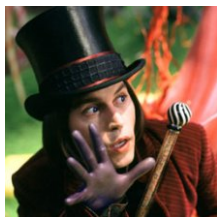


11 July 2005

By:



[Johnny Depp has attended the L.A. premiere of "Charlie and the Chocolate Factory"](#)

Willy Wonka goes out in the US on July 15, heading to the UK on July 22, and reaching Australia in September.

Hollywood star Johnny Depp has attended the Los Angeles premiere of his latest movie, *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory*, directed by Tim Burton. Pop princess Britney Spears did not miss the event at Grauman's Chinese Theatre, according to BBC News. Depp's partner Vanessa Paradis and actress Melanie Griffith were also present at the premiere. Johnny Depp plays Willy Wonka, first portrayed in the 1971 movie by Gene Wilder, who was nominated for a Golden Globe for his interpretation. Johnny Depp, who was nominated for an Oscar in 2003 for his part as Captain Jack Sparrow in *Pirates of the Caribbean: Curse of the Black Pearl*, now plays the part of the isolated unconventional owner of a chocolate factory, who decides to run a special contest in order to select a worthy heir to his great sugar empire. Five children are the lucky winners of the golden tickets, which gives them a chance to visit the famous factory, which has not been seen for almost 15 years. Johnny Depp, who is at his fourth collaboration with director Tim Burton, has denied rumors that his Willy Wonka performance was based on Michael Jackson. "The weird thing is that never occurred to me that there would be any kind of potential connection to Michael Jackson," Depp stated while promoting the film. "It never entered my mind," the actor told Sydney's Herald Sun newspaper, suggesting that Wonka was more similar to the "reclusive, germaphobe, controlling" billionaire Howard Hughes, or even to the Rolling Stones guitarist Keith Richards. The actor declared that his inspiration was "part game show host, part children's show host...locked in a closet for about 10 or 15 years". Tim Burton, the director of the movie based on the popular book written by Roald Dahl, has also expressed his opinion on the Michael Jackson resemblance issue. "I always laugh about that because to me there is like a night and day difference," Burton has recently told Australian reporters. "Michael Jackson likes children and Willy Wonka can't stand children", the director added. "To me there is absolutely no connection as far as my mind goes", Burton concluded. According to the director, viewers should expect a more darker version of the story than the one presented in the original film. Burton's fiancé, British actress Helena Bonham Carter portrays Mrs Bucket in the second version of the film, while Depp's *Finding Neverland* 13-year-old co-star Freddie Highmore plays impoverished Charlie Bucket, the winner of a golden ticket to visit the chocolate factory with his grandpa.