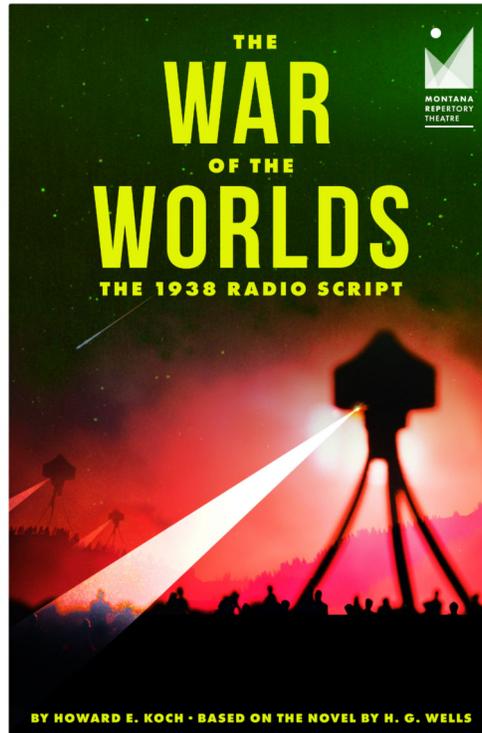




EDUCATION GUIDE



Wednesday, January 29, 2019
12:30pm

Tickets: \$6.00 per person

Recommended for Grades 9+

ABT Student Matinee series sponsored by



Alberta Bair Theater for the Performing Arts
2801 Third Avenue North • Billings, Montana 59101
406-256-8915
www.albertabairtheater.org

WAR OF THE WORLDS

Montana Repertory Theatre presents

The War of the Worlds:

The 1938 Radio Script

By Howard E. Koch

Based on the Novel by H.G. Wells

Directed by Caitlin O'Connell

"From time to time, some quirk of fate, some state of mind, or some brilliance of thought makes a broadcast memorable. As such it deserves to be preserved, for after it passes from the news it becomes part of the color and woof of our history. . ." The Toronto Star (February 1939)

On the night of October 30, 1938, the radio series *Mercury Theatre on the Air*, starring Orson Welles, broadcast *War of the Worlds* as its Halloween episode. The event would become an American legend. Setting off a panic, many listeners, some having tuned in after the brief disclaimer at the opening, believed they were hearing a news report in real time describing a hostile Martian invasion. In Spring 2020, **Montana Repertory Theatre** will re-create a 21 Century theatrical experience of this riveting, relevant, scary and fabulously entertaining epic broadcast.

Enter the 1938 radio station studio, where your theatre audience becomes the original radio series audience. The

character of Narrator/Director/Mastermind Orson Welles, begins the broadcast with an urgent news flash. On what could be the last day of their lives, the 5-member cast of actors portray over two dozen roles that produces a simultaneous blend of live radio play and contemporary theatrical experience.

A rapid-fire series of news bulletins that grow increasingly chilling, describing Martians landing, are juxtaposed with imaginative stage craft, costume changes, dramatic lighting (black outs/spot lighting) and multimedia projections as the action moves from the studio interior to outside locations - the New Jersey farmhouse, an observatory, New York City street scenes. As in 1938, the sound effects of crashing spacecrafts, screaming bystanders and advancing armies, both Martian and United States infantry are created with "period" sound technology on stage.

MONTANA REP ESTABLISHED IN 1967 Montana Rep, an Equity company based at the University of Montana in Missoula, has been touring for 50 years. In recent years the company has presented more than 500 performances in 200 communities from California to New York. Heading into its 52nd season and under new leadership, Montana Rep is thrilled to offer a fresh and innovative approach to an American classic.

PRODUCER | CREATIVE TEAM

ABOUT THE PRODUCER:

"The history of Montana Repertory Theatre is filled with stories from struggle to stardom, and of course, drama."
– (Four Decades of Drama | Montanan Magazine)

Now one of the most dynamic and respected touring companies in the country, **Montana Repertory Theatre** was established as a professional touring company in 1967, providing professional theatre in Montana and neighboring Western states at an affordable cost. MRT's mission is to tell the great stories of the world to enlighten, develop, and celebrate the human spirit in an ever-expanding community.

Past touring productions include: *To Kill a Mockingbird*; *It's a Wonderful Life*; *The Diary of Anne Frank*; *Death of a Salesman*; *A Streetcar Named Desire*; *Steel Magnolias*; *The Trip to Bountiful*; *Lost in Yonkers*; *Cat on a Hot Tin Roof*; *Leading Ladies*; *Bus Stop*; *Doubt, a parable*; *Biloxi Blues*; and *The Miracle Worker*. Most recently, MRT has toured *The Great Gatsby* (2015), *All My Sons* (2016), *Barefoot In The Park* (2017), *On Golden Pond* (2018).

PRODUCER | CREATIVE TEAM (continued)

ABOUT THE PRODUCER (continued):

Montana Rep assembles principle actors, directors, and designers with prestigious credits, including Broadway, Off-Broadway, national tours of Broadway shows, and major regional theatre credits. Beginning in 1992, the Montana Rep inaugurated an expanded residency program, perfect for high school assembles and classrooms, for which study guides are provided. Residency activities are also supplemented by standard professional theatre workshops.

Delivering a theatrical experience in its entirety, Montana Rep brings with it everything from lighting to sound design. Completely self-contained, the Rep offers presenters large and small—in facilities ranging from new performing arts centers to high school gyms—the opportunity to enjoy first-class theatre.

ABOUT THE ARTISTIC DIRECTOR:

Michael Legg is in his first season as Artistic Director of Montana Repertory Theatre. For the last 11 years, he was the Director of the Professional Training Company at Actors Theatre of Louisville, where he directed world premieres of plays by A. Rey Pamatmat, Laura Jacqmin, Dan Dietz, Kyle John Schmidt, Marco Ramirez, Eric Dufault, Jennifer Haley, and Allison Moore, among others. Legg serves as the guest artist at several universities, including the University of Idaho, Ohio University, University of Utah, and Texas Tech University. He teaches for and works extensively with the Kennedy Center American College Theatre Festival. For the past four summers, he's served as the Artistic Director of WildWind Performance Lab, where he's developed new plays by Brian Quijada, Hilary Bettis, Martyna Majok, Basil Kreimendahl, Emily Feldman, Steve Yockey, and Matthew Paul Olmos, among others. Legg holds an M.F.A in acting from the University of North Carolina at Greensboro and is a proud member of Actor's Equity.

ABOUT THE DIRECTOR

Caitlin Ryan O'Connell has directed work at Joe's Pub, The Denver Center, Bushwick Starr, Ars Nova, The Lark, Roundabout, Fault Line Theatre, Actors Theatre of Louisville, Trinity Repertory Company, and Clubbed Thumb. Upcoming projects include TWIN SIZE BEDS by Sam Schanwald at The Public's Under the Radar Festival and SICK by Elizabeth Kenny. She is a 2018 New Georges Audrey Resident, a former Clubbed Thumb directing fellow, a former directing apprentice at Actors Theatre and an alum of the Lincoln Center Director's Lab. Caitlin teaches at The Eugene O'Neill Theater Center, The New

School, The Ridgewood Bushwick Senior Center, and with the International Theater and Literacy Project in Rwanda. BA Wellesley College, MFA Brown University/Trinity Rep.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR – H. G. WELLS

Often called “The Father of Science Fiction,” Herbert George Wells, an English author (1866-1946), was prolific in many genres, writing dozens of novels, short stories, and works of social commentary, satire, biography, autobiography, including two books on war games. Some of his early novels, called “scientific romances,” invented several themes now classic in science fiction in such works as *The Time Machine*, *The Island of Doctor Moreau*, *The Invisible Man*, *The War of the Worlds* (published 1898), and *The First Men in the Moon*. Wells is credited with establishing several extraterrestrial themes which were later greatly expanded by science fiction writers in the 20th Century, including first contact and war between planets and their differing species. The theme of alien invasion has remained popular to the present day and are frequently used in the plots of all forms of popular entertainment including movies, television, novels, comics and video games.

ABOUT THE PLAYWRIGHT – HOWARD E. KOCH

An American playwright and screenwriter, Koch (1901-1995) was born in New York City, and grew up in Kingston, New York. He was a graduate of Bard College and Columbia Law School. While practicing law in Hartsdale, New York, he began to write plays (some of which were produced on Broadway). His radio work in the 1930s as a writer for the CBS Mercury Theater of the Air included the Orson Welles radio drama *The War of the Worlds* (1938), which caused nationwide panic among some listeners for its documentary-like portrayal of an invasion of spaceships from Mars. Koch then began writing for Hollywood studios. In 1942, he co-scripted the classic film *Casablanca*, for which he received an Academy Award in 1944. After the war, Koch was denounced as a Communist. He was criticized by the House Un-American Activities Committee (HUAC) for his outspoken leftist political views and ultimately blacklisted by Hollywood in 1951. After being blacklisted, Koch moved with his family to the U.K. In 1956, he returned to the United States and settled in Woodstock, New York, where he continued to write plays and books and remained actively committed to progressive political and social justice causes.

CURRICULUM | AGES

CURRICULUM CONNECTIONS

Literature: Vocabulary; Characterization; Study of Science Fiction Genre; Plot Development; Use of Science in Story Development **Media:** Media's Effects on Consumers; Use of Standard News Program to Create Fiction

RECOMMENDED AUDIENCES

PUBLIC AUDIENCE: All ages

SCHOOL TIME AUDIENCE: Grades 9-12 + University

FACTS | STATS

BOOK

Author H.G. Wells' novel *The War of the Worlds* has never been out of print since its first full publication as a novel in 1898.

Wells is considered to be the “Father of Science Fiction.”

The War of the Worlds inspired the 1938 radio broadcast.

1938 RADIO BROADCAST

Written for radio broadcast by Edward Koch.

Produced by John Houseman and Directed by famed storyteller Orson Welles.

On January 27, 2003, the Mercury Theatre broadcast of *The War of the Worlds* was one of the first 50 recordings made part of the National Recording Registry of the Library of Congress.

On the 50th anniversary of the radio play in 1988, National Public Radio aired a remake directed by David Ossman (who updated Howard Koch's original script with Koch's approval) and starring Jason Robards, Steve Allen, Hector Elizondo, René Auberjonois, Philip Proctor, Douglas Edwards, Scott Simon, and Terry Gross. It was nominated for a Grammy Award for Best Spoken Word or Nonmusical Recording.

RELATED LINKS

Infamous “War of the Worlds” Radio Broadcast Was a Magnificent Fluke—*Smithsonian Magazine*
Montana Rep Website