



Sunday, 15 October 2017

# Benny Defends

Eddie Cantor's daughters. Bob Hope's nose. Bing Crosby's Hawaiian shirts. Al Jolson and Larry Parks. Jack Benny being cheap. Radio columnists rolled their eyes and said "Oh, not again! Enough!"

And, eventually, the radio stars responded "Enough!"

John Crosby was one of those columnists who complained about the sameness of some shows. And Benny finally said "Hold on a second."

The result was Crosby's column of January 6, 1949. Incidentally, Crosby wasn't entirely negative about the Benny radio series and expressed his like for Jack in other columns.

## Down With the Critics

By JOHN CROSBY

In the anniversary issue of "Variety," Jack Benny, the \$2,260,000 comedian, has broken a lance over the skulls of radio critics, an easy target and one that hardly justifies the expense—lances being pretty expensive these days. If you over look the extravagance though, Mr. Benny has a pretty good point and, since I've temporarily run short of lances of my own and comedians to break them against, I thought I'd turn the place over to Benny for the day. (Since columnists haven't as much space at their disposal as comedians, this has had to be drastically condensed.) Take it away, Mr. Benny.

"The past several years I've noticed radio editors gang up on radio comedians and accuse them of using the same type of humor year after year. Reviewers admit the comedians have top comedy shows, and funny programs. Their beef is the programs always use the same characters and situations.

"The battle cry seems to be, 'The listeners want a change.' But do they?"

"Amos and Andy were public favorites in 1929. They still are. Eddie Cantor, Al Jolson, Fred Allen, Burns and Allen, have all ranked high in the Hoopers for a dozen years. These comics have spent years perfecting their individual comedy styles, and would be completely lost without them. Would the critics have George and Gracie darken their dialogue and Amos and Andy jump into domestic comedy? Bob Hope has a pace and brashness I envy. But I know that I'd be floundering in 'flop-sweat' if I tried Bob's delivery. I do flatter myself into thinking Hope can't get as much out of a 'Well!!!' as I do.



"It took seventeen years to develop the characters on my show. Each week we've tried to inject a new situation, idea, or character into our script. What happens? A reviewer comes along, says the show was great, the audience loved it, the script was hilarious. . . . BUT ... I was the same stingy, toupee-topped, faulty fiddler; Mary was still snippy; Phil continued as a fugitive from Alcoholics Anonymous; Dennis was still silly; Don continued to be fat and Rochester was the same sassy butler he always was.

"Now, I've been reading this reviewer's column for many years, and it's a darn good column. But every week, every year, this columnist's style of writing is always the same. Always verbs, pronouns and adjectives. Why doesn't he get some new things? (Ed. note: If he's inferring to me,

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### Rip Jagger's Dojo



[At The Earth's Core! - \\*At The Earth's Core\\* is a delightful romp of](#)

I added prepositions in 1946, first man in the business to change with the times.)

"Radio critics scream, 'Why don't the comics stop already with programs about Thanksgiving and Christmas. The air is filled with them.' What would they have me do on Christmas? Set off skyrocketes and roman candles and have Phil wish me a Happy Fourth of July?"

"On opening programs, why do the comics all do the same thing— talk about what they did on their vacations? Well, let me ask you something. If you worked with someone closely and then separated for the entire summer, what would be the first thing you'd ask him when you saw him again? How he liked Jane Russell in 'The Outlaw'?"

"Oh well, television is with us now, and I'm waiting for some reviewer to say: 'It was an enjoyable video show, but darn it, always the same old faces.'"

Posted by [Yowp](#) at [07:00](#)

Labels: [Jack Benny](#), [John Crosby](#)

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**LAST NIGHT** - The sky was a beautiful color last night.

*2 days ago*

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Happy Birthday to 20th Century jazz great Lenny Breau! -

"\*\*Lenny Breau was the best guitarist to ever shit between two boots." Jerry Reed\*\* \*\*Lenny was a comet passing through" Chet Atkins\* \*\*If you had dropped...

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#### [Termite Terrace headlines](#)



Commercial Corner August--Mel Blanc (In Person) - Mel Blanc had been in

several commercials as an actor. All of which he mentions that he is the voice of the Looney Tunes characters. In the American Expre...

*2 days ago*

#### [Movies with Michael](#)



Seeing The Gold Rush (1925) at the Old Town Music Hall - Last night I had

the incredible pleasure of watching Charlie Chaplin's\* The Gold Rush\* (1925) at the Old Town Music Hall in El Segundo, CA. This is a movi...

*3 days 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...

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New blog on my Art work...Original art...prints for sale

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 **Supervised By Fred Avery: Tex Avery's Warner Brothers Cartoons**



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...  
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 **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**  
**Leptiri (Butterflies)** - 'Butterflies' is a film from the Zagreb Film studio, when the once famous studio was already in its decline.  
1 hour ago

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