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- ☐ I (WE) CAN VOLUNTEER. Please call.
- ☐ Enclosed is my (our) donation of \$ _____
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| <input type="checkbox"/> Sustaining Member - \$500
10 discounted tickets per show
10 free tickets per year
Program acknowledgement | <input type="checkbox"/> Dual/Family - \$50
4 discounted tickets per show
4 free tickets per year |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Supporting Member - \$250
8 discounted tickets per show
8 free tickets per year
Program acknowledgement | <input type="checkbox"/> Individual - \$35
2 discounted tickets per show
2 free tickets per year |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Patron - \$100
6 discounted tickets per show
6 free tickets per year | <input type="checkbox"/> Senior/Student - \$25
1 discounted ticket per show
(full time student or senior 65+) |

Please list your two favorite films:

(cont'd from page 1)

On The Road With The Brothers Marx

Harpo's pantomime was sheer exposition, but it always got a laugh, even when it was expanded, and more gags were stuck in it, and guesses on Chico's part as to what he might mean by his signals were put in and taken out and written and rewritten like wildfire, until it was finally extended, elaborated, stretched out, and amplified into a whole routine, and turned into one of the great Harpo-Chico scenes of ever.

By the time they left Chicago, the laugh gauge was approaching maximum, and "Scenes from *A Day at the Races*" looked like another hit.

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Film Historian/Filmmaker Joe Adamson is the author of *Groucho, Harpo, Chico and sometimes Zeppo* and other books. He is also Writer-Editor of *The Marx Brothers in a Nutshell* and Director-Editor-Co-Writer of the Emmy-winning *W.C. Fields Straight Up*, both documentaries once on PBS and now on DVD. 🌻

Alex Film SOCIETY presents

GROUCHO·CHICO·HARPO IN **MARX BROTHERS** **A DAY AT THE RACES**

On The Road With
The Brothers Marx By Joe Adamson

(Veterans of vaudeville, the Marx Brothers were accustomed to trying out their material in front of live audiences. In a passage adapted from his book *Groucho, Harpo, Chico and sometimes Zeppo*, author Joe Adamson explains how the process worked for their MGM films *A Night at the Opera* and *A Day at the Races*.)

"Scenes from *A Day at the Races*" was too bizarre to be called quaint but too old-fashioned to be called novel. Vaudeville was on its way out, but this wasn't really vaudeville, and it wasn't really a play either, since it told half of its story live and half of it by proxy with slides and expository monologues. The shows were five times a day, six days a week, and for eight weeks.

Writers George Seaton, Robert Pirosh, and Al Boasberg had followed along, and held conferences with the clowns between each of the fifty-minute shows that were spaced at handy intervals such as 12:30, 3:00, 5:00, 7:30, and 9:30, to give them time to decide what had worked and what hadn't and to retire into a corner for a minute and quickly come up with something that would. These were perhaps the most dynamic of script conferences, and, given the cold-water-in-the-face impetus of a daily audience, the comedy minds of the company found themselves startled into wittiness like dancing tenderfeet.

They found that something that didn't suit people when phrased



The boys battle for the hand of Esther Muir.

as a question might always come across better if it was turned into a statement. (Al Boasberg's famous line upon Groucho taking Harpo's pulse, "Either he's dead or my watch has stopped," wouldn't get a laugh if it went "Is he dead or has my watch stopped?" because people would sit and wait for the funny answer to come.) Groucho's retort to Siegfried Rumann's beard, "Aren't you a fugitive from a mattress?" didn't make the grade either way, and they dropped it. His excuse for Harpo and Chico's existence, "They must have come out of a test tube," didn't quite go over, but its replacement, "You just rub a lamp and they appear," did fine. A reference to a doused wristwatch, "I'd rather have it rusty than disappear," became "I'd rather have it rusty than gone," and then "I'd rather have it rusty than missing." A line that went "That's the most obnoxious proposal I've ever had" was not getting the laughs it seemed to deserve, and so it became a "revolting" proposal, a "disgusting" proposal, an "offensive" proposal, a "repulsive" proposal. Still not funny enough. It became "disagreeable" and "distasteful," and it bombed altogether. When it was a "nauseating" proposal, it was hilarious. One blank spot in the show, just previous to the bedroom scene, was filled only with Harpo making faces at Chico to the effect that Groucho was going to get in trouble with some seductress, and a comedy scene seemed called for.

(cont'd on page 4)

Vol. 16. No. 2 April 10, 2010, 2 p.m. & 8 p.m.

Film Calendar

The best loved musical
of our time! *Oklahoma!*



Saturday,
June 26,
at
2 pm &
8 pm only

Filled with timeless, showstopping songs, this **Oscar®** winning Rodgers and Hammerstein landmark musical takes you back to Oklahoma at the turn of the last century. It's the story of a couple of young cowboys trying to win the hearts of their sweethearts, despite the interference of an evil ranch hand. When first released it was described as "A motion picture as big as all outdoors!" And it still is. Starting Gordon MacRae, Shirley Jones, Rod Steiger, Gloria Graham and Eddie Albert. Unforgettable ballet sequence and choreography by Agnes de Mille. Directed by Fred Zinnemann. Event running time is approximately 2 hours. (1955 20th Century Fox)

Tickets: 818.243.2539



ALEX FILM SOCIETY
P.O. Box 4807,
Glendale, CA 91222-0807

The Marx Brothers A Day At The Races

Saturday, April 10, 2010 at 2 and 8 pm only



A Day at the Races 1937

111 minutes
M-G-M

DIRECTED by

Sam Wood

SCREENPLAY

Robert Pirosh, George Seaton,
George Oppenheimer

Director of Photography

Joseph Ruttenberg

CAST

The Marx Brothers
(Groucho, Chico, and Harpo),
Allan Jones, Maureen O'Sullivan,
Margaret Dumont, Douglass Dumbrille,
Esther Muir, Sig Ruman

Film Society Donors

Michael & Felice FEINSTEIN
Randy & Janice CARTER
Richard & Barbara COUNSIL
Laura RICHARZ
David & Catherine STROHMAIER



You Bet Your Life

Groucho Marx was the emcee and star of this quiz show heard on radio from 1947 thru 1957. ABC, NBC and CBS all aired the series at various times. The filmed television show was seen on NBC from 1950 until September of 1961.

Producer John Guedel developed the show and found sponsorship. At that time Groucho was not making movies, and had not been successful on the radio. Guedel happened to see a special with Groucho and Bob Hope, where they ad-libbed very well. He convinced the skeptical Groucho to take the lead, and invest in 50% of the show, in part by saying that he was "untouchable" at ad-libbing, but not at following a script. Since Groucho and the contestants were ad-libbing, Groucho insisted that each show be recorded and edited before release.

Although it was ostensibly a quiz show, the series' most important asset was the humor injected by Groucho into the interviews he did with the contestants (and sidekick/announcer George Fenneman), before they had a chance to play the game. Contestants were picked primarily on the potential they had to be foils for Groucho's barbs, which they seemed to love. At the start of each show the audience was informed of the night's secret word- "It's a common word, something you

see every day." If any of the contestants happened to say it while they were on the air, they won an extra \$100. When they said the word a dilapidated stuffed duck would drop from the ceiling with the \$100 attached.

Dozens of celebrity guests appeared over the years including: Phyllis Diller, Ray Bradbury, Joe Louis, Liberace, Johnny Weissmuller, Ernie Kovacs, Tor Johnson, Frankie Avalon and author William Peter Blatty, who used his prize money to write THE EXORCIST.

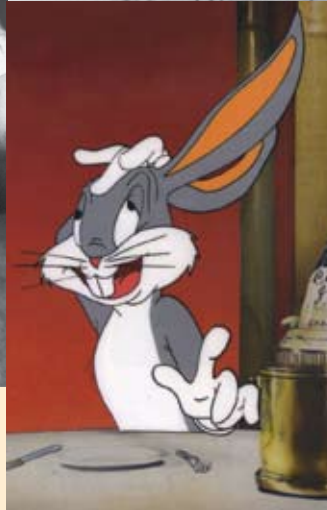


Tall showgirls were perfect comic foils for Groucho's tough line of questioning.

The reruns that aired on TV during the summer were titled "The Best of Groucho" and the entire program was retitled "The Groucho Show" during the final season.

Many of the episodes are in the public domain and syndicated collections of all the episodes have been airing for almost half a century.

Sources: Wikipedia, LIFE WITH GROUCHO, Arthur Marx Popular Library Edition, THE COMPLETE DIRECTORY TO PRIMETIME NETWORK TV SHOWS, Tim Brooks, Earle Marsh, Ballantine Books. 🌸



Slick Hare

WARNER BROS. 1947

8 Mins. Technicolor

Directed by Friz Freleng

Story By Tedd Pierce

Michael Maltese

Produced by Edward Selzer

Voices: Mel Blanc,
Dave Barry,

Arthur Q. Bryan

In a New York club for the rich and famous, Mr. Humphrey Bogart orders rabbit. Waiter Elmer Fudd tries to get Bugs into the pot. Watch for cameo caricatures of Groucho Marx, Sydney Greenstreet, Frank Sinatra, Lauren Bacall, Leopold Stokowski, Gregory Peck, Ray Milland, and Carmen Miranda. 🌸

The Brothers On Film

By the 1920s, the Marx Brothers had become one of America's favorite theatrical acts. Under Chico's management, and with Groucho's creative direction, the brothers' vaudeville act led to them becoming stars on Broadway, first with a musical revue, *I'll Say She Is* (1924-1925) and then with two musical comedies, *The Cocoanuts* (1925-1926) and *Animal Crackers* (1928-1929).

Paramount signed the bothers and produced their early films before they left to join Irving Thalberg at MGM for *A Night at the Opera*. Brother Gummo appeared on stage but never on film and Zeppo was featured in the first five movies before joining Gummo as a major Hollywood talent agent. 🌸

Love Happy (1949)

A Night in Casablanca (1946)

The Big Store (1941)

Go West (1940)

At the Circus (1939)

Room Service (1938)

A Day at the Races (1937)

A Night at the Opera (1935)

Duck Soup (1933)

Horse Feathers (1932)

Monkey Business (1931)

Animal Crackers (1930)

The Cocoanuts (1929)



Minnie's Boy's: From Top, Groucho, Zeppo, Harpo, Chico and Gummo on the set of Duck Soup circa 1933.

For tickets call **818-243-2539**
or alextheatre.org