

# IT'S A WONDERFUL LIFE: A LIVE RADIO PLAY



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

Adapted by JOE LANDRY

"It's a Wonderful Life" is based on the story, "The Greatest Gift" by PHILIP VAN DOREN STERN from the screenplay by FRANCES GOODRICH, ALBERT HACKETT, FRANK CAPRA, and JO SWERLING

It's the holiday season, and we at Western Canada Theatre (WCT) thought that an adaptation of a beloved Christmas classic is the best way to celebrate! In this small information guide, you can read up on what the play is based on, interesting facts, and more about this production. It also includes the cast and crew lists, as well as simple activities that could be used in a classroom setting, or for additional fun at home. Check out all the info below!

### The Play

George Bailey is an idealistic small-town Everyman with big dreams—travelling the world with hopes of finding fame and fortune. As his life unfolds in unexpected ways that keep him close to home, one fateful Christmas Eve he finds himself questioning life's greatest gift. With guidance from a guardian angel looking to earn his wings, George will discover how rich his life and community really are when he sees a world where he had never been born.

### Cast

**ALEX FURBER** – Jake Laurents, playing George Bailey

**LAINE GILLIES** – Lana Sherwood, playing Violet Bick and others

**DOUG HERBERT** – Freddie Filmore

**ANNETTE LOISELLE** – Betty Marie Feldstein, playing Rose Bailey and others

**TRACEY POWER** – Sally Applewhite, playing Mary Bailey

**KIRK SMITH** Harry – "The Kid" Heywood, playing Clarence the Angel and others

**LUKAS VANDERLIP** – Derwood 'The Duke' Barducci

**CHRISTOPHER WEDDEL** – Edwin Rutter, playing Mr. Potter and others

## Youth Ensemble

MEER DANEYAAL ABIDI

QUINCY GATHERCOLE

ANNA HAHN

JUNE HERBERT

NIXON KENNEDY

ANNA MACFARLANE

## Production Team

JOHNNA WRIGHT – Director

ROSS NICHOL – Set Designer

BONNIE DEAKIN – Costume Designer

MATTHEW PITON – Lighting Designer

LUKAS VANDERLIP – Sound Designer, Composer & Foley Artist

ALANA FREISTADT – Stage Manager

JUNE ZINCK – Assistant Stage Manager

LIZZY KING – Youth Supervisor

## What is a Radio Play?

What is the difference between a live play, and a radio one? What makes them so fascinating? Radio plays utilize the truest form of storytelling, which is auditory. “They rely entirely on dialogue, music, and foley, otherwise known as sound effects.” (Jake Fryer Hornsby, Stage Milk). This newfound wave of storytelling began in the 1920s, and by the 1940s became a widespread phenomenon. Once the invention of television came around in the 1950s the radio plays declined, however they are still around today in a smaller capacity.

So even though live plays, movies and TV are more commonly known during this day and age, radio plays are still thriving online, especially through podcasting and audiobook communities. At the end of the day, sometimes we just want to listen to someone tell us a good story, and be given the opportunity to use our imagination to picture the rest.

[wctlive.ca/wonderful](http://wctlive.ca/wonderful)

### DID YOU KNOW?

Radio Plays utilize ‘foley’, which is a unique sound effect technique that involves creating and “performing” everyday sounds.

Lukas Vanderlip will be the live foley artist, creating most of the sounds live for *It’s a Wonderful Life: A Live Radio Play*.

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## The Movie that Inspired it All

*It's a Wonderful Life* is a classic holiday film to many families all around the world, but what started this iconic drama? Back in 1943, Philip Van Doren Stern self-published a short story called *The Greatest Gift*, which is loosely based on Charles Dickens novella *A Christmas Carol*. This short story was the inspiration for *It's a Wonderful Life*, which was produced and directed by Frank Capra.

At the time of its release, the film was widely unsuccessful in the box office. It didn't break even, and had mixed reviews at best. However, it became a Christmas classic after its copyright lapsed and it fell into the public domain. Frank Capra and James Stewart both claim it was one of their favourite films to be a part of.



## Interesting Facts

1. Did you know that the Sound Designer for *It's a Wonderful Life: A Live Radio Play* was also the sound designer and composer for *Sleight of Mind*? Lukas Vanderlip has worked multiple WCT shows in the past, as well as Project X Theatre Company, and Thompson Rivers University productions.
2. One of the earliest radio plays that was ever broadcasted was Shakespeare's *A Midsummer Night's Dream*.
3. As mentioned, *It's a Wonderful Life* is loosely based off of a short story called *The Greatest Gift*, which was then based off the classic Dickens' novella *A Christmas Carol*. Did you know that Western Canada Theatre actually did a production of *A Christmas Carol* back in 2010 and Kirk Smith, who plays Harry in this production, was also in *A Christmas Carol*!
4. Did you know that throughout the original film, there are exactly 42 bells heard? So according to the film, 42 angels got their wings!

## Activities:

1. What common household items can you think of that could create sound effects? This play uses many classic objects to create sounds like wind, thunder, walking, and more. Could you use heavy shoes to make the sound of stomping on hardwood floor? How would you create a sound like thunder or lightning?

2. The main theme of this story is being thankful for the family and life that you have, and knowing that you've made a difference in many people's lives in a positive way! Start a gratitude journal, and write down one thing that you are thankful for every day. This is a great way to start the day off on a positive note, or end the day with a smile.
3. Is watching the film *It's a Wonderful Life* one of your family traditions? Think of some traditions that you do with your family for any given holiday, and then look up what another family might do in another country. What kind of traditions do Italian families have? There are many countries in the world that don't celebrate Christmas, take some time to research what holidays are important to them instead!
4. Try some new (or old) tasty treats this holiday season! Check out Jessica's list of [15 Timelessly Wonderful Christmas Desserts](#), with recipes from all the way back to the 1940s! Let us know which one you tried and whether or not you liked it.

## Curriculum Connections

**Arts Education:** Social and Cultural Context

**Language Arts:** Oral Language, Reading and Viewing, Speaking and Listening

**Drama:** Exploring Drama Forms, Performance, Context

**Social Studies/History:** Society and Culture, 1920-1950's

**Music:** Images and Feelings, Context

## Works Cited

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