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Seventy-five years after Orson Welles' radio production of "War of the Worlds" panicked a nation, his legend continues to inspire old collaborators and new generations of audio artists.

"People were jealous, because he was very talented, and he never played by the rules." says Arthur Anderson, 91, who worked on several of the Mercury Theatre broadcasts. Anderson who began acting on radio at age 12, first worked with Welles on his theatrical run of "Julius Caesar", a groundbreaking play with all the actors in modern costume. Though he was already a star in Broadway circles, before the panic broadcast, Welles' radio program was not supported by advertisers."CBS did it for prestige, but they didn't pay much for the actors, or anyone else," Anderson explains. "Orson had never had a sponsor, but it was so sensational, he got one - Campbell Soup. Now he was able to get well-known stars." The impact of Welles' broadcast was huge, he says, "People thought the US was invaded by Martians. They thought it was really happening."

Orson Welles' legacy now continues with new generations of audio dramatists, many of whom are celebrating October 30th as National Audio Drama Day. On October 30th, Sound Stages Radio is featuring an entire day dedicated to versions of "War of the Worlds", followed by the Transcontinental Terror, a marathon broadcast of terrifying horror stories, which runs all of Halloween (October 31st) and into the early morning hours of November 1st.

Thousands of audio dramatists and audio drama fans are celebrating the anniversary of Welles' production with staged readings and new performances. Earlier this year, audio dramatists competed to create their own take on "War of the Worlds", with winning entries will be played on Sound Stages Radio.

David LeMaster, a professor and playwright in residence at San Jacinto College, in Houston, Texas, is spending October 30th directing "The War of the Worlds: Houston, 1968", an original script based on H.G. Wells' novel, performed as a live audio drama. He teaches acting students how to develop an individual voice acting style. "Acting for the radio, as opposed to television or film, begins with the voice," he explains.

"Audio drama can transport you. You feel surrounded by the story, not separated by the screen or the page," explains Sonia James, who co-runs Sound Stages Radio, a radio station dedicated to audio drama and books. "You're not watching the characters interact in their space, you're in it with them. You're sitting in their living room, dining room, or spaceship."

The Transcontinental Terror was the brainchild of Bob Brittingham, who like many audio dramatists, first performed in a staged recreation of "War of the Worlds". Brittingham and other local artists went on to form Chatterbox Audio Theater, a popular modern audio theatre in Memphis, Tennessee. Transcontinental Terror has grown each year, with the 2013 event featuring work from ten audio dramatists and troupes in the United States, Canada, and the United Kingdom,

In the MP3 age, audio drama podcasts proliferate, today, including Canada's Sonic Society, and Frederick Greenhalgh's Radio Drama Revival, which has had a cumulative 1.2 million downloads. "Contemporary movies are getting more and more focused on visual effects and crowding out story," Greenhalgh explains."Modern audio drama offers a fantastic alternative."

Arthur Anderson, who wrote about his experiences in the autobiography "An Actor's Odyssey: From Orson Welles to Lucky the Leprechaun", later spent 29 years as the voice of the Lucky Charms cereal mascot, but remains especially fond of his years in radio, including almost two decades on the children's program "Let's Pretend". "I got to play wicked witches and warlocks, and enchanted horses!"

**Related links:**

Sound Stages Radio - http://www.soundstagesradio.com

Transcontinental Terror - http://www.transcontinentalterror.com

National Audio Drama Day - http://www.audiodramaday.com

Radio Drama Revival - http://radiodramarevival.com

The Sonic Society - http://www.sonicsociety.org

Chatterbox Audio Theater - http://www.chatterboxtheater.org

Bear Manor Media - http://www.bearmanormedia.com

The War of the Worlds: Houston, 1968 - http://www.houston68.com