

Title: The Wonder of Christmas

By: David Crewe

Director: **Mark Austin**

Genre: Comedy

Synopsis:

The Wonder of Christmas is a staged comedy radio play based on the Carol 'Good King Wenceslas. You may think that you know all about the story of this famous Christmas carol, but it turns out there are some dark truths lurking there and a surprising ending.

With no script to learn - well not much - and lots of fun with doubling parts and voice changes, this is a fun take on a seasonal favourite. Two men and two women, almost any ages.

Characters – (4 actors with multiple characters)

The Storyteller

King Wenceslas

Queen Gertrude

Lord Schwartzfinger -

Otto and Blotto - villains (doubled from Storyteller and King)

Luca - page boy (doubled from Lord S)

A woman (Queen doubled)

SFX Operator (Queen doubled)

Setting A comedy radio play performed on stage.

Running time: 12 minutes

Schwartzfinger: Oh Gertrude!

Queen Gertrude: Oh Willy!

Schwartzfinger: Oh Gerty!

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Queen Gertrude: Oh Willy!

Sounds of heavy sighing and kissing as they kiss their own hands into the microphone

Queen Gertrude: Enough Willy! That's enough Willy! Calm yourself. We must get on with our plan to dispose of my foolish husband and for you to join me on the throne. What's the plan?

Schwartzfinger: Er, I haven't got one yet. I've been so busy on the estate. My peasants are revolting.

Queen Gertrude: All peasants are revolting Willy, I know that. Come, we must have a plan. I'm anxious to be Wenceslasless!

Storyteller: Meanwhile the King is up in his chambers, where Luca the page boy is there to serve him. He is unimpressed with his accommodation.

King Wenceslas: They said there was hot and cold running water in the room and air conditioning. I suppose they meant the leaking pipes and the draughts. The mini-bar was an accurate disappointment - a bite-size Crunchie.

At least there's a decent view from this window. Goodness me, *how brightly shines the moon tonight*, although that frost looks something cruel. Hang on, there's some poor chap out there and it looks like he's *gathering winter fuel*. That can't be right in this weather. Here, page, come and have a look - can you see him too?

Luca: I can your Majesty. He's here all the time, but Lord Schwartzfinger doesn't want him collecting wood on his land so he has orders from his groundsmen to shoot him if they catch him at it.

King Wenceslas: Good Heavens, that's monstrous.

There is the sound of a shot in the distance. A toy cap gun.

Luca: That's them now.

King Wenceslas: I think they missed. He's running away. No, they're still trying to get him.

SFX of a machine gun goes on too long

Storyteller: *Aside in stage whisper to SFX operator* That's enough!

King Wenceslas: Ha! Still missed him. *He is seen to shuffle his script.* There's something wrong with that page.

This next section has to be played as though the audience can't hear what's going on, so in sort of gritted teeth mode.

Luca: *Aside with hand over mic but clearly audible, showing his script to the King.* What's wrong with this page? I only got this part today, cos Mark had a nasty turn after his flu jab.

King Wenceslas: *Also aside, irascibly* What are you talking about? Get on with it. *A chorus of questioning from other players*
What the Hell's going on.

Storyteller: And now for a short intermission. Turn the mcs off please. *Some muzak plays.* To 'King' I think you misled Leslie with where you put the emphasis on the last bit Brian. It should be 'there's something wrong with that, Page' not there's something wrong with that page, you see what I mean. So you threw him completely.

King Wenceslas: *Also aside* So now you're the ruddy Director are you Bill, if that's how it is you can all be Wenceslassless! *Starts to pack up.*

Queen Gertrude: Oh come on Brian, it was as much Leslie's fault. *Gives Brian a squeeze.* Anyone with experience would have known what you were saying. *Said with emphasis to Luca.*

Luca: *mouths* Bitch!

King Wenceslas: Quite right Milly. Amateur!

Storyteller: Let's get on then. Mcs up please. Ha, ha, yes, yes,..... Welcome back to Radio Playhouse.

King Wenceslas: Ha! Still missed him. *He is seen to shuffle his script.* There's something wrong with that, Page. *Said with unnecessary emphasis.* Do you know this man ?

Luca: Yes, your Highnessness I do. He lives quite a way from here , near a mountain on the other side of the forest, *by Saint Agnes Fountain.*

King Wenceslas: Right, we'll see about this. Come on lad I'll load you up with lots of meat and delicious wine and we'll set off to find him and give him a treat for Christmas.

Luca: I don't believe it. That's..... wonderful. *Voice breaking up.* No wonder they call you..... Good King Wenceslas

Storyteller: The news of the King's mission swiftly circulates the castle, as he plunders the kitchens for the supplies, and rudely interrupts an episode of Master Chef Bohemia. But as Queen Gertrude had said, time for a plan.

Schwartzfinger: Listen Gertie. Sometime on the King's trek through the snow we'll kidnap him and take him in to the deepest part of the forest and dispose of him. I'll send Otto and Blotto to do it.

Queen Gertrude: Sounds a cunning plan. But Otto and Blotto? They are hardly the brightest lights on the tree. But I'll leave it to you and go and say goodbye to Winnie.

Schwartzfinger: It will be fine my liebchen don't worry. *Calls out* Otto, Blotto come in here. Now you two follow the King and at the right moment kidnap him, put a sack on his head and take him to the darkest part of the forest, tie him to a tree and then draw your dagger