

**Steve Marinucci**

You bet your life this Groucho Marx collection is funny

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"Groucho Marx TV Classics."
 Photo: Synergy Entertainment

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When Groucho Marx moved to television, it certainly must have been with some of the trepidation that later stars have had when they've made the jump. Will it work? Will the talent of the big screen transfer to the small screen?

With Groucho, there was no need for argument. He was hilarious. "[Groucho Marx TV Classics](#)," a recently released four-disc set from Synergy Entertainment, is a combination of his great work on "You Bet Your Life," along with some rarities.

Episodes of "You Bet Your Life," the '50s quiz show that included the trademark "secret word," are not rare. Shows have been released on DVD multiple times and many collections come from public domain merchants. The quality of the shows in this collection is great. Groucho and sidekick George Fenneman exchange gags with the contestants, with Fenneman caught up in many of them. That was the charm of the show. The set contains 16 different episodes.

The rarities, though, are interesting. There are two episodes of the ABC variety show "The Hollywood Palace" hosted by Marx. One of them, notably, features guest Margaret Dumont, who starred in many of the Marx Brothers' films as a clueless socialite, reprising her role from "Animal Crackers" for a restaging of the classic "Hooray for Captain Spaulding." While the Palace version

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You bet your life this Groucho Marx coll...

doesn't come close to replacing the original, it's fun to see Dumont and Marx playing off each other again.

Also in the set is the pilot and a stag reel from "You Bet Your Life." Also included a 1955 public service film, "See You at the Polls," which features a collection of stars including Groucho, Bing Crosby, Ethel Merman, Jimmy Durante, Bob Hope and Rosemary Clooney, trying to encourage viewers to vote. The quality on these rarities varies, but most are pretty good.

There's also an episode of the game show "Anybody Can Play" from 1958 where Fenneman (without Groucho) was the host and a Dinah Shore radio show featuring Groucho as guest.

If you like Groucho or the Marx Brothers, this is a hilarious collection. But then, you'd hardly expect less from one of the funniest men ever to hit the silver screen.