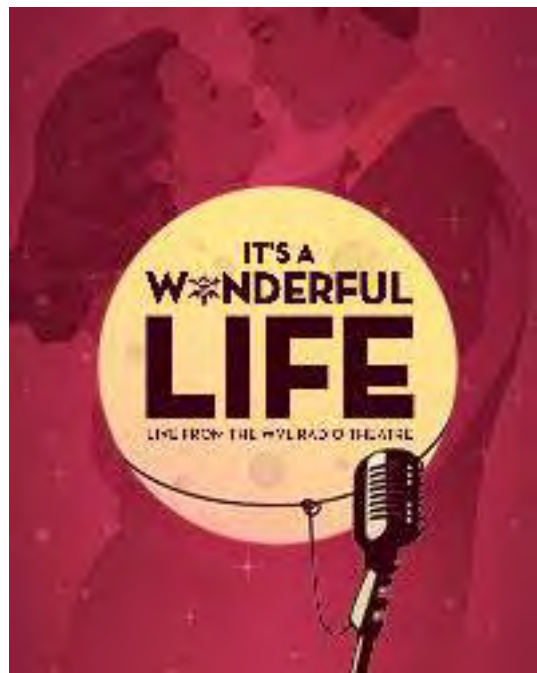


at the REP ★



Directed by Margaret E. Hall
Musical Direction by Josh D. Smith

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**Parts of this guide were researched and written by Dramaturgy Intern Eliza Kupersmid.*

**Parts of this guide come from theREP's study guide for the 2012 production of THIS WONDERFUL LIFE.*

**This guide has been constructed for educational purposes only. theREP does not make any money from it.*

Capital Repertory Theatre's 39th Season - 2019-2020

LOBBY HERO by Kenneth Lonergan
SEPT 29 – OCT 20, 2019

IT'S A WONDERFUL LIFE
Live from the WVL Radio Theatre
Adapted by WVR Repoley from the motion
picture by Frank Capra
NOV 22 – DEC 22, 2019

YOUR BEST ONE by Meridith Friedman
East Coast Premiere
JAN 17 – FEB 09, 2020

THE IRISH AND HOW THEY GOT THAT WAY
By Frank McCourt, featuring the music of
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MAR 06 – APRIL 05, 2020

SISTER ACT
Music by Alan Menken, Lyrics by Glenn Slater,
Book by Cheri and Bill Steinkellner
Based on the Touchstone Pictures Motion
Picture, *SISTER ACT*, written by Joseph
Howard
JULY 10 – AUG 16, 2020

theREP's **ON-THE-GO!** IN-SCHOOL TOURS *We come to YOU!*

To book a tour, contact Aaron Marquise at
amarquise@proctors.org | 518-382-3884 x128

Tour Dates
Oct. 7 – Nov. 3,
2019

Public
Performance
@theREP
10/26/19 at 11am



Tour Dates
Feb. 24 – March
19, 2020

Public
Performance
@theREP
3/21/20 at 11am



Winter 2019



Dear Educator:

Welcome to Capital Repertory Theatre!

We are thrilled that you will be attending the student matinee performance of *It's A Wonderful Life*, one of the REP's main stage productions, and hope you will find this guide to be a useful tool.

You have permission to reproduce materials within this guide for use in your classroom. It is designed to introduce the cultural and historical context of the play as well as provide resources and ideas for integrating the theatre experience with your curriculum.

Productions by the REP are likely to generate questions and opinions among your students. Our hope is that you will join us for a talkback with the cast following the performance where you and your students can share your questions and reactions with the performers.

The arts provide young imaginations with stimulation, points of reference, and intellectual resources for the mind and spirit. Our goal is to make live theatre attendance possible for all students in the Capital Region. Over 11,000 Capital Region students attended student matinees and the REP's On-the-Go! in-school tour performances last season. We hope to continue to grow and serve the needs of the Capital Region education community.

Let us know how you are using theatre in the classroom! Your success stories help us to keep the program funded. We love to receive copies of lesson plans, student work related to our performances and your letters. These are important testimonials to the value of the arts in education.

And finally, please fill out the **Teacher Evaluation** at the back of this study guide. Completing the evaluation form will help us to continue to provide programs that serve the needs of Capital Region students.

We look forward to hearing from you!

With deepest gratitude,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Margaret E. Hall".

Margaret E. Hall
Associate Artistic Director
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at the REP ★



ABOUT US

Capital Repertory Theatre (theREP) is a non-profit professional producing theatre. In its 39-year history, theREP has produced more than 8,000 performances for the people of the Capital Region.

A member of LORT (League of Resident Theatres), theREP strives to bring quality work that explores the essence of the human condition through the stories of people, events, and phenomena that shape our contemporary lives. Theatre, at its best, entertains, cajoles and inspires by engaging the heart and mind through its most powerful ally – the imagination.

There are two basic types of theatre companies: producing and presenting. theREP is a producing theatre. The theatre hires a director and designers for the set, costumes, lights, and sound. The Theatre's Artistic Director and the director select appropriate actors for all the roles in the play. Then they all come to Albany, where the play is built and rehearsed.

In addition to the theatre space, theREP has a scene shop where sets are built, a costume shop where costumes are constructed and cared for, offices where the administrative staff works, a rehearsal hall where the shows are rehearsed, and housing facilities for actors. The resident staff of the theatre works with visiting artists to put the production together.

In contrast, presenting theatres host shows that have been designed, built, and rehearsed elsewhere. A theatre company at many different theatres frequently presents shows of this kind regionally, nationally or even internationally over an extended period of time. What you will see at theREP or with our On-The-Go! tours is unique to theREP where it was built. No one from anywhere else will see this production just as you see it!

ATTENDING A PERFORMANCE

Being a member of an audience is an important job. Live theatre couldn't exist without you! That job carries with it some responsibilities. Follow these suggestions in order to have the best theatre experience possible!

BRING WITH YOU

- ◆ ideas, imagination, an open mind, observation skills and a sense of wonder.

LEAVE BEHIND

- ◆ cell phones, pagers, pen lights, food and drink and anything else that might distract you, the performers or other members of the audience.

THINGS TO DO BEFORE A PERFORMANCE

- ◆ learn about the show you are going to see, arrive on time, find your seat, visit the restroom.

DURING A PERFORMANCE

PLEASE DO

- ◆ applaud, laugh, pay attention and notice little details, think about questions you would like to have answered by the actors after the show, stay in your seat until intermission and the end of the show.

PLEASE DON'T

- ◆ talk, sleep, eat or drink, distract others, exit the theatre during the performance.

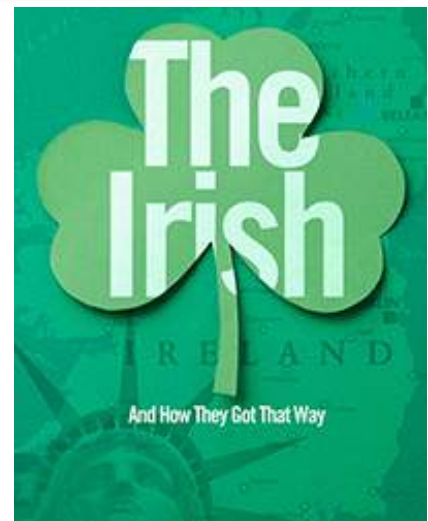
2019-2020 EDUCATION SEASON



OCT 17, 2019
10:30am



DEC 6, 11 & 17, 2019
10:30 am



MAR 12, 17, 25 & APRIL 2, 2020
10:30am

STUDENT MATINEES | Performance at theREP at 10:30am

PRICE \$12 a student

CHAPERONES For every 15 students, one complimentary adult ticket is provided.

LOCATION 111 North Pearl Street, Albany, NY 12207

RESERVATIONS Call Group Sales at 518-382-3884 x139

SCHOLARSHIPS Visit www.capitalrep.org for information and applications.

A Brief Synopsis of the Film

Original Movie Poster



George Bailey (played by Jimmy Stewart) has arrived at a seemingly picture perfect life (after a few early life let downs forcing him to remain in his home town rather than travel the world): he has a loving wife, four young children, and his own business—one that he inherited from his father.

However, things are not as they appear. George and Mary, about to embark on their honeymoon (finally allowing George to travel the world), witness a run on the bank that leaves the Bailey Building and Loan in danger of collapse. Forfeiting their honeymoon money they manage to keep the Bailey Building and Loan from going under. Crisis mounts however, on Christmas Eve when Uncle Billy “loses” the \$8,000 the company owes the bank which is owned by the Scrooge-esque Mr. Potter.

A desperate George pleads with Mr. Potter for a loan to save his business, Potter coldly refuses and swears out a warrant to arrest George for bank fraud. A despondent George takes his frustrations out on his family, gets drunk, crashes his car and believes that he would be “worth more dead than alive” because of a life insurance policy. This life crisis forces him to contemplate the unthinkable act of suicide.

Fortunately, he is saved at the last moment by the appearance of his guardian angel Clarence. If he can save George he will finally earn his wings. When George wishes he had never been born Clarence complies by showing George what the world would be like without him in it. George, seeing how much his life means, is returned to the world as if nothing had happened.

George returns home, grateful for his life and all that he does have, to find the entire community gathered there giving over what little money they each have to help save Bailey Building and Loan, George’s consistently philanthropic loan business. Even Mr. Potter’s accountant donates money to the cause.

The movie concludes with George’s brother, Harry, bursting in the door, back from the war to greet his big brother. And then, to the sounds of the entire town singing, “Auld Lang Syne,” a bell rings out letting George know that Clarence has finally realized his angel potential and obtained his wings.



A Brief Synopsis of this Adaptation

THE STORY

Meet George Bailey and all the residents of Bedford Falls as you've never seen – or heard – them before! Based on the classic Frank Capra film, this story comes to life as a live, 1940s radio broadcast! The story unfolds as four of the station's employees rush to save their beloved radio station. Minutes before the show (which they do every year on Christmas Eve) is due to air, we find out that the boss and all but two of the station's actors, are stuck on a train in a snowstorm. Evelyn Reed, the station owner's daughter, is ready to inform the live audience that they will have to cancel the broadcast. She is stopped, at the last minute, by resident Foley artist Lee Wright who explains that they must do the broadcast as the station is in danger of closing, and if they don't do the show the station will most definitely fold. Wright provides the inspiration needed for Evelyn, and two of the station's character actors (who were, thankfully, not on the train) to rally together and give voice to **all** of the memorable residents of Bedford Falls. Not only will they have to voice all of the characters in the story, they will also have to deliver ALL of the sound effects that go along with it.

THE CHARACTERS

Lee Wright – Foley artist. He is in love with Evelyn, and dreams of being an on air actor. Lee will play Joseph, George Bailey, Harry Bailey and Martini for the broadcast.

Evelyn Reed – Daughter of the radio station (WVL) owner. She is WVL's secretary and general domestic support crew. Despite some amateur theatrical experience, Evelyn has never gotten up the nerve to audition for a spot on one of her father's programs. Evelyn will play Mary, Carter, Owner and Cop for the broadcast.

Mays – A long-time character actor. He is in a "secret" relationship with Kitty and scared to admit it to everyone. Mays will play Franklin, Clarence, Gower, Bailey, Potter, Billy, Bert, Sam, Man, Mrs. Hatch, Tom, Pete, Tommy, Nick and Sherriff for the broadcast.

Kitty Dayle – She is a character actor. She is in a "secret" relationship with Mays, and fed up with the "secrecy" of it. Kitty will play Violet, Ernie, Mrs. Bailey, Dr. Campbell, Tilly, Ruth, Maria, Mrs. Randall, Mrs. Thompson, Teller, Janie, Zuzu and Driver for the broadcast.

Musicians – there will also be two musicians on stage, they will interact with the actors and take part in the on air commercials for the broadcast.



**First rendering of the REP's set for "It's A Wonderful Life"*

LITERARY CONTEXT: Origins of the Screenplay

How It Became “A Wonderful Life:”

Phillip van Doren Stern



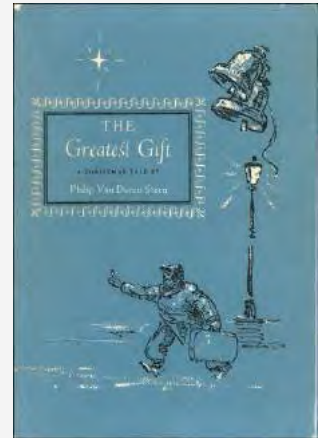
The movie that we watch every holiday season is rather different from its first inception. The plot is based on a short story by Phillip van Doren Stern, called “The Greatest Gift,” and was originally rejected by publishers. In its own remarkable tale, the story gained fame through Frank Capra’s “It’s a Wonderful Life.”

In 1943, when “The Greatest Gift” was yet unpublished, Van Doren Stern decided to spread the heartwarming message of his story on his own. That year, instead of sending simple Christmas cards, he printed out two hundred copies of his short story and mailed them to his friends. It was a hit in his social circle and the story eventually reached the hands of Radio-

Keith-Orpheum movie producers who loved it.

At the time, RKO was an influential movie production company and wanted to include Cary Grant in the film version. They passed the story onto their favorite writers to see if they could make a script out of it. After three unsuccessful attempts, Frank Capra decided to buy the rights to the story, as well as the three bad scripts, and try it himself. Capra brought in some outside writers, and together they turned “the Greatest Gift” into a polished story entitled, ‘It’s a Wonderful Life.’

For a mere \$10,000, Capra’s production company, Liberty Films, got the opportunity to make movie history and Phillip Van Doren Stern got to see his story rise to fame.



Released in 1946 “It’s a Wonderful Life” was considered a box office flop.

A FEW KEY TERMS

ADAPT – Definition: *verb* | make something suitable for a new use or purpose; modify; alter (a text) to make it suitable for filming, broadcasting or the stage

ADAPTATION – Definition: *noun* | Something that is changed or modified to suit new conditions or needs; a form or structure modified to fit a changed environment.

RADIO PLAY – A radio play is a dramatized, purely acoustic performance, broadcast on radio or published on alternative audio media, such as a podcast, tape, CD, etc. Radio plays were very popular in the era prior to television.

FOLEY – Definition: *noun* | relating to or concerned with the addition of recorded sound effects during a live radio broadcast or the score of a film/tv show.

THE ART OF STORYTELLING

Telling stories is an essential part of being human. Whether it is to remember history, or merely to entertain, storytelling helps us better understand the world in which we live. By experiencing the thoughts, hopes, disappointments, and joys of characters in the story, we (the audience) in turn learn more about ourselves, and the impact we have on those around us.

Native American Legends, Folk Tales, and Stories -- Native American mythology has a very rich cultural history. In the telling of tales, many things can be taught or learned. This is one of the ways that many tribes kept their cultures alive; it was not just a collection of stories, but of their beliefs, their ways, and their lives.

Telling a Character's Story

A Few Effective Storytelling Tips from Professional Storyteller, Kevin Cordi:

Highlight Select Traits.

Storytellers tend to accentuate only a few character traits—like tone and attitude. By focusing on a few traits, the story becomes clearer.

Provide a slice of life.

Don't get bogged down in the details. Focus on providing a sense of the experience rather than reciting every fact of the story.

Use accents carefully.

Consider carefully whether you need to use an accent. Only use accents or dialects if they are appropriate for the story. If you decide to use an accent, research the culture to find out how the accent for your character should sound, then practice telling the story and listen to yourself for accuracy. Remember, there are many other ways to convey the tone of another culture.

Practice.

Practice the story, particularly before performing your completed piece. You will notice what works when you practice in front of friends or family.

Adaptation

From a short story, to several movie ideas, to the final product of "It's a Wonderful Life," George Bailey's life has come to be a part of American holiday culture. The popularity of this film has led to many different adaptations, most of them recent. These adaptations range from musicals to cartoons starring bunnies. Some of the most interesting and popular versions are listed below:

Two Musicals:

It's a Wonderful Life, Book by James Rogers, Music by John Higgins

A Wonderful Life, Book and Lyrics by Sheldon Harnick, Music by Joe Raposo

Two One-Man Shows:

This Wonderful Life, By Steve Murray

It's a Wonderful (One Man Show) Life!, By Sharon Fogarty, Performed by Jason Grossman

Two Radio Plays

It's a Wonderful Life: A Live Radio Play, By Joe Landry

Live From WVU Radio Theatre: It's a Wonderful Life, Adapted by W.V.R. Repoley

Film

"It's A Wonderful Life" directed by Frank Capra

"Franz Kafka's It's a Wonderful Life" directed by Peter Capaldi, 1993

Cartoon (30 Second cartoon re-enacted by Bunnies)

"It's a Wonderful Life" http://www.angryalien.com/1204/wonderful_lifebuns.asp

HISTORICAL CONTEXT: Life in the 1930s-40s

WHY IT ALMOST WASN'T A WONDERFUL LIFE: POST-WAR SOCIETY

Knowing about life in Post-World War II America is important to understanding some of the circumstances in *It's A Wonderful Life*. The action takes place on Christmas Eve 1946, just after WWII. The American economy was thriving, but the fear of war and the Great Depression were still lingering in the citizens' minds. This led to some of the important events of George Bailey's adult life.

The Great Depression: In 1929, the world economy took a dive when the stock market crashed on Wall Street. This was followed briefly by a series of economic ups and downs, but ultimately resulted in a worldwide recession. For ten years, the world economy was unstable. Banks began to close and unemployment rose. Farmers in particular struggled. Trade was at an all time low, resulting in fewer goods being available. Then the second World War—which began in 1939—brought much of the world out of the Depression. The cost of building armies and equipment forced the United States to borrow and spend. Thus, jobs were created and money was back in the market.



On Nov. 24, 1933, nearly 5,000 unemployed people waited at the labor bureau in new York seeking relief.



Image of George Bailey during the run on the bank in the film 'It's A Wonderful Life.'

The Run on the Bank: The scene where the Bailey Building and Loan was threatened with a “run on the bank,” was particularly scary for many Americans in 1946. This was a common problem during the Great Depression and the citizens of Bedford Falls hadn't yet forgotten. Essentially, a “run” meant that the bank patrons wanted their money right away because they feared the bank would close and leave them broke. Banks (and George) couldn't return all of the money, however, because of the way loan systems work. The money that people put into a bank isn't just held in a vault. Instead, it is invested through loans to other members of the bank and only a small amount of money is kept in the bank, in order to facilitate the daily transactions. The rest of the money is constantly loaned and repaid. This is why George tells the people of Bedford Falls “Your money's in Joe's house—right next to yours. And in the Kennedy house ...” When the consumers “run” the bank, the bank drains its funds trying to repay its consumers, leaving nothing left for bank operations, forcing it to close.

What is a 'run on the bank'? A run on the bank occurs when a large number of bank customers withdraw their deposits because they believe the bank is, or might become, insolvent. (People are uncertain whether or not their funds are safe in banks so they rush to take their money out before other people do and there is none left for them.)

Suburban Life: WWII also brought about a migration of people from the major cities to the surrounding suburban areas. With factories shifting from making war supplies to cars, automobiles became more affordable, giving families the opportunity to live outside the city. Suburban housing plans began sprouting up to accommodate these families. George's "Bailey Park" was similar to these plans. When George saw the way his neighbors were being treated by their landlord, Mr. Potter, he decided to protect the community from the poisons of Mr. Potter's business practices by selling the lots affordably to families like the Martinis.



Image of Bailey Park from the film 'It's A Wonderful Life.'

The Dust Bowl: The Dust Bowl brought ecological, economical and human misery to America during a time when it was already suffering under the Great Depression. Economic depression coupled with extended drought, unusually high temperatures, poor agricultural practices and the resulting wind erosion all contributed to making the Dust Bowl. By 1932, 14 dust storms, known as **black blizzards** were reported, and in just one year, the number increased to nearly 40. The government enacted aid programs to help, but it wasn't until 1939 when the rain returned that relief came.



Hooverville: During the Great Depression, shantytowns appeared across the U.S. as unemployed people were evicted from their homes. As the Depression worsened in the 1930s, causing severe hardships for millions of Americans, many looked to the federal government for assistance. When the government failed to provide relief, President Herbert Hoover was blamed for the intolerable economic and social conditions; the shantytowns that cropped up, primarily on the outskirts of major cities, became known as Hoovervilles.



WWII: WWII brought an end to the Great Depression. Industries had been ignited for the production of arms and resources to equip fighting forces. The war solved some problems, but created many others.

- The US entered the war on December 8, 1941, the day after the Japanese attacked Pearl Harbor (a major US naval base in Hawaii), claiming the lives of over 2,300 troops.
- WWII ended in 1945 – but not before the horrors of the Holocaust and two atom bombs were dropped on Japan. Countless lives were lost between 1939 & 1945.



World Facts From 1946 - the year the movie *It's A Wonderful Life* was released:

- Jan 1st—Emperor Hirohito of Japan announces he is NOT a god.
- Jan. 10th—First radar contact with Moon.
- Feb 16th—First commercially designed helicopter tested, Bridgeport CT.
- Feb 19th—Giants outfielder Danny Gardella is the first major leaguer to announce he is jumping to the “outlaw” Mexican League.
- Mar 2nd—Ho Chi Minh elected president of North Vietnam.
- Mar 22nd—First US rocket to leave the Earth’s atmosphere (50 miles up).
- Mar 28th—Cold War: The United States State Department releases the Acheson-Lilenthal Report, outlining a plan for the international control of nuclear power.
- Apr 1st—Tsunamis generated by an earthquake in the Aleutain Trench strike Hilo Hawaii.
- Apr 7th—Syria’s independence from France is officially recognized.
- Apr 18th—Jackie Robinson debuts as 2nd baseman for the Montreal Royals.
- May 2nd—The “Battle of Alcatraz” takes place, killing two guards and three inmates.
- May 13th—Winston Churchill welcomed in Rotterdam.
- May 16th—Musical “Annie Get Your Gun,” starring Ethel Merman premieres in NYC.
- June 3rd—First bikini bathing suit is displayed in Paris.
- June 13th—First transcontinental round-trip flight in 1-day, California-Maryland.
- June 26th—Dutch Nazi collaborator Arnold Meijer sentenced to 5 years.
- Jul 1st—US drops atom bomb on Bikini atoll (4th atomic explosion).
- Jul 4th—Philippines gains independence from US.
- Aug 4th—Dominican Republic earthquake: magnitude 8.0 hits northern DR, killing 100 and leaving 20,000 homeless.
- Aug 26th—George Orwell published *Animal Farm*.
- Sep 1st—Greece votes for monarchy.
- Sep 11th—First mobile long-distance car-to-car telephone conversation.
- Sep 20th—First Cannes Film Festival is held.
- Sep 30th—22 Nazi leaders found guilty of war crimes at Nuremberg.
- Oct 24th—A camera on board the V-2 No. 13 rocket takes the first photograph of earth from outer space.
- Nov 4th—UN Educational, Scientific, & Cultural Organization is formed.
- Nov 13th—First artificial snow produced from a natural cloud, Mt Greylock, MA.
- Nov 23rd—The Workers Party of South Korea is founded.
- Dec 19th—War breaks out in Indochina as Ho Chi Minh attacks French in Hanoi.
- Dec 31st—President Harry Truman officially proclaims the end of WWII.

Timeline of the Great Depression

The Great Depression and its effects lasted more than a decade, from 1929 until 1941. Following are some of the key dates in the timeline of the Great Depression:

October 29, 1929: Stock market crashed, Black Tuesday.

1930: Severe drought and Dust Bowl conditions began to ruin farmers' land, a condition that lasted until 1935.

1931: Food riots broke out, workers marched on Detroit, and "foreign workers" were deported.

January 1932: Congress established the Reconstruction Finance Corporation to lend \$2 billion to banks, insurance companies, building and loan associations, and farming organizations.

Late 1932: Stocks reached their lowest point.

November 1932: Franklin D. Roosevelt beat Herbert Hoover in a landslide.

March 1933: Franklin D. Roosevelt took office.

1933: More than 11,000 of the nation's 25,000 banks had closed.

1933: Roosevelt announced a three-day "bank holiday" to prevent a third run on banks and to shore up the banking system.

1933: Unemployment reached its highest level, at 25%.

1933: The Civilian Conservation Corp (CCC) was established to put young men to work in federal and state parks.

1933: The National Recovery Administration (NRA) was introduced.

1933: The Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation (FDIC) was established to insure bank deposits.

1933: The Civil Works Administration (CWA) was established to employ up to 4 million people on public works projects.

1935: The Work Projects Administration (WPA) was formed to employ up to 8.5 million people on public works projects across the country.

1935: The Social Security Act was signed into law, financed through payroll taxes.

November 1936: FDR was elected to a second term as president.

April 1938: FDR asked Congress for an additional \$3.75 billion to stimulate the still floundering economy.

November 1940: FDR was elected to a third term as president.

1941: Preparations for World War II stimulated the American economy and effectively brought an end to the Great Depression.

<http://www.thegreatdepressioncauses.com/timelines.html>

GOLDEN AGE OF RADIO

The Golden Age of Radio was a period in history when radio programming in the U.S. was the dominant form of electronic home entertainment. It started in the 1920s with the birth of commercial radio broadcasting and lasted through the 1940s as television gradually eclipsed radio.

Radio was the first broadcast medium, and people regularly tuned-in – families gathering around their large in home radios – to hear their favorite programs.

A variety of new entertainment formats and genres were created for the new medium – many of which later migrated to the world of television. Such genres as: radio plays, mystery serials, soap operas, quiz shows, talent shows, daytime and evening variety hours, situation comedies, play-by-play sports, children’s shows, cooking shows, and more.



**Girl listening to vacuum tube radio during the Great Depression.*

In 1947, according to a C.E. Hooper survey, 82 out of 100 Americans were found to be radio listeners.

Since the Golden Age of Radio, American commercial radio programming has shifted to narrower formats – news, talk, sports and music, mostly.

Some Popular Radio Programs from the 1940s

- Fibber McGee and Molly
- The Shadow
- The Abbott and Costello Show
- Hopalong Cassidy
- The Jack Benny Program
- The Orson Welles Show
- The Ed Sullivan Show
- Yours Truly, Johnny Dollar



**Orson Welles*

Some Popular Radio Actors from the 1940s

Orson Welles: Infamous “*War of the Worlds*” broadcast on Halloween of 1938; Welles read aloud the book War of the Worlds live on air and people thought he was reporting news and freaked out.

Helen Hayes: Known as “The First Lady of American Theater”

Abbott and Costello: Famous “*Who’s on First*” skit



**Abbott & Costello*



**Helen Hayes*

THEATRICAL CONTEXT: Art of Foley

Foley is the term coined to describe a sound-effects technique used in films today, and radio programs of the past, in recognition of Jack Foley and his many contributions to the art form. (**Note, Foley, though not yet called that, was being used by radio well before it was used in films.**)

Jack Foley and Foley Art



JACK DONOVAN FOLEY

Jack Foley was born in April of 1891, grandson of Irish immigrants, and grew up in the Seagate section of Coney Island. Dissatisfied with the weather in Coney Island, Foley moved to California where he would become a stunt man working in films – which were still silent at that time.

His career would be put on hold for a few years during WWI, while he served in the American Defense Society protecting Los Angeles’s water supply.

After the war, Foley went back to film creating a Hollywood career that consisted of directing silent films, selling scripts to Universal Studios, and ultimately finding a hobby in sound effects that would become his trade in life.

Foley, who was known to create ‘perfect sounding footsteps,’ found himself creating the footsteps and body movement sounds for stars such as Laurence Olivier, Rock Hudson and Sandra Dee ... and then, so much more – doors slamming, glass breaking, leaves rustling, etc.

When silent films became talkies sound effects, added in post-production, were needed to flush out the soundscape of the film. Foley artists worked to match the movements and actions of the actors that had already been filmed.

Foley and his crew – using anything everything they could imagine to simulate the sounds needed for a given moment - worked hard to create the perfect sound for each character in each moment of the film. In doing so, the “Foley Crew” became genuine performers themselves.

For Jack Foley, the job wasn’t just “making sounds,” it was acting, it was bringing the reality of the moment into the film via sound and doing it so well that viewers wouldn’t know they were hearing sounds added “after.”



Foley artists at work in the 1930s – radio broadcasts.

- Foley art itself represents the reproduction of everyday sound effects that are added in post-production to filmed media to enhance the audio quality of the material. These reproduced sounds can be anything from clothing swishing, water pouring, doors squeaking, footsteps, heartbeats and glass breaking to weather sounds such as winds, thunderstorms, or rain. They are all studio recorded mostly by one person or by a well-coordinated team of just a few.



*1930s radio Foley artist.

- Foley artists are keen observers and sensitive listeners, exceptionally tuned into the world of sound and motion, and able to think in creative, innovative ways about sonic reproduction.
- Today post-production editors have libraries of thousands of sound effects, as well as computer software they can use to create and modify sounds, and yet there are still certain sounds that they struggle to create - particularly those that must perfectly match the action onscreen.

ACTIVITY: Watch!

1. Here is a Youtube link from the Dean Martin Show starring Orson Welles where Welles tells a story and Martin tries his hand at making the Foley sound effects (in a comical way).

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ypQP7Uf-fc4>

2. Here are a few more interesting Youtube links for learning more about the art of Foley.

- Short Film on Old Time Radio Sound Effects: “Back of the Mike” (1938): <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hZ43UC5tIOY>
- Foley artists shows how some sounds are made: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=E0pOLukIB4s>
- The Magic of Sound Making: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UO3N_PRIgX0



**Images of two modern Foley stages for film*

Who's Who: In the Production

Director: Margaret E. Hall++

Music Director: Josh D. Smith

Choreographer: Freddy Ramriez

Actors

(in alphabetical order)

Wynn Harmon*

Carl Howell*

Elizabeth Nestlerode*

Laurie Wells*

Production Stage Manager: TBA*

Assistant Stage Manager: Laura Crawford

Costume Designer: Evan Prizant+

Set Designer: David McQuillen Robertson

Sound Designer: Rider Q. Stanton

Lighting Designer: Rob Denton+

Casting Director: Stephanie Klapper, csa



**Denotes a member of Actors' Equity Association, the Union of Professional Actors and Stage Managers of the United States*



+Denotes a member of United Scenic Artists



++Denotes a member of Stage Directors and Choreographers Society

Ideas for Curriculum Integration

CIVICS | SOCIAL STUDIES

1. **DISCUSSION:** Have a classroom discussion about the ethics and morals that arise in the story of *It's A Wonderful Life* – for example, how Potter behaves to the Bailey's at different times throughout the story.
 - a. **Ethics:** the rules of conduct recognized in respect to a particular class of human actions or a particular group or culture.
 - b. **Morals:** principles or habits with respect to right or wrong conduct. While morals also prescribe dos and don'ts, morality is ultimately a personal compass of right and wrong.
2. **TIME MARCHES ON -- 1946 ... 2019:** How does the film's mythical town of Bedford Falls relate to life in cities and towns in America today? Is your hometown more like Bedford Falls or Pottersville? Explain?
3. **EVOLUTION OF ENTERTAINMENT:** Discuss the differences between listening to a radio play and seeing a play live? Discuss the differences between listening to the radio and watching television? Discuss the differences between an audience member's experience at a film and a play. Why see a play instead of a movie? What are the advantages and disadvantages of a live performance?
4. **RESEARCH & REPORT!** Students are asked to research the Japanese Admiral Isoroku Yamamoto. What was his role in WWII? How does the scene on page 19 (in blue), from the play, relate to Yamamoto and WWII?

ENGLISH

1. **WRITE!** Students are asked to write a short story, poem or monologue from the point of view of each of the individuals in one of the photos below (or others teachers may choose). What does each person's body language tell you? How are they relating to one another and the audience/viewer?



**Image from the movie, 'It's A Wonderful Life'*



**Image of a mother and her children during the Depression.*



**Image of a woman during the Dust Bowl.*

2. **WRITE & CREATE!** Students are asked to write out their own short story adaptation of *It's A Wonderful Life* (or *The Greatest Gift*). Then have them create a short storyboard presentation to go with it. *Storyboards are used by filmmakers to show the stories major moments.

VISUAL | PERFORMANCE ARTS

1. PERFORM: Become a Foley Artist: Students are asked to create a list of common – every day, often seen in films/TV etc. – sounds and then assemble the “tools” they’ll use to create those sounds live.

Here are some ideas (and Google search will turn up so much more):

1. Broken bones – break celery stalks; uncooked pasta broken between teeth
2. Skidding car – hot water bottle dragged along a countertop, a balloon
3. Horse trotting – coconut halves, plunger ends, in a box of dirt
4. Horror movie “squishes” – wet rag
5. Footsteps – walking in place on a small patch of gravel or dirt or sand
6. Wooden creaks – old shipping pallet, a piano bench, an old chair
7. Fire – cellophane, potato chip bag, steel wool
8. Bird Wing Flaps – gloves, old-fashioned feather duster

FOLLOW ON ACTIVITY: In pairs, students are asked to take the following snippet from *Live From WVL Radio Theatre: It's A Wonderful Life* and bring it to life – they should each take a turn being Lee to experience the Foley art. (Teachers may choose to have students, in small groups, tackle a scene from another radio play, or even a well-known fairy tale to perform for the class.)

SCENE:

MAYS: Hey Lee – all kidding aside, this is nuts! We haven't rehearsed, I've never worked the sound table in my life—

LEE: Oh my gosh! Sound! All right, you've both seen me do this about a million times, but – in a nutshell, well, let's see:

Lee performs live Foley for the following narrative, he improvises

You get out of the car, walking, a girl passes, you get the door for her, she has an ice cream, plunks down a nickel, uh – make it two! fix her a drink, oh there's the telephone – “we need some milk!” “how'd you know I was here?” – better settle up, and out the door, and into the car and ... just –

Mays and Evelyn are aghast.

Well, that's just a rough ... -- you'll be fine!

MAYS: Said Yamamoto at Midway...

END SCENE

2. DRAW! Set Design *It's A Wonderful Life: Live From WVL Radio Theatre* is set in a radio station in the 1940s. Ask students to draw their own version the radio station. The radio station must include microphones, music stands and the Foley instruments needed, what else could/would be there? Make sure students think about the small details as well as the big ones (like lighting fixtures, applause and on air signs, etc.).

3. DRAW! Students are asked to design a show poster for a production of *It's A Wonderful Life*. The posters should include student's original design as well as the production date and venue; the title and author; and most show posters include the name of the director, perhaps it's you, as the teacher, are the director whose name should be included.

4. PERFORM: Adaptation

We each experience stories and movies differently, even though we all see the same thing. This is why it is so popular to rewrite classic stories over and over again. We each want to show what we think it is really about.

In groups of 4-5, students are asked to perform an adaptation of a familiar story. Write on slips of paper the names of familiar stories, such as “Little Red Riding Hood.” Put them into a container and mix them up. Then write out different styles of movies and plays, such as the one-man show, film noir, mime, musical, etc. and place them into a different container. Each team will draw a story and a style from the buckets. They will then have 15 minutes to create their adaptations. After all groups have had time to rehearse, share the scenes with the class.

Note: Scenes should be a maximum of 5 minutes in length and demonstrate that the students understood the plot while altering (adapting) it in some way. For instance, a film noir version of “Little Red Riding Hood” may be set in the streets of New York City with a detective instead of a hunter.

5. CHARACTER DEVELOPMENT: In Their Shoes: In this activity, students will explore the lives of those individuals who lived during the aforementioned historical events—The Great Depression and Post World War II Society. Using images/portraits from these time periods as inspiration, students will create a character biography that explores the thoughts and emotions of the subjects in the photographs.

For this activity you will need a large, open space, and a collection of images relating to the Great Depression / World War II. (Teacher can provide or ask students to bring in photos.)

Photos

- Place photos in a circle on the floor. (These will be the characters the students ‘create’.)
- As students enter the room, tell them to sit by a photo that they are drawn to.
- Ask the students to study the picture. Notice every aspect of physical appearance—clothing (color, fit, style, etc.), expression, stance, etc.
- Once students feel like they have a sense of the character’s physical appearance ask them to lie on their backs.

Visualization

- Have students close their eyes and bring their attention to breathing.
- Visualize the person that they saw in the photo. Ask them to remember every detail that they picture.
- Begin to visualize how the character moves, sits and walks through the environment seen in the picture.
- When each student can envision this they rise to their feet.

Character Walk

- Students start to walk around the room and bring their attention to certain aspects of movement. Tempo, Body Center, Stance, etc. When all students have made their character choices they may walk, as a group, into a circle and drop the character.

WRITE

- Next, ask students to write an inner monologue for their characters (this should be what their character is thinking during the moment the photograph was taken). Have students share their monologues with the class.

Resources Consulted:

www.dictionary.com
www.thevintagenews.com/2017/07/12/jack-foley-the-artist-who-brought-natural-sound-into-motion-pictures/
<https://www.old-time.com/halper/halper45.html>
<https://www.amazon.com/Christmas-1945-Greatest-Celebration-American/dp/1933909455>
<https://time.com/4151426/operation-magic-carpet/>
<http://filmsound.org/foley/jackfoley.htm>
<https://uh.edu/engines/epi3009.htm>
<https://www.thevintagenews.com/2017/12/27/jack-foley/>
<https://irishamerica.com/2012/01/jack-foley-and-the-art-of-sound/>
<https://www.berklee.edu/careers/roles/foley-artist>
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=U_tqB4IZvMk
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hZ43UC5tlOY>
<https://blog.soundsnap.com/2017/10/23/27-tips-tricks-creating-foley-sound-effects-for-film/>
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Golden_Age_of_Radio
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Category:1940s_American_radio_programs

*****This guide has been constructed for educational purposes only. theREP, which is a non-profit organization, does not make any money from the guide.*****

TEACHER EVALUATION: *It's A Wonderful Life*

Your feedback is **vital** to the growth and continued success of the REP's educational programming. It helps us to constantly improve and attract additional underwriting. Please take a moment to fill out this form.

We encourage you to make multiple copies so that all of the teachers in your group may respond.

1. Name: _____ School: _____

2.

Phone: _____ E-mail: _____

3. How would you rate the quality of today's performance?

Excellent

Good

Fair

Poor

4. Did attending the performance assist you in addressing classroom curriculum?

Very Much

Somewhat

Not At All

N/A

5. Were the on-line study materials useful in preparing students and deepening their experience?

Very Much

Somewhat

Not At All

N/A

6. Please check all that apply:

___ Today's performance price was affordable for my school.

___ My school required a subsidy in order to afford today's performance.

___ My school would provide performances for more students, more often, if additional funds were available.

7. Any additional information / comments welcome:

The completed form may be submitted by email to amarquise@proctors.org or by mail to: Aaron Marquise, Arts Education Manager, 432 State Street, Schenectady, NY 12305.

theREP/Capital Repertory Theatre's Mission In Action! Creating an authentic link to the community we serve...

EDUCATION AND OUTREACH are key components of theREP's mission, "to create an authentic link to the community we serve." Through a wide range of programs, theREP strives "to provide the Capital Region with theatre programming which inspires a greater understanding of the human condition" and helps "to develop future audiences by instilling the notion that theatre is a vital part of the cultural life of all vibrant cities."

PROGRAMS FOR STUDENTS

Student Matinees (Classics on Stage) Performances of most of the theatre's professional productions are scheduled during the school day with dramatically discounted prices for area students to allow for greater accessibility. Each season, at least one play is designated as Classics on Stage, for its direct connections with curriculum.

On-The-Go! in-School Tour Specially adapted professional productions designed to play to students on-site in schools. Last season, theREP's OTG program reached more than 9,500 students.

Young Playwright Contest Providing students, ages 13-19, with the opportunity to submit their work to be produced on the Capital Rep stage. In addition, the winning playwrights are given a mentorship – prior to the production of the play – with a professional playwright.

Summer Stage Young Acting Company Providing young actors the opportunity to work together, with leading professionals in the field, on a production that will take place on the Capital Rep stage. Company Members hone their acting skills while rehearsing and then performing the Young Playwright Contest-winning plays.

Acting Intensive I & II provide teens, ages 12-17, the opportunity to hone their acting skills by providing these week-long comprehensive workshops.

CAST (Cultivating Arts & Students Together) provides students with the opportunity to volunteer at the theatre and earn community service credits at the same time. Teens get an in-depth learning experience that satisfies their passion while fulfilling their needs.

Artist In Residency Programs theREP works in conjunction with school educators to bring highly trained teaching artists to work in extended residency within the classroom. Opportunities to embed the theatrical experience into the curriculum are available for teachers and students for every work in our 2018-19 Education Season.

Career Development theREP is dedicated to helping to build the next generation of theatre professionals with programs like the **Professional Apprenticeship Program** which provides year-long or summer-long paid apprenticeships, and **Internship Program** provides college students internships in many disciplines of theatre. These programs are specifically for young people beginning a career in the performing arts and arts education.

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