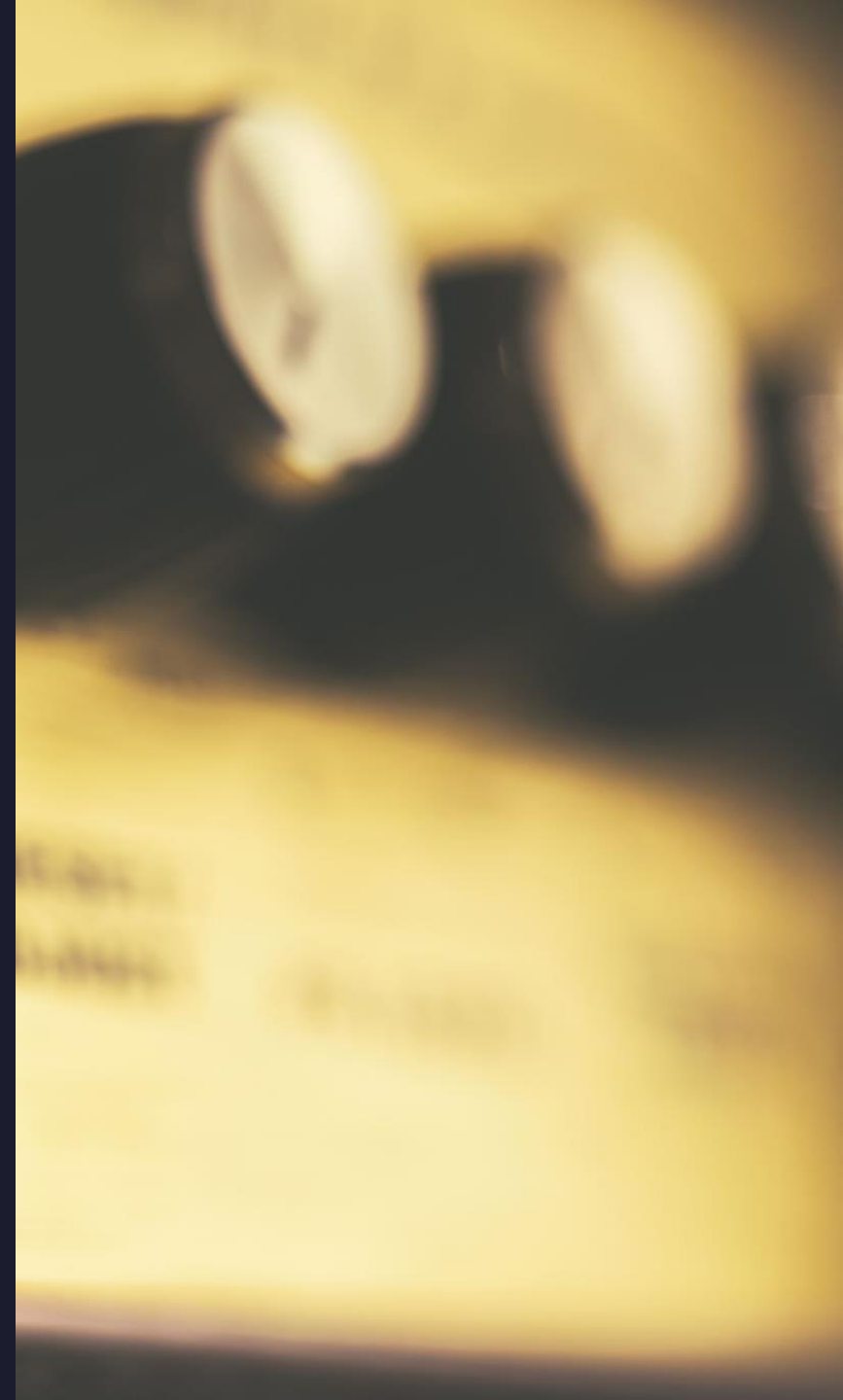

WRITING FOR RADIO



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RUSTY QUILL

Rusty Quill is an industry leading independent production company and podcast network. It was founded in 2015 and works to originate, find, develop, fund, produce and distribute exceptional media content around the world.

We specialise in original audio fiction and operate the RQ Network, a podcast network created by podcasters for podcasters. This inclusive platform works to champion the best new and diverse voices in Podcasting featuring both RQ Originals and external creators.

ATYPICAL ARTISTS



OPPORTUNITIES



GOLDHAWK

PRODUCTIONS

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TWO-UP

Two-Up is an entertainment company devoted to telling stories that move people. Our audience is ready to be challenged, inspired, and entertained, regardless of medium. To date, our projects have spanned television drama, fiction and documentary podcasts, a podcast musical, and a literary novel.

Two-Up is headquartered in Brooklyn, NY.

QCODE

AD LUCEM



iHeart
PODCASTS





OPPORTUNITIES

- Radio 4 is the main outlet for British radio drama
- BBC Wales / Radio Cymru have a few slots
- Radio writing competitions are a good foot in the door



AVAILABLE SLOTS FOR BBC RADIO

- **Monday-Friday 10:45-11am Radio 4 (repeated at 19.45 weekdays)**
- **15 Minute Drama - Short form (15min) commissioned in multiples of 5, ideally a series with individual stories in each episode or short term stories that mature over 5 or 10 episodes.**
- **Monday-Friday 2:15-3.00pm Radio 4**
- **Afternoon Drama - Daily narrative drama strand. A complete story that is imaginative, accessible and entertaining.**
- **Saturday 2:30-3:30pm Radio 4**
- **Saturday Drama - Enjoyment and escapism. For example: love stories, thrillers, and extraordinary personal stories.**
- **Sunday (time varies) Radio 3**
- **Drama on 3 - Radical drama, classics and new theatre productions.**





THE SOUND STUDIO

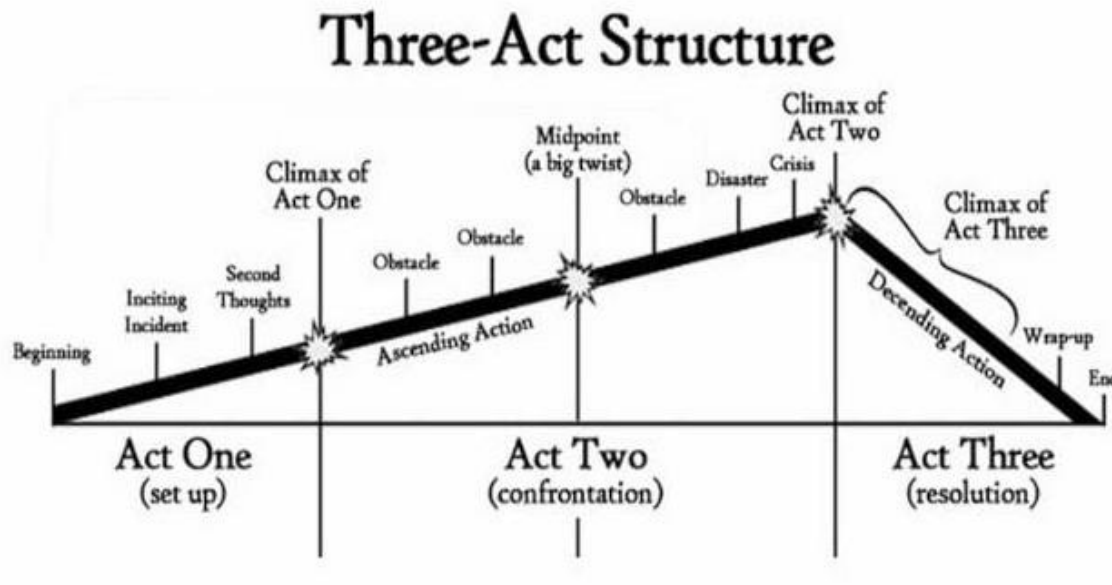




FOLEY ARTISTS

SIMILARITIES WITH OTHER FORMS

- Character is at the heart of the storytelling
- Like all dramatic writing, the three-act structure remains the same:
 - THE SET UP
 - THE INCITING INCIDENT
 - PLOT POINT AT END OF ACT 1
 - OBSTACLES ALONG THE WAY
 - PLOT POINT AT END OF ACT 2
 - CLIMAX
 - RESOLUTION
 - ENDING
- Each act needs to be constructed into its own beginning middle and end
- Compress the action as much as possible to keep up the pressure



DIFFERENCES FROM OTHER FORMS

- Radio relies upon non-visual means to paint a vivid picture in the mind of the listener – you have to be able to capture the listener's imagination.
- Creating an aural sense of place with SFX is as important as creating a visual scene.
- One of the big advantages of radio is that you can go anywhere – there are never any budget constraints when it comes to setting your story in deep space for example or in an historical period.
- Radio is about creating meaning from sound – from the aural landscape in which your story is set, to the characters who inhabit the aural space and the actions that they carry out to drive the story. You have to craft all these crucial elements of story – using nothing but sound.

MIND PICTURES

- Radio allows the listener to ‘see’ the story in their imagination.
- There are limits to the degree of control a writer can exert over what the listener ‘sees’.
- Limitations: battles; car chases; plots that depend upon a very specific sequence of events across a specific geography.
- Bonus: Sounds can be very vivid and intimate – sex and violence can be more disturbing on radio than on film.



A SENSE OF PLACE

- You need to create atmosphere and a sense of place with SFX, music and dialogue
- Consider the particular sounds that convey the essence of the place you want your listener to imagine
- Consider the depth and dynamics of the sound: which sounds are near? What can you hear in the distance?





WHAT CLUES COULD YOU PROVIDE TO
INDICATE THESE LOCATIONS?

CHARACTERS AND DIALOGUE

- Maximum of 3 characters in a scene
- You can't distinguish characters with appearance so you have to make the dialogue work harder – showing off their idiosyncrasies through the idiolect – the particular language of each character. Remember: people rarely speak in complete, grammatically correct sentences.
- You have to consider how and when to use the characters' names: can you subtly drop in a name to indicate who is present? Or to introduce a character to the scene?
- The dialogue has to work incredibly hard in radio drama because it needs to give clues aurally that might otherwise be given visually – but by 'showing' not 'telling'.
- Writers need to avoid loading the dialogue with exposition.
- Audiences can be as sensitive to blasphemy and swearing so be sparing.



SILENCE

- The spaces between dialogue and action can be very powerful when used sparingly; they can keep us on the edge of our seat, but there are limitations...
- Characters can't remain silent / rarely speak - the listener will just forget them
- A character who says little in dialogue has to say something through internal monologue for example
- Silent sequences of action don't work on radio: e.g. a stalker pursues the victim, or someone is eavesdropping from behind the door. These scenes can be done on radio but through different means.





TIME

- On screen, we can signal time shifts and flashbacks by treating the picture (e.g. colour) or showing the characters looking younger / through costume.
- Radio requires a different approach: dialogue; music; sound and often sound devices.
- A language of sound devices can harness particular sounds / musical refrains, to indicate a movement through time, not just space.



CREATIVE EXERCISE

As a group, we're going to read the first twelve pages of the radio play, *Rudy's Rare Records* by Danny Robins and Dan Tetsell.



CREATIVE EXERCISE 2

- Start writing a dialogue in which one character is low status; the other is high status.
- Something must happen in the course of the scene to reverse the power dynamic.
- Write SFX into your script-in-progress to 'show' as much as you can through sound.
- Take inspiration (or not!) from one of the following prompts.













