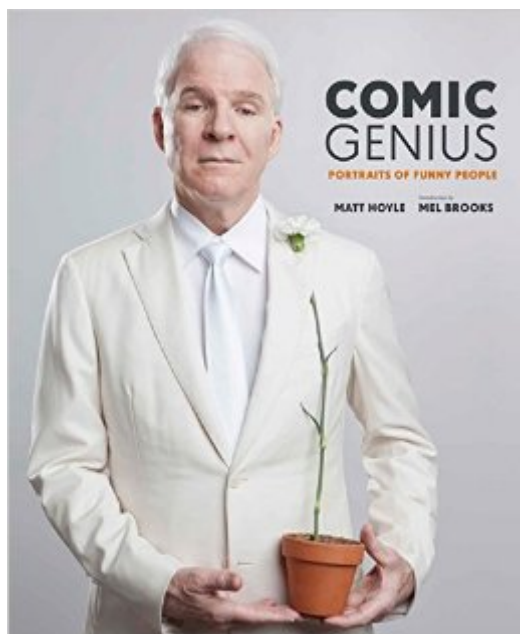


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Comic Genius: Portraits Of Funny People



Synopsis

This star-studded tribute to the kings and queens of comedy draws together such legendary names as Steve Martin, Tina Fey, Steve Carell, Eddie Murphy, Robin Williams, Ricky Gervais, and many more. Granted extraordinary access, photographer Matt Hoyle has captured his subjects in portraits that are works of art in themselves—by turns zany and deadpan, laugh-out-loud and contemplative. Accompanying them are first-person reflections from each of the comedians on life and laughter that always cut straight to the heart of comedy: it's funny because it's true. Page after sidesplitting page in *Comic Genius* offers prose as engaging as each portrait is memorable. Here, in one handsome package, is the gift of laughter itself. *Comic Genius* is proud to support Save The Children.

Book Information

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[Photography & Video > Portraits](#) #161 in [Books > Humor & Entertainment > Humor > Comedy](#)

Customer Reviews

If you like comedy, but more especially, comedians, you will like this book. I got it for a friend as a gift, and looked through it ahead of time. When I ordered this, I thought it was actually a book with text, but it's a book of portraits of great/famous comedians, with quotes dispersed in between. Just beware that it is not a book that you will sit down and read, or you will be disappointed.

Very dry, nothing funny about it. Lists funny people and their signature items that made them famous. Basic facts about them. Each entry is only 1 page if that. Anybody can list the funniest comedians. No photos except for the cover of the book. Very disappointing.

This was a Christmas present for my 16 year old grandson who is participating in a Second City

group. I can only tell you his face revealed more than I can say in a thousand words. He was elated to begin and was still looking when the evening games began.

There's a lot to unpack in photographer Matt Hoyle's portfolio of comedians in *Comic Genius*, especially for something who thinks deeply at the drop of a hat like I do (go on, try me. Just bring the hat). Even if all you want to do is laugh at the pictures, you're going to feel uneasy at times. You'll sense that there's something more going on, that there's a backstory behind the making of these pictures that reveals more about the men and women who make or made a living inspiring that primal emotion. Or that, if they're making fun of anyone, it's you. This is one reason why dictators hate comedy. You never know who their target is. These photos can be broken down into categories: * Persona portraits such as Andrew Dice Clay as Diceman and Joanna Lumley and Jennifer Saunders as their *Absolutely Fabulous* characters. * Persona jokes such as Paul Reubens as Pee-Wee Herman, dangling from red balloons over a city, or Dame Edna Everage eating candy with chopsticks. * Personal portraits, such as close-up portraits of Eddie Murphy and Martin Lawrence, or Denis Leary flipped the bird at the viewer, his finger surrounded by a frame. * Straight-up jokes, such as Carol Burnett tugging her ear down to her shoulder, John Cleese with his bowler hat turned sideways, or Conan O'Brien holding an unhappy infant dressed like him. Hoyle writes that he approached each subject the same way. He'd work up a list of 10 concepts and they'd go from there. Who decided to do what is not revealed, except that Steve Martin agreed to pose next to Kermit the Frog, while Carol Burnett suggested the ear gag. One wishes we could learn more, because that would tell us more about how the comedians saw themselves (surely Hoyle wouldn't have settled for the Lawrence / Murphy portraits unless he had no other choice). But unless Hoyle opens up, we're left to speculate. To see Anne Mearns' picture and wonder if she is still around (yes, thank God!). To regret that Sid Caesar's brilliant and underappreciated *is* too ill to appear. To wonder why Tommy Smothers is standing by a cutout of his brother, Dickie (still alive; yes, I checked). To miss Jonathan Winters. To laugh at Andy Samberg's clever portraits. To ogle Kathy Griffin. To see David Steinberg and feel glad that he's still around (I quoted his Bible routines in junior high school). To watch Weird Al doing a Hendrix on his accordion and be reminded that there are reasons to be happy to be alive (along with Joan Rivers, Don Rickles and Bob Newhart!). I could go on. I will go on. But check out *Comic Genius*. Oh, and the answer is: "To reach the other side." **cymbal-crash!**

I received this as a birthday gift, and I really enjoyed it! I like Hoyle's style of photography. The photos are for the most part clean and simple, which really allows the subject's personality to come through. I loved that people like Tim and Eric, Andy Samberg, and Zach Galifianakis were included along with classics like Steve Martin, The Smothers Brothers, and Bob Newhart. Here are some cons for me: I was really hoping to see more up-and-coming comics or lesser-known comics. Performers like Paul F Tompkins, Scott Aukerman, or Tenacious D would have been really cool. These fellows have been around long enough to establish their comedy cred, and it would have been really cool to see some of that group of people included. (But there are thousands of other funny people doing awesome things in show business, so I obviously get not being able to include everyone. I didn't quite like the way the quotes were utilized. I felt there should have been a quote for everybody, or no quotes at all. I know this is primarily a photo book, but more writing would have been nice. It would have been neat to maybe include a paragraph about each of the shoots or something. All in all though this is a really nice book. Both comedy and photography are such big parts of my life so this is a nice addition to my collection.

Are the words I told my son who wishes to one day be a serious actor, although his wit lends itself more to comedy roles. This book portrays greatness from actors who we've all come to know and love. He loved the book! Thanks to everyone actor and writer who put this together. Who knows it may just be the one tool that sets my son's life on the path of greatness in your field. Thanks, Pamela Longueville

I love the photographs in this book, all of which bring out the true personalities of those featured. The creativity that went into each one of these photos certainly shows and it's a great book to show off to friends and family when they come over. I was very thrilled to see that Paul Reubens has a two page spread. I'm looking forward to keeping this book around for a long time and certainly recommend it.

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