



Sunday, 5 May 2019

About Being 40...

Jack Benny turned 40. Twice. Once in real life in 1934, and then on television in 1958.

The television "40" was quickly forgotten and Jack went back to being 39. During the 1950s—Benny's character began being 39 for the first time in 1948—Jack insisted 40 wasn't a funny number, but 39 was. He insisted it again after turning 40 on TV. (As if plagued by a bad omen, the day before the 40th birthday show, Eddie Anderson suffered a mild heart attack and his lines were awkwardly reassigned to Andy Devine, who made two entrances; evidently the script couldn't be changed in time).

Jack talked with the North American Newspaper Alliance about his 40th birthday, violin playing and dealing with looking at Mel Blanc. This story appeared in the *Indianapolis Star* on June 22, 1958.



Jack Benny, Master Of Pause, Blank Stare

By BILL FISET

HOLLYWOOD (NANA)—Jack Benny swung open the door of his home and was all savoir faire.

"Come in, come in," he said grandly. He was wearing a brocade silk dressing gown. His shirt had french cuffs and gold links showing at the wrists. His cigar was aromatic.

Experts credit Benny with the greatest sense of timing of any living comedian. "Timing is the ability to pause for the precise interval to get the most out of a joke before saying something else. It's also knowing when to emphasize a word or when simply to stare blankly at the audience. It's making the utmost of a situation.

Do you consider yourself a good violinist, Mr. Benny?

(No answer. Instead you get a sort of haughty look. Finally "Well . . . Really!" This is timing.

He doesn't consider himself a top violinist. People go to his concerts to see a comedian, he says, not a violinist.

"The humor is that I'm playing the best I can."

How does it feel to be 40 years old?

(Here you get a doleful, silent stare that lasts perhaps five full seconds. Then: "In real life? This is timing.)

He "turned 40" on his TV show because he figured it would be a good way to bring his old entertainer friends together before the camera.

"Now I regret it. The age of 39 is a funny age. It's a funny number. There's something about 40 that isn't funny." He's 64 in real life.

WHEN YOU do a "live" show, don't you worry breaking up laughing when you shouldn't?

(Here you get a blank, expressionless stare and a long pause. This isn't timing. Benny's thinking.)

"It's all right to break up laughing if it's genuine. I hate to see someone break up, shoulders shaking, if they're putting it on. As for me, I simply can't look at Mel Blanc when he's on the show. Just looking at him I laugh.

"Then Phil Harris—when he throws in an ad lib, I start laughing. You can always tell those ad libs. The camera isn't on the person who makes them because the cameraman doesn't know they're coming."

One more question. How does it feel to be 40? Do you feel older?

(The blank look. The customary five-second pause. Then: "How about a drink?)

This isn't timing. It's savoir faire.

Posted by Yowp at 07:05

Labels: Jack Benny

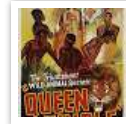
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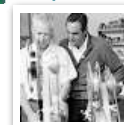


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Yowp



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Drawings,
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Adult
humour
today isn't

what it was 60 years ago.
Today, "adult" humour
brings to mind a lot of
sexual references and
crudity. In other words, the
stuff...

2 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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2 weeks ago

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



Coming Soon To This Blog...


1 month 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

**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**

Zozor ruine la réputation de sa famille (Zozor Ruins the Reputation of His Family) - After his move to the United States in 1912 Émile Cohl starting experimenting with putting the idiom of comic strips to the animated screen, being the firs...
2 hours ago

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