



Sunday, 8 July 2018

Jack Benny and Laugh-In

Rowan and Martin's Laugh-In was supposed to be hip and new in 1968, but there were still vestiges of old comedy hanging around. The show was doing George Jessel jokes. And NBC seems to have shoved some of its old-timers it still had under contract in front of the camera. Young viewers must have thought "What are THESE people doing here?"

One of NBC's old vaudevillians who showed up on *Laugh-In* was Jack Benny. But he was a wise old vaudevillian. For years and years, Jack made sure nothing was ever done on his radio or TV shows that didn't fit his character. And he applied the same thing to his big appearance on *Laugh-In* on February 2, 1970.

Laugh-In was known for quick cuts and fast one-liners. Benny was known for anything but. He could stare immobile at an audience for 15 seconds and the laughs would build and build. When it came to *Laugh-In*, the writers simply played the slow Benny off the fast format.

Here's a promotional story from newspapers just before the show aired. There's no byline, so it could be the product of NBC's publicity department.

'Laugh-In' confuses old Benny

HOLLYWOOD — Jack Benny acted bewildered, but he was having the time of his life.

"This is the third day on the show," he said during a break. "It's the most fun I've ever had as a guest. They handled me very well. It was never tiring for a second." The show? "Rowan and Martin's Laugh-In," to be colorcast over NBC-TV 8 to 9 p.m. Monday.

Jack, who had been approached several times to do the show, finally agreed.

ALWAYS BEWILDERED

"The only suggestion I made was that I should appear constantly bewildered as to what was going on," said Jack. "I felt this was better than just doing jokes." Jack's sense of bewilderment was not far from his reaction to the series when it first came on the air.

"When I was asked what I thought of it, I said I didn't have the slightest idea how this show would do," Jack recalled. "I said it might be a flop or the biggest sensation of the season. I didn't know which. Neither way would have surprised me. I reserved comment."

Benny continued watching the show and became a great fan.

ENJOYS PACE

"I enjoy watching it," he said. "I like all the short bits. There's always something else, and if one bit isn't so funny, another one comes along quickly. I also love the Lucy show. I try to watch both when I'm home."

Jack never felt that the 'Laugh-In' pace would be hard to sustain.

"The fact that they were able to keep up the pace didn't surprise me," said Jack. "The more shows they did, the more it worked. They can keep it up so long as they have the people to write for. If years from now they have trouble casting the show, then something could happen to it."

Benny is high on the present cast.

"I liked Rowan and Martin long before they did 'Laugh-In,'" said Jack. "They are very good. I think everyone in the cast is very good, both fellows and girls. I really mean it."

GOLDIE HAWN



Jack Benny (left) tries to tell funny story with help of "Scandinavian interpreter" Arnie Johnson on NBC's "Laugh-In" Monday at 8 P. M. on Channel 3.

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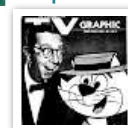
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He singled out Goldie Hawn for special comment. "As far as Goldie Hawn is concerned," said Jack, "nothing can keep her from being a great star. She wouldn't be able to get out of the way of stardom! The reason she is great is because she doesn't realize herself why. Like Gracie Allen, Goldie doesn't have the slightest idea why she is so good. I saw her in 'Cactus Flower.' They couldn't have found anybody better, or as good. Even though she'll make a lot of pictures, she ought to continue doing 'Laugh-In,' when she has time. You can get into a picture that isn't so good, but she is always so good on this show, and it will continue to be good for her."

"Perhaps the greatest tribute Benny could pay the show is that he cites it professionally as a good lesson in comedy timing.

"Everybody can learn something from somebody else," he said. "I hope others have learned something from what I have done. You can learn pacing from 'Laugh-In.' I tell my writers this. If a scene is not funny all the way through, cut it until it is funny. Move it, keep it going."

He made one final suggestion in agreeing to do "Laugh-In."

"They didn't want to use the water bit with me," said Jack. "I said to do the show right I told them to sock-it-to-me!"

I don't like putting up posts with a lot of video because the links always seem to die. But, below, you can see clips of Jack's appearance, though there isn't the one where he gets socked-it-to. One of Benny's radio writers, Hugh Wedlock, Jr., wrote for *Laugh-In*, but was gone by this season. Still, I suspect Jack heard some of these jokes, or variations on them, when on the Orpheum circuit in 1920.

Jack Benny Cocktail Party | Rowan & Martin's Laugh-In | Ge...



Quickies And Recess Are The Same | Rowan & Martin's Lau...



BENNY IS BEFUZZLED — Jack Benny finds himself in one bewildering predicament after another as guest star on "Rowan and Martin's Laugh-In" at 8 p.m. Monday on Channels 2 and 3.

Fernando Llera Blog Cartoons



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Function
Secretary
creates new
online
platform to
fight

corruption. - @2019
fernandolleracartoons.com
1 day ago

Cartoon Research

Pondering "Pocahontas" - I think Disney's Pocahontas will seem better as time passes. While it is flawed, there is still much to recommend in it. Here's my opinion.

1 day ago

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Popeye
Cans the
Spinach
(Commerci
al Corner) -
Due to the

Tom and
Jerry hiatus, the monthly
commercials are returning.
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Popeye canning the
spinach and advertising
with other a...

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The World of Knight



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

today.
6 days ago

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The Classic
Comedy
Rorschach
Test - ...

1 week ago

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Racketty Ann's Mystery
Flight! - Here are pages 5
through eight of "Racketty
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Jack Benny Scandinavian Story Time | Rowan & Martin's La...




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Posted by [Yowp](#) at [07:00](#)
Labels: [Jack Benny](#), [Laugh-In](#)

3 comments:

Errol 8 July 2018 at 09:37
From 1968 to 1971, my Dad and I rarely missed an episode, but from 1972 on, we were back with " The Lucy Show ", and " Gunsmoke ". Never really knew why, we just did. I remember the Jack Benny broadcast well. Benny being Benny made him fit into to " Laugh In " perfectly.
[Reply](#)

 **M. Mitchell Marmel** 8 July 2018 at 10:15
Jack was doing his best to keep a straight face, so the show MUST have been good! :D
[Reply](#)

Tedd 8 July 2018 at 19:50
LAUGH-IN sure kept Charley Douglass busy with his laugh box. Those laughs of his, some of them very familiar to any die-hard fan of 1960s sitcoms, are all over those clips.

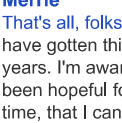
I was a little surprised. Didn't expect Benny to fit into LAUGH-IN nearly as well as he did. He knew his own strengths, though, advising them to play him as if he wasn't quite sure what was going on.

I was too young to have much input into what our family watched on television, outside of Saturday mornings, but I remember that my folks watched LAUGH-IN for probably a couple of seasons before, like Errol above me, drifting back to GUNSMOKE and LUCY.
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.com/ Will update it like I do on facebook.
2 weeks ago

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- 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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