



On Television and Comedy : Essays on Style, Theme, Performer and Writer

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Television comedy traces its roots to vaudeville, radio and film, from which it developed its own unique forms to make the audience laugh. These styles became industry standards: the so-called traditional forms of variety shows and situation comedies. In recent years modern comedy-nighttime variety shows, adult programmes, stand-up acts, British imports, parody shows-have gained increasing acceptance, with these innovative forms bringing an artistry often lost under the traditional formats. These thirteen essays trace the history of television comedy from the genius of Jack Benny, Sid Caesar, Milton Berle, Ed Sullivan and Lucille Ball to the antics of ALF, Martin Mull, Julie Brown and the Gorgeous Ladies of Wrestling. Emphasis is placed on the development and artistry of the genre as evidenced in shows such as Dobie Gillis, Green Acres, Newhart, The Mary Tyler Moore Show and Bewitched.

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