



STOP MOTION: CELEBRATING HANDMADE ANIMATION ON THE BIG SCREEN

# Tim Burton's Corpse Bride

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Directed by: Mike Johnson, Tim Burton

©/Production Company:

Patalex II Productions Limited

Production Companies: Tim Burton Productions, Laika Entertainment

Presented by: Warner Bros. Pictures

Executive Producers: Jeffrey Auerbach, Joe Ranft

Produced by: Tim Burton, Allison Abbate

Associate Producers: Tracy Shaw, Derek Frey

Production Accountant: Jeffrey Broom

Production Co-ordinators: Victoria Bugs Hartley, Fleur Jago

Production Co-ordinator US: Sarah Faley,

Dale A. Smith

Animation Co-ordinator: Portia Wilson

Production Manager: Harry Linden

Post-production Supervisor: Jessie Thiele

Post-production Co-ordinator: Katie Reynolds

1st Assistant Director: Ezra J. Sumner

Casting: Michelle Guish

Casting Associate: Gaby Kester

Head of Story: John August, Caroline Thompson,

Pamela Pettler

Original Characters Created by: Tim Burton,

Carlos Grangel

Head of Story: Jeffrey Lynch

Storyboard Artists: Chris Butler, Patrick Collins,

Dean Roberts, Sharon Smith, David Stoten,

Tim Watts

Additional Storyboard Artists: Alex Hillkurtz,

Andreas Von Andrian, Alberto Mielgo,

Brendan Houghton, Mike Cachuela, Matt Jones,

Kaz

Character Designers: Jordi Grangel, Carles Burges,

Huy Vu

Director of Photography: Pete Kozachik

Lighting Cameramen: Melissa Byers, Jamie Daniels,

Stuart Galloway, Malcolm Hadley, Simon Jacobs,

James Lewis, Simon Paul, Graham Pettit,

Peter Sorg, Mark Stewart

Chief Lighting Technician: Clive Scott

Visual Effects Editor: William Campbell

Visual Effects Supervisor: Pete Kozachik

Visual Effects Consultant: Chris Watts

Visual Effects by: Moving Picture Company

Art Department (Modellers): Andy Baker,

James Barr, Stevie Bettles, Alice Bird,

Mick Chippington, Mark Cordory,

Charles Fletcher, Mike Gould,

Andrew Howard Green, Mark Gunning,

Nicola Hatch, Chris Hepple, Valma Hiblen,

Penny Howarth, Barry Jones, Oliver Jones,

Clare Kinross, Amy Mabire, Ian MacCabe,

Thecla Mallinson, Martin Mattingley, Cathy Maze,

Steve McClure, Cormac McKee, Angela Pang,

Wendy Payne, Gavin Richards, Steven Riley,

Will Sumpter, Hilary Utting, Sarah Wells,

Terry Whitehouse, Dan Wright

Art Department (Graphic Designer): Paul McBride

Character Colourist Art Department: Annie Elvin

Visual Development Artists: Simón Varela,

Sean Mathiesen, Luc Desmarchelier

Animation Supervisor: Anthony Scott

Animators: Phil Dale, Brian Demoskoff,

Drew Lightfoot, Charlotte Worsaae, Pete Dodd,

Jo Chalkley, Mark Waring, Anthony Farquhar-

Smith, Malcolm Lamont, Chris Stenner, Brad Schiff,

Tim Watts, Jason Stalman, Brian Hansen,

Matt Palmer, Chris Tichborne, Tim Allen,

Tobias Fouracre, Trey Thomas, Jens Jonathán

Gulliksen, Antony Elworthy, Mike Cottee,

Stefano Cassini, Chris Tootell

2D Animators: Michael Schlingmann,

In the twelve years since *The Nightmare before Christmas*, which was directed by Henry Selick but conceived by Tim Burton, stop-motion animation has become almost an endangered technique. The makers of new versions of *King Kong* and *The Magic Roundabout*, properties associated with 'traditional' dimensional animation, used CGI to bring their creatures to life. But now Burton has returned to frame-by-frame puppet manipulation with *Corpse Bride*, co-directed by Mike Johnson. Perhaps because he began his career (with the 1983 short *Vincent*) as an animator in the tradition of Ray Harryhausen (who gets a name-check in this as a make of piano), Burton retains a powerful affection for the technique and deems CGI (which he has used often) as just a tool.

The new film showcases the subtle effects the technique can manage, with texture and detail, lighting and costuming still beyond anything computers can achieve, and a satisfying physicality entirely apt in a tale so intent on the flesh. Like *Edward Scissorhands*, this is one of Burton's more personal projects. The story has roots in a Russian folk tale, but the character designs are Burton's (in partnership with Carlos Grangel), and the film is unmistakably set in a world that is wholly his rather than, say, partly Bob Kane's, Roald Dahl's or Washington Irving's.

Burton's visual influences are often noted: the cartoons of Charles Addams, the illustrated books of Edward Gorey, the expressionist stylings of Universal horror films, the bebop animations of Max and Dave Fleischer. Echoes of all these recur here, along with signature touches like the perky skeleton dog Scrap, exhumed from his cigar-box coffin and reunited with his former owner Victor (if you doubt how complex stop-motion 'acting' can be, note Scrap's expression when Victor thoughtlessly asks him to 'play dead'), and the decaying waif, voiced by Helena Bonham Carter, who is literally falling apart with yearning for the self-absorbed leading man. It is perhaps indicative of Bonham Carter's increasing presence in Burton's personal and artistic lives that in this film the marginalised living doll of *Nightmare* is promoted to active heroine as the eponymous corpse bride.

After the reassessment of parent-child relationships in the slightly syrupy *Big Fish* (2004), we are back to a world of grown-ups who don't understand, with nastily amusing caricatures of both the social-climbing Van Dorts (voiced by Tracey Ullman and Paul Whitehouse) and the decayed Mervyn Peake-style aristocratic Everglots (Albert Finney and Joanna Lumley). Burton's love of horror-movie arcana surfaces in his casting of Christopher Lee and Michael Gough, antagonists in Hammer's first *Dracula*, as parallel spiritual figures: respectively, the dry-as-dust, bullying pastor of the living world and the skeletal but humane elder of the dead.

As Burton has been saying since *Beetle Juice* (1988), the dead have more fun – or at least afford more opportunities for inventive sight gags. This film boasts a skeletal soldier with a cannonball-shaped hole in his ribcage, a dead Napoleon clone called General Bonesapart with a kiss-curl painted on the front of his skull and a head waiter who is nothing more than a severed head carried around by scuttling beetles. The graveyard humour that was so appealing in *Nightmare* returns in extremis: a hep-cat number is performed by a singing skeleton; the maggot that lives inside the heroine's head (and often pops out of her eye sockets) poses briefly as a Jimmy Cricket-style conscience and then

Joris van Hulzen

*Puppets Made by:* MacKinnon & Saunders,  
Ian MacKinnon, Peter Saunders  
*Puppet Fabrication Supervisor:* Graham G. Maiden  
*Puppet Co-ordinator:* Libby Watson  
*Puppet Modeller (On-set Puppet Fabrication):*  
Fiona Barty, Richard Blakey, Deborah Cook,  
Nigel Cornford, Georgie Everard, Michele Gelormini,  
Jonathan Grimshaw, Maggie Haden,  
Janet Knechtel, Thalia Lane, Andy Lee,  
Lara Lodato, Shannon O'Neill, Richard Pickersgill,  
Caroline Wallace, Adam Wright  
*Puppet Wrangler:* Dan Pascall  
*Junior Puppet Wrangler:* Trevor Poulsum  
*On-set Puppet Fabrication (Armatures):*  
Merrick Cheney

*Edited by:* Jonathan Lucas, Chris Lebenzon

*Production Designed by:* Alex McDowell

*Art Director:* Nelson Lowry

*Draughtsmen:* Poppy Luard, Hannah Moseley

*Digital Grade Supervisor:* Begoña López

*Colourist (Moving Picture Company):* Max Horton

*Score/Songs by:* Danny Elfman

*Score Conducted by:* Nick Ingman

*Supervising Orchestrator:* Steve Bartek

*Orchestrations:* Edgardo Simone, David Slonaker

*Supervising Music Programmer:* Marc Mann

*Score Programmer:* Jake Jackson

*Score/Songs Produced by:* Danny Elfman

*Music Editors:* Michael Higham, Shie Rozow

*Score Recorded/Mixed by:* Dennis Sands

*Sound Designers:* Martin Cantwell,  
Steve Boeddeker

*Production Mixers:* Sandy Buchanan,  
Paul Langwade, Rupert Coulson

*Re-recording Mixers:* Michael Semanick,  
Mike Prestwood Smith, Chris Burdon

*Supervising Sound Editor:* Eddy Joseph

*Dialogue Editors:* Tony Currie, Colin Ritchie

*Foley Supervisor:* Harry Barnes

*Foley Artists:* Paul Hanks, Ian Waggot

*Foley Mixer:* Phillip Barrett

*Foley Editor:* Simon Chase

*Production Consultants:* Poster Pictures

*Voice Cast:*

Johnny Depp (*Victor Van Dort*)

Helena Bonham Carter (*Corpse Bride*)

Emily Watson (*Victoria Everglot*)

Tracey Ullman (*Nell Van Dort/Hildegard*)

Paul Whitehouse

(*William Van Dort/Mayhew/ Paul the head waiter*)

Joanna Lumley (*Maudeline Everglot*)

Albert Finney (*Finis Everglot*)

Richard E. Grant (*Lord Barkis Bittern*)

Christopher Lee (*Pastor Galswells*)

Michael Gough (*Elder Gutknecht*)

Jane Horrocks (*black widow spider/Mrs Plum*)

Enn Reitel (*maggot/town crier*)

Deep Roy (*General Bonesapart*)

Danny Elfman (*Bonejangles*)

Stephen Ballantyne (*Emil*)

Lisa Kay (*solemn village boy*)

UK/USA 2005©

77 mins

Digital

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shows a face and voice modelled on the Warner Bros. cartoon version of Peter Lorre. But the film also works hard with its living characters. The hero's demure fiancée Victoria, given vocal bite by Emily Watson, and the dastardly villain Barkis Bittern, purred smugly by Richard E. Grant, are figures from Wilkie Collins, lightly satirised but nicely rounded.

As with Pee-Wee Herman and Willy Wonka, Burton projects the image of someone too conscious of the not always admirably childish aspects of his nature to get on all that well with real children. *Nightmare* did manage to become some sort of holiday classic, but *Corpse Bride* might be a more fragile prospect. Could its title contain two more unappetising words for a young audience? Kids who chuckle at gruesome gags about decay might find the 'bride' bit most difficult to swallow. But it's played with utmost sincerity. Like *Beetle Juice*, this has an interrupted wedding at its climax, with the dead freak not going through with entrapment of the living partner. Unusually, the Burton stand-in, voiced by Johnny Depp, represents normality, and the woman, albeit played by Mrs Burton, is the defiant and flamboyant outsider who must step aside to allow for a restoration of balance.

Kim Newman, *Sight and Sound*, November 2005

## STOP MOTION: CELEBRATING HANDMADE ANIMATION ON THE BIG SCREEN

### Fantastic Mr Fox

Thu 1 Aug 12:30; Fri 2 Aug 20:30; Sun 25 Aug 16:15

### The Tale of the Fox

Le Roman de Renard

Fri 2 Aug 18:15; Tue 13 Aug 20:30

### Tim Burton's The Nightmare Before Christmas

Sat 3 Aug 14:00; Thu 29 Aug 20:50

### Tim Burton's Corpse Bride

Sat 3 Aug 15:50; Sun 25 Aug 14:30 BFI IMAX; Fri

30 Aug 18:20

### Frankenweenie

Sat 3 Aug 18:00; Sun 11 Aug 14:30 BFI IMAX; Fri

30 Aug 20:30

### Jason and the Argonauts

Sun 4 Aug 12:10 (+ intro by Alan Friswell,

conservator and restorer of Ray Harryhausen's

models); Wed 14 Aug 18:00

### The Golden Voyage of Sinbad

Sun 4 Aug 14:50 (+ intro by Alan Friswell,

conservator and restorer of Ray Harryhausen's

models); Wed 14 Aug 20:30

### Chicken Run

Sun 4 Aug 13:00; Sat 24 Aug 11:40

### The Emperor's Nightingale

Cisaruv slavik

Sun 4 Aug 20:30; Tue 13 Aug 18:20

### ParaNorman

Mon 5 Aug 12:20; Thu 15 Aug 12:10; Wed 28 Aug

12:20

### The Boxtrolls

Tue 6 Aug 12:20; Mon 12 Aug 14:10; Sat 17 Aug

12:00

### Journey to the Beginning of Time

Cesta do

praveku

Tue 6 Aug 20:30; Thu 22 Aug 18:30

### Isle of Dogs

Wed 7 Aug 12:10; Sat 10 Aug 20:30; Sun 25 Aug

18:30

### Kubo and the Two Strings

Thu 8 Aug 12:20; Sat 10 Aug 18:15 (+ Q&A with

Travis Knight, director and President & CEO of

LAIKA); Fri 30 Aug 12:20

### Missing Link

Fri 9 Aug 12:30; Mon 26 Aug 15:20

### Coraline

Fri 16 Aug 12:30; Sat 17 Aug 15:30; Wed 21 Aug

12:15; Thu 22 Aug 14:20

### Stop-Motion Shorts Scene - BFI Backed + Q&A

Fri 16 Aug 18:10

### Funday: Stop-Motion Children's Favourites

Sun 18 Aug 12:20

### Stopmotion + Q&A with director Robert

Morgan

Wed 21 Aug 20:40

### Aardman Shorts

Sat 24 Aug 14:30

### Guillermo del Toro's Pinocchio

Tue 27 Aug 20:40

### LAIKA: Frame x Frame

Embark on a journey behind the scenes of LAIKA,

one of the world's foremost pioneers in stop-

motion animation. This immersive new exhibition

will transport you into the boundary-pushing art

and science behind every one of the nearly one

million meticulously constructed frames that bring

each of LAIKA's five groundbreaking feature films

to life.

Opens Mon 12 Aug

Thanks to Jez Stewart, BFI National Archive