

# SON OF HARPO SPEAKS!

BY BILL MARX



## **SON OF HARPO SPEAKS!**

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*To Dad, Mom & Family*





**Minnie, my grandmother.**

But, because the Marx Brothers was an outgrowth of a musical act called The Four Nightingales, Harpo's love for music would continue throughout his career and help him to become an accomplished, world-renowned harpist, in spite of never having received any academic training or ever learning to read music. During this time period of his career, I became his musical arranger/conductor at the age of sixteen. We toured together and recorded two albums of music for Mercury Records. I was most fortunate to have both a father/son and professional relationship with him, and for me, something nothing could ever surpass. My autobiography chronicles some of our experiences in both relationships.



THE NORTHWEST'S LARGEST AND FINEST PLACE OF AMUSEMENT

**The Hennepin**  
Junior Orpheum Circuit

5  
Performances Daily  
Photo Plays  
12:00—2:45—5:00—7:45—10:00

CONTINUOUS  
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**X BROS.**

"LCONY"

RLING

HORACE GOLDIN'S MASTERPIECE  
**"SAWING A WOMAN IN HALF"**  
THE POSITIVE SENSATION OF THE CENTURY  
PRESENTED BY  
SERVAIS LEROY  
THE CELEBRATED BELGIAN MYSTIC

**YNES** IN **"Exclusive Songs"**

**DUNCAN** MARY

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**GEORGE AUSTIN MOORE**

IN  
**"SONGS and STORIES"**

**S.**  
VERS

**SAMPSON AND DOUGLAS**  
IN  
"I'LL SAY SO"

**SYLVIA LOYAL**  
AND HER PETS



**The Four Marx Brothers in *Home Again*; Left to right: Arthur, Leonard above Milton, and Julius.**

There are a sizeable number of books on the Marx Brothers (including Dad's autobiography, *Harpo Speaks!*) that reference their remarkably unique contribution to the American theater. All of their films have been digitally remastered and are available in the twenty-first century in DVD packages as well. The Marx Brothers live on . . .

## WHY A BOOK?

For many years, friends and family have asked, “Bill, why don’t you write a book about your life? You must have had quite a childhood growing up with your dad, Harpo, and those zany uncles of yours, the Marx Brothers. And what about those weird, maybe fatalistic, happenings you’ve experienced that can only be described as ‘too-Hollywood-to-believe?’”

Having never written a book in my life, and already struggled to get through an Afterword for the paperback version of Dad’s autobiography, only the help and expertise of the brilliant writer and co-author of Dad’s book, Rowland Barber, saved me from the slings and arrows of outraged unfortunate readers the world over.

Frankly, I have always felt insecure, lacking self-confidence, and terrified at the thought of embarrassing myself forever by administering a below-the-belt blow to literature. Being and thinking as a musician, writing has always somehow seemed to be a much different creative process from composing. Perhaps, it’s the tangible versus the intangible, the absolute of the written word as opposed to the abstract of the musical note.

However, upon the passing of my dear mother, Susan, and through more urging from sadistic friends, I decided to take on the awesome responsibility of writing something. But I needed some kind of support to squelch my anxiety about the whole idea of writing about myself. And, because Rowland wasn’t available at the time to help, I had to look to other self-bolstering devices.

After careful consideration of all possible avenues, I thought I might take an intriguing course being offered at the university in normal and advanced megalomania. All that was required to pass

the course was to read and then write a term paper on the book, *Egomania and I*. Why, maybe this could be the perfect tool in exacting the necessary reinforcement for my becoming confident enough in myself to finally and courageously take the plunge into the waters of my however-long-awaited autobiography! My curiosity leaped when I noticed there was one chapter that would be particularly helpful on developing a split personality, thus allowing one to objectively double the appreciation of one's self.

You have absolutely no idea of the feeling of pride that swelled through my chest just imagining them presenting me with my diploma, designating that I was now a full-fledged megalomaniac and graduating with honors as well. The course probably would even improve my posture. I'd now be ready to take them all on, Hemingway, Steinbeck, Proust, Joyce, Voltaire, Moliere, Shakespeare, Bacon, Barber. Merely the occasional thought of it made me so filled with myself that I knew there would be no stopping this author now. The feeling would then continue to encompass me as I pressed on during the writing of this most important book, one that no home or municipal library should be without.

Not only could I perceive the course giving me the inner strength and overwhelming pleasure of knowing me better than anyone else, it would allow me at last to talk freely about myself with great affection anywhere and to anyone. I'd be just wonderful at dinner parties, quickly bringing up the subject of me when necessary, thus eliminating the possibility of any lull in the conversation. And I'd always be there to give any person in need the benefit of my superb advice on any subject regarding the enigmas of just living life itself.

For weeks I so looked forward to beginning the new semester, until one morning I woke up feeling so good about myself that I realized I no longer felt I needed to take their dopey course. Right then and there, that day, I actually started my book, all by myself!

That having been said with boundless pride, I implore you to continue reading on. After all, it's all about I!!



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