

# A “Completely Good Man” is Hard to Find: Welles’ Defective Falstaff

by Carl C. Curtis (February 2015)

Whether *Chimes at Midnight*<sup>1</sup> is Orson Welles’ greatest film remains a matter for debate. That it suffered from the usual post-RKO Welles problems is certain: the unpredictable production schedule, tight budget, and occasionally poor or out-of-sync soundtrack compose the hash that typifies a latter-day Welles’ effort. Still, critics, at first mixed in their opinions, have warmed so much to *Chimes at Midnight* that many regard it as one of Welles’ finest works (Hindle 42). For Welles, however irksome the task of completing the project, it was assuredly a labor of love. He had in somewhat different form presented the subject onstage and had thought deeply about Shakespeare’s great *miles gloriosus* for many years (Rothwell 86). There can be little question that he was determined to start and finish the film, warts and all.

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