

[Free] The Art of Laurel And Hardy: Graceful Calamity in the Films

## The Art of Laurel And Hardy: Graceful Calamity in the Films

*Kyp Harness, John Larrabee, John V. Brennan*  
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#2851244 in Books McFarland Company 2006-03-13Original language:EnglishPDF # 1 9.04 x .56 x 6.54l,  
.77 #File Name: 0786424400255 pages | File size: 34.Mb

**Kyp Harness, John Larrabee, John V. Brennan : The Art of Laurel And Hardy: Graceful Calamity in the Films** before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised The Art of Laurel And Hardy: Graceful Calamity in the Films:

2 of 2 people found the following review helpful. You should get this oneBy SteveThere have been many (probably too many) books written about Laurel and Hardy. Kyp Harness himself points out that the "must-reads" are John McCabe's "Mr Laurel and Mr Hardy" and Randy Skretvedt's "Laurel and Hardy: The Magic Behind the Movies". If

you want to learn about Laurel and Hardy, read those, and of course watch the funny movies. But don't stop there. Ignore the coffee table books, and some other minor works, unless they touch on something you take particular interest in. I'm not all that interested in movie posters (those for LH films were generally not especially good anyway), or in sensationalism (LH sometimes drank a bit, they both had divorces, you learn enough about all that in the standard biographies and don't need to know more), or in exactly how many movies they might appear in for just how many seconds (they starred together in dozens upon dozens that are worth seeing, and in a handful that aren't, which adds up to plenty.) Yet do not ignore Kyp Harness's fine book. It doesn't reveal anything new. Laurel and Hardy died decades ago and there's not much new to find out about the pair now, or many people left living who knew them to tell you about it, if there were. But it reveals through a very perceptive eye what was always there that you might have missed, or never paused to think about, when watching the funny movies. It helps you understand why you're still watching, maybe for the seventeenth time, a simple film with a simple plot and a bunch of crazy gags you had already memorized in grade school. Kyp Harness's book is not essential any more than is Charles Barr's "Laurel and Hardy" or William K. Everson's "The Films of Laurel and Hardy" or Scott MacGillivray's "Laurel and Hardy: From the Forties Forward" or other good works such as "The Laurel and Hardy Encyclopedia" or "The Laurel and Hardy Digest" or McCabe's "Babe" or Fred Guiles's "Stan" or Leonard Maltin's "Movie Comedy Teams". But like those it's very good. If you've read the essentials, and learned to love the movies, and then want more as you're sure to do, then you'll want to read this. And once you do you'll be awfully glad you did. Apparently this is Kyp Harness's first book. He makes his living, not as a writer, but as a musician. That's a great credential. Musicians know timing, and nobody knew or practiced timing better than did the great comics such as Stan Laurel and Oliver Hardy. Mr Harness writes flowingly and evocatively of the delightfully syncopated rhythms, and the astonishingly catchy melodies, created by the most harmonious two comic characters ever made up out of thin air by anyone: of Stan and Ollie, the pair, the indivisible two-toned comic amalgam, that you come to feel was always there and always part of the world and of you, once you get acquainted with it. But what is "it"? Mr Skretvedt called it magic. He was right. Mr Harness tells us how the magic works on us. He knows his stuff. He knows the movies, and how they make him feel, and how they make you feel. So he explains that. Better than we could. Sometimes, maybe, Mr Harness defies Stan Laurel's injunction against explaining humor to its death. If something's funny, Stan might say, it's funny because it's funny, enough said. But Kyp Harness doesn't go too far. I think Stan would agree. What Mr Harness tells us -- or rather reminds us of because we knew it but simply couldn't articulate it as well as he does -- is that Laurel and Hardy are just like us, very human, and struggling to keep our humanity in a world at odds with that goal. Stan and Ollie are too dumb to make it in the world, and mostly, that's because they are too nice. Of course, and inevitably, Stan was himself sometimes pressed to elucidate on why audiences responded with great warmth to what were superficially simply silly Laurel and Hardy movies. "People have always loved our pictures," Laurel allowed, and on one occasion late in his life he proffered the simple explanation, "I guess that's because they saw how much love we put into them." So I don't really think Mr Laurel, or Hardy either, would take exception to what Mr Harness explains for us in his fine book. He saw how much love was put into the films. Any perceptive person can see that. An artist, and particularly a musician, can see and feel and write about that very well indeed, and that's what Kyp Harness has done with "The Art of Laurel and Hardy: Graceful Clamity in the Films". He has done quite as good a job of providing insight into the LH magic as did Charles Barr a half century ago. That is very high praise as readers of Barr's book will know. So I'm not going to say anybody must read Kyp Harness's book. But you should. You really should. Why not 5 stars? I want him to try again and try for better. I hope Mr Harness keeps playing his music and I hope he finds time to write some more as well. He's got a new audience of reader fans to satisfy now. 12 of 13 people found the following review helpful. The best book yet about the greatest comedy team ever! By Baltimore, MDAs a life-long Laurel and Hardy fan, it was a given that I would have to order the new book about them, even though I felt the \$35.00 price tag was high, especially for a paperback. At that price, I reasoned, it must be huge and loaded with pictures; maybe many I don't already have. With thirty-plus books about L H on my shelf already it seemed logical that "The Art of Laurel and Hardy" would have to be a big picture book: what could possibly be left to write about them? Well, I must say, I was crestfallen when it arrived: not only was it considerably smaller than I had expected, but it had no - count them - NO pictures at all! I was so initially disappointed that I considered returning it for a refund. Then something happened that changed my opinion completely: I read it. I didn't think it was possible, but Kip Harness has managed to write a totally fresh and uniquely insightful analysis of what made Laurel and Hardy so great. And, more importantly, why so many of us love them so much. Any fan of the "boys" will love this book, and for those who are new to their art, this is a tremendous introduction. In my humble opinion, "The Art of Laurel and Hardy" by Kyp Harness is the best book yet about the greatest comedy team ever. 3 of 3 people found the following review helpful. I second the first review. By GregThis is the best book I've ever read about the ART of the classic team and I believe I've read them all. The Magic Behind the Movies by Randy Skretvedt is the best book on how the films were made but this one focuses on what ended up on screen. It thoughtfully and with great intelligence, analyzes the characters and situations exhibited throughout the long term partnership of the boys and in a way that makes it a great read. It is totally worth the price and a must have for anyone who loves Laurel and Hardy or anyone who wants to learn why two comics became immortals of the screen.

From the early days of film came Laurel and Hardy, a comedy team that created slapstick hilarity from life's simplest situations. Some seventy years after their heyday, Arthur Stanley Jefferson and Oliver Norvell Babe Hardy are still remembered for the comic chaos they created in film shorts. They gave us something to laugh at by reminding us of our own foibles, in a way that was genuine and unpretentious. The lanky Stan Laurel (1890-1965) and portly Ollie Hardy (1892-1957) had but one objective: to create as many laughs as would fit in one short film. And that, they did. The book begins by exploring their comedy in the early days of film. A chapter is dedicated to each of the boys: Laurel from Ulverston, England, and Hardy from the state of Georgia as a person and performer. Further chapters explore the slapstick and gags of Laurel and Hardy and how the pair survived the transition to sound that left behind many actors of the day. It was only when they began to work for large studios, churning out cookie-cutter scripts, that their art began to lose its way. The book takes the reader through the ups and downs of their careers and to a final comeback. A filmography lists works from 1917 to 1951 with information on availability.

About the Author: Singer, songwriter and artist Kyp Harness lives in Toronto, Canada.