

ruthless game. Their most formidable adversary the main narrative, Tyagi's storyline and its accompanying twists appear

Beetlejuice Beetlejuice to get Venice Film Festival rolling



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The 81st edition of the Venice Film Festival will start its 11-day motion and magic on 28 August with Tim Burton's *Beetlejuice Beetlejuice*. Known for his fantastically gothic horror movies like *The Nightmare Before Christmas*, *Ed Wood*, *Sleepy Hollow*, *Corpse Bride* and *Dark Shadows* among others, he has assembled a luminous star cast of Michael Keaton, Winona Ryder and Monica Bellucci for his latest outing, which would play in Venice's Out of Competition slot.

The film's plot sounds riveting. Three generations of the Deetz family return home to Winter River in America. They have just been shaken by a family tragedy. But its troubles are far from over. Lydia's life goes into a tailspin after her daughter, Astrid, finds the mysterious model of their town in the attic – which opens the portal to Afterlife! Soon, another member of the family says Beetlejuice thrice, that provokes a demon to unleash its own brand of mayhem.

Burton helms this movie from a screenplay by Alfred Gough & Miles Millar (Wednesday), story by Gough & Millar and Seth Grahame-Smith (The LEGO® Batman Movie), based on the characters created by Michael McDowell & Larry Wilson.

In a note, the Festival chief, Alberto Barbera, said: "*Beetlejuice*

Beetlejuice marks the long-awaited return of one of the most iconic characters of Tim Burton's cinema, but also the happy confirmation of the extraordinary visionary talent and the masterly realisation of one of the most fascinating auteurs of his time. The Venice Biennale is honoured and proud to host the world premiere of a work that features a surprising swing of creative imagination and driving hallucinatory rhythm."

Tim had earlier been bestowed with a Golden Lion for Lifetime Achievement (2017), and has been a Venice regular. Two of his works, *Spotlight* and *Birdman*, were huge hits on the Lido – the island where the Festival takes place and which is just across the lagoon from Venice mainland. His *The Nightmare Before Christmas* and *Corpse Bride* had also been part of the Venice selections.

Interestingly, Venice, which is the oldest festival having opened in 1932 as a Fascist propaganda platform, even predating Cannes by more than a decade, has often been seen as a springboard for the Oscars. Both *Spotlight* and *Birdman* clinched the Best Picture Academy Award.

Come 23 July, Barbera will announce the full list of Venice 2024 titles in Rome.

The writer, a senior movie critic and author, has covered the Venice Film Festival for over 20 years



The Statesman
PEOPLE'S PARLIAMENT. ALWAYS IN SESSION

Sat, 13 July 2024
<https://epaper.thestatesman.com/c/7543317>

