

# *It's a Wonderful Life: A Live Radio Play*

## Author-approved changes for a larger cast and for adding an intermission

### NOTES FOR PERFORMING WITH A LARGER CAST

As written, the play is performed by five actors, however, the play can be performed with as many actors as the director chooses. The first thing to do is look at the character list on pages 6-7 of the Playscripts script. Since the characters of Jake, Sally, Lana and Harry "Jazzbo" are those of the actors at WBFR, they can be eliminated from the breakdown (Freddie Filmore should remain, as he serves as the Announcer). So, if you take the character list, starting from Mary Hatch down, you can distribute these roles as you see fit. Additionally, some smaller character roles written as men may be played by women (changing the related pronouns to feminine). However, please keep in mind that this is a period piece set in the 1940s and certain characters (Nick, the bartender, for example) would more than likely be men.

Once you've decided on your breakdown, the only part of the script which may require some changing is the Stage Manager's pre-show announcements on page 11 and Freddie Filmore's introduction of actors on page 12. As noted above, since the play is written for five actors, those are the only ones introduced here. When performing with more than five actors, your options would be to either eliminate these introductions, or, if performing with less than ten actors (for example), you can add the additional introductions below. If adding additional introductions, those in the current script may require slight modifications based on who is playing what role (for example, if the actress playing Lana Sherwood is reading only the role of Violet Bick, the "and others" should be struck from her introduction). My feeling is that these introductions should not go on and on, so if you are performing with more than ten actors, my thought would be to eliminate the introductions entirely (jumping from Freddie's "...the spirit moves you." on page 12 to the top of page 13). So, for your consideration, here are some additional character introductions followed by additional actor/character name suggestions.

## Introductions

"You know him/her from WBFR's own comedy program 'My Three Husbands' and playing (Character Name/s), I give you (Actor Name)."

"Voted 'Listener's Favorite' by members of our wonderful studio audience two years in a row, playing (Character Name/s) in this evening's show, here's (Actor Name)."

"Currently lighting up movie screens around the country in Universal Pictures' 'Ma and Pa Kettle Go to Hollywood,' and playing (Character Name/s) this evening, Mr./Mrs. (Actor Name)."

"You'll remember our next actor from the WBFR Playhouse of the Air production of 'I Was a Nazi for the FBI,' as (Character Name/s) in tonight's story, please welcome back (Actor Name)."

"Direct from his/her recent sell-out engagement at the Tropicana night club, and currently number three on the Hit Parade with his/her stirring ballad 'Cocktails for One,' playing (Character Name/s), let's have a hand for (Actor Name)."

## Actor/Character Names

Hope Merriwether  
Judy Lester  
Trixie Devine  
Marjorie Applebee  
Hazel Jenkins  
Willy Kurtz  
Dayton Parker  
Ray Gordon  
Trevor Ward  
Phillip Arnold

## ADDING AN INTERMISSION

The play is intended to be performed without an intermission, partially because it would be unlikely for a radio program to stop for fifteen minutes in the middle of a single program. However, I understand the need for certain productions to include an intermission. There are (at least) two choices to place this break: either after the commercial on page 38, or after the commercial on page 60. The page 38 suggestion is probably the best of these two, as it's closest to the halfway point in the script.

If inserting an intermission, you should add the following line for Freddie after the commercial:

"We will now take a short break for local news and station identification."

The "On Air" sign should go out, then back on when the intermission is over. You can also follow the same pattern as the start of the show with the Stage Manager calling the actors to places, as well as the station identification (see page 13, starting with "We're live in..." and ending with "...NEW YORK CITY.") Then return to the bottom of page 38 with Freddie's "We now return to..."