

IT'S A WONDERFUL LIFE: A LIVE RADIO PLAY

by Joe Landry

(Holiday music plays. We're in a radio studio. On the stage are two microphones and a sound effects table, hanging above all are Applause, On the Air and WBFR illuminated signs [at the moment, only the later is lit]. Maybe there's a window in the background overlooking a skyline, maybe it snows outside. The look and feel of the place is posh, sophisticated, deco. Fifteen minutes prior to curtain time, the voice of a STAGE MANAGER [possibly pre-recorded] comes over the house speakers:)

STAGE MANAGER. Fifteen minutes to air. Mr. Laurents, Mr. Heywood, Miss Applewhite, Miss Sherwood, Mr. Filmore, this is your fifteen minute call. Fifteen minutes to air.

(The holiday music continues. Over the next ten minutes, the ACTORS have enter the auditorium, casually mingling with the audience, checking scripts, props, etc. At five minutes prior to curtain time, the voice of the STAGE MANAGER returns.)

STAGE MANAGER. Five minutes to air. Mr. Laurents, Mr. Heywood, Miss Applewhite, Miss Sherwood, this is your five minute call. Mr. Filmore, places for audience warm-up, please. We're at five minutes to air.

(Over the next couple of minutes, FREDDIE FILMORE [the actor playing The Announcer] makes his way to the stage. When he sees that all is in place for him to begin [the other Actors are in the area, etc], he signals to the STAGE MANAGER. The holiday music fades, a light comes up on FREDDIE FILMORE and his mic is live.)

FREDDIE FILMORE / ANNOUNCER. Good evening, ladies and gentlemen, and welcome to a live broadcast of WBFR Playhouse of the Air. We thank you for braving the weather this Christmas Eve, and you'll be glad you did when you hear the story we have for you tonight — *It's a Wonderful Life*.

(Applause sign flashes.)

FREDDIE FILMORE / ANNOUNCER. Very good, thank you, ladies and gentlemen. Remember, this evening's program is being broadcast live from coast to coast, and our listeners are counting on your reactions as a part of their listening pleasure. So, don't be shy, and feel free to applaud, laugh, swoon or cry just as loudly as the spirit moves. (*Receives a signal from the STAGE MANAGER.*) I'm getting the signal from our stage manager that we will be going live on the air in just less than three minutes, which allows me just enough time to introduce you to the fine acting ensemble who will be performing this evening's entertainment. You know him from *Chick Carter*, *Boy Detective* and *Cowpoke Romance*, playing George Bailey, the hero of tonight's story, Mr. Jake Laurents.

(Applause sign flashes as JAKE LAURENTS / GEORGE greets the audience.)

FREDDIE FILMORE / ANNOUNCER. Having just returned from Los Angeles, having completed filming *Dottie Goes Bananas*, a Technicolor spectacle, as his leading lady, Mary Hatch, we bring you Miss Ohio 1943, Miss Sally Applewhite.

(Applause sign flashes as SALLY APPLEWHITE / MARY greets the audience.)

FREDDIE FILMORE / ANNOUNCER. WBFR Playhouse of the Air listeners have heard our next little lady in roles ranging from Mother Cabrini to Salome, and playing smalltown siren Violet Bick and others in this evening's story, I give you Miss Lana Sherwood.

(Applause sign flashes as LANA SHERWOOD / VIOLET greets the audience.)

FREDDIE FILMORE / ANNOUNCER. Soon to be seen co-starring with Margaret Dumont in Paramount Pictures' new comedy, *The Hick Chick*, and playing Clarence the Angel and others in this evening's show, here's Mr. Harry "Jazzbo" Heywood.

(Applause sign flashes as HARRY "JAZZBO" HEYWOOD / CLARENCE greets the audience.)

FREDDIE FILMORE / ANNOUNCER. And, finally, host of *Females Are Fabulous* and here with you every week on Playhouse of the Air, I'm Freddie Filmore.

(Applause sign flashes as FREDDIE FILMORE / ANNOUNCER greets the audience.)

FREDDIE FILMORE / ANNOUNCER. *(Receives a signal from the STAGE MANAGER.)* I'm getting the signal from our stage manager that we will be on the air in twenty seconds. Thank you all for coming this evening and enjoy the broadcast.

STAGE MANAGER. We are live in 5, 4, 3...

(The "On the Air" sign lights up.)

(MUSIC: WBFR on bells.)

(For notes on music, see the Appendix.)

ALL. *(Sing:)* W-B-F-R IN NEW YORK CITY...

FREDDIE FILMORE / ANNOUNCER. This is WBFR Playhouse of the Air!

(Applause sign flashes.)

(MUSIC: Theme Music.)

FREDDIE FILMORE / ANNOUNCER. Good evening ladies, gentlemen, boys, girls, young and old, old and new. Greetings from WBFR Studio A in Manhattan, New York, right here in the U.S. of A. I'm your host, Freddie Filmore, and it is my pleasure to bring you your favorite stories this and every week on WBFR Playhouse of the Air. Tonight, we bring you a real feel-good heart warmer perfect for this or any Christmas Eve, *It's a Wonderful Life*. We begin our story in the little town of Bedford Falls, New York, U.S. of A, where a number of people in the town are praying for their dear friend, a typical American dreamer named George Bailey...

(MUSIC: Underscoring.)

MARY. Dear God, please look over my husband George.

ROSE. *(Simultaneously with "George:")* George is a good boy, you know that. My son has always gone out of his way to give others a hand. Now it's him who needs the help.

HARRY. *(Simultaneously with "help:")* Help my big brother George. He's done so much for all of us. More for me than I remember.