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The Retro Radio Show



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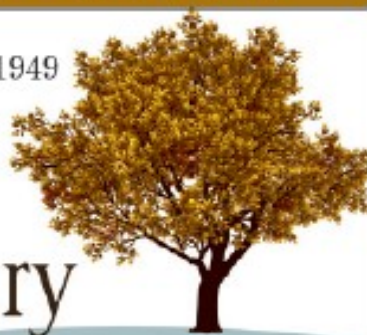
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The Retro Radio Show

Sherlock Holmes

"A Scandal in Bohemia"

By Sir Arthur Conan Doyle
Adapted by
Larry Moss

DIRECTOR'S NOTES

"The game's afoot!" One cannot hear these words without immediately thinking of Sherlock Holmes, Sir Arthur Conan Doyle's brilliant, brilliantly complex and complexly troubled consulting detective. Since we first conjured the idea of producing what has become the GHS Retro Radio Show, Chris Chapman and I have wanted to do a Sherlock Holmes mystery, but we have not been able to find a script that fit our particularly peculiar requirements. After several years of searching for appropriate scripts and gaining experience in this unique theatrical medium, I finally decided that I could write a Sherlock script for our company. What you will watch tonight is the result. I hope you will find it enjoyable and entertaining.

I chose, "A Scandal in Bohemia," because it is the only story in the Sherlock canon in which the enigmatic Irene Adler actually appears, although she is referred to in a few of the other stories. Irene Adler is the only one to accomplish a feat, which even the brilliant Professor Moriarty fails to do: foil Sherlock Holmes.

The GHS Retro Radio Show was born in the Fall of 2011. Our first production, in the Spring of 2012, was Orson Welles' "War of the Worlds," based on the H.G. Wells novel. Despite having only one performance, the production was well received and we decided to continue it annually. In the following years we have presented, "Flash Gordon," based on the comic strip from the 1930s, H.G. Wells' "The Invisible Man," an anthology of short pieces from Edgar Allan Poe, Rudyard Kipling and Oscar Wilde, which we entitled, "Tales of the Macabre" and another Orson Welles' Mercury Theatre on the Air script, Bram Stoker's immortal story of the insatiable vampire, "Dracula."

The beauty of radio drama is its complex simplicity, to borrow an oxymoron from William Shakespeare. First, it can be done pretty cheaply: no sets, no props, no costumes, and most of the scripts can be obtained without royalties. Mr. Chapman and his students provide some wonderful lighting, sound and visual effects, but they are all produced in-house, so we don't incur those costs either.

The most important values, however, are the challenges that this type of theatre provides for the student actors. They have to create believable characters, settings and moods using only their voices, and some of them have to create more than one character. The characters they create have to be real to the actors and to the audience for the duration of the play. Actors also have to engage each other emotionally, often standing thirty feet apart, without even looking at one another and facing front talking into a microphone. This is truly theatre of the imagination!

Another convention that we have used for the past few years is casting across gender lines. A female is playing Watson as a male, and several other characters are being played by opposite gender actors. Part of this is for practical reasons, as many scripts call for more male characters than female, and we often have more female actors trying out, but also gives us the flexibility to cast the most appropriate voices for each role. I think if you close your eyes, you will understand how well it works.

Again this year we are using Foley sound effects, with an onstage crew creating the sounds of the story using a variety of everyday objects and a few specialized items. We also have the actors provide the background atmosphere. Creating crowd scenes that sparkle with a sense of reality takes lots of imagination, lots of experimentation and lots of rehearsal to get the "sound" just right. Instead of just making nonsense sounds, the actors are actually conversing in improvised dialogue that keeps them anchored to the scene and the story.

Larry Moss, Director