



Forties Film Funnymen: The Decade's Great Comedians at Work in the Shadow of War

Wes D. Gehring

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The twelve classic comedy films examined within these pages are distinguished by an equal number of defining comic performances. Ranging from *The Great Dictator* (1940) to *A Southern Yankee* (1948), each film focuses on the most central theme of "clown comedy": Resilience, the encouragement or hope that one can survive the most daunting of life's dilemmas--even during the war-torn 1940s. And each film can be regarded as a microcosm of the antiheroic world of its central clown (or clowns). Among the performers represented are Charlie Chaplin, W.C. Fields, Abbott and Costello, Jack Benny, Eddie Bracken, Bob Hope, Bing Crosby, Danny Kaye, the Marx Brothers, Harold Lloyd and Red Skelton. This lavishly illustrated work includes an introduction by noted film critic and historian Anthony Slide.

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