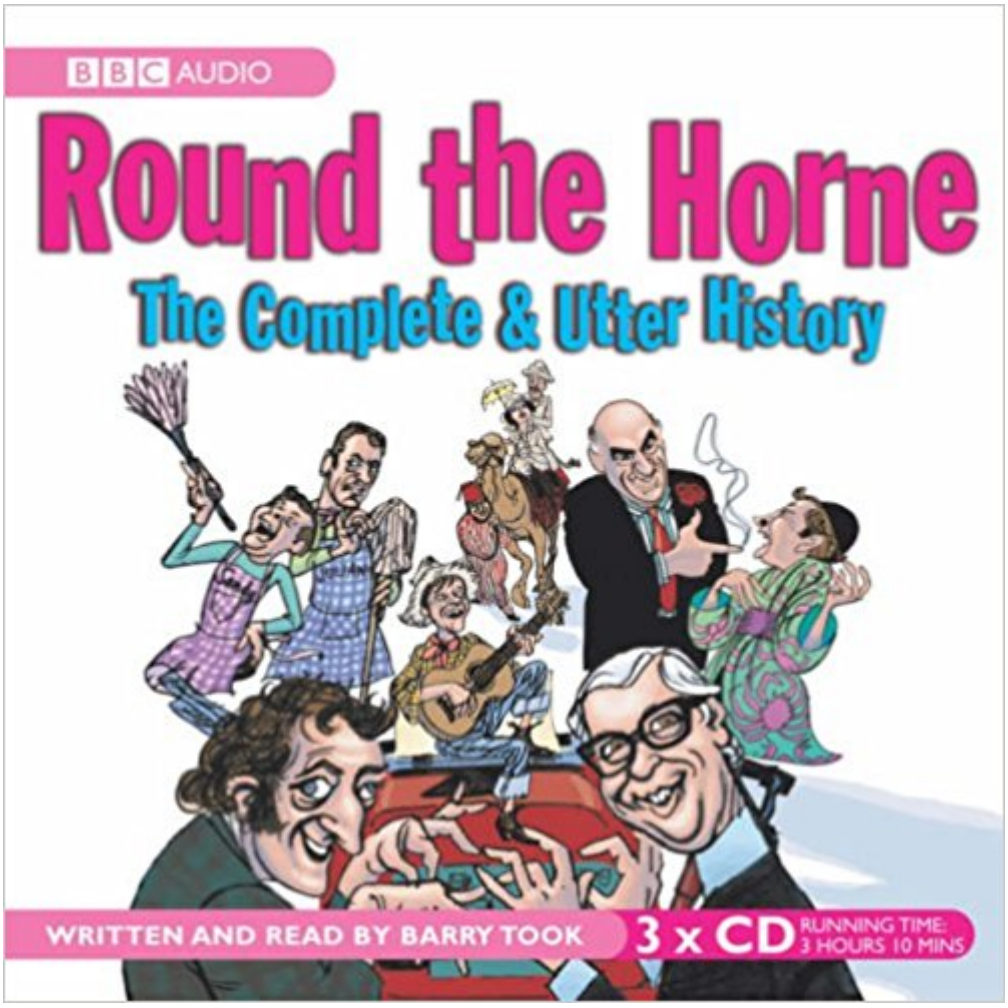
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"Round The Horne": The Complete And Utter History (BBC Radio Collection)



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Synopsis

From 1965 to 1968, Round the Horne boldly went where no programme had previously dared, bringing a frenetic mix of wit, satire, parody and downright innuendo to the BBC airwaves. From its roots as a successor to Beyond Our Ken it became an institution, earning a place in the hearts of listeners worldwide and in the annals of radio comedy. In this special programme, Barry Took, who co-scripted every episode, takes an insider's look back at Round the Horne's evolution. With the help of archive excerpts he reveals how each series was made, from the script writing process through to the heady atmosphere of rehearsal and recording. Along the way he also fondly remembers the colourful personalities of all those involved. 3 CDs. 3 hrs 1 min.

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Customer Reviews

A word from the producer about Round the Horne: 'I'm Julian, and this is my friend Sandy' - the line with which two of the characters in Round the Horne regularly introduced themselves. But the questions most people asked me, as producer of the series, were 'Who plays which?' and 'What are they really like, Messrs Kenneth Horne & Co?' These notes offer a good opportunity to answer both questions. Kenneth Horne played himself. He was the perfect anchor man. The central role in this kind of programme needed a rare blend of character: charm, warmth, sense of humour and generosity in letting others get laughs at your expense were a few of the qualities required. Kenneth Horne had all of these plus an avuncular manner which somehow lent responsibility to a series which, in its day, might otherwise have been labelled outrageous. Perhaps it had something to do

with his appearance. Certainly his bald head glinted with responsibility, and it also explains why we called him the uncrowned head of our show. Kenneth Williams played Rambling Syd Rumpo, Gruntfuttock, Sandy and Dr Chou en Ginsberg MA (Failed). 'I need to be serviced' was one of Kenneth's lines - and the writers duly obliged him with many other comic roles. His temperamental protests about his lines in the show gave many the impression that he might also be difficult at rehearsal. In truth, he was totally the professional, dedicated to his work and, incidentally, the quickest 'study' I had ever met, giving an instant performance at his very first reading. Hugh Paddick played Charles, Brown-Horrocks, Julian and, in the radio equivalent of drag, Lotus Blossom. Best-remembered perhaps will be his character nick-named Dentures, whose sibilants gave trouble to him and a bath to anyone without an umbrella! During the laughter which always accompanied the Julian and Sandy spot, I always felt a tinge of sympathy for Julian. Hugh made sure of this by his usual attention to the detail of his characterisation, making Julian submissive and vulnerable, particularly about 'his friend Gordon', in contrast to Sandy's determination to make him 'purge himself' about the whole affair. Betty Marsden played trendy columnist Daphne Whitethigh, terribly terribly affected Fiona and every other female role with which Kenneth Williams, versatile as he was, could not cope. Sophisticated, delightfully theatrical and highly talented, Betty extracted every titter, giggle and belting laugh from everything the writers provided for her, 'many, many times' as she would say. Bill Pertwee played all the remaining roles including the whispering gossip columnist Jocelyn Pettibone and two (thinly disguised) send-ups of TV personalities: Seamus Android and Rife Hobertson. Douglas Smith was our regular BBC announcer whose establishment manner developed such a large following among the audience that the writers were forced to provide him with his own funny lines, all delivered with great seriousness - and perfect timing. Barry Took and Marty Feldman were the writers and creators of Round the Horne. Each had a totally different approach to comedy from the other, but combined they made one of radio's greatest writing teams. They even invented two new languages - a homespun one full of 'grommits' and 'trossops' for Rambling Syd and the other a special 'palare' of 'eeks, vadas and lallies' for Julian and Sandy. John Simmonds, producer.

If you like 'Round the Horne', you'll find this fascinating. Great information on Kenneth Horne, Kenneth Williams and the rest of the gang. Barry Took did a great job here. Recommended.

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