

The Museum of Modern Art

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COMEDY LEARNS TO TALK:

MUSEUM'S BICENTENNIAL COMEDY SALUTE ENTERS 2ND STAGE OF SOUND FILMS

The Museum of Modern Art's Bicentennial Salute to American Film Comedy will move into its second phase on July 4 with the presentation of the first sound film in the series, Charlie Chaplin's "City Lights."

The comedy retrospective, continuing through January 4, 1977, is accompanied by a wall exhibition of still photographs capturing the comic highlights of several major figures in American comedy, among them Laurel and Hardy, Mae West, W.C. Fields, the Marx Brothers, Marie Dressler, Danny Kaye, and Betty Boop. The photos were selected by Mary Corliss, Coordinator of the Museum's Film Stills Archive, from the Museum's extensive collection.

The Museum's salute to comedy "...will provide more than 400 examples of madness, parody, satire, wit, and humor from the sublimely ridiculous to the ridiculously sublime," wrote Jack Kroll in Newsweek. In the New York Times Guy Flatley commented, "All the breeds and cross-breeds of our native comic stock--slapstick, drawing room, surreal, folksy, screwball, sentimental, socially significant, wisecracking, raunchy, acerbic, black, beach blanket, sick--will be on view."

The sound era will be represented by the social satires of the thirties such as "Nothing Sacred," "My Man Godfrey," and "It Happened One Night;" screwball comedies of the forties including "His Girl Friday," "The Lady Eve," and "The Palm Beach Story." Also to be shown are several comedies based on plays of the period, including "The Royal Family of Broadway," "Once in a Lifetime," and "The Guardsman."

The Comedy Series was organized by Guest Programmer, Leonard Maltin, in collaboration with Adrienne Mancina, Associate Curator, and Larry Kardish, Assistant Curator, of the Department of Film.

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