

CONFERENCE

Those present: Walt, Larry, Jaxon, Dave, Richard, Pinto, Ted Sears, Churchill, Anderson, Buchanan, Jack Miller (and yodelers: Fraunfelder, Fraunfelder, Jr., Sonny Dawson, Harry Stanton, Freeman Hyde and Bill Cowles)

Time: 2:00 to 4:00

Walt: There might be yodeling all thru it along with the singing and you could bring in just a bit of the syncopated stuff (as done by Sonny Dawson)

Buchanan: Suggest Dopey - he can't talk but he can yodel- on the syncopated stuff.

Walt: At the start do you get a chance to plant your instruments? (Larry: Yes)

We can carry a lot of the singing offstage so you don't have to stand there on them on uninteresting spots, where there is nothing for them to do.

I'd like to see Happy with a tin flute, directing then with it - and come up and play the last few notes of it. That's all he'd do.

Dick: Not pick up other instruments?

Walt: No - and Bashful might be good to play the slap bass because he's bashful as he plays it and slaps the bass when he gets a look from her. There should be some cuts to SW in there too.

Pinto: He could turn around one of the slats and it could be carved like a fanny.

Walt: I was thinking the shape of a gourd goes back like a fanny and there's the stem - you could have the faces of the animals and the eyes. You plan on using the gourds don't you?

Larry: Yes, it would be good to design them like the gourd is a fanny.

Walt: And the stem is the nose there.

I wondered if Bashful should have a harp too. (Larry: He uses that line.) A funny kind of harp. (Jaxon: One that sounds like a jews harp.) Sounds like a zither or banjo or whatever you want. Use a guitar too, but an odd looking one. It's good for background.

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They can still play their instruments and yodel.

(The concertina) I like when he's playing it, he can let it slide down and catch it back here (back of his head) or underneath his leg - throw it right around and catch it. We bring the other guy in? It might be funnier if he threw it around himself. Or couldn't he just throw it up in the air, it stretches out and comes back down into his hands.

(Sneezy) - Can he work out something where he's trying to get the pipe, he's wobbling like Fields with the billiar cue, and finally gets his nose?

Why can't Doc play something besides the triangle? It seems you need the orchestra back there (shouldn't take him out just for that little gag.)

Larry: We thought of cutting the end of every chorus to Doc.

Walt: If you have a place for a ping in here, you could show Grumpy sitting over there, and he'd spit and right on the nose hit something that pings.

Jaxon: Doc is going to hit it, but he's going to be late, and Grumpy does it for him.

Walt: Dopey just hold his triangle up and you cut to Grumpy. Dopey is up there ready, waiting, and you cut to Grumpy. He spits and it pings offstage; Grumpy goes on. Cut back to Dopey and he has that expression of "it worked" and goes back into drumming.

Buchanan: The gag might be built up. Wattanobe used it on the air. It got funnier and funnier at different distances.

Walt: You wouldn't see a spit - it would just be a blur for one frame. You see the blur and hear the ping. When you cut back the triangle is vibrating. Dopey puts it down with a smile.

Larry: I think once you get into the instruments, just when you need dialogue or yells, it could be group stuff, and that we don't need Doc on it. Just get the lines on him during the singing.

Jaxon: I think we could skip Doc completely.

Walt: I think you could skip him.

Dick: In the chorus too - on You're Never Too Old to be Young?

Jaxon: Show him in the group singing.

Walt: If you have a chorus you can have Doc there with them - you don't recognize voices. But you might spot a few lines for Doc and take them and be covered there. Go ahead and get the thing layed out. At the end of the week we'll come in and get the singing we want. I feel you could do without Doc in this thing. We don't want any mixup. The mixup should be when he is excited, when he gets mad and when he is flustered. Doc takes quite an important part in the picture. Happy hasn't done much, so he shines here and in the soup sequence. Grumpy has an important part in the picture so here he just plays the organ and doesn't say anything. Doc could just do one of the yodels when the gang yodels.

Walt: You don't intend to have any definite instrumental section do you?

Larry: We call it an instrumental section, but it really isn't. Do you think it should be?

Walt: I like to see them all singing and playing instrumentally too, or it will drop suddenly. It should be like they are ad libbing - no training to it.

Dick: On the instrumental section we don't see definite words or dialogue.

Larry: We have two choruses then the yodel then two verses we could sing or just play.

Walt: If the instruments get hot enough you have body enough and don't

Walt: need it. To cover it, I'd take some yodeling to fit.

Larry: I'd like yodeling under it.

Walt: Yes, it has to build and not let down. I'm afraid an instrumental section would do that at that time.

Buch: The dream scene which is instrumental comes next.

Walt: Yodeling has so much pep.

Jaxon: What about getting hot on the end?

Walt: Just some of it would be good if you could work with it. I don't like the Cab Calloway ideas or too much OH-DE-OH-DO. Audiences hear a lot of that stuff. If we can keep this quaint it will appeal more than the hot stuff. It can be peppy, but let's watch out about getting too modern, because audiences get overdoses of that. A modern touch to something old would be all right.

Buchanan: Are the birds or animals going to help. The birds whistle the chorus, or anything?

Walt: No, I think we feature the seven little guys.

Buchanan: When you cut up to the bird with the drumstick in his mouth, it's just up and back.

Larry: I think we ought to concentrate on the guys here.

Walt: I was thinking on Doc you're going to be lacking. Happy will be doing so much. I wouldn't like to see him jumping around like Buddy Rogers, mugging, because I think each guy has value in himself. Cut to Bashful and let him do something.

Dave: The flute idea might come in on Happy.

Walt: He twirls it with his finger and brings it up and just gets a note or- runs a running scale and no more.

Ken: He could have a very small flute because he is the biggest guy.

Walt: Yes the old gag of the smallest guy with the biggest instrument and the biggest guy with the smallest instrument.

Jaxon: You think it would be better for Bashful not to have the concertina?

Walt: That's all right.

Larry: Walt was talking about throwing it over to Happy.

Walt: Could he get his whiskers tied up in it. He has to drop it and pull his whiskers out. He has long whiskers (Happy) -- I'd like cuts around to their feet going too. Cuts to their feet and to their hands - to Grumpy's hands and to the pipes moving. To a guy playing a tricky run on something and pan down to his fingers going to beat the band. Same with the guy on the flute. Cut to the fingers. He makes a gallop with his fingers and slides up the bunch of keys and cut to something else. They would be sort of montage shots.

Ken: Could you use the shot of Grumpy that Albert made - the fanny going up and down like a bellow at the organ.

Walt: He works up and down with his whole body.

Larry: Where you want a socked accent he goes down with both cheeks on the fanny.

Walt: The seat definitely has something to do with the pumping. It's like he has double bellows and when he works both, it's double force and individually it's a steady rhythm. That's funny. I wouldn't see it so exaggerated as Albert has it.

I think you could get him here (on the keyboard) and pan down to his feet and show the business working with his feet.

Larry: Do you think more of a piano keyboard might be funnier?

Walt: He has his toes over the holes individually. It's impossible to do - that's what's funny about it. Here he is, cut down and here are his toes playing a certain way, running up a little scale - then playing in rhythm. Then maybe he has to cross them (one foot crossing another as hands do on a piano keyboard) - just for a second, then back into the other (up above on board) then cut away.

Dick: In one sketch there is a key for the valve on the end. His big toe would come over and smack down the valve, lift the valve and his other toes tremolo up there. Like a pianist or violinist.

Ted: You could get a Marx brothers touch there.

Walt: There is the guy with the concertina - his fingers gallop down it.

Dick: That's the place for the Marx Bros. thing.

Walt: Grumpy can do it with the organ too.

I think you can get Grumpy's hand playing and move up on the pipes, cut to the pipes. You hear the high part down here and cut up to the bird pipes doing it and down to him and he's finishing.

Larry: Wouldn't it be good to get motion up and down on the pipes?

Walt: The section where you said where he makes a run down the scale. Start him and cut up to the pipes and back to him.

There is a [roar] of pipes. He might skip - each pipe gets a couple of notes instead of running a complete scale.

The slap bass will be swell - it can go all the time even when nobody's playing it.

I thought there'd be individual strings across the gourdophone.

Larry: We pretend to get a different tone on each gourd. You want them big and small. The hole would be the mouth of the figure. It's a longer gourd and the string crosses it, otr it's a flatter type and curves underneath, but the string comes over the bridge like a violin so you have something to slap. Maybe two strings on each.

Walt: The instruments should be bright colors too don't you think?

Dick: They can be, as long as we retain the carved feeling.

Walt: I don't know why they have to be made out of wood. They are of some design of their own.

(On the squirrel horn) There might be a hole in the belly for a belly button. He plays up on the horn, then comes down and tickles the belly button.

Jaxon: Suggests the animals feet rest on the floor in this horn. Or the fly could shoot out the belly button.

Dick: Brings forth sketch of the gong Doc might use instead of a triangle.

Walt: How many times would you get the cut to Doc with the triangle?

Larry: Four or five. (Walt: That's all he does?)

Dick: That's all if we use it that way.

Jaxon: The cymbal looks like a hat. Dopey might get thru and put it on his head for a hat and run around in a little dance and come back, take it off and go back to work.

Walt: Maybe when doc has to play something he has a hell of a time doing it. He isn't very clever. He is the blustery type, assuming he can do everything, but really can't do anything. It might be good if he had to work very hard at something.

Buchanan: Give him a one string instrument; there couldn't be anything much simpler. I thought Dopey had the triangle; the gag would be funnier with him.

Dave: With all that's going on there it seems you might miss doc altogether with his little triangle.

Jaxon: I'd rather see him busy with some instrument.

Buchanan: The gag with Dopey and Grumpy would be good if they were nonchalant.

Walt: Maybe Dopey is drumming away and comes to a certain point, grabs the triangle and comes up with it, all ready to hit. Cut to Grumpy, he splits and hits it. Come back to Dopey and before he can hit it it rings. He and the bird up there and he locks up at the bird.

Next time he'd get it up ready to hit and look up at the bird, thinking it came from up there. We get Grumpy playing along. The thing rings before he can hit it. He doesn't know what happened. Work it as a complete surprise to Dopey. But I think you ought to see him work it once - really do it once. He brings it up, waits, pings it and puts it down and goes on. Next time he is up waiting and Grumpy gets the ping before Dopey gets it.

Jaxon: He would hold it up by his ear and listens.

Dave: Doesn't think you have to show it first; says if you get a triangle and hammer up a character's hands you know what he is going to do.

Walt: Says you might not know what the gong was according to the sketch. If you saw it ring once you'd know what it was right away.

Buchanan: Your sound is o.s. and your spit o.s.

Walt: You see Grumpy spit, hear the ping and cut back to the thing vibrating and he hasn't even hit it yet. Get his take or something. He'd look up above and then he looks at the audience like he wonders if that's where it comes from.

Walt: How long does it Run? Larry: 195 feet for the first singing and from where we pick up with the group "Never too old to be young" to the end, 223 feet.

Walt: I think we can stand that much. We ought to keep our gags from running too long on one individual.

Of course there is the dancing; we haven't got that in yet.

Larry: Do you see dancing thru the whole thing?

Walt: No. Larry: I saw it picking up during the last yodel. They go

Larry: thru one yodel then the complete chorus of the song ad the dance goes on in that section. They dance by themselves first and then grab SW and she's be into it. Then cut away to different things and end up "You're never too old to be young" -

Walt: What would stop us from having them dance any where? Happy, when he is leading, is dancing. When he finishes what stops him from skipping out on the floor and thru a dance and sliding back to his instrument?

Ken: Dopey dances when he's playing the drums too.

Walt: You might pull stuff on him like Russ Powell, or what's his name, the drummer does. Dopey comes out and hits the floor with his drumsticks and hits the top of his head with them. He does a dance and at the same time keeps up a rat-a-tat-tat on the floor with his sticks.

Jaxon: The guy with the instrument like the tail of an animal might dance around in a circle with the thing swirling around on the floor.

Walt: They get so peppy they have to get up and dance.

Larry: A certain amount of that at the beginning, and more at the end.

Walt: The guys could get out and do a dance together, then both of them dance over to SW and pull her out and the three dance together. Let that dance finish the thing up, you know.

There might be something in the two dancing together at first.

Dick: Ted suggests that we eliminate all verses.

Ted: I just said there's the yodeling, dancing and instruments and the main idea is expressed in "You're never too old to be young" - it seems the longer verses are just something the audience has to listen to and try to make out.

Walt: It seems to kind of break the monotony. (Likes the one about indigestion going woo-woo and the one about the Adam's apple.) I think the audience would like them if they pertained to the fellows and were in line.

Larry: I don't think Doc has to sing any of them.

Walt: I'd like Happy doing it. Bit I wouldn't like him to exaggerate as he did in the spoon stuff. He made that over happy. It might be good if each guy sang one, not all of them, but two or three - one would be Bashful, say.

Jaxon: Sneezy could come in.

Walt: You could try it out by getting somebody that can really sing then make a recording and get a gang over there and see which one gets the laughs. Pick a certain bunch of them to select from.

A funny way to do it would be to have Bashful gets up on one, say: WHEN YOUR INDIGESTION STARTS TO GO WOO WOO. He is bashful and embarrassed. WHEN YOUR INDIGESTION, etc. He'd say EAT SOME PICKLED PARSNIP PIE, etc., then they could all laugh after the finish - like it's something they are making up; like each guy is getting up with something. But Happy would take the lead on the other things.

Jaxon: Happy could point to them; put them on the spot so they have to get up.

Walt: The gang repeats the second line.

Larry: If the group is on the line, a single voice comes on the next.

Walt: Suggest some other word to substitute for "can" of lye; tub, pail, or drink.

Say we picked three who could sing that.

Dave: I think that's a good idea, and play back to happy each time.

Walt: And come in for Doc to take one line.

Larry: I don't think we want to write a special verse for him.

Walt: Do you think these verses are too long for the fellow to sing?

Dave Paul thinks there's not enough on the "Never too old to be young" idea. (Paul: I think that is the whole point.)

Walt: Why not prepare some of the verses that sound like possibilities and take them and see what the crowd likes. Who could you get to sing them? (Larry: Pearce and Pinto. Walt: Pinto - and maybe you.

(Here followed the discussion about Doc which is transcribed on page 2 starting with Jaxon's remark about not using Doc)

Walt: I was thinking there might be something in Bashful singing one of the verses. If it was something to do with love -- Sneezzy could do one, too.

Dick: What about using Dopey on the yodel? Would that be in key with the rest of it, or would you rather not use him?

Walt: I think that might be all right.

Dick: His ears wiggle when he yodels.

Walt: If we can get the funny yodel Pinto talked about, it might do for him. It should be goofy.

Pinto: He could yodel with his whole face and neck, ears and all.

Walt: Ted, you don't like the verses?

Ted: I haven't a lot of faith in the dwarf's ability as entertainers when they are trying to be. All the stuff that sounds funny is the instruments and drums and getting up - all their movements, but I don't like to see one of them get up and sing a lot of lines, good or bad. They aren't funny enough to get a laugh on the stage or radio. We're depending on their personalities.

Walt: I wonder - (talks about what foolish things people do laugh at) - Why not record them and get the whole gang over.

Larry: We can always cut it from the end of the yodel, cutting the verses out together.

Ted: I just made it as a suggestion.

Walt: Would your suggestion be that there would be a verse about being old yet gay?

Ted: "Never too old to be young" is enough to burden the audiences with.

Ted: The strongest line in the whole song is that one, and it doesn't require anything to explain it.

Larry: You mean cut out the chorus too, or just the verse?

Ted: Just the verse. There is so much of it and you're adding more. I wouldn't suggest cutting them out. I just bring it up as a point.

Walt: People like to sing verses to a song like that - like It Ain't Gonna Rain No More.

(About how much depends on the personalities) - We have definite personalities. Bashful and Happy - they are trying to entertain her, not our theater audience. I see it that then it comes Bashful's turn he is bashful about starting it, but he sings it. When he says the gag line he's almost ashamed to say it, but he does say it and they like it and get into the hot stuff again.

JAXON NOTE: Walt made the suggestion that Pinto connect up with a mike and sing the verses to a group on the sound stage - eliminating the recording of the.

Walt: It's like each guy sits there thinking and when his turn comes he will get up and sing.

Buchanan: Suggests it be worked as though one guy gets stuck for the next line of his verse, and somebody else breaks in to supply it.

Dick: One points to the next for the next line.

Walt: Each one puts in, without the pointing.

Larry: They way we were talking it, each guy started and put in his line, as though the whole thing were sort of thrown together.

Walt: I'd like to hear them laugh afterwards as though they'd had fun.

Buchanan: It's like one doesn't know what to do next and the next finishes for him.

JAN.18,1936

E.T.