

DVD Review: 'The Incredible Mel Brooks' Offers Timeless Comedy

Submitted by [BrianTT](#) [1] on November 23, 2012 - 12:18pm

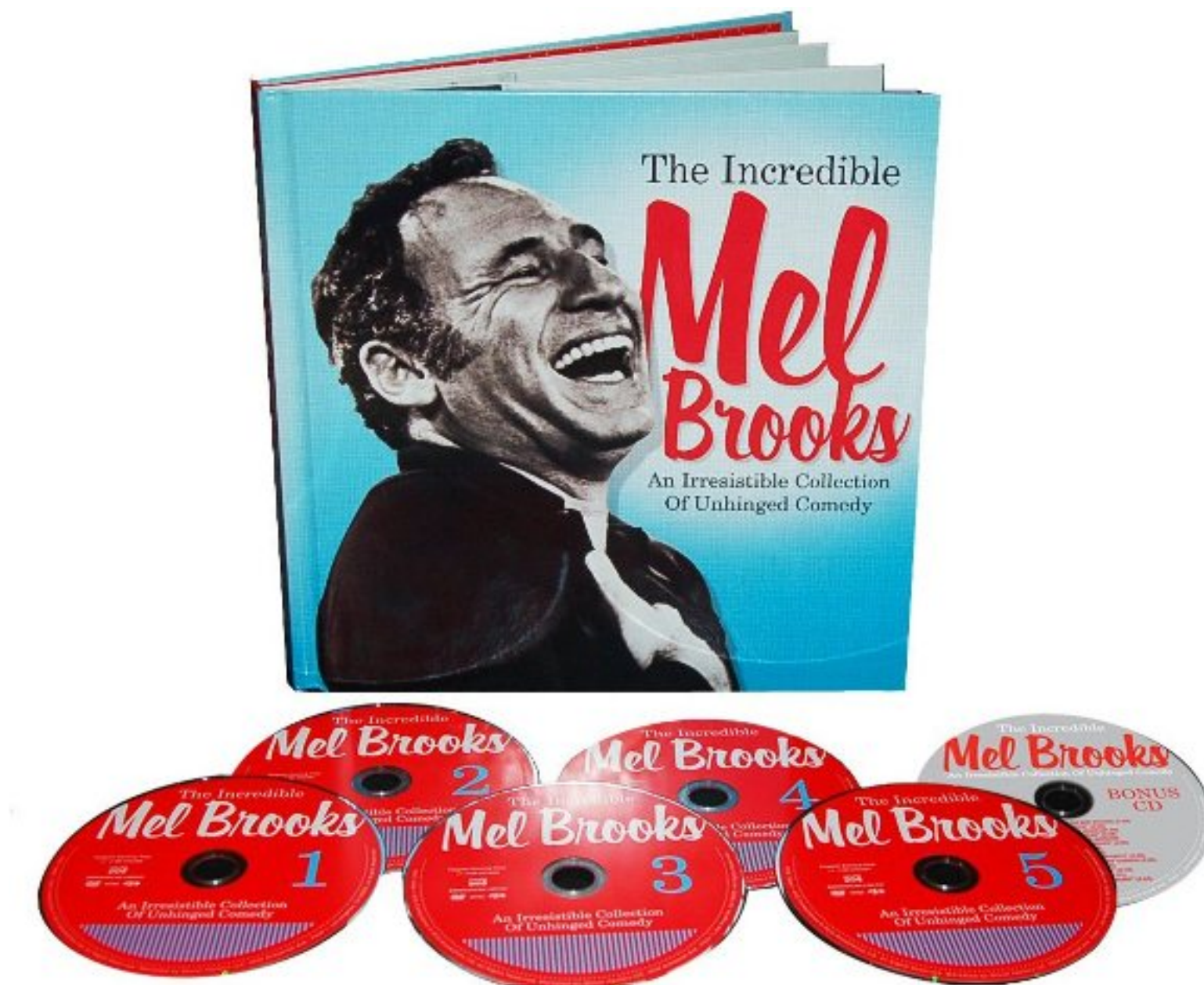
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CHICAGO – Mel Brooks is an indisputable genius and his comic mastery gets a perfect tribute in the 5-DVD-and-1-CD set from Shout Factory, "The Incredible Mel Brooks," a treasure trove of rare clips, old TV shows, appearances, and recollections from one of comedy's greatest writers. This is a fantastic set, a perfect gift for the comedy fan in your family.

Rating: **5.0/5.0**

As with all sets this big, it's hard to know where to begin. And so I find it funny that the first clip on the first DVD of "The Incredible Mel Brooks" is "The Hitler Rap," a promotional music video with Brooks as Hitler rapping to promote "To Be or Not To Be." It's the kind of thing that would typically be lost to movie history but Shout Factory has a wonderful track record of finding such lost material and bringing it to modern audiences. It sets the tone, letting viewers know that they're in for a unique assortment of Brooks' history from his early days as a TV writer to his most recent appearance. And, of course, a lot of Hitler.



The Incredible Mel Brooks was released on DVD on November 13, 2012

Photo credit: Shout Factory

The best thing about “The Incredible Mel Brooks” is its scope. This 5-disc set covers Brooks’ entire career but not chronologically, except for one, the best overall feature and reason alone to buy this release — “Mel and His Movies.” Over each of the five discs, Brooks tells amazing stories about his career. If you love classics like “The Producers,” “Blazing Saddles,” and “Young Frankenstein,” you’ll adore the opportunity to hear their creator talk more about how they came to be. The fact that Wilder wasn’t the first one cast in “Saddles”; How Brooks had to fight to shoot “Frankenstein” in black and white — stories like these are a true movie fan’s dream come true.

The rest of “The Incredible Mel Brooks” is filled with such unique offerings. There are straightforward, complete features like HBO’s “Mel Brooks and Dick Cavett Together Again” from 2010 or a “60 Minutes” segment on Brooks from 2001. Then there are the rarities like a pilot called “Inside Danny Baker” that Brooks wrote two years before “Get Smart” in the early ’60s or another pilot directed by Barry Levinson called “Peeping Times” in which Brooks appeared. Even segments from “The Tracey Ullman Show,” “Mad About You,” and “The Electric Company” are included. This is no mere fan service release. It is a deeply researched, exhaustive look at one of comedy’s most important voices. And it’s one of the best DVDs of the year.

“The Incredible Mel Brooks” was released by Shout Factory on November 13, 2012.



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