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The Soupy Sales Show

US TV comedy puppet show : 19 : dir. : ? x ? min
prod: : scr: : dir.ph.:
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Soupy Sales (Milton Hines)

Ref:	Pages	Sources	Stills	Words	Ω	8	€	M	⚡	Copy on VHS	Last Viewed
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Source: History of Television

How Sweet It Was – Television: a Pictorial Commentary note:

“He started with a local show in Detroit ("Soupy's On"), graduated to a network programme, and finally landed in New York, where he launched a daily local show that was syndicated widely. Soupy's specialities are a pie

in the face (at least one a show, sometimes dozens); outrageous riddles, puns, and old jokes; and conversations with his animal friends... [among them] Black Tooth, "the kindest dog in the country". He has always been a favourite of the youngsters, but recently he has also become in with the hipster set.”



Not Fred Gwynne, but Soupy Sales – a firm favourite with the student body, apparently (this was before any child kicking his heels in a classroom would be described as a “student”)

Source: How Sweet it Was

History of Television comment:

“**Rocky and his Friends**”... was in a tradition – already forged by “**Crusader Rabbit**” and “**Beany and Cecil**” – that appealed to adult viewers as much as their kids. Squarely in the same tradition was Soupy Sales, a live-action host who similarly played (via references, puns and allusions, not to mention double-entendre) to the oldsters. Sales began in Detroit, moved to the ABC network, and then local stations in New York. His companions were puppets and unseen voices; White Fang (the sweetest dog in the world) and Black Tooth (the meanest dog in the world) would be seen only by their arms in the doorway, and Reba’s head was in a potbellied stove. Sales’ routines brought baggy pants burlesque to a new generation of Americans – his outrageous skits would invite kids to “send in the green paper from Daddy’s wallets” (it happened in great volume and resulted in a suspension) and admonishing kids to eat their Jello just like Soupy. When he did,

his swallow was accompanied by the sound effect of a flushing toilet.”

Halliwell’s **Television Companion** biographical entry on Sales:

“(1926-) American comedian, usually seen performing corny jokes and slapstick in children’s time.”

[no listing in “The Golden Age of Children’s Television”, “Into the Box of Delights - a History of Children’s Television”, “Television’s Greatest Hits” or “25 Years of ITV - 1955-1980”]

No further information currently available. The character and the show are completely unknown in the UK. It's rather perverse to measure the merit of a children's show in terms of its appeal to adults, but that same attitude prevails with most film reviewers, so that the judgement "strictly for younger viewers" implies material of inherently lesser worth, and by the same token the most dull and derivative of films will often be commended by critics as "suitable" for younger (hence *undiscerning*) audiences. I am not one of those adults who suffers total amnesia of their childhood sensibilities, so I recognise that children can spot junk when they see it just as readily as we can. Sadly they tend to be served a good deal more of it than adult viewers, and their tolerance levels are of necessity higher.

Before the advent of multi-channel 24-hour television, children's programming was confined to an hour or two of early evening scheduling, so that material aimed at pre-school or very young children was often watched by older kids also, to whom it would seem facile and twee. Puppet shows (the UK's "**Muffin the Mule**", "**Sooty**" and "**Pinky and Perky**" being prime examples) had a more patronising, nannyish tone in general than the animated series, but there must have been golden exceptions to that rule on both sides of the Atlantic. The true popularity of programmes aimed at very young children is impossible to gauge, since it is by and large their mothers who choose what they will and will not watch. Programmes which carried a parental seal of approval – "**Blue Peter**" for example – always tended mysteriously to fall among the more successful and longest-lived children's shows.

See subject index under **PUPPET SHOWS**.