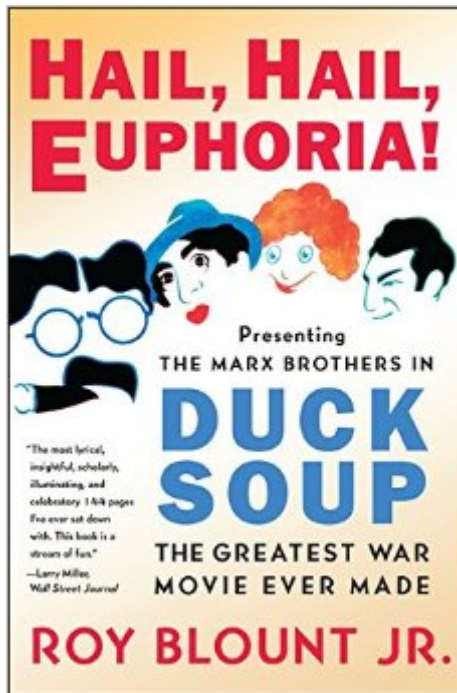


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# Hail, Hail, Euphoria!: Presenting The Marx Brothers In Duck Soup, The Greatest War Movie Ever Made



## Synopsis

Bestselling author Roy Blount Jr. tells the story of the classic Marx Brothers wartime satire *Duck Soup*. As always, Blount is informed yet informal, tongue-in-cheek yet tempered, providing the perfect voice to recount the irreverent antics of Harpo, Chico, Groucho, and Zeppo. Readers of *Harpo Speaks*, *The Essential Groucho*, and *Monkey Business* and fans of *Animal Crackers*, *A Night at the Opera* and the Marx Brothers' other timeless comedies as well as all fans of Blount's witty and insightful books like *Alphabet Juice* and *Feet on the Street* and listeners to NPR's weekly news quiz, *Wait, Wait, Don't Tell Me* will be captivated by the lyrical humorist's compelling, behind-the-scenes storytelling of the 1933 classic film.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

I am an admirer of Roy Blount's works, but this book will not go into that list. While it is admirable that he decided to do a critical analysis of this greatest of all Marx Bros. films, how he goes about it is so derivative of another work from over thirty years ago to make reading this book a bit discomforting. On the plus side, the stills contained herein are some I have never seen and it is really nice to have some different ones unearthed for us to view. Also, I will give Blount kudos for his passion for the film and for taking the time to not only construct an interesting if flawed examination of both the film and its history, but for being so passionate about it. Now...as to my criticisms, perhaps the biggest one is this: back in the 1970's the best book on the brothers Marx and one of the best tomes on film comedy was published called *GROUCHO, HARPO, CHICO AND SOMETIMES ZEPPPO* by Joe Adamson. His approach to their world and its relation to the rest of it

was a huge refreshing breath of air in a genre that normally stifled creativity in film criticism. The book was wise and also wiseass, funny, sarcastic and still is one of the most entertaining books on movies and movie history ever written. It is also obvious that I am not the only one to read it-many of the points in that book are in this one, with no attribution, which saddens me. Also, some of Blount's facts are just plain wrong-example: he refers to Woody Allen's masterpiece HANNAN AND HER SISTERS and how the Allen character decides to keep on living after a particularly depressing time because of DUCK SOUP. He marvels at the silliness of the film and how great it is to really laugh at something even when the world around you seems bleak.

Roy Blount jr., a humorist himself, writes a very appreciative, witty and often serious and appreciative view of the Marx Brother's critical 1933 film 'Duck Soup'. While Blount refers to 'Duck Soup' as one of the greatest war movie of all time, as stunning as that remark may seem, a national known military magazine actually rates the film as a top 20 war film of all time. The writing style of Blount is energetic and very fast paced discussing the script, goes back to the movie, the script, then the movie, the brothers, the support actors such as Margaret Dumont, the frequent straight woman foil for Groucho and the boys. Blount provides generous bios on the brothers periodically through his detailed analysis of the film and with intimate details of the film, even describing the stage fruit that the brothers heave at the the end and at Dumont. There is so much captured by Blount, the detailed comedic moments like Chico and Harpo's teasing the lemonade man, and Groucho & Harpo's mirror act that, as Blount describes, is more than coordinated timing but is a special sense of each other from their uniquely close relationship literally growing up at stage. Blount provides fascinating background on the brothers evolving act that was initiated and coordinated by their stage mother Minnie, who sounds funny in her own right, such as wearing a corset to make an entrance then immediately removing it. Blount not only provides descriptions of Chico, Groucho and Harpo but Zeppo who leaves to produce and create a mechanical company that has great success in the medical field and even Gummo who ironically has the last laugh in the book.

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