

The Three Stooges

Their names were Larry Fine and Moe and Jerry Howard, but most people know them as Larry, Moe, and Curly – The Three Stooges. This goofy threesome, along with a handful of other performers, became the beloved slapstick trio whose careers started in 1920s vaudeville and endured through a series of films in the 1960s.

The Three Stooges were known for their physical humor, which involved expertly choreographed face-slapping and eye-poking. While some audiences disapproved of the hitting and slapping, saying it was uncivilized, others loved the trio's comedic timing and childlike nonsense.

Moe, with his bowl-shaped haircut, was the serious, impatient Stooze who frequently called the others “knuckleheads.” Larry, with his curly mop of hair, was the middle Stooze, who started his life in show business as a violinist. The bald Curly was Moe Howard's younger brother, Jerry, who shaved his wavy hair and handlebar mustache to get the part. Curly was known for saying the word *certainly* with a distinct Brooklyn accent, so it was pronounced *soitenly*.

Moe Howard's middle brother, Shemp, gave the Three Stooges' concept its start on the vaudeville stage with their childhood friend, Ted Healy. Vaudeville was a kind of stage entertainment that flourished in the 1920s. It featured a variety of acts, including slapstick comedians, jugglers, song-and-dance acts, and other performances. Larry Fine and Jerry Howard joined the act later. In the 1930s, the Three Stooges moved from stage work to films. In 1934, they signed with Columbia Studios, where they made about 200 films over the next 24 years. The films were later released for television viewing.

When Jerry Howard had a stroke in 1946, he was replaced by his brother, Shemp, who played with the Stooges until he died in 1955. Other performers to fill the third Stooze role were Joe Besse and Joe DiRita. The Stooges released seven new

