Duck Soup Encyclopedia Article

Duck Soup

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Though it failed at the box office upon its release, The Marx Brothers' 1933 feature *Duck Soup* is widely regarded as the comedy team's masterwork. By turns madcap, scathingly satirical, and genially surreal, the film chronicles the war fever that engulfs the mythical nation of Freedonia when Groucho becomes its dictator. Harpo and Chico play bumbling spies, with Zeppo relegated to the romantic subplot. Some critics found an anti-war subtext in the proceedings, but the brothers always denied any political agenda. Classic scenes abound, including the famous "mirror routine" and a rousing musical finale. Woody Allen paid homage to *Duck Soup*'s enduring comedic power by including scenes from it in the climax of his own classic *Hannah and Her Sisters* in 1986.

Further Reading:

Adamson, Joe. *Groucho, Harpo, Chico, and Sometimes Zeppo.* New York, Simon & Schuster, 1973.

Seaton, George. *The Marx Brothers: Monkey Business, Duck Soup, and a Day at the Races (Classic Screenplay).* New York, Faber & Faber, 1993.