



Laurel and Hardy: A Bio-Bibliography (Popular Culture Bio-Bibliographies)

Wes D. Gehring

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This book presents a combined biographical, critical, and bibliographical estimate of Laurel & Hardy's significance in film comedy, the arts in general, and as popular culture icons. Of the two, Laurel decidedly evolves as the central player in this duo biography. The reasons for this are several, but mainly stem from Laurel's role as team spokesman; his late life accessibility; media coverage given to his private life; and the fact that he outlived Hardy by eight years--from 1957 to 1965--a period in which the ever burgeoning public fascination with the team reached new proportions. Hardy's artistic input, however, is currently being given a revisionist upgrading, which Gehring addresses.

The book is divided into five chapters. Chapter 1 is a biography of Laurel & Hardy, exploring the public and private sides of their lives. Chapter 2 is a critique of four broad influences of Laurel & Hardy--as special icons of comic frustrations; as developers of a change in film comedy pacing (which also eased their transition from silent to sound film); as movie pioneers in the innovative early use of comic sound; and, most importantly, as key participants in the evolution of the comic antihero into American mainstream humor. Chapter 3 is composed of two very early reprinted Laurel & Hardy articles and a special Encore collection. Chapter 4 is a very ambitious Laurel & Hardy bibliographical essay, assessing key reference materials and locating research collections open to the student and/or scholar. This involves many obscure, often early and/or untranslated articles drawn from research in Ulverston England--Laurel's birthplace--London and Paris. Chapter 5 is a bibliographical checklist of all sources recommended in Chapter 4. This volume should be of special interest to all Laurel & Hardy aficionados, and students/scholars of comedy.

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