

Introduction

Tom Lehrer

Announcer: I should like to introduce now the featured artist of this evening's...ordeal. I'm sure that you will all agree without any hesitation that Tom Lehrer is the most brilliant creative genius that America has produced in almost 200 years, so perhaps a few words of biographical background might not be amiss. Endowed by nature with perhaps the most glorious baritone voice to be heard on an American stage since the memorable concert debut in 1835 of Millard Fillmore; endowed also with twelve incredibly agile fingers; Mr. Lehrer has had a long and varied career in the field of entertainment starting with nine years at Harvard University...where it was that he first decided to devote his life to what has since become a rather successful scientific project - namely, the attempt to prolong adolescence beyond all previous limits.

Even before he came to Harvard, however, he was well known in academic circles for his masterly translation into Latin of The Wizard of Oz*, which remains even today the standard Latin version of that work. A few years ago he was inducted...forcibly...into the United States Army and spent most of his indenture in Washington as sort of Army liaison to the Office of Naval Contemplation. About his service record he is justifiably... modest, but it is known that in a short time he rose to the rank of brigadier general. However, before he could acquire a tenure, he was discharged, and owing to nepotism and intrigue, he emerged with only the rank of Specialist 3rd Class, which was roughly equivalent to the rank of Corporal without Portfolio.

But to return to his career in show business: for several years he toured vaudeville theaters with an act consisting of impressions of people in the last throes of various diseases. I'm sure that many of you here tonight still recall with pleasure his memorable diphtheria imitation. He is generally acknowledged to be the dean of living American composers, and is currently working on a musical comedy based on the life of Adolph Hitler**. Without further ado - Tom Lehrer...

(The Announcer sits down at the piano, revealing himself to be Tom)

You'd be amazed at the money we save that way.