

Benedict Cumberbatch, In Transition: An Unauthorised Performance Biography

Lynnette Porter



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Benedict Cumberbatch, In Transition: An Unauthorised Performance Biography Lynnette Porter Tinker Tailor Soldier Spy, War Horse, Star Trek: Into Darkness, The Hobbit trilogy, Twelve Years a Slave, August: Osage County, The Fifth Estate; Hedda Gabler, After the Dance, Frankenstein; Hawking, To the Ends of the Earth, The Last Enemy, Parade's End, and, of course, Sherlock. For most actors, these stellar cinematic, theatrical, and television events would be the highlights of a lifetime's work. On Benedict Cumberbatch's résumé they are only a few of many entries. Especially since 2010, his performances have garnered a plethora of best actor awards, both in the theatre (Evening Standard Theatre Award, Critics Circle Theatre Award, and Olivier Award), by playing the dual roles of Victor Frankenstein and the Creature in the National Theatre's Frankenstein, and on television (Broadcasting Press Guild Award, Critics Choice Television Award, Crime Thriller Award, and TV Choice Award), by starring as the titular Holmes in the BBC's Sherlock. Add these and other recent accolades to nearly a decade s nominations and awards (such as the Golden Nymph as best actor in Hawking), and it's easy to see why Benedict Cumberbatch is often hailed as the actor of his generation. Cumberbatch's body of work further includes indie films, radio plays and series, television documentaries, live dramatic readings, multimedia advertisements, and even the occasional stint as a fashion model. He often shares an intriguing perspective on his profession, as evidenced in sometimes controversial interviews. He has become so much in demand that online box offices crash when tickets for his performances go on sale, and, before a Cheltenham Literature Festival Q&A session, fans overwhelmed Twitter when so many responded immediately to a call for questions. Cumberbatch consistently is a top name on lists ranging from sex appeal to global influence. In 2012 he beat David Beckham in the former and U.S. President Barack Obama in the latter. Increasingly, part of Cumberbatch's job involves the role of celebrity. Benedict Cumberbatch is at a pivotal point in his profession, and his career trajectory especially as documented in entertainment media permits a closer examination of just what it means to be a celebrity or star in Britain or the U.S. and how an actor may be perceived very differently in London or Hollywood. This performance biography is an analysis of a man in transition from working actor to multimedia star, as well as the balance between actor and celebrity. It looks at what makes this actor so well suited to play one of popular culture's iconic characters, Sherlock Holmes, and how Sherlock is so well suited to propel Cumberbatch toward greater global fame.



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