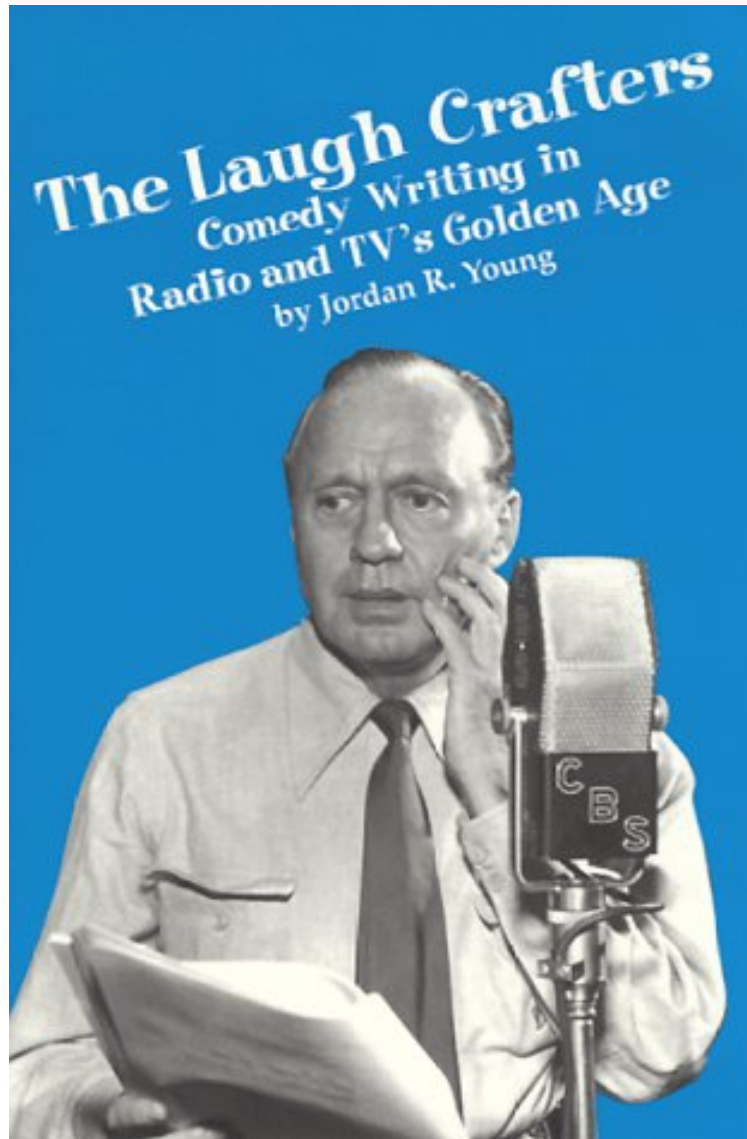


[Free and download] The Laugh Crafters: Comedy Writing in Radio and Tv's Golden Age

# The Laugh Crafters: Comedy Writing in Radio and Tv's Golden Age

Jordan R. Young

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**Jordan R. Young : The Laugh Crafters: Comedy Writing in Radio and Tv's Golden Age** before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised The Laugh Crafters: Comedy Writing in Radio and Tv's Golden Age:

8 of 8 people found the following review helpful. As close as you'll ever get to finding a Time MachineBy Nathan A.

Gordon Jordan Young's interviews with some of Hollywood's top radio comedy writers in the thirties, forties and fifties gives the reader interested in show business nostalgia so much more than could be reasonably expected. While I was reading the book, I felt that I went back in time and I thoroughly enjoyed every hour. We don't read transcripts of old radio shows--instead, we get a front row seat on Sunset and Vine in Hollywood and find out--through the writers--all that went on before the show went on the air and how the whole frenzied process began again immediately after the show went off the air. I always wondered how these old radio shows were put together. What we learn is that each comedy star had his own system. While Eddie Cantor may have employed a hundred writers in a chaotic fashion over his long radio career with only modest results, Jack Benny had a long-time stable of six or seven writers and by consensus, had established, along with Fred Allen, the "gold standard" in radio comedy. I loved this book!

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. **Marvelous!** By HeyJudy Anyone with an interest in classic comedy writing will find this book to be an absolute treasure trove. It is a fascinating and comprehensive work consisting of interviews with the men (almost exclusively, men) who created the industry of modern comedy writing and, thus, the television industry as we all know it. I enjoyed every page!

1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. **A New Found Treasure** By William J. Cassara I heard of this book when it came out, but delayed buying it. For some reason I knew I would love this book if I ever got my hands on it. That time came at the Cinecon convention in L.A. where author Jordan R. Young was present. There on his table were many other books that he wrote, but when I saw "The Laugh Crafters" with an image of Jack Benny holding a radio script in front of a microphone, I simply had to get it for the cover alone. I jumped in at any given page just to get the feeling; the interviews of the radio writers who wrote for all the biggies in New York and Hollywood had me spellbound. What talents these scriptwriters had; they knew their subjects well and helped to create their comic persona to the public. Some of these writers came from a hard trip up the ladder of success and seemingly always underpaid and unaccredited. This is where Author Jordan has my respect; the interviews were as though there were simple discussions without the restriction of a Q A format. These writers did not have an axe to grind, but they were experts in knowing their true worth and took great pride in their career (which often ended as fast as they got the job). The script writers featured had the best "take" on what was going on with their character development, humor, pacing and packing it in to the time frame during mostly live performances. Jordan (and I believe Randy Skretvedt) collaborated with the excellent questions posed. I can tell you that this kind of open banter does not come unless there is complete trust and respect on both sides. Jordan made these unsung heroes comfortable enough where some were concerned they were "burning their bridges." Not to fear, this was not a trashy-tell all tome, it was the opportunity to get those fellows to remember way back to their beginnings and interactions with the stars. One must remember that writers were generally respected by the performers and certainly "in-the-business." In a sense those radio script writers were virtually "flies on the walls" of what was going on, the performers did not always give off the best impression, but that's what makes this book "real." Some great stories of Benny, Hope, Berle and Vallee were my favorite. This book will never age, though the writers mostly have passed on. The book truly tries to capture something for the fans of comic writing in the radio period of the 1930's, 40's and even the 50's (to include some television). Who fares the best? Who excelled on radio and not t.v.? Read "The Laugh Crafters" and enjoy a world gone by, but captured in print by Jordan R. Young.

Twelve of Hollywood's top comedy writers and speak their minds about the so-called good old days, and recall the outrageous backstage antics of legendary comedians. No one is spared in frank, uncensored and frequently hilarious conversations about the stone age of broadcasting -- the 1930s, '40s and '50s -- when advertising agencies controlled the programs, stars ran amok and writers were treated with profound disrespect, like a necessary evil.

"A GREAT book... I go back to it again and again. I also gave to my dad when he went on a cruise and he couldn't put it down." --Nick Santa Maria "There's a lot of show-business history here that might otherwise be lost. What a boon for show-biz buffs and comedy students alike." -- Leonard Maltin, Entertainment Tonight, 10/98

From the Author I live in the past, and I readily admit it. In fact, I've made a career out of it. I would love to have written comedy for radio in its heyday. Having grown up during the television era -- Jack Benny made his TV debut the week I was born -- I did not have this opportunity. As a show business historian, however, I have been able to live this dream vicariously, interviewing many of those who did. For an oral history of radio drama (a work-in-progress at this time) I have interrogated a number of comedy writers about their work in radio and early television. And while I have sat at the feet of countless actors, comedians, musicians, announcers, producers and other industry veterans, the writers were a revelation. They proved, invariably, to be the best raconteurs and the most articulate interview subjects. While screenwriters have finally won a measure of recognition in recent years, far less attention has been paid the writers of radio and television's Golden Age. Several of the writers featured in this book have been celebrated for their creative efforts of the 1960s and '70s, but most have seldom, if ever, talked about their work in the early days of broadcasting -- the '30s, '40s and '50s -- a decidedly different era of popular culture that has been largely forgotten. I have been a lover of comedy and comedians all my life. This book may present a somewhat unflattering portrait of some of my favorite entertainers. But as we know, there are at least two sides to every story. Behind every successful radio and TV comic

was a hard-working writer -- or a platoon of them -- who toiled in virtual anonymity. It is high time these invisible comedians took a bow. These interviews were conducted between 1990 and 1995. Many of the subjects required little or no prodding, and since my philosophy as an interviewer is simply, "shut up and listen," and I let them go right on talking. I have edited the interview transcripts only slightly and rephrased next to nothing.

From the Back Cover "Jordan Young has performed an excellent -- and long overdue -- examination of the men who made millions and millions of Americans laugh, only to wind up as Writers Anonymous." -- Larry Gelbart. "Jordan Young's 'The Laugh Crafters' is enjoyable for its spark, spunk and humor, but there are also sobering insights into the exploitation of comedy writers in the early days of radio, when royal talents were treated like serfs, by ego-fixated comedians and feral producers. This book is a Must with a capital M for writers and a Should with a capital S for the general reader." -- Norman Corwin. "In the emerging history of radio, 'The Laugh Crafters' is a welcome piece of work. Jordan Young interviews a dozen of radio's best comedy writers, and what emerges is oral history of the first order. These guys were unsung heroes behind such brand names as Jack Benny, Fibber McGee, Bob Hope and Red Skelton. They've been given short shrift in all the books on radio, but here Young lets them speak for themselves. Together they tell a story that is rich, not only with who-wrote-what details, but with the rough-and-tumble way of life of the comedy writer in radio's glory years." -- John Dunning, author of "On the Air: The Encyclopedia of Old-Time Radio."