

Bennie Bartlett's Band

US : 1938 : dir. : ? min
 prod: : scr: : dir.ph.:
[Bennie Bartlett](#)
 Adult cast unknown

Ref:	Pages	Sources	Stills	Words	Ω	8	€	M	⌘	Copy on VHS	Last Viewed
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The Moving Picture Boy entry on Bartlett:

"Not many Hollywood kids came from Kansas, but red-haired Bennie Bartlett did. His parents (Floyd and Nina) were vaudeville people, and he was born on tour, making his debut at 10 days, though it's not known what he sang. At the age of three he learnt the trumpet, and at four was running his own dance band, with himself as vocal and trumpet soloist. It must have been terrible.

Bennie (or Benny) now learnt piano and drums, and began writing his own songs. Soon he was singing them, and trumpeting, on the local radio station. At this point, whether by request of the Kansans or in search of higher things, the Bartlett family upped stakes and moved to California, where father Floyd got work as a dance music arranger. The boy became a public figure, in a small but noisy way, and by the time he was nine had had 15 of his songs published. He had also landed a Paramount contract.

Music apart, there was clearly some intention to set up the rowdy redhead as a new Rooney. He had that sort of pudgy truculence. But it didn't quite happen. Behind the brass there was an

anxious streak that showed, an earnestness that was actually rather redeeming. He made a nice foil for Dickie Moore, Virginia Weidler or Shirley Temple.

Bennie was in six 1943 films, including "**HE HIRED THE BOSS**", "**NEXT OF KIN**" and "**THANK YOUR LUCKY STARS**", and in many more over the next two decades, such as "**CHEAPER BY THE DOZEN**" (50), "**REAR WINDOW**" (54), "**HIGH SOCIETY**" (55) and "**THE SCAPEGOAT**" (59)."

[no listing in "Halliwell's Film Guide", "Leonard Maltin's Movie and Video Guide 2001", "Speelfilm Encyclopedie", "The Critics' Film Guide", "The Good Film and Video Guide", "Movies on TV and Videocassette 1988-89", "Rating the Movies (1990)", "The Sunday Times Guide to Movies on Television", "The Time Out Film Guide", "TV Times Film & Video Guide 1995", "Variety Movie Guide 1993", "Video Movie Guide 1993" or "The Virgin Film Guide"]

No further information currently available. Holmstrom writes rather slightly of the talent required to play the trumpet – however badly – by the age of three, and have fifteen songs published by the age of nine. In any case, this title was obviously dedicated all to himself, and elevates Bartlett to membership of a very select club of child performers who had feature films named after them (Shirley Temple and Jackie Coogan, for example, were never paid that compliment). Others included Jackie Cooper (for "**JACKIE COOPER'S CHRISTMAS PARTY**"), Soviet boy star Gogi Ratiani (for, would you believe, "**GOGI RATIANI**"), Spanish boy star Joselito, and Dutch singing boy star Heintje (virtually all his films were prefixed with his name).

Bartlett was 11, and Holmstrom lists over thirty films for him – hardly any of them musicals – between the ages of 8 and 16. They included “**ANYTHING GOES**” (36), “**TIMOTHY’S QUEST**” (36), “**SONS OF THE LEGION**” (38) and “**THE GREAT MAN VOTES**” (39).

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