

'Mercury' Character Descriptions

Main Cast (No doubling.)

Orson Welles - Actor/Director (290 lines)

Visionary genius of radio and screen in the making, a force of nature. Focused, to the point of unfriendliness. Is consumed by the current 'idea', whether it is a script, a screenplay, a woman, food or drink.

John Houseman – Producer (242 lines)

Yin to Orson's Yang. Enables Orson's genius by smoothing the way to allow his creativity to shine. Raised British, well spoken, has been in America for thirteen years.

Howard Koch – Writer (114 lines)

Jewish, Chicago native, writer. Hired to write for the Mercury Theatre On the Air after Houseman saw his play, The Lonely Man performed in Chicago. This will be his fourth radio adaptation for the Mercury.

Paul Stewart - Actor/Co-Director (130 lines)

Genial, practical, easy going member of the Mercury. Smooths between the 'in booth' and 'in studio' worlds of the Mercury.

Davidson Taylor - CBS Supervisor (122 lines)

A worrier. Fierce in his love for and protection of the Studio. Has an eye for the detail, and identifies more with techs than the creatives.

Supporting Cast (Anyone not in the final scene may be called upon to double as a reporter.)

Ora Nichols - Sound Designer (49 lines)

Aurora Nichols, inventor of sound effects in radio. Knows that the 'metaphor' of sound comes across better than its reality. She once made Orson Welles apologise to her. Publicly.

Frank Readick – Actor (34 lines)

William Alland – Actor (44 lines)

Kenny Delmar – Actor (61 lines)

The Mercury actors. They're the comic relief; Lion, Tin Man, Scarecrow.

Legal - Company Lawyer (47 lines)

An officious little prick.

Ensemble (Will double)

Newsreader	Male	Reporter 1	Male
Bartender	Male	Reporter 2	Male
Bar Patron 1	M/F	Reporter 3	Male
Bar Patron 2	M/F	Reporter 4	Male
Bar Patron 3	M/F	Reporter 5	Male
Stagehand	Male	Reporter 6	Male
Operator 1	Female	Reporter 7	Male
Operator 2	Female	Reporter 8	Male
Policeman 1	Male	Reporter 9	Male
Policeman 2	Male	Reporter 10	Male
Policeman 3	Male	Reporter 11	Female
Policeman 4	Male	Reporter 12	Female

Audition Information

HISTORY

On 30 October, 1938, Orson Welles and the Mercury Theatre on the Air caused a national panic with their broadcast of *The War of the Worlds* by H.G. Wells. All across America, thousands of people mistook the radio play for an actual newscast about a Martian invasion.

THE PLAY

Our play, "*Orson Welles and the Mercury Theatre on the Air in The War of the Worlds by H.G. Wells*" (or "*Mercury*" for short) is about the men and women who put this broadcast together. Who they were; how they decided to write it; how they made it ready for the radio audience; and how it all went pear-shaped once listeners started to call the cops.

It's a full-length, two-act play, with an interval. It will be performed at the Bakehouse on November 1st, 2nd, and 3rd.

AUDITIONS AND REHEARSALS

- Auditions - Friday 18 May, 6-8pm, and Saturday 19 May, 10am-1pm
- Call backs – Saturday 19 May, 3-6pm and Wednesday 23 May, 7-9pm (if necessary)
- Audition pieces – excerpts from *War of the Worlds* radio play. Available online from the STAG website.
- Auditions will need to be delivered in a consistent, generic American accent. Do your best!
- Cast will be announced Saturday 26 May
- Rehearsals - mid-August, held 2-3 times per week, depending on role(s). Wednesday night/Sunday afternoon, with occasional Monday/Thursday rehearsals.
- Cast will not have to learn lines until August, but use the time until then to continue workshopping with the directors. Two to three full cast table reads will be scheduled in that time, beginning on Monday 28 May.
- Due to the inordinately large cast for a black box performance, cast will double as stage/tech crew.

RADIO PLAY

In addition to the play, we will also be presenting the original radio play on 30 October, the 80th anniversary, two days before our show opens, using the '*Mercury*' cast.

Cast will not have to learn two separate scripts, but will be reading the radio program directly from the script.

WHO'S WHO

Steven T. Boltz, writer/director
Amy Hollow, writer/director
Bron Prater, Production Manager