University of Nebraska - Lincoln
DigitalCommons@University of Nebraska - Lincoln

Student Research and Creative Activity in Theatre and Film | Theatre and Film, Johnny Carson School of

5-1-1949

How to Write Comedy for Radio

Johnny Carson
University of Nebraska - Lincoln

Follow this and additional works at: http://digitalcommons.unl.edu/theaterstudent

Part of the Theatre and Performance Studies Commons

Carson, Johnny, "How to Write Comedy for Radio" (1949). *Student Research and Creative Activity in Theatre and Film.* Paper 1.
http://digitalcommons.unl.edu/theaterstudent/1

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by the Theatre and Film, Johnny Carson School of at DigitalCommons@University of Nebraska - Lincoln. It has been accepted for inclusion in Student Research and Creative Activity in Theatre and Film by an authorized administrator of DigitalCommons@University of Nebraska - Lincoln.

How to Write Comedy for Radio

Entertainment and television icon Johnny Carson received his bachelor of arts degree in radio and speech (with a minor in physics) in 1949 from the University of Nebraska. While at Nebraska, he was a member of Phi Gamma Delta fraternity and served as master of ceremonies for the Kosmet Klub, a male dramatic society.

Before completing his bachelor of arts degree, Carson did a senior thesis for his broadcasting professor, William Dempsey. His 1949 senior thesis was entitled "How to Write Comedy for Radio," which he recorded on a reel-to-reel tape. The 45-minute recording was a scholarly examination of the techniques and devices that radio comedy writers used to construct the jokes and gags in comedy radio shows. Using bits from several well-known comedians, such as Jack Benny and Bob Hope, Carson illustrated the various techniques used to write comedy, which he later effectively used in television through his "Tonight Show" monologues.

Born in Corning, Iowa, on Oct. 23, 1925, Carson grew up in Norfolk, Neb. He died on Jan. 23, 2005.

Carson became host of "The Tonight Show" in October of 1962. He retired in 1992 after hosting more than 4,531 shows.

In November 2004, Carson announced a gift of $5.3 million to the University of Nebraska Foundation to support the renovation and expansion of the Temple Building, where he got his start, and to create an endowment to keep performance spaces equipped with the latest advances in lighting and sound technologies.

Following Carson's death in January 2005, the University of Nebraska Foundation received an additional gift of $5 million from the estate of Carson for endowed support of programs in theatre, film and broadcasting. Annual income from the endowment provides support to the Johnny Carson School of Theatre and Film in the Hixson-Lied College of Fine and Performing Arts and the broadcast program in the College of Journalism and Mass Communications.

In August 2005, the University of Nebraska renamed the Department of Theatre Arts the *Johnny Carson School of Theatre and Film*, creating a permanent legacy for Johnny at the University of Nebraska.

To listen to the audio recording of this senior thesis presentation, go back 1 click and select and download the "Related file: Johnny Carson Thesis.mp3"— Download it to your hard-drive or mp3 player, and play it with your preferred listening software (e.g., itunes, etc.).