

OREGON CARTOON INSTITUTE

Your source for Oregon animation and cartooning history since 2007
Anne Richardson, director/Dennis Nyback, archivist/Bill Crawford, project manager
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Martha Richards
James F. and Marion L. Miller Foundation
520 SW Yamhill, Suite 520
Portland, Oregon 97204

August 25, 2011

Dear Martha Richards,

We were so pleased to have received support from Miller Foundation. Thank you for taking a chance on us.

We consider the Mel Blanc Project a huge success. Our speakers were wonderful, our volunteers were passionate, and we were treated well by the press. We met our goals as far as having successful partner relationships, and building capacity as an emerging non-profit. We did not meet our goal to sell out the lecture series. Our audiences were enthusiastic and grateful, but much too small, given the high quality of the programs.

We had a steep learning curve about audience development. We thought our partner institutions would supply us with customers. We learned that that goal is possible, but would require a much closer working relationship early on in the planning stage than was the case in this project.

I provide detailed information about the Mel Blanc Project in the following report.

If you have any additional questions, please let me know.

Sincerely,

Anne Richardson

Mel Blanc Project Timeline

Jan 2010. Ethos Music Center signs on as partner.

May 2010. Oregon Jewish Museum signs on as partner. They ask us to delay the project to June 2011 so that they have time to put together an exhibit to coincide with our lecture series. Wonderful opportunity!

June 2010. Oregon Cultural Heritage Commission agrees to be fiscal sponsor.

Sept. 2010. Arts Builds Communities grant proposal to Oregon Arts Commission submitted. (not granted)

Oct. 2010. Oregon Humanities Commission grant proposal submitted. (not granted)

Jan. 2011. Website goes live.

Feb. 2011. The "Learn More About The Mel Blanc Project" screening series at The Waypost. We gain volunteers.

March 2011. OHS & PSU sign on as partners.

April 2011. Miller approves \$3,000 grant.

May 2011. Kinsman approves \$5,000 grant.

May 2011 The "Learn More About The Mel Blanc Project" screening series at The Secret Society.

June 2011. Mel Blanc exhibit opens, Lecture Series takes place

June 29, 2011. Mayor Sam Adams declares Mel Blanc Day in Portland

July 2011. Mel Blanc Walking Tours take place

July 27, 2011. Mel Blanc Project Volunteers Thank You Dinner.

Sept. 2011. Mel Blanc exhibit closes.

Actual Income

\$3000.00 Miller
\$5000.00 Kinsman
\$17.18 T shirts sold online (1 shirt)
\$273.00 tickets sold online, lectures
\$223.00 tickets sold at the door, lectures
\$50.00 donations, walking tours

Total: \$8,563.18

Actual Expenses

Venue rentals \$450
Venue tech support \$270
Guest honoraria \$1,300.00
Dennis Nyback film rentals \$450
Printing, programs, posters, handbills, stickers \$929.72
Admin \$4,661.37 (includes \$400 fee to fiscal sponsor)

Total: \$8,061.09

PROPOSED BUDGET/EXPENSES AS ORIGINALLY OUTLINED IN GRANT

Venue rentals: \$450
Venue tech support: \$600
Guest speaker honoraria: \$800
Dennis Nyback film rentals: \$500
Printing, brochures, posters: \$1,500
Admin: \$4,150

Total: \$8,000

In kind donations

PSU School of Fine and Performing Arts, \$800 venue rental fee

In kind donations of labor by volunteers

Bill Crawford,
project management
20 hrs/month X 12 months X \$28.00/hr = \$6,070.00

Peter McLean,
website design, \$2000
graphic design, PSU poster \$300

Carye Bye,
artist
ink wash portrait of Mel Blanc, \$350

Josh Winsor,
graphic design
screening series poster \$300
sponsorship package (8 pages) \$800
project poster \$500
handbills \$75
stickers \$75
program (12 pages) \$800
videography
4 events X \$250 = \$1000

Jennifer McBride
tech crew
3 events X \$50 = \$150

Justin Shelp
sound design
3 events X \$100 = \$300

Eric Wiler,
event manager
10 hrs X 4 events X \$28/hr = \$1,120

Megan Huston
ticketing
3 events X \$25 = \$75

S. W. Conser
calligraphy
one document = \$200

Total: \$ 14,895 "in kind"

Evaluation of the Mel Blanc Project

Thanks to media coverage of the project, Oregon Cartoon Institute did succeed in its primary mission of raising awareness of a neglected Oregon artist.

Television news stories, radio interviews, radio talk show discussions, and newspaper articles brought word of Mel Blanc's Portland roots to thousands of people, some of them lifelong Oregonians, some of them new to the region. What we heard during the project, over and over again, was "I didn't know that!"

The lecture series and walking tours are over. But the Mel Blanc Project continues to have impact.

The website receives traffic from around the world. Popular posts include [Top 5 Myths About Mel Blanc](#) and [Mel Blanc's Portland Years: Craig Adams Explains It All For You](#).

Portland author Katie Schneider's online [article for Tablet](#) beautifully captures the intent of the Mel Blanc Project

An original work celebrating Mel Blanc's genius, composed by Eric Hull, has entered VOX PDX's concert repertoire. [Listen to it being performed live](#) at the final June 29, 2011 Mel Blanc Lecture in Lincoln Hall.

As example of the impact we wanted to have: OPB Radio observed the [birthday of Bugs Bunny](#) (July 27, 1940) this year, with a nod to the Oregon origins of Mel Blanc. In so doing, they educated more listeners in one day than our lecture series reached in one month!

Last but not least:

All of our Mel Blanc Scholars did original research to prepare for their lectures. **This was the best possible outcome for the overall project.** Taken collectively, the new knowledge they shared about Mel Blanc's Portland life permanently deepens our understanding of Portland's cultural history, and changes our perception of regional identity, in ways which reach beyond the life and work on this one gifted artist.

Ways the project succeeded:

1. Drew on partnerships among a diverse set of cultural institutions
2. Created an array of educational experiences (museum exhibit, website, lecture series, screening series, walking tours) for the public to choose from.
3. Made use of social media (Facebook) and new media ([website](#) which has had 8,670+ unique visits).
4. Engaged local artists (painter Carye Bye, composer Eric Hull, voice artist Seth McGrath, comedian Courtenay Hameister, the musicians of the ukulele band Honky Tonk Prison) to celebrate Mel Blanc as a fellow creative
5. Provided impetus for original research by Steve Stone and Gary Lacher, Portland theater historians; Dennis Nyback, pop music historian; Judy Margles, director of Oregon Jewish Museum; Craig Adams, Portland radio historian. These historians have now permanently raised the level of Mel Blanc knowledge, giving future Blanc scholars a base of information on which to begin their studies.

Ways the project did not meet the desired goals:

1. We did not sell out the lecture series. The head count at the first three lectures never went above 40. The final lecture at Lincoln Hall, however, was attended by over 100 people. The walking tours were also small (under 10 people per tour, but they were very appreciated).
2. We did not sell many T shirts (although we did give them away as prizes at the final lecture, and as thank you presents to people who helped us)
3. We did not make best possible use of the opportunity to collect names (of ticket buyers/audience members) for an email list.

What we learned:

1. We need a larger budget for administration, and more administrative staff.
2. We could have worked more closely with the media, to place stories. This is a skill we need to acquire.
3. We should have used a short video to advertise the project.

Summary:

The successes and failures, taken together, of the Mel Blanc Project served as a wonderful test drive of the partnership model which serves as the template for Oregon Cartoon Institute's collaborative approach to public history/arts education. Partnerships work. However, for our next project we will limit ourselves to one (or two) partners, and work much more closely with them to develop an audience.

For the Portlanders who came, each lecture contained brand new information, stemming from new research done expressly for the Project.

Gary Lacher & Steve Stone showed us how theater drenched Mel Blanc's Portland was, and reminded us that the "silent" films he saw were not silent at all. During the 1920's, there were many, many opportunities for a musically gifted child to hear live music - in theaters. They also told us that Mel Blanc's first South Portland home was right next door to a nickelodeon.

Dennis Nyback & Rick Meyers told us Del Porter, Mel Blanc's friend and band-mate who beat him to fame as a member of The Foursome quartet, also served as an early role model to a jug eared musical nobody in Spokane named Harry Lillis "Bing" Crosby.

Judy Margles explained that the brief window of time during which South Portland served as an immigrant neighborhood coincided almost exactly with Mel Blanc's personal timeline in Portland. The multilingual Tower of Babylon Blanc describes in his book existed only briefly.

Craig Adams confirmed what we had begun to suspect - that KGW's Hoot Owls radio show was seemingly custom designed to nurture a person of Mel Blanc's talents and ambitions. Not every city in the US had a improvisational comedy show which a) pioneered the radio variety show format, b) had a huge following and c) was broadcast on a station with an unusually powerful signal.

Robyn Tenenbaum observed that Portland's ability to nurture radio talent is directly related to the medium's comparatively low cost, which allows for experimentation.

The Mel Blanc Project is not over. The last stage of the project is the creation of a booklet "Your Guide To Mel Blanc's Portland" which will document the lecture series, and which will contain an annotated map of the specific Portland sites Mel Blanc mentions in his autobiography.

Looking towards the future: It seems to me Oregon Cartoon Institute should develop a relationship with Oregon Encyclopedia since two of Oregon Encyclopedia's three component institutions (Portland State University, Oregon Council of Teachers of English, and Oregon Historical Society) have already partnered with us.

Testimonials:

From Judy Margles, director of Oregon Jewish Museum

Dear Anne,

I received the check and your lovely thank you in today's mail. I was delighted to take part in one of your programs and thank you for the opportunity. Indeed, the article in Tablet was the icing on the cake -- and fun to hear from my colleagues and friends around the country who read it!

Let's stay in touch -- you never know what other kinds of collaborative opportunities might come our way.

All best,
Judy

From Robyn Tenenbaum, senior producer of Live Wire

Hi Dennis and Anne,

On behalf of Courtenay and Sean and myself, I wanted to thank you for including us in your event last week for Mel Blanc day. It was a treat to be involved and to be seen as the current radio mavens.

The more I heard that night, the more I am convinced the indeed Live Wire is a modern day version of what Mel was doing in the 20's. And our very own Sean McGrath is the *type* of person I imagine Mel to have been.

Thank you again and congratulations on what you've accomplished to bring Mel Blanc into the forefront of many minds.

All best,
Robyn

From Judith Minton, director of development for PSU/School of Fine & Performing Arts

Hi Anne,

Congratulations to you and Dennis for a successful celebration of the life and career of Mel Blanc. Please let me know if you will be wanting support from my office on the Walking Tour (a stop at Lincoln Hall).

Regards,

Judith

Cue sheet for the final lecture of Mel Blanc Lecture series, June 29, 2011 at Lincoln Hall

WARM UP ACT: HONKY TONK PRISON

1. Bill Crawford introduces Honky Tonk Prison. **ONSTAGE: Bill**

1a. Bill leaves stage.

1b. HTP performs. **ONSTAGE: Honky Tonky Prison.**

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PSU'S KARIN MAGALDI WELCOMES CROWD

2. Karin Magaldi of PSU/FPA takes the podium.

2a. Karin Magaldi welcomes the crowd, speaks abt PSU, introduces Anne. **ONSTAGE: Karin Magaldi**

2b. Anne arrives on stage; Karin leaves stage, returns to seat.

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ANNE RICHARDSON INTRODUCES THE EVENING'S THEME

3a. I speak, introduce the theme of the evening: radio. **ONSTAGE: Anne Richardson**

3b. I remain on stage.

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DENNIS SCREENS I LOVE TO SINGA (1936)

4a. Dennis shows I Love To Singa. **ONSCREEN: I Love To Singa, cartoon.**

Lighting cue - Lights go down for film.

Lights go back up after film.

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DENNIS & AMOS PERFORM JUANITA

5. I introduce Dennis and Amos Hunter. **ONSTAGE: Anne Richardson**

6. Dennis & Amos arrive onstage and re-enact Mel Blanc's Portland radio debut "Juanita". **ONSTAGE: Anne, Dennis & Amos.**

7. Amos leaves stage. Dennis stays. **ONSTAGE: Anne & Dennis**

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CRAIG ADAMS & ROBYN TENENBAUM GIVE LECTURE/CONVERSATION

8. I introduce Craig Adams.

9. Craig joins Dennis and me on stage. **ONSTAGE: Anne, Dennis, Craig.**

We sit.

I bring my mike from podium. Dennis and Craig get miked/mike themselves.

10. We ask Craig questions.

11. I invite Robyn Tenenbaum, Sean McGrath and Courtenay Hameister to join us, they get miked/mike themselves. **ONSTAGE: Anne, Dennis, Craig, Robyn, Sean, Courtenay.**

12. Dennis and I ask Robyn/Sean/Courtenay questions. **ONSTAGE: Anne, Dennis, Craig, Robyn, Sean, Courtenay**

13. Dennis and I open up the questions to the audience. **ONSTAGE: Anne, Dennis, Craig, Robyn, Sean, Courtenay**

Audience asks questions.

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MEL BLANC TRIVIA CONTEST with AUDIENCE

14. Dennis and I conduct the Mel Blanc Trivia Contest, awarding t shirts. **ONSTAGE: Anne, Dennis, Craig, Robyn, Sean, Courtenay**

15. Our panel leaves the stage. Dennis leaves the stage. I remain. **ONSTAGE: Anne**

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DENNIS SCREENS GI JOURNAL (1944), featuring Mel Blanc himself

16. Dennis shows GI Journal, I remain on stage. **ONSCREEN: GI Journal**

Lighting cue - lights down for the film.

Lights go back up.

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VOX: A SPOKEN WORD CHORUS

17a. I introduce VOX.

1b. They perform the mayoral proclamation of Mel Blanc Day. **ONSTAGE: Anne, VOX.**

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INDUCTION CEREMONY

18. I ask Dennis, Craig, and Robyn to come back up onstage. I ask all members of the Mel Blanc Project Team to come onstage. We perform the induction ceremony. **ONSTAGE: Anne, VOX, Dennis, Craig, Robyn everyone.**

18a. Audience applauds Mel Blanc, new member of OCI's Hall of Fame.

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19. IF WE HAVE TIME --- I introduce surprise event.

19a. We screen (streaming from Youtube) Mel Blanc singing Daffy's Rhapsody. (3 min)

Lighting cue - lights down for the film.

Lights go back up.

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20. I thank each Mel Blanc Project Team member by name. **ONSTAGE: EVERYONE . All members of Mel Blanc Project Team**

20a. Everyone takes a bow -- everyone.

Oregon Cartoon Institute is fiscally sponsored by Oregon Cultural Heritage Commission, a 501 (c) (3) non profit organization.