

Sunday, 8 April 2018

Fiddling With Farewell

The calendar changed to 1973 and even though Jack Benny was about to turn 79, he kept right on going.

You couldn't blame him if he wanted to quit, considering his age and his very comfortable financial situation. But it just wasn't in him. However, he did tell the entertainment columnist for the Newspaper Enterprise Association that would like to slow down a bit. "Slowing down" really only happened the following year when he became too ill to perform and then pancreatic cancer quickly claimed him.

This column is, more or less, a plug for a TV special, but columnist Kleiner put a few other questions to him as well, including broaching the idea of just staying at home and relaxing. It first appeared in papers on January 5. 1973.

He Fiddles with Retirement

By DICK KLEINER

HOLLYWOOD -(NEA) - For the first time since I've known him the word "retirement" didn't make Jack Benny grimace.

Like most veteran performers — and remember that Benny is pushing 40—he's scoffed at retiring. But this time, when the subject came up, he scoffed not.

"I don't think I'll ever retire fully," he said. I'll always do concerts. I love them because they involve the two things I love the most, talking and playing the violin — but I am trying to cut down.

"I want to take it a little easier from now on. But it isn't easy to take things easy. You get involved."

He pulled out his schedule and showed how involved a star can get. There was a long list of appearances but most of them were benefits. He says if you say yes to one, it's hard to say no to some other.

He says the whole list of his dates includes only a couple that mean any money coming in. One of these is his NBC show. Jack Benny's First Farewell Special, coming on Jan. 18, with RCA picking up the whole tab.

"I have to do a TV shot or a special once in awhile," Jack says, "to prove to the nation at large that I'm still living.'

He says if he does a benefit in Philadelphia or plays Las Vegas for a few weeks, the people in Philadelphia and Las Vegas know about it. but nobody else does.

"You have to have some national exposure." he says, "or else the whole country thinks you're either dead or retired."

He has a contract for another NBC special, which will probably be called Jack Benny's Second Farewell Special, and is tentatively slated for spring.

He says he thinks his first farewell special is good but he stresses the word "thinks." He says he'd be surprised if it wasn't good but adds that a performer can never really be sure about these things.

"We generally do pretty well if we start out with a good idea," he says.

And he thinks this farewell idea is a pretty good one. His manager, Irving Fein, thought it up, although Benny says it goes back in the dusty history of show business to such greats as Sarah Bernhardt and Sir Harry Lauder.

"I worked with some good writers on it," he says. "And, actually, I've always thought that I was a much better editor than I was a comedian. You know you can be a good comedian but if you're not a good editor you're in

"We've spent hours already editing my special and we're not through yet. Editing is a very important part of the business."

He says he may come up with an idea. He bounces it off his writers. Maybe six on a special. He says he won't use his idea, no matter how great he thinks it is, unless four of the six agree.

Benny says this may be one of the reasons many young comedians trip on their way up the ladder. They come to have too much faith in their own ideas and disregard the cautioning words of others.

But he says there are some young comics he enjoys. He singles out Flip Wilson — "but he's been in the

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business a long time, don't forget"-and Bob Newhart.

"You have to give a lot of credit to any young comedian today," he says. "They didn't have the schooling my generation had. We had a chance to be bad, before we were good."

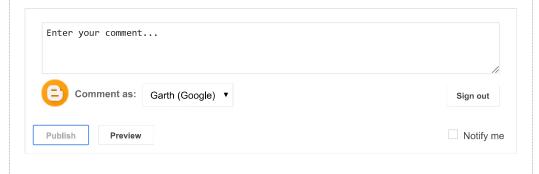


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SATURDAY AFTERNO ON - Nice view. I actually drew it into a panel

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Cartoons, Model Sheets, & Stuff



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