

THE BEST OF RED SKELTON

A new public television special celebrates America's Clown Prince of Comedy and one of the longest running television variety series. "The Red Skelton Show," one of the first variety shows to make the successful transition from radio to TV, premiered September 30, 1951 and was a television staple for two decades until its cancellation in 1971. **THE BEST OF RED SKELTON** features classic Skelton slapstick routines and characters in full color, along with hilarious guest appearances from Walter Brennan, Raymond Burr, Tim Conway, Phyllis Diller, James Drury, Eva Gabor, Janet Leigh, Vincent Price, Cesar Romero, Mickey Rooney, Telly Savalas, Tiny Tim, Robert Wagner, John Wayne and others (full list below). Assembled with permission from Red Skelton's estate, the special includes segments from one of the final interviews Skelton gave before his death, and most of the vintage footage in **THE BEST OF RED SKELTON** has not been on TV since the original broadcasts.

Unlike other variety series, "The Red Skelton Show" did not rely on guest stars every week. Skelton had a strong group of support players and most of his characters – first developed for radio – worked equally well on television. **THE BEST OF RED SKELTON** features Skelton's most popular characters, including sometime singing cabdriver "Clem Kadiddlehopper," a hillbilly farmer with a big heart and a slow wit; "Sheriff Deadeye;" boxer "Cauliflower McPugg;" henpecked husband "George Appleby;" and "Gertrude and Heathcliffe," his pair of cross-eyed seagulls. The only television addition to Skelton's original radio repertoire of characters was hobo "Freddie the Freeloader." With Skelton's endless talent for pantomime, a simple smile, his trusty hat and cigar, "Freddie" could bring you to tears from both sadness and laughter. Presented nationally by WLIW21 in association with WNET.ORG, **THE BEST OF RED SKELTON** premieres nationwide on public television March 2009 (check local listings), and is pure entertainment for the entire family.

THE BEST OF RED SKELTON Featured Celebrity Guests (in order of appearance)

Mickey Rooney
Mike Connors
Tiny Tim
Telly Savalas
Phyllis Diller
Vincent Price
Jack Jones
Walter Brennan
John Wayne
Cesar Romero
Tim Conway
Robert Wagner

Martha Raye
Janet Leigh
Carol Wayne
James Drury
Gene Barry
Maurice Evans
Raymond Burr
Barbara Anderson
Eva Gabor
Wally Cox
George Gobel
Audrey Meadows

Presented nationally by WLIW21 in association with WNET.ORG. ST and CC.

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