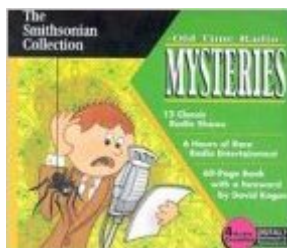


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# Old Time Radio Mysteries (Smithsonian Collection) (Smithsonian Institution)



## Synopsis

The Smithsonian Institution and Radio Spirits have united to bring you the very finest from radio's golden age. Each radio broadcast has been digitally restored and remastered from original recordings for superb sound quality. The 60-page book is filled with rare photographs and insightful commentary about the shows, the performers, the medium and the genre and features a foreword written by David Kogan, writer/creator of *The Mysterious Traveler & Murder by Experts*. Experience the finest in classic entertainment with this unprecedented series from the Smithsonian Collection of Old Time Radio.

## Book Information

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Audio Cassette

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Average Customer Review: 4.1 out of 5 stars 12 customer reviews

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## Customer Reviews

A good example of what old people like me use to listen to when we were kids before and sometimes during TV. Smithsonian made this collection of many of the programs out there. Some of them I never heard of before as they might be just West Coast or Chicago or somewhere any place. In those days there were only a couple networks that supplied programs to local radio stations but some stations made enough money to buy the programs on radio and play them with local produced shows mingled in the line.

Out of comedy, detective, sci-fi, and westerns, I believe mystery is the best old-time radio category. These stories are timeless and hold your interest. It's fun to let your mind create the scenes instead of having it done for you! The quality is good and classic episodes are selected.

Brought me back to my childhood, sitting on the floor in front of the old Philco.

It keeps your interest throughout the entire story. Its exciting to try to find out who did it in the mysteries. Many years ago I found a radio station that played old time radio programs. It was at that time when my love for them began. So finding these old time radio programs reminded me of better times when I was young. Thanks again.

If you're a lover of old time radio, this collection of mysteries is fantastic. Commercials are even included which adds to the fun. I like this collection because it isn't interrupted by modern day narration recounting the history of the shows like some other collections are. The sound quality is also far superior to other non-Smithsonian collections. Others may be less expensive, but I don't believe that you get the quality you get here. Definitely worth the money.

No science fiction unless you count Escape's great adaptation of "Country of the Blind". And only one detective type which classifies as mystery because of the mysterious "Fatima". Still, a great collection. Top of the heap is the "Suspense" classic, "The Hitchhiker" with the great Orson Wells at his greatest. "Escape" is represented as mentioned above with "Country of the Blind", a H. G. Wells story, spotlighting the terrific use of sound effects and music in telling the story. Then, there's not one, but two examples of the great Arch Oboler. First, there's "Cat Wife" on "Everyman's Theater", an admittedly preposterous supernatural story, but made one of the most entertaining entries here because of the Oboler genius of use of the voices. The "Lights Out" episode, also featuring Oboler's talent, was the lesser of the two, but quite interesting because of the dramatic acting by singer Dinah Shore and tough voiced Gloria Blondell. "The Whistler" and "Inner Sanctum" were two of the best loved mystery series, and the theme music of the former, and use of the organ in the latter definitely are masterful. But the episode which I found most interesting and surprising personally was the story, "Killer, Come Back to Me" on Molle Mystery Theater, a gangster story by a fledgling author by the name of Ray Bradbury while he was still writing for the detective pulps, before he found himself in the horror and science fiction genres which made him famous. I am sure that while many Bradbury stories were dramatized on radio, this was undoubtedly the first. The classic "Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde" from the Weird Circle series was good though I could've wished for a less familiar literary classic. All in all, this is a great collection which shows how sound effects, music, distinctive voices, stories with twist endings, were all used to create the beloved old time radio

mystery.

The realm of mystery and suspense must lie somewhere between the detective story and science fiction. The example shows chosen from "Escape", "Everyman's Theater", "Suspense", "The Mysterious Traveler", and "The Wierd Circle" would have been just as much at home in the Smithsonian science fiction collection, while the stories from "The Molle Mystery Theatre", "Murder by Experts", "Tales of Fatima", and "The Whistler" would have fitted quite nicely into the Smithsonian detectives collection. Several of the individual episodes were classics: H.G. Wells' "The Country of the Blind" ("Escape"), Stevenson's "Dr. Jekyll & Mr. Hyde" ("The Wierd Circle"), and Orson Welles' "The Hitchhiker" ("Suspense"). Radio drama just doesn't get any better than these episodes. "Suspense" has to have been the greatest radio drama series of all time, but from what I've seen, "Escape" wasn't far behind in quality. "Cat Wife" ("Everyman's Theater"), "The Man the Insects Hated" ("The Mysterious Traveler"), "Killer Come Back to Me" ("The Molle Mystery Theatre"), and "The Eager Pigeon" ("The Whistler") were forgettable. Two of my favorite old time radio detectives were included: Basil Rathbone played himself in "Tales of Fatima", but the persona he adopted was strongly influenced by the many years he spent portraying Sherlock Holmes. Jack Webb played an anti-hero in "The Whistler", but Webb's bad guy was a sort of a tarnished Joe Friday. Webb seems incapable of having played anything other than a jaded tough-guy. The three series characters he played (Jeff Regan, Pat Novak, and Joe Friday) were all had boiled, hard fisted heroes.

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