

DECEMBER 7, 2018

The Golden Age Of Comedy - Released December 26, 1957 in New York. Released in the rest of the United States in March 1958.

Opening and closing theme music is from Frederic Chopin's *Etude in C Major - Opus 10, No. 3*, often known as "Tristesse".

Robert Youngson was born on November 27, 1917 in Brooklyn, New York. He graduated from Harvard University with a Master's degree in business administration. During World War II, he worked on training films for the United States Navy as a screenwriter. After the war, Robert went to Warner Brothers where he worked going through numerous amounts of newsreel footage and creating one-reel short film series about World War I titled *This Was Yesterday, It Happened To You* and *Those Exciting Days*. His effort gained him much praise along with six Academy Award nominations and two wins.

Robert Youngson's passion led him to creating a full length feature film devoted to the slapstick days of silent films. He began by contacting Herbert Gelbspan who was the New York representative of the Hal Roach Studios. He was granted access and given full co-operation to the studio's library. In addition to Laurel & Hardy, Youngson included comedians Harry Langdon, Billy Bevan, Ben Turpin and Andy Clyde from the Mack Sennett Studios. To complete this project, Youngson added the talents of film editors Albert Helmes and Al Dahlem plus radio and television narrators Dwight Weist and Ward Wilson.

When it came time to release *The Golden Age Of Comedy*, no major studio would touch it. They felt that silent movies were too much of a gamble in the current "sound films" climate. Instead, Youngson went with Distributors Corporation Of America. When this film hit the big screen in New York at Radio City Music Hall and the Embassy on Broadway on December 26, 1957, it was a sensation. The New York media loved this film and promoted it in newspaper columns and television programs. Late night hosts Jack Paar and Steve Allen were very positive in their comments about *The Golden Age Of Comedy*.

Now due to the success of this film, 20th Century Fox and MGM were inviting Youngson to release more films like this through their studios. His follow up film, *When Comedy Was King*, was even more successful than "Golden Age". He would go on to make two films dedicated just to Laurel & Hardy titled *Laurel & Hardy's Laughing 20's* in 1965 and *The Further Perils Of Laurel & Hardy* in 1967. Among his other salutes to silent films were *The Days Of Thrills and Laughter*, *30 Years Of Fun*, *The Four Clowns* and MGM's *Big Parade Of Comedy*, the latter including both silent and sound moments.

His final project, *There's Nothing Like The Movies*, was not completed due to Youngson's failing health. He died on April 8, 1974 at the age of 56.

REFERENCE

Laurel & Hardy: From The Forties Forward by Scott MacGillivray