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Old Jewish Comedians: A BLAB! Storybook



Synopsis

An illustrated celebration of the greatest Jewish comedians of the 20th century. This comprehensive collection of portraiture of comedians born before 1930 includes the famous (Milton Berle, Groucho Marx, Jerry Lewis, Mel Brooks, Jack Benny), the not-so-famous (Benny Rubin, Shelly Berman) and the largely unknown (Al Kelly, Menasha Skulnik). The Reuben Award-winning Friedman presents a thorough visual history of these greatest Borscht-Belt comedians with 28 full-page portraits. This is a Blab! Storybook, a series showcasing sequential artists from the acclaimed anthology Blab!. Each volume is presented in a beautiful 10" x 10" hardcover and full-color format. 28 full-page full-color portraits

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Popular film historian Leonard Maltin's page of affectionate tribute is the only text in Friedman's 10-by-10-inch watercolor portrait album, which would seem to disqualify the book for the BLAB! Picto-Novelette series. Where's the story (i.e., novelette)? But kvetch, kvetch. Friedman needs no narrative to justify any book he puts out. He is one of the best cartoonists and caricaturists going, whose renderings, in this case, of star comedians of the mid-twentieth century seethe with the panoply of feelings their personae stir in so many breasts: affection, repulsion, caution, fear, sadness, disdain, and admiration (maybe). If he gives Milton Berle, Rodney Dangerfield, Don Rickles, Jerry Lewis, and the rest outside heads, he makes sure that every crease, mustache hair, and liver spot looks utterly real. And he catches each man "on": Bud Abbott appears stoically grumpy even in retirement, Myron Cohen still tilts his head in disingenuous submission, Phil Silvers

is working yet another con. If only we were all funny enough to get Friedman to draw us! Ray Olson
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Friedman is one of the best cartoonists/caricaturists going. -- Booklist starred review

Drew Friedman's work falls into that category of "you either get it or you don't." For those of us who get it, this is pure gold. Besides being the state of the art in contemporary caricature, Drew puts a particular spin on everything he does. There's a lot of love in these portraits of aging comics, but there's still this warts-and-all approach that separates them from pure hero worship. Drew casts his Jewish comedians as wonderful funnymen to be admired, while still keeping them human (or perhaps even more than human). If the Everyman is covered in wrinkles and liver spots, then these larger-than-life Supermen have even more! With today's comics almost always working blue, and the average comedy club or HBO special containing more four-letter words than a dockworkers convention, it's refreshing to see these old-timers (accent on the old) who were funny without being foul-mouthed. The days of these old-skool comedians is past, but their faces will live on thanks to Drew. Like Levy's rye bread, you don't have to be Jewish to love this book.

I bought this for my Jewish grandmother as a lighthearted gift. She loved it. I too found it to be a great coffee-table book, despite only being familiar with maybe 1/3 of the comedians. The art is excellent, and I could easily spend 5 or 10 minutes studying each portrait. There's a simple honesty in Friedman's work which makes it both funny and refreshing. As other reviewers have mentioned, there is absolutely no text in this book, so be aware that what you're getting is a book of portraits, nothing more. If you want more info on the comedians shown, you'll have to use the googles.

Book is primarily photos, with very little text. Somewhat disappointed. Guess I should have paid more attention to the product description.

Drew Friedman is one of the best humorous illustrators working today. His art straddles the line between portraiture and caricature, capturing his subjects with wit and personality. This and his other "Old Jewish Comedians" collections are fantastic examples of a master at the height of his powers.

If you grew up in the 50's and 60's watching TV, having this short but sweet book on your coffee

table to thumb through will bring a smile to you over and over. Being Jewish not required.

A wonderful tribute - brought back so many great memories. Congratulations, Drew; it's your best work yet!

The book is fabulous, I loved it!! It's great and it's really funny!! I've been looking for such a book for a long time!!!! Thank you!!!

There's not much going on with this book. It is basically an homage with beautiful illustrations, but the lack of information leaves one wishing for a discount.

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