



Harpo Marx

November 23, 1888 - September 28, 1964

Los Angeles, California

Arthur "Harpo" Marx - American comedian, pantomimist, and harpist whose silence said more than most comic speeches - died in Los Angeles on September 28, 1964. He was seventy-five. Born Adolph Marx on November 23, 1888, on New York's Upper East Side, he grew up in a crowded immigrant household where vaudeville was less a dream than a family trade. He left school early, hustled odd jobs, and found that a blond wig, a battered top hat, and a refusal to speak onstage could outlast any punch line.

With brothers Groucho, Chico, and later Gummo and Zeppo, he tore through Broadway and then Paramount and MGM farces - The Cocoanuts, Animal Crackers, Duck Soup, A Night at the Opera - chasing blondes, chasing food, chasing pure chaos while the harp solos suddenly turned the clown into a concert musician. Offstage he talked freely, raised a family in California, and wrote a memoir that revealed a gentle, bookish man behind the horn honks. Heart surgery in the early 1960s slowed him; he still sketched gags in the margins of recovery.

Cedars of Lebanon Hospital in Los Angeles closed the routine. He died the day after a heart attack, leaving a comic grammar that silent-film clowns and modern physical comics still study.

Yorkville tenements taught scarcity; the Orpheum circuit taught timing. He never needed a microphone to own a room - only a coat full of silverware and an eyebrow that negotiated peace treaties.

He died in Los Angeles on September 28, 1964. Somewhere a harp still answers a bicycle horn in the same sentence.

Harpo's gift was eloquent silence - making anarchy look affectionate. Notice Nearby keeps the death date so September 28 remembers the New York kid who turned not talking into an American art.

Services

Died in Los Angeles, California, September 28, 1964. Comedian and harpist; Marx Brothers films including Duck Soup and A Night at the Opera.

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