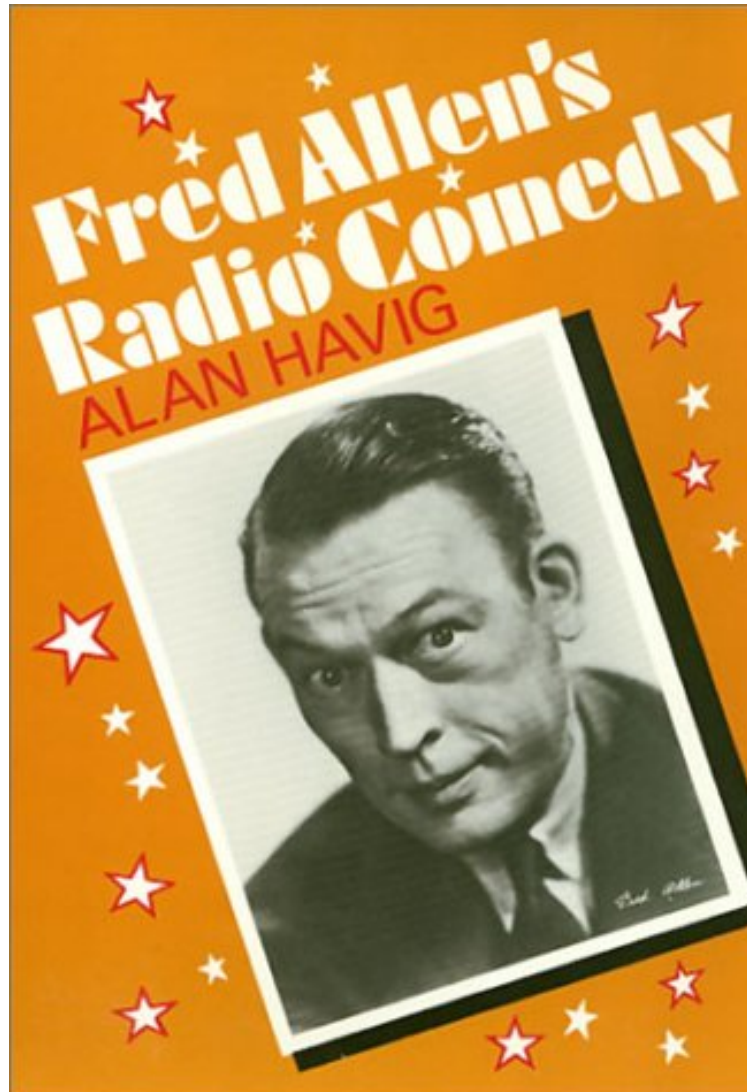


[Library ebook] Fred Allen's Radio Comedy (American Civilization)

Fred Allen's Radio Comedy (American Civilization)

Alan Havig

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#4193272 in Books Temple University Press 1990-08-22 Original language: English PDF # 1 8.50 x 1.10 x 5.80l, 1.25 #File Name: 0877227136287 pages | File size: 36.Mb

Alan Havig : Fred Allen's Radio Comedy (American Civilization) before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Fred Allen's Radio Comedy (American Civilization):

7 of 8 people found the following review helpful. Fine book about Fred Allen's radio career and what went into it By Marie Lamb While this book is not a barrel of laughs in itself, it's not meant to be. It's a scholarly work on Fred Allen's radio career, and has a factual approach. Alan Havig gives a great deal of detail about Allen's radio programs and the commercial and other circumstances under which they were created. In Allen's day, network radio programming was largely governed by sponsors and advertising agencies. The fact that Allen was able to create such great comedy,

despite pressure from overly-cautious ad types and network brass, shows his creativity and strength of character. Those of us who are used to Jay Leno and David Letterman fearlessly poking fun at network executives need to remember that, over sixty years ago, Fred Allen took the risks that made their satires possible. Steve Martin is right about comedy not being pretty; a lot of work, sweat and hassles go into the best of it. Once you read this and find out what was behind Fred Allen's radio career, you will appreciate his jibes against pretentious network vice-presidents and pompous advertising language even more. Enjoy Allen's shows and books by all means, but also read this to learn about the man and what has behind his work.⁶ of 8 people found the following review helpful. Great book about a brilliant radio show
By A Customer
Fred Allen himself wrote 2 autobiographies. Robert Taylor later wrote another biography of Fred Allen. As far as I know, this book is the only one in existence that centers on only the radio show. It starts out with Fred's early years in the medium and traces the evolution of the show until it went off the air in 1949. A person who doesn't know very much about Fred Allen can get a clear picture from this book of who the man was and what made him such a beloved comedian. This book captures the magic of Fred Allen's unique brand of humor.⁷ of 10 people found the following review helpful. The worst book I've read about this great man
By A Customer
This book reads like somebody's doctoral dissertation. The writing is dry and pedantic. Really awful. Robert Taylor's book was much better--but of course the best thing would be to read Allen's two books (Treadmill To Oblivion and Much Ado About Me).

A notable example of radio at its best. --Back Stage/SHOOT
In 1954, James Thurber wrote: You can count on the thumb of one hand the American who is at once a comedian, a humorist, a wit, and a satirist, and his name is Fred Allen. Several decades after his death and more than forty years since his radio program left the air, Fred Allen's reputation as a respected humorist remains intact. In this book, Alan Havig explores the roots of his comedy, the themes it exploited, the problems and challenges that faced the radio comedy writer, and Allen's unique success with the one-dimensional medium of radio. Tracing a career that lasted from 1912 into the 1950s and encompassed vaudeville, Broadway revues, movies, radio, and television, Havig describes the verbal slapstick style that was Fred Allen's hallmark and legacy to American comedy. More than a biography of Fred Allen, this is a study of the development of the radio industry, a discussion of American humor, and the story of how one relates to the other. Using a wide variety of published and unpublished sources, including the Allen Papers, Havig analyzes Allen's radio comedy of the 1930s and 40s within the context of the peculiar advantages and limitations of radio as a medium for comedy. He argues that Allen did not merely transfer vaudeville routines to a non-visual medium as did Eddie Cantor, Ed Wynn, and others. Allen developed a comedic style that depended on word play, sound effects, and on his audience's ability and readiness to imagine a visual world in which his eccentric characters operated. Havig illustrates his story with numerous examples of Allen's humor, with fascinating anecdotes, and excerpts from radio broadcasts. In accounting for the comedian's success, he deals with vaudeville, comedy writing, sponsor's demands and censorship of material, and the organizational world of radio broadcasting companies. Describing radio as an instrument of wit, Fred Allen wrote: on radio you could do subtle writing because you had access to the imagination...that was why I liked radio. we had some fun. Readers will also have some fun remembering or discovering for the first time Allen's Alley and the magic of radio comedy in its prime. Fred was one of the greatest of vaudeville and radio comedians. Anyone even casually concerned with the state of American humor will be well advised to give his work, as Mr. Havig presents it, careful study.--Steve Allen
Alan Havig has done an intelligent, careful and exhaustive research job. This is a well-written, solid performance-biography.--J. Fred MacDonald, Curator of the Museum of Broadcast Communication, Chicago

From Publishers Weekly
A Stephens College (Missouri) professor of history here examines Allen's (1894-1956) 20 years in vaudeville, his career in radio from 1933 to 1949, and his characteristic brand of air-wave comedy, and concludes that Allen was a literary humorist who created "comedy uniquely aural in achievement and appeal." His humor, as Havig observes, frequently involved parody, insult (as in Allen's long-time feud with Jack Benny); puns; dialect humor (a Chinese-American was a "Yangtse Doodle Dandy"); worldly satire; and sporadically profound wit (Allen defined life as "a lull between stork and epitaph" and a spinster as "a woman who indulged once too seldom"). Havig's searching account amuses and informs, offering further proof that the line between high and popular culture has blurred in our century. Photos. Copyright 1990 Reed Business Information, Inc. "A notable example of radio at its best." Back Stage/SHOOT