

From Mercury to Mars: A Hard Act to Follow: War of the Worlds and the Challenges of Literary Adaptation from Antenna

Neil Verma

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Abstract

This week our From Mercury to Mars: Orson Welles on Radio after 75 Years series begins ramping up for our big event, a listening party / social media experiment, in which we're asking all of our fans and readers to listen to Orson Welles' "War of the Worlds" radio play at the same time and respond [...]

Keywords

Music (Subfield), From Mercury To Mars, History, Literature, Radio, Sound Studies



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This week our **From Mercury to Mars: Orson Welles on Radio after 75 Years** series begins ramping up for our big event, a listening party / social media experiment, in which we're asking all of our fans and readers to listen to Orson Welles' "War of the Worlds" radio play at the same time and respond to it on social media with the hashtag #WOTW75, beginning at 8:00 pm Eastern. On that date SO! Editor-in-Chief [Jennifer Stoeve-Ackerman](#), SO! Multimedia Editor [Aaron Trammell](#), producer Nick Rubenstein, Binghamton Cinema Professor [Monteith McCollum](#) and his "Performative Processes" class, and BU's Radio Drama Division will offer a broadcast from 90.5 FM [WHRW radio](#) in Binghamton, NY (and online) both before and after the play.

Remember to tune in to this blog on that date, and we'll have lots of links and resources ready to help you participate. Organize your listening party now! Follow our project on [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#), too.

But first! Check out the most recent entry to the **M2M** series by contributor and media historian [Shawn VanCour](#) ...

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“What is left to tell after the end of the world, and who is there to tell it? In his *Mercury Theater* signoff on October 30, 1938, producer and star Orson Welles boasted that the evening’s “[War of the Worlds](#)” broadcast had “annihilated the world before your very ears and utterly destroyed the C.B.S.” While these scenes of otherworldly invasion from the program’s opening 40-minute act have been a source of much discussion, its 20-minute closing act is seldom addressed and stands in stark contrast to the fast action and stylistic innovation of Act I ...”

[Reblogged from [Antenna](#)]

Click [here](#) to read VanCour’s exceptional essay on the second act of the “War of the Worlds,” and what made it – from a stylistic point of view – perhaps more controversial than the first.

This is the sixth entry in our ongoing series on Welles and radio. Want to catch up with the series? See below.

- [Here](#) is “Hello Americans,” **Tom McEnaney**’s post on Welles and Latin America
- [Here](#) is **Eleanor Patterson**’s post on editions of WOTW as “Residual Radio”
- [Here](#) is “Sound Bites,” **Debra Rae Cohen**’s post on Welles’s “Dracula”
- [Here](#) is **Cynthia B. Meyers** on the pleasures and challenges of teaching WOTW in the classroom
- And ... [Here](#) is **Kathleen Battles** on parodies of Welles by Fred Allen.

See you on the 30th! — nv