



PBS®

# MAKE 'EM LAUGH

*the funny business of america*

**thirteen**  
WNET NEW YORK

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## media information

### Host Bio

**MAKE 'EM LAUGH:**  
*The Funny Business  
of America*

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### **MAKE 'EM LAUGH: THE FUNNY BUSINESS OF AMERICA**

**BILLY CRYSTAL** has created one of the most versatile and prolific careers in the entertainment industry, finding success in front of the camera, as a performer in film and television, and behind the scenes as a writer, director and producer. After touring with such stars as Billy Joel, Barry Manilow, Neil Sedaka, and Sha Na Na, he became a regular on the popular series *Soap* playing the first openly gay character on a network television series. During the 1984-85 television seasons, Billy met with phenomenal national success on *Saturday Night Live*. He created, wrote and produced the critically acclaimed HBO series *Sessions* and became the first comedian to perform in the then-Soviet Union with his special *Midnight Train to Moscow*, one of four one-man specials he has done for HBO. He has hosted the Grammy Awards three times and, of course, the Oscars eight times.

He starred in *Running Scared*, *Throw Momma from the Train*, *The Princess Bride*, *When Harry Met Sally*, *City Slickers*, *Mr. Saturday Night*, *Forget Paris*, *Hamlet*, *Deconstructing Harry*, *Analyze This*, *Monster's Inc.* and *America's Sweethearts*. Crystal's film *61\** for HBO films showcased Billy as both director and executive producer. It garnered 12 Emmy nominations including nods for Best Director and Best Made for Television Movie and also earned him a prestigious Director's Guild nomination.

Crystal made his Broadway debut in 2004 with *700 Sundays*, an autobiographical one-man play. It opened to stellar reviews, and broke box office records, becoming the highest grossing non-musical in the history of Broadway and garnered Crystal the Tony, Outer Critics Circle award, and the prestigious Drama Desk Award. In fall of 2005 Crystal took *700 Sundays* on tour to Boston, Chicago, Los Angeles, San Francisco, Toronto, and Australia also breaking box office records and earning him the Australian Tony Award. In October 2005, he adapted *700 Sundays*, into a book which joined Billy's two children's books, *I Already Know I Love You* and *Grandpa's Little One* on the *New York Times* Bestseller's List.

A dedicated human rights advocate, he has co-hosted with Robin Williams and Whoopi Goldberg all eight *Comic Relief* telethons on HBO which have brought the plight of the nation's homeless to the public and raised over \$40 million for housing and medical care for these needy people. Billy, Robin and Whoopi reunited in November 2005 for a special *Comic Relief*, to aid those affected by Hurricane Katrina. Billy has won six Emmy Awards, six American Comedy Awards and seven Cable Ace Awards. Most recently, he was honored with the 2007 Mark Twain Prize for American Humor at the Kennedy Center in Washington.

He has been married for 37 years to Janice, with whom he has two daughters, Jennifer and Lindsay, and granddaughter's Ella and Dylan.

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