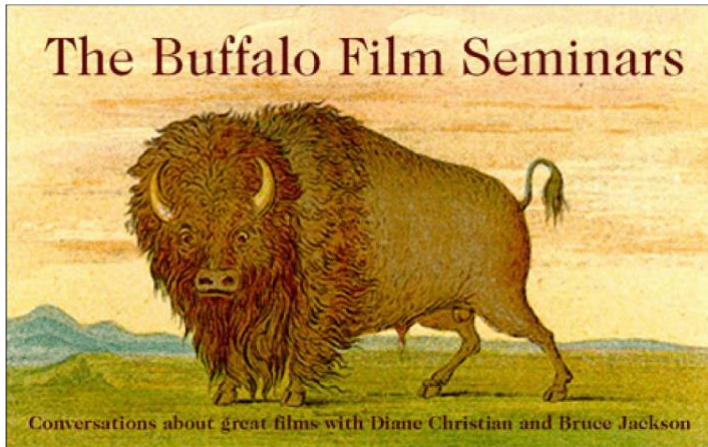


October 4, 2022 (XLV:6)

Orson Welles: **CHIMES AT MIDNIGHT** (1966, 119 min)

URL for Introduction Vimeo: <https://vimeo.com/755999627>

URL for 7:00 Tuesday discussion zoom: <https://vimeo.com/748377120>



Directed by Orson Welles

Written by William Shakespeare (plays), Raphael Holinshed (book), Orson Welles (screenplay)

Produced by Ángel Escolano, Emiliano Piedra, Harry Saltzman

Music Angelo Francesco Lavagnino

Cinematography Edmond Richard

Film Editing Elena Jaumandreu, Frederick Muller, Peter Parasheles

Production Design Mariano Erdoiza

Set Decoration José Antonio de la Guerra
Costume Design Orson Welles

Cast

Orson Welles...Falstaff

Jeanne Moreau...Doll Tearsheet

Margaret Rutherford...Mistress Quickly

John Gielgud ... Henry IV

Marina Vlady ... Kate Percy

Walter Chiari ... Mr. Silence

Michael Aldridge ...Pistol

Tony Beckley ... Ned Poins

Jeremy Rowe ... Prince John

Alan Webb ... Shallow

Fernando Rey ... Worcester

Keith Baxter...Prince Hal

Norman Rodway ... Henry 'Hotspur' Percy

José Nieto ... Northumberland

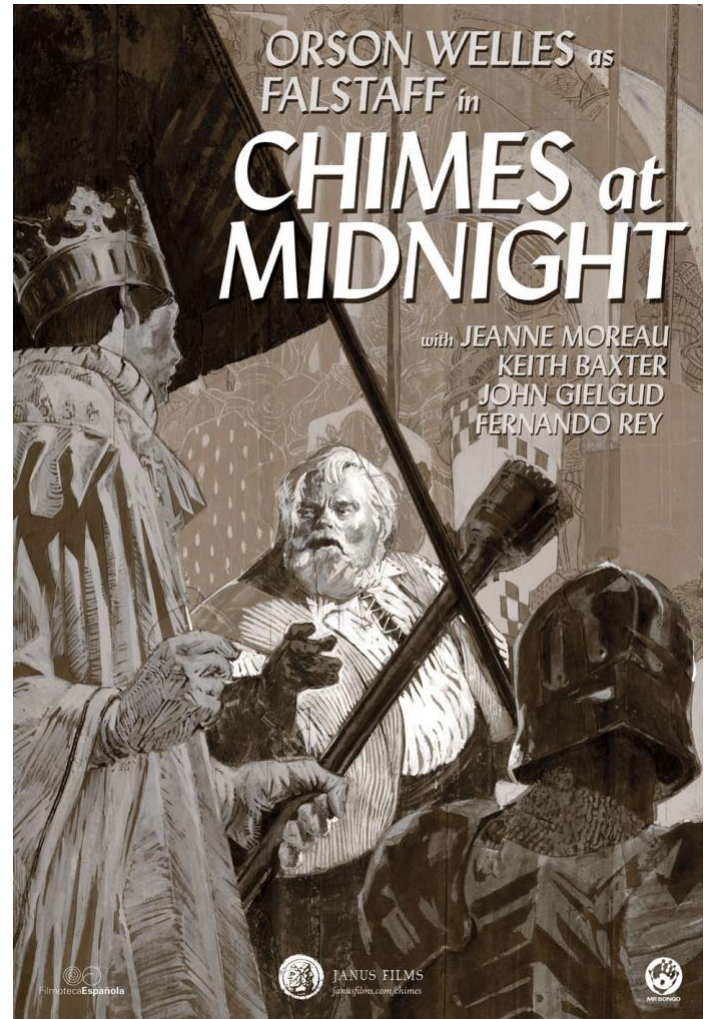
Andrew Faulds ... Westmoreland

Patrick Bedford ... Bardolph (as Paddy Bedford)

Beatrice Welles ... Falstaff's Page

Ralph Richardson ...Narrator (voice)

Orson Welles (b. George Orson Welles on May 6, 1915 in Kenosha, Wisconsin—d. October 10, 1985, age 70, Hollywood, California) did it all: actor, director, writer, producer, editor, cinematographer, skill for Gallo Wines.



His 1938 radio adaptation of H.G. Wells "War of the Worlds" panicked thousands of listeners. He made his first film *Citizen Kane* (1941), which tops nearly all lists of the world's greatest films, when he was only 25. Despite his reputation as an actor and master filmmaker, he maintained his memberships in the International Brotherhood of Magicians and the Society of American and regularly practiced sleight-of-hand magic in case his career came to an abrupt end. Welles occasionally performed at the annual conventions of each organization, and was considered by fellow magicians to be extremely accomplished. Laurence Olivier had wanted to cast him as Buckingham in *Richard III* (1955), his film of William Shakespeare's play "Richard III", but gave the role to Ralph Richardson, his oldest friend, because Richardson wanted it. In his autobiography, Olivier says he wishes he had disappointed Richardson and cast Welles instead, as he would have brought an extra element to the screen, an intelligence that would have gone well with the plot element of conspiracy. His bio

lists more than 160 acting credits, beginning as Death in the 1934 film *Hearts of Death*. Many of those credits were as “narrator”: he was the off-screen voices of the narrator in “Shogun” and Robin Masters in “Magnum P.I.” He played some of history’s great characters: Cardinal Wolsey in *A Man for All Seasons* (1966), Falstaff in *Chimes at Midnight* (1965), Harry Lime in *The Third Man* (1949), Cesare Borgia in *Prince of Foxes* (1949), and the title role in *Macbeth* (1948). Not one of the 14 films he completed is uninteresting and several are masterpieces including *Citizen Kane* (1941), *The Magnificent Ambersons* (1942), *The Stranger* (1946), *The Lady from Shanghai* (1948), *Macbeth* (1948), *The Third Man* (1949), *Othello* (1952), *Mr. Arkadin* (1955), *Touch of Evil* (1958), *The Trial* (1962), *Chimes at Midnight* (1965), *The Immortal Story* (1968), *F for Fake* (1973), and *Filming 'Othello'* (1978). He won a lifetime achievement Academy Award 1971, was nominated for *The Magnificent Ambersons* and *Citizen Kane* in 1941 and 1942, won for best writing original screenplay for *Citizen Kane*. The American Film Institute gave him its Life Achievement Award in 1975. Has the distinction of appearing in both the American Film Institute and British Film Institute's #1 movie. For AFI, it was *Citizen Kane* (1941). For BFI, it was *The Third Man* (1949). Welles shares this distinction with Joseph Cotten, who also starred in both movies. One of only six actors to receive an Academy Award nomination for Best Actor for his first screen appearance. The other five actors are: Paul Muni, Lawrence Tibbett, Alan Arkin, James Dean and Montgomery Clift. His final film, [*The Other Side of the Wind*](#), was begun in 1970 and was unfinished at his death. Reconstruction of the fragments and edited was overseen by Peter Bogdanovic and Frank Marshall. The making of that (awful) film is documented in Morgan Neville’s [*They’ll Love Me When I’m Dead*](#) (2018)

Angelo Francesco Lavagnino (b. February 22, 1909 in Genoa, Liguria, Italy, August 21, 1987 (age 78) in Gavi, Piedmont, Italy) deserves a special place in film music for his contribution to documentaries. He gave reportages a new dimension; he did not elaborate folkloristic themes, nor did he passively adapt the instruments of a certain musical civilization: he identifies the elements that characterize a country under the “sound profile” and gives a plausible equivalent. For this aim, Lavagnino uses all the possibilities given by modern technology, his goal is to “build” a sound. The main collaborator of a musician is no more the orchestra director, but the sound engineer. This attitude did not prevent Lavagnino from producing great orchestra music. In the classical field, he wrote a Concert for violin and orchestra and a Mass for chorus and orchestra. He began composing for cinema in 1951, for film director Orson Welles’ *Othello*. Since then, he has worked on over 213 films and television series

Edmond Richard (b. January 6, 1927—June 15, 2019, in Paris, France) is a French Director of photography. He was awarded at Vincennes on February 1, 2010 “5th anniversary” Henri-Langlois Prize - Arts and film Techniques, for his international career which led him to work with such luminaries as, Orson Welles, René Clément, Marcel Carné, Henri Verneuil, and Jean-Pierre Mocky. In 1983, he was nominated for a César Award for Best Cinematography for his work on *Les misérables* (1982). He has worked on over 56 films, some of which are *Les ballets écarlates* (2007), *Le bénévole* (2006), *Grabuge!* (2005), *Touristes? Oh yes!* (2004), *Le furet* (2003), *Spiders of the Night* (2002), *La bête de miséricorde* (2001), *Le glandeur* (2000), *La candide madame Duff* (2000), *Tout est calme* (2000), *Vidange* (1998), *Robin des mers* (1998), *Alliance cherche doigt* (1997), *Black for Remembrance* (1995), *Bonsoir* (1994), *Leon's Husband* (1993), *Mother* (1992), *Mocky story* (1991), *A Star for Two* (1991), *Juillet en septembre* (1988), *La machine à découdre* (1986), *Le pactole* (1985), *Les Misérables* (1982), *Litan* (1982), *The Cabbage Soup* (1981), *The Miser* (1980), *That Obscure Object of Desire* (1977), *La fille d'Amérique* (1977), *Bad Starters* (1976), *The Marvelous Visit* (1974), *The Phantom of Liberty* (1974), *And Hope to Die* (1972), *The Discreet Charm of the Bourgeoisie* (1972), *Kill! Kill!* (1971), *Fantasia Among the Squares* (1971), *How Short Is the Time for Love* (1970), *Sex-Power* (1970), *La direction d'acteur par Jean Renoir* (1969, Short), *Les gros malins* (1969), *Astragal* (1968), *Manon 70* (1968), *Young Rebel* (1967), *Chimes at Midnight* (1965), *All About Loving* (1964), *Le concerto de la peur* (1963) and *The Trial* (1962)



Jeanne Moreau (b. January 23, 1928—July 13, 2017, in Paris, France) is often called “The French Bette Davis” able to use her unconventional (read: not traditionally beautiful) features to her advantage as well as choosing unorthodox or complex characters. Once, technicians at the film lab went to the producer after seeing the first week of dailies and said: “You must not let Malle [the

director] destroy Jeanne Moreau". Malle explained: "She was lit only by the windows of the Champs Elysées. That had never been done. Cameramen would have forced her to wear a lot of make-up and they would put a lot of light on her, because, supposedly, her face was not photogenic". This lack of artifice revealed Moreau's "essential qualities: she could be almost ugly and then ten seconds later she would turn her face and would be incredibly attractive. But she would be herself". She became the youngest full-time member in the history of Comédie Française, France's most prestigious theatrical company at 20 years old. But her most known role was Catherine in François

Truffaut's *Jules and Jim* (1962) which is ranked #80 on *Premiere Magazine's* 100 Greatest Performances of All Time. A woman of many talents, Moreau made her directorial debut in *Lumière* (1976) — also writing the script and playing Sarah, an actress the same age as Moreau, whose romances are often with directors for the duration of making a film.

Orson Welles, who considered her "the greatest actress in the world," was the first person Moreau spoke to about directing and the only one who was not protective about it. She may also be known for turning down roles in many major films, including the part of Varinia in *Spartacus* (1960), played by Jean Simmons, the Mrs. Robinson part in *The Graduate* (1967), played by Anne Bancroft and the part of Nurse Ratched in *One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest* (1975), for which Louise Fletcher won a Best Actress Academy Award in 1976. She has also been twice replaced by Annie Girardot: in *Rocco and His Brothers* (1960) and in the recent *The Piano Teacher* (2001). An intellect as well, Moreau has been a close friend of many literary figures, such as Jean Cocteau, Jean Genet, Henry Miller, Anaïs Nin and Marguerite Duras. ... Moreau presided over the jury of the 1995 Cannes Film Festival. In 2003, she won the Cannes Honorary Golden Palm for her lifetime of work and at the 2008 César Awards in France she won Honorary César for 60 years of cinema. Some of the 146 films and TV shows she acted in are *Le talent de mes amis* (2015), *Le tourbillon de Jeanne* (2013, TV Series), *Gebo et l'ombre* (2012), *A Lady in Paris* (2012), *Eleanor's Secret* (2009), *La guerre des fils de la lumière contre les fils des ténèbres* (2009), *Face* (2009), *Roméo et Juliette* (2006), *Go West* (2005), *Time to Leave* (2005), *Akoibon* (2005), *Lisa* (2001), *Les Misérables* (2000, TV Mini-Series), *Map of the Human Heart* (1992), *The Lover* (1992), *The*



Suspended Step of the Stork (1991), *Until the End of the World* (1991), *The Old Lady Who Walked in the Sea* (1991), *Anna Karamazoff* (1991), *The Last Tycoon* (1976), *Mr. Klein* (1976), *Lumière* (1976), *Hu-Man* (1975), *French Provincial* (1975), *Going Places* (1974), *Je t'aime* (1974), *Joanna Francesa* (1973), *Repeated Absences* (1972), *Nathalie Granger* (1972), *Louise* (1972), *The Deep* (1970), *The Little Theatre of Jean Renoir* (1970, TV Movie), *Monte Walsh* (1970), *Great Catherine* (1968), *The Bride Wore Black* (1968), *The Oldest Profession* (1967), *Mademoiselle* (1966), *Viva Maria!* (1965), *Mata Hari, agent H21* (1964), *The Yellow Rolls-Royce* (1964), *The Train* (1964), *Diary of a Chambermaid* (1964), *The Victors* (1963), *The Fire Within* (1963), *The Trial* (1962), *Eva* (1962), *A Woman Is a Woman* (1961), *La Notte* (1961), *The Carmelites* (1960), *Seven Days... Seven Nights* (1960), *5 Branded Women* (1960), *Les liaisons dangereuses* (1959), *The 400 Blows* (1959), *The Lovers* (1958), *Back to the Wall* (1958), *Elevator to the Gallows* (1958), *Not Delivered* (1958), *Three Days to Live* (1957), *The Wages of Sin* (1956), *Hi-Jack Highway* (1955), *M'sieur la Caille* (1955), *The Doctors* (1955), *A Woman of Evil* (1954), *The Bed* (1954), *The Scheming Women* (1954), *Touchez Pas au Grisbi* (1954), *Julietta* (1953), *Dr. Schweitzer* (1952), *The Man in My Life* (1952), *Pigalle-Saint-Germain-des-Près* (1950), *Three Sinners* (1950) and *Last Love* (1949).

Margaret Rutherford (b. May 11, 1892 in Balham, London, England—d. May 22, 1972, age 80, in Chalfont St. Peter, Buckinghamshire, England) began her acting career first as a student at London's Old Vic, debuting on stage in 1925. In 1933, she first appeared in the West End at the not-so-tender age of 41 and her screen debut was three years later portraying Miss Butterby in *Hideout in the Alps* (1936). In summer 1941, Noël Coward's *Blithe Spirit* opened on the London stage, with Coward himself directing. Rutherford appeared as Madame Arcati, the genuine psychic, a role in which Coward had earlier envisaged her and which he then especially shaped for her. She would carry her portrayal of Madame Arcati to the screen adaptation, David Lean's *Blithe Spirit* (1945). Not only would this become one of Rutherford's most memorable screen performances - with her bicycling about the Kentish countryside, cape fluttering behind her—would establish the model for portraying that pseudo-soothsayer forever thereafter. Rutherford won an Oscar for Best Actress in a Supporting Role *The V.I.P.s*

(1963) and has appeared in over 50 films and TV shows. However, it is perhaps Rutherford's portrayal of Agatha Christie's indomitable sleuth, Jane Marple, for which Rutherford is best known. Her acting work includes *The Wacky World of Mother Goose* (1967), *Arabella* (1967), *A Countess from Hong Kong* (1967), *The Alphabet Murders* (1965), *Chimes at Midnight* (1965), *Murder Ahoy* (1964), *Murder Most Foul* (1964), *Murder at the Gallop* (1963), *Murder She Said* (1961), *On the Double* (1961), *I'm All Right Jack* (1959), *Just My Luck* (1957), *Innocents in Paris* (1953), *The Importance of Being Earnest* (1952), *Castle in the Air* (1952), *Curtain Up* (1952), *The Magic Box* (1951), *The Taming of Dorothy* (1950), *The Happiest Days of Your Life* (1950), *Meet Me at Dawn* (1947), *While the Sun Shines* (1947), *Blithe Spirit* (1945), *Missing, Believed Married* (1937), *Catch As Catch Can* (1937), *Big Fella* (1937), *Beauty and the Barge* (1937), *Talk of the Devil* (1936), *Hideout in the Alps* (1936) and *Troubled Waters* (1936).

Sir John Gielgud (b. April 14, 1904 in London, England—d. May 21, 2000, age 96, in Buckinghamshire, England) is arguably the century's greatest "Hamlet". The role is considered the summit for a tragedian, and Gielgud was the most celebrated Hamlet of the 20th century, surpassing even John Barrymore, Laurence Olivier and Richard Burton in acclaim for his stage portrayal of the melancholy Dane. A graduate of the Royal Academy of Dramatic Arts in London, Gielgud played his first Hamlet in 1930 and quickly established himself as one of the most eminent Shakespearean interpreters of his time, as well as a respected director. He made his screen debut in 1924 in *Who Is the Man?* (1924) and appeared in Alfred Hitchcock's *Secret Agent* (1936) as well as several Shakespearian adaptations such as *Julius Caesar* (1953) and Olivier's *Richard III* (1955)... Other film credits include *Becket* (1964) (for which he was nominated for an Oscar for his portrayal of King Louis VII of France); *The Charge of the Light Brigade* (1968); *Oh! What a Lovely War* (1969); *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* (1977); *The Elephant Man* (1980); *Arthur* (1981); *Chariots of Fire* (1981); *Gandhi* (1982); *Scandalous* (1984); *The Shooting Party* (1985); *The Far Pavilions* (1984); *Plenty* (1985); *The Whistle Blower* (1986); *Barbablu*, *Barbablu* (1987); *Arthur 2: On the Rocks* (1988); *Prospero's Books* (1991); *Shining Through* (1992); *The Best of Friends* (1991); *The Power of One* (1992), and *First Knight* (1995) with Sean Connery and Richard Gere. The more recent of his numerous television credits include the BBC's acclaimed series *Brideshead Revisited* (1981); *Wagner*; *The Master of Ballantrae* (1984); *War and Remembrance* (1988); *Screen Two: Quartermaine's Terms* (1987); *A Man for All Seasons* (1988); *Scarlett* (1994) ; and *Alleyn Mysteries* (1990) . Sir John also wrote three novels - *Early Stages* (in 1939),

Stage Directions (in 1963) and *Distinguished Company* (1972). He is also one of only a handful of people ever to win an Oscar, a Grammy, an Emmy and a Tony. All of his Oscar and Emmy nominations were received during the latter part of his career, after he had turned sixty: He won Best Actor in a Supporting Role in *Arthur* (1981) and in 1965 was nominated for Best Actor in a Supporting Role for *Becket* (1964).

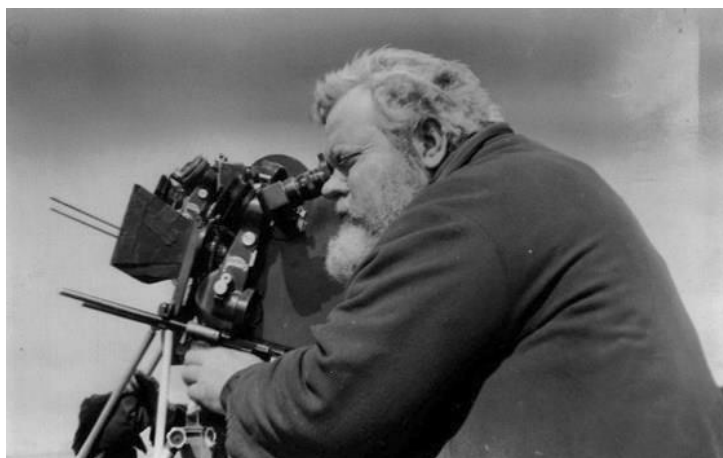
Marina Vlady (b. May 10, 1938 in Clichy, Hauts-de-Seine, Île-de-France, France) She had the makings of a blonde bombshell and could have ended up in film history annals as merely a second-rate Brigitte Bardot, but sex symbol Marina Vlady proved she was capable of much more. In her prime she was nominated for a Golden Globe and won a "Best Actress" award at the 1963 Cannes Film Festival for her stunning performance in *Una storia moderna - L'ape regina* (1963) [The Conjugal Bed] with Italy's Ugo Tognazzi. Gracing both French and Italian productions throughout most of her career, Marina was not shy at playing unsympathetic, even caustic characters, and proved adept at both saucy comedy and edgy drama, appearing for such notable directors as Jean-Luc Godard and Christian-Jaque. Playing opposite some of Europe's finest leading men, she was a vision in loveliness alongside Marcello Mastroianni in *Black Feathers* (1952), a touching WWII drama; she also co-starred with Italy's top character actor Aldo Fabrizi in *Too Young for Love* (1953). . One of her rare English-speaking appearances was in tonight's *Chimes at Midnight* (1965). Her later years included much TV. She has starred in over 100 films and television shows.



Keith Baxter (b. April 29, 1933 in Newport, Monmouthshire, Wales) is an actor, known for *Merlin* (1998), *Berlin Blues* (1988) and *Chimes at Midnight* (1965). Was chosen to play the role of "Octavian" in the Rouben Mamoulian production of Elizabeth Taylor's *Cleopatra* (1963), and some minutes of him on film still exist. Baxter interviewed for *Cleopatra: The Film That Changed Hollywood* (2001). When Taylor finally recovered from pneumonia and they moved the production to Italy, Baxter had other commitments. Some of his 34 acting roles are *Killing Time* (1998),

Performance (1992, TV Series), *Hawaii Five-O* (1978, TV Series), *Golden Rendezvous* (1977), *La regenta* (1975), *Ash Wednesday* (1973), *With Love in Mind* (1970), *The Avengers* (1969, TV Series), *Public Eye* (1965, TV Series), *Armchair Theatre* (1965, TV Series), *Peeping Tomm* (1960), *The Barretts of Wimpole Street* (1957) and *She Stoops to Conquer* (1956, TV Movie)

Sir Ralph Richardson (b. December 19, 1902 in Cheltenham, Gloucestershire, England—d. October 10, 1983, age 80, in London, England) was one of the greatest actors of the 20th Century English-language theater, ascending to the height of his profession in the mid-1930s when he became a star in London's West End. He also became the first actor of his generation to be knighted. He became Sir Ralph in 1947, and was quickly followed by Laurence Olivier in 1948, and then by John Gielgud in 1953. Co-stars and friends, the three theatrical knights are considered the greatest English actors of their generation, primarily for their mastery of the Shakespearean canon. They occupied the height of the British acting pantheon in the post-World War II years. They appeared in several scenes together in the epic miniseries *Wagner* (1981), which was released shortly after Richardson's death. Refusing to be typecast, Richardson has played both God - in *Time Bandits* (1981) - and the Devil - in *Tales from the Crypt* (1972). He was also nominated three times for Broadway's Tony Award as Best Actor (Dramatic): in 1957, for "The Waltz of the Toreadors"; in 1971, for "Home"; and in 1977, for "No Man's Land" -- but never won. Famously eccentric, he once stopped in a middle of a stage performance, and addressed the audience inquiring, "Is there a doctor in the house?" When a doctor made himself known, Richardson calmly enquired "Isn't this a terrible play, doctor?". Richardson has been in over 86 films and television shows.



**"(George) Orson Welles," from *World Film Directors*,
V. I. Ed John Wakeman. The H.W. Wilson Co. NY
1987. Entry by Philip Kemp**

Born—to his lasting chagrin—in Kenosha, Wisconsin. (Having been conceived in Paris and named in Rio de Janeiro, he felt that Kenosha lacked, as a birthplace, a certain *éclat*) Wisconsin happened to be where his father, Richard Head Welles, who hailed from Virginia, owned two factories. A dilettante engineer and idiosyncratic inventor, sixty-four years old when Orson Welles was born, his preferred occupations were travel and gambling; "a wandering *bon viveur*" was his son's description. Welles' mother, Beatrice Ives Welles, was an accomplished concert pianist whose acquaintances included Ravel and Stravinsky; she was also exceptionally beautiful, a crack rifle shot, and a political radical who had once been imprisoned as a suffragist. Welles adored both his parents. "[My father] was a gentle, sensitive soul....To him I owe the advantage of not having had a formal education until I was ten years old. From him I inherited the love of travel which has become ingrained within me. From my mother I inherited a real and lasting love of music and the spoken word."

Welles was the second and youngest child. (His brother Richard, ten years his senior, is said to have been a quietly eccentric character. At one point he joined a monastery in California from which he was later ejected.) Orson Welles was treated virtually as a adult from infancy. Tales of his precocity have passed into legend. At two, he spoke "fluent and considered English" and rejected Lamb's *Tales From Shakespeare*, which his mother was reading to him, demanding "the real thing." At three, he was reading Shakespeare for himself, starting with *Midsummer's Night's Dream*. He made his public stage debut the same year in *Madame Butterfly*, as the heroine's infant son. At four, he was writing, designing, and presenting his own stage plays in a miniature theatre given him by Dr. Maurice Bernstein, a Kenosha physician and family friend who was fascinated by his prodigious talents. At eight, Welles said "I was a *Wunderkind* of music. I played the violin, piano, and I conducted." He could also draw, paint, and perform conjuring tricks with professional facility, and had written a well-researched paper on "The Universal History of the Drama,"

His parents separated when he was six, and he went to live with his mother, mainly in Chicago. Two years later Beatrice Welles died, and the boy passed from a world of international high culture into one that involved (according to John Houseman) "long, wild nights...with his father, in the red-light districts of the Mediterranean, Hong Kong and Singapore." Welles seems to have found both environments equally stimulating. A term at the Washington School in Madison, Wisconsin when he was nine, was not a success; a year later, at the suggestion of Dr. Bernstein, he was sent to Roger Hill's progressive Todd School for

Boys at Woodstock, Illinois. Among the school's assets was a well-equipped theatre, where Welles promptly staged *Androcles and the Lion*, not only directing but playing both title roles. During his five years at Todd he mounted some thirty productions, including a widely acclaimed *Julius Caesar* in which he played Antony, Cassius, and the Soothsayer. He also coauthored with Roger Hill a popular textbook entitled *Everybody's Shakespeare*, which sold twenty thousand copies.

During his vacations Welles continued globetrotting with his father. Richard Welles took his son to most of the great cities of Europe and the Far East and made him at ease in a world of actors, circus folk, and conjurers. "My father loved magic; that's what bound us together." In 1928 Richard Welles killed himself in a Chicago hotel, flat broke. His son became the ward of Dr. Bernstein, of whom he later said, "I have never known a person of more real kindness, nor with a greater capacity for love and friendship."

Welles left Todd in 1930 and studied for a time at the Chicago Art Institute. At sixteen he was supposed to enter Harvard. Instead he took off to Ireland, where he bought a donkey and cart and traveled round the country painting. By the time he reached Dublin, his money had run out. "I guess I could have gotten an honest job, as a dishwasher or gardener, but I became an actor."...

Back in America in 1933, he was hired by Katherine Cornell, on the recommendation of Thornton Wilder and Alexander Woollcott, to join her national repertory company of *Candida* and *Romeo and Juliet*. ...Around this time

Welles directed his first film. *The Hearts of Age* (1934) was a four-minute surrealist spoof, satirizing such avant-garde works as Cocteau's *Le Sang d'un poete*.... Filmmaking, at this stage in Welles' career, was a lighthearted diversion. The theatre was where he planned to make his mark. He first did so in the spring of 1936, when he and John Houseman staged their all-black "*Voodoo Macbeth*" for the Federal Theatre Project in Harlem. It was the sensation of the season.... In 1937 he and Houseman formed their own company, the Mercury Theatre, which rapidly became one of the most influential companies in the history of Broadway....

Much of the funding for Mercury productions was provided by Welles' prolific radio work. His rich, commanding baritone voice, once described by Kenneth Tynan as "bottled thunder," suited him ideally for the medium, and while producing and acting on stage he was also providing voices for, among others, The Shadow

("Who knows what evil lurks in the hearts of men" The Shadow knows...."), Emperor Haile Selassie, and a chocolate pudding. Starting in July 1938, he persuaded CBS to employ the Mercury Company in a weekly dramatization of a literary classic, initially under the title of *First Person Singular*, and later as The Mercury Theatre of the Air. On the evening of October 30, 1938. The chosen work was H.G. Wells' *The War of the Worlds*.

Accounts of mass hysteria, fleeing multitudes, packed congregations weeping in churches, panic calls to police and army, and even suicides were undoubtedly exaggerated by a gloating press. Nonetheless, an astounding number of people, hoodwinked by Welles' narrative method of simulated newsflashes, evidently did believe that Martians had landed at Grover's Mill, New Jersey, intent on annihilating the human race. By the next morning a highbrow radio show had become the most famous program in broadcasting history. Editorials thundered of criminal irresponsibility; writs and lawsuits were threatened; CBS groveled in apology; and Welles, delighted beyond measure, expressed his heartfelt contrition. *Macbeth* and *Julius Caesar* had made him famous among the intelligentsia, but with *War of the Worlds* he had become, a twenty-three, a household name....

Of all the major Hollywood studios, RKO had the most trouble in establishing a consistent identity for itself—partly thanks to



frequent changes of ownership, invariably followed by management reshuffles. Lacking the long-term leadership—for good or bad—of a Mayer, Zukor, or Cohn, the studio had veered indecisively from prestige ventures to cut-price programmers and back again. The current studio head, George Shaefer, was hoping to establish a reputation for progressive, sophisticated filmmaking, an aim backed by the more highbrow board members such as Nelson Rockefeller and NBC chief David Sarnoff. Hence the offer to Welles.

The terms of the contract were unprecedented. Welles was to make one picture a year for three years, receiving for each \$150,000 plus 25 percent of the gross. He could produce, direct, write, and/or star as he wished. He could choose his own subjects, cast whomever he liked, and no studio executive had the right to interfere in any way before or during filming, nor even to ask to see what had been shot until the film was complete.

Hollywood was full of veterans who had been struggling for years to achieve a fraction of the autonomy that was being handed to “the boy wonder.”...

For his first Hollywood movie, Welles announced an adaptation of Conrad’s *Heart of Darkness* with himself as Kurtz, and Marlowe, the narrator, to be represented by a subjective camera. But months passed and nothing was filmed except a few tests. Welles spent much of his time watching movies, especially those of Lang, Clair, Capra, Vidor—and Ford, whose *Stagecoach* he screened over forty times....It was a full year after his arrival in Hollywood that Welles began shooting his first feature film.

More has been written about *Citizen Kane* (1941) than about any other film ever made. Acclaimed on its release as a work of striking originality, it has since attained an unassailable position as a landmark in American filmmaking and the most influential film in the history of the cinema. “Less by imitation than by inspiration,” wrote Arthur Knight in *Action* (May-June 1969). “*Citizen Kane* has altered the look not only of American films, but of films the world over.” Since it is, as François Truffaut pointed out, “the only first film made by a man who was already famous,” Welles therefore “felt constrained to make a movie which would sum up everything that had come before in cinema, and would prefigure everything to come.”

Citizen Kane recounts, by means of a complex and ingenious flashback structure, the life of a great American press tycoon. Charles Foster Kane—despite Welles’ subsequent disclaimers—is modeled fairly closely on William Randolph Hearst. Kane’s mistress Susan Alexander, a talentless singer whom he tries to mold into a diva, is an unjust caricature of Hearst’s mistress Marion Davies, whose career as a movie actress was backed by Hearst and his newspaper empire. Kane’s mansion Xanadu was obviously inspired by Hearst’s San Simeon.

The film starts with Kane’s death, then cuts with jarring abruptness to the blare of a fake newsreel—a perfect imitation of the *March of Time* series—recounting the late tycoon’s life and exploits. The newsreel editor, though, is dissatisfied, and—rather implausibly—assigns one of his reporters to find out not just what Kane did, but “who he was,” and why he died with the word “rosebud”

on his lips. The rest of the film follows the reporter as he sifts the recollections of five people who knew Kane well. Trying to arrive at the truth. He fails, but the camera (as well as audience) discovers at least part of the answer. At the very end we watch the casual destruction of Kane’s “junk,” including the sled he had used as a boy in the Midwest. The sled is thrown into the furnace and the camera catches for a moment the word painted on its side: “Rosebud.” There is a dissolve to the exterior of Xanadu—and the sign we had seen at the beginning of the film: “No trespassing”

“The best way to understand *Citizen Kane*,” David Bordwell asserted in *Film Comment* (Summer 1971), is to stop worshipping it as a triumph of technique.” Bordwell points out, as have other writers, that none of the technical devices employed by Welles in *Kane* were brand-new. Deep-focused photography, ceilinged sets, chiaroscuro lighting, temporal jump cuts, expressionist distortion—all had been used before, mostly by the great German silent directors whose influence pervaded Hollywood in the 1930s. But never before in America had they all been used together with such exuberance, style, and ferocious narrative intensity. Welles’ inexperience worked for him: unaware of the “right way” to make a film, he created from the first a style completely his own, one that David Thomson characterized as



“simultaneously baroque and precise, overwhelmingly emotional and deeply founded in reality.” Perhaps no other director’s work is so immediately recognizable; “his signature,” as Ronald Gottesman wrote, “is unmistakably inscribed in virtually every frame.”

In a contemporary review (*The Clipper*, May 1941), Cedric Belfrage noted that “of all the delectable flavours that linger on the palate after seeing *Kane*, the use of sound is the strongest.” Though Welles was a novice—albeit a staggeringly gifted one—at filmmaking, he could bring to bear more knowledge of radio techniques than anyone else in Hollywood. The soundtrack of *Kane*—as of his other American films, *Macbeth* excepted—is of a complexity and subtlety unprecedented at the time. Dialogue overlaps, cuts across spatial and temporal dissolves; sounds are dislocated, distorted, deployed non-naturalistically to comment on or counterpoint the visuals; voices alter in timbre according to distance,

placing or physical surroundings; music and sound are used across transitions, to effect narrative ellipses....

By the time *Macbeth* was released, Welles had quit Hollywood in disgust, setting out on the restless, peripatetic career he followed to the end of his life. Increasingly, acting in other people's films began to occupy his time, to the exclusion of directing his own; though he always insisted that he only acted in order to finance his own films....

Touch of Evil (1958), freely adapted from a pulp novel by Whit Masterson, was Welles' finest film since *The Magnificent Ambersons*—even, in the opinion of some critics, since *Kane*. Set in a squalid, peeling township straddling the US-Mexican border (for which the sleazy California resort town of Venice stood in admirably), it centers around the clash between an upright Mexican narcotics investigator, Mike Vargas (Heston) and a bloated, corrupt American cop, Quinlan (a sweaty and mountainously padded Welles). When a local magnate is killed by a bomb, Quinlan followings usual practices, plants evidence on the likeliest suspect. To prevent Vargas exposing him, he then arranges to have the Mexican's young American wife framed in compromising circumstances, Vargas manages to convince Quinlan's deputy, Menzies, of his boss' crooked methods, and Menzies helps to trick Quinlan into a taped confession.

Welles was a lifelong sufferer from insomnia, and many of his films suggest an insomniac's vision of the world—shadowed and ominous, shot through with a heightened, unreal clarity. In *Touch of Evil*, wrote Terry Comito (*Film Comment*, Summer 1971), “any place a character may for an instant inhabit is only the edge of the depth that opens dizzily behind him.... Menace lurches suddenly forward, and chases disappear down long perspectives....By opening the vertiginous ambiguities of space [Welles denies us] the safety of the frame of reference through which we habitually contemplate the world.” Frequent use of an anamorphic lens exacerbates this sense of a distorted, nightmare universe where spatial dimensions cannot be trusted. *Touch of Evil* generates a miasma of total instability, both moral and physical—anything may give. Corruption oozes from walls and furniture like a palpable presence; the very buildings become emanations of Quinlan's bulbous, looming person. When, in the film's final moments, his vast cadaver sinks slowly into a

canal turgid with oil-slicked garbage, it seems an inevitable symbiosis, a reabsorption into the constituent elements.

Yet, as Truffaut observed, “we are brought somehow to shed real tears over the corpse of the magnificent monster.” At one point Quinlan encounters the local madam, Tanya (Marlene Dietrich); she first fails to recognize him, then comments laconically, “You're a mess, honey. You better lay off those candy bars.” Quinlan grunts disconsolately, surveying his own decrepit bulk; the moment conveys unexpected pathos. Even this truculent, crooked cop, we realize, has a lost innocence to look back on. Welles always acknowledged, in regard to Quinlan, Kane, Arkadin and the rest of his overreaching villains, a feeling of “human sympathy for these different characters that I have created, though morally I find them detestable.” Around his own central performance Welles deploys a vivid range of supporting roles: “Uncle” Joe



Gandi, the local gang boss (Akim Tamiroff at his most greasily repellent); Mercedes McCambridge as a butch hoodlum in black leather; Dennis Weaver's twitching, giggling motel clerk, described by Welles as “the complete Shakespearean clown...a real Pierrot Lunaire; and Dietrich's Sternbergian Tanya, left to speak Quinlan's off-hand epitaph, “He was some kind of a man....What does it matter what you say about people?”

The unbroken three-minute take that opens *Touch of Evil* has become deservedly famous. Starting on a close-up of a hand placing a time bomb in a car, the camera pulls back to show a dark figure vanishing round a corner as a couple enter, get in the car, and drive off; then cranes up, over a building, and down to follow the couple as they drive slowly along a busy street alongside another couple on foot (Vargas and his wife), stop at the border post to swap casual banter with the customs officer, and drive on into the desert; finally holds on Vargas and his wife kissing in close-up as, deep-focus in the background, the car explodes in a sheet of flame. Even the producer's inane decision to run the credits over this shot could do little to detract from its masterly buildup of tension.

Universal, who had intended a run-of-the-mill thriller, were bewildered to find an offbeat masterpiece

on their hands—not that *Touch of Evil* (“What a silly title,” said Welles) was acknowledged as such at the time, except in France. Inevitably, the studio tampered with the film, calling in a hack director (Harry Keller) for additional scenes to “explain” the action. The essence of Welles’ conception nevertheless survived intact. His temporary return to Hollywood was received by most American reviewers with contempt or indifference (“Pure Orson Welles and impure balderdash, which may be the same thing,” sneered Gerald Weales in the *Reporter*) and flopped at the box office. Europe, as usual, proved rather more receptive; the film was praised at Cannes, won an award at Brussels, and played for months to packed houses in Paris.

...Of Welles’ three Shakespeare films, the last (1966) is by far the best—both as Shakespeare and as cinema.

Drawing on both parts of *Henry IV*, *Henry V*, and *The Merry Wives of Windsor* (and adding a narrative taken from Holinshed)

Welles creates a richly lyrical elegy for “the death of Merrie England.” His Falstaff is not the conventional cowardly buffoon, but “the most completely good man in all drama. His faults are so small....But his goodness is like bread, like wine.” *Chimes at Midnight*, like *The Magificent*

Ambersons, is a lament for a lost innocence, a golden age that most likely never existed, but is nonetheless to be mourned. “It is more than Falstaff who is dying. It’s the Old England, dying and betrayed.”

In this reading, much of the comedy is necessarily lost, overshadowed as it is by constant intimations of the coming, crushing rejection of Falstaff by his beloved prince and the old man’s death. The film’s dramatic emphasis, noted Jack Jorgens, is on leave-takings, the breaking up of groups and relationships. “Welles portrayed people alienated, people driven apart by death and the forces of history, people betraying each other.” For Shakespeare, Falstaff, despite his vitality and gusto, must rightly be sacrificed as an obstacle to the greater cause of responsible kingship; but to Welles, Falstaff is the greater cause, standing for an instinctive moral nobility spurned by Hal’s cold, Machiavellian new world. In a last valedictory shot, Falstaff’s vast coffin is trundled away across a bleak terrain, beneath grey winter

skies; the chill spirit of the old king (an incisive performance by John Gielgud) has irrevocably triumphed. As Falstaff Welles gives his finest screen performance, “the creation of an actor who has ripened and even softened into the part,” as Penelope Huston put it. Beside him, Keith Baxter’s saturnine Hal, beadily calculating, recalls MacLiammoir’s Iago—an ideal counterpoint both to Falstaff and to Norman Rodway’s impetuous Hotspur. Not all the supporting roles are equally well cast (Jeanne Moreau, in particular, seems ill at ease as Doll Tearsheet), several intermediate scenes look sketchy, as if hastily constructed, and the soundtrack—recurrent problem of Welles’ European movies—is often irritatingly unfocused. Despite these faults, *Chimes at Midnight* contains some of Welles’ greatest work: the scene in Shallow’s orchard, the old king’s death, the rejection scene and above all the Battle of Shrewsbury, which conveys as no film had ever done before the sheer blind brutality of battle—writhing, agonized figures

hacking and clubbing each other in the mud. For Joseph McBride, *Chimes* was unequivocally “Welles’ masterpiece, the fullest expression of everything he had been working toward since *Citizen Kane*.”

Chimes at Midnight was premiered at the Cannes Film Festival in 1966.



Once again the festival audience gave Welles a rapturous reception and the jury added a special Twentieth Anniversary Tribute. But the American distributors, apparently disheartened by an unfavorable advance review by Bosley Crowther in the *New York Times* furnished scant publicity and minimal distribution. The film has since recovered from this initial neglect; many critics now rate it the best of Welles’ European movies.

“I am frustrated, you understand?” Welles told interviewers in 1965. “And I believe that my work shows that I do not do enough filming....I wait too long before I can speak.” The struggle for financial backing, he said, “had become “more bitter than ever.” Matters hardly improved subsequently; in the twenty years following *Chimes*, not a single full-length feature directed by Welles was released. One film said to be complete but remained unshown. Another, stated in 1970, was apparently left unfinished. Two Welles pictures have been released: one lasts under an hour, the other is less a

film than a tongue-in-cheek collage, based on someone else's material....

At the 1970 Academy Award ceremony Hollywood made belated—and inadequate—amends to Welles with an Honorary Award for “superlative artistry and versatility in the creation of motion pictures.”...“I started at the top,” Welles was fond of remarking, “and worked down.”

As Jonathan Rosenbaum once wrote, “possibly no other director has been the subject of so many conflicting accounts, in large matters as well as small ones.”

“I am an experimenter. I don’t believe much in accomplishment.”

...One of the greatest problems in assessing Welles’ movies is attempting to disentangle the man from his works—perhaps a harder task in his case than in that of any other director. We can appreciate the films of Hawks, Huston, even of Ford, without knowing anything of their respective directors’ biographies. But with Welles—and not only because he appears in all but one of his own films—that compelling, legendary figure constantly comes between us and the screen, “I drag my myth around with me,” Welles lamented. The myth, as befits any Wellesian artifact, is at once true and false, a dazzling tapestry of reality interwoven with illusion: the *enfant terrible*, irresistible conqueror of one art after another, iconoclast of all accepted notions of filmmaking—then, hubris incarnate, the fallen angel, dragged down by his own overweening ambition—to become finally the tragic exile, dragging tattered shreds of his former glory from one country to the next, wasting his gifts on unworthy activities to fund his next precarious venture.



Orson Welles Interviews. Edited by Mark W. Estrin, University of Mississippi Press, Jackson, 2002. “Orson Welles: Shakespeare, Welles, and Moles.” Richard Marienstras, 1974

Richard Marienstras: *Mr Welles, of all film directors, you are not only the most flamboyant and the most controversial.* . .

Orson Welles: I am not in the least an ostentatious director,

RM: *It seems that among the modern directors you are.*

OW: I don’t think so. Fellini is much more flamboyant than I am.

RM: *But you started before he did.*

OW: Yes, and now I’m much less flamboyant than he is. I hope so, because for me, flamboyance...I don’t know if this is the case in French, but in English “flamboyant” is pejorative. And I don’t feel that my Shakespearean films are at all flamboyant.

RM: *Macbeth isn’t flamboyant, but it is a baroque film.*

OW: Yes, but baroque is not rococo. It’s hard for me to imagine a Shakespearean film that wouldn’t be visually baroque: his plays are works from the Renaissance, not from Brecht’s era,

RM: *Peter Brook doesn’t direct Shakespeare in quite this manner. He presents a much more tense and controlled Shakespeare.*

OW: I think all directors who make Shakespearean films make controlled films. Excuse me for insisting: in the case of Peter Brook, it’s not control. Maybe you’re thinking of his rather dry aesthetic, but that’s not control. In the end, there’s control in Bernini too. ...

RM: *Peter Brook avoids using images that are too dazzling. He controls their flamboyance.*

OW: Yes, perhaps. I’ve never seen a Shakespearean film directed by Peter Brook. I’ve only seen his productions onstage. I saw one very flamboyant, very rococo work, but it was magnificent.

RM: *Titus Andronicus, for example?*

OW: Yes, but also *Measure for Measure*: this was a remarkable production by Peter Brook.

RM: *Recently [1970] he directed a wonderful Midsummer Night’s Dream.*

OW: I am one of the two or three people in the world who don’t like that production. As a production, it’s remarkable but it’s an insult to the play!

RM: *This play has been weighed down by pastoral tradition, and sets overloaded with greenery and leaves,*

Peter Brook managed to evade the pastoral tradition and replace it with another tradition, the circus!

OW: Ah yes: Shakespeare's great enemy is the director!

RM: *It's true—but how can one do without him?*

OW: One needs a director who is perfectly measured, a true servant not only of Shakespeare but also of the actors. For a few years, I think, in Germany, Russia, and perhaps for a short time in England and America, there was a certain openness, an end to this impasse. The academic tradition is dead, I absolutely agree. But today—and I'm not speaking of cinema but specifically of theater—I feel that the director has become too strong.

RM: *Too strong for Shakespeare?*

OW: Yes, for Shakespeare, and also for theater. Because the basis of theater is the actor, and after the actor, the play. In that order.

RM: *The text doesn't come first? The actor takes precedence?*

OW: Absolutely. Because in the history of the theater, the text comes after the actor.

RM: *As in the commedia dell'arte?*

OW: But also in prehistoric times, in all countries, and even in pre-Shakespearean England. And Shakespeare himself was an actor, like Molière. It's no accident that he played Iago, the best role in Othello.

RM: *Are we sure he played Iago? It's not entirely certain.*

OW: I'm sure. There's a lot of proof. We are certain that he played the role of Hamlet's father.

RM: *The ghost?*

OW: Yes, for me it's the second essential role in Hamlet, the most difficult role. I've never seen it done well or performed well, in cinema or in theater. [Welles himself interpreted the ghost at the Gate Theatre, Dublin, in 1932, and then in 1934 at the Woodstock, Illinois festival.]

RM: *This type of character is always hard to portray on stage, like the witches in Macbeth.*

OW: That's entirely different the witches aren't ghosts. They're devotees of their religion, they're real. [In his 1947 film of *Macbeth*, Welles introduced a conflict between paganism and Christianity which does not figure in Shakespeare.] For me—I say *for me* because there are a million different opinions about *Hamlet*—Hamlet's father is first a man and only then a phantom. He's a man in rage, filled with fury, stronger than Hamlet, and he speaks violently, he's much more inventive than Hamlet. I am absolutely willing to believe that in the end the ghost exists only in Hamlet's head, at least that's one way to interpret it. But, in whatever way he exists, he's the greatest man in Denmark. And when Hamlet says in his apostrophe, "*well said, old mole! Canst work i' the earth so fast?*" this earth is to be found in Hamlet's spirit. I have a theory (all directors have theories, like professors, like everyone...) that in each of Shakespeare's plays there's a role—not the principal role—that has to be played by the best actor of the company. And for me, Hamlet's father has to be played by the best. Only then does the play come alive...

RM: *You say that today no one likes old people. Is that why you made a film about an engaging old man like Falstaff?*



OW: No, I didn't make it to reverse a universal tendency, but because it's a role which I've always thought of as one of the two or three greatest roles in Shakespeare, and I wanted to perform it four or five more times because there are four or five other ways to interpret it. This film developed a certain theme. There are so many

other ways to approach it. Once someone wrote that Falstaff was a Hamlet who never returned from his exile in England, and became old and corpulent. The truth of Falstaff is that Shakespeare understood him better than the other great characters he created, because Falstaff was obliged to sing for his supper. He had to earn everything he ate by making people laugh. It's not that he was funny; he had to be funny.

RM: *But in Shakespeare, Falstaff also has a rather repulsive side.*

OW: I think that in all of Shakespeare, he's the only good man.

RM: *But as a recruiting officer, for example, he lets the rich off by making them pay him and then only enrolls the poor.*

OW: Doubtless, but you are transposing the social concerns of the twentieth century onto this epoch. This scene is simply a terrible and funny joke. I don't think it shows him to be a bad man. In fact, it doesn't show anything except that he is an engaging rascal.

RM: *I still think you magnify Falstaff's goodness.*

OW: I don't think so. I really don't. And I'm not the only one to say this—a good number of Shakespeare specialists agree with me. I think Falstaff is the only great imaginary character who is truly good. His faults are so minor. No one is perfect, and he's filled with imperfections, physical and moral defects, but the essential part of his nature is his goodness. That's the theme of all the plays he appears in.

RM: *You once said that you admire the ambiguities of Shakespeare and that things are not entirely clear.*

OW: With Falstaff, there are two very ambiguous moments and I performed them as forcefully as I could. One is the brutal recruiting scene, and though I played this scene gaily, it is no less brutal. On the English stage, of course, it would never have been performed as anything other than a comedy. It's a scene which makes the audience laugh, after a long moment, because it comes after an interminable chain of civil wars. So rightly or wrongly, I did nothing but follow classical tradition. But in doing this, I was not trying to pass Falstaff off as an honest man. He is certainly a swindler. But there are good swindlers.

RM: *Was this acceptable in the Elizabethan context?*

OW: By all means! After Shakespeare, who was the greatest man in England? I'd say it was Francis Bacon.

RM: *As a man, he was horrid.*

OW: And yet he's still one of the greatest authors of all time. He was also the perfect example of what was happening at the top and bottom of the social ladder during the reign of the Tudors. If Bacon was ultimately condemned for being a swindler, then why would poor Falstaff, without a coin in his pocket, act any differently

than his compatriots? This, I think, the dark humor of it all, is an image that reflects the entirety of the society, an image that Shakespeare would never have dared show in another way. Coming from him, it's a truthful critique of society, not only the corruption of his time, but of the way things had worked for hundreds of years.

RM: *And yet, he still justifies Prince Hal in all sorts of ways.*

OW: He couldn't do otherwise. Prince Hal is an official patriotic hero. But he makes him extremely ambiguous.

RM: *Yes but you don't! In the film the prince is so cold. . .*

OW: He loves Falstaff, but he prepares a betrayal necessary from a Machiavellian point of view. I'm speaking of Machiavellianism, that of the real Machiavelli that we know and who is so far superior to the one Shakespeare judged to be so sly. Hal is certainly a great Machiavellian prince. He loves Falstaff and, still, is ready to betray him from the get-go.

RM: *What kind of necessity are you thinking of?*

OW: The necessity of a great king. How could he have forced the respect of the English court and the people if he had kept vulgar acolytes as his playmates? But this kind of betrayal is still an infamy, even if it's a Machiavellian necessity. You can judge it severely or indulgently, but for myself, I find it impossible to be accommodating with the prince. From the point of view State rationality, I understand what a prince has to do, but I can't love him for it.

M: *But you know the modern audience*

OW: Ah, but I was making a film, and a film is never made for an audience. A dramatic work is made for an audience; a film is made for itself.

RM: *You never think of the people who will see it?*

OW: Never!

RM: *In other words, it's a kind of solipsism for you?*

OW: It's entirely personal, because the audience of a film doesn't exist. It's impossible to conceive of it. It's made up of two hundred Berbers on the other side of the



Atlas Mountains. It's made up of a group of intellectuals at the Athens film archives. It's made up of seven hundred bourgeois who voted for Nixon. It's made up of a single person watching television. The audience doesn't exist. And I'm also writing my bit of film for posterity, when there will be other kinds of audiences that I can't foresee. It's impossible to address yourself to an audience, unless you address a well-defined audience, as Godard, Fellini, or Bergman did. When I stage a play, I address an audience *this* year, in *this* city. When I make a film, I make a film and that's it.

RM: *Even when you're filming in the United States?*

OW: Certainly.

RM: *So Citizen Kane wasn't oriented towards an American audience?*

OW: You can orient things as you like, but what will the American

audience think about them? I haven't the slightest idea. It's not out of disdain for the audience, but because the audience of a film is unconceivable. Sixty percent of an audience will never hear the words we say because the film will be dubbed. Maybe ten million people will see it later, when we're all dead. They're poor, they're rich, they're big, they're little. We don't know who the film audience is, thus we can only make something we believe in. So when I play Falstaff I play a Falstaff who I think will be the center of a good story. It's not *Henry IV Part 2*, which would have been another film, or *Henry IV Part 2*, or *Henry V*, which would be yet another film. But by joining all three, I created something new. And here's a new distinction, I have a very strong feeling that a film made of one of Shakespeare's works is not at all what the stage version would be. Because Shakespeare was writing for a living public and not for film. And when I make a film, I feel as free as Verdi or any other adapter who borrows a Shakespearean subject. I feel no obligation to Shakespearean tradition. I may be its victim or prisoner, but I don't accept it as a constraint....

I think there are a thousand ways to put Shakespeare on the stage and I'm not dogmatic about it. I simply defend my way of doing it, which isn't the only way, and I think it's possible to shoot a Shakespearean film, which is, in fact, a theatrical play. That is what Lawrence Olivier has always done and it works very

well. Why wouldn't it work? It's equally possible not to use a single word from Shakespeare.

RM: *Not a single one?*

OW: Yes, why not? All variants are possible, but I think that when one adopts film, this brand new medium of expression, one is free to decide to what point one will remain Shakespearean and to what extent one is making one's own film—I don't think this is a question that comes up in theater.

RM: *In that case, if I may come back to Prince Hal whom you criticize so severely, what did you try to represent through him?*

OW: He is the Machiavellian prince, the son of a usurper with no right to the throne. He is obliged to be an official hero. And I think that the obliged hero is one of the most disagreeable characters of all. He's also a man who is chided in no uncertain terms by his father because he's not acting enough like a king.

And Henry IV, of course, is more anxious than a real king about what a prince should be because he isn't a real king: he's nothing more than Bolingbroke, who deposed the legitimate king of England, that is, Richard II. And I think the whole tetralogy should be understood in the context of usurpation or, rather, it *shouldn't* be, especially if you're free not to use the story of Henry V. When I staged *Five Kings* for the theater, we used the story of Henry V. And Henry V, that is, Prince Hal turned into a king, was interpreted very differently, because he had to deliver the famous speech at the end. But the role was conceived as that of a demagogue who plans to become a great popular hero. And there's this brutality in him which, in my opinion, characterizes him, along with something fundamentally vulgar. I think that the scene where he's courting Katherine, which Olivier performs in his film as if Henry were an Italian prince, bypasses the comedy it should have, because Henry is a sort of Gary Cooper forcing himself to speak Italian and not an Italian prince trying to speak French. In the spirit of Shakespeare, he was a rugged Anglo-Saxon, in both the good and bad senses of the word. What Stalin called a sense of history, as well as all the violence which originated from his father and so many other things...all this imposed a great historic role on him by frustrating the best part of himself. His good nature, his good angel, was Falstaff, and his bad angel was the king. Even though he had an obligation to be king, the obligation was



implicated in the illegalities of the end of a civil war. It's a very complex political situation.

RM: *Would you say that in a certain way Hal uses one father against the other?*

OW: I don't think he uses them. I think that Shakespeare uses them, yes, and very visibly. When he has Falstaff play the role of Henry IV...He takes great trouble to show the audience that there are two fathers.

RM: *The scene where Henry V rejects Falstaff is one of the most moving scenes you have ever filmed.*

OW: Isn't it one of the most terrible scenes in literature?

RM: *That depends on the way it's done.*

OW: "I know thee not, old man..." After this kind of line, it's very hard to make the man who spoke it seem good. Because a good prince would have said: "Take this man somewhere, I want to speak with him," But "I know thee not, old man" has a demagogic cruelty to it, it's terrible. The role was played marvelously by Keith Baxter. He was extraordinary because his own heart broke too. The necessities of power...We know that power corrupts, and that it's a much deeper corruption than that of relieving a few travelers of their money or allowing rich people to avoid the army. Shakespeare adores parody. He loves it when one character in the play is a parody of another. Gloucester is a parody of Lear and, in my opinion, the recruitment scene is a parody of the struggle for power in the court. Shakespeare likes showing things in simple terms, or in crazy terms, showing the same thing twice, a mirror image of this or that things. Parody is specifically Shakespearean.

RM: *You've used the theme of betrayal in other films. People betray their friends for various reasons, or else they betray the values they believe in.*

OW: Yes. In your mind, which is worse?

RM: *I suppose it's worse to betray the values you believe in ...*

OW: There we go! Now we know how we differ! For me, betraying a friend is the worst thing. I wouldn't stake my life on it, but it defines our positions.

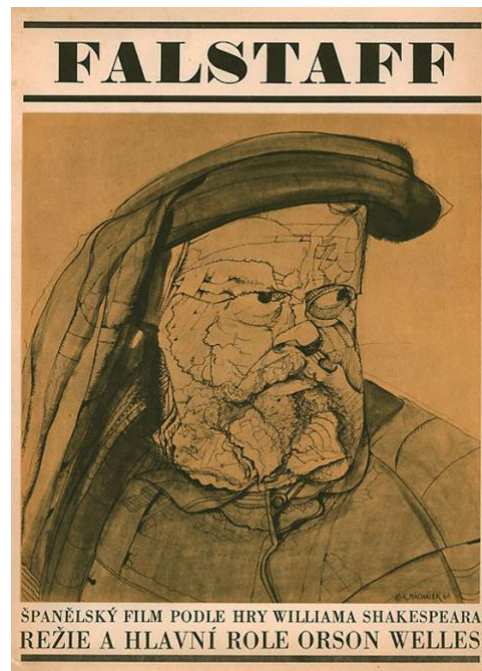
RM: *If it weren't for the fact that, in all honesty, I have little belief in values...*

OW: Now you've got me! That's a Falstaffian response!

RM: *In the world as it is, it's very hard to believe in values. Thus the only value left, I think, is friendship. And when a man betrays a friend...*

OW: Brutus and Caesar...

RM: Yes, or in *Touch of Evil*, Menzies who betrays Quinlan. In a sense he does it because he believes in the law



Orson Welles, 1958 Interview with André Bazin and Charles Bitsch:

"One can only take control of a film during the editing. Well, in the editing room I work very slowly, which always enrages the producers who tear the film from my hands. I don't know why it takes me so long. I could work for an eternity editing a film. As far as I'm concerned, the ribbon of film is played like a musical score, and this performance is determined by the way it is edited. Just as one conductor interprets a musical phrase *rubato*, another will play it very dryly and academically, a third romantically, etc. The images alone are insufficient. They are very important, but they are only images. The essential thing is how long each images lasts, what follows each image. All of the eloquence of film is created in the editing room."

John Falstaff (Wikipedia)

Sir John Falstaff is a fictional character who appears in three plays by [William Shakespeare](#) and is eulogised in a fourth. His significance as a fully developed character is primarily formed in the plays [Henry IV Part 1](#) and [Part 2](#), where he is a companion to [Prince Hal](#), the future King [Henry V of England](#). Falstaff is featured as the buffoonish suitor of two married women in [The Merry Wives of Windsor](#). Though primarily a comic figure, Falstaff embodies a depth common to Shakespeare's major characters. A fat, vain, and boastful knight, he spends most of his time drinking at the [Boar's Head Inn](#) with petty criminals, living on stolen or borrowed money. Falstaff leads the apparently wayward [Prince Hal](#) into trouble, and is ultimately repudiated after Hal becomes king.

Falstaff has since appeared in other media, including operas by [Giuseppe Verdi](#), [Ralph Vaughan Williams](#), and [Otto Nicolai](#), and in [Orson Welles'](#) 1966 film [Chimes](#)

[at Midnight](#). The operas focus on his role in *The Merry Wives of Windsor*, while the film adapts from the [Henriad](#) and *The Merry Wives*. Welles, who played Falstaff in his film, considered the character to be "Shakespeare's greatest creation".^[1]

THE FALL 2022 BUFFALO FILM SEMINARS XLV:

August 30 William Wellman *Wings* 1927
 Sept 6 Jean Renoir *Rules of the Game* 1939
 Sept 13 Michael Curtiz *Casablanca* 1942
 Sept 20 Nicholas Ray, *In a Lonely Place* 1950
 Sept 27 Luis Buñuel *Viridiana* 1961
 Oct 4 Orson Welles *Chimes at Midnight* 1966
 Oct 11 Mel Brooks *Young Frankenstein* 1974
 Oct 18 Arthur Penn *Night Moves* 1975
 Oct 25 Sydney Pollack *Tootsie* 1982
 Nov 1 Akira Kurosawa *Ran* 1985
 Nov 8 Martin Scorsese *Goodfellas* 1990
 Nov 15 Hiayo Miyazaki *The Wind Rises* 2013
 Nov 22 Ava Duvernay *Selma* 2014
 Nov 29 Pedro Almodóvar *Parallel Mothers* 2021
 Dec 6 Ang Lee *Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon* 2000

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