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film

What's the name and where do they come from?

Spike Jonze, born 1969 in Maryland, USA.

And how would one pronounce that, then?

Well, with a pinch of salt, actually. Jonze's real name is Adam Spiegel, and Jonze is in fact something of an act, a character he has taken to playing while in public. Even his interviews are conducted in character, generally annoying interviewers by being uncooperative, being silly, and at one point being sick out of a car window - see the DVD of 'Being John Malkovich' for that one.

What key films of theirs can I casually drop into conversation?

'Being John Malkovich' was a critical success in 2000, confounding everybody with its story of puppeteer Craig Schwartz - John Cusack - finding a portal into the head of John Malkovich, playing himself, naturally. This allows him to see the world as Malkovich and eventually control him.

Other than that, Jonze is primarily known for his music videos, particularly Weezer's 'Buddy Holly' - a Happy Days re-make, the Beastie Boys' 'Sabotage' and the ubiquitous 'Praise You' by Fatboy Slim, in which Jonze appears as the leader of a dance class for people with no co-ordination...

Any awards or other notable information?

He's a current darling of the media and the industry - he was nominated for the Best Director Oscar for 'Malkovich'. The film was also won twelve awards worldwide - from the Venice Film Festival 'Future Award' to MTV's 'Best New Filmmaker' - and was nominated for five others. After 'Malkovich', he moved on to directing commercials - mainly for Nike - and Jonze was also behind the 'Egg and You sitting in a tree, k-i-s-s-i-n-g' adverts this year.

And is he still alive?

He is very much alive, married to Sophia Coppola - of the veritable Coppola clan and director of the sublime 'Virgin Suicides'. He is currently directing 'Adaptation', a film about the making of a film based on a book, and intertwining the making of the film with the narrative of the book. Equally bizarrely, he is producing 'Human Nature', to be directed by music video director Michael Gondry, a love story between a man, a woman, and a boy raised as an ape. 'Malkovich' scriptwriter Charlie Kaufman, tellingly, is writing both projects. He is also, reportedly, appearing in Tim Burton's forthcoming remake of 'Planet of the Apes'.

Where can I find out more?

The Original Spike Jonze Site
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