

Johnny Depp



Celebrating the upcoming release of **Tim Burton's *Alice In Wonderland: An IMAX 3D Experience*** (2010) this March, in which **Johnny Depp** plays The Mad Hatter, **BFI Southbank** presents a selection of Depp's varied and alternative roles.

A talented character actor blessed with a leading man's good looks, Johnny Depp, by his own admission, doesn't care how he appears on screen. Indeed, Depp exhibits both a remarkable lack of vanity and an amazing ability to transform himself completely for a role. From an undercover FBI agent in **Mike Newell's *Donnie Brasco*** (1997) to the drug-fuelled portrayal of **Hunter S. Thompson** in **Terry Gilliam's *Fear and Loathing in Las Vegas*** (1998), his choice of parts reflect his preference for the quirky over the commercial, often opting to play outsiders, oddballs and misfits rather than the roles Hollywood would no doubt prefer him to play. Arguably the most gifted actor of his generation, he can play broad, he can play restrained; since he's capable, like the silent movie stars he so admires, of engendering huge emotion with his eyes.

Born in 1963 in Kentucky, but raised in Florida, Depp dropped out of school to concentrate on music, playing in a number of garage bands before his group The Kids ended up in Los Angeles where his then-wife introduced him to **Nicolas Cage**. The following day, Depp secured an agent and a role in **Wes Craven's *A Nightmare on Elm Street*** (1984), as heroine Nancy's boyfriend Glen who is spectacularly sucked into a bed by Freddy Krueger. He became a reluctant teen idol as the star of the popular TV show *21 Jump Street* (1987-1990), but found salvation when **Tim Burton** picked him over Tom Cruise to play an innocent suburban outcast with blades for hands in ***Edward Scissorhands*** (1990). It was his breakthrough role and the beginning of an extraordinary two-decade collaboration which has resulted in seven films including the bloody adaptation of **Stephen Sondheim's** horror musical ***Sweeney Todd: The Demon Barber of Fleet Street*** (2007), the stop-motion animation fantasy film ***The Corpse Bride*** (2005), and the tribute to Edward D Wood, the cross-dressing writer-director of *Glen or Glenda* and *Plan 9 from Outer Space* in ***Ed Wood*** (1994). "He provides an atmosphere where you can try anything," says Depp of Burton. "Which is the most important thing for an actor. It's so liberating."

Screening for families, as part of our **Movie Magic** strand, Depp stars as Captain Jack Sparrow (a performance inspired by Keith Richards) in **Pirates of the Caribbean: The Curse of the Black Pearl** (2003). He won a long-overdue **Oscar** nomination and made Depp one of the biggest stars in the world. Ironically, Disney executives, anxious about his fey, foppish pirate, had asked him to change it after watching the early rushes. Depp refused, having spent months developing the character. His supporting role stole the movie, which became a phenomenon, with audiences flocking just to see him.

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Cry-Baby

In 1954 Baltimore, Wade 'Cry-Baby' Walker (Depp), leader of teen gang the Drapes, falls for rich, blonde goodietwo- shoes Allison (Locane), much to the consternation of rival gang the Squares. Wearing a black leather jacket, his hair greased into a quiff, Depp radiates James Dean-esque cool, delivering the melodramatic dialogue with sulky conviction and a knowing insolence, and wriggling his hips like The King during the energetic dance numbers.

USA 1990 Dir John Waters With Amy Locane, Susan Tyrell 85min 12A

Mon 1 Feb 18:30 NFT2, Thu 4 Feb 20:40 NFT2

Edward Scissorhands

A magical fairy tale with Depp as the unfinished creation of Vincent Price's inventor, a tousle-haired innocent with blades for fingers who comes down from his hilltop mansion to live in a pastel-coloured suburbia with Avon Lady Peg Boggs (Wiest) and her family, and who falls in love with her teenage daughter Kim (Ryder). Depp, his face a mass of scars, brings a touching poignancy to Edward's plight, in what is effectively a silent movie performance, his soulful eyes conveying a remarkably affecting range of emotions.

USA 1990 Dir Tim Burton With Winona Ryder, Dianne Wiest 105min 70mm PG

Tue 2 Feb 20:45 NFT3, Sat 6 Feb 17:50 NFT3

What's Eating Gilbert Grape

Life is grim for Gilbert (Depp), having to take care of his mentally disabled younger brother Arnie (DiCaprio), two sisters and a grossly obese mother, after his father hanged himself in the basement. He's engaged in an affair with Mary Steenburgen's frustrated housewife, but things pick up when Gilbert meets Lewis' traveller, Becky. Depp, playing one of his more realistic characters, gives another beautifully muted performance. DiCaprio, too, is sensational, even if Hallstrom resorts to one too many fat jokes.

USA 1993 Dir Lasse Hallstrom With Juliette Lewis, Leonardo DiCaprio 117min 12A

Wed 3 Feb 20:40 NFT2, Sun 7 Feb 16:00 NFT2

Ed Wood

A wry, affectionate and mostly accurate tribute to Edward D Wood, the cross-dressing writer-director of *Glen or Glenda* and *Plan 9 from Outer Space*, that's comic without ever being condescending or malicious. Depp, all wide-eyed enthusiasm and infectious charm, is funny and heartfelt as the woefully inept filmmaker with a penchant for angora sweaters whose delirious optimism borders on the delusional, and who forms a touching friendship with faded horror icon Bela Lugosi (Landau).

USA 1994 Dir Tim Burton With Sarah Jessica Parker, Martin Landau 126min 15

Sat 6 Feb 20:40 NFT3, Mon 8 Feb 20:20 NFT2

Dead Man

A black and white, deadpan western with Depp as William Blake, a docile accountant who travels by train from Cleveland to Machine, a lawless frontier town, for a job that's been filled by the time he gets there. Wrongly accused of the murder of a flower girl, Blake goes on the run with Nobody (Farmer), an eccentric Native American who believes him to be the English poet of the same name, turning from meek number-cruncher into a notorious gunslinger as they're pursued by the law and a sadistic bounty hunter (Henriksen).

USA 1995 Dir Jim Jarmusch With Gary Farmer, Lance Henriksen 120min

Fri 5 Feb 20:40 NFT1, Sun 7 Feb 20:40 NFT1

Donnie Brasco

A tense, compelling, moving true-life crime drama with FBI agent Joe Pistone (Depp) going deep undercover as jewel fence Donnie Brasco in the organisation of low-level mobster Lefty Ruggiero (Pacino). As Donnie is taken under Lefty's wing, the assignment lengthens, Pistone's family suffer serious neglect, and his friendship with Lefty soon blurs the lines between what's acceptable and what's not. Working from a sharp script by Paul Attanasio, Newell ably balances Pacino's showy performance with yet another brilliantly controlled turn from Depp.

USA 1997 Dir Mike Newell With Al Pacino, Anne Heche 126min

Sat 13 Feb 18:10 NFT2, Thu 18 Feb 20:20 NFT2

Fear and Loathing in Las Vegas

Gilliam's delirious, hallucinatory adaptation of Hunter S Thompson's gonzo classic is a paranoid's delight, with Depp, a long-time friend of the writer, as his fictional *alter ego* Raoul Duke, travelling to Vegas and ingesting vast quantities of drugs. Beneath a bald cap and tinted glasses, his teeth permanently clamped around a cigarette holder, Depp impersonates Thompson down to his trademark mumble and lumbering movement, staggering his way through a series of mescaline-fuelled misadventures with his Samoan attorney (Del Toro).

USA 1998 Dir Terry Gilliam With Benicio Del Toro, Christina Ricci 118min

Fri 19 Feb 18:20 NFT1, Sat 20 Feb 20:40 NFT1

The Ninth Gate

Rare-book dealer Dean Corso, at the behest of Langella's creepy collector, travels to Europe in search of the two remaining copies of *The Nine Gates of the Kingdom of Shadows*, a manuscript which, reputedly, can summon the Devil. Inevitably, Corso's not the only one after them, and soon finds himself involved in murder and a Satanic conspiracy. Depp's restrained performance reflects Polanski's elegant, low-key approach to the supernatural, eschewing elaborate special effects in favour of old-fashioned chills.

France-Spain-USA 1999 Dir Roman Polanski With Lena Olin, Frank Langella 133min 15

Wed 17 Feb 18:00 NFT2, Sun 21 Feb 20:20 NFT1

Blow

Charting the rise of George Jung (Depp) from small-time California dope-dealer to major league cocaine-biz player, who pulled in more than \$100 million before his empire came crashing down, Demme's decades-spanning biopic is a potent mix of ambition, chaos and period detail. Depp, wearing a succession of wigs, plays George as an everyman living the American dream, infusing him with a likeability he doesn't really deserve. Cruz lends ferocious support as his coked-up wife.

USA 2001 Dir Ted Demme With Penelope Cruz, Franka Potente 123min

Fri 19 Feb 20:40 NFT1, Fri 26 Feb 18:10 NFT2, Sun 28 Feb 18:00 NFT3

Sweeney Todd: The Demon Barber of Fleet Street

Depp shows off his vocal talents in this bloody adaptation of Stephen Sondheim's horror musical, as the eponymous London barber, wronged by Alan Rickman's judge, who extracts his revenge with the help of Bonham Carter's pie-maker Mrs Lovett. Playing another of Burton's outsiders, his hair streaked like a skunk's, Depp brings enormous compassion and humanity to his emotionally traumatised killer, making you not just empathise but care for him, even as he's slicing his razor across the throat of yet another victim.

USA-UK 2007 Dir Tim Burton With Helena Bonham Carter, Sacha Baron Cohen 116min

Tue 23 Feb 14:30 NFT3, Wed 24 Feb 18:10 NFT2, Sun 28 Feb 15:50 NFT2

Movie Magic

Charlie and the Chocolate Factory

Burton's candy-coloured adaptation of Roald Dahl's much-loved children's classic hews closer to the source than Mel Stuart's inexplicably popular 1971 version, with Depp as a creepy, germophobic Willy Wonka, seemingly inspired by Michael Jackson, and ingeniously designed sets obviating the need for CGI.

USA 2005 Dir Tim Burton With Johnny Depp, Freddy Highmore 115min PG

Sat 6 Feb 13:30 NFT2, Tue 16 Feb 11:00 NFT2 (Parent & Toddler screening)

Tim Burton's Corpse Bride

Victor Van Dort makes the mistake of his life when he discovers that he has accidentally married the corpse of a heartbroken bride. A trip to the Land of the Dead seems to make matters worse, and soon Victor has to face the reality that he may never return 'upstairs' again. Shot in East London and featuring the vocal talents of Johnny Depp, the subject of this month's season (see pp38-42), this is a visually impressive and beautifully constructed piece with a healthy combination of mirth and the macabre.

USA 2005 Dir Tim Burton & Mike Johnson With voices of Johnny Depp, Helena Bonham Carter 77min PG

Sat 13 Feb 14:30 NFT3

Pirates of the Caribbean: The Curse of the Black Pearl

The first and definitely the best of these swashbuckling epics introduces us to Johnny Depp as Captain Jack Sparrow, the off-centre anti-hero with more than a few skeletons in his closet. Who needs a story when it's already stuffed with pirates, sea battles, romance, ghosts and buried treasure? This hugely enjoyable tale may have been inspired by a theme-park ride but it led to Depp being nominated for his first Oscar.

USA 2003 Dir Gore Verbinski With Johnny Depp, Keira Knightley, Orlando Bloom 143min 12A

Sat 20 Feb 13:30 NFT3

Screenings for adults with young children

Parent & Toddler screenings are for parents and guardians with under-5s.

Parent & Toddler Screening: *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory*

Tue 16 Feb 11:00 NFT2

Admission is only for adults accompanied by a baby/toddler.

Tickets £2 (babies/toddlers go free)

Booking information

The BFI Southbank is open to all. BFI members are entitled to a discount on all tickets. BFI Southbank Box Office tel: 020 7928 3232. Unless otherwise stated tickets are £9.00, concs £6.65 Members pay £1.40 less on any ticket. Website www.bfi.org.uk/southbank

Tickets for ALL FREE screenings and events but must be booked in advance by calling the Box Office to avoid disappointment

NOTES TO EDITORS:

BFI Filmstore

The BFI Filmstore is stocked and staffed by BFI experts with over 1,200 book titles and 1,000 DVDs to choose from, including hundreds of acclaimed books and DVDs produced by the BFI.

The benugo bar & kitchen

Eat, drink and be merry in panoramic daylight. benugo's décor is contemporary, brightly lit and playful with a lounge space, bar and dining area. The place to network, hang out, unpack a film, savour the best of Modern British or sip on a cocktail.

There's more to discover about film and television through the BFI. Our world-renowned archival collections, cinemas, festivals, films, publications and learning resources are here to inspire you.

***** PICTURE DESK *****

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