

# Mr. E's Radio Spirtz Show

Jonathan M. Zaley





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***We help older performers fulfill their theatrical dreams!***

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## AUTHOR'S NOTES

The slow sinister creaking door...the forlorn wailing of a train...the ominous ticking of a clock. These particular sounds and others made for edge-of-your-seat entertainment during the Golden Age of Radio.

One of the most important ingredients to a mystery story was the sound-effects man. He was the one who set the stage, painted the scenery, built the mood and provided the motif. When these realistic sound effects were combined with wonderful acting and writing, the result was truly a treat for the mind's eye. There definitely was mystery on the airwaves during the Golden Age of Radio, but there really wasn't any mystery to it at all...it was just plain fun! This play lets the audience close their eyes and listen to the sounds that paint a picture in their mind...BUT THEY MUST STAY ALERT! For they have a job to do...to be the show's sound effects folie!

I wrote this show for the special talents of my dear friend, Frank Pisani...an incredible performer and one-man show from the Chicagoland area. Frank can do voice impersonations that are out of this world...and can switch from character to character in a blink of an eye. Adapting the old Wayne and Schuster, *Rinse the Blood Off My Toga* routine, to the characters that Frank could easily mimic and dropping them into a 1940's radio studio, gave the perfect storyline for the audience to do their part with the sound effects. The dark, film noir Bogie-style setting makes for a great atmosphere...which, in turn, is a lot of fun for my Young-At-Heart audiences. Clean family-style comedy that brings back fond memories for those growing up with the Golden Age of Radio, and, yet, stimulates the minds of the younger generations who are growing up with the mind-numbing effects of television and video games.

I played the part of the Host (dressed in zoot suit) and Frank handled all of the character voices, but you can easily have a different person play each character...just do it with the best voice impersonation that you can and dress your characters accordingly...a la ancient Rome style...such as a sequined toga-clad Elvis...or long trench coat toga Detective Columbo...or, well, you get the idea.

The majority of the sound effects props can be easily purchased at most party stores, or in bulk quantities through such places as Oriental Trading Company and other novelty vendors. The toy drum and piano can easily be purchased

from most toy stores, and shoes can be found at any local thrift store. We made our APPLAUSE and

ON-AIR signs out of sheet metal ducts and Plexiglas purchased from the local hardware store, and Liberace got a custom-made mini-sequined cape with bowtie and feathery boa attached. If you have a large audience, you may want to mic the toy piano so it can be heard by everyone...the humor is in the slow playing of the Funeral March.

As with all of my plays, audience participation is a key ingredient, with the cast having fun with it. If the audience sees and feels that the cast is enjoying themselves, they too will have a lot of fun. Thanks for performing my play...ENJOY!

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MR. E'S RADIO SPIRITZ SHOW

by

Jonathan M. Zaley

*Setting: 1940's old-time radio studio with vintage microphone(s), 'On-Air' sign, studio audience 'Applause' sign, table with sound effects equipment, etc.*

CAST

HOST: Male or female dressed 1940's style  
NARRATOR: Jimmy Durante  
DETECTIVE COLUMBO: Peter Falk  
MARGELLA: Marge Simpson  
TOGA-GRAM: Elvis Presley  
BRUTUS: Sylvester Stallone  
EDITHIA: Edith Bunker  
MARK ANTONY: Peter Lorie  
RODNEYUS: Rodney Dangerfield  
SENATE GUARD: Liberace  
SENATOR: W.C. Fields  
COMMERCIAL ANNOUNCER #1: Bella Lugosi  
COMMERCIAL ANNOUNCER #2: Dean Martin  
COMMERCIAL ANNOUNCER #3: Walter Brennan

HOST: *(out in audience)* Good afternoon ladies and gentlemen and welcome to W-M-O-O...*(lip-sync a "moo" while encouraging audience to "moo" out loud)*. Oh, I guess you didn't hear. Our folie...that's the sound effects man here at the station...called in sick today, or so he says *(mimic drinking alcohol)*. So, it's up to you, the audience, to do the sound effects.

Of course, you know that it was the sound effects that made vintage radio shows so special. The clamoring thunder *(poorly mimic thunder sound)*, down-pouring rain, and howling wind...*(poorly mimic howling wind sound)*...the breaking of glass as bodies fall through windows...*(hit "glass breaking hammer" on nearby table then scream and fade as if falling)*...the eerie sounds of ghostly voices...*(booo like a ghost while rattling some chains)* Well, we don't have any of those sounds in this show! But we do have some other great sound effects and it's up to you, our audience, to make it all happen. So, the first sound effect is whenever you hear the station's call letters...W-M-O-O...everyone must moo like a cow, okay? So let's start again.

Good afternoon ladies and gentlemen and welcome to W-M-O-O...*(wait for audience response)* Good job! *(eerie theme music begins)*...and welcome to another edition of Escape to The Weird Circle of the Inner Sanctum where suspense awaits The Mysterious Traveller when it's lights out.

Brought to you by *(location of theatre/performance/sponsor)* with a cast of today's hottest stars including Peter Falk, the radiant Marge Simpson, Sylvester Stallone,

Peter Lorie, W.C. Fields, Rodney Dangerfield, Edith Bunker, Elvis Presley, and Jimmy Durante as the narrator. So before we start the show, I need to pick some groups of people to help us out with our sound effects.

*(approaching a table/group)* This group looks like an ornery bunch! Mean...nasty...you don't take any do-do from anyone, right? Well, too bad! You're going to take it from me and the rest of the cast today! Your job is to be our gunmen...and ladies...or is it gun maulsmolls. *(start passing out guns to table)* Whenever you hear a line like, "Okay boys, pump 'em full of lead," or "Stop, or I'll shoot," or anything pertaining to gunfire or gun shots....that's your cue to let 'em rip. So does everyone have their weapons now? Let's do a practice run. Are you ready? Listen for your cue..."Let 'em have it, boys!" *(wait for gunfire)* Not bad, not bad. "Suddenly, he heard a gunshot." *(wait for single shot, but more than likely everyone will fire their gun)* Okay, you sort of missed that one. I said "gunshot" not "gunfire." Does anyone know the difference between a gunshot and gunfire? Any retired teachers among us that want to explain the difference between a gunshot and gunfire?

That's right. A gunshot is a single shot...one bullet. And gunfire is many guns going off at once, right? Why don't you figure out amongst yourself who will be the designated person to fire the single gunshot. Okay, I think you have the idea, so once the show starts here at W-M-O-O...*(wait for audience response)* Good! The rest of you didn't miss your cue!...Gunslingers, just pay attention for your cues and you'll do fine.

Let's move on to our next group of folies here at W-M-O-O. *(wait for audience response)* How about this group of fine-looking people *(look at group and hesitate)*...this group of good-looking *(hesitate again looking for the right word to describe them)*...this bunch of hooligans here? You look like you're on the ball. Better than that last bunch at least. Now you probably know that many of the classic suspense and mystery radio shows of the past always had mysterious-sounding, creepy footsteps...or fast-paced footsteps running from danger. Guess what? You get to be our Foot Fanciers! *(start passing out shoes)* Now don't worry, these shoes shouldn't smell too bad. We got them from the local thrift store instead of the local bowling alley. We tried to get the smell out of them, so deal with them as best you can.

You folks get to make the sounds of footsteps whenever it's called for in the show. Just stomp them on the table or on the floor. Move them quickly for running...or shuffle them slowly...or whatever's mentioned in the show. Got it?



Now the rest of you with this group get these. (*take coconut bras out of bag and start passing them around to the remaining people with the FOOT FANCIERS*). I bet you don't know what these are for (*hold bra in front of chest and wait for reply...more than likely someone will get it correct*). Yes, they are indeed coconut bras, but not for this show! Want to guess again? Horses! That's right! This old-time radio show that you are going to participate in happens to take place in ancient Rome. And how did they get around in ancient Rome? (*wait for reply*) Ding! Ding! Ding! That's absolutely right! Chariots and horses! So, you get the idea. Whenever moving chariots or horses are mentioned, what do you do? (*wait for reaction*) Oh, that's pitiful! Your horses sound like they're on Doggie Downers! Or, maybe, they had to stop and do their doody! Come on, put some feeling into it! Let's hear some horses moving! (*wait for reaction*) That's better...just keep working at it, okay! Sheesh!

Now, on to our next victims...er, I mean, sound effects folies here at WMOO (*wait for reply*). Please don't take this personally...or think that this is an omen or anything, but this group is called our...dun, dun, dun...Doctors of Death! Can you guess what this group of sound effects folies will do? (*wait for reply*) You folks get to make some sound effects whenever someone gets killed in our story. When someone dies, or is murdered, it is your job to do your thing.

First off, I need one loud-mouthed, brassy and sassy woman (*put hands on shoulders of woman at table*) to be my screamer. You know that loud scream you always heard in the murder shows...and still hear in horror movies of today. That loud, high-pitched, obnoxious lady's scream! Come on, let's hear your best shot (*wait for scream*). Oh, come on. You can do better than that! Try again (*wait for scream*). Much better!

Okay, now, who of this group is musically inclined? Had a few piano lessons, did you? (*wait for volunteer, then once person admits they're skill...*) I'll get back to you in a minute.

**END OF FREEVIEW**

**You'll want to read and perform this show!**