CONTENTS

Acknowledgments xi
Introduction 1

PART I
Comic Elements and Exercises
1 Elements of Comedy That Writers Should Know 19
2 Exercises to Nurture the Comic Muse 29

PART II
A Writer's Overview of the Traditions and Genres of Comedy
3 From Stage and Page to Screen: Anarchistic and Romantic Comedy 43
4 Physical Humor: From Commedia dell'Arte and Molière to Vaudeville and Silent Screen Comedy 58
5 Sound Comedy: American Screwball Romantic Comedy, Then and Now 64
6 Comedy and Television: Stand-up, Sitcom and Everything in Between 72
7 Comedies from around the World 79
8 Comedy and the Documentary Impulse 95

PART III
Close-ups on Comedies
9 Feature Film Comedies 103
10 Television Comedy: Seinfeld and The Simpsons 121
PART IV
Writing Comedy

11 The Fifteen-Week Feature Comedy Screenplay 139
12 The Seven-Week Half-Hour Television Comedy Pilot Script 168
Beyond Happy Endings: Toward a Comic Conclusion 177

Appendix 1 A Recommended Viewing List of American and Foreign Feature Comedies 179
Appendix 2 Networking, Marketing and Making Your Own Comedy 192
Appendix 3 Food, Recipes and Comic Screenwriting 201
Bibliography 205
Index 211