



Sunday, 11 August 2019

The Working Ham

Jack Benny liked to work. He said it to interviewers. And he proved it by appearing on stage and television almost until his death. He was working on another TV special when cancer felled him in 1974.

Here's a feature story on Jack, talking mainly about work. It's dated May 11, 1963 and from one of the syndication services. About the only thing I'll take issue with is Jack's hair colour. It wasn't brown in 1963. It wasn't brown in 1943, and I don't believe it was brown in 1933. He coloured it for years.

Workhorse Benny Will Never Retire

By ISOBEL ASHE

AMERICANS, FOR the most part, are sentimental people. They revere traditions like Mom's apple pie and the Fourth of July. They grow misty-eyed over helpless puppies or abandoned babies.

And they are loyal, almost without exception to old-timers in show business who have made them laugh over the years.

Of the living legends, less than a handful have remained in the most grueling of show business mediums, television. Most of them made the transition gracefully from radio or movies.

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Left today are only Bob Hope, Red Skelton and Jack Benny doing regular shows. And of these three, it's a toss-up who works harder, Hope or Benny.

As Jack says, "Bob and I argue who is the bigger ham. We've never resolved it. All I know is that we're agreed on one thing: we'll never retire. I don't think either of us would know what to do with our lives."

Entertainment industry folk gasped when Benny announced a few seasons ago that he would switch from a monthly television show to a weekly series.

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"How can he do it at his age?" some asked. "Why does he want to do it?" others pondered. "Why should he do it?" was another question.

Jack's answer was the same to all the queries. "Because I like to work."

The impression should not be gotten from this statement that the blue-eyed comic is a man of only one facet, at loose ends when he isn't poring over a television script.

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He golfs almost daily at Beverly Hills' swank Hillcrest Country Club, and any dedicated golfer knows this sport can become a full-time preoccupation.

He is an authority on art and artists, and discusses their works with knowledge. He is an exceedingly well-read man and can converse, again with knowledge, on the latest novels and nonfiction books. And — oh yes — he is a violinist. Of course, he is a master at his profession — comedy.

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The line, "Jack Benny couldn't ad lib a belch after a Hungarian dinner" has been variously attributed to the late Fred Allen and Benny's best friend, George Burns.

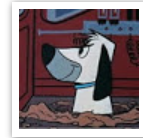
In any event it is apocryphal, because it isn't true at all. Jack Benny is a very funny man even in conversation with friends. But he will decry it. His modesty shows all the time.

Getting back to the weekly television show, "I didn't regard it as a challenge," Jack comments. "Actually I was far more nervous when I used to be in radio. When you do a show once a month on television, it's regarded as something rather special and you have to live up to this.

"But every week, well, you don't have time to think whether you've been spectacular. You just keep on



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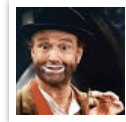


Some Cartoons For Saturday Morning #80 - Hello my friends

and welcome back for another selection of classic cartoons. Today's selection begins with one of the great Mickey, Donald and Goofy car...

32 minutes ago

Way Too Damn Lazy To Write A Blog



Born on July 18, 1913 - Red Skelton - *Today's post commences

with the Guzzler's Gin routine (from Ziegfeld Follies) by R...

1 hour ago

Fernando Liera Blog Cartoons



'Cozy Bear' Group Tied to Hacks on Covid Vaccine Research. - ©2020

fernandolleracartoons.com
15 hours ago

News From ME

Sorry... - As far as I know, I do not have any diseases. I just have too much to deal with right now so I won't be blogging much if at all. I'm postponing all the web...

19 hours ago

Cartoon Research

In His Own Words: H.T. Kalmus on Disney in Technicolor - Suspended Animation #276 Many

working.

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"I do think, however, that since we've been doing a show every week, we've been good. We've never been really bad," he puffs thoughtfully on the ever-present small cigar.

Last season, Benny was moved from his 30-year-tenure of Sunday nights to Tuesdays on CBS Television and gloom-guessers thought his audience wouldn't make the switch with him. They couldn't have been more wrong.

The ratings on the Jack Benny show this past year have been better than ever, and professional television critics maintain the shows have been better too.

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One close friend observes: "The man is a workhorse. He was less bored this year and he had more physical ideas for the shows, for publicity value.

"Take the Tarzan show he did with Carol Burnett, swinging from vines. Or re-creating the USO show with Martha Tilton. And that Dennis Day Irish Mikado stunt!

"Jack works hard on all these shows, but he still maintains he works a total of only 13 hours a week. I don't believe it! I think he's working all the time, even when he's on the golf course or practicing his violin."

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Of course, to Jack practicing the violin isn't work; it's a release. He always has a fiddle with him, not necessarily the Stradivarius he plays with symphony orchestras around the country, but valuable and expensive instruments just the same.

"That's really my escape," Benny says. "If I'm upset or worried about something, I play the violin for an hour or two and I feel better.

"I would like very much to make a violin album. So far, no one's asked me," he grins.

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And it is, of course, a source of considerable satisfaction that through his guest appearances with symphonies around the country, he has raised well over \$3-million for the various musicians' funds and helped perpetuate their orchestras.

There was a classic instance, at one concert, where at the first rehearsals, the orchestra was having difficulty. "They've got to get better at the concert," Jack insisted. "They have to be better, to make me look bad. There isn't enough contrast at this point." They did get better, of course, to Benny's gratification and to the benefit of the box office's ailing coffers.

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There are those who maintain the Benny scores at these symphonies are purposely written incorrectly so he can make his classic goofs. Not so, insists his violin teacher, Larry Kurkdjie.

"Jack plays to the best of his ability," says Kurkdjie, who is a member of the Benny television show orchestra. "He might have been great, if he had continued after he started as a little boy. But there was a lapse of some 60 years when he didn't play at all, until he resumed.

"And considering this, he does very well," Kurkdjie puts it tactfully.

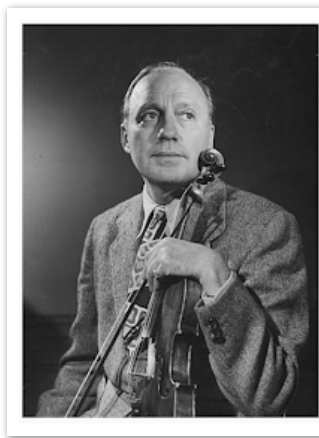
Currently preparing shows for the 1963-64 season, Benny plans no radical changes in his Tuesday night CBS television format.

He will continue using guest stars, since last year the fan mail coming to his office was highly favorable toward such guests as Jimmy Stewart and his wife, singers Frankie Avalon, Connie Francis and Frank Sinatra Jr., who made his professional debut with Benny.

"The mail for Sinatra Jr. was tremendous," says Ned Miller, Jack's longtime friend.

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Miller, who met Benny back in 1921 when the comic was in vaudeville and Miller was writing what he terms "Chicago songs" ("that was because of the beat they had— songs like 'Why Should I Cry Over You,' 'You Don't Like It, Not Much,' 'Don't Mind the Rain,' and other novelties"), now doubles as Jack's stand-in on the television show and handles his fan mail.



"The mail is divided. Among fan mail for Jack and the guests, asking for autographed pictures and questions about Jack's personal life, are letters from violin owners.

"We get hundreds of letters from people who have violins which they think are old, or genuinely worth a lot of money.

"They ask Jack to whom they should take them for an appraisal, or how to sell them. He's considered an authority on the subject," Miller says.

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Obviously, Benny is considered an authority on many subjects, from violin-appraisals, to money-raising for symphonies, to comedy, and to show business longevity.

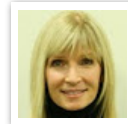
Fans, seeing him in person at his television show, at personal appearances in Las Vegas or Lake Tahoe or the recent Ziegfeld Theatre Broadway show in New York, exclaim at how he looks.

"I don't think I look 69 either," Jack says. And he doesn't. He's slimmer than he appears on television. There is

references may be found regarding two-strip Technicolor. I have been guilty of discussing Walter Lantz's King of Jazz (1930)...

1 day ago

AFRTS Archive



Mary Turner 1985 - Mary Turner today Mary Turner really

rocked the house. Normally when any of the jocks got a reaction, it'd be split. The ones that were really liked wou...

3 days ago

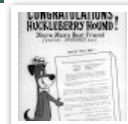
The World of Knight



TONIGHT, 11:54 PM. - COPYRIGHT 2020 BY MILTON KNIGHT

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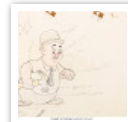


Hanna-Barbera Birthday Did-You-Knows - 63 years ago today, some

forms were signed by George Sidney, Bill Hanna and Joe Barbera creating what eventually became the biggest TV cartoon operation i...

1 week ago

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



Wabbit Twouble: A Small Addendum to An Outstanding Podcast -

Original animation drawing from Wabbit Twouble with color notations for the ink and paint department. Release date: 12/20/41 Availability: Looney Tunes Gol...

3 weeks ago

Mark Kausler's CatBlog The Lady and the Tiger - From the Cathy Hill Archive of Unpublished Comics comes "The Lady and the Tiger". This story was drawn before Cathy started the "Mad Raccoons" series. U...

4 weeks ago

Termite Terrace headlines

Porky's Hot Dog Intake - Western Publishing definitely isn't free of cannibalism when it comes

no gray in his brown hair. And he moves like a younger man.

“I simply don’t believe in retirement,” he repeats. “I heard of an acquaintance, younger than I, who did retire and practically overnight he changed.

“His speech became slower, his walk more pronounced. He almost fumbled. And I think it’s because he had no reason for being. Nothing with which to occupy his time or his thinking.

“I know from this man’s experience, and from my own observations—for me life has zip and purpose only when I’m working.”

With termination of his present CBS contract still a year away, workhorse Jack is already making audible noises about doing a straight play on Broadway. Benny the matinee idol? Who knows?

He put his feet up on his desk and commented, “Besides, I’m too old now to be thrown out of show business. They can let me out, if they want to — thank God no one’s made the offer, yet.”

Posted by [Yowp](#) at [07:40](#)

Labels: [Jack Benny](#)


1 comment:

Lee 11 August 2019 at 19:46

Must have been a real blow to Jack to have his much of his audience bailing on him in favor of GOMER PYLE just two or three years after this.

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to comics featuring Porky Pig. These are just some of the covers in which

Porky is ei...
4 weeks ago



Peter Gray's Comics and Art

An early Tom Thug page for sale and other comic art by Lew Stringer go


to link and ebay.. - <http://lewstringercomics.blogspot.com/2020/02/original-art-for-sale.html>
https://www.ebay.co.uk/sch/graphite47/m.html?_nkw=&_armrs=1&_ipg=&_from=

5 months ago

What About Thad?

[Cartoon Logic Podcast](#) - And yet another distraction from this brick and mortar blog... I've entered the world of podcasting with renowned animation director and historian Bob Jaques...

10 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...

1 year ago



Dr. Grob's Animation Review

[The Flying Man](#) - 'The Flying Man' is a very short absurdist film in which a man drops his coat to take a swim in mid air. Another man with a dog drops by, tries the same th...

1 day ago

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