

Interview: Crispin Glover Brings ‘Big Slide Show’ to Chicago

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CHICAGO – Nobody puts actor Crispin Hellion Glover in a corner. The eclectic and insightful performer is also a filmmaker, musician and author, and he brings all those elements to Chicago with the presentation of his “Big Slide Show” at the Patio Theater, 6008 Irving Park Road, on Friday, February 7th, 2014.

Crispin Hellion Glover was born in New York City and raised in Los Angeles. His father is actor Bruce Glover, who used the made-up middle name “Hellion” on his resume, and bestowed it for real upon his son. Glover’s first name was inspired by the “St. Crispin’s Day Speech” in the William Shakespeare play, “Henry V.” Glover was educated in progressive schools up through his secondary education, and graduated from Beverly Hills High School in 1982.



Crispin Glover Presents His 'Big Slide Show' in Chicago

Photo credit: Joe Arce of Starstruck Foto for HollywoodChicago.com

He began acting professionally at the age of 13, and had roles in "My Tutor" (1983), "Teachers" (1984) and "Friday the 13th: The Final Chapter" (1984). He broke out in a huge way in 1985's "Back to the Future," as George McFly. After not coming to contractual terms to continue the role in the sequels, Glover moved on and established a reputation for creating unforgettable characters. The films "River's Edge" (1986) and "Wild at Heart" (1990) had him in scene stealing roles, and he was Andy Warhol in "The Doors" (1991), the title characters in "Bartleby" (2001) and the "Willard" remake (2003), and found memorable mainstream success again as "The Thin Man" in the "Charlie's Angels" film series. Recently, he's done voice work in animated films such as "9" (2009) and the "Open Season" series.

Glover has been traveling with his "Big Slide Show" since the early 1990s. As a noted musician and author, he combines elements of his worldview into the presentation, as well as showcasing his films "What is It?" and "It is Fine! Everything is Fine." In anticipation of his upcoming appearance in Chicago, HollywoodChicago.com caught up with him in the following interview.

HollywoodChicago.com: What type of communication and perspective do you want the audience to interpret in your 'Big Slide Show'?

Crispin Glover: The live aspects of the shows are not to be underestimated. For 'Crispin Hellion Glover's Big Slide Show' I perform a one hour dramatic narration of eight different books I have made over the years. The books are taken from old books from the 1800's that have been changed into different books from what they originally were. They are heavily illustrated with original drawings and reworked images and photographs.

I started making my books in 1983 for my own enjoyment without the concept of publishing them. I was in an acting class in 1982 and down the block was an art gallery that had a book store upstairs. In the book store there was a book for sale that was an old binding taken from the 1800's and someone had put their art work inside the binding. I thought this was a good idea and set out to do the same thing. All together, I made about twenty of them.

HollywoodChicago.com: How did that evolve to the slide show?

Glover: When I first started publishing the books in 1988, people who saw them said I should have book readings. But the books are so heavily illustrated, the only way for them to make sense was to have visually representations of the images. This is why I knew a slide show was necessary. It took a while, but in 1992 I started performing what I now call ‘Crispin Hellion Glover’s Big Side Show Part 1.’ The content of that show has not changed since I first started performing it, but the performance of the show has become more dramatic as opposed to more of a reading. The books do not change but the performance of the show of course varies slightly from show to show based the audience’s energy and my energy.

HollywoodChicago.com: At what point did you add your film ‘It is Fine! Everything is Fine’ to the tour?

Glover: The fact that I tour with the film helps the distribution element. I definitely have been aware of utilizing that I am known from work I’ve done in the corporate media from the last 25 years or so. This is something I rely on for when I go on tour with my films. It lets me go to various places and have the local media cover that I will be performing a one hour live dramatic narration of eight different books – which are profusely illustrated and projected as I go through them – then I show the film afterward. I finish with a Q&A, and then a book signing. As I funded the films I knew that this is how I would recoup my investment, even if it a slow process.

It is enjoyable to travel and visit places, meet people, perform the shows and have interaction with the audiences – and discussions about the films afterwards. The forum after the show is also not to underestimated, as a very important part of the show for the audience.

HollywoodChicago.com: Your works are often based on a complex web of different ideas and life elements coming together. What do you believe are the origins in this point of view?

Glover: I think you already defined it in the question. One of the ways that comes together is this description of my 2005 film, ‘What is it?’ I am very careful to make it quite clear that ‘What is it?’ is not a film about Down’s Syndrome but my psychological reaction to the corporate restraints that have happened in the last 20 to 30 years in film making. Specifically anything that can possibly make an audience uncomfortable is necessarily excised or the film will not be corporately funded or distributed.

This is damaging to the culture because it is the very moment when an audience member sits back in their chair looks up at the screen and thinks to themselves – ‘Is this right what I am watching? Is this wrong what I am watching? Should I be here? Should the filmmaker have made this? What is it?’ When questions are not being asked, it’s not right, because these kinds of questions are when people are having a truly educational experience. So the film ‘What is it?’ Is a direct reaction to the contents of this culture’s media. I would like people to think for themselves.



Actor, Filmmaker, Musican and Philosopher Crispin Glover
Photo credit: Joe Arce of Starstruck Foto for HollywoodChicago.com

HollywoodChicago.com: Like the protagonist in your film ‘It is Fine! Everything is Fine,’ are we all formulated through our psycho sexual development? In your opinion, are many of our choices based in that orientation?

Glover: Because I am a student of Joseph Campbell’s ‘Monomyth’ [a basic narrative pattern], I understand that story structure is the element that has to be dealt with, to put forth the concept that is necessary to be illustrated. So in a certain sense, creativity is about finding the way that the concept will properly push forth within the proper constraints of the aforementioned structure.

There is a universal truth when getting in to the subconscious. This is something Campbell, Jung and Freud all got into within their writings. The best stories are in an individual’s way of expressing their subconscious experience. The expressions of human beings are the reflections of the expressions within the universe. If the subconscious is reached in one way or another, then there is some kind of universal truth or essential truth that is revealed.

HollywoodChicago.com: Your persona has been defined mostly by others. How do you desire to keep on old fashion movie star mystery about yourself?



Crispin Glover in ‘Charlie’s Angels’
Photo credit: Sony Pictures Home Entertainment

Glover: I’m not certain that my persona has defined mostly by others, although it is certainly written about more by others. One thing I have noticed in the recent social media is the large amount of sharing of the day-to-day experiences by a celebrity. It actually can be something that helps to bring in a lot of money, not always, but it can. For whatever reason I am not comfortable with sharing my experiences in social media. I am relatively strict about utilizing it only to let people know about my tours.

HollywoodChicago.com: My grandfather comes from Lukov, in what is now Slovakia. You have ancestry roots in Czechoslovakia, and own property in the Czech Republic. What have you learned about that property, and how does it connect you to the land?

Glover: Technically what the Czech word for my property in that language is ‘zámek’ which translates as lock, castle and chateau. It was built in the 1600s in a quadratic structure. In the 1700s the chateau was resurfaced in a baroque style. There are complex and varied architectural styles that reflect different times and tastes. My chateau’s official name is Zámek Konárovice.

The longer I have owned the chateau, the more I understand what needs to be done. It is a strange perspective when ‘owning’ it because it becomes apparent that I am merely the current caretaker of something that will be around for a very long time. A few years ago the Czech government stepped in and made me aware that the status of the chateau is that of a historical monument. There are certain guidelines I have to stick to and luckily my genuine interest is to continue to restore it to proper historical accuracy. It has actually been extremely educational.

HollywoodChicago.com: Your parents named you after the St. Crispin’s Day speech in Shakespeare’s ‘Henry V.’ Which part of the speech do you think best defines you, in a representing or destiny sense?

Glover: It’s funny. I realize with the question that I have never analyzed the speech before. When given an unusual name like Crispin, I take from it a certain amount of individual pride. Of course Shakespeare is great to read and I really should analyze it much more carefully and see if there is something I specifically relate to – I could pick out sort of funny things to say, but I would have to take some time to give a proper answer to that question.

HollywoodChicago.com: Do you believe in an afterlife? If it does exist, how do you think we’ll evolve when freed from the confines of a body, and simply become pure consciousness?

Glover: That is a good question. Theoretical physics continue to push amazing boundaries of what the concept of the universe is, and that continues to be fascinating. Also interesting is the concept that consciousness itself is the universe. I prefer having little knowledge of what will happen after shedding this mortal coil – to enjoy my life right now.

I can guess and presume, but I was not raised religiously at all. I highly regard science, but there is a lot to figure out and it seems certain that truths that are held today will not be truths in 100 years. So in that case I am open to a lot of things. Like I said I am glad to be alive right now!

“Crispin Hellion Glover’s Big Slide Show” will be presented on February 7th, 2014, at 7pm – in the Patio Theater, 6008 W. Irving Park in Chicago. For more information and to purchase tickets, [click here](#). [19]



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