at than they are to hear. The reason for this is a half hour of unprogrammed foolishness that takes place just before the show goes on the air. This is the conditioning period, during which the principals run up and down the sidelines "warming up" and getting the "feel" of the house. They have to do this for the same reason that a pugilist shadow boxes and flexes his muscles before climbing into a ring. If they didn't they would go in "cold," and perhaps off balance. Benny is a study in well-practiced nonchalance during this period. He strolls about, wisecracking with people in the audience, pausing occasionally to render a "sonata" on his fiddle. Showers of coins fell at his feet when these impromptu renditions were given in New York. Benny calmly pocketed the change and said, "Thanks, pals."

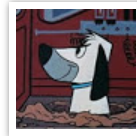
• • •

There is at all times just the right amount of happy confusion to be observed—Phil Harris arranging or passing out music, Don Wilson seeing that everyone has a script, Dennis Day sitting down and then getting up and crossing the stage to try a more comfortable chair. Rochester, the gravel-voiced guardian of "Carmichael," remains out of sight. This is smart showmanship, because the audience is wondering where he is and what he looks like. It is a slick build-up for an important character. Finally, when he is called forth to take a bow, the audience fairly screams. Rochester has a good comedy bit for this introduction. He sweeps into view and bows very low, almost to the floor, to Benny, who in turn bows just as solemnly to Rochester. Don Wilson also bows to Rochester, but Rochester snubs him, sweeping off-stage with his head in the rafters. This is good for a tremendous exhibition of feet-stomping by the audience. Frequently, as you listen by the radio, the cast itself appears to be engulfed with laughter at its own miscues or shortcomings. These sessions are not faked. Don Wilson may read a line backward. Jack may muffle a gag. Phil Harris may confuse Mary Livingston with Dennis Day. When this happens everyone on stage breaks down. It is a situation conducive to hysterics, and the audience can no more escape the general hilarity than the actors themselves.

• • •

Seeing Dennis Day, the embarrassed young tenor who always says "Yes, please?" when "mister" Benny speaks to him, makes you realize what a mighty big difference just a few breaks and a little time can make. A year or so ago he was singing on a minor local radio station, and absolutely nobody seemed to care. I bet most of you

About Me



[View my complete profile](#)

Blogs to See

Movies with Michael

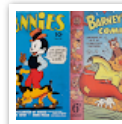


Cowboy Church #67
- Hello my friends and welcome back for another

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

1 hour ago

Termite Terrace headlines

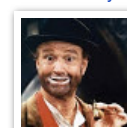


Question for All You Cartoon Collectors! - OK so I've been doing some

looking around. Bosko apparently had a comic book and I'm wondering if any of you know of additional covers you could share! ...

10 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

(f...

1 day ago

Fernando Llera Blog Cartoons



'Cozy Bear' Group Tied to Hacks on Covid Vaccine Research. - ©2020

fernandollera.com

1 day ago

have pictured Dennis as a blond. You're wrong. He is slight and thin, and black-haired, and not too tall. Rochester's amazing popularity focuses attention on that small but growing company of Negro entertainers on the stage, and in radio and the films who are proving their worth and establishing themselves as credits to their professions as well as their race. There are quite a number of them of late. Watch for a boy named Nicodemus in "Louisiana Purchase." There is Maxine Sullivan, who isn't new but she is certainly young, and she has been riding high since she first took the low road to Loch Lomond. You could name any number of youngsters like these who are following the trail so carefully blazed by Bill Robinson, Ethel Waters and others who have done more to help their kind than the pronouncements from a thousand pulpits.

Posted by [Yowp](#) at [07:28](#)




Labels: [Jack Benny](#)

No comments:

Post a comment

Enter your comment...

 Comment as:

Garth (Google) ▼

Sign out

Publish

Preview


☐ Notify me


[Newer Post](#)

[Home](#)

[Older Post](#)

Subscribe to: [Post Comments \(Atom\)](#)



 **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


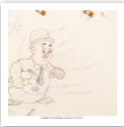
 **Cartoon Research**
[In His Own Words: H.T. Kalmus on Disney in Technicolor](#) - Suspended Animation #276 Many references may be found regarding two-strip Technicolor. I have been guilty of discussing Walter Lantz's King of Jazz (1930)...
2 days ago

 **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...
3 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


 **Peter Gray's Comics and Art**



An early
Tom Thug
page for
sale and
other comic
art by Lew
Stringer go
to link and ebay.. -
<http://lewstringercomics.blogspot.com/2020/02/original-art-for-sale.html>
https://www.ebay.co.uk/sch/graphite47/m.html?__nk=__armrs=1&_ipg=&_from=

5 months 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...
1 day ago

Blog Archive

- ▶ 2020 (215)
- ▶ 2019 (376)
- ▶ 2018 (379)
- ▶ 2017 (380)
- ▶ 2016 (396)
- ▼ 2015 (389)
 - ▶ December (33)
 - ▶ November (30)
 - ▶ October (33)
 - ▶ September (32)

- ▶ [August \(34\)](#)
- ▶ [July \(32\)](#)
- ▶ [June \(33\)](#)
- ▶ [May \(33\)](#)
- ▶ [April \(31\)](#)
- ▶ [March \(33\)](#)
- ▶ [February \(30\)](#)
- ▼ [January \(35\)](#)
 - [Toledo Loves Mel-O-Toons](#)
 - [Calling All Cuckoos](#)
 - [Watch the Birdie](#)
 - [CBS is Here](#)
 - [Drag-a-Long Droopy Backgrounds](#)
 - [Hare Conditioned Smears](#)
 - [The House of Benny](#)
 - [Made-For-TV Cartoons in 1941](#)
 - [The Poses Tell the Story in Magical Maestro](#)
 - [Ub's Goofy Fish](#)
 - [Lucy and the Bomps](#)
 - [Small Cries For Help](#)
 - [Hirschfeld](#)
 - [Cavorting Cannibals](#)
 - [Jack on TV](#)
 - [Cartoon Salesmen](#)
 - [Starring Art Davis](#)
 - [Baloney](#)
 - [Radio's Smart Dummy](#)
 - [Hipster in Shock](#)
 - [Wake Up Fox](#)
 - [A Benny Warm Up](#)
 - [He's Not Sam-tastic](#)
 - [Rabbit and Costello](#)
 - [Jay Ward Backgrounds](#)
 - [Radio That's Zany and Sometimes Purplish](#)
 - [Return With Us Now To Those Forgotten Days of Yest...](#)
 - [Popcorn Chicken](#)
 - [The Endless Rockabye](#)
 - [Magoo in the Comics, January 1965](#)
 - [That Ol' Man Benny](#)
 - [Dot ist Gut Cartoon?](#)
 - [Divorce For Doris, aka Donna Douglas](#)
 - [A Devil of a Cartoon](#)
 - [New Year's Eve Killed](#)

- [2014](#) (390)
- [2013](#) (388)
- [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 (453)
Jay Ward (30)
Jimmy Durante (17)
John Crosby (84)
John Sutherland (28)
Johnny Johnsen (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)
Trafaz 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)