



Sunday, 29 October 2023

## Gisele's Benny Boost

Is it possible to count the number of people Jack Benny helped over his lifetime?

His violin concerts raised money for pension funds for musicians and saved theatres for people to continue enjoying.

Others thanked Jack for their careers. Dennis Day was one. Wayne Newton was another. And so was Gisele MacKenzie.

Gisele and her family were singers/musicians in Winnipeg and appeared on the CBC; her brother Georges was later in charge of the network's French-language operations in Vancouver. Like quite a number of Canadian performers, she moved to the U.S. to further her career and landed a spot on Bob Crosby's "Club Fifteen." It was through Crosby, who later fronted the band on the Benny radio show, that she met Jack Benny.



Here's a brief column from June 1, 1957/

### Gisele Gets Own Show Thanks to Jack Benny

By ALINE MOSBY

HOLLYWOOD (UP) — After four years of singing 300-plus songs on "Your Hit Parade," Gisele MacKenzie finally gets her own show, thanks to a fellow violin player named Jack Benny.

When the pretty French-Canadian brunette adds up her life she gives credit for her success to the veteran comedian. Performers seldom take the time or trouble to sponsor another entertainer, but Jack has been largely responsible for Gisele's expanding career.

Next fall he unveils his protegee in her own live half-hour TV program on NBC, "The Gisele MacKenzie Show," produced here by the 39-year-old violinist himself.

"I met Jack five years ago when he saw me sing with Bob Crosby in Las Vegas," Gisele explained between rehearsals here for her last guest appearance of the season, on Sunday's "Chevy Show" on NBC.

#### Went On Tour

"He asked me to go on tour with him. Then I guested several times on his TV show. He's been such a great help."

Gisele's appearances with Benny showed she had other talents than singing upside down, sideways, in those zippy production numbers on "Your Hit Parade." With Benny she displayed a flair for comedy and a talent for the violin.

As a result she wound up guesting on other shows and playing dramatic roles. This spring she quit "Your Hit Parade" and was signed by Benny for the new fall series.

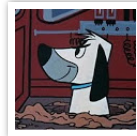
Many fans wonder why Gisele didn't have her own show long ago, but she insists, "I'm glad this didn't happen before. I wasn't ready for it."

"But this spring I decided I'd been on the 'Hit Parade' long enough," she continued. "I felt it was time to do something else. I didn't want to wait until the audience tired of me."

#### Lot Of Fun

"The show was a lot of fun and an easy schedule. But there just comes a time when you want to do something else. It was invaluable experience as the show is like a stock company—you learn to do everything. Of course, I still think the real stars of the show are the producer, director, cameramen and writers who dream up the ideas."

## About Me



[View my complete profile](#)

## My Blog List

### Old TV History

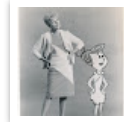


April 1940 - It was a battle that wouldn't end for more than a

year. The F.C.C. was concerned RCA was manoeuvring to impose its 441-line transmission standard by sell...

1 day ago

### Yowp



Wilma - Jean Vander Pyl didn't have a big name on

television when she was cast to play Wilma Flintstone in 1960. The others were a bit different. Bea Benaderet ap...

2 weeks ago

## Blogs to See

### Movies with Michael



Cowboy Church #248 - Hello my friends and welcome

back for another service of Cowboy Church. Today's musical selection begins with Roy Rogers and Dale Evans with "May the G..."

1 minute ago



Whether her move sparked a general cast change she doesn't know, but Dorothy Collins and the other singers on the popular program will not appear on it next fall, either. Gisele is "very excited and scared about her series" "because the responsibility is all mine." Benny set the format for her Saturday night show—"a loose one. One week I'll sing, another week I'll do skits with regular characters or have guest stars." "Jack phones once a week with plans," she smiled. "He says he thinks he knows what to advise for a few people and I'm one of them. He knows what's right for me."

Jack seemed to find his way into stories about MacKenzie's career. Here's another one from the McClure Newspaper Syndicate (which distributed the "TV Key" column) that appeared in papers around

Dec. 15, 1957. Lucky Strike had been Jack's sponsor on radio and then television, so it's no coincidence that American Tobacco would listen to his recommendations.

## Gisele's Show is Work; Fun

By STEVEN H. SCHEUER

"I'm having my ninth baby," said Gisele MacKenzie in Hollywood, referring to her ninth Saturday night soiree. This is Gisele's way of explaining the ordeal she goes through starring in her own show. She isn't as relaxed and easy-going as she appears to be on TV. She's been on since September and that seems years ago to her.

On the Hit Parade, Gisele looked carefree and relaxed, too, but it was a lot different. The pressure was off, she wasn't the star, just part of the company. "I learned a lot," said Gisele, "but the Hit Parade was a breeze compared to carrying your own show."

Gisele looks fit. She's even gained a few pounds, but on Mondays a rash breaks out on her white Canadian skin from nerves, not smog, and she has to cover it up with make-up. "Listen, you have to be nervous to be any good. I'm nervous singing before two people and I always will be," she explained. "It's part of the business. I know I wouldn't be in any other. I couldn't go into advertising, for instance."

Having her own weekly show, something she's looked forward to for a long time, is half fun and half chore and that's all Gisele wants. She's had good times on some programs, but the most fun was a recent one with Jack Benny when the two dropped the script and began ad-libbing.

"I stepped on one of Jack's lines," Gisele said, "by accident. And he fired back, 'Now that you have your own show you can't stop talkin.' We carried on from there. The critics thought it was part of the show."

Jack Benny has been a big factor in Gisele's success. He originally saw Gisele working with Bob Crosby in Las Vegas. Jack needed a girl vocalist for his touring vaudeville show and could get Gisele cheaply. After the show ran for while, Jack heard that the Hit Parade was searching for a new female vocalist. So Jack had Gisele guest on his TV show and made sure the Hit Parade sponsors were watching.

Gisele got the job and spent the next four years polishing her talents, singing the "big seven" hits and those extras Jack has a big interest in Gisele's Saturday nighter and was instrumental in setting up the format of light, casual humor.

With the format set, the big problem is guests—those available and in the right price range, and who would fit working with Gisele. "I would like to sing to Gregory Peck," said Gisele, pretending to look wistful, "Ty Power, Clark Gable, Aly Khan—but they're not available. So I'll settle for the Curfew Kids—Greg, Ty, Mike and Butch. They're a little young but awful cute."



The patronage of Jack Benny couldn't bring one thing—viewers. Gisele's show on NBC began on Sept. 28, 1957 and was replaced with reruns from *Schlitz Playhouse* and *General Electric Theater* on March 29, 1958. It didn't stop her career. She was a regular with Sid Caesar on ABC-TV in 1963. My first exposure to her was on the original version of *The Match Game* in June 1966 (the other celebrity panellist was fellow Canadian Paul Anka). And, of course, she continued to appear with Jack Benny.

Posted by Yowp at 07:15



Labels: Aline Mosby, Jack Benny

## News From ME

**Much at Steak** - Speaking of Las Vegas, as I was: Peter Luger's Steakhouse has finally opened at Caesars Palace. I'm a longtime fan of Peter Luger's in Brooklyn but my last...

5 hours ago

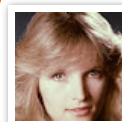
## Fernando Llera Cartoons



Fans hopefully cheer Checo Perez as a winner on

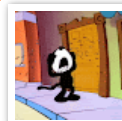
Mexican Grand Prix F1 racing today. - ©2023 fernandollera.com 6 hours ago

## AFRTS Archive



**Mary Turner 1986** - Mary Turner brought the rock in the 1980s and 90s. She had the daily show and "Off The Record". The music was great and she really had a way with a... 9 hours ago

## Pete Hale



**Gimme Felix!** - Recently Steve Stauncheid said that

a "Felix the Cat" collection had been in the works from Thunderbean, but got cancelled after the license for the ch...

1 day ago

## The Exposure Sheet



**Video of the Week: Joe Barbera Talks Toons** - I shared a video some

weeks back that was an interview with William Hanna, so it seems time to share a similar video of his longtime business partner, Joe...

2 days ago

## Cartoon Research

**All "Jack"-ed Up: The 30th Anniversary of "The Nightmare Before Christmas"** - When Tim Burton's *The Nightmare Before Christmas* bowed in theaters thirty years ago, it came and went quickly.

2 days ago

No comments:

## Post a Comment



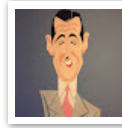
Enter comment

[Home](#)

[Older Post](#)

Subscribe to: [Post Comments \(Atom\)](#)

### [Way Too Damn Lazy To Write A Blog](#)



Born 130  
Years Ago  
Today:  
Comedian  
Charley  
Parrott

[Chase -](#)

*1 week ago*

### [Mark Kausler's CatBlog](#)

[Mabel Doesn't Care](#) - Here's "Now Listen, Mabel" from 19191208 to 19191220. Mabel is quite the cold fish in this one, not caring if her devoted suitors Jimmie Doozinberry or "Sa...

*2 weeks ago*

### [Prydain on Film](#)



1972  
Interview  
with  
Chronicles  
of Prydain  
author

Lloyd Alexander, Illustrator  
[Evaline Ness and Ann Durell](#) - from the Free Library Rare Book Department YouTube channel,

*3 months ago*

[Show All](#)

## Why Not Read...

[Cartoonerific](#)

[Dr Grob's Animation Review](#)

[Tex Avery at Warner Bros](#)

[Format Films Roadrunners](#)

## Blog Archive

▼ [2023](#) (313)

▼ [October](#) (30)

[Gisele's Benny Boost](#)

[Commercials at Animation, Inc.](#)

[Tex's Other Red](#)

[Setting the Mood For Chills](#)

[20-Inch Snip Snip Snip](#)

[A Tale of Horror, Van Beuren-Style](#)

[The Nine Lives of Tom the Cat](#)

[Jack Doesn't Do Dallas](#)

[Plugging Cartoons](#)

[Car Bites Car](#)

[I Can't Bear Those Eyes](#)

[It's the Metaphors](#)

[You've Been Canned](#)

[Familiar Dialogue, Isn't It?](#)  
[An Old, New Network For Jack](#)  
[Making Mutt and Jeff](#)  
[Tip Your Head](#)  
[Pop Music 1, Opera 0](#)  
[The Glamorous, Unpredictable...](#)  
[Um, That Kind of Looks Like...](#)  
[And the Pitch...](#)  
[Jack Benny Pays For a Baby](#)  
[Pigs, Affairs and Candy](#)  
[What Happened Bugs?](#)  
[Flip Arrives](#)  
[Turkey Surprise](#)  
[Alan Reed](#)  
[Running From a Lawnmower](#)  
[Hidden Inside Gags, UPA Version](#)  
[40th Birthday Shower](#)

- ▶ [September](#) (32)
- ▶ [August](#) (31)
- ▶ [July](#) (32)
- ▶ [June](#) (32)
- ▶ [May](#) (32)
- ▶ [April](#) (31)
- ▶ [March](#) (31)
- ▶ [February](#) (29)
- ▶ [January](#) (33)
- ▶ [2022](#) (382)
- ▶ [2021](#) (380)
- ▶ [2020](#) (389)
- ▶ [2019](#) (376)
- ▶ [2018](#) (379)
- ▶ [2017](#) (380)
- ▶ [2016](#) (396)
- ▶ [2015](#) (389)
- ▶ [2014](#) (390)
- ▶ [2013](#) (388)
- ▶ [2012](#) (397)
- ▶ [2011](#) (106)

## Labels

- [Aline Mosby](#) (20)
- [Art Davis](#) (46)
- [Bad Luck Blackie](#) (12)

-----  
[Bob and Ray](#) (17)  
-----  
[Bob Clampett](#) (116)  
-----  
[Bob McKimson](#) (82)  
-----  
[Bob Thomas](#) (66)  
-----  
[Chuck Jones](#) (185)  
-----  
[Columbia](#) (68)  
-----  
[Counterfeit Cat](#) (10)  
-----  
[Cynthia Lowry](#) (36)  
-----  
[Dick Thomas](#) (18)  
-----  
[Don Patterson](#) (24)  
-----  
[Drag-a-Long Droopy](#) (14)  
-----  
[Earl Wilson](#) (19)  
-----  
[Erskine Johnson](#) (43)  
-----  
[Felix the Cat](#) (37)  
-----  
[Film Daily](#) (50)  
-----  
[Fleischer](#) (211)  
-----  
[Frank Tashlin](#) (43)  
-----  
[Fred Allen](#) (57)  
-----  
[Fred Brunish](#) (13)  
-----  
[Friz Freleng](#) (193)  
-----  
[Gene Deitch](#) (24)  
-----  
[George Pal](#) (12)  
-----  
[Grant Simmons](#) (10)  
-----  
[Hanna and Barbera unit](#) (131)  
-----  
[Hanna-Barbera](#) (10)  
-----  
[Hans Conried](#) (5)  
-----  
[Hardaway-Dalton unit](#) (7)  
-----  
[Harman-Ising](#) (101)  
-----  
[Henry Morgan](#) (14)  
-----  
[Irv Spence](#) (12)  
-----  
[Jack Benny](#) (621)  
-----  
[Jay Ward](#) (35)  
-----  
[Jimmy Durante](#) (22)  
-----  
[John Crosby](#) (108)  
-----  
[John Sutherland](#) (41)  
-----  
[Johnny Johnsen](#) (42)  
-----  
[Johnny Olson](#) (5)  
-----  
[Kenny Baker](#) (6)  
-----  
[King-Size Canary](#) (9)  
-----  
[Laugh-In](#) (18)  
-----  
[Legend of Rockabye Point](#) (7)  
-----  
[Little Rural Riding Hood](#) (7)  
-----  
[Magical Maestro](#) (10)  
-----  
[Maurice Noble](#) (12)  
-----  
[Mel-O-Toons](#) (5)  
-----  
[MGM](#) (744)  
-----  
[Norm McCabe](#) (10)  
-----  
[Pat Matthews](#) (13)  
-----  
[Paul Julian](#) (16)  
-----  
[Sara Berner](#) (6)  
-----  
[Screwy Squirrel](#) (42)  
-----

- [Spider-Man](#) (3)
- [Terrytoons](#) (117)
- [Tex Avery](#) (650)
- [The Cat That Hated People](#) (10)
- [Toby the Pup](#) (4)
- [Tom and Jerry Human](#) (46)
- [Tralfaz Sunday Theatre](#) (21)
- [Ub Iwerks](#) (126)
- [UPA](#) (78)
- [Van Beuren](#) (141)
- [Vernon Scott](#) (52)
- [Virginia MacPherson](#) (14)
- [Walt Disney](#) (208)
- [Walter Lantz](#) (324)
- [Warner Bros.](#) (876)
- [Who Killed Who](#) (13)