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Westward Ho!

A mini-spectacular about the
Wild West

by CRAIG SODARO



Meriwether Publishing Ltd.

Contemporary Drama Service

PO Box 7710 • Colorado Springs, CO 80933-7710

CAST

(NOTE: In presenting *Westward Ho!* doubling and tripling parts is encouraged both to reduce the cast size and to give new challenges to the cast members. The starred (*) roles are relatively large parts.)

FEMALE

CALAMITY JANE* — *the loud but likeable muleskinner*

YOUNGEST SISTER — *kind and generous*

OLDEST SISTER — *mean and ugly*

CLARISE — *a cheerful saloon hall girl*

KATIE* — *a tired would-be socialite*

MRS. CARTER — *a well-bred lady*

TRIXIE* — *a cheerful girl of about ten*

DIXIE* — *her little sister*

LIZA* — *her sensible older sister, about eighteen*

LOTTA* — *a sly villainess*

JENNY — *a little girl who likes to cry a lot*

MRS. HARGROVE — *her bewildered mother*

MISS WILSON — *a nervous lady*

ELLA — *a cheerful, outgoing lady*

MISS GRANGER — *a quiet school teacher*

SARAH PIKE* — *a homesteader's wife*

REBECCA PIKE — *her young daughter, about ten*

JESSICA PIKE* — *her older daughter, about nineteen*

DOLLY — *a haughty ranch girl, about seventeen*

ELIZA STEWART* — *a rancher's wife*

MALE

BUFFALO BILL — *the great showman*

SITTING BULL* — *the dignified Indian chief*

WYATT EARP* — *the gunslinger*

BOY — *a long-suffering fellow, about ten*
WILBUR* — *a silly trapper*
OLLIE* — *his equally silly partner*
ARCHIE* — *a determined prospector*
SNAKE EYE — *a rough outlaw*
MAD JACK — *a rougher outlaw*
BAD BOB — *a nervous outlaw*
JASPER CLUTZENHEIMER* — *a villain*
PVT. SMITH — *a suffering soldier*
PVT. JONES — *another suffering soldier*
SGT. HATCHITT — *loud and mean*
MR. HEALY — *an old man with a cane*
DIRTY DAN — *a bungling thief*
JARRED PIKE* — *a stubborn homesteader*
TOM STEWART* — *nineteen and in love*
STEWART* — *Tom's rancher father*
SHERIFF — *firm and sensible*

EITHER FEMALE OR MALE

VOICE	PERSON TWO
STORYTELLER ONE	NEWSBOY
STORYTELLER TWO	WORKER ONE
STRANGER	WORKER TWO
WIND	WORKER THREE
THUNDER	WORKER FOUR
LIGHTNING	CONDUCTOR
RAIN	DRIVER
PERSON ONE	

SETTING

A bare stage. Upstage, various banners may depict some of the more traditional events of the Wild West. Platforms can be right and left to give a different dimension to the staging of the play. Bunting may decorate the front of the stage . . . but all of this is left to the imagination of the director and scenic designers. Because the play is episodic, certain props are needed. A full list appears at the end of the Production Notes. However, some of the larger props will include:

Several benches. These can be painted as simple wood and can remain on the stage throughout the production, being moved into various positions as needed.

A table. Painted like the bench, the table can be used in various ways throughout.

Painted rock. The rock is important in the first segment, and can be placed Downstage in front of the table as the first episode begins. It can then be moved Upstage and remain a part of the general scene for the rest of the show.

Tepee. A tepee may be used in the first segment, if desired. It should be big enough for two to hide behind.

Covered wagon. This can be brought out as the pioneer story unfolds. It should be big enough for three performers to hide behind.

School. The schoolhouse for the last segment should be big enough for three to hide behind.

Car. A cardboard representation of an auto in the best cartoonish sense of the word!

MUSIC

While few musical cues are indicated in the script, musical bridges from episode to episode would be a good touch.

Fiddle music (or other western tune) is needed for the end. The cast members sing "I've Been Working on the Railroad" as indicated in the script. Other songs can certainly be incorporated as desired.

COSTUMES

One way to make costuming easy and yet effective with all the required doubling is to have the performers all wear a similar "uniform" costume such as brightly colored T-shirts and jeans. Then

add necessary accessories such as hats, vests, shawls, glasses, and so on. This can be very effective and allows for the many quick changes necessary. It is a good idea backstage to give each performer a chair and have his or her name on it so that his or her costume pieces and props can be easily organized.

PROPS

Storybooks (if Storytellers do not memorize their parts); cymbals for Thunder; flags for Wind; squirt guns for Rain; pack and gun for Ollie; torn shirt, bandage for Wilbur; feather boa for Clarise; gold pan for Archie; gold rock for Archie; newspaper for Newsboy; guns and holsters for Snake Eye, Bad Bob, and Mad Jack; pen and paper for Mrs. Carter; blankets for Dixie, Trixie, and Liza; bush, rope for Jasper; gun for Lotta; milk pail for Jasper; play money for Trixie and Dixie; rubber snake for Trixie; backpacks and rifles for Jones and Smith; map for Worker One; shovel for Worker Two; hammer and spike for Worker Three; sledge hammer for Worker Four; cane for Mr. Healy; doll for Rebecca; food for table at dance scene.

1 *(In the darkness, a voice:)*
2 **VOICE:** And now, that stupendous showman of the Wild
3 West, that fearless Pony Express rider, that courageous
4 scout, that friend of the Indian and settler alike . . . none
5 other than Colonel Buffalo Bill Cody! *(BUFFALO BILL*
6 *enters left and strides to center, complete with his hallmark white*
7 *hair and beard, buckskin coat, and cowboy hat.)*
8 **BUFFALO BILL:** Thank you, ladies and gentlemen, boys and
9 girls . . . folks from near and far. I would like to welcome
10 you to the last performance of my famed Wild West Show
11 which has played across the country and throughout
12 Europe for the last thirty years. For a third of a century
13 my troupe of six hundred performers and support staff
14 have brought to life the heroes and heroines of the West,
15 which has sadly passed into the pages of history. But,
16 alas, I am no longer able to ride the way I used to, and
17 my performers are clamoring for the peace and quiet
18 they richly deserve. Besides, our work is already done.
19 We have brought the world a vision of what the settling
20 of the great American West was like. A vision that is
21 equalled only by the grandeur of Rome, the glories of
22 Greece, the — *(A gunshot is heard off left. CALAMITY JANE*
23 *enters left, dressed in pants, buckskin coat, and cowboy hat. She*
24 *carries a pistol or rifle.)*
25 **CALAMITY JANE:** Awe, hang it up, Colonel!
26 **BUFFALO BILL:** *(Rubbing his eyes)* My eyes deceive me, folks.
27 It must be age —
28 **CALAMITY JANE:** Your eyes ain't reliev'in' nothin', Bill. It's
29 me, all right!
30 **BUFFALO BILL:** Calamity Jane!
31 **CALAMITY JANE:** *(Grinning broadly)* A face you never could
32 ferget, ha?
33 **BUFFALO BILL:** But . . . but . . . but . . .
34 **CALAMITY JANE:** Say that one more time, 'n you'll make
35 them little varmints in the front row laugh.

1 **BUFFALO BILL:** You're dead!

2 **CALAMITY JANE:** You're not gonna hold *that* against me,
3 are you? (*BUFFALO BILL* draws *CALAMITY JANE* aside.)

4 **BUFFALO BILL:** Calamity, pardon my saying this, but
5 ghosts aren't too good for business.

6 **CALAMITY JANE:** Look, Bill, that's just what we wanted to
7 talk to you about. For years you've been runnin' this show
8 and every year it gets bigger 'n bigger. But every year,
9 you put in just a bit more of what you *thought* the West
10 was like. And now, you say this here's the last night . . .
11 and, well, Bill, I hate to tell you, but you forgot some of
12 the story.

13 **BUFFALO BILL:** But it sells so well, Calamity!

14 **CALAMITY JANE:** That *all* you're concerned with? How about
15 tellin' these folks the *real* story of how the West got
16 settled, hmmm?

17 **BUFFALO BILL:** And what would *you* know about the real
18 story, Calamity? At one time, you were one of us! You
19 stood on this stage.

20 **CALAMITY JANE:** I know I traveled with your show, Bill.
21 Folks loved my trick shootin' and ridin' and loved hearin'
22 me tell stories about how I fought a bear and single
23 handedly cornered Jesse James. But I wasn't no hero.
24 (*WYATT EARP* enters right.)

25 **WYATT EARP:** Neither was I!

26 **BUFFALO BILL:** Wyatt Earp! You were nothing less than the
27 greatest U.S. marshall that ever lived!

28 **WYATT EARP:** Awww, Bill, there were a whole lot of fellers
29 smarter, quicker, 'n more honest 'n me! I guess I just had
30 the name and the face for fame. (*SITTING BULL* enters left.)

31 **SITTING BULL:** Good point, Marshall Earp.

32 **BUFFALO BILL:** My old friend, Chief Sitting Bull! You look
33 excellent.

34 **SITTING BULL:** Not bad for somebody who died in 1890, if I
35 do say so myself.

1 CALAMITY JANE: Hey, Chief, remember me?
2 SITTING BULL: Why, if it isn't the Strange Screeching One.
3 CALAMITY JANE: *(To BILL and WYATT)* That was my special
4 name. I have this thing about yellin'. You wanna hear?
5 BUFFALO BILL: No, Calamity. We don't want to hurt anybody
6 in the first five rows! And now, really, friends, we must
7 get our show started. These people have paid a fair price
8 for their tickets and they want to see the Wild West come
9 alive.
10 SITTING BULL: You take a seat off-stage, Colonel Cody.
11 WYATT EARP: Tonight, you won't have to do a thing!
12 CALAMITY JANE: These folks are going to get their show.
13 They're gonna get the other side of the legend.
14 BUFFALO BILL: What other side?
15 WYATT EARP: The stories of the common folks — who got
16 caught up in the greatest mass migration of humans in
17 history.
18 CALAMITY JANE: That was a mouthful!
19 SITTING BULL: It is the story of many people. People in
20 conflict. People like you. People who wanted no trouble.
21 People who wanted only to be happy.
22 CALAMITY JANE: Like the Cheyenne. The Native Americans
23 had lived all through the western United States for
24 thousands of years.
25 WYATT EARP: Their lifestyle kept them close to the land,
26 using only what they needed to live comfortably.
27 SITTING BULL: And in the winter, when the snow fell and
28 the sun set in the southern sky and the wolf's howl was
29 clear in the crisp night air, my people would sit around
30 the fire and learn from the elders how the things in the
31 world came to be. *(BUFFALO BILL backs off right. SITTING*
32 *BULL, CALAMITY JANE, and WYATT EARP exit to different*
33 *corners of the stage as STORYTELLERS ONE and TWO enter*
34 *from left and right.)*
35 STORYTELLER ONE: A long time ago there lived three

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