



Sunday, 17 October 2021

Television's Successes

What makes a TV show a success?

There's no one, specific answer.

In 1963, one columnist looked at three shows that had been on the air for quite some time—two Goodson-Todman game shows, and Jack Benny's weekly prime time sometime-variety show—and did brief examinations of each. To sum up, all three shows had things going on that kept the viewer interested.

The situation didn't stay the same. Garry Moore quit *I've Got a Secret*, Benny's show was cancelled in 1965 and *What's My Line* suffered the same fate a few years later.

Perhaps it's no coincidence, but I've heard from quite a number of Benny fans who enjoy the original *What's My Line*. Benny appeared on the show as a mystery guest, as did Dennis Day (and, of course, Fred Allen became a panellist until his death in 1956).

Two Guessing Games, Benny, "Indestructable"

By ERSKINE JOHNSON

Hollywood Correspondent

Newspaper Enterprise Assn.

HOLLYWOOD (NEA) — "The Indestructibles" of television—the 10 longest-running, regularly scheduled television programs—include two guessing game shows: "What's My Line?" and "I've Got a Secret." Their long-running success is a combination of deeply planted roots dating back 13 years for "Line" and 11 for "Secret" and, above all, ordinary people. It is the constant parade of people—people with offbeat occupations and in offbeat situations—which has given both shows their great success.

Television fans say so, and so do Mark Goodson and Bill Todman, the creators of both shows.

Says Goodson:

"The real entertainment comes from watching people as themselves, placed in a format which creates a tension. It is the competition that exists between panel and the opponent. In turn, the viewers at home identify themselves with panelist and opponent in some fashion."

Added fillip for "What's My Line?" includes the weekly mystery celebrity, the good-natured John Daly, the sharpness of its veteran panelists in playing the guessing game.

These draw the publicity. But it is the show's guests, ranging from lady plumbers and girdle manufacturers to a cow manicurist, a man who blows himself up with dynamite at county fairs, a girl who sells life insurance for chickens, an 11-year-old boy who writes a column of advice to parents—these are the people who intrigue outdoors and in the home, a its weekly loyal audience.

Incredible Confessions

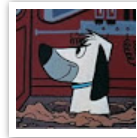
Ask Chester Feldman, producer of "I've Got a Secret," the reason for the success of his show, and he says:

"I can tell you in two words—Garry Moore."

On that I'm sure the fans of Garry will partially agree. But again, it is people and their competition with panelists. The people who guest on the show make confessions as incredible as the occupations turned up on "What's My Line?"



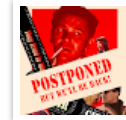
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Way Too Damn Lazy To Write A Blog



Noir City 19
Postponed (thanks A LOT, Omicron) -
*The hope

for 2022 was that screenings, festivals and events would finally return at least semi-permanently, but, alas, COVID-19 has the las...

29 minutes ago

Cartoon Research

In His Own Words: Willis Pyle - Pyle worked at Disney and UPA and later enjoyed a long career as a freelance animator on such projects as Richard Williams' Raggedy Ann and Andy.

7 hours ago

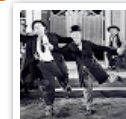
News From ME

Orlando Busino, R.I.P. - Veteran gag cartoonist Orlando Busino has left us at the age of 95. I don't write these about a lot of magazine cartoonists but Mr. Busino did exceptional

...

10 hours ago

Movies with Michael



Way Out West (1937) - If *Sons of the Desert* (1933) is

Laurel and Hardy's most popular feature than *Way Out West* is a close second. Its popularity is well founded as t...

23 hours ago

Fernando Liera Blog Cartoons

They have included the 100-year-old man on his honeymoon . . . a Holstein cow that had quint . . . the girl who announced she was becoming Mrs. Tommy Manville (he reneged and she sued) . . . the man who squeezed a hard-boiled egg into a milk bottle by building a fire inside . . . Merle Oberon dressed like a fashion model in a \$9.95 outfit.

Such are the stars of "I've Got a Secret" who guarantee the show an always-curious audience.

Tied with "Line" at 13 years of regular television exposure is Jack Benny. He wears as well on home screens as he did on radio for 18 years before the coming of test patterns. Many other radio personalities failed in the visual switch, but Benny walked into the electronic picture zone without altering either himself or his show. As he says, "I had no show to alter. We've always been different every week."

His long-established character of the fellow who hates to part with a dime, who won't admit his right age, and who vocally delights in the blueness of his eyes was as tailor-made for television as radio.

"It is the character," Benny says about his success. "Everyone knows someone like the fellow I play. The jokes aren't that important, and we try to do everything in good taste."

There are other keys to Benny's success—letting others get laughs while he deadpans—others such as announcer Don Wilson, who has been with him for 29 years; Rochester, for 26 years, and Dennis Day, for 24 years. They know the Benny character as well as two of the show's writers, Sam Perrin and George Balzer.


Posted by [Yowp](#) at [07:08](#)    

Labels: [Erskine Johnson](#), [Jack Benny](#)

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The price of milk is now higher than gasoline! - ©2022

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om

2 days ago



Inbetweens: The Cult Classics of Animation

A Itchin' to Fly: Howard Post's The Itch - It's amusing to me,

compared to last week's cartoon of pick, this week I'm going to be giving some thoughts of something the complete opposite! Think about...

3 days ago



AFRTS Archive

Wolfman Jack on AFN 1976 - It's howlingly delicious.

More Wolfman Jack

4 days ago



Old TV History

November and December 1943 - NBC shut down its

television cameras in 1942 when the FCC cut the minimal hours of broadcasting to four a week. The sole NBC station, WNBT in New York, sto...

5 days ago



Yowp

Flintstones Daily Strips, October 1961 - Over the years, the Yowp

blog has posted the Sunday (Saturday in Canada) colour comics starring Yogi Bear and The Flintstones syndicated by McNaught. There...

1 week ago



Prydain on Film

Merry Christmas -

2 weeks ago

Show All



Dr. Grob's Animation Review

Sarusuberi (Miss Hokusai) -
Based on a manga from the
mid-1980s by Hinako
Sugiura 'Miss Hokusai' is
one of those rare animation
films unquestionably
directed to an adult
audience. The...
4 days ago

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