Tuesday, 10th December 2024
Performance Hall, 7.45 pm



Free Social from 7pm!

Wonka

UK, US, PG, 2023, 1 hr 56 mins
Dir: Paul King
Writers: Paul King, Simon Farnaby
Inspired by Charlie and the Chocolate Factory by Roald Dahl
Producers: David Heyman, Luke Kelly
Adventure, Comedy, Musical

With dreams of opening a shop in a city renowned for its chocolate, a young and poor Willy Wonka discovers that the industry is run by a cartel of greedy chocolatiers.

Cast includes (selected)

Timothée Chalamet	Willy Wonka
Hugh Grant	Oompa Loompa
Tom Davis	Bleacher
Olivia Coleman	Mrs Scrubitt
Matt Lucas	Prodnose
Jim Carter	Abacus Crunch
Sally Hawkins	Willy's Mother
Rowan Atkinson	Father Julius

Film Notes by Mike Darbon

Released in the UK exactly a year ago, **Wonka** serves as a prequel to Roald Dahl's beloved story, **Charlie and the Chocolate Factory**, exploring the early days of the eccentric chocolatier, Willy Wonka. It diverges from the original narrative by focusing on Wonka's youthful adventures before establishing his chocolate empire. The plot intertwines with Dahl's universe, featuring characters like Slugworth (Paterson Joseph), who is mentioned in the book, though the film introduces new elements like the "hoverchoc", a creative twist on the Fizzy Lifting Drinks.

Wonka is not the first film to bring the character to life. Gene Wilder's iconic portrayal in 1971's **Willy Wonka & the Chocolate Factory** and Tim Burton's version in the 2005, **Charlie and the Chocolate Factory**, starring Johnny Depp as Willy Wonka, are both well-known adaptations. And not all films about Wonka are musicals; the 2005 film, for instance, features musical numbers only by the Oompa-Loompas, unlike the 1971 version where Wonka himself sings the equally classic song, *Pure Imagination,* written by Leslie Bricusse & Anthony Newley.

Director Paul King and producer David Heyman (of **Paddington** and **Harry Potter** fame, respectively) were inspired to create **Wonka** as a tribute to Dahl's work and Gene Wilder's portrayal of the character, aiming to craft a story that resonates with warmth and festivity. Timothée Chalamet was cast as Willy Wonka not specifically because of his resemblance to a young Gene Wilder, but rather for his ability to capture the character's essence. Chalamet mentioned that he aimed to emulate Wilder's "childlike playfulness" in his portrayal. Paul King agrees that Chalamet's performance brings a unique blend of "ambition, joy and sensitivity" to the role, making him a perfect fit for the younger version of Willy Wonka.

Chalamet described his experience playing Wonka as "joyful", and a stark contrast to his previous, more sombre roles. He paid homage to Wilder by recreating some of his mannerisms, such as the way Wilder walked down the stairs in the original 1971 film, demonstrating his respect for Wilder's portrayal while bringing his own interpretation to the character. Chalamet was actually cast as Willy Wonka without an audition, primarily due to his proven singing and dancing abilities, which he showcases in his high school musical performances which you can still see on YouTube.

Set in an unspecified European country, the film's locations were meticulously chosen to reflect the whimsical and timeless nature of Dahl's world, with filming taking place across the UK, including places like Bath and Lyme Regis, with the magic of Warner Bros. Studios Leavesden, home of **Harry Potter**, bringing the fictional city to life.

Critically, **Wonka** received a nuanced response, with plenty of praise for Chalamet's performance and the film's visuals, though there was some criticism for its deviation from the source material. This didn't stop the film being recognised with a host of award nominations making it a worthy addition to Dahl's literary legacy.

Our Next Presentations



Thursday, 16th January 2025
In Studio 609 at 7.30 pm

Thelma
US, 2023, 12, 1 hr 38 mins
Dir: Josh Margolin
Comedy, Drama

When 93-year-old Thelma Post gets duped by a phone scammer pretending to be her grandson, she sets out on a treacherous quest across Los Angeles to reclaim what was taken from her.

Members' Choice Film!

Wednesday, 29th January 2025

In the Performance Hall at 7.30pm

The Dead Don't Hurt
Canada, Denmark, Mexico,
15, 2023, 2 hrs 10 mins
Dir: Viggo Mortensen
Drama, Romance, Western



In Studio 609 at 7.45pm

The Lobster
Ireland, UK, Greece, France,
Netherlands
15, 2015, 1 hr 54 minutes
Dir: Yorgos Lanthimos
Dystopian, Drama, Comedy



Latest Audience Film Ratings

How did you like our recent offerings? % voting "Excellent" or "Good"

