VOICES
From the
TITANIC

A docu-play

Dramatized by Pat Cook

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Dedicated to those who lost their lives on that tragic night,
and to those who survived to tell the story.

The Playwright
Pat Cook

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This play is based on the known facts in the tragedy of the *RMS Titanic*. All the events depicted in this play are "as they happened" according to the latest research. It is a theatrical compilation of historical facts, newspaper articles and interviews with the people who lived through the disaster. All the characters who are identified in the show actually existed and, in some cases, "speak for themselves," telling their stories in their own words. The few fictional nameless characters, Gentlemen, Lady, Newsboys, etc. are inserted to provide additional facts and, in some cases, atmosphere. I would like to thank Philip Hind for his permission to use his excellent and extensive Internet text, "The Encyclopedia Titanica," copyright 1997, in my research. I consider it the utmost in biographical facts regarding the doomed ocean liner. Also, I owe a large debt of gratitude to Bob Flowers for allowing me to use his on-line web page, "*Titanic* - Voyage Of Discovery," for further research.

And to Arnaud Mouronval, for granting me permission to pull facts from his web page, "*Titanic* - A Tragic Destiny," I am forever grateful. And, of course, John Rudolph for granting me permission to his on-line page, "*RMS Titanic*," which includes recollections of Anna Turja, *Titanic* survivor and John's grandmother. Thanks, John. I owe you several.

And finally to the kind people at Congressional Information Services in Bethesda, Maryland, my gratitude for your reprints of "The 1912 Senate Hearings on the *Titanic* Disaster."

STORY OF THE PLAY

A history professor enters and begins to read: "On April fourteenth, nineteen twelve, at eleven-forty p.m., the *RMS Titanic* struck an iceberg." He then wonders about the bravery and tragedy of the event. Suddenly, the stage comes alive with passengers and crew of that gilded age. In a series of short scenes, we meet some of the people who lived through the sinking of the *Titanic*, speaking to us as if we are passengers ourselves. This poignant story is told in a docu-play format using the actual conversations. "I never said this ship was unsinkable," Thomas Andrews, the builder of the mammoth ship, tells us. "I said she was practically unsinkable." We see the magnificent vessel through the eyes of both the first class passengers and the third class. When Frederick Fleet spots the iceberg, all the officers are called upon to carry out the most dreaded command Capt. Smith ever had to issue: "Get the lifeboats ready!" It's all true - the panic, the valor and the bravery. Representational sets.

A sequel to this play, ECHOES FROM THE *TITANIC*, which dramatizes the Senate hearings concerning the disaster, is available from Eldridge Publishing.

A NOTE ABOUT THE SHOW

This docu-play can be produced as written or performed in a reader's theater format, since all the characters are identified during the course of the action. Because this is an extremely large, male heavy show, I would suggest having the actors and actresses play as many parts as possible. The cast can simply wear a basic outfit of black or dark pants or skirts, white shirts or blouses and black ties. Then after they play a part and exit, it would simply be a matter of replacing a jacket, vest or hat and returning seconds later as their next character if needed. Using this idea, it is possible to do the show with approximately 11 men and 7 women. Of course, the larger the cast the better, especially for the "lifeboats" section.

Stage performance time: Approximately 40 minutes.

CAST OF CHARACTERS

(Flexible cast of 18, with doubling, to 63.)

PROFESSOR: Lecturer. (Either man or woman.)
NEWSBOY 1: English teenager.
NEWSBOY 2: American teenager.
CAPT. EDWARD SMITH: English, Captain of the *Titanic*, 59.
MOTHER: Passenger, American, 40s.
DAUGHTER: Passenger, American, late teens.
2ND OFFICER CHARLES LIGHTOLLER: Deck officer, English, 38.
THOMAS ANDREWS: Builder of *Titanic*, Irish, 39.
BRUCE ISMAY: Managing Director of the White Star line, English, 50.
JACK PHILLIPS: Telegrapher, English, 24.
HAROLD BRIDE: Telegrapher, English, 24.
1ST OFFICER WILLIAM MURDOCH: Deck officer, Scottish, 39.
MAGGIE (MOLLY) BROWN: Passenger, American, mid-40s.
MADELEINE ASTOR: Passenger, American, 19.
MARIA PANULA: Passenger, Finnish, 41.
ANNA TURJA: Passenger, Finnish, 21.
ALMA PAULSSON: Passenger, Swedish, 29.
REV. JOHN HARPER: Passenger, American, mid 30s.
JESSIE LEITCH: Passenger, English, mid 40s.
CHIEF OFFICER HENRY WILDE: Deck officer, English, middle age.
4TH OFFICER JOSEPH BOXHALL: Deck officer, English, 28.
FREDERICK FLEET: Ship's lookout, English, 25.
REGINALD LEE: Ship's lookout, English, mid-20s.
COL. ARCHIBALD GRACIE: Passenger, English, 53.
ISADORE STRAUS: Passenger, Bavarian, 67.
IDA STRAUS: Passenger, Bavarian, 63.
ELLEN BIRD: Passenger, American, 28.
3RD OFFICER HERBERT PITMAN: Deck officer, English, 34.

CHARLOTTE COLLYER: Passenger, English, 31.
AMY STANLEY: Passenger, English, 24.
WALLACE HARTLEY: Orchestra leader, English, 34.
LAWRENCE BEESLEY: Passenger, English, 34.
REV. ERNEST CARTER: Passenger, English, 54.
LILLIAN CARTER: Passenger, English, 44.
MARY SLOAN: Passenger, English, mid-20s.

*There are also other characters, GENTLEMAN, LADY, MAN, MAN 2, WOMAN, WOMAN 2, STEWARD, etc., and many OFFSTAGE VOICES, but these parts, like the others, should be double cast.

SETTING: The stage is set in a representative fashion, utilizing a series of platforms and step units, painted either dark gray or white. There is foremost a large platform, three feet in height, placed USC with a corner facing out; a large "mast" juts out of it straight up near the rear of the platform. On the mast is a ship's bell and old-fashioned ship's telephone. Step units behind it allow the actors access. On top of the platform on the DS corner is a white railing, reminiscent of the great ship's iron balustrades. A second, rectangular, platform is located DSR, two feet in height, running parallel to sight lines with a step unit running off SL. It, too, has a railing running along the DS edge. A third, rectangular, platform with the DS white railing, also about two feet in height with step unit, runs along sight lines SL.

PROPS: Large history book, brochure, ticket, messages, telegraphing equipment, writing pad, drinks, life jackets, two pistols.

SOUND EFFECTS: Sea gulls and waves, ship's whistle, ragtime music, string quartet playing gently, crowd noises, ship's bell sounding six times, large engines, distant, deep-grinding noise, chamber music, gun shots, low rumblings, crashing of glass, breaking furniture.

Voices From The Titanic

(AT RISE: LIGHTS come up DSR and a PROFESSOR walks into the area, carrying a large history book. He looks out over the audience and opens his book.)

PROFESSOR: *(Reading.)* On April fourteenth, nineteen twelve, at eleven-forty p.m., the *RMS Titanic* struck an iceberg. The supposedly unsinkable ship soon took on water on the lower decks and, inside of three hours, sank beneath the North Atlantic. Unfortunately, there were not enough lifeboats aboard, and over fifteen-hundred lives were lost...and seven hundred and five saved. *(The SOUND of sea gulls and waves are heard as HE looks up.)* They say there was much bravery during those few hours, much more than we will ever know…

(Suddenly, the air is pierced by the BLAST of a loud, deep ship's whistle. When the blast dies down, a sprightly ragtime MUSIC sounds. LIGHTS go down on the PROFESSOR. Then the cries of NEWSBOYS are heard.)

NEWSBOY 1: New luxury liner to set sail!
NEWSBOY 2: Latest in Goliath sea-going vessels from the White Star Line!

(A solitary LIGHT comes up DSL on NEWSBOY 1.)

NEWSBOY 1: *Titanic* to set new standards in twentieth century!

(A solitary LIGHT comes up DSR on NEWSBOY 2.)

NEWSBOY 2: Largest ship to ever set sail!
NEWSBOY 1: Large liner the length of four city blocks!
NEWSBOYS 1 and 2: *Titanic* ! Unsinkable!

(A LIGHT comes up DSC on CAPT. EDWARD SMITH.)

End of Freeview

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