

FOLEY FOR STORYTELLING:
AN INTERACTIVE PERFORMANCE
OF THE STORYBOOK *I AM A WOLF*

A Thesis

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Introduction

Sit still, breathe slowly, close your eyes, and observe how you perceive the world. It is likely that many of your observations are sounds. Even in the world's quietest room our bodies are still creating sound, as you hear your heart beating and blood flowing through your veins (Crane 1). In a physical sense, sound is the vibration of particles through space. Our ears have developed to decode this vibration and in conjunction with our brains derive some understanding of the world from it ("Sound, N. (3), Sense 1.a."). While assisting in people's understanding of the world, sound also functions as an aspect of storytelling. In *The Sound Effects Bible*, Ric Viers stresses the need for sound in storytelling as an integral aspect to the worldbuilding of a story (313). Just as sound is a natural part of our world, it is part of the worlds that people create through stories.

In this thesis I produced a live performance that I toured to local libraries in an attempt to understand sound and story and how they work together in a practical application. Sound is utilized in conjunction with other mediums in storytelling; however, it is also used as a standalone medium for storytelling. As the technology of radio broadcasting grew in popularity in the late 1920s, it enabled mass media that used only audio to become more prevalent (Scott). This development led to the specific discipline of sound creation known as foley. Foley was only meant to be heard, which meant that any object that could make the appropriate sound could be used. This freedom fostered the creativity of foley artists in developing their techniques. One of the most famous narrative broadcasts to utilize the medium is *The War of the Worlds*, broadcast in 1938. As I show later in this thesis, *The War of the Worlds* serves as a prime example of how foley sound effects can enhance storytelling.

The use of sound for radio traces its roots to theater, where sound elements were also often unseen. Having no visual component, these offstage effects functioned similarly to sounds

used in radio broadcasting. As a result of their similar functions, techniques were shared between radio and theater. Today in some theatrical performances the creation of foley sound effects is visible to audience members. This adds a new dimension to the artistry of foley. The techniques through which foley sound effects are produced are often different from how sounds are organically produced. When this process is visible and integrated into the performance, it puts audience members in a unique position. There is a disconnect between what audience members hear and what they actually see. This contrast leads audience members to reexamine their assumptions about sound and how it is created. For example, stage adaptations of the film *It's a Wonderful Life* often include visible foley sound effects to accentuate the storytelling. I had the privilege of seeing one of these performances, which I will recount and discuss in a later section.

When sound design incorporates non-diegetic sounds, audience members' imaginations are further activated. Etymologically the word "diegesis" traces its roots to Greek and is defined as a sound "that occurs within the world of the story, and can be heard by the characters" ("Diegesis, N., Additional sense."). Diegetic sounds are part of the world of the story and characters hear the sound the same way as the audience. Non-diegetic sounds are for the audience and are not part of the world of the story. These sounds convey the dynamics, moods, emotions, and other intangible aspects of the story. They serve to assist the audience's understanding of the story through their sense of hearing. In a performance in which diegetic and non-diegetic sounds are created in view of the audience, the complexity of the sounds and visual elements compound. An intangible concept is conveyed through a physical action that results in a sound. This leads audience members to think about abstract concepts, visualization, and sound in new and imaginative ways. The live performances I produced as part of this thesis allowed me to explore the connections between these concepts further.

I produced a public traveling production performed at six Athens County branch libraries as community events for children. The production centered around the reading of the book *I am a Wolf*¹ (see Appendix I: *I am a Wolf* Front Cover). In this book an individual wakes up one day having been transformed into a wolf. They then have to learn how to adjust to life and be comfortable in their new form. During my interactive performance of the book, the audience made gestures and foley sound effects along with the story. The sound effects were both diegetic and non-diegetic and were created in view of the audience. There was then an interactive workshop in which the audience was prompted to create their own diegetic and non-diegetic foley sound effects for a story they created on their own. By utilizing multiple aspects of performance, I strove to create an environment in which the audience experienced the storybook through sound while gaining an understanding of how they can utilize sound in their own stories. I aimed to inspire the audience to tell their own stories while improving their ability to incorporate sounds into stories, thereby empowering them to tell stories with more skill and confidence. Through this project, I learned how foley functions to create immersive sensory storytelling, developed my own way of using foley to tell a specific story, and implemented foley as a medium for learning and imagining.

The Origins of Foley

Foley sound design is created manually through the manipulation of objects. The purpose of foley is to create the world and atmosphere of a story through the use of sound effects, often working in conjunction with linguistic or musical elements. The term foley derives from the early 1900's era of radio and silent film. It is named after Jack Foley, who was an influential

¹ M. Mintz, *I am a Wolf*, Currently Unpublished

figure in the early development of sound for radio (“Foley, N.” Oxford English Dictionary). The specific techniques he developed used items in unconventional ways in order to create a desired sound. A commonly-cited example of this is the use of coconut shells pounded on sand or stone to replicate the sound of horse hooves (Carlile 218). Today, regardless of the medium, all sound effects created manually are referred to as foley. However, before radio technology existed, the practice of manually creating sounds was utilized by the theater.

In theater, sound was used to signify events and occurrences in the world of the story, which was often accomplished through the use of offstage sound effects. This is acousmatic sound design, or sound design where sound is produced without any visible source (“Acousmatic, Adj., Sense 2.”). By incorporating these acousmatic sound effects, artists were able to make the theater more realistic and rich in its design and tell stories beyond visual limitations. As Frank Napier notes in his 1962 handbook for sound designers *Noises Off*, this was accomplished by being very specific about the sound created. “For example, a man is required to imitate gunfire by striking a bass drum. To achieve the right volume of sound, he must strike the drum with exactly the right amount of force” (6). In *The Cherry Orchard* Napier created the sound of the “Breaking Harp-string” at the end by utilizing a musical saw bent into an “S curvature,” which was then struck by a small padded stick (86). The techniques developed in the theater for acousmatic sound design were easily transferable to radio as they occurred outside the view of the audience.

From 1921 to 1929 the number of radio stations in operation in the United States multiplied by over 100 times. Radio was cheaper than the theater as a form of entertainment—so much so that theaters refrained from scheduling performances at times that competed with radio shows such as *Amos ‘n Andy* (Scott). A major difference between the theater and radio was the

radio's total absence of visual components. As a result of this absence, many artists working in radio looked for ways to supplement the dialogue and musical elements through the use of sound effects. Robert Mott notes that when radio storytellers came to the realization that they needed more sound design to retain the attention of their audience, they created images through sound based on the offstage acousmatic techniques of theater (4-5). A key individual to the development of these techniques was Jack Foley.

In developing his own approach to sound design, Foley drew on the extensive history of sound effects used in the theater and repurposed them for radio and, later, film. His approach to sound for audio stories to create the world of the story through sound became more widespread as radio became a popular medium for storytelling. Today, the approach he pioneered is used for theater, film, television, podcasts, audio books, and other media that incorporate sound effects in storytelling.

Many of the stories that were turned into radio drama were based on existing works of literature such as *The Adventures of Sherlock Holmes*, based on the books by Sir Arthur Conan Doyle and *Theatre Royal*, which “showcased classic literary works” (Yourgrau 2021). Reading literature is often a solitary act—individuals read to themselves silently. Of course, sometimes individuals read out loud to themselves or a group, but part of what makes literature unique is its ability to be consumed alone and in silence. While reading silently, readers are left to imagine anything not explicitly described by the text. When literature is converted to theater, significantly less is left to the imagination of the audience. The story is conveyed through a three-dimensional portrayal in which many elements not explicitly described in the text have been decided on by the director, designers, and other individuals working on the production. Each audience member has a slightly different experience and takeaway from the production, but all observe the same

story world. Radio, as audio storytelling, functions as a halfway point between literature and theater. Radio utilizes the carefully designed sound of the theater in combination with the individually imagined visual elements of literature. Through the creation of sounds to represent the world of the story, the audience no longer has to imagine the soundscape for themselves. The audience then combines the creative choices of the foley artists with their own imaginations to create a rich collaborative world of the story that is unique to them.

The War of the Worlds Case Study

Many radio dramas have been produced over the years including the influential example of *Gangbusters*, which began with the explosive sound of gunfire and inspired the idiom of “like Gangbusters” (Ammer 271), but one that has left a distinct mark on the world of foley is *The War of the Worlds*. Produced on Halloween in 1938 by Mercury Theatre on the Air, the radio adaptation of *The War of the Worlds* was heard by at least six million people during its original airing (Cantril 3, 47). It has been reproduced many times since its original broadcast, and many live theatrical versions have also been developed and performed. I believe that a key reason that this radio drama has continued to be produced while many others are not is its deliberate and effectual use of foley to establish the world and atmosphere of the story.

The original broadcast begins by stating that the story is originally by H.G. Wells and introduces Orson Welles as the “director of the Mercury Theatre and star of these broadcasts” (Koch 193). This announcement functions as a prologue, informing the audience that what they are about to hear is fictitious, implementing dramatic irony through the audience’s knowledge of the existence of Martians in contrast to the humans in the story, and setting the tone for the story as serious, monumental, and mysterious. As the story begins, this tone shifts, as we listen to a

seemingly mundane radio broadcast about the weather, followed by a jovial “Spanish Theme Song” (Koch 194). The mundanity of this beginning brings the dramatic irony into focus as the audience is still aware of the seriousness of what is about to unfold. The first sign of something out of the ordinary is the observation of explosions on Mars occurring at regular intervals, but the seriousness of the explosions is not felt by the broadcast as they return to the music. This music was produced live in the studio for the original broadcast, contributing to the story’s feeling of authenticity (Gosling 39). The music then shifts to a song titled *Stardust*, making light of the astronomical phenomena occurring as it plays.

Throughout the broadcast, the range in quality of dialogue audio helps to communicate the world of the story. The audio quality corresponds directly to each fictional recording location; the highest quality audio, for example, is said to be recorded in the home studio in New York City, where broadcasts are intended to occur. Once the events of the story require the use of field recording, the quality of the audio diminishes. In the field, Carl Phillips, a reporter, is forced to contend with an attack by the invading Martians while still attempting to report, stating, “I’m pulling this microphone with me as I talk” (Koch 202). As the broadcast from the mobile unit is disrupted multiple times by the events that are unfolding, the audio quality diegetically deteriorates slightly each time that the broadcast resumes. This deterioration also non-diegetically represents the diminishing control that the humans have over their situation.

A sound effect that stood out to me was the inclusion of ticking while the broadcast was reporting from an observatory at Princeton. Carl Phillips references it in the dialogue as the “vibration of the clockwork” of the observatory (Koch 195). Diegetically this sound serves to create an ambient distinction between the observatory and the home studio. When the dramatic irony of the prologue is factored in, the ticking non-diegetically represents that the humans’ time

to effectively respond to the alien threat is running out. The repetitive and rhythmic ticking creates a tense atmosphere that isn't reflected by the characters until later in the story, serving as important foreshadowing of the severity of the dire situation the characters find themselves in.

Once the first martian capsule has landed, the audience gets their first glimpse at something from the alien world of the Martians. The drama uses a “humming that increases in intensity” that emanates from the capsule to first showcase this world to the audience (Koch 202). The sound they use is unlike anything that I, and most members of the audience, have likely ever heard organically produced while going about our lives. This sound effect was produced by “slowly unscrewing the lid of an empty pickle jar in a nearby toilet cubicle” (Gosling 40). The sound-people on the show were able to turn these mundane objects from our world into the sound of something from a world very different than our own.

The story then needs to display two very different worlds through sound—the alien and the human. They accomplish this as they broadcast distinctly human “screams” with “unearthly shrieks” (Koch 202). The juxtaposition of recognizable and foreign sounds highlights the chaos of the situation and the clashing of these two worlds.

The story of *The War of the Worlds* is often associated with the tale of mass panic and hysteria that was instigated by the original broadcast. Coinciding with the beginning of the broadcast between 8 and 9 P.M. “the New Jersey Bell telephone company handled between 75,000 and 100,000 extra calls” than they normally would at that time (Gosling 49). The exact scale of panic nationwide has been debated over the years but regardless of the size, the broadcast has had a lasting impact. *The War of the Worlds* used sound to create a world so rich and authentic that the fiction of the story was regarded as reality by members of the audience.

The degree to which the broadcast used sound to create an entire world and spark the imagination of the audience is something I strove to emulate with my performance.

It's a Wonderful Life: A Live Radio Play Case Study

Based on the 1939 short story *The Greatest Gift* by Philip Van Doren Stern, the movie *It's a Wonderful Life* came out in 1946. Today it is a holiday staple for many people, with many more having watched it at least once. It has been turned into a number of theatrical productions, many of which are performed in the style of a radio play being produced live in front of the audience. For this case study I am discussing the version *It's A Wonderful Life, A Radio Play* by Joe Landry, which originally premiered in 1996. I was fortunate to be able to attend the production directed by Jenny Henchey produced by the Ariel Opera House based in Gallipolis, Ohio in December of 2024, and my discussion will revolve around the specific artistic choices of that production.

The theater was built in 1895 and has a traditional proscenium setup. The space is designed to efficiently carry sound from the stage to the audience without the need for modern amplification technology. The theater was decorated ornately in a warm and inviting manner with Christmas trees, garland, and wrapped presents. Immediately upon entering the theater, there was a pianist playing 1940s Christmas music. This immediately put me in a more relaxed and festive mood, preparing me for the performance that was about to begin. This element functioned in a diegetic way, putting the audience in the mood and mindset of a live studio audience. Meanwhile, the actors were both onstage and in the house, acting as if they were preparing for the radio show to be produced. This was reinforced by having the character of the Stage Manager call five minutes to places as the first line in the script, just as a real radio performance would (Landry 11). The production began with a section of dialogue before the

story of *It's a Wonderful Life*. The character of the Producer of the radio play gave a speech, establishing us as the live studio audience, and an "Applause" sign told us when to applaud (Landry 11). While the audience knew the sign was to be fictitious, it still established our reactions as part of the production, making me more aware of how I was audibly reacting to the show, while simultaneously validating those same reactions.

For this specific production there were six actors who each played a number of different characters. Every actor had clear distinctions in their voices to distinguish which character they portrayed. One actor effectively used a cigar in his mouth to assist in the characterized alteration of his speech pattern. On occasion small costume pieces such as hats were added for individual characters, though vocalization and context clues would have been enough to recognize them. Two of the performers also served as the foley artists, taking turns creating sounds and portraying characters, as well as occasionally creating foley sound effects in tandem. There were mics set up around the stage in routine locations, as if for a radio show, but they were not plugged in and simply served as visual props. This lack of amplification did not detract from the performance due to the well designed acoustics of the space.

It's A Wonderful Life, A Radio Play begins as the various characters pray for the main character George Bailey and the prayers are heard by two angels, Joseph and Clarence. They look back through the life of George until they arrive at the present, where George contemplates suicide to provide his family with his life insurance money. As he stands on a bridge, wishing he had never been born, when the angel Clarence appears and shows George an alternate reality in which his wish is granted. Observing the desolate state of Bedford Falls in the reality where he doesn't exist, George is emboldened to continue living and find alternate solutions to his

financial troubles. As he returns to his house, the town he has helped throughout the years rallies around him, collectively solving George's financial troubles.

Beginning just as a radio show would, the foley artists replicated the sounds one might expect. They used a glockenspiel for the traditional NBC jingle, which was immediately followed by intro music on the piano. There were approximately fifty different sound effects, created through vocalizations or through the use of items. The item that stood out the most to me for its addition to the story was a small door. This door was approximately two feet tall and was used for the sounds of knocking on a door and the shutting of a door. The variations implemented by the foley artists shaped the world of the story, clearly indicating the emotional state of the characters by the speed and force with which the foley artists closed the door. One example of this was when an upset Old Man Collins opened his door to go inside and slammed it to punctuate his agitated exit. Unlike in a more traditional play, actors never exited the stage. Their exits were entirely conveyed through the foley sound working in conjunction with the imagination of the audience. Two effects that stood out to me for the accuracy of sound created with atypical objects were the sounds of "running through snow" and a "car door" that "opens and closes" (Landry 71, 28). For the snow, the foley artists crunched something with their hands that was laid out on a metal tray. The foley was performed on a table on the stage; after the show I learned that they used cornflakes. For the car door, they used the forceful closing of a toolbox lid. This was a new foley technique to me but one that I found to be very accurate: the slight echo of the metal as it shut was nearly indistinguishable from that of a car.

Foley sound effects were primarily used when a character entered or exited the scene, or when a character interacted with an object within the scene. For the movement of characters, there was a bell added to the opening of the door to establish the location as a store (Landry 17).

Another sound implemented with the door was the use of indistinct chatter as “crowd noises” while the door was open, which went away as the door closed (Landry 76). This combination of sounds was used to indicate the main characters leaving a crowded party to have a private conversation. Footsteps were also utilized, with different shoes being used for different characters based on what their costuming would have looked like. A baseball bat struck a large piece of padded leather, which replicated the sound of the shopkeeper “Gower slapping Young George” (Landry 18). Some of the other foley sounds included a bucket of water with a jar inside of it that the artist manipulated to sound like a child who had fallen through ice into a pond: “Ice cracks, followed by water sloshing” (Landry 15). The foley artists thumbed through a deck of playing cards to sound like a person thumbing through a stack of crisp dollar bills. An airtight candy jar lid popping was used to replicate the cork of a wine bottle, while being more easily timable and replicable than an actual wine cork. A cash register was created through the combination of coins dropped on a tray used in quick succession, with a drawer being shut on a toolbox—the same toolbox that was used for the car door. Another foley object used was a cricket rasp, a wooden instrument with ridges that a stick is quickly rubbed against, as “Crickets chirp” (Landry 34). A thunder drum was utilized to indicate the presence of magic in the world of the story, particularly the reversal of a wish. Since the reversal of a wish doesn’t have a defined associated sound, I appreciated their choice of the thunder drum. It functioned as a naturally occurring sound used in an unnaturally occurring way, placing magic as a natural force occurring within the world while still being mystical.

The aspect of the sound design that was integrated most significantly throughout the performance was the piano. Aside from being the first sound the audience was introduced to, it was utilized for ambiance, authenticity of the radio broadcast, conveying location during the

story, and foley. The piano was integral to the radio broadcast as it was a major component of the music bookending the story, in addition to three time-period-accurate advertisements that were interjected into the story. In the fiction of the story, piano music indicated a transfer back to the supernatural world of the angels, a location that would have been otherwise difficult to convey. It also was used for foley for when a child practices the piano, playing “poorly, with wrong notes” (Landry 52). In actuality, it was performed by the same pianist as before. By functioning in so many different ways, the piano was frequently a major indicator of the diegesis of the world of the story. It was the only sound that was diegetic to the radio show, the story of *It’s a Wonderful Life* where the characters could hear it, and also non-diegetic within the story. In the absence of a set for the story the piano served as a connective tissue that prepared the audience for immersion into the production as well as transporting the story between locations. This production inspired the sound in my own project by clearly creating foley sound effects to enhance the story.

My Project

The primary driving force behind this thesis was the art of foley. In devising a final project to be performed, I decided to use foley in conjunction with a book. Last year I read *I am a Wolf* by M. Mintz, which was the capstone project for Mintz’s bachelor’s degree in Digital Arts from Bowling Green State University. The story immediately resonated with my journey through life, and I knew I wanted to facilitate other people having access to the story. I read the book as the story for my performance, while foley elements altered and enhanced the experience for the audience members. The project took place at six of the local branch libraries in Athens County in community meeting rooms that are reservable (see Appendix II: Performance Poster).

The project was approximately an hour long and consisted of the interactive performance of the book along with a workshop during which the audience developed their own foley sound effects.

I am a Wolf is a picture book and as such has intricate images that accompany the text. My performance combined the visual aspects of the book with the auditory aspects of foley to draw connections between the senses. Even so, the performance left room for the imagination of the audience. Audience members imagined the events between pages. The use of imagination enabled them to visualize the story and characters in action.

In traditional foley it doesn't show us how the sound is made and it is the sound alone that activates the imagination. My performance made the visual aspect of the foley part of the performance for all of the sounds, much as *It's a Wonderful Life: A Live Radio Play* did. In showing the creation of the sound audience members draw new connections between the visual and auditory aspects while considering the deliberate use of sound to tell a story. These connections enable the audience to think more creatively about sound in their own lives following the performance.

Audience members were encouraged to participate in various aspects of the performance. During the reading of the book, audience members were asked to make gestures that coincide with the events the book depicts. Through the inclusion of these gestures, the audience embodied the character of Wolf. This kinesthetic aspect of the performance assisted the audience in developing connections between their sensory experiences and the story. Another way in which the audience participated is by creating foley sound effects. Some of the foley sound effects created during the story required specific items to be able to generate the sound. These were performed by myself at the front of the performance space. For the foley sound effects that did not require any specific materials, the audience members were asked to participate (see

Appendix III: Foley and Audience Participation Cue List). As the audience members generated sound they contributed to the world of the story, becoming a part of it. Having participated in the telling of this story, audience members are emboldened to tell their own stories.

I began to develop the performance by reading *I am a Wolf* a number of times and dividing it into sections based on the dialogue and pages. Taking note of the words that were used frequently, I developed sounds or gestures the audience could participate with. These sounds existed within the story making them diegetic. A key example of this is the word “wolf,” which cued the audience to howl like wolves. I also workshopped which non-diegetic sounds would add to the overall story I was telling with the book. I used a slide whistle both going up and down in pitch to indicate the mood of the character of Wolf. Some of the sound effects didn’t exactly match their cue word diegetically but still invoked the word. Examples of this include the word “frightful,” for which I used a toy leaf blower to make a deep unusual jitter that could inspire fear and also be made by a fearful creature. I used a musical ratchet to indicate teeth, due to the grating and staccato nature of the sound, and I used a vibraslap, which made a sudden metal on wood vibration to indicate the roughness of the hairy fur, though not as rough as the ratchet for the teeth. I had to consider the volume of the sound effects while developing my techniques so that all of the sounds could be heard by a crowd in a large room. In the book there are two instances in which a character is eating food. I experimented with creating the sound of chewing by moving dice and other small objects within a leather bag. It didn’t sound as much like chewing as I had hoped it would, even when experimenting with a wide variety of objects, and also was much too quiet for anyone more than a foot or two away to hear. While a technique at this volume could work for a recorded setting it wasn’t a good fit for my performance, which didn’t include any additional amplification. Instead of this sound I added more audience

participation where audience members made both noises and gestures to indicate eating food. All of the audience gestures and sound effects were created using only their bodies, demonstrating to the audience how simple the materials for foley could be.

Before the project there was an interactive introduction with the audience members (see Appendix IV: Performance Dialogue with No Book Text and Photos). The introduction functioned in multiple ways. It prepared the audience to engage with me as the performer, it made them more comfortable in the atmosphere I created for the performance, and it served as a reference point for the impact the performance may have had on them. Talking to the audience before the show, I asked what they knew about foley and about the concepts presented in the book. During the talkback following the performance, I asked similar questions about the concepts presented in the book to observe how the answers changed as a result of the performance.

Moving beyond the book, there was a workshop to teach the audience more about the art of foley and how they can explore it for themselves. As part of the workshop, the audience was provided with prompts for a variety of diegetic sounds or objects that make well known diegetic sounds such as squeak, creak, train, toaster, and more (see Appendix V: Prompt Cards). Then they were given the time to develop their own foley technique to generate the sound. They used an assortment of mundane objects I collected in my “Big Tub of Foley” to generate their sounds. I also directed them to come up with a story that their sound could be used in. After everyone was done, I asked for volunteers to share their newly developed techniques and stories with the rest of the audience attempting to encourage everyone to share. I then repeated this section with a different set of prompts for non-diegetic sounds such as orange, magic, proud, and more (see Appendix V: Prompt Cards). When generating a non-diegetic sound there is no right or wrong

answer, making it necessary for the audience to think about their prompt creatively. Through this section, the audience was empowered to use their imagination to create sound as well as learn from the imagination of the other audience members. They were empowered as unique and creative individuals, while also being part of a larger group that supported and fostered their imaginations.

Project Reflection

Each one of my projects at the branch libraries were very distinct, which was very beneficial to my understanding of my project. I learned from all six of them, though some were more enlightening than others. Listed in order, the audience attendance for each event was eighteen people, five people, four people, seventeen people, zero people, and seven people. Approximately half of the audience members were children. Weather was also a likely factor for one having no attendance as school had been cancelled due to the weather and other routine library programs had almost no attendance that day.

During the performances themselves, the response of the audience couldn't have been much better. For every performance, almost every single audience member participated in the wolf howls that occur frequently in the book. At the start of the program, it was more difficult to get people involved in answering questions, but having audience participation in this section helped to prepare the audience for the book reading itself. The workshop section of the project where the audience developed their own foley sounds needed to be customized to each group more than the performance itself. One of the key parts of this was the tactics I used to encourage participation. It was difficult to get the youngest kids in attendance to focus on the prompt. When they found something they liked in the "Big Tub of Foley" they would typically stick to it and

not explore other items. At that point, I found a prompt card that could work for that item comparatively easily and then gave them that prompt instead. This worked with limited success but at a rate I was still happy with. Older children either found their sounds very quickly or very slowly. For the children who found their sound quickly, I prompted them to either take another prompt or to keep exploring and try combining more items together to make a new sound. The children who found their sound more slowly tended to experiment less while finding the sound. Thinking about the object too much kept them from experimenting with unconventional combinations and origins for sounds. For these children I attempted to coach them by directing them to ignore the visual aspects of the objects and to start making sounds to experiment.

One of my favorite moments occurred during the first performance, in The Plains. For this performance, a lot of the kids were younger and only participated minimally. One girl stepped up and answered frequently throughout, though at times she would get embarrassed about answering so much, even with my encouragement. By the time that we were sharing our final sounds the room had a more comfortable and supportive atmosphere, and in sharing her sound she also sang a 30-second song she had just written. The audience was prompted to create a story in which their sound could be used and so the creation and sharing of this song was unexpected and thrilling to see. It was a good indication to me that the performance had inspired her creativity and created an environment in which she was comfortable with sharing, which were the two main goals of my performances.

In Glouster, the audience consisted mostly of children who regularly spend their afternoons at that library. As I entered the library they were all very invested in a game that they were playing on computers. As I began to set up for my performance, I saw their attention start to shift, especially as I brought out some of my more unusual objects, such as the flexatone and

vibraslap. With some slight prompting from the librarian, all of the children then stopped their games and came over to participate in my performance. About half of the children were immediately invested in the performance while the other half were still visibly self conscious. As the performance continued, all of the children became much more invested in the performance and no longer appeared self conscious. They were much more eager to participate, especially when it came to the foley workshop. One of the children was so excited about creating the sounds that he, with permission, kept taking prompts until he had a total of eight different prompts and sounds, all of which he shared with the group. Following the performance, one child asked when I would be returning to the library as he wanted to have more similar library programming. After the performance, one of the librarians expressed to me how impressed she was by how excited and involved the children got into my performance, especially with their typical option of computer games still available to them.

Albany was one of the least attended performances but still served as an important learning experience. The audience consisted only of people I had personally invited, one of whom was the book's author, Mintz. This was disappointing as I hoped to reach the community more, but it also shows me that I could have done more to advertise even though I did reach out to the local school district and hang up posters at establishments in the town around the library. Even though it was just people I knew, I still continued with the performance. The audience consisted entirely of adults and was very supportive and engaged as they made a dedicated effort to be helpful audience members. I treated the performance just like any other performance, though for the foley workshop section I possessed a more thorough understanding of which prompts to hand out to adequately challenge audience members to create sounds. Through this

performance, I was able to gain more experience of working directly with adults while having the benefit of their active participation.

Athens was a successful performance in terms of multiple aspects. Objectively, attendance was the second largest. Having already performed three times, I felt more capable of handling the bigger audience, which included the author and my academic advisor and his family. The reading of the book went well with lots of enthusiastic participation from the audience. One moment that stood out to both the author and myself was when the book asked an overarching rhetorical question: “Does wild have to be bad?” One child exclaimed “No” out loud, unprompted. Doing this, the child showed that the space I had created was a safe space to participate and share, and that they were so moved by the message of the book that they shared their thoughts out loud. The foley workshop section of the performance was more chaotic than some of the previous performances but that was primarily due to the quantity of children participating at once. Even with the increased quantity of children, parental supervision and assistance enabled me to still go around and interact with each of the children as they developed their sounds. Anecdotally, as reported by my academic advisor, his children were still talking about the performance over two weeks later.

Nelsonville was the final performance and primarily consisted of children who were already at the library. Due to the time restraints of the children, I was unable to complete the final section of the performance where they create non-diegetic sounds from the second set of prompts. Even so, the performance and first foley workshop section went well as the children were excited to participate and seemed to have fun while doing so.

The final week of spring semester I will perform the project twice more as part of the School of Theater Fringe Festival. This will provide an opportunity to share the work with my

peers. As of this writing, the performances are next week. I am curious to see how an older crowd but one more practiced in storytelling will experience it differently. I also hope to share the project again in the future.

These performances showed me that sound is conducive to dynamic storytelling. The use of live sound effects in the performance engaged audience members in a more active way than just reading the book would have done, while further developing the world of the story. The workshop section of the project started with sound instead of story. Once audience members had crafted their own foley sound effects they were able to develop a wide variety of stories, even with similar sounds. This project showed how sound and story can develop and aid each other in creating dynamic, unique, and beautiful experiences. I am thankful and appreciative to each and everyone that attended the performances and participated in them. It was an impactful experience to be able to take this performance to various parts of Athens County and to get to interact with and learn from each of the different communities. I believe the audiences from my performances will be better equipped to tell their own stories using sound just as I have learned about the power of sound and the worlds that it can create using only an object and your own two hands.

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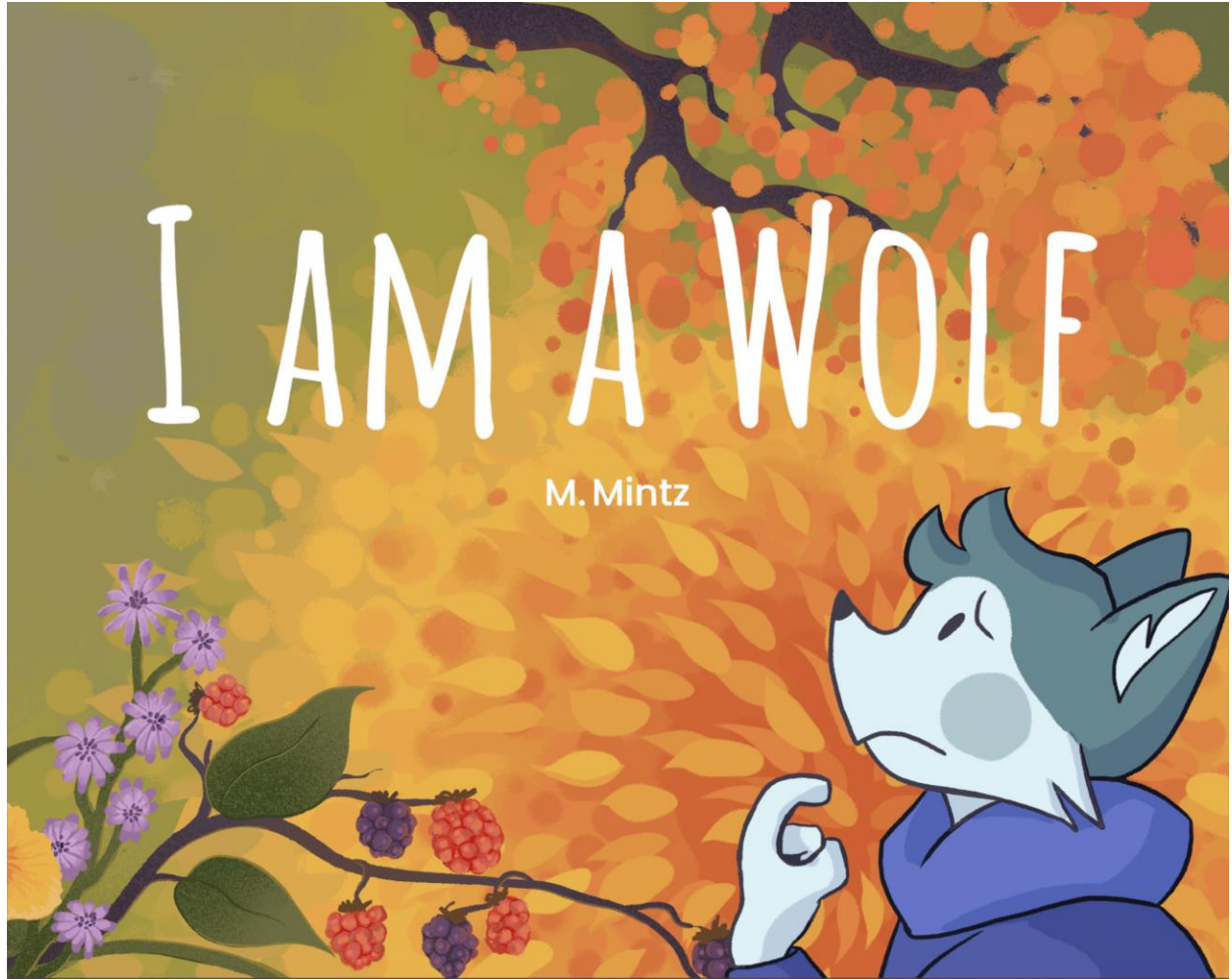
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Appendix I: *I am a Wolf* Front Cover

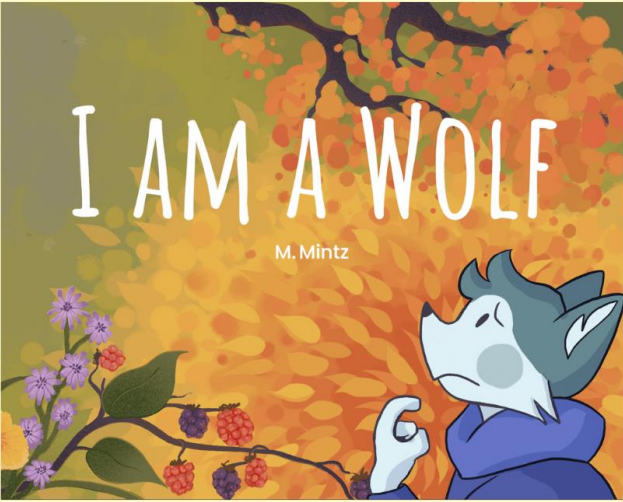


I AM A WOLF

An Interactive Storybook Performance

• • FREE ADMISSION - DURATION 1 HOUR • •
• • AUDIENCE PARTICIPATION FOR ALL AGES • •
• • BOOK PERFORMANCE AND FOLEY SOUND WORKSHOP • •
• •

Thesis Project of Bob Walters Based on the New Book



At the Local Branch Libraries

February 1st 11:00am The Plains

February 6th 4:30pm Glouster

February 8th 11:00am Albany

February 10th 4:30pm Athens with Author

February 12th 4:30pm Coolville

February 13th 4:30pm Nelsonville

Appendix III: Foley and Audience Participation Cue List

Page	Cue Word	Sound	Item	Diegetic/Non	Participation
5	Wolf	Wolf Howl	Voice	Diegetic	Yes
6	Wolf	Wolf Howl	Voice	Diegetic	Yes
8	Frightful	Frightful	Leafblower	Non	No
8	Wolf	Wolf Howl	Voice	Diegetic	Yes
8	Eyes	Shock	Plane Whistle	Non	No
8	Teeth	Clashing	Ratchet	Non	No
9	Tail	Swooshing	Flapping Fabric	Non	No
10	Right x1	Disgusted Noises	Voice	Diegetic	No
10	Right x2	Fabric Ripping	Ripping Muslin	Diegetic	No
11	Day	Weird	Slide Whistle	Non	No
14	Wolf	Wolf Howl	Voice	Diegetic	Yes
14	Wolf	Wolf Howl	Voice	Diegetic	Yes
15	How	Questioning	Flexatone	Non	No
16	Hairy	Wild	Vibraslap	Non	No
16	Wolf	Wolf Howl	Voice	Diegetic	Yes
17	Wolf	Wolf Howl	Voice	Diegetic	Yes
17	Hairy	Wild	Vibraslap	Non	No
18	Wolf	Wolf Howl	Voice	Diegetic	Yes
18	Tamed	Wild	Leafblower	Non	No
20	Wolf	Wolf Howl	Voice	Diegetic	Yes
20	Eyes	Shock	Plane Whistle	Non	No
21	Teeth	Clashing	Ratchet	Non	No
21	Tail	Swooshing	Flapping Fabric	Non	No
22	Me	Happy	Slide Whistle	Non	No
23	Beastly	Beastly	Leafblower	Non	No
24	Taste	Tasty "Mmmm"	Voice	Diegetic	No
25	Clothes	Zipper	Jacket	Diegetic	No
25	Night	Running and Fur	Feet and Hands	Diegetic	Yes
27	Too	Joyful Ding	Chime	Non	No
27	(Chime)	Wolf Howl	Voice	Diegetic	Yes

Appendix IV: Performance Dialogue with No Book Text and Photos

Hello everyone and welcome to this performance of *I am a Wolf*! My name is Bob Walters and I am a senior at Ohio University and this is part of my thesis project. This is an interactive performance and that means that you are just as much a part of it as I am! So for your first challenge, on the count of three, I want you to say your name out loud! One, Two, Three.

(Audience provides their answer.) Wonderful! So this book was actually written by M. Mintz who is a good friend of mine and I really loved it and so I wanted to share it with all of you today! The twist is that I am adding sound to the book. The sound I will be using is called foley. Does anyone know what makes foley unique? Raise your hands and I'll get some of your answers. (Pick a selection of kids to give an answer.) Those are some really interesting answers! How about I show you an example of foley? (Use a thunder drum out of sight.) What was that? (Pick a selection of kids to give an answer.) All good guesses! To me it sounded like thunder. Does thunder normally happen indoors? (A resounding no from the audience.) I don't think so. So since we can't have real thunder inside, I had to use something else to sound like thunder! What I actually used to make the sound was this! (Reveal thunder drum.) This is called a thunder drum! (Use the thunder drum.) It is designed to sound similar to thunder! Foley sound effects are effects that are made by moving objects. Often the sounds that they make are very unexpected for the items used to make them like the thunder drum for example! This thunder drum doesn't look anything like the big clouds that usually make thunder. Foley is used a lot for radio, movies, tv shows, podcasts, theater, audio books, and other things to make the world of the story come to life! Today, as we read the book *I am a Wolf*, I will be making foley sound effects in front of you as we go! Does that sound cool? The problem is, I'm only one person with two hands, so I can only do so much! I need you to make some gestures like you are the characters in the story as

well as help me make some of the foley sound effects. Can you help me with that? (A resounding yes from the audience.) Great! Let's Practice! First let's do some gestures. When I name a body part, let's all point to it! So when I say "eyes" (Point to eyes.) we point to our eyes! Great! What about "teeth"? (Point to teeth.) What about "tail"? (Point to imaginary tail.) We don't actually have tails, but we are going to be using our imaginations a lot today and you already seem to be naturals at that! Now let's practice making some sounds. So whenever I say the word Wolf, I want you to give me your best wolf howls! Let's test it. Wolf. (Wolf howls.) Woah! It was just like you all transformed into a pack of wolves before my very ears! So as we read the story, pay attention to when I ask you to make a gesture or sound and I'll be making some extra sounds with my handy dandy items I brought along with me today. Now before we hop into the story, I have some questions for you! So the character in the book doesn't have control over everything in their life. I've felt that way in my life. For example, when there is a thunder storm and I want it to be dry to go outside and play I don't have any control over it. Can you raise your hand if you have ever felt like you didn't have control over something in your life? Now does anyone want to share an example? Keep your hands raised if you do. (Pick a selection of kids to give an answer.) Now raise your hand if you have ever had something change in your life and you didn't know what to do? I know I certainly have. So what did you do when that happened? (Pick a selection of kids to give an answer.) Well, the main character in this book definitely feels that way too and we will see how they deal with that situation! Is everybody ready to begin the story? (A resounding yes from the audience.)

(READ BOOK WITH FOLEY AND PARTICIPATION)

Wonderful job! You all did so good! My friend who wrote this actually wrote a note for us so I'm going to go ahead and read that to you as well! Adults, feel free to read this first page. I will only read the second out loud.

Page 29: "When a big change has happened in your life, you may feel a little out of control. For the main character, they couldn't control suddenly being a wolf. But what they could do is look at what they do control! We may not have control over some changes, but when you focus on what you can control, a sudden change may not seem as scary!"

Now that the story is done I have some more questions for you! So how did Wolf deal with changes in their life? (Pick a selection of kids to give an answer.) How can you use the same things in your own life? (Pick a selection of kids to give an answer.) Wonderful! Now we are going to do even more with foley sound effects which I am very excited for! So you saw and heard me make a lot of sounds during the book. What are some of the sounds that you remember? (Pick a selection of kids to give an answer.) Very good! Here I have some cards with different prompts on them! (Bring out prompt cards.) These are for sounds or items that make sounds that everyone will probably know. I also brought with me my big tub of foley! It is filled with fun random items that we can use to make sound! I'm going to give everyone some time to take a prompt and use these items to create your own sound! Then I want you to come up with a story that the sound could be a part of! Then we will share the sounds and stories we have created with the group! Parents and guardians, this is the perfect opportunity for you to get involved as well helping you kids with this or creating your own sounds too! Now does everyone promise to be careful with the items, make sure the items stay in your own bubble, and to share if someone else wants to use an item? (A resounding yes from the audience.) Wonderful! I will

pass out the cards and set out the big tub of foley and then you can go and use your imaginations with these items to create your sounds and stories. (Set out the tub and pass out cards.)

Approximately 10 Minutes Later

Everyone please head back to your seats with the item or items you picked for your sound!

Welcome back everyone! Now we will be sharing first our story and then our sounds with the group if you want to. Who wants to share their sound with the group? (Pick a selection of kids to share their sound.) Those are all super cool! I really liked how when multiple people had the same card they came up with very different results! That shows how everyone is unique and just how creative you all are! Let's all now put the items back into the big tub of foley. (Returns items.) Now I want you to remember back to the sounds I made during the story. Some of the sounds that I created weren't for specific objects in the story but matched up with the vibe of the story. Can anyone name some of those sounds and how they made you feel? (Pick a selection of kids to give an answer.) Wonderful! There are no wrong answers when it comes to these as each person is unique and might think of them differently! Now I have a second set of cards! These don't have specific sounds or objects on them, but have feelings, ideas, and stuff like that on them! We are going to dive back into the big tub of foley and I want you to use your imagination to create a sound that makes you think of the word on your paper and then a story you would use it in! Let me know if you want any help as this can be difficult but I believe that all of you can do it! (Pass out cards.)

Approximately 10 Minutes

Everyone please head back to your seats with the item or items you picked for your sound!

Welcome back everyone! Now we will be sharing first our story and then our sounds with the group if you want to. Who wants to share their sound with the group? (Pick a selection of kids to

share their sound.) Did any of these sounds make you feel anything in particular? (Pick a selection of kids to give an answer.) Now for this second time, what was it like imagining a sound for something that usually doesn't have one? (Pick a selection of kids to share their sound.) So now that you have learned all about foley and how you can use sound to tell stories, do you want to use it when you tell stories in the future? (A resounding yes from the audience.) Before we all leave, does anyone have any more questions? (Answer any questions to the best of my ability.) Thank you all so much for helping me with this story! It has been so much fun to get to meet all of you and make sounds with you! Feel free to stay and talk afterwards! Have a nice day and keep using your imagination to have fun with sounds!

END



Foley Table Setup at Nelsonville Public Library



Room Setup at Nelsonville Public Library

Appendix V: Prompt Cards

Diegetic	Non-Diegetic
Clock	Happy
Alarm	Sad
Cricket	Worried
Car	Mysterious
Tree	Heavy
Wind	Light
Bike	Red
Storm	Orange
Growl	Yellow
Squeak	Green
Crash	Blue
Buzz	Purple
Creak	Speedy
Jingle	Slow
Rattle	Confused
Thunk	Soft
Twang	Hard
Train	Shy
Plane	Proud
Hammer	Suprised
Toaster	Magic