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HARVARD FILM ARCHIVE, NOV/DEC 2008
ORSON WELLES THE UNKNOWN
NOVEMBER 29 – DECEMBER 1

The legend of Orson Welles (1916-1985) continues to draw as much of its power from his lesser-known body of unfinished and fragmentary work as his eleven completed feature films. The long list of Welles' unrealized and uncompleted films begins with the ill-fated *It's All True*, the deliriously ambitious Rockefeller-funded Latin American project begun with great promise in 1942 only to collapse under its own impossible weight. The tragicomedy of *It's All True's* demise – and the butchering of *The Magnificent Ambersons*, partially caused by the Latin American adventure – revealed the self-destructive side of Welles' creative process, the state of perpetual distraction and over-stimulation in which he both thrived and suffered.

Over the years dedicated archivists and historians have gradually assembled the scattered fragments cast off from Welles' career into a mosaic portrait of America's arguably most influential and iconic director. New attention has also been given to an alternate side of Welles' career – his work as a versatile performer and public persona equally famous for his countless scene-stealing appearances on the big screen as his appearances on television as a celebrity raconteur and occasional magician. One of the leading experts on Welles' multi-faceted career is Stefan Drössler, the director of the Munich Film Museum, who has gathered several hours of Welles rarities into a series of wonderful presentations which he brings to the Harvard Film Archive in a program that also includes two of Welles' most underappreciated films, *Othello* (1952) and the masterful *Chimes at Midnight* (1965).

This program is co-presented with the Goethe Institute Boston. Special thanks: Karin Oehlenschläger, Goethe Institut, Boston; Karin Kolb, Heather Heckman, UW Cinematheque; Mike Mashon, Library of Congress.



ORSON WELLES *CHIMES AT MIDNIGHT* 1965

CHIMES AT MIDNIGHT

SATURDAY NOVEMBER 29 AT 7PM

One of the few films over which Orson Welles wielded complete creative control, *Chimes at Midnight* is a creative, combinatory adaptation of Shakespeare's *Henry IV* and *The Merry Wives of Windsor*. Even more than a sublime John Gielgud as the guilt-ridden Henry IV and Jeanne Moreau as a lusty Doll Tearsheet, the most fascinating performance comes from Welles himself in a riveting Falstaff that is a classic Welles grotesque – by turns abrasive, gentle, pathetic and boastful. Among Welles' most moving films, *Chimes at Midnight* reveals the relationship between Falstaff and Prince Hal to be Shakespeare's most nuanced reflection on the difficult gap between political power and its human instrument.

Directed by Orson Welles. With Orson Welles, Jeanne Moreau, John Gielgud
Spain/Switzerland 1965, 35mm, b/w, 115 min.

IT'S ALL TRUE

SATURDAY NOVEMBER 29 AT 9:15PM

In 1942, in the midst of editing *The Magnificent Ambersons*, Welles famously abandoned Los Angeles for Brazil, accepting an RKO contract for a State Department-sponsored film project comprised of a handful of segments set primarily in Mexico and Brazil whose goal was to strengthen relationships with the United States'

"good neighbors" in Latin America. In the early 1990s, a group of scholars and historians rescued the incredible and previously unseen footage from *It's All True* to create this insightful documentary that intertwines Welles' own filmed stories with the fascinating tale of the project's genesis and demise.

Directed by Richard Wilson, Bill Krohn, Myron Meisel. With Orson Welles
France/US 1993, 35mm, color & b/w, 89 min.

OTHELLO

SUNDAY NOVEMBER 30 AT 3PM

A follow-up to his innovative 1948 adaptation of *Macbeth* for Republic Pictures, Welles' *Othello* was plagued with delays and budget problems from its very first day. Welles' genius and resourcefulness transformed obstacles into opportunities, such as the famous fight scene staged in a steamy Turkish bath after the production's costumes failed to arrive. While Welles' cosmetic dark skin has contributed to the film's general neglect, he gives one of his finest performances, conjuring a genuinely moving Othello who is deeply plagued by love and jealousy. Despite the film's renown – it garnered the Palme d'Or at Cannes in 1952 – *Othello* remained virtually impossible to see until a wonderful 1992 restoration made new prints available.

Directed by Orson Welles. With Orson Welles, Michéal MacLiammoir, Suzanne Cloutier
US/Italy/France/Morocco 1948-52, 35mm, b/w, 91 min.

PRESENTED BY STEFAN DRÖSSLER

"MY NAME IS ORSON WELLES" (WELLES RARITIES, PROGRAM ONE)

SUNDAY NOVEMBER 30 AT 7PM

Welles was fascinated by television and tried to become popular as a TV director and host. He shot several episodes for programs such as *Around the World with Orson Welles*, *People and Places*, *In the Land of Don Quixote* and *Orson's Bag*, in which he is seen as an indefatigable globetrotter visiting European capitals like Paris, London or Vienna, as well as the Spanish countryside. In *Orson Welles' London*, Welles indulges himself by playing several parts: a musician, Winston Churchill, a policeman, a flower seller, a Chinese man, four clubmen, a castle owner and, of course, the host. "I am happily married to New York, I'm in love with Paris, but cannot resist London. I return to London again and again, as a man returns affectionately to a past mistress." (Orson Welles) Finally, in *Orson Welles' Shylock*, the Munich Film Museum has compiled different approaches by Welles to Shakespeare's *The Merchant of Venice*.

1955-73, video, 125 min.

PRESENTED BY STEFAN DRÖSSLER

UNFINISHED WORKS (WELLES RARITIES, PROGRAM TWO)

MONDAY DECEMBER 1 AT 7PM

Among Welles' most legendary unfinished projects is the thriller *The Deep*, based on a novel by Charles Williams and filmed at the Dalmatian coast in Croatia, and meant by Welles to be a more commercial crossover venture. "My hope is that it won't be an art-house movie. I hope it's the kind of movie I enjoy seeing myself. I felt it was high time to show that we could make some money." (Orson Welles) His last project was *King Lear*, a film that exists only as the revealing explanatory video designed to instruct his producer on the nuances of his proposed Shakespeare adaptation. In addition to important scenes and excerpts from *The Deep*, this program will also show footage from *The Other Side of The Wind*, *The Dreamers* and Welles' dream project, *Don Quixote*.

1955-85, video, 125 min.