



Sunday 14 July 2024

## Benny and Benny

Jack Benny and Benny Rubin were both big vaudeville stars. They each headlined at the Palace in New York. Both appeared in short films when the talkies became popular. They co-emceed a bill at the Mayan Theatre in Los Angeles in 1930. Benny has even been given credit for giving Jack his stage name when it had to be changed from "Ben K. Benny."

The two also starred in their own radio shows. But while Jack appeared regularly in living rooms from 1932 to 1965 (1950-onward on television), Rubin's variety show lasted one season (1936-37) and then he had to be content with supporting roles, with the exception of a Los Angeles TV show that appeared for less than a month in 1949 (he quit after the producing William Morris agency told him what to do on camera). At one point, he opened a dress shop to make ends meet.



One person who put Benny to work was Jack Benny. In the mid-'40s, Rubin was hired to play the Tout, but when a stage show cut into his time he was quickly replaced with Sheldon Leonard. Rubin had other periodic roles with Benny on radio into the 1950s; the only recurring character was the "I dunno" guy. He also appeared on the Benny TV show; in the final two seasons he was in about a third of the episodes.

Here's Rubin talking about Jack Benny in a United Press International column that began appearing in papers on July 30, 1964, shortly before the start of Jack's final season on television.

### Benny uses Rubin often

By JOSEPH FINNIGAN

UPI Writer

HOLLYWOOD—Benny Rubin, a character actor for clowns, has appeared on more than 500 Jack Benny shows, building a reputation as laugh insurance for comedians.

Besides Jack Benny, the veteran Rubin has worked with other top comics, including Bob Hope, Jerry Lewis, Red Skelton, Gracie Allen and Danny Thomas.

When a comedian needs a performer for a scene, they know they can depend on Rubin not to foul up the act. That's one reason he has been with Benny more than 500 times.

"I've lost count," said Rubin who is going to work this week at Revue Studio in another of Jack's programs. "There's a good reason for it all," explained Rubin. "Nobody knows his timing like I do."

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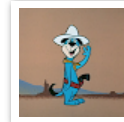
### Old TV History



January 1931 - As 1931 began, the interesting television developments came out of Chicago. Los Angeles didn't have a station. In New York, CBS wasn't on the air and NBC w...

22 hours ago

### Yowp



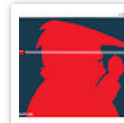
Huck Shines in the Sunshine State - Not too long

after "The Huckleberry Hound Show" debuted on the week of September 29, 1958, newspaper columnists began praising the series. An early thumbs...

1 day ago

## Blogs to See

### Fernando Llera Cartoons



Attempted assassinati on of Donald Trump at Pennsylvani

a rally. - ©2024 fernandollercartoons.com 15 minutes ago

He calls me his insurance. If you're going to get somebody to work with you, you want somebody who knows you. I know Jack's timing. He calls me his insurance. If you're going to get somebody to work with, you want somebody who knows you. I know Jack's timing. When Jack says 'hum' you know that's to keep you from stepping on the next line.

"When Jack has new actors or people he doesn't know on the show this is heck of a thing to explain to somebody. You'd be surprised how many scenes an actor ruins because he moves or says something at the wrong time. On radio, Jack would read a line and grab your arm. You didn't talk until he released you. That was if he didn't 'know you.'"

With his hundreds of appearances on television, Rubin should be a familiar face. He is, but the faces are different. Millions of persons have seen Rubin in hundreds of different ways.

"I do everything," he said played. "I've played 40 or 50 Italians, 20 or 30 Germans—all kinds of guys, including cops and robbers.

"People see me on the street and they say, 'I've seen that guy.' But they've been looking through beards and moustaches.

Rubin's friendship with Benny goes back to more than 40 years. As long as Benny has a show, Rubin will have some work on it.

"This is the big point, the trust," said Rubin. "That's the big thing in this racket."

The comedians who appear with Rubin had better trust him. There are times when they're not certain what he'll do. But they know it'll be good.

Jerry Lewis once hired him to play a waiter. Jerry instructed other actors in the scene about their action. Rubin he left to his own design.

Rubin once showed up on a Jack Benny episode and the boss asked, "Who are you today?"

Jack might not have known who Rubin was that day but he knew what he was—laugh insurance.

There was a time Jack Benny worked for Rubin, in a round-about way. This is from George Pratt's column in the *Hollywood Citizen-News* of June 2, 1961.

## Comic Rubin Has Memories Aplenty

By GEORGE PRATT

Citizen-News Staff Writer

Comic Benny Rubin scoffed when we asked him if he was adverse to admitting he'd been a movie featured performer in the mid-30's, in the likes of "George White's Scandals," with Alice Faye and Jimmy Dunn, and "Go Into Your Dance" with Al Jolson and Ruby Keeler.

"What do you think I am, a juvenile lead?" he tossed back on the Jack Benny set at the Cahuenga lot of Desilu's where he was awaiting the day's shooting on Jack's show.

"I earned these grey hairs in show business, and it's all there in the billings down through the years.

Why should I try to avoid dating myself, when it's all down in the ads?"

And on Benny the grey hair looks remarkably good.

### REMARKABLE MEMORY

His remarkable memory and flair for facts from the past were graphically exhibited as he ran through the list of "Leading Men" and "Comedians" who played in the mid-30's in the first Rubin-promoted ball game for the benefit of Duarte Hospital, which grew to become The City of Hope.

The leading men had Charles Winninger, John Boles and Vince Flaherty's brother as pitchers, Jimmy Cagney caught, Lee Tracy was first base, Dick Powell second, Bing Crosby was short, Dick Arlen third and George Raft, Clark Gable and Dennis Morgan were the outfield.

The comics, Benny recalls, had "me and Maxie Rosenbloom as pitchers, Buster Keaton caught, Harry Ruby played first, Joe E. Brown second, Vince Barnett was short, and Jackie Coogan third. The outfield had Andy Devine, Jack Benny and George Jessel."

Umpires were Bela Lugosi, Lon Chaney, Boris Karloff and Jimmy Gleason. And Arthur Treacher served tea to the hurlers!

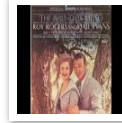


## News From ME

Mushroom Soup Sunday - I have lots 'n' lots of things to do before I'll be able to clear some blogging time so expect light posting here for the next day or three. Do me a favor ...

1 hour ago

## Movies with Michael

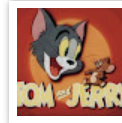


Cowboy Church #185 - Hello, my friends and welcome

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

2 hours ago

## Way Too Damn Lazy To Write A Blog



Remembering Bill Hanna - \*This frequently cartoon-

centric blog notes that July 14 (tomorrow) is the natal anniversary of animation great William Hanna, the ridicul...

1 day ago

## AFRTS Archive



John Doremus 1967 - It's been a busy day and time for

orchestral music and stories for the dinner hour from John Doremus. \*John Doremus - 1967\* More John Doremus

1 day ago

## The Exposure Sheet



Video of the Week: William Hanna Tells the Truth - This coming

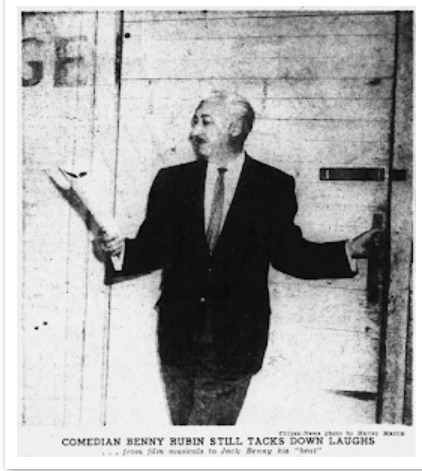
Sunday marks what would've been the 114th birthday of Hanna-Barbera co-founder William Hanna. Unlike his partner Joseph Barbera, who lived and...

2 days ago

## Cartoon Research

Talk to the Animals: The 35th Anniversary of "Creature Comforts" - The artistry seen in all of Aardman's films begins with this Academy-Award-winning short - which celebrates its 35th anniversary this year.

2 days ago



### THRILLED GIRL

That's when Benny and Lucille thrilled a girl named Ann Miller, who continued with her dancing to gain world fame through Hollywood's cinema musicals where her tappings were viewed by audiences all over our planet.

Benny has a jillion yarns like these. He can tell you about the four-a-day, the pit band leader at Seattle's Orpheum—Tiny Burnett—or the dressing facilities at Keokuk.

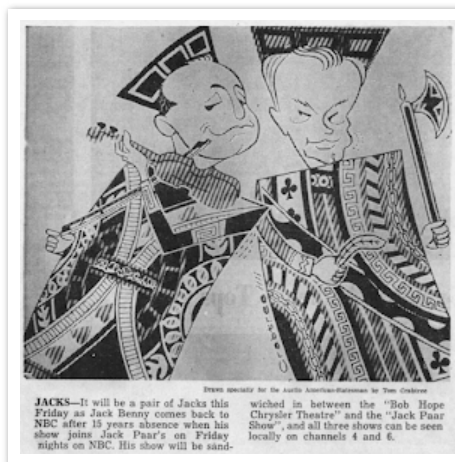
Rubin has made his excursions into bond selling and other attempts at commerce, but his heart beat is the variable tattoo of show biz, the game where he started as a hoofer and varied his routines to include tooting a trombone, doing comic roles—countless in number—to now as a foil for Jack Benny.

Rubin wrote a reminiscence in 1972 called *Come Backstage with Me*. He admitted he wasn't too concerned about whether his tales were accurate.

Dialects were a specialty for Rubin, Jewish and many others. He griped in public that his career was hurt badly in 1938 by movie industry moguls getting together (so he says) to eliminate all dialect comedy; he blamed Walter Winchell, too. Jack Benny didn't hire Rubin on radio to do a Jewish character. After Sam "Schlepperman" Hearn left, Jack brought in Artie Auerbach to play the pleasant hot dog vendor Mr. Kitzel. In a 1963 interview, Rubin said he never liked Kitzel. "I thought it was phony," he told columnist Hal Humphrey. Auerbach was dead by this time and couldn't defend his character, who popped in on Benny for 11 years (including a TV episode after Auerbach's death in 1957). If Mr. Kitzel hadn't made a connection with the audience, Jack never would have kept bringing him back.

And Rubin rained on Benny's season-ending party after the 1964-65 season [ad for one show to the right], as he wrote in a feature story for *TV Guide* at the time. He didn't stay for it because he couldn't handle NBC's cancellation of Jack's show, feeling his Benny buddy had nothing to celebrate. The idea that Jack wanted to throw the party to thank his cast and crew didn't seem to dawn on Rubin.

Whether Rubin was bitter is hard to tell. Jack Benny was able to adjust to changes in the entertainment business and maintain his stardom. Benny Rubin was not.



Posted by [Yowp](#) at [07:03](#)

Labels: [Jack Benny](#)

No comments:

Wonderful names of some wonderful performers of the mid-thirties.

Hear Benny tell a couple of gems from his memory vista: "I needed some music for an idea I had and this young fellow said he'd tackle it for me. I had only a few bucks over \$600 in the bank and he offered to do it for \$200. Well, when he brought it along, he'd done such a fine job with the assignment that I dumped the \$600 in his hands and told him he'd earned it. The 19-year-old was a lad named Bob Mitchum."

And when Benny was doing the act for which Mitchum wrote the music, breaking it in at the Golden Gate in San Francisco, he went to luncheon with Lucille Ball and they dropped to the Bal Tabarin for a bit of entertainment. A little performer, all of 15, on the show caught Benny's eye and he induced Lucille to send for the girl and her mother.

### Termite Terrace headlines



A Mistake Only  
Charlton Could Make  
- The Jetsons,

here mistakenly referred to by their Spanish name, Los Supersonicos, in Charlton's Huckleberry Hound#3.

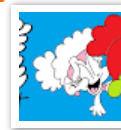
4 days ago

### Mark Kausler's CatBlog

Felix Goes Camping - Hi Folks, Our special header this time is by my favorite cartoonist and artist, Cathy Hill, inspired by Otto Messmer's art, called "Felix On The Rockin..."

6 days ago

### Pete Hale



Read My Newest Blog - \*No, I'm NOT getting rid of this

blog.\* Check out a new blog of mine, intended as my "official site", simply titled Pete Hale, Cartoonist. It is mainly ...

1 week ago

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