

WAR OF THE WORLDS

Written by Howard Koch

Adapted from the book by H.G. Wells

Director	Mark Cole
Scene & Lighting Designer	Tim Baumgartner
Costume Designer	Kitty Macey
Sound Designer	Steven Shull
Technical Director	Johan Godwaldt
Costume Shop Supervisor	Judy McCabe
Assistant Sound Designer	Samuel-Graeme Austin
Stage Manager	Ben Harrison
Assistant Director	Erik Shuler
Assistant Stage Managers	Robert Fusco, Melanie Tarrant
Dramaturg	Dr. Jessica Hester
Assistant Dramaturg	Todd Backus
Box Office Manager	Kelly Cullinan
House Manager	Melisa Erwin

The Setting: A Radio Studio

Time: October 30th, 2009

The playing time is approximately 90 minutes, with no intermission.

The Cast

John, Operator Three, Officer Margie	Knate Roy*
Radio Actress, Carla Phillips	Kimberly Greenawalt
Radio Actress, McDonald	Jessica Quindlen
Radio Actor, Foley Operator, Gunner	Katherine Boswell
Grandmother, Operator Five	Daniel Distasio
Aunt Ruth, Announcer Two	Courtney Bennett
Mrs. Potter	Sarah Sterling
Mrs. Newton, Secretary of the Interior	Stephanie Martinez
Professor Pierson	Kimberly Saunders
Mr. Wilmuth, Announcer, Operator Two,	Nick Pike
General Smith	Charles S. Smith II*
Captain Lansing, Operator Four	Josh Gadek*
Commander Voght, Policeman	Steven Handzel
Operator One, Announcer One, Observer,	
Foley Operator	Zachary Mackrell
Operator Two, Stranger	Chris Walker

* Indicates membership in Alpha Psi Omega, the National Honorary Dramatics Fraternity.

Notes from the Dramaturg, Dr. Jessica Hester

On the surface, *War of the Worlds* may seem to be a quaint science fiction drama. After all, the original novel by H. G. Wells was published in 1898, and the radio program based on it and performed by Orson Welles and the Mercury Theatre was broadcast in 1938. In addition, the dangerous element of the tale comes from outer space – Mars to be exact. Aside from being entertaining, how does this production speak to the world we live in today?

The answer lies in the fear residing in the human mind, often subdued, but always ready to emerge at a moment of crisis. Negotiating fear on a broad cultural level means dealing with mass panic and, although *War of the Worlds* connects this panic to an alien invasion, this theme has been an ever-present part of history. The earliest examples of crises on an epic scale were related to plagues, most notably the Ten Plagues of Egypt and the Bubonic Plague. The thread that holds the history of mass human panic together is fear of the unknown. Whether the enemy has been linked to sickness, natural disaster, economic crisis, or an unfamiliar human element, its terrifying arrival could neither be seen nor anticipated.

At the time of the 1938 radio production of *War of the Worlds*, the United States, barely recovering from the Great Depression and wondering about our future involvement in World War II, was primed for pandemonium. Listeners who missed Welles's introduction to the performance believed that Martians were in fact invading New Jersey. The phones at radio stations, police stations, and newspapers all over the country were jammed with calls from people desperate for information. Listeners in New Jersey were particularly frightened, and several packed their cars, driving away in hopes of outrunning the aliens.

While we may think this bizarre, how would modern audiences react to a similar program centered on one of the anxiety-causing issues of our time? Today we are juggling multiple cultural fears rooted in an economic crisis, the threat of terrorism, and the H1N1 pandemic. Given the degree of unease simmering at the surface of our lives, how much would it take for many of us to boil over into full panic?

This is where we enter *War of the Worlds*. Live performance has the ability to make immediate something of a distant culture or era, regardless of when a play is written, shifting the way that audiences think about their own lives. In these moments when we watch the stage and feel ourselves reverberating against history, we experience the universal themes of humanity combined with the intensity of the individual drive to overcome adversity, whether it be Martians or

Production and Run Crews

Master Electrician
Lighting Crew

Sound Mixer
Foley Supervisor
Deck Crew
Set Construction

Costume Construction

Set Painting

Light Hang Crew

Properties Crew

Wardrobe Crew
Make Up
Publicity Photography
Graphic Design
Lobby Display Window
Choral Music Coach
Recording Engineer
Piano Tuning

Organ accompaniment for *Abide With Me* and piano arrangements of *Always* and *What Do You Want To Make Those Eyes at Me For?* performed by Diane Zych; Organ Interludes for *The Seneca Hill Apparition* composed and performed by John Zych.

Mike Makuch
Brian Wedeking
Beca Schretzlmeir
Jamie Ruggio
Samuel-Graeme Austin
Tim Duffy*
Jeremy Waterman, Amie Howard
Samuel-Graeme Austin,
Chris Verschneider,
Tim Duffy, Jeremy Waterman
Riann Warren, Lindsay McIntyre
Students in THT 300 and THT 110
Reva Cline,
Christina Strauss,
Logan Robinson
Students in THT 300, THT 150,
THT 110
Melissa Maurer, Jessica Houston
Ashley Sumner
Samuel-Graeme Austin,
Todd Backus, Katherine Boswell,
Courtney Bennett, Tim Duffy,
Melisa Erwin, Beca Schretzlmeir,
Kim Greenawalt, Ben Harrison,
Aaron Londraville, Steve Rutherford,
Charles Smith, Sarah Sterling,
Jeremy Waterman, Kenny Eng
Stephanie Holt, Amie Howard,
Andrew Katz, Sarah Keach,
Sara McDonald, Knate Roy,
Jamie Ruggio
Maura Koenig, Aleesha Knopic,
Dylan Ventura, Maryam Bassyouni,
Melanie Tarrant
Alagia Conwell, Jalisa Ward
Lauren Chapman
Jim Russell
Colin Nekritz
Todd Backus
Dr. Kelly Hudson
Dan Wood
Robert Senko

Notes from the Director

How does one stage a script, intended for radio, in a theatrical setting? More to the point why does one present a radio script in a theatrical setting? Not just any script, but perhaps the most famous script ever produced on radio. The why is more accessible: Howard Koch's adaptation of the Wells novel is masterful storytelling; the language, swift depiction of character, documentary style, and dramatic action (humans fighting to survive against insurmountable odds) offer actors a compelling world to inhabit; the evocative use of sound effects adds an intriguing dimension to the experience; and just as Orson Welles and company exploited the medium of radio in the 1938 production, the material offers contemporary students and audiences an opportunity to stretch the boundaries of theatre production. As to the "how" of it all, our door into the play opens into a room where anything can happen. The radio studio setting for this play is the pretense: the place of dreams, nightmares, the imagination and the uncanny. Freud defines the uncanny as "something that should have remained hidden and has come into the open." He also likens the experience of the uncanny to "groping around in the dark in an unfamiliar room, searching for the door or the light-switch and repeatedly colliding with the same piece of furniture."

In our production, the radio show that is repeatedly interrupted by the news bulletins is titled *The Seneca Hill Apparition* (in the 1938 script it was a performance by "Ramon Raquello and his orchestra.") Many of you may have heard a version of this local story. I first heard it from an Oswegonian who saw the woman and child during a late night drive to visit a relative. Mrs. Rosemary Nesbitt, Professor Emerita of the Theatre Department, transformed that person's story into a first person narrative that became part of her annual Tales of the Haunted Harbor storytelling event for the Marine Museum. Last April, when I knew we were to produce *War of the Worlds*, I spent a delightful afternoon with Mrs. Nesbitt and asked her about using the story as a basis for this play within the play. She graciously consented and lent me a tape of her version of the story. I transcribed it, constructed a play around the story and looked forward to sharing the full play with her this fall. Mrs. Nesbitt died on August 2nd. Sadly she won't see how her version of the story has been incorporated into the script but her words inhabit the production, particularly in Mrs. Newton's monologue in the play within the play, a story that recounts another instance of the uncanny.

Mark Cole

The Foley Artist is the person who adds the sound effects in film or radio performances. Jack Foley (1891 - 1967) began his work in the silent era in the area of sets and properties and later provided expertly detailed post-production sound effects for many productions at Universal Studios. Because of the influence of this pioneer in sound effects, his name became linked to the art of sound in radio and film.

Please Remember....

Food and drink are not permitted in the theatre.

Turn off all electronic devices. Cell phones should be turned off, as the light emitted from your phone is discourteous to other guests and distracting to the performers.

Photography and video recording are not permitted.

Special Thanks

Julie Blissert, Director and Tim Nekritz, Office of Public Affairs; Jon Vermilye; Mark Lavonier, Program Host, WRVO for sharing his passion for radio with us and lending his voice to the production; Tim Ganey, Carl Foutz and Eric Foertch, Health and Safety; Bill Pastella* and Tara Wiseman.



Upcoming Performances in Tyler Hall

Flamenco Vivo with Carlotta Santana
November 5

Blood Relations
November 17- 22

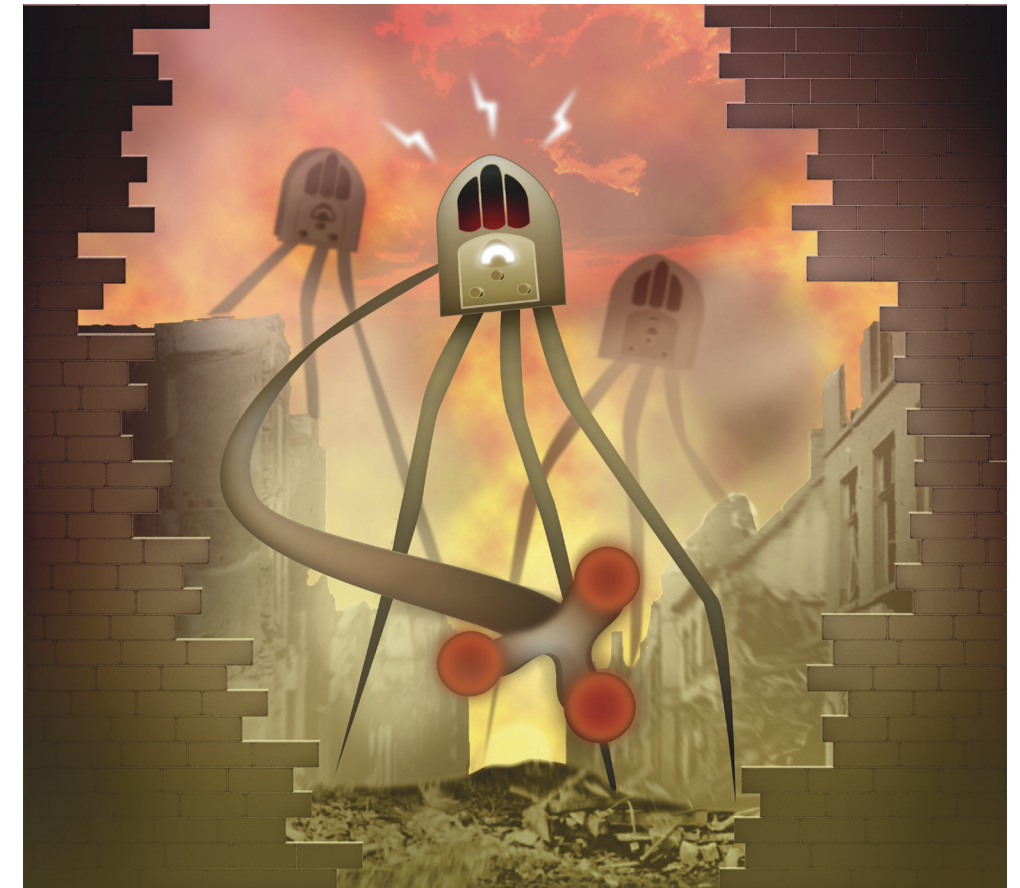
An Evening with Alan and Lawrence
November 23

Feast of Carols
December 6

Order Online: www.tickets.oswego.edu

The Oswego State Theatre Department presents

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Waterman Theatre, Tyler Hall

October 13 - 18, 2009

