

*The Sprocket Society presents:*

# Boop!

Thursday, February 27, 2014 ~ Grand Illusion Cinema

All films credit Dave Fleischer as director. In reality, he was more of a producer. The credited animators were the de facto directors, with other uncredited animators also contributing. Max Fleischer, credited as producer, was what would now be called the executive producer. Lou Fleischer served as music supervisor for all titles.

*Mysterious Mose* (Dec. 26, 1930)

Animated by Willard Bowsky and Ted Sears. Song written by Walter Doyle. Voice: Ann Little. Betty's third appearance.

*Bimbo's Initiation* (Jul. 24, 1931)

Animated by Myron "Grim" Natwick. Music director: Sammy Timberg. Songs include "Tiger Rag" and "The Vamp." Voice: Mae Questel.

*Dizzy Red Riding-Hood* (Dec. 12, 1931)

Animator(s) unknown. Music by George Steiner. Voice: Ann Little. Betty's first appearance as a human.

*Any Rags* (Jan. 2 1932)

Animated by Willard Bowsky and Thomas Bonfiglio. Music director: Sammy Timberg. Music supervisor: Lou Fleischer. Voice: Ann Little.

*Minnie the Moocher* (Mar. 11, 1932)

Animated by Willard Bowsky and Ralph Somerville. Music by Cab Calloway and His Orchestra. Voice: Mae Questel. The brief live-action introduction is the earliest known film footage of Calloway, who was also rotoscoped to create the dancing walrus-ghost. Calloway did two more cartoon collaborations with the Fleischers.

*Crazy Town* (Mar. 25, 1932)

Animated by Al Eugster, Shamus Culhane and Dave Tendlar. Music by Sammy Timberg. Voice: Mae Questel.

*Betty Boop, MD* (Sept. 2, 1932)

Animated by Willard Bowsky and Thomas Goodson. Voice: Mae Questel. "Nobody's Sweetheart Now" written in 1924 by Billy Myers and Elmer Schoebel, with lyrics by Gus Kahn and Ernie Erdman. The untitled scat song was long thought to have been recorded by Cliff Edwards (aka "Ukelele Ike"). More likely is that it was performed by William Costello, who is known to have recorded very good imitations of Ukelele Ike under the stage name Red Pepper Sam. Costello would later provide the voice for Popeye in the Fleischer shorts.

*Betty Boop's Ups and Downs* (Oct. 14, 1932)

Animated by Willard Bowsky and Ugo D'Orsi. Voice: Mae Questel. Music by Sammy Timberg.

*Betty Boop for President* (Nov. 4, 1932)

Animated by Seymour Kneitel, Roland Crandall and Bernard Wolf. Voice: Mae Questel. Music by Sammy Timberg. In this election satire, among the characters Betty morphs into are Republican Herbert Hoover and Democrat Al Smith. The glass of beer at the end is a reference to repealing Prohibition, a major issue in the election that year.

*I'll Be Glad When You're Dead You Rascal You* (Nov. 25, 1932)

Animated by Willard Bowsky and Ralph Somerville. Voice: Mae Questel. Music performed by Louis Armstrong and His Orchestra. "I'll Be Glad When You're Dead" written in 1931 by Sam Theard. "The High Society Rag" originally written in 1901 by Porter Steele as a march; King Oliver's Creole Jazz Band recorded the first jazz version in 1923.

*Betty Boop's Crazy Inventions* (Jan. 27, 1933)

Animated by Willard Bowsky, Ugo D'Orsi and Bernard Wolf. Voice: Mae Questel. Music by Samuel Lerner and Sammy Timberg.

*Snow-White* (Mar. 31, 1933)

Animated by Roland C. Crandall. Voice: Mae Questel. Music by Samuel Lerner, George Steiner, and Sammy Timberg. "St. James Infirmary Blues" sung by Cab Calloway, who was rotoscoped as Koko. The animation reportedly took six months to complete, a very unusual amount of time. Added to the National Film Registry in 1994.

## Suggested Reading

Leslie Cabarga, *The Fleischer Story* (Nostalgia Press, 1976; revised edition: Da Capo Press, 1988) – Profusely illustrated and loads of fun. Still the only book to cover the entire Fleischer oeuvre.

Richard Fleischer, *Out of the Inkwell: Max Fleischer and the Animation Revolution* (University of Kentucky Press, 2005) – Written by Max's son, a fairly brief and cursory biography that is still worth a read as an introduction and personal memento.

Leonard Maltin, *Of Mice and Magic: A History of American Animated Cartoons* (Plume/Penguin Books, 1994. Prior editions in 1980 and 1987.) – Includes an entire chapter on Max Fleischer. Say what you will about him as a critic, Maltin knows his animation history, and he tells it splendidly in this book. Covers both silent and sound eras, through the end of the theatrical short cartoon era.

Shamus Culhane, *Talking Animals and Other People: The Autobiography of One of Animation's Legendary Figures* (St. Martin's Press, 1986) – Includes two chapters recalling his early days at the Fleischer studios, 1930-1932.

Leonard Ellis, *The Definitive Guide to Betty Boop Memorabilia with Values* (Hobby Horse Press, 2003) – Reference guide to collectibles, with market prices at the time of publication.

## Home Video

*Betty Boop: The Essential Collection* (Olive Films, 2013–2014) DVD & Blu-Ray – Four volume series; vols. 1 and 2 are available now, vol. 3 is due at the end of April. These are no-frills editions, but they are new high-definition captures of film prints in the UCLA archives.

*Betty Boop: The Definitive Collection* (Republic Home Entertainment, 1996) 8-tape VHS box set, also 8 LaserDiscs in two volumes – Long out-of-print, this set includes 115 Boop cartoons, omitting only four titles. Not chronological, each tape has a theme. Available on the secondary market (sometimes unopened) from eBay, Amazon, and elsewhere. There are also grey-market DVD-Rs floating around.