

## FACT SHEET

**TITLE:** THE ELECTRIC COMPANY'S GREATEST HITS & BITS  
[TV-G] [CC] [Mono]

**LENGTH:** 1/60

**NOLA CODE:** ELCS

**CATEGORY:** Music & Entertainment

**OFFERED:** Premium Service 17 offer, June 2006

**RELEASE DATE:** November 25, 2006

**CONTRACT TERMS:** Eight (8) releases through August 31, 2009

**PROGRAM SUPPLIER:** Authorized Pictures LLC

**PROGRAM DESCRIPTION:** *The Electric Company*, a mainstay of children's television during its six-year run from 1971-1977, helped a generation of America's children learn that education could be fun. THE ELECTRIC COMPANY'S GREATEST HITS & BITS is a clip-filled celebration featuring the series' most popular segments, such as "The Adventures of Letterman," "Count Dracula," "The Director," "J Arthur Crank" and "Fargo North, Decoder." The special will also feature interviews with some of the series stars such as Rita Moreno, Skip Hinnant, Jim Boyd, voice-over participant Joan Rivers, and show creator Joan Ganz Cooney. This retrospective is a fond look back at a series that was both fun and educational for the Gen-Xers who loved it as children.

**THE ELECTRIC COMPANY'S GREATEST HITS & BITS / 2      FACT SHEET**

**PROMOTIONAL MATERIALS:**      Use the above program description for guide listing. A press kit, including fact sheet, press release, and biography will be posted to PBS Connect and APTonline.org. Color photos will be available via email and on APTonline.org.

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**PRODUCTION CREDITS:**      Written and Directed by: David Leaf & John Scheinfeld

Produced by: David Leaf & John Scheinfeld

Editor, Co-Producer: Peter S. Lynch II

Co-Producer: Arlene Wszalek

Supervising Producer: Terry Castagnola

Executive in Charge of Production:  
Jonathan Flom

**BROADCAST HISTORY:**      U.S. Television Premiere

**RELATED MERCHANDISE:**      Individual viewer purchase: TBA

Pledge:  
Program DVD and related DVDs.

**VIEWER INQUIRIES:**      American Public Television  
Viewer Services  
55 Summer Street, 4<sup>th</sup> Floor  
Boston, MA 02110  
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## PRESS RELEASE

### **New Public Television Special Reunites Gen-Xers With A Favorite Childhood TV Show, *The Electric Company***

*Retrospective program celebrates the fun-filled, educational segments made famous by Bill Cosby, Morgan Freeman, Rita Moreno, Joan Rivers and more!*

Remember the unforgettable, infectious jingle that kicked-off one of the greatest children's series of all time: "We're coming down the line, strong as we can be, through the courtesy of the Electric Company, the Electric Company, the Electric Company"? Or, how about the bellowing howl of actress Rita Moreno as she yelled "HEEEEEEY yooooou guuuuys" at all the wrong times? American Public Television's new pledge special, THE ELECTRIC COMPANY'S GREATEST HITS & BITS, will reacquaint Gen-Xers with the progressive, Emmy Award-winning program from the '70s. Airing on public television stations nationwide beginning Nov. 25, 2006, this retrospective is a clip-filled celebration featuring the series' most popular segments and interviews with some of its memorable stars.

A mainstay of children's television during its six-year run from 1971-1977, *The Electric Company* helped a generation of America's children learn that education could be fun. Filled with song and dance routines, comedy sketches, funky fashions, psychedelic graphics and hip language, this television show masked reading education with pure entertainment. "If you ever have to choose on a piece between education and entertainment, don't hesitate to go for entertainment. If you don't have eyes on the screen, you can't do anything," says show creator Joan Ganz Cooney. Talented actors – including the award-winning Morgan Freeman, Rita Moreno and Bill Cosby – made entertaining easy by bringing a vast array of characters to life with their boundless enthusiasm.

– more –

## **THE ELECTRIC COMPANY'S GREATEST HITS & BITS/ 2 PRESS RELEASE**

Freeman, one of today's top actors, coolly charmed his audience while promoting literacy with his unforgettable characters, including slick-talking "DJ Mel Mounds," groovy "Easy Reader" and comical "Count Dracula." Bill Cosby, who appeared on the show as part of his master's degree in education, used his famed dead-pan humor to deliver literacy messages. And Rita Moreno's charismatic portrayal of sketch characters, including Otto "The Director" and Millie the Milkman's helper, added a layer of delightful entertainment that no child could resist. Additional heavyweight entertainers adding their talent to this unforgettable show include Joan Rivers, Mel Brooks, Jim Boyd, Skip Hinnant, Irene Cara and Gene Wilder.

Take a step back in time and enjoy the endless charm of this '70s television staple. While the costumes may seem dated, the memories are timeless.

**THE ELECTRIC COMPANY'S GREATEST HITS & BITS** is produced by Authorized Productions LLC in association with American Public Television's Premium Service. The producers are David Leaf & John Scheinfeld; the editor and co-producer is Peter S. Lynch II; the co-producer is Arlene Wszalek; the supervising producer is Terry Castagnola; and the executive in charge of production is Jonathan Flom.

### **About American Public Television**

For 45 years, American Public Television (APT) has been a prime source of programming for the nation's public television stations. APT distributes more than 300 new program titles per year and has 10,000 hours of programming in its library. It is responsible for many public television milestones including the first HD series and the 2006 launch of the Create channel featuring the best of public television's lifestyle programming. APT is known for its leadership in identifying innovative, worthwhile and viewer-friendly programming. It has established a tradition of providing public television stations with program choices that strengthen and customize their schedules such as *JFK: Breaking the News*, *Battlefield Britain*, *Globe Trekker*, *Rick Steves' Europe*, *Great Museums*, *Jacques Pépin: Fast Food My Way*, *America's Test Kitchen From Cook's Illustrated*, *Broadway: The Golden Age*, *Lidia's Family Table*, *California Dreamin' – The Songs of The Mamas & the Papas*, *Rosemary and Thyme*, *P. Allen Smith's Garden Home*, *Monarchy*, and other prominent documentaries, dramatic series, how-to programs and classic movies. For more information about APT's programs and services, visit [APTonline.org](http://APTonline.org).

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## CAST BIOS

### THE ELECTRIC COMPANY'S GREATEST HITS & BITS CAST BIOGRAPHIES

#### JIM BOYD

Jim Boyd was born in Philadelphia, went to school, met Kathleen Paris and joined the Air Force. Then he married Kathleen, had a daughter and moved to New York in 1957. He attended the American Academy of Dramatic Arts with Robert Redford (whatever happened to him?). Boyd did a few summers of stock, acting and directing and four summers of stage managing tent musicals. Then, he moved on to improvisational children's theatre and stand up improvs. After being spotted at the *Bitter End* in Greenwich Village, he landed a real job with an animation house called Aniforms, where he became a puppeteer and a comedy writer.

This led to the World's Fair and hundreds of trade shows, state fairs, sales meetings and business films and eventually to a local New York children's TV program (the *Surprise Show*), where he did voices for a whole company of puppets. When *The Electric Company* wanted an animated figure – not a muppet – they chose Aniforms and Boyd went along as the voice and animator of Lorelie Lovely, the chicken. The writers then invented J. Arthur Crank (as a voice-over) and in *The Electric Company's* second year Crank (Boyd) appeared on camera, as did Paul, the gorilla, The Blue Beetle, Breakstone, the Magician, etc. Boyd continued to do business films, commercials, TV movies, some theatre and anything else to support his lavish lifestyle. Much of his time is spent on a mountaintop in Pennsylvania with the birds, the bears, the deer, the turkeys, the Yankees, *The New York Times* and Kathleen Paris.

#### SKIP HINNANT

Skip Hinnant has had a varied, 43-year career in theatre, film, TV, and radio. Besides *The Electric Company*, on which he appeared for the entire 6 years of first-run shows, he had a running part on *The Patty Duke Show*, and appearances on *Kate and Allie* and the daytime dramas, *As the World Turns*, *All My Children*, *Another World*, and *Guiding Light*. On the stage he created the role of Schroeder in the off-Broadway hit, *You're a Good Man, Charlie Brown*, and has worked with such legends of the business as Mike Nichols (twice), Lauren Bacall, Elaine Stritch, Lee Grant, Dan Daily, and E.C.'s own Rita Moreno, in *The Owl and the Pussycat*. His voice has been heard in several animated features and as the Easter Bunny in the annual TV musical special, *The Easter Bunny is Coming to Town*, with Fred Astaire. He has also been seen or heard in literally thousands of TV and radio commercials. He served as a Vice President and on the national Board of The Screen Actors Guild for 23 years, and is the very proud father of four, and grandfather of eight. He is thoroughly delighted that *The*

– more –

*Electric Company* is now available on DVD, and has already bought it for all the grandkids.

### RITA MORENO

Rita Moreno is one of a select group of performers to have won all four of the most prestigious show business awards: The Oscar, The Emmy, The Tony and The Grammy. The Oscar was for her performance as Anita in the 1962 motion picture, *West Side Story*. The two Emmys were for a 1977 variety appearance on *The Muppet Show* and in 1978 for a dramatic guest appearance on *The Rockford Files*. The Tony was for her 1973 triumph on Broadway as Googie Gomez in *The Ritz*. The Grammy was for her 1972 performance on *The Electric Company Album* for children which was based on the long-running television show of the same name.

Along the way she received dozens of other show business awards, most notably the Golden Globe Award for her role in *West Side Story* and in 1968 the Joseph Jefferson Award as best actress in Chicago's theatrical season for her brilliant performance as Serafina in *The Rose Tattoo*. In 1985, she repeated her Chicago triumph and was awarded the prestigious Sara Siddons Award for her portrayal of Olive Madison in the female version of *The Odd Couple*. In 1995, Moreno received a star on The Hollywood Walk of Fame.

Moreno was born Rosa Dolores Alverio in Humacao, a small town near the famous rain forest of Puerto Rico. When she was five years old she and her mother moved to New York and the following year she started dancing lessons. At age 13, she had her Broadway debut in *Skydrift* which starred Eli Wallach. Then, in the true tradition of Hollywood, a talent scout arranged a meeting for the seventeen-year old with Louis B. Mayer and she was signed to a contract with MGM.

From that point on her career advanced steadily. She made some 30 films early in her career, too often typecast as a Mexican Spitfire or an Indian Maiden. During that period she appeared in films with Richard Widmark, Esther Williams, Mario Lanza, Susan Hayward, Tyrone Power and Gary Cooper. She appeared in the marvelous *Singin' in the Rain* starring Gene Kelly. She was also featured as Tuptim in the classic *The King and I* with Yul Brynner and Deborah Kerr, but it was only after she won an Academy Award for her outstanding performance as Anita in *West Side Story* that she was finally recognized as a major talent.

In 1962, she moved to London where she appeared in Hal Prince's production of *She Loves Me*. She then returned to New York to star in Lorraine Hansbury's *The Sign In Sidney Brustein's Window*. On Broadway, she also appeared as the female lead opposite Robert Shaw in *Gantry* and with Jimmy Coco in *The Last of the Red Hot Lovers*, followed by a Tony Award nomination for her role in *The*

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*National Health*. Moreno then starred in *The Ritz* for which she received the Tony Award. In 1981, she once again appeared opposite Jimmy Coco in *Wally's Cafe*. She was most recently seen on Broadway in the female version of Neil Simon's *The Odd Couple*. In 1997, she starred in the London production of *Sunset Boulevard*. In 2004, Moreno received rave reviews for her interpretation as Maria Callas in the Terrance McNally play *Master Class*.

Moreno has appeared in regional theatre in such diverse roles as Lola in *Damn Yankees*, Annie Sullivan in *The Miracle Worker*, Doris in *The Owl and the Pussycat*, Amanda Wingfield in *The Glass Menagerie* and Mama Rose in *Gypsy*.

It may be said that Rita Moreno, in portraying an Irish teacher, an Italian widow, a reformed prostitute, a lady evangelist, an English lady and a southern belle has broken the mold of Latino stereotyping.

In 1967, Moreno resumed her screen career playing opposite Marlon Brando in *The Night of the Following Day*, then with James Garner in *Marlowe*, as Alan Arkin's girlfriend in *Popi* and in Mike Nichol's production of *Carnal Knowledge*. She then starred in the film version of *The Ritz* and went on to do Alan Alda's *The Four Seasons* followed by the highly acclaimed Columbia Picture release *I Like It Like That*. In 1995, Moreno appeared in the Showtime film *Wharf Rat* and in the feature film *Angus* with George C. Scott. More recently, she was the lead in the independent feature *Carlo's Wake* and in 1999 she starred in the film *Blue Moon* opposite Ben Gazzara. The following year she appeared in the highly acclaimed movie *Pinero* starring Benjamin Bratt and in 2002 she completed work in the John Sayles film, *Casa de los Babys*. In 2004, she had a featured role in the independent film, *April Showers*.

Moreno has also been the guest star on a wide variety of television productions both here and abroad. She is proud to have been a featured artist for many years on *The Electric Company*, the highly regarded educational television program for children. She has starred in her own TV series, the sitcom version of the film *9 to 5*. She then played opposite Burt Reynolds in *B.L. Stryker*. In 1994, Ms Moreno returned to New York to appear as a series regular with Bill Cosby in the NBC *Cosby Mystery Series*. Most recently she was one of the leads in the highly acclaimed HBO series *OZ*. In 1995, Moreno returned to the New York stage in Anne Meara's *After Play* and in Circle Repertory's production of *Size of the World*.

She continues to keep busy performing concerts across the country and as a guest artist with symphony orchestras. In 1993, she was invited to perform at President Clinton's inauguration and later that month she performed at the White House. Moreno's latest endeavor has been in cabaret where she has met with great critical success. In 2002, she appeared with the San Francisco Symphony in a production of *Candide*.

In addition to her film, stage, television and concert careers, Moreno fills her spare time by lecturing to various organizations as well as to university audiences. She is also involved with a number of civic and charitable organizations and events. She has served on the National Endowment for the Arts and as commissioner on the President's White House Fellowships. Moreno has also served as a member of the President's Committee on the Arts and Humanities.

At a White House ceremony in June 2004, Moreno was awarded the Presidential Medal of Freedom by the President. The medal is the highest honor given to a civilian and ranks second only to The Congressional Medal of Honor as the nation's highest award and is conferred on individuals for a lifetime of meritorious service.

Moreno is married to Leonard Gordon, a retired physician. Their daughter, Fernanda is an artist and a mother.

### **JOAN RIVERS**

Joan Rivers is a force of nature, and one of the hardest working celebrities in the world. Comedienne; Tony-nominated actress; best-selling author; Emmy Award-winning television talk-show host; playwright; screenwriter; motion picture director; columnist; lecturer; syndicated radio host; jewelry designer and cosmetic company entrepreneur; red-carpet fashion laureate; businesswoman and, most importantly to her, mother and grandmother. She is exhausted!

The daughter of immigrant Russian parents, Rivers created her own brand of irreverent, unconventional comedy to forge her remarkable rise to stardom in the entertainment world. Enduring humiliation and deprivation for nearly a decade playing tawdry clubs, Borscht Belt hotels, and Greenwich Village cabarets ("I was insanely persistent," she says), Rivers' career skyrocketed in 1968 when she appeared on *The Tonight Show* starring Johnny Carson. Within three years she was hosting *That Show With Joan Rivers*, one of the first syndicated daytime shows, and went on to become the first sole guest host of *The Tonight Show*. Her own *The Late Show Starring Joan Rivers* helped launch the Fox Network in 1986. In 1989, she returned to daytime television with *The Joan Rivers Show*, winning an Emmy Award for Outstanding Talk Show Host the following year, and her own star on the Hollywood Walk of Fame.

Using her unique gifts of humor, compassion and tenacity has enabled Rivers to triumph over personal tragedy and attain extraordinary professional success. In 1990, she launched the Joan Rivers Classics Collection of fashion jewelry on QVC. She won an ACE Award from the Accessories Council in 1997, and continues to achieve unprecedented success with a record-breaking 500 million dollars plus in sales to date.

One of the most naturally style-savvy women on the planet, Rivers consistently appears on Best Dressed lists around the world. Along with her daughter Melissa, she hosted E!'s red-carpet events from 1996-2004. In 2004, they signed a long-term contract with the TV Guide Channel, where they are continuing their "must-see" red-carpet coverage.

A pre-eminent connoisseur of fine art, antiques and vintage jewelry, Rivers keeps her finger on the pulse of all the latest trends and is widely considered America's most visible, accessible and authoritative fashion spokesperson. Her firm belief that when women look their best they can *be* their best was the inspiration for her Joan Rivers Beauty Line, a continually expanding line of products that was launched on QVC in 2000. It encompasses Absolutely Magic skincare treatment, color cosmetics, and her signature fragrance, Now & Forever.

While continuing to headline at prestigious concert venues worldwide, Rivers is always working on new projects. In April 2002, she brought her critically acclaimed Edinburgh Fringe Festival one-woman show, "Broke and Alone," to London's Theatre Royal Haymarket. She received rave reviews and the first standing ovation at the theatre in fourteen years. Rivers then took the show to the State Theatres in Sydney and Melbourne where it received the same enthusiastic critical and audience response. Subsequent performances, including two one-week runs at the Canon Theatre in Los Angeles, have all garnered "hottest ticket in town" status.

Good news travels fast and, before she knew it, Rivers was back headlining in Las Vegas. In October of 2004, she returned to the U.K. for her first national concert tour. The Glasgow International Comedy Festival followed in March of 2005. But the U.K. was clamoring for more, so in 2005 Rivers returned to England for her second major tour in two years. In the spring of 2006, she will tour Australia and New Zealand again in highly anticipated appearances.

Constantly in motion, Rivers knows first-hand the importance of healthy bones in helping us all live the life we want and deserve. In 2004, she reached out to the National Osteoporosis Foundation (NOF) with a passion and purpose to get the word out about osteoporosis, a disease that affects one in two women over 50. As NOF Ambassador, she took this message to Capitol Hill in 2005 where she met with the Surgeon General and worked with Congressional leaders to encourage support for increased awareness and national action to prevent this disease. Honored by NOF in 2005 with its first-ever Innovation Award, Rivers continues to lend her energy and creativity to encourage people everywhere to be aware of osteoporosis and bone health.

From her signature question, "Can we talk?" (a Federal trademark), to her red-carpet mantra, "Who are you wearing?" the woman who asks the questions gets

– more –

the answers America... and the world... wants to hear.

Joan Rivers embodies class, confidence and chutzpah in all the right proportions and her accomplishments are amazing (see attached). Of course, her most joyous triumph is being grandmother to Melissa's son, Cooper (Edgar Cooper Endicott), who was born on December 1, 2000.-- and she's enjoying that immensely!

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