

# British Theatre Guide

News, reviews, features and podcast on theatre across the UK

## Edward Scissorhands

Devised and choreographed by Matthew Bourne based on the story and film by Tim Burton, music by Terry Davies based on an original score by Danny Elfman

Sadler's Wells  
(2005)

*Edward Scissorhands* became a cult movie and now stands every chance of becoming a cult ballet. This results from the mix of Matthew Bourne's choreography, his sense of humour, a strong story line and powerful imagery.

The film starred Johnny Depp as a classic misfit who is destined to remain an outsider forever; Winona Ryder as Kim, the girl that he worships rather than loves; and even had Vincent Price to inject an element of Hammer Gothic.

The start of this version presents a very different back story as Edward seemingly emerges, almost complete, from the grave. The early scenes major on the dark Gothic world of Frankenstein and his ilk.

This contrasts with the bland mid-America occupied by half a dozen nuclear families, each with two children, a boy and girl; and, these days even more surprisingly, a father and mother present in every case.

Designer Lez Brotherston symbolises the dullness of their life by placing them in cardboard cut-out houses, straight from a book of fairytales.

The two lives meet when skeletal, lost-looking Edward wanders into a town that is as alien to him as Mars would be to its inhabitants.

There are two complete teams of dancers and on opening night, Sam Archer managed the difficult trick of making Edward both awkward and elegant. He certainly looked the part - blades flashing dangerously and bad hair. The latter was almost matched by that of the film's director Tim Burton, who attended the opening night with partner, Helena Bonham-Carter (and a plethora of other stars).

The imagery works well, as Edward is adopted by kind Peg Boggs (Etta Murfitt) and ensconced in her daughter Kim's girlish bedroom, the source of innocently romantic dreams for the other-worldly guest.

Edward is soon desperately in love, which is unfortunate since Kerry Biggin's bouncing Kim has a violent boyfriend Jim (James Leece). This is by-passed for a bit as Edward becomes a folk hero, creating remarkable topiary (including an unlikely giraffe), taking opportunities as a hair dresser and faltering before the love of Michela Meazza's Joyce, a red-headed vamp, bored with her husband and happy to risk amputations in her search for extra-marital excitement.

The ending is both poignant and tragic following that of the original, as does much of the music though Terry Davies gives it a mix of jazz and rock 'n' roll to enhance the Bourne-style dance.

Matthew Bourne's choreography allows the story to come through strongly. It reaches its most spectacular at a Christmas Ball. First, Sam Archer provides a lovely, comic solo as the drunken hero and then the whole cast lets rip with a happy and energetic modern dance that tops off the evening beautifully.

This sell-out version of *Edward Scissorhands* will appeal to lovers of both the movie and Matthew Bourne's cross between dance and theatre. In a couple of hours, the romance and comedy of an alien hitting Middle America will warm enthusiastic Christmas audiences.

If you are a fan, you might like to check out the website too -

[www.edwardscissorhands.co.uk/flash/index.html](http://www.edwardscissorhands.co.uk/flash/index.html)

Rachel Lynn Brody [reviewed](#) the touring production in Edinburgh and David Chadderton in [Salford](#). Peter Lathan saw it towards the end of the tour at the Theatre Royal, [Newcastle](#).

[Visit our sponsor 1st 4 London Theatre to book tickets for Edward Scissorhands.](#)

**Reviewer:** [Philip Fisher](#)