

Sunday, 30 March 2025

He's No Bing

Back in the network radio days, word when around that Jack Benny was dependent on his writers. Jack joked about it. Harry Conn actually believed it.

But you'll find a number of newspaper articles in the Golden Age that spoke of the collaborative nature of the writing on the show. While Jack didn't do the writing, he sat in with the writers as they dissected the script. He was his show's script editor and approved every word, even those the writers talked him into that he didn't particularly like.

This story appeared in the Springfield Sunday Union and Republican, July 3, 1938. There is no byline.



Jack Benny Goes to Town In Sustained Popularity

Radio's Ace Comedian Leans On His 'Gag' Writers But Not So Completely as Do Bing Crosby and the 'Good News' Performers—Sets Own Pace for Writers and Cast Alike

Radio's consistent No 1 feature—the Jack Benny show—left the air waves last Sunday night but will be back in its accustomed spot on the same network 13 weeks hence, or on October 2. The comedian, voted for three years running as tops in his field, and his wife, Mary Livingstone, and the rest of their troupe take this leave of the radio audience annually to enjoy a well-deserved vacation—more than often a vacation fraught with even more intensive movie and other work.

But they're off the air for the summer, now, so there can be no press agency suspected in a postlude devoted to a diagnosis of their success on the radio. Recently this column accredited the writer of Bing Crosby's show and the writers and producers of "Good News of 1938," which precedes it every Thursday night on the Red network, with a fairer share of the success of the show than the "big name" performers themselves contributed. Does the same hold true for Benny's performances?

Probably not. Jack Benny's program hasn't the pace of Bing Crosby's nor the variety of "Good News of 1938." But it has a peculiarly individualistic style of humor and presentation that is Jack Benny's—and his alone. It succeeded when Harry Conn, the noted gag writer, was doing his scripts; it succeeded just as well in the recent months when Bill Morrow and Ed Beloin were writing his gags.

Individual Style

The reason simply is—Jack Benny. He knows precisely what he wants in the way of program structure; he personally sets the pace for the whole show; he is perfectly willing to be ribbed unmercifully by his cast (something few other star comedians will stand for), and he has a peculiar style of humor that is debonair New York and Hollywood and at the same time naive Waukegan, Ill.

Assuredly the former fiddler-trouper from Waukegan has come a long way in radio and the films, thanks to a peculiar popular appeal that must set him to wondering himself how long it can last. That he was just another comedian and master-of-ceremonies before he struck the responsive chord on the wave lengths three or four years ago, everyone along the Rialto recalls.

One of the little known facts about the Benny shows, which have lately been staged chiefly in Hollywood because of his new domicile there, is that even his orchestra does not hear the script rehearsal. Thus the sallies of laughter from the audience get a spontaneous spark from the cast itself. More than that, everyone in the cast likes working with Jack Benny, though he is as serious in preparation and rehearsal as he is funny in actual performance. Every line is studied intensively for the

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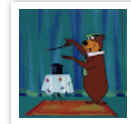


February 1939 - Amos 'n' Andy weren't as big on the

radio in the late '30s as they were in the early '30s, but they still had a large fan base, and survived on network ra...

17 hours ago

Yowp



Not So Magical Bear - Yogi Bear tries a magic trick in one of

those cartoons-between-the-cartoons on the "Huckleberry Hound Show". *Alakazam, Alagazoom Come out, little bear, ...

1 week ago

Blogs to See

Fernando Llera Cartoons



INE halts government promotion of judicial elections. - ©2025

fernandollercartoons.com 31 minutes ago



JACK BENNY
in "ARTISTS AND MODELS ARRIVE" - A Paramount Picture
SHOWING IN U. S. A.

right build-up; every situation gauged for the proper reaction. Jack and his scripters work the full week to prepare for each week's end performance; while in New York at least, they spent the whole of Sunday afternoon in rehearsal. All of this is not to detract from Jack Benny's writers, two extremely well paid young men to whom he is perfectly willing to give credit and kudos. That the writers are less the mainsprings in the Benny show than they are in the Crosby and "Good News" shows is no reflection on the talents of Messrs Morrow and Beloin.

Bill Morrow is a 29-year-old Chicagoan, not many years out of Northwestern university. He became a press agent upon graduation, traveling the circuits with many shows. While at this work he submitted suggestions for material to Jack Benny, Phil Baker and others. In March, 1938, after Harry Conn had left him, Benny needed a gag writer badly and invited Morrow to join him in Hollywood. There he teamed Morrow up with Ed Beloin, a 27-year-old graduate of Columbia university, who

had been a humor magazine writer while in college.

Beloin's hookup with Benny was fortuitous. He had submitted a script to Fred Allen, who couldn't use it at the time. Fred, being an intimate friend of Jack Benny, sent Beloin and his script over to Benny. The comedian didn't call upon Beloin until some months later when he sent him a hurry call to join him in Detroit. Thence they went on to Hollywood together.

The Morrow-Beloin team now has a three-year contract through 1940 to write for Jack Benny, doing the dialog for his pictures as well as his radio shows. Together they conceive the situations, write the gags, see the shows through rehearsals. But always at their side is the indefatigable Benny himself, with probably the keenest sense of radio audience appeal and the shrewdest ability to edit and present "copy" of any comedian in the business.

Morrow and Beloin did more than come up with gags. Jack's on-air "gang" was changing and they had to invent new characters for each of them. Phil Harris, Rochester and Dennis Day joined the show. Andy Devine was used frequently for a couple of years. There was Carmichael the polar bear (other animals were short-lived) and Mr. Billingsley the boarder. They all added something to the programme, thanks to their acting abilities, the writers and, through his oversight, Jack himself.

Posted by Yowp at 07:09

Labels: Jack Benny

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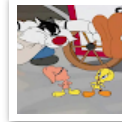
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News From ME

[Today's Video Link](#) - For reasons I can't quite explain, I've always had a fondness for Jimmy Durante singing so here's a musical number from a 1956 episode of The Jimmy Durante...

7 hours ago

Movies with Michael



[Tweety's High-Flying Adventure \(2000\)](#) - *Tweety's High-Flying

Adventure *marked the first Looney Tunes feature film to be released direct to video. It also marks the first time that Tweety ...

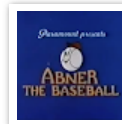
9 hours ago

Cartoon Research

[Picture Perfect: The 85th Anniversary of "Elmer's Candid Camera"](#) - This Chuck Jones short, celebrating its 85th anniversary this month, features a redesigned Elmer and an early appearance of Bugs.

2 days ago

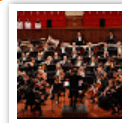
Way Too Damn Lazy To Write A Blog



[MLB 2025 Has Begun - Play Ball And Watch Baseball Cartoons!](#) -

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AFRTS Archive

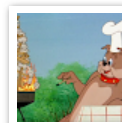


[John Doremus 1969](#) - What could be more universal

than travel? John Doremus has songs and stories about going places and seeing things. *John Doremus - 1969* More J...

3 days ago


Tom and Jerry: Toon by Toon




[Barbecue Brawl \(1956\)](#) - In some ways, this short film can be

considered a follow up to the earlier Tom and Jerry cartoon, Pup on a Picnic (1955). The two films have a similar...

5 days ago

**The Exposure Sheet**




A Spring Break Announcement - After a particularly lengthy first two months, spring break is finally here. My workplace tends to get pretty busy around this time, so I'll be taking a w...


1 week ago

Mark Kausler's CatBlog

Felix Soap Opera - Felix is back, and in Danny Dooit's home to stay! Danny's Dad finds out that Felix rescued Danny, so the Cat deserves a reward. It takes a bit of cha...

2 weeks ago

**Pegbar Profiles**



The Animator, January 1938 - The second issue of

The Animator is missing as of this writing, so here is the third edition from the start of January 1938.

*Snow White *had its Ca...

5 months ago

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Why Not Read...

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- Tex Avery at Warner Bros
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