

Sunday, 11 June 2017

He Interviewed an Idol

Jack Benny's Second Farewell Special proved, though no one knew it at the time, to be the last. A Third Farewell Special was scripted but never shot—Jack's pancreatic cancer became too much and he died before it could be made.

It's a little amazing to think that in 1974, Jack was turning 80, his fatal cancer was secretly spreading, but he maintained a schedule that should have worn out anyone. He made the newspaper rounds plugging his special, in addition to performing concerts and appearing on stage (which also required media publicity via interviews with reporters).

By 1974, Jack was in a position where there were now reporters—perhaps a majority of them—who had grown up with him on radio; his show began in 1932. One of them worked for the King Features Syndicate and cobbled together this feature story published in subscribing papers on January 23, 1974. It has a nice, personal feeling. If you're wondering, John Goudas was also an actor on stage and television in New York. He died in 2008.

Jack Benny Maintains There's No Formula for Comedy BY JOHN N. GOUDAS

TV Key, Inc.

NEW YORK (KFS)- Jack Benny was recently in town to drumbeat his latest TV outing, "Jack Benny's Second Farewell Special," airing on NBC tomorrow night.

When I started to talk with him, I must admit I reacted like an autograph-seeking fan who had been granted an audience with his idol. My reaction surprised me at first, but I soon realized how natural it was. After all, one of my earliest recollections is my father asking us to cut down on the noise on many a Sunday night so that he could listen to Mr. Benny on radio (that's TV without the pictures). The Sunday radio lineup included Fred Allen and Eddie Cantor, but it's Jack Benny's unmistakable delivery that echoes in my head.

As I grew a little older, I joined my father in listening to Mr. Benny trade one-liners with his gallery of radio regulars-innocent Dennis Day, rasping Rochester, pompous Don Wilson, sweet Mary Livingston, and wisecracking Phil Harris.

Then as I was graduating from grammar school, we got our first TV set and there was Jack Benny, in living black and white, holding court as usual — playing the inevitable straight man for everything from a squad of

baton twirlers to a group of roller-skating chimps. So, you can see how it took all the sophistication I could muster when I arrived at his hotel and was introduced to Jack Benny, in person. The first thing he did was offer me a cigar and excuse himself to go into the bedroom to call his wife Mary in California (the Bennys have been married 47 years). He returned a few minutes later and as he walked across the room, I couldn't help thinking to myself, "He really does walk that way. Rich Little isn't exaggerating.'

I asked him what he and his old pal, George Burns, would be doing on his special (Redd Foxx, Johnny Carson, Dinah Shore and the De Franco Family join him, too).

"George and I do something a little different. We play statues in a Roman fountain. I think we've got a good show, but you don't always know what's



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Blogs to See



Bugz' Livez: Antz (pt. 2) -We continue along lastweek's trail, following closely behind the protruding abdomen of a marching ant, as his column descends into the depths of a subter...

6 hours ago

🕒 Rip Jagger's Dojo



Five Million Years To Earth! - It's felt like five million vears

sometimes. I've yearned to have *Five Million Years to Earth *or as it's otherwise know Quatermass and the Pit i*n my ...

8 hours ago

Movies with Michael



Movie Review The Angry Birds Movie

Michael's Movie

Grade: B+ To be honest I didn't care for the first* Angry Birds Movie*. I simply just did not find that film eniovable. That is what made ..

12 hours ago

|| News From ME Recommended Reading -

This piece by Ed Kilgore may bring comfort to some of my friends who think that if Donald Trump wins a second term, he won't get a third because there will... 15 hours ago

Termite Terrace headlines

Screwing the Name Up: HB edition - A while ago I wrote going to work and what isn't. Even after all the years I've been in show business, there's no formula for comedy."

Since Benny's career ranges from vaudeville to video, I asked him what he thought of today's comics. He thought for a second and answered, "I like Woody Allen very much. He's not only a wonderful comedy actor, but he writes and directs his movies. That takes a lot of talent."

I took this opportunity to ask him about one of my favorite films, "To Be Or Not to Be," which starred Benny and Carole Lombard. I detected a gleam in his eye when I informed him that "To Be Or Not to Be" was currently playing on a double bill in a movie house in Greenwich Village.

"Ernst Lubitsch, who directed "To Be Or Not to Be," was one of the best directors in Hollywood," said Benny. "When he called to ask me to appear in the film, I said yes. He said, 'But you haven't even seen the script,' and I told him I didn't have to if he was going to direct it. In those days, comics seldom, if ever, got to work with great movie directors."

When I asked Benny what he had lined up for the immediate future, he said Frank Sinatra was throwing him a big birthday party on Feb. 14 — when he will turn 80 — believe it or not. As for retiring, it's the farthest thing from his mind... he has plans for a concert tour in Australia and more TV appearances.

After all, institutions like Jack Benny are as much a part of the American scene as the Statue of Liberty and Mount Rushmore.

Posted by Yowp at <u>07:21</u>

Labels: Jack Benny

2 comments:

Joyce B 31 January 2019 at 09:12

I was googling my Uncle (who wrote this piece) when to my surprise I saw this. It was so nice of you to use this as everything else that came up was much earlier than 2017. I used to love his stories after he interviewed someone really important like Jack Benny. One of my favorite stories is after he interviewed Vivien Leigh. Thanks for making me feel he is still around, albeit only for a moment. I miss him.

Reply

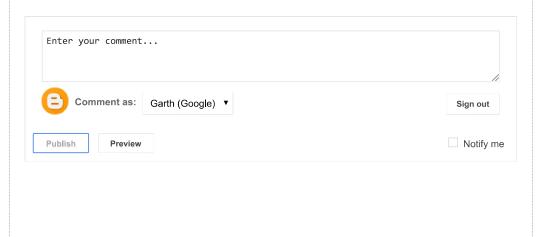
Replies



Yowp 31 January 2019 at 23:57

Thanks for writing, Joyce. I've pored through probably several hundred newspaper entertainment profiles and this was the first time I spotted his name.

Reply



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Wei created Scoolig Occil Acceser: The legendary are fon heart. Joseph Henne at Willern Barthore, also between as Henne Barthore. They also undefind the Fandstrane, and the Jethams. about the spelling Walt Dinsey. Today, I'll be talking about

Hanna and Barbera. We all know that William Hanna and Joseph Barbera defi... 2 days ago

Fernando Llera Blog Cartoons



Trump is high on gun reform chances despite NRA

resistance.

- ©2019 fernandolleracartoons.com 2 days ago

Way Too Damn Lazy To Write A Blog



Sunday String Swing -*Continuing the thread from last Sunday's

post, as the following caricature of Django ... 2 days ago





Hanna-Barbera Fans Write Back - Is it possible to fairly

compare cartoons made by Hanna-Barbera and the Jay Ward studios? I don't think so. The two studios had a different attitude and p... 3 days ago

The World of Knight



LAST
NIGHT The sky
was a
beautiful
color last
night.

1 week ago

Mark Kausler's CatBlog

Racketty Ann's Mystery Flight! - Here are pages 5 through eight of "Racketty Ann and the Lost World". There's delightful fantasy here as Racketty Ann and Bla Bla take a ride on the back o...

3 weeks ago

Peter Gray's Comics and



New blog on my Art work...Origi nal art...prints for sale

petergrayart

ist@gmail.com for prices
etc.. https://petergrayart.blogspot

.com/ Will update it like I do on facebook. 5 weeks ago

Supervised By Fred Avery: Tex Avery's Warner Brothers



Coming Soon To This Blog...

2 months ago

What About Thad? Chris Reccardi Interviewed

- I don't want to start a practice of publishing an interview every time someone from Ren & Stimpy dies, but Chris Reccardi (1964-2019) was too important a f... 2 months ago

E 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... 6 months ago

Kids, Eh? #1288: Bird Call - #1288: Bird Call 10 months ago

Cartoons, Model Sheets, & Stuff



Pete Hothead Model Sheets -Here are a few model sheets from

the first Pete Hothead short. Released in 1952 and directed former Tom & Jerry animator Pete Burness. Ted Parmelee was the...

1 year ago

Dr. Grob's Animation Review

Paranoja (Paranoia) -

'Paranoia' is a short film (lasting only four minutes) about a young man who thinks he's followed on the street.

1 day ago

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