

RELEASE #1

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CO.

# JEST LIKE OLD TIMES

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FAMOUS FUNNY MEN



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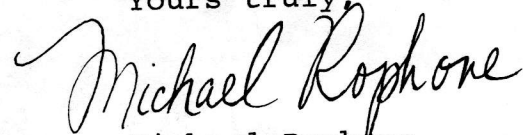
WHAT EVER HAPPENED TO RADIO COMEDY? That's a question often asked by folks who remember radio as it used to be, and in fact, by anyone that once belly laughed to the antics of Amos 'N Andy, the snappy patter of Burns & Allen, or the crashing thunder of Fibber McGee's closet. Sure, radio has its humor today, the one-liners of the time-tune-temperature disc jockeys, but it sure has changed...hasn't it.

WHAT A WONDERFUL TREAT WAITS FOR YOU. "JEST LIKE OLD TIMES," a fabulous, hilarious collection of the Greatest Radio Comedians, and the routines that made them famous. Gathered together on a modern, high quality LP record, playable on any mono or stereo phonograph, these Star Comics are yours to play over and over again for yourself, your family, your friends. Out of the tender web of Yesteryear, you'll walk down memory lane with Ed Wynn, Bert Lahr, Joe Penner, Edgar Bergen, and the other laugh-getters we've chosen from out of the past.

NEVER TO BE RE-CREATED. Years of searching have produced the master tapes to make this monumental record. Only 1,000 numbered copies have been pressed. You will not be offered the opportunity to buy this album again. When these 1,000 copies are gone, there will be no more. You'll want to order an extra copy as a present. However, in fairness to all who receive this letter, we must limit sales to a maximum of two copies per customer. Of course, you won't find this album in record shops, in fact, nothing on this album has every appeared on disc before.

BUT WHAT DID HAPPEN TO RADIO COMEDY? On the back page of this letter are a few of my thoughts...you'll have a few opinions of your own after listening to the exciting, educational and downright FUNNY history of radio comedy we call, "JEST LIKE OLD TIMES."

Yours truly,



Michael Rophone  
 The Radiola Company

P.S. This offer is strictly limited, please order today, to avoid disappointment.

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## RELEASE #1

# JEST LIKE OLD TIMES

### SIDE A

The Art of Radio Comedy when broadcasting was young, by performers who achieved Fame and Fortune before Radio was a household word.

1. **BERT LAHR.** Primarily known for his activities in Vaudeville, in Burlesque and on the stage, Bert Lahr in this 1935 recording acts as a transition from the older forms of entertainment to the new medium of Radio. A logical beginning for a look at Radio Comedy.
2. **THE HAPPINESS BOYS.** Billy Jones and Ernie Hare were straight singers recording Edison cylinders and going nowhere fast. Their instant success as a team carried over into radio when they made their debut on a 1½ hour broadcast on WJZ, New York, on October 18, 1921. Their two famous themes "How Do You Do?" and "My Hap-Hap-Happiness" introduced programs of puns, satire and pure corn. This selection gives a fascinating glimpse, through satire, of the programming fare of the day, c. 1926.

Soon sponsored by the Happiness Candy Company, the "Happiness Boys" became the "Interwoven Pair" for a sock manufacturer, and later the "Taystee Loafers" for a bread company . . . "He who pays the piper calls the tune" . . . a rule of the air that still applies to broadcasting today.

3. **JACK PEARL** better known on radio as **BARON MUNCHAUSEN**, an inveterate liar and dialect comedian par excellence. His famous "Vas You Dere Sharlie?" was heard hundreds of times on his own program and on numerous guest appearances.
4. **STOOPNAGLE AND BUDD.** Colonel Lemuel Q. Stoopnagle and Budd (whose real names were F. Chase Taylor and Budd Hulick) met in Buffalo and broke into radio on a local station. By 1931 they were appearing on a CBS show called 'The Tasteyeast Gloomchasers.' Their fame lasted only during the Depression, appearing on many shows, including Fred Allen's, and on all the networks. At the end of the decade, the team split for personal reasons, and neither of them could make it alone.

Radio itself is the subject of the satire in this 1934 routine that contains enough skillfully written lines to make you hear something new each time you listen. Play this cut twice and you'll see what we mean.

5. **ED WYNN.** Known as the "Fire Chief" because of his long association with Texaco "Fire Chief" Gasoline. Wynn was a top Vaudeville name when he came to radio in the early 20's and he promptly fell flat on his face. He was a comic who, more than most, needed a live audience and looking into a cold mike that never even giggled was unnerving to him. Doing the most obvious thing, Wynn (along with Eddie Cantor) at that point simply invented the live studio audience for radio. His success in front of the microphone was assured. Behind the mike, his attempt to start his own network (the Amalgamated Broadcasting System) was a failure.

This particular routine is loaded with atrocious puns as well as good belly laughs and is altogether typical. It's from a 1940 "Harvest of Stars" broadcast, using world famous James Melton as a straight man. We've included the entire Texaco commercial simply because we've never heard one quite like it before, and probably never will again.

6. **AMOS 'N' ANDY.** Freeman Gosden and Charles Correll, both white, the creators of Amos 'N' Andy, well deserve the title "The Most Popular Radio Comedians." Starting at a small station in Chicago "Sam 'N' Henry," the characters they created, soon moved to WGN, and later to WMAQ, and by the end of the decade (1929) not only were they on the NBC network, but they be-

came the first radio program to go into syndication (individual sales to local independent stations).

WGN, unwilling to let them take the characters of Sam 'N' Henry, (which the station owned) with them when they left, forced the creation of the two new names, now known the world over. Achieving popularity unheard of at that time, Amos 'N' Andy were probably responsible for the sale of as many radios as Milton Berle was later responsible for the sale of televisions. The entire country would stop at 7 P.M. each evening to find out what new adventures these two colored bumpkins from Marietta, Georgia were up to. Movie theaters wisely turned off the film and wheeled a radio onstage, else the theater would be emptied. Even the White House ceased its official bustle promptly at 7, so Presidents Coolidge and later Hoover could tune in their favorites.

### SIDE B

Early Radio Humor develops and matures. New names appear, names that became known BECAUSE of Radio, not transplants from the stage or records. A greater degree of sophistication can be heard in these selections.

7. **EDGAR BERGEN AND CHARLIE MCCARTHY.** When he was first introduced on the Rudy Vallee show, on December 16, 1936, most people thought the idea of putting a ventriloquist on the Radio absurd, since obviously no one could see the dummy or watch the ventriloquist's lips. But logic never has played a large role in selecting the public's heroes. The talented writing and the cleverness of the material, plus the unique character of Charlie, overcame all obstacles and made Edgar Bergen endure for so long that he finally, in 1957, became the last major radio comedian with his own sponsored show on network radio.
8. **GEORGE BURNS AND GRACIE ALLEN.** Refugees from dying Vaudeville, they achieved immense popularity on the radio during the Depression. Their debut was on the Eddie Cantor program in 1931. This wartime recording is typical of their routines, with references to Gracie's weird assortment of relatives.
9. **JOE PENNER,** a comic from Burlesque and the Stage, made his first network appearance, as did so many others, on the Rudy Vallee show in 1933. He was liked well enough to be given his own Blue Network show that same year called "The Baker's Broadcast." A performer who relied heavily on puns and unusual situations, his popularity faded with the Depression. The depth of his humor ran much deeper than his famous lines "Wanna Buy a Duck?" "You Naaasty Man!" and "Don't Eeeeverrr Do Thaaat;" The famous "Mad Russian" of Eddie Cantor Show fame is also heard.
10. **ABBOTT & COSTELLO.** While best known for their many movies, their radio show was an important, albeit short-lived, step in radio comedy development. Discovered on the Kate Smith Hour in 1938, they became Fred Allen's summer replacement in 1940, and soon had their own show. Realizing that television was the coming thing, they abandoned radio and their TV show became a staple on early TV screens. Their "Who's on First" skit always was a favorite with the young set, while their famous "Mustard" routine had more appeal to older listeners.
11. **FANNY BRICE AS BABY SNOOKS.** While Fanny Brice was already a great name on the stage by 1935, the irascible Baby Snooks character (created by two of her writers) was already a byword in radio comedy. The little monster first appeared on the "Ziegfield Follies of the Air" on CBS, although Fanny Brice had been a radio performer since the early 1920's.



## WHATEVER HAPPENED TO RADIO COMEDY?

It all started back when the first "Uncle Josh" record was played into that first primitive microphone and someone "out there" got a chuckle from his crystal set. It started small, grew until it was the most important product of every broadcast station, and eventually subsided as Television and cheaper-and-easier disc jockeys took over. The executives of those early stations discovered that when people actually listened they most wanted to hear something to make them laugh, with drama a close second. The slow growth and developing sophistication of the art are well illustrated in "JEST LIKE OLD TIMES." The early names soon faded to a degree in all but memory as the newer personalities, performers whose stardom had been achieved in the medium of radio, entered the spotlight. Just as their names are still remembered, so too are the changes and innovations, and yes, the jokes that they pioneered. The rise and fall of Radio Comedy can be likened to a gently sloping parabolic curve with a rise (1921 to 1933), a plateau (1933 to 1947), and a gradual decline (1947 to 1957). In "JEST LIKE OLD TIMES," we've concentrated on the beginnings and the plateau, or what might be termed, "Radio's Golden Age."

## WHAT IS THE RADIOLA COMPANY?

It's an unusual company with an unusual project. Starting some eight years ago, a small group of professional people from the Arts, Radio & TV, felt a method was required to save the remaining examples of the history of our industry...Radio. But not only broadcasters, people from the theatre, the screen, and other media became involved. The RADIOLA COMPANY is in effect a club, but a club with no dues, no membership requirements, and no obligation to buy anything. Our common bond is the belief that great art-forms should be preserved. Much of today's sculpture, for instance, (crushed automobiles and the like) has resulted from the fact that today's artists aren't interested in years of study. They feel that if it's self-expression, it must be good, and the Great Masters are ignored. We believe that the Great Masters of our industry, Radio, should be preserved, studied, but most of all, ENJOYED. RADIOLA RECORDS are produced to the highest professional technical standards by skilled craftsmen. Every record is hand inspected, then carefully placed in an individually numbered jacket. RADIOLA RECORDS can play on any phonograph, mono or stereo, and are guaranteed to be as advertised, or YOUR MONEY BACK.

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