

The Franklin Brothers'

Kiddie Comedies – General note

Excerpt from **The Moving Picture Boy** entry on Buddy Messinger:

“Melvin Joe Messinger was a great bruiser of a boy, inclining to fat though not in the Arbuckle or Joe Cobb class. He and his comelier sister Gertie sprang to fame around their ninth year in the Kiddie Comedies which the Franklin Brothers, Chester and Sidney, turned out for Fox between 1915 and 1918. These delightfully robust romances, with the children taking adult parts and the larger girls sometimes donning moustaches and playing dashing gentlemen, had very much the air of end-of-term school entertainments and often used the traditional pantomime stories.

While Gertie – who had a delicious sense of comedy – played heroines or floozies, her big brother was naturally cut out for bullying or villainous roles. (Though when they needed a Giant, for “**JACK AND THE BEANSTALK**“, the Franklins engaged an enormous adult, Jim Tarvers, to make the children look even tinier by comparison.) Buddy could be superbly malevolent, or just touchingly thick. He would have enjoyed playing Long John Silver in the 1917 “**TREASURE ISLAND**“, but the part went to barnstorming Violet Radcliffe!”

1917:

ALADDIN AND HIS WONDERFUL LAMP

Francis Carpenter, Buddy Messinger, Lewis Sargent, Raymond Lee, Lloyd Perl

THE BABES IN THE WOODS

Francis Carpenter, Buddy Messinger

THE BROWNIES

Francis Carpenter, Buddy Messinger

JACK AND THE BEANSTALK

Francis Carpenter, Arthur Lake, Raymond Lee, Buddy Messinger

THE MIKADO

Francis Carpenter, Buddy Messinger

PINAFORE

Francis Carpenter, Buddy Messinger

TREASURE ISLAND

Francis Carpenter, Violet Radcliffe, Buddy Messinger, Lloyd Perl, Lewis Sargent

TWO LITTLE IMPS DOING THEIR BIT

Frankie Lee, Buddy Messinger

1918:

ALI BABA AND THE FORTY THIEVES

Lewis Sargent, Buddy Messinger, Georgie Stone, Raymond Lee

FAN FAN

Francis Carpenter, Buddy Messinger, Lewis Sargent

SIX SHOOTER ANDY

Lewis Sargent, Buddy Messinger, Georgie Stone, Raymond Lee