

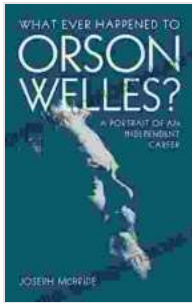
# What Ever Happened to Orson Welles?



## Early Life and Career

Orson Welles was born on May 6, 1915, in Kenosha, Wisconsin. From a young age, he exhibited a prodigious talent for storytelling and performance. At the age of 15, he enrolled in the Todd School for Boys in

Woodstock, Illinois, where he honed his skills in theater and public speaking.



## What Ever Happened to Orson Welles?: A Portrait of an Independent Career by Joseph McBride

★ ★ ★ ★ ☆ 4.2 out of 5

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Enhanced typesetting : Enabled  
Word Wise : Enabled  
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In 1931, Welles joined the Gate Theatre company in Dublin, Ireland, where he worked as an actor, director, and produced several notable productions. His innovative approach to stagecraft and his audacious interpretations of classic works garnered critical acclaim.

### **The Mercury Theatre and "Citizen Kane"**

In 1937, Welles returned to the United States and founded the Mercury Theatre, an itinerant theater company based in New York City. The Mercury Theatre became a breeding ground for some of the most talented actors, writers, and directors of the era, including Agnes Moorehead, Joseph Cotten, and Burgess Meredith.

In 1941, Welles directed, co-wrote, and starred in his masterpiece, "Citizen Kane." The film, renowned for its groundbreaking cinematography,

narrative structure, and themes of power and corruption, is widely considered the greatest American film ever made. "Citizen Kane" won an Academy Award for Best Original Screenplay and was nominated for eight others, including Best Picture and Best Director.

## **Post-"Citizen Kane" Career**

Despite the critical and commercial success of "Citizen Kane," Welles' career took a tumultuous turn in the years following its release. His subsequent films, including "The Magnificent Ambersons" (1942) and "The Lady from Shanghai" (1947), failed to achieve the same level of acclaim. Welles also faced financial difficulties and creative interference from studio executives.

Welles turned to other mediums, including radio, television, and theater, to continue his work. He directed and starred in several radio dramas, including his famous 1938 adaptation of H.G. Wells' "The War of the Worlds," which caused widespread panic among listeners who believed it was an actual news broadcast of an alien invasion.

## **Later Years and Legacy**

In his later years, Welles continued to work as an actor, director, and writer, but his career was often overshadowed by the legacy of "Citizen Kane." He appeared in a variety of films, including "Othello" (1952), "The Trial" (1962), and "F for Fake" (1973).

Orson Welles died on October 10, 1985, at the age of 70. He left behind a vast and influential body of work that continues to be studied and celebrated by filmmakers and scholars alike. Welles is widely regarded as

one of the greatest figures in the history of cinema and theater, and his work has had a profound impact on generations of artists and audiences.

## **Personal Life and Relationships**

Welles was married three times. His first marriage, to actress Virginia Nicolson, ended in divorce in 1940. He then married actress Rita Hayworth in 1943, but they divorced in 1948. His third marriage, to actress Paola Mori, lasted from 1955 until his death in 1985.

Welles had three children: Christopher Welles Feder, Beatrice Welles, and Rebecca Welles. He was also romantically linked to several other notable figures, including Marlene Dietrich, Carole Landis, and Dolores del Río.

## **Impact on Cinema and Theater**

Orson Welles' contributions to cinema and theater are immeasurable. His innovative approach to stagecraft and filmmaking revolutionized both mediums. He pioneered the use of deep focus photography, long takes, and unconventional editing techniques that have become standard practices in modern filmmaking.

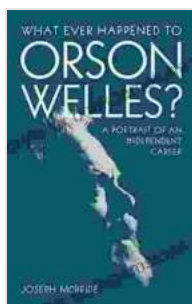
Welles' work also had a profound impact on the development of acting. He encouraged his actors to create fully realized characters with complex motivations and emotions. His work as a director helped to elevate acting from a craft to an art form.

## **Legacy and Cultural Significance**

Orson Welles is considered one of the most important and influential figures in the history of cinema and theater. His work has had a lasting

impact on generations of filmmakers and performers, and his legacy continues to inspire artists and audiences alike.

Welles' films, plays, and radio dramas are studied and analyzed in universities and film schools around the world. His work is a testament to the power of storytelling, the transformative power of art, and the indomitable spirit of the human imagination.



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