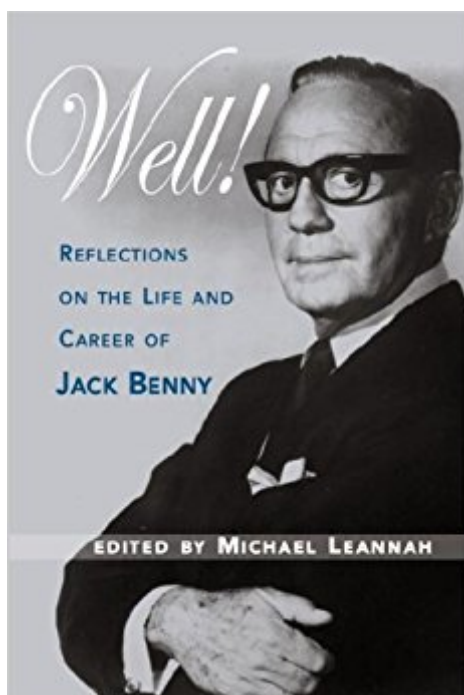


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# Well! Reflections On The Life & Career Of Jack Benny



## Synopsis

The ultimate book on Jack Benny's varied career. Includes these chapters: I Remember Jack by Frank Bresee The Sweetest Music This Side of Waukegan by Clair Schulz In the Movies with Jack Benny by Kay Linaker with Janine Marr Finding Himself in the Footlights: Jack Benny in Vaudeville by Pam Munter The Women in Benny's Life: An Examination of Jack's Luck With the Fairer Sex in Radio, TV, and the Movies by Mark Higgins Benny's War by B. J. Borsody Cheapskate Benny or Generous Jack? by Charles A. Beckett Balzer on Benny by Jordan R. Young To Be or Not to Be: Jack Benny in Hollywood 1940-1945 by Philip G. Harwood Jack Benny and Fred Allen: The Fierce Fighting of Good Friends by Noell Wolfgram Evans My Adventures in Hollywood by Jack Benny Benny's Floopers and Blubs (Uh, Bloopers and Flubs) by Michael Leannah Better Play, Don by Jack Benny Jack and Johnny: To Each a Fan, To Each a Friend by Steve Newwine From the Cradle to the Grave: The Births and Deaths of the Principal Characters of "The Jack Benny Program" by Ron Sayles and Michael Leannah What're You Laughing At, Mary? The Comic Voice of Mary Livingstone by Kathryn Fuller-Seeley Mel Blanc: Man of a Thousand Voices by Marc Reed Jack Benny: Cartoon Star by Derek Tague and Michael J. Hayde Jack Benny: Guardian Angel by Steve Thompson Timing Is Everything by Jordan R. Young Finding Jack Benny in Today's Waukegan by Michael Mildredson

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

I wish it were less expensive, but this is a great idea for a book. I enjoyed all of the various articles in the book, especially the one on Mary Livingstone. She hasn't had a lot written about her, other

than her relationship with Jack. The article on his film history was also interesting. The article by his co-star in *Buck Benny Rides Again* had lots of inside insight into what it was like working with Jack. The most intriguing section was about the cadence of the dialog on the show and how similar it was to a musical form. I would love to see a follow up book with articles on Eddie "Rochester" Anderson, Phil Harris, Kenny Baker, Dennis Day, and Don Wilson.

Always liked Jack Benny--was upset by the reference in the current Johnny Carson book by Carson's x attorney-stated that Jack was not outgoing etc etc...I purchased this book to get another perspective of the man Carson modeled himself professionally after and glad I did. I also recognized the book was mostly written by his relatives but it was a sweet read.

Started it, didn't get through much of it. Found the "Jack Benny On Comedy" interview much more interesting and insightful -- coming from Jackson himself.

I love reading about Jack Benny. He was a master of his craft! Too bad no-one here can replace him. Thanks for the book.

simply put, an interesting experiment has interesting results. rather than a standard biography (of which there's already been at least a dozen anyway), one Michael Leannah corrals a handful of Benny enthusiasts to offer articles on particular aspects of the legend of Jack Benny. there are of course a few inevitable reflections on the been-there-done-that. for instance...the line between the "real" Jack and his character is explored in Charles A. Beckett's "Cheapskate Benny Or Generous Jack?" one Pam Munter explores Jack's days of paying his dues in "Finding Himself In The Footlights: Jack Benny In Vaudeville." one Michael Mildredson chronicles his pilgrimage to Jack's hometown in "Finding Jack Benny In Today's Waukegan." Noell Wolfgram Evans' "The Fierce Fighting Of Good Friends" explores his relationship with supposed nemesis Fred Allen. there's even mini-bios of Benny sidekicks Mary Livingstone ("What're You Laughing At Mary?" by Kathryn Fuller-Seely) and Mel Blanc ("Man Of 1,000 Voices" by Marc Reed). but not every aspect explored is quite so obvious or conventional. for instance... "Jack Benny: Cartoon Star," by Derek Tague and Michael J. Hayde. in those days when cartoons were one of the "added attractions" to precede the movie, the day's celebrities would routinely get the animated caricature treatment. Tague and Hayde chart how Benny & Company came off, with results both flattering and embarrassing. "The Sweetest Music This Side Of Waukegan," by Clair Shultz. Mr. Shultz (yes, he's a man) explores the

rhythmic motifs of the Benny Show's running-gags and demonstrates their quasi-musical quality. (granted, he finishes on a sour note by comparing it to the God-awful big-band "music" popular at the time, but he still makes an interesting point.) "From The Cradle To The Grave" by Ron Sayles and Michael Leannah. this, probably the most unique take on the subject, takes the various members of Jack's radio "gang" and compares the world they were born into to the world they departed. "Better Play Don" and "My Adventures In Hollywood," vintage magazine articles written by the man himself. "To Each A Fan To Each A Friend," by Steve Newvine. this one explores Jack's relationship with fan-turned-disciple Johnny Carson. "Jack Benny: Guardian Angel" by Steve Thompson. this one gives an in-depth look at how, 15 or 20 years after his death, Jack Benny rose from the grave. well, okay, his likeness rose from the grave for an episode of a comic-book called Wolfe & Byrd: Counsellors Of The Macabe. the premise is lawyers who specialize in the supernatural, and a character based on Jack's radio character is charged with neglecting his guardian angel duties. "Benny's War," by B. J. Borsody. here we're given an idea how (for want of a less dubious term) propaganda was worked into radio comedies during the war years. my favorite is probably Leannah's own "Benny's Floopers & Blubs (Uh, Bloopers & Flubs)." the sort of goof-ups which television today reserves for their own blooper-themed shows were as commonplace on radio, only they couldn't be filtered out because radio series were always broadcast live. Leannah explores how such misreadings often led to enduring running-gags. you get the idea. i'm forced to admit that i wouldn't have nearly as much enthusiasm for this project if i wasn't a die-hard Jack Benny fan. but even if i weren't, it's still a fascinating portrait of how different aspects of a pop-culture phenomenon resonate with different people. it might not be a bad idea for the same approach to others star and/or phenomena to become a trend. in other words, now DON'T cut that out!!

The editor, Michael Leannah, says that this book about Jack Benny isn't a biography. Well, maybe not, but it sure does give us a clear picture of what the man was really like and why his co-workers loved him so much. Would you believe that Jack Benny originally wanted to be a musician? That comedy wasn't his goal from childhood? Who would'a thunk it? I listened to him on the radio as a child and watched his TV show every week, but only now, after reading this book, feel that I truly know him. This book consists of essays and articles, each written by a different person (except for two that Benny wrote himself), and they zero in on specific aspects of his life and/or career. Terrific reading for Jack Benny fans!

Of all the comedians I enjoyed during the 1950s and '60s, I loved Jack Benny the most. Every Sunday night he and his band of zanies - Don Wilson, Mary Livingstone, Dennis Day, Rochester, Frank Nelson and my personal favorite, Mel Blanc - brought much laughter and joy into my house. And just about everything I learned about being funny, I learned from Jack Benny; he was the master! Michael Leannah offers up a scattershot collection of writings on this legendary comedian in this 2007 BearManor Media release. To say I eagerly awaited getting a copy of this book is an understatement. While it includes some interesting and sometimes funny essays on Benny, I have to say I was kind of disappointed. I enjoyed the sections on Benny's early career and radio successes, flubs made during the course of those radio shows, his feud with Fred Allen, write-ups on Mary Livingstone and Mel Blanc, Benny's friendship with Johnny Carson, etc. The essay on the Warner Brothers 'Jack Bunny' cartoons, though, was marginal. And I failed to see how the 1990s WOLFF & BYRD comics that used a Jack Benny-like character in any way reflected 'the life and career' of JB. Those criticisms aside, most Jack Benny fans will want to pick up a copy of WELL! It celebrates the life and times of one of America's greatest funnymen. Recommended.

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