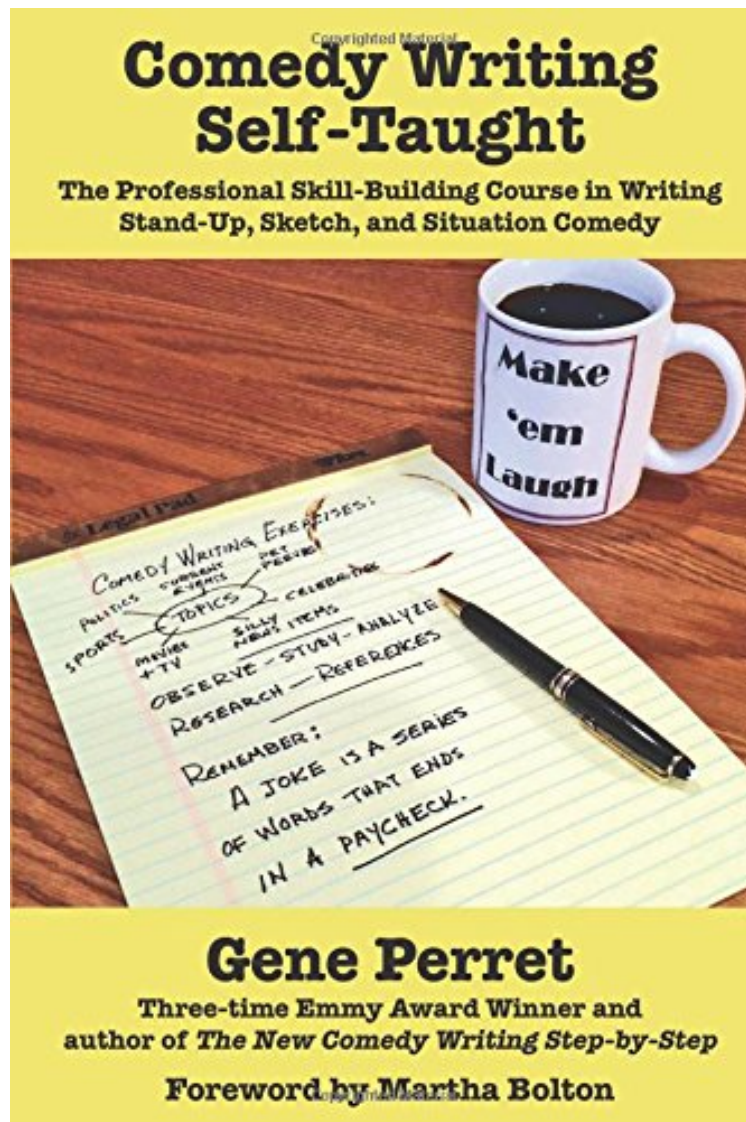


[Pdf free] Comedy Writing Self-Taught: The Professional Skill-Building Course in Writing Stand-Up, Sketch, and Situation Comedy

Comedy Writing Self-Taught: The Professional Skill-Building Course in Writing Stand-Up, Sketch, and Situation Comedy

Gene Perret

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#623159 in Books 2015-01-15 Original language: English PDF # 1 9.30 x .40 x 5.80l, .0 #File Name: 1610352203175 pages | File size: 18.Mb

Gene Perret : Comedy Writing Self-Taught: The Professional Skill-Building Course in Writing Stand-Up, Sketch, and Situation Comedy before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Comedy Writing Self-Taught: The Professional Skill-Building Course in Writing Stand-Up, Sketch, and Situation Comedy:

11 of 12 people found the following review helpful. "Self-Taught Is Best Taught": Gene Perret's Proof? By Dr. C. J. Singh. Reviewed by C. J. Singh (Berkeley, CA). "Self-Taught Is the Best Taught": Gene Perret's Proof? As a young engineering staffer at General Electric Corporation in the early 1960s, Gene Perret began doing "chores as an emcee" at the company's retiree and anniversary roasts. To prepare his scripts, Perret interviewed the roastees' colleagues, family, and other friends. The audience's enthusiastic responses encouraged him to become a full-time professional comedy writer. Of the many humor-writing books Perret has published in his 50-year career, I have studied three earlier books. "The Comedy Writing Workbook," published in 1994, with its 192 pages of workouts; "Damn! That's Funny! Writing Humor You Can Sell," published in 2005, includes several examples of Perret's magazine articles as well as tips for writing humor; "The New Comedy Writing Step by Step: Revised and Updated," published in 2007, shows the detailed process of writing humor and is widely regarded as his magnum opus. Encouraged by these three books, I started incorporating more humor in my short stories and published several in the literary magazine *Zyzzyyva* under the title "Varieties of Short Fiction. [55-word nano-fiction; 250-word micro-fiction; 500-word flash-fiction; and 2000-word limit sudden fiction. My nano-fiction: "Are You Jewish? Walking to snack at Noah's Bagels, I often passed by Berkeley's Chabad House, where the men all wore black caps. Seeing my black cap, they'd smile warmly. One man asked: 'Are you Jewish?' They wanted to connect, but I walked on. To come clean, I turned back and said: 'No, I'm not Jewish. I'm balding'." His latest, *COMEDY WRITING SELF-TAUGHT*, published in 2014, is a compact introduction to the craft, comprising four introductory chapters and three sections: Part One, Joke Writing; Part Two, Sketch Writing; and Part Three, Sitcom Writing. The brief introductory chapters set the book's encouraging tone. The chapters are titled: 1. Comedy Can Be Taught 2. Self-Taught Is the Best Taught 3. Two Concepts That You Can Teach Yourself Immediately 4. Learn the Business. Okay, what are the two concepts that you can teach yourself immediately? Writing to a Quota and Overwriting. You set the quota depending on whether you are writing gags, sketches, sitcoms, or a novel. For example: "It would be silly to say 'I'll write ten jokes a day' if you're trying to write a humorous novel" because humor must emerge from the story (page 13). Overwriting: "you deliver a little more than is required of you.... If a sitcom script demands a new punchline on page 15, you jot five or six possible improvements in the margin. You, the producer, or the actor can then select the one that works best" (page 16). Part One, Joke Writing, comprises ten brief chapters. "A joke is the basic building block of humor.... Master the joke form and you've got a solid foundation for writing all types of humor" (p 27). The chapters are titled: 5. Learn What Good Comedy Is 6. Learn to Be Good by Not Being Bad 7. Selecting Your Mentor (Perret chose Bob Hope as his mentor, analyzed his performances, and went on to write jokes for him for 30 years. I would have chosen Bob Newhart. Reader, your choice of mentor? Write it in the Comments.) 8. What and How You Should Learn From Your Mentor? 9. What Do You Write About? ("Listen to radio and TV: The big comedy names on TV, like Jon Stewart and Conan O'Brien, do gags on current events and up-to-date trends," p 65). I listen to NPR daily. 10. Preparation and Research Are Part of Learning 11. Teach Yourself to Write Routines 12. Find and Study Joke Formulas 13. Do Comedy Writing Exercises (Perret suggests writing the missing caption in *The New Yorker* magazine's cartoon joke-writing contest. "Generate as many captions as you can for the cartoon. This is not only fun and beneficial, but you can submit your best gags and maybe capture one of the prizes" p 96) 14. You May Want to Skip This Chapter, But Don't. (Don't defend your gag when the buyer/performer doesn't want it. Perret acknowledges he didn't always follow his own advice. His example: Bob Hope didn't want one of Perret's gags written for performance before Queen Elizabeth. Perret insisted that the Queen would love it. Hope suggested that Perret perform it and reminded him that the Queen still had beheading authority. p 101.) Part Two, Sketch Writing, comprises four chapters. "Sketch writing is one of the most unrestricted genres of comedy. With standard writing you're limited to the preferences and deliver of the individual comic. In sitcom writing you have the same characters week after week. With sketches, though you're free to create any character you like. You can put that character in any situation at all" p 107). The chapters are titled: 15. Your Best Mentor Is in Your Den (TV) 16. How to Watch Sketches 17. Sketch Endings. (Every sketch should have a definite ending like the punchline in a joke.) 18. Sketch Writing Exercises Part Three, Sitcom Writing, comprises five chapters. In Sitcom Writing, "the story is the main factor; the comedy is secondary. The gags are necessary, of course, but they are governed by the story that is being told" p 133). The chapters are titled: 19. How to Watch Sitcoms. (Watch sitcoms: "the good, the bad, the ugly" p. 135) 20. Sitcom Writing Exercises. 21. Develop a Situation Comedy Story and Outline a Script. 22. Write a Situation Comedy Script. 23. Errors to Avoid in Writing a Spec Script. Interspersed in the expository text are wonderful Perret jokes such as: I took my date to an elegant French restaurant. I didn't want and ordered our meal in French. The waiter brought me all the bread I could eat and a glass of meat. (page 80) When she wore a white dress, we would show movies on her. (page 86, written for Phyllis Diller about her heavy-set mother-in-law whom she called Moby Dick) Its so cold in Washington that I saw a politician with his hand in his own pocket. (page 88, written for Johnny Carson) "Self-Taught Is the Best Taught": Gene Perret's proof? With his success -- Authors Guild-Award Winner and three-time Emmie-Award Winner--the proof is the trajectory of Perret's career. 3 of 4 people found the following review helpful. Comedy gold By MJZ This book is packed with so much great advice and exercises. The author doesn't waste words and fill the pages with a lot of "filler" he gets right in, gives you honest and clear advice and suggestions. He tells you up front this isn't easy or for the weak willed. Comedy writing takes dedication and focus. You have to be

willing to fail and not give up. My favorite thing in the book is the idea of picking a comedy mentor and studying him/her in depth to discover what makes them funny and how you can use what you learned in your own writing. By studying two of my faves (Eddie Izzard and Alan Davies) in the way suggested in the book I came away with a wealth of new ideas and perspectives about my own writing which I would never have gained on my own. This book is gold and make sure to also pick up the workbook that goes along with it. This is hard work but the payback is invaluable.0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. COMEDY WRITINGBy Omar PashaVery good!

Comedy writing is an acquired skill. No one is born a comedy writer. The desire may be there from an early age, but the techniques must be learned, developed, and honed. Fortunately, the best teachers are readily available. They are the comics of the past and present, the television shows you see daily, both current versions and reruns. They provide your Ph.D. course in humor writing. In "Comedy Writing Self-Taught," Gene Perret, a three-time Emmy Award-winner and former head writer for Bob Hope and Phyllis Diller, teaches you how to teach yourself comedy writing techniques by observing, analyzing, and replicating those who have already mastered the skills. This book not only guides you in selecting the appropriate mentors for your writing and helps you decide what to look for in your studies, it also offers drills and exercises that will develop your creativity. A companion volume, "Comedy Writing Self-Taught Workbook," provides even more exercises and writing workouts. Whether you're writing stand-up routines, TV sketches, or sitcoms, this book clues you in to the fastest, most convenient way to teach yourself the skills you'll need. You'll do the watching, studying, and learning. You'll do the work -- and it will require work -- but you'll also reap the generous rewards, and have fun while teaching yourself to write comedy.

Exceptionally well written, organized and presented, "Comedy Writing Self-Taught" should be considered a must for all aspiring comedians, as well as novice writers trying to write jokes and comedic ideas for those comedians. -- Midwest Book A must for any comedy writer who wants more of a workbook approach to learning, along with industry specifics. --California BookwatchAny would-be comedy writer -- especially those just starting out in the genre -- need this and its accompanying workbook. --The BookwatchAbout the AuthorGene Perret taught himself to write comedy in the early 1960s by studying the technique and the writing style of the great comedians of the day, especially Bob Hope. This led to his writing comedy material for many nightclub performers, including Phyllis Diller and Slappy White. In 1968, Gene was signed to contribute to "The Beautiful Phyllis Diller Show." That led to a television career writing for "The Jim Nabors Hour," "Laugh-In," "The New Bill Cosby Show," "The Carol Burnett Show" and others. Later, he produced such hits as "Welcome Back Kotter," "Threes Company," and "The Tim Conway Show." Gene also worked with Bob Hope on all of his personal appearances and TV specials for 38 years, the last 12 of which he served as Hopes head-writer. Perret has won three Emmys and one Writers Guild Award. He is also a well respected teacher of comedy writing and is the author of over 45 books, including The New Comedy Writing Step by Step and The Ten Commandments of Comedy.