



Star Wars: The National Public Radio Dramatization

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The original script of the National Public Radio Star Wars adaptation -- with more than thirty all-new scenes! You've seen the movie. You've read the book. But you've only heard half the story . . .

Star Wars: The National Public Radio Dramatization Details

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From Reader Review Star Wars: The National Public Radio Dramatization for online ebook

Josiah says

If you love Star Wars then you'll love this too.

Ralph says

I remember being so obsessed with getting every one of these episodes on tape back in 1981 that I carried my portable radio/cassette player with me when I couldn't be home for the shows. My dad insisted I get out of the van and play tennis during one taping, and I spent the whole time wondering if the tape was still recording!

Grahm Eberhardt says

My parents taped this off the radio back in 1981. I still have the cassettes and listened to it a bunch of times over the years, especially in the days before home video so things like Luke and Biggs hanging out on Toschi Station and Luke threading the stone needle in Beggar's Canyon have always been part of my personal Star Wars canon. In fact, these radio plays were considered official canon up until the Disney buyout.

Anyway, these radio plays are excellently produced with full access to the Ben Burtt sound fx library and John Williams' iconic score. That, along with Mark Hamill and Anthony Daniels voicing Luke and C3PO, gives this an air of authenticity that other supplemental material *cough prequels cough* lack. The story is often told from a perspective we don't get in the films which adds richness and depth to the saga, filling in the gaps. I can't recommend this enough if you've got a 6 hour road-trip in your future and are a Star Wars fan.

Terence says

I am not a fan of *Star Wars* in any way near the way I'm a fan of *Star Trek* but the original film* remains one of my all-time favorites; it was the near perfect recasting of the archetypal (Western, at any rate) hero myth into a science-fiction setting. For all its adumbrations of Lucas' shortcomings as a director and writer, the film worked on every level for me. Much of that success must be laid at the feet of the veteran actors Lucas managed to corral - Alec Guinness, Peter Cushing and James Earl Jones, who all rose far above the material to create some of the most memorable characters and scenes in SF movie history.

The importance of that critical chemistry is evident when you listen to this adaptation for radio. The script was written by Brian Daley, who wrote some decent, pre-Rebellion Han Solo adventures (Han Solo at Stars' End, Han Solo's Revenge, Han Solo and the Lost Legacy) but here he adds a lot of pointless padding that dilutes the power of some of the most iconic scenes and are boring.** Mark Hamill and Anthony Daniels reprise their film roles so they do fine (unless you didn't like them in the movie) but the rest of the cast is

either lackluster or horribly miscast (with one exception I'll get to below); my cats could read this stuff with more conviction and distinctiveness. The "horribly miscast" role is Perry King (of "Riptide" fame if you're old enough to remember that TV show) as Han Solo. Even if I had never seen Harrison Ford's performance, King's take on the Solo character just didn't work; and in comparison to Ford's, it suffers irremediable harm. The exception to the awful cast is Brock Peters - Admiral Cartwright in *Star Treks IV & VI* and Tom Robinson in the film version of *To Kill A Mockingbird* - as Darth Vader. He managed to nearly equal Jones' film version.

An example will suffice: One of the most memorable scenes - Tarkin's confrontation with Leia when he destroys Alderaan - falls entirely flat because neither actor could pull it off. It deserves to be quoted in full and here is the link to the scene on YouTube. Watch the scene and you'll see how both body language and vocal cadence carry it off:

LEIA: Governor Tarkin, I should have expected to find you holding Vader's leash. I recognized your foul stench when I was brought on board.

TARKIN: Charming to the last. You don't know how hard I found it signing the order to terminate your life!

LEIA: I surprised you had the courage to take the responsibility yourself!

TARKIN: Princess Leia, before your execution I would like you to be my guest at a ceremony that will make this battle station operational. No star system will dare oppose the Emperor now.

LEIA: The more you tighten your grip, Tarkin, the more star systems will slip through your fingers.

TARKIN: Not after we demonstrate the power of this station. In a way, you have determined the choice of the planet that'll be destroyed first. Since you are reluctant to provide us with the location of the Rebel base, I have chosen to test this station's destructive power... on your home planet of Alderaan.

LEIA: No! Alderaan is peaceful. We have no weapons. You can't possibly...

TARKIN: You would prefer another target? A military target? Then name the system!

I grow tired of asking this. So it'll be the last time. Where is the Rebel base?

LEIA: Dantooine.

They're on Dantooine.

TARKIN: There. You see Lord Vader, she can be reasonable. (addressing Motti) Continue with the operation. You may fire when ready.

LEIA: What?

TARKIN: You're far too trusting. Dantooine is too remote to make an effective demonstration. But don't worry. We will deal with your Rebel friends soon enough.

LEIA: No!

I'm giving this two stars because of Peter's performance more than anything else but I wouldn't recommend this to any but the *Star Wars* completist.

* And by "original," I do mean the original version, sans Lucas' "improvements" (ugh).

** Even accounting for the fact that this is a radio adaptation and some things that could be shown in the film needed to be elaborated on for a solely listening audience, there's still far too much useless jabbering. In fairness, one part did work: In the film, when Luke races back to the farm to find his aunt and uncle dead, it's all done visually without a line of dialog. Daley successfully converts that scene for the radio by having Luke recount what he found when he gets back to Obi-wan and the droids.

Steven Shinder says

There is some really great stuff in this radio adaptation. The film itself does not even begin until about halfway through the third episode! Before that point, we get an introduction for C-3PO and R2-D2, Leia's interactions with her father and government related matters, and Luke's interactions with his friends on Tatooine. I always wished that Biggs Darklighter had been given more screentime, and similar fans may find their fix here. There are just little things that I dislike, such as the slow and soft (as opposed to quick and loud) delivery of Darth Vader's line, "Commander, tear this ship apart until you find those plans. And bring me all passengers, I want them alive." The scene with Jabba in Docking Bay 94 is included, and the voice does not match, though one cannot fault anyone since this was produced two years before Return of the Jedi was released. I have always wondered what that torture droid Vader uses on Leia actually does, and we get an idea of it here. But the film's cutting away from it and leaving it to our imaginations is more effective, whereas here it is a bit awkward having Vader's voice trying to convince Leia that he is a rebel. I do love Leia's immediate reaction to Tarkin blowing up Alderaan, as well as her telling Luke that, being the inexperienced pilot that he is, he should not feel pressured to fly in the Battle of Yavin. I also love the extended sequence of Ben Kenobi training Luke on the Millennium Falcon. The scene in which the crew talks about the plan about hiding in the compartments on the Falcon would ruin the surprise of them being in there if people were to listen to this before watching the film. But there is other extended dialogue to enjoy throughout the drama. The narrator does a great job opening and closing each episode. And, of course, what would this be without the John Williams music? Since this is an audio, there is dialogue during the award ceremony, but it does not ruin the music.

Amy Sturgis says

I recall gathering around the radio with my parents and listening to this radio adaptation for the first time, going wide-eyed with delight as each all-new scene added to my understanding of the *Star Wars* universe. I've lost count of the number of times I've revisited this ambitious work, but I do know each time I return to it, I'm impressed with its depth and quality. From its depiction of Luke Skywalker's friendships and rivalries on Tatooine to its glimpses of behind-the-scenes politics on Alderaan, this adaptation really delivers for *Star Wars* fans. It provides additional texture and characterization to support and expand the larger *Star Wars* story, while using music and sound effects to anchor it solidly to the film. The voice actors are uniformly excellent, with Mark Hamill's vocal talents in particular stealing the show. Highly recommended.

Eric Mesa says

This was a lot of fun. Instead of an audiobook, it's basically a radio play. The movie balloons from 2ish hours to 4 hours, but it adds in a lot of backstory that gives some of the characters, especially Leia, a lot more complexity. I definitely recommend it!

Lewis Clark says

A pretty dry, extended version of A New Hope. Most of the additions are extra lines of dialogue to flesh out the scenes so they're easier to follow using only audio. The most noticeable extensions are more time with Luke on Tatooine prior to meeting Obi Wan, as well as more time with Leia on Alderaan trying to slip the Death Star plans under the Imperials' noses during some formalities involving her father. They're not bad scenes, just unnecessary and it becomes apparent why they were cut from the film. If you've ever wanted to read a book of A New Hope with some extra scenes then that's all this really is. Like I said, it's a very straight-forward adaptation that doesn't take anything away from the film, but doesn't have anything worth adding that I could recommend to long-time fans.

Ondřej says

Alternativní herci (Leia, Han, Vader) se celkem snaží a ?lov?k si zvykne rychle.

V?etn? rozší?ené?ho intra (Biggs, parti?ka na Tosche station) a jedné z prvních verzí jak se plány dostaly na Tantive IV.

Jim says

Adds so much more depth to what is seen in the movie, with additional scenes and extended sequences.

Michael Legge says

THIS IS ABSOLUTELY FUCKING AWFUL.

Jared Bird says

This production is amazing. I don't even need to mention the tremendous boon that it is to have Mark Hamill and Antony Daniels reprise their roles for the radio show (and if there's one thing Mark Hamill is, it's a great voice actor; he's come a long way since he first acted in A New Hope, and he's definitely in fine form in this play). When it comes to acting, almost all of the characters seem to be top-of-the-line. I'll admit that the Han Solo voice actor was not the best (his Han Solo was less scoundrel and more Italian Mafia con-man), and Vader was about as good as you expect when you're not James Earl Jones, but Leia, Tarkin, and Obi-wan delivered in their roles.

The shining that really got me though was the additional added throughout. When the show opened on a scene from Tatooine with Luke and his friends, I felt like I was watching a new, never-before-seen classic Star Wars film. We additionally hear more about Princess Leia and her initial ties to the rebellion, which provides an interesting subplot on its own, and then serves to explain the intro to movie- how Leia obtained the plans, where she was coming from, how she wound up close to Tatooine, and everything. It's nearly literally a dream come true to have the original source material handled with such care and then augmented into a more fleshed-out experience. There are multiple instances in this production wherein the actors clarify things that happen in the movie, like why R2 and C-3PO are always together, where the practice droid on the Millennium Falcon comes from, and how Han is more a hero than a scoundrel if you look for clues in his personality. Obi-wan points out a number of character traits that Han shows that I had totally taken for granted for all these years.

Another draw of the series is the sound effects. It seemed to my untrained ear that the vast majority of the sound effects of blasters, spaceships, and light sabers are the original deal. The music is consistently true to the film, which makes it a huge plus. I must admit that the fact that there is an intro and credits sequence to each thirty minute segment means that you will hear the main theme A LOT, which you may take as a plus or minus. I'll admit that at the end of the production, I started skipping the ending credits. So sue me.

Overall, this radio broadcast was absolutely the best Star Wars experience I've had in years. It's full of nostalgia as well as its own original content, which makes it a must-hear production for any fan who enjoys listening to audiobooks. I can't recommend it enough.

Emily says

Excepting the absence of Harrison and Carrie...this is better than the movie. More detail, extra scenes, plenty of new to mix with the classic. I especially loved getting to see more of Luke's life on Tantooine as well as Leia acting as a princess.

Eric Sullenberger says

Brian Daley added a lot to the Star Wars Universe but the radio dramas in general, and this one specifically, might be his greatest contribution. Adapting anything for radio drama can be difficult, but he manages to avoid having characters describe their every move in an inane way like other audio dramas do and still keeps the narrating to a minimum. Additionally, the voice work is impressive. I usually don't like audio dramas because the vocal actors are sometimes difficult to distinguish from one another, but here they are clear, well spoken, and well acted; not to mention the Mark Hamill and Anthony Daniels reprising their roles as Luke and C-3PO. Not only does the audio drama retell a familiar tale in a new way by taking the visuals away and immersing you in sound, but it also adds details and background that we haven't seen before. In fact, the first two of thirteen stories give us background on Leia and Luke that were not in the movie and take place before the start of the main story. Whether you have seen the movie or not, read the book or not, this retelling has enough new details to make it enjoyable for any fan.

Michael Dennis says

I really enjoyed the script of the radio drama since it is completely familiar but adds depth.

My favorite (new) moment is a scene with Tarkin during the initial stages of the Death Star attack by the rebels. He's concerned that rebel fighters might actually destroy the battlestation and is prepared to order a ship be made available for him to escape. A subordinate tells him that his power derives from command of the Death Star and he should stand unwavering in front of the staff. Then, the familiar dialogue from the movie as another subordinate approaches him: "We've analyzed their attack, sir, and there is a danger. Should I have your ship standing by?" Tarkin: "Evacuate in our moment of triumph? I think you overestimate their chances!"

I love how the additional scene adds an ironic nuance to the movie.
