

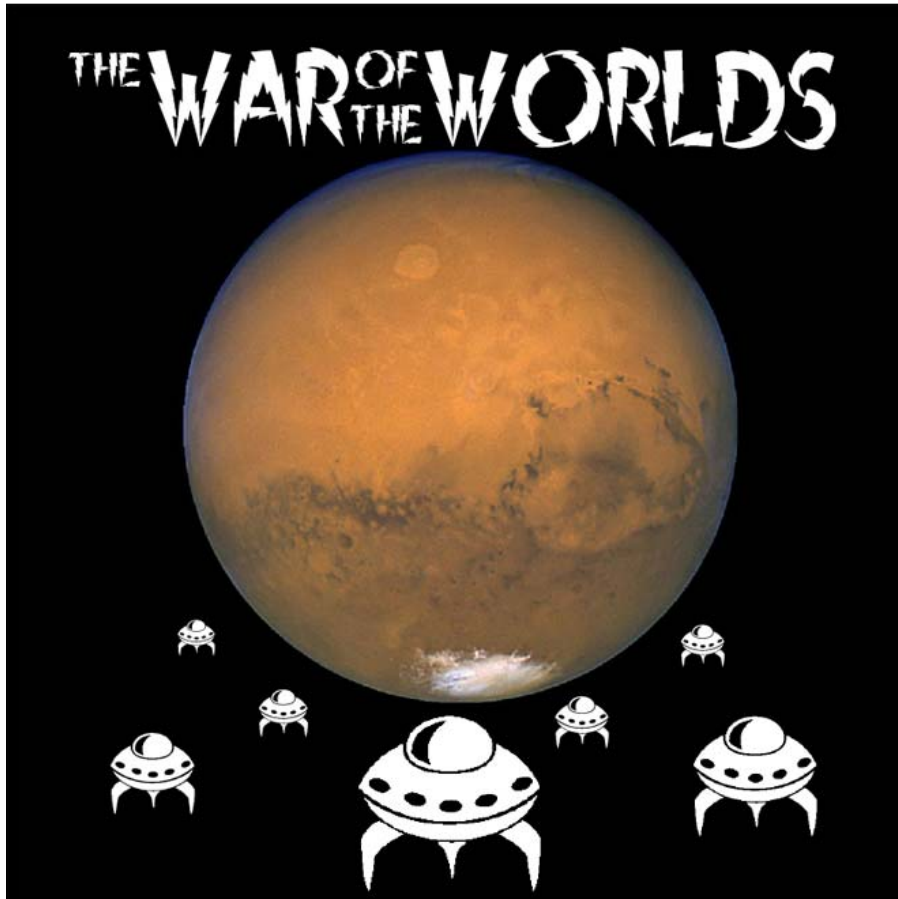
LIFE

Long Beach Shakespeare Keeps Halloween Tradition Alive with "The War of the Worlds"

by Long Beach Post | Staff Reports | 10.27.11 |

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Graphic designed by Vic Warren

2:00pm | The front page of the New York Times on October 31, 1938: *Radio Listeners in Panic, Taking War Drama as Fact.*

You know the story of what had happened the night before: Orson Welles and the rest of the Mercury Theatre Players produced a radio play of H.G. Wells's *The War of the Worlds* that many people took for authentic news coverage of an Martian invasion — "the Mercury Theatre's own radio version of dressing up in a sheet and jumping out of a bush and saying, 'Boo!'" Orson Welles said at the show's conclusion.



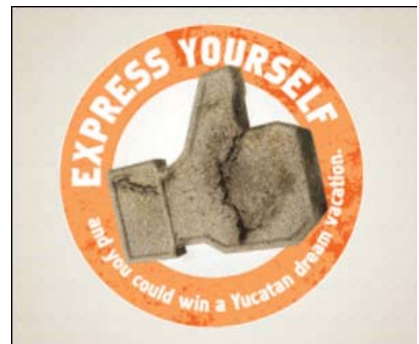
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It was the Halloween trick/treat for the ages, a legend even before it concluded, and it's something the Long Beach Shakespeare Company have made their own little tradition, producing various versions of the tale every Halloweentime since 2002.

In 2008 Long Beach Shakespeare decided to recreate the radio broadcast live in front of an audience — a move so popular that they're about to do it again for the fourth straight year.

On Friday/Saturday beginning at 8 p.m. and Sunday/Monday at 7 p.m., audiences are invited into Richard Goad Theatre to bear witness to a simulation of the epicenter of the Halloween shockwave that hit the Tri-State area all those years ago. There'll be in-studio

music, live sound effects ("I think some of the people will be surprised at how we produce some of the sounds," says Artistic Director Helen Borgers), and actors populating the stage in this theatre-of-the-mind classic.



And if you want to experience a bit of what it was like on the other end of the charade, the performances will be Webcast live.

This year Long Beach Shakespeare is adding a prelude about the real Mars, in the form of a half-hour presentation – including the most recent pictures of Earth's sister planet – by Mat Kaplan, producer/host of Planetary Radio.

Also included in the prelude will be quotations from listeners who heard the original 1938 Mercury broadcast, "to take people back in a time machine to set the atmosphere of the time when the show was performed," Borgers says.

Since you've got four chances to see/hear the show, you can still make that Halloween party and trick-or-treating experience you've got slated, and still experience this piece of history.

To do so, go to lbshakespeare.org.

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