

One to watch

PROMISING NEW BRITISH ACTOR CHARLIE COX REVEALS HOW HE WENT FROM THE CHOCOLATE FACTORY TO FENCING WITH ROBERT DE NIRO



Are you from an acting family?

No, I'm the only one. My parents think that my grandmother might have gone to RADA [Royal Academy of Drama and Acting] but they're not sure. They love the fact that I act though, and I reckon my mum has been my major influence as she's very "drama queenie".

Where did it all begin?

I played Charlie in *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory* when I was seven. Then I went to a school that only did musicals and I never got a chance to do anything there as I can't sing.

So how did you get your lucky break?

Well actually, it was from a musical! I played one of the leads in a musical at secondary school [in Sherborne in Dorset] where a talent scout saw me and told me to apply for drama school.

How did that get you into the big time?

It made me think about being an actor, which I hadn't even considered until then. I went to London to earn some money to go to acting school. I met someone who knew a casting director, got an audition, didn't get that part, but got an agent instead. Then I auditioned for a film called *Dot the I* and got myself a part.

Has it been all go since then?

It's been mad. I went to drama school for a year after that film, as I wanted to learn my craft. But then, I got offered the part of Lorenzo in *The Merchant of Venice* which starred Al Pacino, Joseph Fiennes and Jeremy Irons. I wasn't going to turn that down!

Now, you're playing the lead in a \$100m film...

I can't believe it really. I had to go through four months of auditions to get the part of Tristan in *Stardust* which was a gruelling process, but it was worth it.

Was going from a supporting to lead role tough?

In terms of fatigue, yes. I'd done long shoots before – I filmed in Venice for five months but I would get 10 days off at a time. However, I was filming every day for four months for *Stardust*. By the end, the car would come to pick me up early in the morning to go to Pinewood Studios and I would stumble from my bed to the car with my pillow – it was the only way I got any sleep.

What was it like acting with Robert De Niro?

It was really fun. I even got to fence against him which was a bizarre, yet wonderful, experience. I was quite in awe of him, though, and when he waved to me at a cast party, it made my evening!

Was making *Stardust* worth all the effort?

I love it and it's been a real surprise. When we were filming, we would do two takes for each scene; one that was quite dark and one that was comedic. So I had no idea how the film would turn out – it's much funnier than I expected.

What happens now?

I've just finished filming *Stone of Destiny* in Scotland with Robert Carlisle, which will hopefully be at the Cannes Film Festival, and I start work on a World War I drama called *Truce* in January. There are other projects in the pipeline but I'm far too superstitious to tell you about them until I know I've got the parts.

ROLL CAMERA, CHARLIE'S CV:

CHARLIE COX, 24, made his feature film debut in Matthew Parkhill's film *Dot the I* in 2003, before playing Lorenzo in Michael Radford's award-winning screen adaptation of *The Merchant of Venice*. His first major Hollywood role was playing Sienna Miller's brother in *Casanova*. He has had parts in various TV series including *Lewis*, *Judge John Deed* and *A for Andromeda*. He stars as Tristan in Matthew Vaughn's new film *Stardust*, which opens across the UK on 19 October.

Charlie Cox with Robert De Niro and Clare Danes in the major fantasy adventure film *Stardust*

