

TRUNCATED SAMPLE SCRIPT

This is a series of excerpted scenes from the full script, which runs to 48 pages--about 45 minutes in performance.

If you purchase the rights to the play, I will send you a full script—as a PDF—from which you can make as many copies as are needed by your cast & crew. There is no per-script-fee.

If you wish to secure the performance rights to this script, pre-recorded music tracks and pre-recorded sound effects or sheet music to the score, contact Sales@RuyaSonic.com

AUNTIE SCROOGE

a BACKWARDS Christmas Carol

A radio drama by

Anthony E. Palermo

RUYASONIC

940 S. Windsor Blvd.
Los Angeles, CA 90019
(323) 938-0415 Palermo@RuyaSonic.com
www.RuyaSonic.com

PRODUCTION SCRIPT

December 4, 2004
© 2004 Anthony Edward Palermo
All rights reserved.

BILLING AND CREDIT REQUIREMENTS

Producers of *Auntie Scrooge - a BACKWARDS Christmas Carol* must give credit to Anthony E. Palermo in all programs distributed in connection with performances of the play, and all instances in which the title of the play appears in advertising or publicizing the production, including programs and playbills. The name of the Author must also appear on a separate line, immediately following the title of the play, and must be in type size not less than 30% of the size of type used in the title of the play.

Billing shall be in the following form:

(name of producer)
presents

AUNTIE SCROOGE - a BACKWARDS Christmas Carol”

Adapted for radio-on-stage by
ANTHONY E. PALERMO

Musical score composed and arranged by
ANTHONY E. PALERMO

Long bio:

ANTHONY E. PALERMO (PLAYWRIGHT) is a radio dramatist, performer, and educator based in Los Angeles. His work is heard on NPR and Satellite Radio as well as in audiobooks and on-stage with L.A. Theatre Works, California Artists Radio Theater, numerous theatre troupes, and on national tours. His holiday-themed plays, *A Christmas Carol*, *It's A Wonderful Life*, and *The Headless Horseman of Sleepy Hollow* have seen productions around the world since 1998. Tony's sound effects work on Yuri Rasovsky's *Sherlock Holmes Theatre* contributed to its winning the 2006 *Audie Award*--the Oscar of audiobooks. Tony directed the 60th anniversary production of Norman Corwin's *On a Note of Triumph*--for which he also re-created Bernard Herrmann's orchestral score. Recently, Tony provided live SFX for shows such as Eric Idle's *What About Dick?*, CART's *Leviathan '99*, LATW's *Hamlet* and *Side Man*, as well as performing 65 solo shows at the California State Fair. Tony's *Sonic Storytelling Studio* at San Francisco's Exploratorium is a permanent exhibit that has seen thousands of visitors since 2006. His *Sparx Audio Adventures* assembly programs and workshops are popular with schools and colleges across California, the U.S. and the world. Tony also hosts the RuyaSonic Radio Drama Resources website, offering info on writing, directing, scoring, engineering, and sound effects. www.RuyaSonic.com

Short bio:

ANTHONY E. PALERMO (PLAYWRIGHT) is an Audie Award-winning radio performer, dramatist, composer and educator who has produced dramas and workshops for broadcast, stage, and schools. Tony hosts the RuyaSonic Radio Drama Resources website, offering info on writing, directing, scoring, engineering, and sound effects. www.RuyaSonic.com

NOTE: Up-to-date text of the bios is available at www.RuyaSonic.com/tp2bio.htm You can cut & paste the text into your playbill or program and thus not have to worry about typos.

Auntie Scrooge - a BACKWARDS Christmas Carol

CAST

| | |
|-----------------------------|---|
| NARRATOR | Cynical announcer (male or female) |
| AUNTIE SCROOGE | Happy old lady executive. (female) |
| FRED/FREDERICKA | Auntie's greedy heir (male/female) |
| BOBBIE CRATCHIT | Auntie's nasty VP (male/female) |
| BOB MARLEY'S GHOST | Santa Suited spirit reggae star (male) |
| GHOST OF CHRISTMAS PAST-DUE | Lecturing psycho-shrink (male/female) |
| BILL | Jilting young suitor of Auntie (male) |
| GHOST OF CHRISTMAS PRESENTS | Materialist Spirit (male/female) |
| BIG TIM/TINA CRATCHIT | Spouse of Bobbie Cratchit (male/female) |
| GIDGET/GIDGE CRATCHIT | Cratchit teenager (male/female) |
| PETRA/PETER CRATCHIT | Cratchit pre-teen (male/female) |
| TINY TIM CRATCHIT | Falsetto-singing ukulele-player (male) |
| KIM | Domestic partner of Fred/Fredericka (m/f) |
| TECH SUPPORT | Tech support, Christmas 3.0 (male/female) |
| COW-OLERS | Several Singing cows (male or female) |

ALSO: PARTY GUESTS

Two sound effects artists are also required.
Music cues cover scene transitions and underscore some dialogue.

(The pre-recorded music tracks are available from Sales@RuyaSonic.com)

Visit Tony Palermo's Radio Drama Resources website: www.RuyaSonic.com

1. MUSIC: [MUS-1] PLAYHOUSE THEME-UNDER. PLAY THRU.

2* ANNOUNCER: [CUE] Holiday Playhouse presents... Auntie Scrooge, "A Backwards Christmas Carol"... the tale of a cheerful old woman who comes to realize the "false" spirit of Christmas in these troubled times.

(LONG PAUSE) For over one-hundred-and-sixty years, people have enjoyed Charles Dickens' wondrous story "Auntie Scrooge," which tells of the miraculous conversion of a miserly Ebenezer Scrooge into a kind, generous, giving man. However, our story takes place today, as we look in upon the great-great-great-great-grand-niece of old Ebenezer, who--true to her reformed ancestor's credo--loves Christmas-time! She is bright and happy and charitable--a lovely human being--but not for long...

(PAUSE) Our little "Ghost Story of Christmas" opens in New London, Connecticut, on a cold, snowy December twenty-fourth, in the year... two-thousand-and something...

3. MUSIC: PLAYHOUSE THEME--LET BELLS RING UNDER.

SCENE ONE: INT. ICE CREAM FACTORY DIARY - EVENING
(NARRATOR, AUNTIE, COW-CAROLERS, FRED, BOBBIE)

1* SOUND: JINGLING BELLS (QUIETLY) COWS MOOING.

OCCASIONAL CHICKENS. UNDER WIND

2* NARRATOR: [CUE] (DELIVERED WITH DICKENSIAN DREAD) Once upon... this week--of all the good days in the year--on Christmas Eve, old Auntie Scrooge sat milking her cows in her ice-cream factory dairy. (PAUSE) (WITH SCORN) Irene Carolyn Scrooge was a pleasing, friendly, gracious, sympathizing, obliging, courteous old winner--a good-natured woman! On this evening, the offices of her I--C--Scrooge ice cream company were shrouded in cold, bleak, biting weather. But external heat and cold had little influence on Auntie Scrooge. Her warmth could warm. No wintry weather could chill her. No wind that mooed--Um, I mean--blew... was warmer than she...

1. SOUND: SINGLE NOTE ON PITCH PIPE/HARMONICA.
JINGLE BELLS ACCOMPANY THE SONG, IN TIME.
- 2* COW-CAROLERS: (TO THE TUNE OF "GOD REST YE, MERRY GENTLEMEN)
 Moo moo moo moo, Moo moo moo-moo-moo
 Moo moo moo moo moo (SOURLY) mooooooooo
 Moo moo moo moo, Moo moo moo-moo-moo
 Moo moo moo moo moo (SOURLY) mooooooooo
 Moo moo-moo-moo moo moo-moo- (VERY SOUR)
 moooooooooooo.... (SUDDENLY STOP)
3. AUNTIE SCROOGE: (TO COWS) (NOT MEAN) Oh! Bum hand-bag! That's
 not quite right, my dears. It doesn't quite...
 "mooooo-ve" me! (LAUGHS AT HER JOKE) Ha-ha-ha!
4. COW-CAROLERS: (GROANING AT THE PUN) Moooooooooooo.
5. SOUND: OFFICE CLOCK CHIMES (7X) --UNDER
6. AUNTIE SCROOGE: Well, maybe that's enough singing for tonight,
 anyway. I don't want to spoil your "mooooo-ry"
 Christmas. (LAUGHS AT HER JOKE) Ha-ha-ha-ha!
7. COW-CAROLERS: (GROANING EVEN MORE AT THE PUN) Moooooooooooo.
8. SOUND: DOOR OPENS. FRED AND BOBBIE WALK IN.
- 9* FREDERICKA: [CUE] (SCOLDINGLY) Auntie Scrooge!
10. AUNTIE SCROOGE: Why, hello, Fredericka!

1. FREDERICKA: Auntie Scrooge! Don't you know Bobbie Cratchit and I have been searching the whole factory for you?
2. BOBBIE CRATCHIT: (DISDAINFULLY) That's right, Auntie. We've wasted precious time. And time is money!
3. AUNTIE SCROOGE: Er, I'm sorry, Bobbie. I know how you worry so about efficiency.
4. BOBBIE CRATCHIT: Were you wasting the cows' time... again?
5. AUNTIE SCROOGE: Er... just wishing the cows a... "mooooo-ry" Christmas. (LAUGHS AT HER JOKE) Ha-ha-ha-ha!
6. COW-CAROLERS: (GROANING AT THE PUN) Moooooooooooo.
7. AUNTIE SCROOGE: And the chickens a "Squawky" New Year!
8. SOUND: CHICKENS SQAWK A GROAN.
- 9* AUNTIE SCROOGE: [CUE] I just want them to be happy, so they'll produce healthy milk and eggs to go into our holiday egg-nog. You know, Fredericka, how I love egg-nog.
10. FREDERICKA: Yes, Auntie, we know. But sales are down for egg-nog.
11. BOBBIE CRATCHIT: They've been down for years. It's a money loser!
12. AUNTIE SCROOGE: Well... it's only money.

1. BOBBIE CRATCHIT: (GASPS) Only money? We have a business to run!
2. AUNTIE SCROOGE: I know, Bobbie. But what kind of "Mooo-ry..."
3. COW-CAROLERS: (QUICK HALF-A-MOO) Moo? (AS IF WARNING HER)
4. AUNTIE SCROOGE: (CATCHING HERSELF) Ahem, What kind of "Merry" Christmas would it be without egg-nog?
5. FREDERICKA: (SNOTTY) "Merry Christmas?" We are not a charity, Auntie! While you do control the majority of stock in the I.C. Scrooge company, you're old! And your old values are out of step with the public.
6. AUNTIE SCROOGE: What? Kindness is out of step?
7. BOBBIE CRATCHIT: Your kind of... kindness is. Do you know how much it's going to cost to hold our office Christmas Party tomorrow night? On Christmas night?
8. AUNTIE SCROOGE: But most of our employees have always liked the annual Christmas evening party.
9. FREDERICKA: They "like" it because we pay them double-time to attend! Plus, there's free food and drink! Another money loser! Every dollar counts!
10. AUNTIE SCROOGE: Some things can't be counted. To my mind, those are the things that count the most! (LAUGHS)

1. BOBBIE CRATCHIT: That's insane, Auntie! Your generosity leads to loses! And losses lead to... layoffs!
2. AUNTIE SCROOGE: (GETTING RILED) Oh! Always looking for a reason to fire people... --And animals! No wonder they call Bobbie Cratchit...
3. FREDERICKA: I know, Cratchit, the Hatchet-man!
4. COW-CAROLERS: (BOOING IN AGREEMENT) Moooooooooooooooooooo
5. AUNTIE SCROOGE: Y'see? Christmas is a grand opportunity...
6. BOBBIE CRATCHIT: ... a grand opportunity to exploit the public's appetite!
7. AUNTIE SCROOGE: (DEFIANT) No! Christmas is a grand opportunity for time-honored traditions, like our annual-- and generous--Christmas night party. And our traditional home-made-style Holiday Egg Nog!
8. FREDERICKA: (CALMING EVERYBODY) Now, look, Auntie. We'll have the party--as planned--tomorrow night. But our marketing studies have shown that nobody wants egg-nog anymore. It harkens back to a forgotten past. ...And clogged arteries!
9. BOBBIE CRATCHIT: My kids won't touch egg-nog. Not even Tiny Tim.
10. FREDERICKA: Kids today--and adults--want something new! Something cool. Something with... "edge."

1. AUNTIE SCROOGE: (PUZZLED) Er... Ice-cream with an... edge?
2. COW-CAROLERS: (QUESTIONING) Mooooooooooooo?
3. BOBBIE CRATCHIT: Yes! We want to replace our Holiday Egg Nog with.... Bo-bah!
4. AUNTIE SCROOGE: Bo-bah....? What's Bo-bah?
5. FREDERICKA: Bo-bah is the latest thing, Auntie! It's from Taiwan. All the kids want it! It's made from tea and milk and tapioca globules.
6. BOBBIE CRATCHIT: And emulsifiers, stabilizer, and hi-fructose corn syrup. Plus preservatives, of course, prolonging the shelf life--to all year long!
7. AUNTIE SCROOGE: Yikes! Chemicals? Fake sugar? This would rot kids' teeth! It sounds dreadful!
8. FREDERICKA: Oh, it is dreadful--and addictive--but new! Think of the possibilities for marketing! We could do tie-ins!
9. BOBBIE CRATCHIT: Yes. "The Harry Potter...Teeth Rotter."
10. AUNTIE SCROOGE: (GASPS) No!
11. FREDERICKA: Yes! We could advertise it like this:
"Dentists? ...The Menace!"
12. COW-CAROLERS: (DISAPPROVING) Mooooooooooo. (THEN STOP UNDER...)
13. BOBBIE CRATCHIT: (NASTILY SILENCING THEM) Taco filling, anyone?

1. FREDERICKA: This Bo-bah drink would be wretched, Auntie--on purpose! The terrible taste would add novelty--and be cheaper to produce. People would buy it.
2. BOBBIE CRATCHIT: They buy anything--with "edge." (PAUSE) And no carbs. Just sugar, fat and ice! And chemicals.
3. FREDERICKA: So, Auntie, we want to shut down the old Holiday Egg Nog line and replace it with... "Cobra-Bo-bah! The drink that's awfully good!"
4. AUNTIE SCROOGE: But the firm of Scrooge and Marley has long stood for natural goodness and health and joy!
5. FREDERICKA: (CORRECTING HER) Not always, Auntie. Back in England, "Scrooge and Marley" started as a usury--a loan-sharking company.
6. BOBBIE CRATCHIT: And a very profitable one! They had "edge!" Plenty of it!
7. AUNTIE SCROOGE: Yes, but when Jacob Marley's ghost visited my great-great-great-great-grand-uncle, Ebenezer Scrooge..., Uncle turned the company around.
8. FREDERICKA: (DISMISSINGLY) Yes, Auntie, we know all about the visitations from the (SARCASTIC) "Ghost of Christmas Past" and "Ghost of Christmas Present" and (LAUGHS) "Ghost of Christmas Future."

1. BOBBIE CRATCHIT: (AGREEING) Yes! But, it is the future now and we've got to change with the times.
2. AUNTIE SCROOGE: What change? We're an ice-cream company!
3. FREDERICKA: (CORRECTING HER) No! We are a chilled-refreshment-manufacturer! One that has smartly capitalized upon the public's association of the name "Scrooge" and "cold."
4. BOBBIE CRATCHIT: Yes! (QUOTING FROM THEIR ADS)
"I. C. Scrooge... cold!-heartedly good!"
5. AUNTIE SCROOGE: (SIGH) I never liked that ad-line.
6. BOBBIE CRATCHIT: You can't argue with success!
7. AUNTIE SCROOGE: (FRUSTRATED) Oh, I've tried to keep up the reformed Scrooge family tradition of being kind and generous and sweet, but not... teeth-rottingly sweet! Bum hand-bag, Fredericka! This is a bunch of nonsense!
8. FREDERICKA: (ANGRY) I've had enough, Auntie! We're losing money! Your sentimentality will cost us our future! Nowadays, your old-fashioned "ideas" are just.....
9. BOBBIE CRATCHIT: (ANGRY) ... too old-fashioned! Too retro!
10. FREDERICKA: Well, come on, Bobbie. This is useless!

1. SOUND: FRED & BOBBIE WALK OFF.
- 2* AUNTIE SCROOGE: (CALLING AFTER THEM) Oh! Fred! Bobbie! Can't we work something out? It is Christmas Eve, after all?
3. FRED & BOBBIE: (DISTANT) (SNOTTY) "Merry Christmas, Auntie Scrooge!"
4. SOUND: DOOR SLAMS.
- 5* AUNTIE SCROOGE: (DEJECTED) Merry... Christmas...

SCENE TWO: EXT. SNOWY STREETS - LATER
(NARRATOR, MARLEY'S GHOST)

- 6* MUSIC: [MUS-2] FOGGY NIGHT-UNDER. PLAY THRU.
- 7* SOUND: WIND. AUNTIE'S STEPS IN SNOW--CONTINUE UP TO MARLEY'S LINE: "AUNTIE SCROOGE!"
- 8* NARRATOR: [CUE] Auntie Scrooge took a melancholy dinner in--for her--an un-usual melancholy manner, and walked home through the rolling fog and bitter cold. She silently passed street urchins crowding 'round "fire" apps in the street, tweeting to keep warm. The wistful Scrooge trudged along through the dark streets, but... just as she reached the door of her little house... she thought she heard... something... calling...

PRODUCTION NOTE:

All ghosts will speak through a reverb to give their voice a ghostly flavor. Marley's sound effects also get reverb.

- 1* MARLEY'S GHOST: [REVERB] Auntie Scrooge! Auntie Scroo-ooge!
- 2* NARRATOR: [CUE] It was the voice of the ghost of the long
dead Marley! ...Who's ghostly face appeared on
the door knocker! Auntie Scrooge hurried
inside, closed the door, and locked herself in!
She double-locked herself in!
3. SOUND: DOOR CLOSSES QUICKLY. LOCKS (2X).
- 4* NARRATOR: She checked the sitting-room, bedroom, yoga-
room--all as they should be. Nobody under the
table, nobody under the sofa. Nobody under the
bed, nobody in the closet. Secured against
surprise, Auntie Scrooge put on her dressing-
gown and nightcap, and sat down before the fire
to knit some wool. (PAUSE) When... suddenly...

SCENE THREE: INT. AUNTIE SCROOGE'S SITTING ROOM - IMMEDIATELY
(AUNTIE, MARLEY'S GHOST)

5. MUSIC: FOGGY NIGHT-QUICK FADE.
- 6* SOUND: (SILENT PAUSE) THEN BELL 1. THEN BELL 2. THEN
MANY BELLS. (NOT TOO LOUD.) CONTINUE UNDER,
THRU THE LINE "WHAT IN THE..."

- 1* AUNTIE SCROOGE: (STARTLED) Er! What? What is it! The alarm! A burglar? The mailman? What in the...
2. SOUND: BELLS ALL STOP.
- 3* AUNTIE SCROOGE: ...world? (PAUSE) N-Nonsense. A bum hand-bag! Nonsense! It's a bum hand-bag! I had... Wait! Ohh!... What-what's that?
- 4* SOUND: SILENCE THEN BASH... BASH/BASH! CRASH. JINGLE BELLS DRAGGED. SLOW FOOTSTEPS--UNDER.
5. MUSIC: [MUS-3] MARLEY'S WOE-UNDER. PLAY THRU.
- 6* AUNTIE SCROOGE: Someone's in the cellar! But the doors are locked! Double-locked! Something... is coming. Up the stairs! Closer! It's outside my door! Oh, bum hand-bag! I won't believe it! I say...
7. MARLEY'S GHOST: [REVERB] (MOANING) Scrooge! Auntie Scrooge!
8. SOUND: THUNDER-RUMBLE. RUMBLE. JINGLE BELLS RATTLING. MARLEY'S DRAGGING STEPS. CHAINS
- 9* AUNTIE SCROOGE: (SCARED) Ah! Whoa! (PAUSE) What-what do you want with me? Who-who are you? (PAUSE) Ummm.... Santa... Claus?
9. MARLEY'S GHOST: (JAMAICAN ACCENT) No! I am... Marley's Ghost!
- 10 AUNTIE SCROOGE: (AMAZED) The-the g-ghost of... Jacob Marley?
11. MARLEY'S GHOST: No! He's busy! I'm the ghost of Bob Marley!

1. AUNTIE SCROOGE: (DUMFOUNDED) Bob Marley? The reggae singer from Jamaica? (GASP) But, y-you're... d-dead!
2. MARLEY'S GHOST: Yes, mon! That's how you get to be a ghost! Don't you see my dreadlocks? I am the sad ghost of Bob Marley. Full of... dreads.
3. AUNTIE SCROOGE: But... Bob Marley in a Santa suit?
4. MARLEY'S GHOST: It's a long story, mon. I-and-I had a wonderful life--but it's a terrible after-life!
(ROOSTER-LIKE, BOB MARLEY WAIL) Ohhhhhhh, mon!
5. AUNTIE SCROOGE: Bob Marley? But you were a good guy! You sang about love and peace! You gave people all over the world... dope. Er... I-I mean... hope!
6. MARLEY'S GHOST: (SIGHS) Dope! Hope! Either way, it's a curse!
7. AUNTIE SCROOGE: What? But I see you're chained, Bob! Tell me why!
8. MARLEY'S GHOST: I wear a retail-chain! Forged in life, mon. Commercialism! I'm chained by gift boxes, jingle bells, Christmas lights, credit card bills. It a pondr'ous chain!
9. AUNTIE SCROOGE: Er.. I don't get it, Bob. What does Jamaica and your good-guy life have to do with being a ghost? With wearing a Santa suit? And with your suffering over Christmas?

1. MARLEY'S GHOST: Well... when I was alive, I had a (SINGS FROM THE SONG "POSITIVE VIBRATION") "positive vibration--Yay-ah--Positive, uh-huh." (SPOKEN) Looky-yay... I was a do-gooder.
2. AUNTIE SCROOGE: Yes! I feel the same way... "positive."
3. MARLEY'S GHOST: Well, once I died, I was doomed to forever have to spread joy and good cheer. A symbol of hope! That's why the Santa suit, mon.
4. AUNTIE SCROOGE: OK. But you bring gifts to children all over!
5. MARLEY'S GHOST: No-no, Mon! I have to sit with greedy kids in my lap--for-ever--and listen to them demand toys and goodies.
6. AUNTIE SCROOGE: Is that so bad? They're only children.

SCRIPT HAS BEEN TRUNCATED AT THIS POINT

(several pages later...)

4. AUNTIE SCROOGE: I'm sorry for you, Bob. Is there anything I can do?
5. MARLEY'S GHOST: For me, it is too late, mon! But I have come... to warn you of a hope and chance of escaping my fate. (PAUSE) You will be haunted by three spirits...

6. AUNTIE SCROOGE: Er... Three spirits? Wait! This is strangely familiar...
1. MARLEY'S GHOST: (IGNORING HER) Expect the first, tomorrow when the bell tolls One. The second and then the third, soon come! Without their visits, you cannot escape the dread-mill... that I'm on!
(WAILS) Aieeeee! Beware this cruel fate, Auntie Scrooge! Beware! (FADES) Beware! Beware!
(WAILS) Aieeeee!
2. MUSIC: MARLEY'S WOE--LET CHURCH BELLS RING UNDER, FADE.
- 3* NARRATOR: [CUE] And with that, the ghost of Bob Marley vanished in ganga smoke. Auntie Scrooge wondered... was Marley's visit a dream? Or not? She decided it was a dream and nothing more, but suddenly...

SCENE FOUR: INT. AUNTIE SCROOGE'S BEDROOM - LATER
(NARRATOR, FIRST SPIRIT, AUNTIE SCROOGE)

- 4* SOUND: CLOCK CHIME (1X).
5. MUSIC: [MUS-4] SPIRIT #1 ARRIVES--UNDER, PLAY THRU.

- 6* NARRATOR: (CONT'D)... Auntie Scrooge found herself face-to-face with an un-earthly visitor. It was a strange figure--like a child, yet... not so like a child as like an old man...
7. FIRST SPIRIT: [REVERB] I.C. Scrooge?
1. AUNTIE SCROOGE: Er... Are you the Spirit that Bob Marley sent?
2. FIRST SPIRIT: I am the Ghost of Christmas Past...Due.
3. AUNTIE SCROOGE: Christmas past-due?
4. FIRST SPIRIT: Yes! Christmas Past...Due! Collecting on the debts incurred while paying your dues. Rise and walk with me!
- 5* MUSIC: [MUS-5] FEZZIWIG'S BALL--UNDER, PLAY THRU.
(TRANSITION/SILENCE/FIDDLE-TUNING/
DANCESONG/CLAPS.)
6. NARRATOR: Instantly, Auntie Scrooge and the Spirit were transported to the past! To the back room of a beauty parlor--decorated for a holiday party.
- SCENE FIVE: INT. FUZZY WIGWAM BEAUTY PARLOR - NIGHT
(WALLA--PARTYERS, AUNTIE SCROOGE, FIRST SPIRIT)
7. SOUND: WALLA--PARTY GUESTS UNDER. GLASSES CLINK.
8. NARRATOR: A small group of teenagers mill about. A young fiddler tunes up!

- 9* AUNTIE SCROOGE: [REVERB] The old Fuzzy-Wigwam! I worked here after school! It's our Christmas dance!
10. FIRST SPIRIT: [REVERB] Do you see yourself, Scrooge? The young girl with the eager eyes and hopeful smile? Ready to dance every dance and dosey-doe and curtsey with every boy?
1. AUNTIE SCROOGE: (HAPPY) Oh! It was a marvelous dance! So much fun!
2. FIRST SPIRIT: (SKEPTICAL) Was it, Auntie?
3. AUNTIE SCROOGE: What do you mean?
4. FIRST SPIRIT: Well... everybody's got a dance partner--almost everybody! Who's dancing with you?
5. AUNTIE SCROOGE: (SQUIRMING) Well, um... no one, right now. I'm... uhh.. dancing by myself. I think a boy will ask me, ...i-i-in a minute.
6. FIRST SPIRIT: (SKEPTICAL) Will there ever be one?
7. AUNTIE SCROOGE: (BRIGHTENING) But I'm having fun! Even if I am dancing alone. I was a pretty good dancer.
8. FIRST SPIRIT: Really? Your "friends" don't think so!
9. SOUND: WALLA--AMID DERISIVE LAUGHS. "YOU CALL THAT DANCING?" "TALK ABOUT A 'SQUARE' DANCER! "GET

BACK ON THE WALL, FLOWER!" "HEY EVERYBODY! GIVE
HER A HAND--OUT!" DERISIVE LAUGHTER--UNDER.

10. FIRST SPIRIT: Face it, Auntie. You were a loser. An outcast.
You never fit in. Because you were too naive to
fit in. Too easy. No... "edge." Your "friends"
called you a... what was it?

11. FRIENDS: (ALL TOGETHER) Loser! (LAUGHING)

SCRIPT HAS BEEN TRUNCATED AT THIS POINT
(several pages later...)

7* MUSIC: [MUS-6] BILL'S MUSIC BOX--UNDER, PLAY THRU.

SCENE SIX: INT. BILL'S PARLOR - DAY
(AUNTIE SCROOGE, FIRST SPIRIT, BILL)

8* AUNTIE SCROOGE: [CUE] [REVERB] (IN AWE) Ah, Bill! As handsome
as ever...

9. FIRST SPIRIT: [REVERB] A cynical young man... who never loved
you enough, Auntie.

10. AUNTIE SCROOGE: Don't say that, Spirit. It didn't matter. I was
so happy loving him...

1. FIRST SPIRIT: Until your own unconditional love came between
you. The more you adored him, the more you lost

favor in his eyes. Do you see yourself? You're older. Your eyes are needy--the eager, restless eyes of a spinster!

2. AUNTIE SCROOGE: (SHAKEN) No! No! No! Spare me this! Not this, Spirit. (PLEADS) No!

3. BILL: (REGRETFUL) This music box is a neat little gift, but you gotta realize you matter little to me, now. It's a hard and cruel world, but you're too soft-hearted. You're a fool for love! You love me no matter what! And frankly, it's suffocating. Another woman's replaced you.

4. AUNTIE SCROOGE Who could ever replace me, Bill?

5. BILL: Somebody cooler! A gal who'll fight back once in a while. Your "miss goody-two shoes" thing was cute at first but, you've got no... no mystery. (SIGHS) You're just too willing.

6. AUNTIE SCROOGE: I'd do anything you want, Bill. Anything for you!

1. BILL: That's just it! I want a challenge, not surrender. Therefore, even though it's Christmas, I'm breaking off our engagement.
2. AUNTIE SCROOGE: (PLEADING) No. No! Bill! Please. Please!
3. BILL: Don't worry. You'll get over me. I ain't so special, anyway. You'll see.
4. MUSIC: BELLE'S MUSIC BOX-FADE IF NOT FINISHED.
5. AUNTIE SCROOGE: (PLEADS) Bill. Bill! No! (PAUSE) Spirit! Show me no more! Why torture me? (SOBS) Remove me! I can't bear it! Haunt me no longer! No longer!
(FADING) No longer!
- 6* MUSIC: [MUS-7] TAKE ME BACK-- (CYMBAL/WIND CHIME) LET FADE.

SCENE SIX: INT. AUNTIE SCROOGE'S BEDROOM - NIGHT
(NARRATOR, SECOND SPIRIT)

- 7* MUSIC: [MUS-8] SPIRIT #2. UP, PLAY THRU.
(CLOCK CHIME SONG/SILENCE/SPIRIT 2 THEME)
- 8* NARRATOR: [CUE] The whole scene disappeared and Auntie Scrooge found herself, once more, ...alone ...back upon her bed. (PAUSE) She drifted off to sleep, only to be awakened... again... by the stroke of One...
- 9* SOUND: CLOCK CHIME (1X).

1. AUNTIE SCROOGE: (GROGGY) I gotta get that clock fixed...
- 2* NARRATOR: ... She gradually noticed a great blaze of ruddy light, glowing from beneath the door. Something was in the outer room...
3. SECOND SPIRIT: [REVERB] Come in. Auntie Scrooge! Come in!
(LAUGHS)
4. SOUND: CREAKING DOOR OPENS UNDER.

SCENE SEVEN: INT. AUNTE SCROOGE'S SITTING ROOM - IMMEDIATELY
(NARRATOR, SECOND SPIRIT, AUNTIE SCROOGE)

- 5* NARRATOR: [CUE] Auntie Scrooge opened the door and beheld her own knitting room--transformed! The walls and ceiling were so strung with tinsel decorations, that it looked a... shopping mall! Around the simulated fire lay a feast of take-out pizzas and donuts and seething bowls of Cap'n Crunch! And there sat a jolly glutton--not a petty bourgeoisie! The Spirit bore a overflowing pouch, shaped like Plenty's horn, and held it up--high up--to shine its blue light...special...on Auntie Scrooge, as she came peeping 'round the door...
6. SECOND SPIRIT: [REVERB] (LAUGHS) Attention holiday shoppers! Auntie Scrooge! Come on down! Come in and know me better. [MORE...]

1. SECOND SPIRIT: (CONT'D) I am the Ghost of Christmas Presents!
You've never seen deals like these before!
2. AUNTIE SCROOGE: [DRY] Er... Spirit, make whatever sales pitch you wish. My last lesson was a doozy and I'm pondering it now. But if you have anything to teach, let it at me. I won't resist.
4. SECOND SPIRIT: (LAUGHS) Very well! Touch... my... remote!
5. MUSIC: [MUS-9] CHRISTMAS PRESENT-UP
- 6* NARRATOR: [CUE] And immediately, Auntie Scrooge and the Spirit found themselves in a tacky condo on Christmas morning. Auntie recognized the place.

SCENE EIGHT: INT. BOBBIE CRATCHIT'S HOME - SECONDS LATER
(SCROOGE, SECOND SPIRIT, MRS. CRATCHIT, PETER, MARTHA,
BELINDA, BOB, TIM,)

- 7* SOUND: GIFT UNWRAPPING. WALLA--KID ARGUING. CONTINUE UNDER.
8. AUNTIE SCROOGE: [REVERB] Why this is the home of my executive assistant, Bobbie Cratchit, her husband and three kids. What's going on here, Spirit?
9. SOUND: SMALL CRASH. WALLA--KID FIGHTING. "GIVE IT BACK." "NO!" "IT'S MINE." "MINE." "MOM!"

1. BOBBIE CRATCHIT: Now, cut that out, Petra! Stop it, Gidget! What has gotten into you kids? Where is that Tiny Tim? Have you seen him, Big Tim?
2. BIG TIM CRATCHIT: No, dear. (UNCARING) But he couldn't have gotten far! Not with that bum leg!
3. SOUND: MEDIUM CRASH.
- 4* BIG TIM CRATCHIT: Here he comes, Bobbie!
5. BOBBIE CRATCHIT: C'mon! We're wasting time! Ohhh! Just unwrap the presents already! Let's get it over with. Here, Gidget... from Grandma Cratchit.
6. SOUND: GIFT UNWRAPPED.
- 7* GIDGET CRATCHIT: Eeew! Yuck! A sweater? I hate this. It's turtle-puke green! Don't ya hate it too, Petra.
- 8* BIG TIM CRATCHIT: I thought that's your favorite color!
9. GIDGET CRATCHIT: Not anymore, Daddy. It's so five-nanoseconds-ago. Here, Petra, you can have it.
10. PETRA CRATCHIT: Don't re-gift me, Gidget Cratchit!
11. BOBBIE CRATCHIT: Stop that! (CALLING OUT) Hurry up, Tiny Tim! Get in here! You're gonna miss the whole thing.
12. SOUND: BIG CRASH.

- 1* BIG TIM CRATCHIT: Tiny Tim is getting closer, Bobbie. Well, while we're waiting, here's my gift to you... Merry Christmas.
2. SOUND: GIFT BEING UNWRAPPED--UNDER.
3. BOBBIE CRATCHIT: Merry Christmas, Big Tim. But this better not be another vacuum cleaner like last...
(DISMAYED) Ohhh...
4. GIDGET CRATCHIT: Nice frying pan, Mom!
5. BIG TIM CRATCHIT: (SMIRKING) Whaddya think, honey?
6. SOUND: FRYING PAN HITTING SMARTY PANTS HUSBAND'S HEAD.
7. BIG TIM CRATCHIT: Ow!
8. BOBBIE CRATCHIT: (ANGRY) Go on, Petra. Open this one.
9. SOUND: GIFT UNWRAPPED.
- 10* PETRA CRATCHIT: (DISAPPOINTED) Oh, This is sooooo lame!
11. BOBBIE CRATCHIT: What? You said you wanted the "Egad-It's-an-iPad." It comes loaded with twenty gigabytes of the latest "boy band" videos, apps and tunes. That's what...? Forty-thousand songs?
12. PETRA CRATCHIT: I already heard all these songs! They're "oldies" now! How could you, Mom? I hate it!
13. BOBBIE CRATCHIT: OK, Petra. Just put it back in the box. We'll re-gift it to some...

1. SOUND: IPAD BEING STOMPED TO PIECES--UNDER
2. BOBBIE CRATCHI: Or take it back to the store....
(SFX: CRUNCH) and say it...(SFX:CRUNCH) had a software bug.
3. AUNTIE SCROOGE: (GASPS) My goodness, Spirit. These Cratchit kids behave terribly! Bob Marley's ghost was right!
4. SECOND SPIRIT: Not at all, Auntie! These are the kind of consumers who drive the economy! They generate manufacturing jobs--um.... overseas, at least. Ahhh. Look! Big Tim Cratchit's got a special gift in-store for Tiny Tim, who's just crawling up here now...
5. BIG TIM CRATCHIT: OK, Tiny Tim. Here's your present. Open it up!
6. SOUND: GIFT UNWRAPPED--SLOWLY
7. BOBBIE CRATCHIT: We hope you like it, Tiny Tim!
8. SOUND: UKELELE STRINGS BEING RAKED ("MY DOG HAS FLEAS")
- 9* TINY TIM: (SINGS A FALSETTO NOTE--VERY LONG) "ohhhhhhhh!"
10. GIDGET CRATCHIT: (GROANS) No! Not another ukulele for him, Mom!
11. MUSIC: [MUS-10] "TIPTOE THROUGH THE TULIPS" ON UKE.

- 1* TINY TIM CRATCHIT: (SINGS ALONG)
- Tiptoe to the window. By the window
that is where I'll be!
Come tiptoe through the tulips with me!
2. PETRA CRATCHIT: Oh, somebody stop him! God save us, every one!
3. TINY TIM CRATCHIT: Tiptoe from your pillow,
to the shadow of a willow tree
And tiptoe through the tulips with me!
(START FIRST VERSE AGAIN AND CONTINUE UNDER.)
4. AUNTIE SCROOGE: (TROUBLED) Oh, Spirit. I had no idea that poor
Bobbie Cratchit's Christmas was so wretched!
This is truly awful! ...To see a grown man
singing like that. But Tell me, Spirit, will
poor, crippled Tiny Tim die?
5. SECOND SPIRIT: Not soon enough! Come, Auntie Scrooge, before
he gets to the bridge! There's more Christmas
presents, across town...
6. MUSIC: [MUS-11] FREDERICKA'S PARLOR--UNDER

SCENE NINE: INT. FREDERICKA'S PARLOR - AFTERNOON
(AUNTIE SCROOGE, SECOND SPIRIT, FREDERICKA, KIM)

- 7* AUNTIE SCROOGE: [REVERB] Ahh, Fredericka--and her co-habitant,
Kim. But no... friends for Christmas dinner?
What kind of Christmas is this?

1. FREDERICKA: (FADING IN) ...And then, Kim--get this--she said to me that my Bo-bah proposal was a... a... bum hand-bag! And she believed it!
3. KIM: Wait. A "bum"... what?
4. FREDERICKA: A "bum hand-bag"--a purse full of junk. Twaddle! It's one of her old-fashioned expressions. From the Seventies, I think.
5. KIM: Well, she's a fool, Fredericka. You've told me that.
6. FREDERICKA: And she's living in a fool's paradise! Auntie Scrooge trusts too many people. Has too many high ideals. She runs too many risks--and with my future nest-egg.
7. KIM: Well, one of these days, she'll be gone and then you do what you want with the company.
8. FREDERICKA: But when? If we were smart, we'd sell the "I.C. Scrooge" name to the giant Yum-nivorous liquid-dessert corporation.
9. KIM: Oh, yeah! They're big time. Didn't they sell Eskimo Pies to the Eskimos?
10. FREDERICKA: Yes. And they would take my advice about "Dentist, the Menace."

1. KIM: It's brilliant, dear. So "edgy."
2. FREDERICKA: Yeah, but Auntie Scrooge won't allow it! Her relentlessly (SNOTTY) "positive"--but-actually-naïve--outlook will cost us millions!
3. KIM: Go, ahead, dear, vent. Get it all out!
4. FREDERICKA: (SEETHING) Oooh! She's stifled my career! I'm sure somebody will steal my "Harry Potter--Teeth Rotter" idea and clean up.

SCRIPT HAS BEEN TRUNCATED AT THIS POINT

(several pages later...)

10. MUSIC: [MUS-12] MONTAGE THEME--UNDER, PLAY THRU.
(TRANSITION/GOD REST YE HORNS)

SCENE TEN: EXT - TRIP AROUND THE WORLD - NIGHT
(NARRATOR)

1* SOUND: WIND. JINGLE BELLS.

2* NARRATOR: [CUE] And with that, Auntie Scrooge and The Ghost of Christmas Presents traveled 'round the world. Much they saw, and far they went. And many malls they visited--but not with many "happy" returns. They stood in long lines at stores with legions of shoppers complaining. They saw holiday travelers strip-searched at airports and mired in traffic jams in terrible weather. (PAUSE) They saw department-store Santas un-bearded by disillusioned tots and heard "Well, it's the thought that counts" countless times from ungrateful gift-recipients. (PAUSE) They saw lonely people choose to end their lives on a holiday celebrating a birth. (PAUSE) And everywhere, the happiness brought by material goods was fleeting, but mankind pursued them more doggedly every year. (LONG PAUSE) At last, they returned to the streets of New London... for the Spirit's final lesson... but the Spirit had... aged.

SCENE ELEVEN: EXT. NEW LONDON STREET - ALMOST MIDNIGHT
(SECOND SPIRIT, AUNTIE SCROOGE, NARRATOR)

- 1* SECOND SPIRIT: [REVERB] My life upon this globe, has a short shelf-life. My time with you, Auntie Scrooge, is almost done. Have you learned by what I have shown you what dwells within mankind's heart?
2. AUNTIE SCROOGE: [REVERB] What do you mean learned? You've shown me nothing but greed and ingratitude, consumerism and callousness, longing and despair. This is dispiriting, Spirit!
3. SECOND SPIRIT: And that is my point, Scrooge. It is a reality check for you--one that won't bounce.
4. AUNTIE SCROOGE: This world is full of woe, but that's why we need Christmas--now, more than ever. If we can just give to one another, give ourselves, without all the strings and ribbons attached, then maybe things will work out.
5. SECOND SPIRIT: Get real, Auntie! That "positive thinking" stuff doesn't work! Look who's ruining the world today! Greedy, fearful, ignorant people! They've corrupted religion, government, business, culture! And they're immensely successful! Don't be a loser! You've got to fight fire with fire! Join the rat race!

1. AUNTIE SCROOGE: But what if the "losers" like me--what if we banded together--used the internet or something to pool our resources...? Promote green causes... Sold healthy products? What if we used our money... for good?

2. SECOND SPIRIT: (MOCKING HER) Ha! "It's only money!" "It's only money" (FADING) "It's only money!" "It's only money..." (FADES)

SCENE TWELVE: EXT. STREET - SECONDS LATER
(NARRATOR, AUNTIE SCROOGE, TECH SUPPORT)

3. MUSIC: [MUS-13] TRANSITION/THIRD SPIRIT THEME--UNDER

4* NARRATOR: [CUE] (SPOOKILY) And with that, the Spirit of Christmas Presents disappeared! (PAUSE) Auntie Scrooge stood upon the deserted street, awaiting the next ghostly visitor! Just then, there rang out a chilling bell, striking Twelve mid-night! Auntie Scrooge knew it was tolling for... (PAUSE) Ahem! (REPEATING, AS IN ASKING FOR THE SFX) I said, "Just then there rang out a chilling bell, striking Twelve mid-night." (PAUSE) Hey! Sound effects artist! Where's that "chilling bell striking Twelve mid-night?"

5. SOUND: CELLPHONE RINGS (2X) THEN CONTINUES UNDER UNTIL AUNTIE ANSWERS.

- 1* NARRATOR: [CUE] (GROANS) Oh! Whatever! It'll have to do... (RESUMING, SPOOKILY) Well... Auntie Scrooge knew it was tolling for her! And she now beheld... the most fearsome spirit of all! The Ghost of Christmas Future!
2. AUNTIE SCROOGE: (ANSWERING, SCARED) Er... Hello? This is Auntie Scrooge.
3. TECH SUPPORT: [PHONE VOICE] (CHEERY INDIAN ACCENT) Hello. This is "Tracey", how may I assist you?
4. AUNTIE SCROOGE: (PUZZLED) What? Hey! Is this... (ULP) the Ghost of Christmas Future?
5. TECH SUPPORT: Um... Yes. But he's not here right now. We expect him... soon. However, I would be happy to assist you. This is tech support.
5. AUNTIE SCROOGE: (PUZZLED) What? Tech support? I thought I was... going to be talking to a... spirit!
6. TECH SUPPORT: Well... I am a disembodied voice. I do possess special knowledge. And I am calling from far away.
7. AUNTIE SCROOGE: Far away? Do you mean... "the Great... Beyond?"
8. TECH SUPPORT: Uh... Actually, it's a call center in Bangalore, India. Now, how may I help you?

1. AUNTIE SCROOGE: Bangalore, India? Is... this the Christmas of the Future?
2. TECH SUPPORT: Yes! In the future, they've outsourced Christmas... to India! It's cheaper that way.
3. AUNTIE SCROOGE: India? You don't have much of an accent!
4. TECH SUPPORT: Thank you, ba-hoo-gee! Oh, and we don't call it "Christmas of the Future" anymore. Now it's: (SMILINGLY) "Christmas: Version Three-Point-Oh."
5. AUNTIE SCROOGE: (PAUSE) Oh. Well... golly..., I'm not so sure about all this. This wasn't what I had in mind.
6. TECH SUPPORT: That's the thing about the Future! It's never what you had in mind.
7. AUNTIE SCROOGE: Yeah, but "tech support...?"
8. TECH SUPPORT: Well... you are having problems; Problems you hope will be solved in the future. You need tech support. There's tech support for your computer, your car, your fax machine---and now... your life!
9. AUNTIE SCROOGE: (UNCERTAIN) Oh...kay. Well, what is in my future?

1. TECH SUPPORT: In your future? (HAPPILY) Death! Your computer will die, your car will die--and that fax machine...? It's not long for this world!
2. AUNTIE SCROOGE: Oh, no!
3. TECH SUPPORT: Oh yes! (PAUSE) And... one more thing. You... too! You will die.
4. AUNTIE SCROOGE: (GASPS) Oh!
5. TECH SUPPORT: (SORRY) Um... I hope this isn't news to you. According to our database, everyone dies. (DISMISSINGLY) Those "lifetime" warranties always run out. And, I wouldn't put much faith in those religious, "afterlife-time" warranties either.
6. AUNTIE SCROOGE: (SHAKEN) So... I'm going to die? Umm... Will it be... soon?
7. TECH SUPPORT: Well... mmmm.... (LOOKING IT UP) Let's just say you will outlive your fax machine!
8. AUNTIE SCROOGE: But... will I die... (INHALE) alone?
9. TECH SUPPORT: If you don't wish to die alone, there are options. You could always pick up a psychotic hitch-hiker! Or perhaps take a whole post office with you. It's your choice.

1. AUNTIE SCROOGE: Well, when I die. Um, will I leave much of a legacy? My ice-cream business?
2. TECH SUPPORT: Let's see... (LOOKING IT UP) The I. C. Scrooge company? I'm sorry... but there is no legacy showing up. All I can see is a smoking ruin-- after the big fire.
3. AUNTIE SCROOGE: Big fire? At the factory? Oh no! What about my niece, Fredericka? And Bobbie Cratchit? Do they die?
4. TECH SUPPORT: No! They make a killling! By selling off the "Scrooge" brand name to the giant Yum-nivrous liquid-dessert corporation.
5. AUNTIE SCROOGE: What about me? What about my good will? All the delight and good cheer I've tried to spread? My dreams!
6. TECH SUPPORT: (MATTER OF FACTLY) Oh, they will all be betrayed. You see, just like your fax machine, dreams die too. Nothing lasts... And neither do you.
7. AUNTIE SCROOGE: (DEVASTATED) Well... I'm... shattered!
8. TECH SUPPORT: (HAPPILY) You needn't be! But that is the standard option. OK. How should I close this inquiry?

1. AUNTIE SCROOGE: Well, what's the use of trying to do good? If it's all a waste? If everything dies, why even bother? (SIGHS) I give up.
2. TECH SUPPORT: Me too! (HAPPILY) Very well. I am happy to have been of service. Thank you for calling Christmas: Version three-point-oh. Have a nice day! Or in your case... not. (HANGS UP)
3. MUSIC: [MUS-14] CHRISTMAS PAST--FADE IT AT END OF NARRATION.

SCENE THIRTEEN: - INT. AUNTIE SCROOGE'S BEDROOM - MORNING

- 4* NARRATOR: [CUE] And suddenly, Auntie Scrooge found herself back in her bedroom. Safe and sound. But in reality--which is where she now found herself finally living--she was neither safe, nor sound. Just human. (PAUSE) The visits by Bob Marley's ghost and the three Spirits had succeeded in freeing her from the false hopes she'd relied on her entire life. Now, unburdened by illusion, she took all the love, hope, dreams and other bunk that she'd used to prop up herself up through misfortune, tied them up in a handkerchief...
(SFX: CHIMES MUFFLED INTO HANKIE) and locked them away, deep in her purse. [MORE...]

1. NARRATOR: (CONT'D) Chastened by fate, Auntie Scrooge had finally left her Fool's Paradise and was now living in the real world, with the rest of us. She'd have to muddle through, just like everyone else.

2. MUSIC: [MUS-15] CHRISTMAS DAY-UP, UNDER, FADE AT END OF NARRATION.

SCENE FOURTEEN: INT. AUNTIE SCROOGE'S HOUSE - DAY
(NARRATOR)

3* NARRATOR: [CUE] Auntie Scrooge spent Christmas day like other normal people. She got up and opened the few presents she'd bought for herself--as a ruse to convince her that somebody cared; She went to church and sat while everybody went through the motions. Back home, she listened to old Christmas records she'd heard too many times before; She went to lunch at a Chinese restaurant with some Jewish neighbors. She channel-surfed through sentimental and tasteless comic holiday films on TV. And... oh yes! She made out her will--leaving everything to her niece, Fredericka.

4. MUSIC: [MUS-16] SAD SILENT NIGHT--UNDER. LET IT FINISH.

1. NARRATOR: [CONT'D] (PAUSE) As night fell, Auntie Scrooge arrived--unfashionably late--at the company Christmas Party. The dreary affair was just what she needed--a total downer!

SCENE FIFTEEN: INT. OFFICE CHRISTMAS PARTY - NIGHT
(NARRATOR, BOBBIE, AUNTIE, FREDERICKA, KIM, WALLA)

2. SOUND: WALLA--BORED CROWD-UNDER. GLASSES CLINK.

3. BOBBIE CRATCHIT: [CUE] (CHEERLESS) Ho-ho-hum! (DULLY) Merry Christmas, Auntie Scrooge. You're... late.

4. AUNTIE SCROOGE: (FEARFUL OF DEATH) Late...? Don't bury me yet! Oh, sorry, Bobbie. I had a rough... night. Um, how's the rest of the Cratchit family doing?

5. BOBBIE CRATCHIT: Don't ask. They're around here somewhere. Oh, here's Fredericka! I gotta go find Big Tim.

6. SOUND: BOBBIE WALKS OFF. FREDERICKA AND KIM STEP UP.

7. FREDERICKA: (DULL) Hello, Auntie. How's your Christmas? You remember Kim, here.

8. KIM: (TO AUNTIE) Hello, old girl. My! You don't look like you got much sleep last night.

9. AUNTIE SCROOGE: Actually, Christmas Eve was quite an eye-opener for me. I did a lot of thinking.

10. FREDERICKA: Did you?

1. AUNTIE SCROOGE: Er...Yes. And I've decided to step down from running the firm... and let you take over, Fredericka.
2. KIM: (STARTLED) You... what?
3. AUNTIE SCROOGE: That's right. It's time for somebody who's got a hipper view of the real world to run things.
4. FREDERICKA: Well, it's about time, Auntie. You've nearly run this company into the ground, if you don't mind me saying so.
5. AUNTIE SCROOGE: No, I guess you're right. Do whatever you want with the company. I won't stand in your way.
6. FREDERICKA: Wow! That's great news--for me! I've got to go tell Bobbie! (EXITING) We'll start making changes immediately!
7. KIM: Say... you don't look very good, Auntie. Are you ill? Your brow is sweating.
8. AUNTIE SCROOGE: Sweating? (FLUSHED) Oh... I'll just dab my forehead with my hankie a bit.
9. SOUND: AUNTIE SCROOGE WALKS. OPENS PURSE UNDER.
HANDLING HANDKIE/WIND CHIMES.
10. KIM: (CALLING AFTER HER) Go get yourself a drink of the holiday egg nog over at the punch bowl.

1. AUNTIE SCROOGE: (TO HERSELF) Well. (SIGH) Hmm. This may be my last batch of Holiday Egg-Nog. Um... What's this?--wrapped up in my hankie? Oh! Yeah.
(SIGHS) All the love and dreams and hope that caused me so much trouble. Well, I don't need this anymore. Oh! Whoops! Right into the bowl!
2. SOUND: HANKIE/CHIMES PLOPS INTO EGG NOG BOWL.
3. FREDERICKA: (DISTANT) Attention! Attention everybody.
4. BOBBIE CRATCHIT: (DISTANT) Wake up, you zombies! I see the tired faces, the briefcases. I want everybody to come over here. Right now! It's toast time. Nog up!
5. SOUND: (DISTANT) WALLA--CROWD STIRS.
AUNTIE DIPS LADLE IN EGG NOG. FILLS A CUP.
6. AUNTIE: Goodness! I can't find my hankie in the punch bowl. Well, I might as well have some egg-nog anyway... (SIPS) Mmmmm. Say, this is delicious!
7. FREDERICKA: (DISTANT) OK. Listen up! This is a brand new day for the I.C. Scrooge & Marley company.
8. SOUND: WALLA--INTERESTED.
- 9* FREDERICKA: Yes! I'm proud to announce that I've appointed myself new president of the company!
10. SOUND: WALLA--STUNNED.

- 1* BOBBIE CRATCHIT: That's right, everybody! Auntie Scrooge has stepped down and Fredericka is the new CEO!
2. SOUND: WALLA--GASP. STUNNED & MEAGER APPLAUSE
3. FREDERICKA: Thank you, thank you! Now...! There's gonna be changes around here. Lots of them. Starting with our product line. Tell 'em, Bobbie!
4. BOBBIE CRATCHIT: First, we're gonna shut down the money-losing Holiday Egg-Nog production line!
5. SOUND: WALLA--GASP.
6. FREDERICKA: Then, we're gonna start making Bo-bah!
7. ALL: (AD LIB, NOT TOGETHER) Bo-bah? What's that?
8. BOBBIE CRATCHIT: Never mind! It's a company secret.
9. FREDERICKA: And it's gonna make us rich! Well, some of us, anyway!
10. BOBBIE CRATCHIT: I propose a toast! A toast to...
11. A SINGLE VOICE: How about a toast to Auntie Scrooge?!
12. SOUND: WALLA--ANGRY CRIES "YEAH!" "AUNTIE" "AUNTIE SCROOGE."
13. AUNTIE SCROOGE: (CALLING OUT) (VIVACIOUS) OK. A toast to me! Sure, gang! Have yourself some of my Holiday Egg-Nog. Whadaya say?

1. SOUND: WALLA--"YEAH!" "I WANT SOME." "ME TOO."
FOOTSTEPS MILLING. EGG-NOG LADLED OUT--UNDER
2. FREDERICKA: Yes! Go ahead! Drink up. It's our last batch.
Finish it! We're out of the egg-nog business!
3. SOUND; WALLA--CROWD GETS BOISTEROUS--CONTINUE UNDER--
BUT BUILD TO INSANITY AS NARRATION DESCRIBES.
- 4* NARRATOR: [CUE] But then the most extraordinary thing
happened! As every man, woman, and child drank
the egg nog, they felt refreshed! Rejuvenated!
They found new energy. New willingness. And
great joy. All Heaven broke loose! Soon the
entire crowd was ecstatic! Out of control!
5. SOUND: WALLA--UPROARIOUS CROWD. AND---HAVE CRASHES,
RUNNING, COWS, CHICKENS, ETC READY---PEFORM AS
CALLED FOR.
6. NARRATOR: They added five more gallons of egg nog to the
punch bowl and everyone filled their cups
again. Suddenly, dancing broke out.
(DANCE/CLAP) Then footraces! (RUNNING) Three
hundred people playing Blind Man's Buff!
(SFX: CRASHES) They were swinging from the
light fixtures! ("WHOOOAAA")
[MORE...]

1. NARRATOR: (CONT'D) Trampolining with table cloths! (SHOUT AND WHEEE!) Then, somebody let the cows in... (STAMPEDE AND MOOING) ...who promptly got nogged. Then the chickens joined the fun! (SQUAWKS) Then everybody got... naked... and threw their clothes in a pile.
2. MUSIC: [MUS-17] CONGA LINE (1-2-3-456, ETC) WALLA--CHANTS TOO.
- 3* NARRATOR: They formed a conga line and danced around and around! But at the peak of the frenzy, the Christmas tree caught fire! (SCREAMS, PANIC, RUNNING) and burned the building down.
4. SFX-TRACK: [MUS-17] FIRE TRUCK SIRENS--FADE UNDER.

SCENE SIXTEEN: INT. RADIO STUDIO - LIVE
(NARRATOR, AUNTIE SCROOGE, ALL)

5. MUSIC: [MUS-18] WE WISH YOU... -- STOP WHEN AUNTIE SHOWS UP.
- 6* NARRATOR: (CALMER) Well, although nobody was killed, the big fire completely wiped out the I.C. Scrooge & Marley chilled-desert-manufacturing company. They lost everything. It appears the prediction of the Ghost of Christmas Version three-point-oh, was right: Everybody lost their jobs--even the cows. All that remained was for Fredericka and Bobbie to sell the 'Scrooge' name.
- [MORE...]

1. NARRATOR: [CONT'D] (PAUSE) As for Auntie Scrooge, well, she really learned her lesson. Her carelessness by dropping that hankie full of love and dreams into the egg-nog cost everyone dearly. Bob Marley and the Spirits had been right! In a world of worry, it's futile to be generous, open, and ever-willing. (PAUSE) And so... Auntie Scrooge curled up in a little ball and... (NEXT WORDS WOULD BE: "died of grief.")
2. MUSIC: ABRUPTLY STOP THE MUSIC-- (NO FADE, JUST STOP)
3. AUNTIE SCROOGE: What a bum hand-bag! Hey, you! Narrator! That's the worst ending I've ever heard!
3. NARRATOR: What? Auntie Scrooge?!
4. AUNTIE SCROOGE: That's right! I can't abide a life-negating bunch of cynical tripe like this! It's a... a... bum hand-bag! Twaddle! That's what it is!
5. NARRATOR: (WHISPERS) Shhh! Go away. This show is over!
7. AUNTIE SCOOGE: Oh, no it ain't! I got bet-tah! I recovered my joy! After seeing how my own love and hope could be spread to everybody else, I went over your "edge!" So, your smug, liittle un-happily ever-after ending is hereby kaput!

1. NARRATOR: (CORRECTING HER) Oh, no it ain't! It says, right here in the script. Look! "And so... Auntie Scrooge curled up in little ball and..."
2. AUNTIE SCROOGE: Gimmie that script, you!
3. SOUND: SCRIPT BEING GRABBED, RIPPED UP.
- 4* NARRATOR: Hey! You can't do that! This is a radio drama! (ULP) Without a script, what do we do now?
5. AUNTIE SCROOGE: Now?... We'll we're gonna have to improvise!
6. NARRATOR: What? Hey, I don't make this stuff up. I just read it.
7. AUNTIE SCROOGE: OK. I'll teach you how to improvise. The first rule is "Don't deny." You gotta say "Yes." "Yes" to everything and "Yes" to everybody. (TO CROWD) Hey, gang!
8. ALL: (NOT PERFECTLY IN UNISON) Yes?
9. AUNTIE SCROOGE: Want a happy ending to this story? To life!
10. ALL: Yes!
11. AUNTIE SCROOGE: OK. It's all about willingness! Now. Answer me some questions. We were all gloomy, right?
12. ALL: Yes!
13. AUNTIE SCROOGE: And we drank that spiked egg-nog, right?

1. ALL: Yes!
2. AUNTIE SCROOGE: And then we all felt love and goodness and joy, right?
3. ALL: Yes!
4. AUNTIE SCROOGE: And then everybody had a blast, right?
5. ALL: Yes!
6. AUNTIE SCROOGE: And then the building burnt down.
7. ALL: (LESS WILLING) Yes. (AD LIB—"umm... huh?")
8. AUNTIE SCROOGE: (CHIDING THEM) Wait! Stay with me. Go with it! You gotta embrace it. The good and the bad!
9. ALL: (A BIT MORE WILLING) Yes?
10. AUNTIE SCROOGE: That's the secret. You gotta learn to love it, no matter what happens to you. Yes?
11. ALL: (MORE WILLING) Yes!
12. AUNTIE SCROOGE: It's just what we needed. Some humbling, right?
13. ALL: (MORE WILLING) Yes!
14. AUNTIE SCROOGE: OK. So... where were we? Ah, yes... the building burnt down, right?
15. ALL: (WILLING) Yes!
16. AUNTIE SCROOGE: And we lost our jobs, right?
17. ALL: (WILLING) Yes!

- 1. AUNTIE SCROOGE: But we won't sob, yes?

- 2. ALL: (WILLING) Yes!

- 3. AUNTIE SCROOTE: We'll make plenty of money... selling...

- 4. ALL: Spiked egg-nog! (CHEER) Yesssss!

- 5. MUSIC: [MUS-19] "WHO SPIKED THE EGG NOG"-- UP AND PLAY THROUGH

- 6. ALL: (SINGS) Egg nog! Who spiked the egg nog?
 That crazy Christmas pick me up
 Let's all have another cup, of that...
 Egg nog! Who spiked the egg nog?
 Ho-ho-ho! I've got to have some more!
 Ho-ho-ho! I've got to have some more!
 Ho-ho-ho! I've got to have some more!

- 7. NARRATOR: (OVER THE SONG) And that concludes our program:
Auntie Scrooge, a BACKWARDS Christmas Carol!
 Our program was written and scored by Anthony
 E. Palermo and starred: _____,
 _____,' _____'
 _____,' _____'
 _____,' _____'
 _____,' _____'
 _____,' _____'
 _____,' _____'
 _____,' _____'
 and _____ . (MORE...)

1. NARRATOR: This has been a production of the
_____ Radio Network.
"Mooerry" Christmas, everybody!

5. COW CAROLERS: Mooooooooooooooooooooooooooooo!

-THE END-

CASTING: "AUNTIE SCROOGE" 18/8

Date: _____

| | |
|-----------------------------|---|
| NARRATOR | Cynical announcer (male or female) |
| AUNTIE SCROOGE | Happy old lady executive. (female) |
| FRED/FREDERICKA | Auntie's greedy heir (male/female) |
| BOBBIE CRATCHIT | Auntie's nasty VP (male/female) |
| BOB MARLEY'S GHOST | Santa Suited spirit reggae star (male) |
| GHOST OF CHRISTMAS PAST-DUE | Lecturing psycho-shrink (male/female) |
| BILL | Jilting young suitor of Auntie (male) |
| GHOST OF CHRISTMAS PRESENTS | Materialist Spirit (male/female) |
| BIG TIM/TINA CRATCHIT | Spouse of Bobbie Cratchit (male/female) |
| GIDGET/GIDGE CRATCHIT | Cratchit teenager (male/female) |
| PETRA/PETER CRATCHIT | Cratchit pre-teen (male/female) |
| TINY TIM CRATCHIT | Falsetto-singing ukulele-player (male) |
| KIM | Domestic partner of Fred/Fredericka (m/f) |
| TECH SUPPORT | Tech support, Christmas 3.0 (male/female) |
| COW-OLERS | Several Singing cows (male or female) |

ALSO: FUZZY-WIGWAM FRIENDS, OFFICE PARTY GUESTS, CHICKENS

=====

Audition ratings: A through F

| Actor Name | Bold | Emotion | Accents | Who | X |
|------------|------|---------|---------|-----|---|
| | | | | | |
| | | | | | |
| | | | | | |
| | | | | | |
| | | | | | |
| | | | | | |
| | | | | | |
| | | | | | |
| | | | | | |
| | | | | | |
| | | | | | |
| | | | | | |
| | | | | | |
| | | | | | |
| | | | | | |
| | | | | | |
| | | | | | |
| | | | | | |
| | | | | | |
| | | | | | |
| | | | | | |
| | | | | | |
| | | | | | |
| | | | | | |
| | | | | | |
| | | | | | |
| | | | | | |
| | | | | | |
| | | | | | |
| | | | | | |

| Actor Name | Bold | Emotion | Accents | Who | X |
|-------------------|-------------|----------------|----------------|------------|----------|
| | | | | | |
| | | | | | |
| | | | | | |
| | | | | | |
| | | | | | |
| | | | | | |
| | | | | | |
| | | | | | |
| | | | | | |
| | | | | | |
| | | | | | |
| | | | | | |
| | | | | | |
| | | | | | |
| | | | | | |
| | | | | | |
| | | | | | |
| | | | | | |
| | | | | | |
| | | | | | |
| | | | | | |
| | | | | | |
| | | | | | |
| | | | | | |
| | | | | | |
| | | | | | |
| | | | | | |
| | | | | | |

CASTING MONOLOGUES: "Auntie Scrooge"

The casting director will cast the roles in our production based upon "lukewarm readings." Please take a moment to read the lines below several times, both silently and aloud. These monologues provide a bit of a "back story" giving an idea of who the characters are. Since radio actors often play several parts, we encourage the use of different voices or accents for the different roles.

NARRATOR:

I'm the narrator. I describe the details of each scene and tell the audience what is happening. This is "Ghost Story of Christmas" requires a good story teller to make the scary parts scary and the snide parts, snide--that's my job. BTW, I drip cynicism and snark.

(PAUSE) As night fell, Auntie Scrooge arrived--unfashionably late--at the company Christmas Party. The dreary affair was just what she needed--a total downer!

AUNTIE SCROOGE:

I'm Auntie Scrooge and I think Christmas is a grand opportunity for time-honored traditions, like our annual--and generous--Christmas night party. I've tried to keep up the reformed Scrooge family tradition of being kind and generous and sweet, but not... teeth-rottingly sweet! Foisting more commercialism on Christmas??? Oh! Bum hand-bag! A bunch of nonsense!

BOBBIE CRATCHIT: (STERNLY) Auntie! Your kind of... Christmas is... financial suicide! These are lean, hard times! We need to stop making egg-nog and switch to Bo-bah--the Taiwanese soft-drink. It's made from tea and milk and tapioca globules. And emulsifiers, stabilizer, and hi-fructose corn syrup. Plus preservatives, of course. But they prolong the shelf life--to all year long! Tiny Tim loves it! Be sensible, now.

FREDERICKA/FRED: (UPSET) My old, Aunt Scrooge is a fool! And she's living in a fool's paradise! Auntie trusts too many people. Has too many high ideals. She runs too many risks--and with my future nest-egg. Like this--she said my idea of selling Bo-bah was a... a... bum hand-bag! --a purse full of junk. Twaddle! It's one of her old-fashioned expressions. From the Seventies, I think.

BOB MARLEY'S GHOST: (JAMAICAN ACCENT) Ooooh! Booooooh! I'm dead, but that's how you get to be a ghost! Don't you see my dreadlocks? I am the sad ghost of Bob Marley. Full of... dreads. I and I are doomed to forever spread joy, good cheer. A symbol of dope. I mean hope! That's why the Santa suit, mon. Don't be a fool, Auntie, like I was.

(ROOSTER-LIKE, BOB MARLEY WAIL) Ohhhhhhh, mon!

BILL: I'm Bill. I was Auntie Scrooge's fiancée when she was young. It's a hard and cruel world, but she was soft-hearted! A fool for love! She loved me no matter what! And frankly... I found it suffocating! I said, sorry, kid but... take a hike!

TECH SUPPORT: (CHEERY INDIAN ACCENT) Hello, tech support. Oh, you expected the "Spirit of Christmas Future?" Well... I am a disembodied voice. I do possess special knowledge. And I am calling from far away. Now, let me see, in your future... Death. But If you don't wish to die alone, there are options. You could always pick up a psychotic hitch-hiker! Or perhaps take a whole post office with you. It's your choice!

Sound Effects for Auntie Scrooge - a BACKWARDS *Christmas Carol*

JINGLING BELLS
COWS MOOING (Vocalized)
CHICKENS (Vocalized)
SINGLE NOTE ON PITCH PIPE/HARMONICA
CLOCK CHIME (7X)
DOOR OPENS / CLOSES / SLAMS
FOOTSTEPS
AUNTIE'S FOOTSTEPS IN SNOW
LOCKS
BELLS
CRASH / SMALL CRASH, MEDIUM CRASH, BIG CRASH
JINGLE BELLS BEING DRAGGED
THUNDER-RUMBLE
DRAGGING FOOTSTEPS
CASHBOXES
CHAINS
GLASSES CLINK
DANCING
CREAKING DOOR OPENS
GIFT UNWRAPPING
FRYING PAN HITTING HUSBAND'S HEAD
IPAD BEING STOMPED TO PIECES
UKELELE STRINGS BEING RAKED
CELLPHONE RINGS
PURSE OPENING
WIND CHIMES MUFFLED INTO HANKIE:
HANKIE/CHIMES PLOPS INTO EGG-NOG BOWL
LADLE BEING DIPPED INTO EGG-NOG BOWL
EGG-NOG BEING LADLED INTO GLASSES
STAMPEDE
SCRIPT BEING GRABBED, RIPPED UP.

Live Sound Effect Cookbook: Auntie Scrooge - a BACKWARDS *Christmas Carol*

JINGLING BELLS

Shake jingle bells 1-2-3-4 1-2-3-4, etc.

COWS MOOING (Vocalized)

CHICKENS (Vocalized)

SINGLE NOTE ON PITCH PIPE/HARMONICA

Blow a single note on a pitch pipe or harmonica. As a gag, have it be a far different note that what Auntie or the cows will begin to sing.

CLOCK CHIME (strikes 7X) (available on pre-recorded SFX track)

Strike a small bell with a mallet

DOOR

Slam, close or open a door in conduction with small bell.

While you can try the typical prop doors used in stage plays, I suggest you build a small SFX door to stand on the SFX table. For photos of my SFX doors, see: www.ruyasonic.com/ruya_news.htm You can make a small door from a single panel off an old 4 or 5 panel door--which can be found at architectural salvage yards. Build a frame out of 1"x6" pine. Use 2-1/2" non-mortise hinges. What's important for a good SFX door is to use an old-style mortise lockset. Search at Amazon.com or Google for: "Mag Engineering" #8785 Brass Mort Lock. The lockset and strike are more important than the door dimensions. Attach 1"x3" wooden feet to the frame so it can stand upright. Clamp those feet to the SFX table so the door won't rock when you slam it.

FOOTSTEPS: (MEN OR WOMEN)

Shoes walking on walk-board (a 3/4" thick piece of 18" x 24").

FOOTSTEPS - HIGH-HEELS (WOMEN):

Shoes walking on walk-board (use heels). Or 9-volt battery terminals--alternatingly--on wooden surface.

AUNTIE'S FOOTSTEPS IN SNOW

Flex a box of corn starch rhythmically.

LOCKS

Twist a ratchet wrench. Or wiggle door knob.

BELLS (available on pre-recorded SFX track)
Ring several different hand bells.

CRASH / SMALL CRASH, MEDIUM CRASH, BIG CRASH

Shake or rotate crash box SFX device. You can make one from a popcorn can, the kind Christmas popcorn comes in (11 inches high and 10 inches in diameter--a bit larger than a basketball).

Dump the popcorn and put in one broken ceramic coffee mug, one crushed aluminum can, a few pennies, a few screws, one piece of wood (about the size of a fist), and two handfuls of pea-sized gravel. Tape the lid shut with grey duct tape--around the seam. Keep the lid on tight or the junk or its soon-to-be fine dust will leak out. Don't use glasses or wine bottles because they powderize too much. Ceramic coffee mugs are sturdier and sound similar.

As in most SFX work, manipulation is everything. Use a two handed shake and roll motion to get a variety of crashes out of it. When shaking it for a sound effects cue, you have to remember to end the motion with the can upright or you'll create unwanted crashing/settling as you put the can down. If not, your actor will have to ad-lib "Look! Marley's crashing...again."

JINGLE BELLS BEING DRAGGED

Take several jingle bells and drag them across a piece of wood in a rhythmic, walking fashion.

THUNDER-RUMBLE (available on pre-recorded SFX track)

Shake a 6"x6" thunder drum close to the mic. Search Google for: *schylling "thunder maker" or "Remo Spring Drum" (7"x16")*

DRAGGING FOOTSTEPS

Ghostly drag-steps and sneaky, soft footsteps on 18"x18" piece of 3/4" plywood.

CASHBOXES

Rattle some coins in a tin cookie box.

CHAINS RATTLING

Shake several chains against some metal or wood.

GLASSES CLINK

Tap a couple of glasses together (don't clink too hard)

DANCING

Stomping, in-time to music, 1-2-3-4, etc.

DOOR CREAKS OPEN

Twist as 3/8" dowel (coated with violin rosin) within drilled out 1-1/2" dowel. Or use mouth sounds.

GIFT UNWRAPPING

Crinkle and manipulate some newspaper or a large plastic shopping bag.

FRYING PAN HITTING HUSBAND'S HEAD

Take a metal mixing bowl (12" or 14" diameter) and hit the center of it with your hand. Experiment to find the funniest, meanest sound.

IPAD BEING STOMPED TO PIECES

Repeatedly crunch an empty, thin-walled 16 oz water bottle (with the cap off.) You can re-inflate the bottle by blowing into it.

UKELELE STRINGS BEING RAKED

Stroke finger across all four strings of an ukulele. The "My Dog Has Fleas" reference is to a meme that ukulele players use to remember the tuning--G-C-E-A.

CELLPHONE RINGS (available on pre-recorded SFX track)

Ring a toy (or regular) cell phone. Use a ringtone that is similar to an old, rotary-dial phone's bell.

PURSE OPENING

Noisily unsnap a purse/handbag then forage around within it.

WIND CHIMES MUFFLED INTO HANKIE

Shake a small wind chime--then muffle it in a handkerchief. Search the web for solid aluminum chimes similar to *Cupids Love wind chimes* or *Farm Tractor wind chimes*.

HANKIE/CHIMES PLOP INTO EGG-NOG BOWL

Take the Hankie/Chimes combo described above, and drop it into a large glass/ceramic bowl--making sure to hit the edge of the bowl. Experiment to find a sound that "speaks" well.

LADLE BEING DIPPED INTO EGG-NOG BOWL

Use a large metal ladle/soup serving spoon and scoop some liquid from a second, large glass/ceramic bowl--making sure to tap the edge of the bowl twice (tap-tap).

EGG-NOG BEING LADLED INTO GLASSES

Ladle some actual egg-nog into medium-sized tumbler-style glasses. Make sure to tap the sides of the glass with the ladle.

STAMPEDE

Put 7 large potatoes in a pillowcase and "flump" it about on a table, repeatedly--mimicking the rhythm of cows stampeding.

SCRIPT BEING GRABBED, RIPPED UP

Ruffle some sheets of paper, then rip up several pages.

Pre-recorded Sound Effects for *Auntie Scrooge*

By Tony Palermo (www.ruyasonic.com)

Certain sound effects are either hard to produce live or hard to mic well, or both. In *Auntie Scrooge* these difficult sounds include clock chimes, wind, thunder, fire trucks, etc. For these particular sounds, you should rely on pre-recorded tracks--for a variety of reasons.

My SFX mentors worked with Orson Welles, Jack Benny, Jack Webb and other radio greats and in the Golden Age of radio drama, these network SFX artists always used a mix of live sounds and pre-recorded ones. There was no SFX purism preferring live over pre-recorded sounds; they used whatever worked to best achieve the effect the script called for.

Usually, background ambiances, such as jungles, factories, weather, interiors of cars, etc. were pre-recorded. Actions, such as fights, doors, feet, guns, etc. were done live. Using a mix of live and pre-recorded sounds served both the budget and the realism of the shows--and this was true for both studio shows and those done with live audiences.

For modern productions of *Auntie Scrooge*, some theatre troupes may seek to use live SFX for everything (including wind, clock chimes, thunder, etc.) but live would NOT always be authentic. It might also sound poor. For example: wind SFX are notoriously hard to mic. Also, if one SFX artist was busy doing wind ambience, would the other be able to do thunder and the Third Spirit's shriek? Here, pre-recorded SFX allow for a smaller crew.

Real Sonic Sorcery

In the heyday of radio drama--for both studio and live performances--the SFX crew consisted of one or more artists doing the live SFX, with another artist playing 78 RPM sound effects records from a "sound truck"--a wheeled console/cabinet consisting of multiple turntables--some with two (or even four) tone arms, a mixer for crossfading between turntables/tonerms, and a speaker. The sound truck man would work side by side with the live SFX artists. On some shows, one artist would do both the live SFX and sound truck duties.

I suggest putting a sound truck on-stage and have one of the SFX artists trigger the pre-recorded SFX using it. This increases the precision of coordinating SFX with dialogue. Plus, being on-stage, next to the live SFX table allows the SFX artists to easily "assist" the pre-recorded tracks with live SFX. This "doubling" can put over the illusion of great live sound effects work--and thus entertain the audience in a way impossible if pre-recorded SFX are merely triggered by an unseen booth technician.

These illusions could be accomplished with a booth technician triggering the pre-recorded tracks, but coordination between the live SFX artist and the booth technician will be tougher. You'll need more rehearsal and there's a greater chance of mis-timing the actions, which would expose the trickery and disappoint the audience. (It could also get a great *laugh*--if the bad timing is bad *enough*.)

Build the sound truck so that the modern playback equipment is concealed from the audience's point of view. You can also "accessorize" the sound truck with some old 78 RPM records and have the artist appear to be cueing up the records--when he's actually triggering CD or MP3 tracks. This will look totally authentic for 1930s-50s radio drama.

To see my own sound truck: visit www.ruyasonic.com/sfx_rig.htm

My modern sound truck is pretty fancy, but I do about 90 shows a year. For *Auntie Scrooge* you won't need anything as elaborate as mine, but here's what I use. It's a wheeled modular cabinet--painted in "CBS Blue"--containing a 24-input mixer board, DJ-style dual CD players, reverb/FX unit, and a headphone amp. Lately, I've replaced the dual CD player system with a DJ-style dual SD chip player (model# SDJ-1 from American Audio.)

In addition to controlling the pre-recorded SFX players--and volume for them--all my SFX mics are routed through the sound truck's 24-input mixer, plus any telephone filter mics. I even mix the four actors' mics and the keyboardist's organ/piano from the sound truck. All the booth audio technician does is control the overall volume of the show. Having control of all on-stage mics on-stage with me allows me to correct things immediately.

However, some troupes may wish to have all mics controlled by a booth technician--and that can work out fine. If you are using the pre-recorded music tracks, I suggest the technician triggering those tracks work from on-stage—with his gear housed by an organ shell. They could also trigger the pre-recorded SFX tracks from here—as well as mix the voice and SFX mics. It's always easier to coordinate the many elements of radio dramas when all control is taking place on-stage.

Pre-Recorded Sound Effects Cues for
Auntie Scrooge - a BACKWARDS Christmas Carol

| Track | Volume | Page-Cue | Description |
|-------|--------|----------|--|
| 01 | | 02-01 | Wind--under intro--FADE AS NEEDED |
| 02 | | 03-05 | Office clock strikes 7x--under dialogue |
| 03 | | 10-07 | Wind--under "Auntie Scrooge took a... FADE QUICK |
| 04 | | 11-03 | Various doors and locks |
| 05 | | 11-06 | Bells 1, 2, 3 – then they stop. |
| 06 | | 12-04 | Marley (basement) Bash, Bash, Crash, chains, walking |
| 07 | | 12-08 | Thunder (1x) |
| 08 | | 16-04 | Scrooge's bedroom clock (1x) |
| 09 | | 21-09 | Scrooge's bedroom clock (1x) |
| 10 | | 23-09 | Small crash |
| 11 | | 24-03 | Medium crash |
| 12 | | 24-12 | Big crash |
| 13 | | 30-01 | Wind--under "Much they saw..." --FADE AS NEEDED |
| 14 | | 32-05 | Cellphone rings (20X) will be answered |
| 15 | | 44-04 | Fire Truck sirens--briefly |
| | | | |

Using Pre-Recorded Sound Effects Tracks for *Auntie Scooge* by Tony Palermo (www.ruyasonic.com)

NOTE: A specially prepared collection of sound effects tracks is available from Sales@RuyaSonic.com. The tracks can be downloaded as MP3 files from a special web page--and burned to CD or triggered from a computer or MP3 player.

Most sounds for *Auntie Scooge* are produced using live SFX devices, however, as in the golden era of radio drama (1930s-1960s) pre-recorded tracks were used for sounds that were difficult to produce manually. Some sound effects artists perform the live sound effects AND trigger the pre-recorded ones from a playback device on the SFX table. Others leave pre-recorded SFX to an off-stage technician.

The live sound effects are to be rendered by sound effects artists— doors, crunching iPads, footsteps in snow, Bob Marley’s chains and cash boxes, etc. The pre-recorded sound effects are to be triggered from a playback device—CD player, computer, MP3 player, etc. These sounds include wind, thunder, cymbal/wind chime “time travel” transitions, clock chimes, crashes, and the fire truck.

Review the Pre-Recorded SFX Cue List where you will find each pre-recorded SFX track listed by the page and cue number where it occurs in the script (EXAMPLE: “16-06” indicates “Page 16, Cue 06). Mark your script with the Track number (1 to 33) to be played at that point. Leave space to also mark a volume level for each track—in pencil—as the director may change levels over the course of rehearsal. Go through the script and listen to each SFX track. Know the SFX cues well, so you don’t cut them off too early. In some cases, you will have to fade them out or crossfade between two tracks (a cab driving and a cab pulling over).

Please note that some SFX tracks will be played at the same time as the music cues—and thus will require balancing the volume levels, as well as considering the level of the actors’ voices.

In some cases, the director may wish to have the SFX artists “double” some pre-recorded sounds live—for example, the wind or thunder. They may even fake doing the wind and thunder effects while the bulk of the sound is produced via the pre-recorded tracks. However, doubling is very effective in creating sonic illusions for audiences.

Ideally the playback device should not advance automatically to the next SFX track. Some CD players or software will finish a track and cue up the next one and pause. If you don’t have a device like that available, use this technique: Before the end of a SFX track, the SFX playback technician should pause the track on a silent spot, advance to the next track and be ready to trigger the next SFX. Note that some cues come very quickly on top of one another. It will take some practice to be able to trigger certain cues in rapid succession. If you trigger your SFX from a CD player, you may wish to duplicate the SFX CD and use a second CD player to allow for quicker SFX triggering.

NOTE: Avoid using DVD players—they take too long to trigger audio tracks for radio drama.

I would recommend using TWO playback devices since there are a few times where an ambience is playing and you need to trigger a spot effect (such as a the bells and Bob Marley’s crashes). In those instances, you need to trigger the spot effect timed with the actor’s delivery of a line, so a combination of the two cues won’t do much good.

Pre-Recorded Music for *Auntie Scrooge* by Tony Palermo (www.ruyasonic.com)

LIVE VS. PRE-RECORDED MUSIC:

Some troupes may use the pre-recorded orchestral music cues I offer (contact: Sales@RuyaSonic.com for more information) or they may opt for a live keyboardist. The music cues can be “beds”—which play underneath dialogue, or “bridges”—which play between scenes and fade under the new scene’s dialogue, or as “source” music which is supposedly played by either musicians or a phonograph within the scene—often a bar or party. The engineer’s task here is to mix the music with the voices and sound effects so the volume level of the three elements is properly balanced. Generally, the music will need to fade as the dialogue begins—unless the script indicates otherwise, such as LET CUE FINISH, or PLAYS UNDER ENTIRE SCENE, or MUSIC CUTS ABRUPTLY at a certain line of dialogue.

If your troupe chooses to use the pre-recorded music tracks, a technician will be triggering those tracks from a playback device—an audio CD player, MP3 player, or computer. The audio tech will need to be able to clearly hear the actors’ dialogue and sound effects, so as to trigger their music cues at the appropriate time. However, since the actors’ voices and sound effects are going through a mixer to the P.A. system, the technician should use either headphones or a small monitor speaker to listen to the show as it is performed. This is in contrast to most stage play productions, where the control booth is located at the back of the theater and hearing the dialogue from on-stage can be difficult. Elsewhere in this document I suggest having the pre-recorded music triggered on-stage by a technician seated at a fake organ shell. You should seriously consider that option.

Some cues are triggered quickly in succession, such as where one scene ends with musical punctuation and the next begins with its own musical motif—for example, the many time travel transitions. You may find it useful to employ TWO playback devices—both loaded with the exact same tracks—and trigger one after the other or even crossfade between the two.

Some theaters use slow-to-engage DVD players to trigger music or sound design tracks, but you should make sure the playback devices can quickly play the tracks as scripted. I recommend using DJ-style devices since they respond instantly to button pushes. If your playback devices take a while to actually play the tracks, you should notate on the script exactly when to trigger a track to have it play in sync with the actors’ dialogue reaching the point where the cue should play. This could be earlier than indicated in the script.

You may want to investigate using a computer-based cue triggering system, one that is similar to the many computer-based light cueing systems in use in many theaters. For PCs, look into Baxel Data’s Cue Player Premium - <http://www.baxeldata.com/cueplayerprem.html> . For Macs, look into Cricket - <http://cricketsound.com> KueIt <http://www.kueit.com/> works for PCs and Macs. These sophisticated programs are useful of any theatre playback needs—not just for doing radio-on-stage shows.

**Pre-Recorded Music Cues for
*Auntie Scrooge - a BACKWARDS Christmas Carol***

A complete engineer's script should be marked up with highlights to show how long music cues run (through scenes and dialogue). Generally, there is no need to fade out any music cues--they all have proper endings. The only fading is to bring the volume down under a voice.

| Track | Volume | Page-Cue | Description |
|--------------|---------------|-----------------|---|
| 01 | | 01-01 | Holiday Playhouse theme (1:09) - "See Amid the Winter's Snow" (John Goss) |
| 02 | | 10-06 | Foggy Night (1:10) - ends with timpani roll |
| 03 | | 12-05 | Marley's Woe (3:05) - ends with church bell tolling |
| 04 | | 16-05 | Spirit #1 Arrives (0:15) |
| 05 | | 17-05 | Fezziwig's Ball (1:15) - Transition, silence, tuning, - then "Sussex Carol" (English Traditional) - ends with applause |
| 06 | | 19-07 | Bill's Music Box (1:27) - Transition, plus - "The Coventry Carol" (English Traditional) - At end, song winds down |
| 07 | | 21-06 | Take Me Back (Return to Bed) (0:11) - Transition |
| 08 | | 21-07 | Spirit #2 arrives (1:02) - Clock bells/ - pause for SFX bell - plus "Good King Wenceslas" (John Mason Neale) |
| 09 | | 23-05 | Christmas Present/Cratchit's #1 (1:40) - Transition plus "Bell Cacophony" - plus "Away in the Manger" (William J. Kirkpatrick) - plus "Tim's Wish" |
| 10 | | 26-11 | "Tiptoe Through The Tulips" |
| 11 | | 27-06 | "Transition to Fredericka's" - Transition - - "In The Bleak Mid-Winter" (Gustav Holst) |
| 12 | | 29-10 | Christmas Montage (0:55) - Transition - plus "God Rest Ye Merry Gentlemen" (English Traditional) |
| 13 | | 32-03 | Spirit #3 Arrives (1:16) - Spirit #3 |
| 14 | | 37-04 | Christmas Past (2:35) - Gets louder midway through (for window) - runs longer than needed - "In the Bleak Mid-Winter" (Gustav Holst) |
| 15 | | 38-02 | Christmas Day (1:00) - "Wassail Song" (English Traditional) |
| 16 | | 38-04 | Sad Silent Night (1:09) - "Silent Night" (Franz Xavier Gruber) |

| Track | Volume | Page-Cue | Description |
|--------------|---------------|-----------------|--|
| 17 | | 44-02 | Conga-Line |
| 18 | | 44-05 | We Wish You... (0:54) - "We Wish You A Merry Christmas" (English Traditional) |
| 19 | | 48-05 | "Who Spiked The Egg-Nog?" |

All tracks have 8 seconds of silence tacked onto the end, to allow you time to pause the playback device before the next track would begin to play.

Except where noted, all music composed by Anthony E Palermo.
The Victorian carols are all public domain.

All music arranged and performed by Anthony E. Palermo.
Compositions and arrangements © 1998-2012 Twitshyre Tunes. (ASCAP) All rights reserved.

Producing *Auntie Scrooge* as a Radio-on-Stage Show by Tony Palermo (www.ruyasonic.com)

STAGE SETUP: Production Concepts

Below are several ways old time radio was presented. You can pick and choose the elements that fit your vision and budget. I also include logistical info regarding how you can stage the show as a *radio-on-stage* production.

Radio Reality Ain't What It's Cracked Up to Be

Theatre troupes seeking to present my radio adaptation of *Auntie Scrooge - a BACKWARDS Christmas Carol* as an authentic piece of classic radio drama need to understand just how shows were actually produced in the fabled Golden Age. Sure there were actors reading from scripts in front of microphones, live sound effects artists, and an organist, orchestra or pre-recorded score. But there were also directors "throwing cues" (from a booth or on-the-floor), sound trucks, headphones for the SFX artists, sponsors watching the shows from their own booth, assistants with stop watches running up to actors at the mic to cut dialogue and fit the show into the time-slot, and more. Your production can use as many of these authentic elements as you choose.

However, authenticity can be a trap. As we say in the radio sound effects world, "Reality ain't what it's cracked up to be"--meaning that mistaken notions of authenticity can harm your production. I've seen modern stage depictions of "old time radio" chock full of errors--such as applause signs, using the film term "foley" instead of Sound Effects, actors tossing script pages to the floor, the absence of somebody throwing cues, etc. Here's a primer on classic radio-on-stage productions that may spare you from anachronisms, bogus "realism," and unnecessary art direction/prop expenses. Once you grasp the concepts of radio drama production, you can mix and match elements to create your own crowd-pleasing show.

Hollywood Radio-On-Stage Productions:

A typical 1940s radio-on-stage show--such as for the *Lux Radio Theater* or the *Theater Guild on the Air* programs--took place in a large, legitimate theater (seating 600-1000) or a fancy movie house. These live audience shows were hour-long adaptations of recent Hollywood films--often with just one or two lead actors reprising their film roles. The broadcasts mostly served to promote upcoming films starring those actors. The live audience functioned more as a sound effect. Applause was there to validate the egos of the film studios, producers, and movie stars.

For radio dramas such as Lionel Barrymore's annual *Christmas Carol* shows or *It's A Wonderful Life*, these radio-on-stage productions in large theaters made no attempt to recreate the look of a radio studio--no control room windows, no acoustical tile, no overhead boom mics, no "On-Air" signs, etc. Instead of any kind of "radio-land" set, all they used were a few boxy-shaped microphones in front of long velvet drapes--which served to acoustically deaden the room. The actors were elegantly dressed, even if the characters they portrayed were pirates or coal miners. There were no fedora-wearing actors with turned-up shirtsleeves, no gum-chewing actresses, no cigar smoking by the SFX artist, no Damon Runyon version of the 1940s. The look of these shows resembled our modern Oscar ceremonies. The intent of these shows was *glamour*, and not a showcasing of the technical aspects of radio production. As such, the sound effects were often minimal and presented without much fanfare--or visibility.

In this kind of *Hollywood radio-on-stage show*, there were 3-4 microphones on stands--positioned Down-Stage Center running Right to Left. Since the focus of these shows was on the movie stars, the sound effects elements were downplayed. With that in mind, the SFX table would be unobtrusively located Stage-Right or Stage-Left. Next to the SFX table, a “sound truck,” a wheeled console with several turntables and a speaker, played pre-recorded sound effects from 78 RPM records. An orchestra or organist might be Up-Stage or in the pit in front of the apron. A group of vocal “extras”--called the “mumble chorus” would be seated Up-Stage, headed by a “conductor” for the “walla-walla” crowd scenes.

This *Hollywood radio-on-stage* setup is one that most modern troupes could easily reproduce in any theater space. It is totally authentic for *Christmas Carol*. However, I believe this style of presentation requires some tweaking in order to provide a more satisfying experience for modern theater audiences. Those tweaks can be borrowed from the production styles detailed below.

Radio-Studio-Theater Productions:

The weekly radio comedy and variety shows, such as the *Jack Benny Program* and the *Fred Allen Show*, were broadcast from *radio studio-theaters*--seating 150 to 300. Modern sit-coms and *Jay Leno*-style talk shows are based on this model. These radio shows used a setup similar *Hollywood Radio-On-Stage* with a smaller stage, drapes, mics, SFX, sound truck, etc., but the walls surrounding the audience itself had acoustical tile or drapes. There was an “On-Air” sign--but no “Applause” sign. Along the *side* walls were glassed windows into the control room and a box for the commercial sponsors—much like an opera box or skybox at today’s arenas.

In radio sitcoms such as the *Jack Benny Program* or *My Favorite Wife*, sound effects artists were prominently featured, often with elaborate props that were visual as well as aural. The studio audience was active and well-mic’d. They gave the performers instant feedback as to how well jokes went over--and most importantly, their laughter assured advertisers that the show they were sponsoring was actually funny. If somebody screwed up on-stage, it was all part of the show.

Using the *Radio-Studio-Theater* model of production allows your version of *Auntie Scrooge* to be authentic, but it also incorporates a “wink” to the live audience. By emphasizing the “fakeness” of radio drama (the very visible sound effects, phone filter mics, doubling by actors, the mumble chorus, etc.) this model lets the studio audience in on the illusions being performed (swirling phantoms, blind man’s buff crashes, crowd scenes, etc.) The audience is not only acknowledged, but actually serve as *accomplices* in that they know what the unseeing “broadcast audience” does not--just how “fake” the art form is.

This “wink” aspect of revealing the radio tricks to the live audience can be very important when you are presenting radio dramas on stage. You can choose to “work” this audience with an entertaining pre-show about sound effects, teach them how to applaud like a professional studio audience, request a silencing of noisemakers for the performance, using humorous commercials, contests, and even a sing-along at the end of *Auntie Scrooge* .

Small Radio-Studio Productions:

The typical radio genre shows--crime, suspense, westerns, soap operas, horror-- were done *without* audiences present. Here, audience reactions would detract from the realism of the shows. Modern

crime and doctor TV shows resemble this model--the realism is key. In the Golden Age of radio these kinds of genre programs were produced in small radio studios with acoustical tile everywhere, some drapes, and large control and advertising client box windows placed behind and beside the performers. The sound truck and live SFX devices were sprawled across the studio--often taking up a great deal of space--while the 4-8 actors were off to the side, huddled around 1 or 2 mics. The cast would provide their own "walla" crowd sounds--often from their seats, several feet from the mics. Here, actors and crew could be dressed informally--some in suits, others with rolled up shirtsleeves and collars loosened--and SFX men in bow ties or long ties tucked into shirt front, ladies in dresses--usually never in slacks.

To achieve this studio look, you can use white pegboard for the walls, above dark wainscoting, a talk-back speaker, an illuminated On-Air sign, a large vintage clock--with second hand, an armoire-style SFX closet, a 6-foot long SFX table and "sound truck," wooden folding chairs, and a large window into a control room, peopled by a silent "director" and "engineer." You can add a water cooler, or small table with coffee and donuts, etc.

While it is possible to present your show using this *Small Radio-Studio* model, please note that it is the *least* authentic way to present *Auntie Scrooge*. In the 1940s, this show would have been produced using the *Hollywood Radio-On-Stage* or *Radio Studio-Theater* production models. However, feel free to use elements from all three styles of production to fashion a look that fits your performance space, budget, and artistic vision.

QUESTION: Does the Live Audience Exist--or Not?

Many modern theatre troupes employ the *Small Radio-Studio* model when presenting radio dramas on stage. This approach--with the performers ensconced in the characters' world and ignoring that there is an audience present--is how modern theatre troupes produce most conventional plays. Art directors tend to see the *Small Radio-Studio* as a typical location where drama occurs.

Appropriately "retro" art direction can look realistic and provide an enticing behind-the-scenes glimpse into the world of the "radio actor" characters. Conceptually, however, the presence of the live theatre audience "messes" with that reality here.

You may choose to treat the radio-studio as a kind of "closed set"--so the live theatre audience doesn't *exist*. Here, the characters are playing to the *microphones* and unseen *broadcast audience* instead of to the people seated just in front of the stage. In this way, the live audience members are voyeurs, functioning as they do for traditional theatre productions set in kitchens, bedrooms, porches and the like. Since that is what most theatre troupes are used to, they may be inclined to treat *Auntie Scrooge* the same way.

However, there is much to be gained by acknowledging the presence of the audience--and making them part of the show. Since you have chosen to produce *Auntie Scrooge* as a radio-play--and not with full-blown sets for Auntie's milking barn, the Cratchit home, the office Christmas party, etc., you may want to go a step further and fully break the "Fourth Wall" separating the performers from the live audience.

Ask yourself: Are you in a studio--or not? Does the audience exist--or not? The *Small Radio-Studio* model was about intimacy and control, while *Hollywood Radio-On-Stage* and *Radio Studio-Theater* productions were about a communal spectacle--one where the audience's laughter was essential in

presenting comic material. Unlike most theatrical plays, radio-on-stage productions can openly break the Fourth Wall and treat the audience to a “show.” This difference can make for a very fresh theater experience for the troupe and the audience.

If you take the *Small Radio-Studio* model and merely incorporate the live theatre audience as a “studio audience” please note that you are no longer authentic at all. You may have seen other modern productions present radio drama this way, but do not confuse that style with the reality of Golden Age radio. And most importantly, don’t think that just because some other modern troupes have gone this route that you must too. Of course, you are not limited to the *Hollywood Radio-On-Stage* or *Radio-Studio Theatre* production styles just because they *are* authentic. I’m only informing you on what’s available as a model.

Authenticity isn’t everything. Purism by itself doesn’t make for a satisfying theatre experience, but mistaken notions of what is authentic can lead you to poor decisions about the look and presentation of your show. For example, some troupes mistakenly think ALL sound effects have to be produced manually (including cars, crickets, water and wind), and their shows suffer from lousy sound as they fail to utilize pre-recorded sounds the way Golden Age shows did. It’s best to understand “know the rules and then choose to break them.”

Feel free to mix the elements listed above, but don’t be a slave to clichéd notions of authenticity or conventional ways of dealing with the audience/performer divide.

A great resource on old time radio--with photos--is *The Great American Broadcast: A Celebration of Radio's Golden Age* by Leonard Maltin. You can find it at Amazon.com.

STAGE SETUP: Logistics

Here are some technical and logistical issues you should consider in producing for radio-on-stage.

MICROPHONES:

Use *real* microphones hooked up to a P.A. system. Some troupes think dummy mics and loud stage voices will carry, but with the amount of music and sound effects in a radio show like *Auntie Scrooge*, the actors' voices will need to be balanced with the other sounds. I've done over 1200 radio shows--many of them as radio-on-stage productions--and they could NOT be done without mics for actors, let alone sound effects.

Actors will have to learn to use regular voices and realistic whispers for this show. It will take a while for them to get used to doing drama over a P.A. system. Try to rehearse at mic stands (optionally) with mics and amplification in order to quickly familiarize the cast and crew with this unusual form of theatre. See the Engineering section for information about setting up the P.A. system.

Well-heeled troupes may wish to use the large vintage microphones of the 1930s-40s (the boxy RCA 44BX or capsule-shaped RCA 77DX) but these ribbon mics are fragile and very expensive to buy or rent. (AEA's modern re-creation--the R84--cost \$1000 each). However, I suggest you buy or rent the the 1940s-style Shure 55SH (about \$160) This is now commonly called the "Elvis" mic. You can also get by with the traditional Shure SM58. (These look like a large golf ball on a handle. Knock-offs of this mic can be found for \$30 each.) You could choose to hide the SM58 mics behind a foam core façade that looks like the vintage mics cited above.

While Golden Age mics often had a "flag" on top with "CBS" or "NBC" or station call letters like "WNYC" or "KNX", these flags often obscure the faces of actors--especially when the actors are standing on a stage above a seated audience. Some mic models have flags that can be easily unscrewed—and I suggest you do so.

Use several microphones to accommodate actors' different heights. Four mics will be sufficient for most casts and most radio dramas. Add one more mic stand for the telephone filter microphone--if you use one. (see Engineering section for detailed info on mics.) These will be arrayed in a line Down-Stage--just like a rock band. Put Auntie Scrooges's mic at Center-Stage, with Bobbie Cratchit's mic far away from hers. Mic "blocking" will be discussed below.

CHAIRS FOR OFF-MIC ACTORS:

Place a row or two of chairs Up-Stage--for actors to sit on when they aren't on-mic. The chairs should be quiet when sitting down or getting up--beware of creaking chairs, swivel chairs, or padded chairs that emit "whoosh" sounds. There is no need for actors to be off-stage at any point in the show, so no doors or exits are required. (However, if you use a radio-studio type of set, you may want to have the actors enter at the opening of the show as if they're coming in the studio door.) The seated actors will serve as the "mumble chorus" to provide walla-walla crowd noises. And the distance they will be from the mics will serve to keep their volume balanced in the audio mix.

“RADIO” COSTUMING:

Whether you choose to have a contemporary look for your actors or put everybody in 1940s radio actor garb (or Dickensian 1840s outfits), it is handy to allow actors to use various character-based hats, aprons, or shawls when they are at the mic--to help the live audience understand if the actor is portraying a clerk, charity seeker, housewife, Spirit, etc. This is especially true if your actors are doubling up several roles. Auntie in her night cap can visually evoke setting, as can the Second Spirit's laurel leaves, Kim's coat, etc. While such character costuming is not authentic to radio studio productions, the clarity it brings to radio-on-stage shows is invaluable. These costume accessories can be stowed under the actors' chairs and they can don them before they step up to the mic for their lines.

ITEMS NOT RECOMMENDED:

Some radio-on-stage productions put actors' scripts in 3-ring binders, however this makes for noisy page turning, physically limits how many actors can share a mic, and is not authentic to Golden Age radio shows.

Similarly inauthentic is the practice of throwing script pages on the floor once the lines for that page have been read. This will distract the audience and make a mess of the stage--and require massive re-sorting of scripts for subsequent performances.

Some troupes use music stands to hold the actors' scripts while they're at the mic, however stands tend to clutter the set and can block the audience's view of the actors' faces.

A similar clutter would be the use of headphones on *actors*. Not only is it inauthentic to radio production--in the studio OR on-stage--the wires across the floor makes it difficult and even dangerous for actors to cross to mics. Please note that SFX artists and musicians *do* need headphones. If your show has an on-stage “Radio Director” character to throw cues and coordinate the ensemble work, they would also be wearing headphones.

Stools or chairs at microphones may be necessary if your actors cannot stand up for however long their scenes are, but these also clutter the stage, inhibit vocal performance, and make blocking difficult.

It is also not recommended for actors to be off-stage when they are off-mic. A typical radio show has so many scenes and characters that the endless entrances and exits will steal focus from actors who are actually on-mic. The best way to handle off-mic actors is to have them sit Up-Stage on a row of chairs.

SOUND EFFECTS:

Use a 6-foot table for sound effects at Stage-Right or Stage-Left--as far Down-Stage as the actors' microphones. Sometimes the SFX artist must make eye contact with an actor (to coordinate say, picking up a telephone or knocking on a door.) This is impossible if the SFX table is Up-Stage of the actors at their mics.

You will need several mics for the live SFX. I suggest one to be on a boom arm over the table and another to be aimed at the floor--for footsteps. A third mic may be necessary depending upon how large your SFX door is. A headphone mix of voices, music and SFX should be provided to the SFX

artist(s). They need to clearly hear what's going on in the drama so as to judge the timing and loudness of their sound effects. (For more information on SFX and mics see the SFX and ENG sections in this script.

For precise control of timing and volume, I suggest you trigger pre-recorded sound effects from the SFX area on-stage--which is how professional radio dramas do it now and how they did it in the Golden Age. Modern gear can be concealed in a wooden console to resemble the 1940s "sound truck" turntable devices--which were used both in the studio and for radio-on-stage shows. This technician also will need a headphone mix of voices, music and SFX.

NOTE: It is possible to have a booth technician trigger the pre-recorded sounds off-stage, but you must provide a headphone feed--of voice, music and SFX--for that technician so they can clearly hear the show.

MUSICIAN/MUSIC TRIGGERING:

Throughout the show there are music cues to bridge between scenes or play beneath the dialogue. These can either be the pre-recorded orchestral tracks I offer or you may use a live keyboardist.

An organ would be a very authentic way to accompany this radio show, but the expense of renting a real Hammond B-3 organ may be beyond your budget. I suggest you use a modern synth/sampler keyboard, but house it in a wooden enclosure built to resemble a church organ's façade.

Another idea is to use that church organ shell to hide the audio playback gear necessary to trigger the pre-recorded music cues. Have the audio technician--who is usually hidden away in the control booth--seated behind the organ shell on-stage. The audio gear in the enclosure would include whatever playback system you use--dual CD players, MP3 players, a computer, etc.--and a small mixer that would control the volume levels for those devices. This "organist" would wear headphones--receiving a mix of the voices, music and SFX--to be able to precisely follow along in the script, triggering the pre-recorded music (and optionally, pre-recorded SFX) as needed. You could go further and have this technician mix the vocal microphones from this station. It would save you from having to run audio cables to the booth--and headphone feeds back to the stage.

The organ shell can be located Up-Stage Left or Right, but it is generally on the side of the stage that is *opposite* the SFX table. It helps if the SFX artist can make eye-contact with the musician/triggerer in order to coordinate their cues--such as the tinkling chimes and cymbal rolls that signal the Spirits coming and going.

For photos of a typical SFX rig and the Organ/Trigger Shell, see the page about my *It's A Wonderful Life* adaptation: www.ruyasonic.com/radio_wonderful_life_sound_effects.htm

LIGHTING:

Atmospheric lighting is up to you, but make sure the performers have sufficient light to be able to read their scripts at the microphones. This often requires there be light provided above/just behind the mics. One way to provide enough light is to bounce it off the backdrop or curtains, so the reflected light illuminates script pages held at the microphone.

An illuminated "On-Air" sign would be an authentic touch, but not an illuminated or foam core

“Applause” sign. When the show needs the audience to applaud--say for the intermission or at the end of the live commercials--the on-stage SFX artist signals to them with a silent clapping motion and the crowd responds to his cues as to when and how long to applaud. This cueing of the applause provides more control than any illuminated sign could. You need only rehearse this cueing during the pre-show—along with asking people to silence their cell phones.

NOTE: Please take care that audio equipment not share power outlets with dimmer packs for the light system, otherwise electrical hum may come through the audio system. You may also want to locate the SFX table on the side of the stage that is quietest—away from fans for the dimmers.

Radio-on-Stage Advice to Cast & Crew

By Tony Palermo (www.ruyasonic.com)

MICROPHONE TECHNIQUE:

Microphones will be set up at various heights to accommodate a variety of actors. You will generally be assigned a “home” mic and use it whenever you have lines and that mic is free.

For drama, mics are used differently than they are for singing or public speeches. In radio drama, we do NOT “eat” the mic the way singers do. Keep your mouth 4-6 inches from the mic. Set up the stands so the mic height comes to just below an actor’s chin--so as to not obscure their eyes. This distance will also prevent them from popping their “P’s. It will take a day or two of working with mics before an actor feels comfortable doing drama that is being amplified to a crowd.

Use microphone blocking to assign actors particular mics to speak at. This may be because a special effect is called for, such as reverb or a phone-filter. Or there may be mic assignments for specific scenes and even specific lines within a scene. At times, characters will be on separate mics and at others they will be grouped together on one mic, to aid the drama.

Note on your script which mic to be at for a particular scene or cue. For *Auntie Scrooge*, I suggest the regular voice microphones be numbered 1-2-3-R from Stage-Left to Stage-Right. Use a separate mic for Reverb (for Bob Marley and the Spirits—and Auntie when she’s with them).

NOTE: When their characters appear in a scene, those actors should remain at the mic until their characters exit--even if they have no more lines in the scene. Early exiting by actors confuses the live audience as to where their characters are. You must consider the live audience—and not just the “broadcast” audience—at all times.

When a line of dialogue indicates (ENTERING), the actor should begin speaking a bit back from the mic as they step up to it. For (EXITING) they should back away from the mic and finish speaking at about 2 feet away. The sound effects artist will watch their approach and time his footsteps to mimic these entrances and exits. The dialogue instruction (FADING) means to step back a bit from the mic as you deliver the line and reduce your volume--as if this were a film and we were dissolving to a new scene. When the script indicates (DISTANT), the actor should stand about 2 feet from the mic and deliver the lines. This will sound as if the actor is across the room or a dozen feet away. When the script indicates (SCREAMS) the actor should direct their voice up into the house—so as to not distort the mic nor deafen the SFX artist and Engineer using headphones.

SCRIPT TECHNIQUE:

Radio actors in the 1940s would have their scripts either stapled in the upper left-hand side, or loose--either lying flat or slightly center-creased, length-wise. They wouldn’t use 3-ring binders for scripts because binders make for noisy page turning that will be picked up by the mic. Binders also make it hard to have several actors share one mic--since the scripts are now double-wide. No matter how your scripts are held, all page turning is done with care, to be as quiet as possible—hold the script away from the mic and gently turn the page. This also goes for actors seated Up-Stage. If 10 or 20 actors noisily turn their script pages, it sounds like a flock of birds.

The elements of radio dramas are dialogue, music, and sound effects--all of which are called "cues," because they come at a certain time in the show--and the performer may have to be cued by a director to begin. All cues are numbered in this radio script. This numbering system allows for fast rehearsals and notes. If you need to refer an actor or technician to a specific part of the script, just call out the page and cue #. For example: "Page 12, cue #3."

Certain cues in the script have an asterisk (*) beside them. For example:

2. MUSIC: FOGGY NIGHT-QUICK FADE.

3* SOUND: (PAUSE) THEN BELL 1. THEN BELL 2.
THEN MANY BELLS. (NOT TOO LOUD.) CONTINUE UNDER,
THRU THE LINE "WHAT IN THE..."

4* AUNTIE: (STARTLED) Ahh! What? What is it! Every bell
in the house must be Ringing! What in the...

5. SOUND: BELLS ALL STOP.

6. AUNTIE: [CUE] ...world?

These asterisks indicate that something needs to "clear" before the cue can be performed. Usually, this is to let a music cue or a sound effect reach a certain point before the dialogue cue begins. The performer should pay attention when their cues have the asterisk. Either they need to listen for the previous music or SFX cue to "clear" or wait for the director's hand-signal to begin. Similarly, there may be a dialogue instruction of [CUE]--indicating to wait for music or SFX to be established. Often the director (or the SFX artist) will point at an actor to give them the go-ahead to begin speaking.

Golden Age performers used pencils to circle their character cues (GEORGE:, MARY:, etc) and underline their dialogue. If period authenticity isn't required here, colored highlighter pens are fine for scripts, but try to use orange or pink, because yellow highlighting can often disappear in some light situations, whether on-stage or in a recording studio.

The script indicates--in the SCENE headings--which characters are needed in a scene. For example:

SCENE FIVE: INT. AUNTIE'S BEDROOM - LATER
(NARRATOR, FIRST SPIRIT, AUNTIE SCROOGE)

Just prior to this scene starting, the actors portraying the Narrator, First Spirit, and Scrooge should make their way to the mics and be ready to speak. You can unobtrusively make your way to the mics during someone else's speech towards the end of the previous scene, or during the music cue that bridges the last scene to the upcoming one. Actors leave the mics at the end of the scene or when their characters have exited the scene.

WALLA-WALLA is the indistinct murmuring of crowds in radio dramas. Please DO NOT say “walla-walla walla” or “peas and carrots” or “rhubarb”—just mumble. (In Hollywood radio-on-stage productions from the 1930s-1950s, this group was often called the “Mumble Chorus.”)

While walla is considered a sound effect, it is usually performed by cast members whose characters are NOT speaking the main dialogue in a scene. Walla needs to have energy, but a lower volume than crowd sounds are in reality. You must remember to keep the walla going in a scene. The cacophony of walla really adds to the drama, particularly in *Auntie Scrooge’s* Fuzzy Wigwam party, the Cratchit household, and the office Christmas party.

In performance, the director or sound effects artist will “conduct” the walla as to vitality, length and most importantly, keeping the volume down.

Please note that live radio drama walla differs from film-style “loop group” backgrounds in that mumbling—and not distinct sentences—are used, so as to not steal focus when there’s a pause in a scene’s foreground dialogue. However, some specific words or phrases will be called for in walla cues. These phrases can be ad-libbed. For a good deal more about walla, see www.ruyasonic.com/sfx-walla.htm

“THROWING” CUES ON-STAGE:

Radio dramas have more scenic transitions than stage plays, more music cues, and a need for a precise timing and volume balancing for the sound effects. A radio drama—and a radio-on-stage show such as *Auntie Scrooge*—is more like a movie unfolding in real-time than a typical stage play, where once a scene starts, the actors are on their own.

With so many elements in need of coordination in radio drama, it is essential that somebody coordinate the ensemble. Otherwise, the troupe may spend endless hours in rehearsal trying to avoid “train wrecks” resulting from using stage directing methods to govern a far more complicated production. Giving notes *after* a rehearsal or performance may work for fine tuning the dramatic tone, but it won’t do for coordinating the elements of radio drama in real-time.

In radio dramas—from the Golden Age to now—the Radio Director provides the timing and coordination of voice, sound effect and music cues. They “conduct” the ensemble much the way an orchestra conductor handles tempo, volume, emphasis, and provides real-time feedback as to the performance of the players. Not only can they see the actors—to signal if someone is standing too far from the mic—they are wearing headphones and can signal that the actor or walla-walla is too loud or too soft, and let the performer know to make adjustments immediately.

The Radio Director silently signals to cast and crew as to when to trigger the next music cue, or when to begin the sound effect ambience track, a door knock, or when an actor is to begin a line after the music cue has established itself. This is done visually with hand signals and requires that the Radio Director be seen by the cast and crew. (For a list of radio direction signals, see page PRODUCTION-13 of the appendix of this script.)

Please note that the Radio Director does NOT signal when EVERY cue is to be performed. It is only when the coordination of voices, music and SFX requires such coordination. (These moments are marked in the *Auntie Scrooge* script with either [CUE] or an asterisk right next to the cue number—such as 12*)

This kind of coordination is typically required whenever there is a transition from one scene to another. For example: Fredericka and Bobbie Cratchit has just left Auntie in her milking barn, Auntie delivers her last line, the SFX artist slams the door, the “Foggy Night” music plays to take us into the next scene. Now, the director waits until the “Foggy Night” music has played just long enough for the audience to realize time has passed, and then cues the Narrator to begin speaking—setting up the meeting with Bob Marley’s Ghost.

Without this live cueing, the coordination of so many events will require lots of rehearsal. In radio, we don’t get weeks to rehearse shows. Often, we get the script and perform it that same day. For your radio-on-stage show, you can use this same style—and make it part of the show. However, it isn’t necessary that your play director do the Radio Directing on-stage.

You can have a “Radio Director” character—script in hand, wearing headphones, with a stop-watch around her neck. She can stand Stage-Left or Stage-Right or even on the floor just beyond the lip of the stage, and “throw cues” to the performers.

You could also have a Sound Effects Artist do this in addition to their SFX duties. Another option is to get your troupe’s actual stage manager to play the role of “Radio Director”—since they are “calling the show” after all. Audiences enjoy the behind-the-scenes aspect of seeing the radio show be directed in this fashion. It’s up to you as to how prominent you want this character to be.

However it is essential that the “Radio Director” be seen by the cast and crew. It won’t do any good to put this person in a glassed-in control booth that is Up-Stage of the performers. If Radio Director and performer can’t make eye contact while performing, then cues will not be seen.

Radio actor/director, Orson Welles often stood on a raised platform in the studio, wearing headphones and flamboyantly “conducting” the ensemble while also performing dialogue. Some radio-on-stage directors sit in the audience—front row center—at a card table, and throw their cues from there. Others sit on a stool on the floor—at the lip of the stage--just off-center.

The next page of this section offers pointers for doing radio drama—including a list of radio direction gestures. I suggest that the entire troupe be given a demonstration of what these cues and movements mean. Using them in rehearsal and during performance is not only practical, but very entertaining for radio-on-stage productions.

Radio Drama Pointers

Microphone Technique:

- 1) Sensitive and dead areas. Don't touch!
- 2) Proximity effect. (Boomy if too close.)
- 3) Proper distance for radio acting. (4" to 6")
- 4) Dynamics and distance. (Back off to yell.)
- 5) Off mic use for distant sounds. Asides.
- 6) Popping "P"s and S-S-S-Sibilance.
- 7) Mic safety. (Don't hit, blow into, or drop)
- 8) Assume every mic is always ON.
- 9) Quiet script page turning.

Radio Acting:

- 1) Quiet in the studio.
- 2) Don't cough or talk during production.
- 3) Watch the director. Wait for your cue.
- 4) If your character is in a scene, stay at the mic.
- 5) Speed equals excitement. Don't bore the audience.
- 6) Jump in if there's dead air.
- 7) Wait for director's signal at the end of the show.

Radio Direction "Sign Language"

- 1) "Wait" - Open hand.
- 2) "5-4-3---" - Finger count down.
- 3) "Theme starting" - Form a "T" with hands.
- 4) "Watch for cue" - Point to person then eye.
- 5) "You're on" - Pointing finger.
- 6) "Cut" - Finger slits throat.
- 7) "Faster" - Move index finger clockwise.
- 8) "Stretch it out" - Pulling taffy.
- 9) "Come in/"Back off" microphone - Move hand towards/away from face.
- 10) "Louder" - Elevate the hand, palm up.
- 11) "Quieter" - Lower the hand, palm down.

Radio-On-Stage Audio Setup by Tony Palermo (www.ruyasonic.com)

Unlike traditional stage plays, radio-on-stage shows require that all voices be mic'd, as well as the live sound effects. Additionally, there will be the triggering of pre-recorded sound effects, and either a live keyboardist or pre-recorded music tracks of theater organ and piano. This show will be busier--audio-wise than any stage play. And the coordination and timing of actors and sounds/music will be more complex than stage plays. The number of live SFX, pre-recorded SFX and music cues may seem daunting, but there are ways to split up control of those sounds so as to not swamp the audio tech staff.

Some troupes may think they can get by without micing the actors, but balancing the volume levels of the various elements will be impossible unless voices and live SFX are mic'd. Dummy mics and stage voices will not work for this show. However, think of the audio system as *reinforcing* the sound on-stage and not *supplanting* it. The volume levels will not be extreme. The intent here is for clarity--allowing the audience to hear the many sonic elements of the show. The concept is to treat the show as if it were going out for broadcast, but deliver that sound to the live audience in the theater.

P.A. SYSTEM:

You'll need a P.A. system sufficient to fill the venue--with mostly talk. While most P.A.s are used for rather loud music groups, the volume levels required doing radio drama won't approach those used for rock bands, so you won't need massive amplification. If your theater uses a P.A. system to play background music and pre-recorded sound design for conventional plays--the power of your amp will be sufficient for radio-on-stage.

Inputs:

The sound sources will consist of 3-4 voice mics, 1-3 live sound effects mics, pre-recorded sound effects and either pre-recorded music tracks or a keyboardist (organ and piano, which could be provided from a single synth/sampler keyboard). Dynamic unidirectional mics are best for radio-on-stage shows. Avoid condenser mics--as they pick up too many stray sounds, including noises from the audience.

Electronic Effects:

A reverb effect on one microphone would be nice. This is to depict Marley's Ghost, the Three Spirits and Auntie Scrooge, when she accompanies them. It is not essential. Many mixing boards now come with on-board reverb effects. This would be assigned to a single mic, but you'd want to be able to switch off the reverb effect so that mic could be used by non-supernatural actors.

Speaker Placement:

The location of P.A. speakers in the theater may be impacted by the use of mics on-stage. The existing sound system in a theater may be fine for the typical sound design and scene music of a stage play, but could cause problems when used for radio-on-stage productions because of mics being on-stage. It may be better to opt out of using a theater's fixed speakers and instead employ portable P.A. speakers--which are better able to be positioned for clarity and sound quality.

Depending on the size and layout of your theater, you can place a speaker at Stage-Left and Stage-Right. While the show will not make use of panning in a stereo soundscape, putting speakers at extreme left and right--or high up will not serve the illusion that the sound is coming from the actors where they are speaking into mics. You may want to consider using "front fills" (low profile speakers) placed *on-stage*, at

the lip of the apron, facing the audience, a bit right and left of Center-Stage. This placement best creates the illusion that the sound is coming from the stage.

Please note that because mics will be on-stage, you risk feedback if the speakers are behind or directly above the mics. If your theater has speakers in these locations, you should either move them or avoid using them. Experiment to make sure that your speakers don't cause feedback or "monitor spill"--which is just before you reach the squeal point of feedback. "Monitor spill" produces a boxy sound that strikes the ear as odd--and will interfere with the intimacy that drama requires. By keeping the P.A. volumes at a reasonable rate you can avoid monitor spill. When setting volume levels, your goal should be to *assist* and *reinforce* the actors normal speaking voices heard from on-stage, then set the volume level for music and SFX to be balanced with that.

Monitoring:

For monitoring purposes, there should be no speakers facing the performers--as this will produce "monitor spill." Instead, the sound effects artist(s)--and live keyboardist (if you use one)--should be wearing headphones and receiving a mix of all voices, music and SFX. This is necessary for them to hear both themselves and to follow where they are in the script. Certain scenes have bustling crowds on-stage and only headphones can provide an accurate rendering of where the actors are in their dialogue. Failure to use headphones often results in blown cues--and thus, lots more rehearsal.

Since pre-recorded SFX and music may be triggered either on-stage or in the tech booth, whomever triggers pre-recorded tracks should also use headphones--with the full mix of voices, music and SFX. A headphone amp can provide enough feeds for several performers--or technicians.

Modern headphones, such as the \$25 Sennheiser HD 202 are excellent for radio-on-stage--and so non-descript that they won't detract from having a period look to your show. You may want to use black electrical tape to mask the Sennheiser logos.

MICS FOR ACTORS:

Because radio dramas rarely have more than 4 people on-mic in a scene, you do NOT need a mic for each cast member. For *Auntie Scrooge*, you should have 3-4 regular vocal mics, primarily to accommodate actors of various heights. Set up mics for "tall", "short" and "medium" actors. Since most scenes only have 2-4 actors speaking at one time, each actor can be on their "home" mic most of the time, but for dramatic purposes, they may be assigned to be a different mic--even one that might appear too tall or short for them. It's sometimes necessary for two or even three actors to share a mic. For example, in *Auntie Scrooge's* time traveling scenes, Scrooge and the Spirits should share a single mic--since it will have a reverb effect applied to it.

Label the mic or mic stand with 1-2-3-R (with R--for reverb)--on the side facing the actors. During rehearsals, the director may employ blocking--as to who's on which mic for a scene--or even to cross from one mic to another on a certain line of dialogue. Since the mics are clearly labeled, actors can use these numbers when marking up their scripts as to which mic they need to be at and when. (Mic <2> , <R> , etc.)

Mics running through a P.A. system are treated differently by actors doing drama than by other mic'd performers. Rock singers, lecturers, or DJs often "eat" the mic (put their lips right on the mic.) For drama, we seek a natural tone, so the actors should never be closer than 4 inches from the mic element. If they

speak too close to the mic, the super-bassy “proximity effect” kicks in and you get the unnatural sound of a commercial voiceover or shock-jock. Such close-micing also ups the risk of actors popping their “P’s.”

Mic Height:

You can avoid both the proximity effect and popping “P’s” by setting the mic at what might appear to be far below the conventional height for a singer. Instead of setting up the mic stand to position the mic at lip height, adjust the mic stand so the mic is just below chin level, aimed up towards the mouth at a 45 degree angle. I’ve used this radio-on-stage mic setup for everything from 40-seat black box theaters to 1600-seat performing arts centers. It eliminates popped P’s and provides a natural, conversational tone well-suited to drama. It also keeps the mics from obscuring the performer’s eyes from the audience, which is import for them to read emotion in the faces of the actors.

NOTE: You might be tempted to use modern “pop filters”--small hoops covered with sheer material, or thin metal screens at a distance of 3-5 inches from the mic. However, these devices were not used in the Golden Age of radio and would spoil the 1940s look. Instead of pop filters, radio shows used mic height and distance to avoid these problems. You should too.

To set the various mic heights, have some actors--tall, short, and medium--step up to separate mics and, with scripts in hand, begin delivering lines. Note that they may stand at attention at first--and thus be taller than when they’ll actually be performing. Get them to relax to their preferred performance stance and then adjust the mic stand to the below-the-chin position. Once you have settled on the appropriate heights for the mics, get a tape measure and measure from the floor to the tip-top of the mic and write it down. This way your prop department can make sure the mics are set right for each performance. Actors shouldn’t adjust mics mid-show.

Conduct Mic School:

Although you set the mic heights in this way, please note that actors must learn how to “work” a mic. Even if they’ve done 10 years of voiceovers, few actors are experienced when it comes to performing *drama* through a mic into an amplification system. Assemble the actors--together with the director--for mic school. With the P.A. on, do a mic technique demonstration so they can learn how to act into a mic.

- 1) Explain the concept of below-the-chin micing. Tell each actor to select a “home” mic based on their height and try to play there as much as possible during the play.
- 2) Describe and show the “strike zone” of the mic--what areas are sensitive, less-sensitive and dead.
- 3) Explain that a short actor’s mouth can be as far below the mic as a tall actor’s can be above it. (This will be essential training for when two actors of differing heights must share a mic--for dramatic purposes, such as a love scene or an argument.)
- 4) Show how speaking while one approaches the mic simulates an “entrance” and backing away while speaking simulates an “exit.” The distance traveled is only about 2-3 feet, but the talking should be non-stop during the travel.
- 5) Let them see that when the script indicates a character is (DISTANT) that they should be 12 to 18 inches from the mic.

- 6) Explain that all calling out, yelling and screams should be done at an up-angle into the theater--so as to not deafen crewmembers wearing headphones.
- 7) Demonstrate how to hold a script at a mic--and turn pages without the sound getting picked up.
- 8) Demonstrate how if one turns his head perpendicular to the mic while speaking, the mic won't pick them up. (Many newbie radio actors--trying to address an actor face to face--make this mistake.) They must aim their words AT the mic, from wherever they are positioned.
- 9) Bring up two actors to play a "two-hander" scene at adjacent mics. Show how they can deliver their lines without eye contact--just talking straight into the mic. Then show how they can do the scene *with* eye contact. (The actor on the right should stand a bit further right to his mic and "cheat" a bit left to aim his eyes at his partner, while his mouth is angled at his mic. The actor on the left does the mirror-opposite by standing further left of the mic and "cheating" right.) This type of positioning allows actors to use their typical stage skills when doing multi-character scenes.
- 10) Have two actors play a "two-hander" scene at the *same* mic. Position one at 45 degrees from mic-center and the other at 135 degrees from mic-center--but both are aimed directly at the mic. Also: Have the cast note how script handling needs to be coordinated when two actors work the same mic.
- 11) Lastly, explain that after a few rehearsals, actors will acclimate to "working" the mic.

MICS FOR LIVE SOUND EFFECTS:

The SFX artist (or artists) are usually located at either extreme Stage-Left or Stage-Right. They should be Down-Stage, in order to provide the audience with a clear view of their work. You'll need 2-3 dynamic unidirectional mics for sound effects, depending upon how many devices there are and how large. SFX artists work in front of a 6-foot table upon which is arrayed a variety of noise-making devices--creakers, scratchers, crashers, etc. They also use their feet to walk upon wooden or stone surfaces. They may have a full-size door beside the SFX table or miniature door mounted to either the main SFX table or on a table behind them.

For the SFX table, I recommend using a conventional mic stand outfitted with a boom arm. The artists may sometimes hold a device--like a toy ratchet or envelope of money--near the mic. At other times they may swivel the boom to position the mic near a device--such as an autoharp or toaster--something that cannot be picked up because it requires two hands to operate it. Some SFX artists do not swivel the booms and so have two mics on stationary booms over their tables.

Since the SFX artists are wearing headphones, they can adjust the mic distance from a device to control volume. (If they do not use headphones then someone in the tech booth will have to adjust volume levels continuously as one SFX device will be louder or softer than another.)

You'll need a dedicated mic for the floor surfaces. You can mount it on a short mic stand or a regular height stand with a boom pointed at the floor.

If the door is free-standing or on a table, aim a mic at the lockset area, but it must be positioned so that the whoosh of air from door opening or closing doesn't ripple noisily across the mic element. I often use a

small door mounted to my main SFX table and then position the boom mic each time I need to open or close the door. Please note that the door and the floor surfaces are usually located near each other, since characters entering or leaving via a door usually also take several steps.

THE SFX “SOUND TRUCK”:

In Golden Age radio dramas--and in many contemporary radio-on-stage productions--the SFX artist triggers pre-recorded sound effects from on-stage. This is contrary to how conventional plays handle their pre-recorded tracks and your troupe may choose to have a booth tech trigger all tracks.

TECHNICAL CHECKLIST FOR RADIO-ON-STAGE PRODUCTIONS

Items you may already have or need to buy or rent for a radio-on-stage production.
For recommendations of specific items, see page ENGINEERING-6 in the appendix of this script.

FOR ACTORS:

- [] 3 or 4 microphones (for regular voice sounds)
- [] 3 or 4 tall mic stands - for a period look get chrome stands with heavy iron bases.
- [] XLR mic cables - get enough for all mics, and have some spares in case cables go bad.
25 foot cable lengths are recommended.

FOR LIVE SOUND EFFECTS:

- [] 2 or 3 microphones - for regular voice sounds
- [] 1 or 2 tall mic stands with booms - for a period look get chrome stands with heavy iron bases.
- [] 1 short mic stand (for footsteps)
- [] XLR mic cables - get enough for all mics, and have some spares in case cables go bad.

FOR PRE-RECORDED SFX:

- [] Playback device - (Audio CDs, MP3 player, SD player, etc)
- [] Mixer - to adjust volume for playback device

OVERALL:

- [] Audio mixer capable of mixing a max of 8 microphones and how many playback devices you need,
NOTE: If you use a live keyboardist, you'll need mixer inputs to handle their feed (and a “direct box”
to go from their keyboard outputs.)
- [] (OPTIONAL) A multi-input “snake” may make it easier to run mic cables to your mixer--especially if
the tech booth is far from the stage. You may choose to locate the mixer just off-stage.
- [] P.A. System (amp, cables and speakers) sufficient to fill your venue.

Radio-On-Stage Mic & Stand resources (as of 2011)
by Tony Palermo (www.ruyasonic.com)

NOTE: In this truncated script I've covered up some information. The full script has names, model #s and active links to vendors selling each specific piece of gear.

Note: This page can be found--with active web links at:

[IN THE FULL SCRIPT A LINK TO A WEBSITE WOULD GO HERE]

MICS:

One easy-to-find mic that is perfectly authentic for a 1940s look is the **XXXXXX**. This is commonly called the XXX mic. They're available for \$160 each (with free shipping). [IN THE FULL SCRIPT A LINK TO A WEBSITE WOULD GO HERE]

You'll need 3 or 4 of these—for the actors.

Another idea is to use conventional mics, but mount a boxy-style classic mic façade to the front.

For SFX, just get a few conventional mics—something like a **XXXXX**. Here's a link to some good \$30 clones:

[IN THE FULL SCRIPT A LINK TO A WEBSITE WOULD GO HERE]

You'll also need to simulate the sound of voices on the telephone—specifically Sam Wainwright's important call to Mary. Read my website's advice about a variety of ways to create this effect. www.ruyasonic.com/sfx-phone.htm The best way is to use a special Phone Filter Mic—I make them—you can't find them anywhere else). They're available for \$75 (including shipping). See www.ruyasonic.com/go-filter-mic.htm for more information.

STANDS/BOOMS:

To complete the period look, I'd suggest shiny chrome mic stands—like these for \$20 each: [IN THE FULL SCRIPT A LINK TO A WEBSITE WOULD GO HERE]

You'd also want one chrome boom arm—for the SFX table mic: Here's a \$50 model:

[IN THE FULL SCRIPT A LINK TO A WEBSITE WOULD GO HERE]

For a second or third SFX mic, maybe a chrome gooseneck will help to position the mic—depending on your SFX door size, etc. Here's a \$15 model [IN THE FULL SCRIPT A LINK TO A WEBSITE WOULD GO HERE]

If you opt for the **XXXX** mics--which do NOT come with stands, you'll need to order the short mic stand listed next.

If you need a taller short mic stand for SFX, try this \$22 model: [IN THE FULL SCRIPT A LINK TO A WEBSITE WOULD GO HERE] It's not available in chrome, but because it's on the floor, nobody will notice that it's black.

HEADPHONES FOR SFX TEAM, KEYBOARDISTS, BOOTH TECHS:

In the Golden Age of radio drama, sound effects artists and organists wore headphones so they could clearly hear the dialogue and their own work and thus be more precise as to timing and volume levels.

The mix you'll want to deliver is what is going out to the P.A. system—voices, sound effects and music. There is no need to generate separate mixes for the SFX crew or anyone. The point is to provide clarity of what the show sounds like to the audience. Do not provide headphones for the actors—this will mess with their performance and cause traffic problems as they cross from their seats to the various mics. You may wish to let actors wear headphones when learning how to work a mic, but not during the show itself.

Please note that the actual headphones of the 1930s-1950s radio dramas were uncomfortable and tinny in their sound. It is possible to find these vintage headphones on e-bay, but I suggest using non-descript modern headphones that won't seem too out of place in your period setting.

I highly recommend Sennheiser HD-202 headphones—available between \$20-\$30 on-line (Search at Google for: *Sennheiser "hd-202"*) To preserve the period look, you can easily cover the Sennheiser logos with black electrician's tape. These headphones are comfortable and provide great acoustical isolation from the sounds nearby—something very useful when the SFX artists or keyboardist must gauge their own volume and balance in the mix.

Radio directors also wore headphones and the Sennheisers would serve if your troupe chooses to have an on-stage Radio Director character cueing the performers. I'd also recommend the use of headphones for audio technicians in the control booth. Don't try to rely on the typical stage play use of a far-away booth technician listening to the voices on stage. Since you have everybody on mic, make use of headphones to provide a crystal clear sound for the technicians.

I'd suggest that for any on-stage headphones, you also buy a straight (not coiled) extension cables. Get 20-foot or 25-foot cables. The Sennheiser HD-202 headphones use a 1/8" plug, but come with a 1/4" adapter, so you can get extension cables with either 1/8" or 1/4" male and female ends.

Try Radio Shack or search Google for: *25 Foot Stereo "Headphone Extension Cable" 1/8*

You may need a headphone amp on-stage to power multiple headphones—and provide individual volume controls. Search Google for: *"headphone amp"* You can find some nice 4-output headphone amps at Amazon.com for \$20.

Please note it will be necessary to deliver a mix of voices, SFX and music from your main mixer—wherever it is located—back to the stage to feed the headphone amp. Some theaters will be using a “snake” XLR stage box to send the many inputs from the stage to the control booth. It is possible to send a “return” from the control room back to the stage via these boxes.