

= James McAvoy =

James McAvoy (/ ˈmækəv?? / ; born 21 April 1979) is a Scottish actor . He made his acting début as a teen in 1995 's *The Near Room* and continued to make mostly television appearances until 2003 , when his feature film career began and he continued to work in both areas from then on . His notable television work includes the drama show *State of Play* , the adult comedy @-@ drama *Shameless* , and the science fiction show *Frank Herbert 's Children of Dune* . Besides screen acting , McAvoy has performed in several West End productions , receiving three nominations for the Laurence Olivier Award for Best Actor . He has also done voice work for animated films including *Gnomeo & Juliet* and *Arthur Christmas* (both 2011) .

In 2003 , McAvoy appeared in a lead role in Bollywood *Queen* , a British Indian take on the Shakespeare play *Romeo and Juliet* , directed by Jeremy Wooding . This was followed by a supporting role , the faun Mr. Tumnus , in *The Chronicles of Narnia : The Lion , the Witch and the Wardrobe* (2005) . His performance in Kevin Macdonald 's drama *The Last King of Scotland* (2006) garnered him several award nominations . The critically acclaimed romantic drama war film *Atonement* (2007) earned him a Golden Globe Award nomination and his second BAFTA nomination . He appeared opposite Angelina Jolie as a newly trained assassin in the action thriller *Wanted* (2008) .

Since then , he is notable for playing the young Professor Charles Xavier in the 2011 superhero film *X @-@ Men : First Class* , a role he reprised in *X @-@ Men : Days of Future Past* (2014) and *X @-@ Men : Apocalypse* (2016) . McAvoy starred in the 2013 crime comedy @-@ drama film *Filth* for which he won Best Actor in the British Independent Film Awards .

= = Early life and family = =

McAvoy was born in Glasgow , Scotland , the son of Elizabeth (née Johnstone) , a psychiatric nurse , and James McAvoy , Sr. , a builder . He was brought up as a Roman Catholic . His parents divorced when he was seven . McAvoy 's mother suffered from poor health and subsequently decided it was best that he live with his maternal grandparents , Mary and James Johnstone , a butcher who lived in a terraced council house in the nearby Drumchapel area of Glasgow . His mother lived with them intermittently . The actor has a sister , Joy , and a younger half @-@ brother , Donald . McAvoy has not been in contact with his father since childhood . He attended St. Thomas Aquinas Secondary in Jordanhill , Glasgow , a Catholic school , and briefly considered joining the Catholic priesthood . In a 2006 interview , McAvoy said that he considered becoming a priest as a child because it seemed to be a way to explore the world via missionary work . During his education , he worked at a local bakery .

= = Career = =

= = = Early career = = =

McAvoy 's acting debut came at the age of 15 in *The Near Room* (1995) . He later admitted that he was not very interested in acting when joining the movie , but was inspired to study the craft after developing feelings for his co @-@ star , Alana Brady . He continued to act while still a member of PACE Youth Theatre . McAvoy eventually graduated from the Royal Scottish Academy of Music and Drama in 2000 . Throughout the early 2000s , he made guest appearances in television shows and began working on movies . In 2001 , McAvoy 's performance as a gay hustler in the play *Out in the Open* impressed director Joe Wright so much that Wright began offering McAvoy parts in his films . McAvoy kept declining them , however , and it wasn 't until six years later that the two actually worked together .

He also starred in *Privates on Parade* in the Donmar Warehouse , this time catching Sam Mendes ' attention . Also in 2001 , the actor appeared as Private James W. Miller in *Band of Brothers* , an

eleven @-@ hour World War II miniseries by executive producers Steven Spielberg and Tom Hanks . This is the same miniseries in which his future coworker , Michael Fassbender , played the role of Burton " Pat " Christenson . It was shown on the HBO network . He gained the attention of critics in 2002 's White Teeth , a four @-@ part television drama miniseries adaption based on the novel of the same name by Zadie Smith .

In 2003 , McAvoy appeared in the Sci Fi Channel miniseries Frank Herbert 's Children of Dune , adapted from Frank Herbert 's novels . It is one of the highest @-@ rated programmes ever to be aired on the channel . More cable work came for him when he accepted the role of an unprincipled reporter in 2003 's State of Play . The well @-@ received six @-@ part British drama serial tells the story of a newspaper 's investigation into the death of a young woman and was broadcast on BBC One . Calling the programme a " must @-@ see " , the Chicago Tribune recommended State of Play for its cast 's performance . In 2002 , McAvoy shot scenes for Bollywood Queen , described as West Side Story meets Romeo and Juliet with bindis , the movie deals with star @-@ crossed lovers caught in the middle of clashing cultures ; it was shown as a special presentation at the 2003 Sundance Film Festival and opened in UK theatres on 17 October . In 2004 , he acted in a supporting role in the romantic comedy Wimbledon , also featuring Kirsten Dunst as a co @-@ lead . His next project was voicing a character named Hal in the 2004 English version of Strings , a mythic fantasy film . Another 2004 release for him was Inside I 'm Dancing , an Irish production helmed by Damien O 'Donnell starring alongside fellow Scotsman Steven Robertson . In it , the actor was cast as the principal character : a maverick with duchenne muscular dystrophy .

= = = Critical success = = =

McAvoy ended 2004 by appearing in the first two seasons of Shameless as Steve McBride , the moral hero of the BAFTA @-@ winning Channel 4 programme . His public profile was raised in 2005 with the release of Walt Disney Pictures 's The Chronicles of Narnia : The Lion , the Witch and the Wardrobe . McAvoy starred in the fantasy adventure film made by Andrew Adamson and based on C. S. Lewis 's children 's novel as Mr. Tumnus , a faun who befriends Lucy Pevensie (played by Georgie Henley) and joins Aslan (Liam Neeson) ' s forces . It was given a UK release of 9 December . At the UK box office , this movie opened at number one , earning around £ 8 @. @ 7 million at 498 cinemas over the weekend . Worldwide , Narnia grossed £ 463 million , making it the 41st highest @-@ grossing film of all @-@ time worldwide . That succeeding year he also accepted the principal role of Brian Jackson , a nerdy university student who wins a place on a University Challenge quiz team in the mid @-@ 1980s , in Starter for 10 . He was directed by David Nicholls , who adapted the film 's screenplay from his own book . The British / American production was given distribution in the UK on 10 November . 10 scored a rating of 89 % on review aggregator Rotten Tomatoes based on a sample of 75 reviews . In spite of the positive buzz , the movie flopped at the box office , unable to recover its production costs of £ 5 @. @ 7 million .

Forest Whitaker had suggested McAvoy to director Kevin Macdonald for the role of Nicholas Garrigan in 2006 's Academy Award @-@ winning low @-@ budgeted The Last King of Scotland . McAvoy portrayed a Scottish doctor who becomes the personal physician to dictator Idi Amin (played by Whittaker) while in Uganda . While the movie is based on factual events of Amin 's rule , the details of the story are fictional and adapted from Giles Foden 's acclaimed 1998 novel . McAvoy assessed his character to be a " completely selfish prick " . An overwhelmed McAvoy fainted during his first take of what would be the hardest scene for him to shoot , Nicolas 's torture . McAvoy was named Best Actor of the year by Scotland 's own BAFTA Awards , where the film swept the major categories , and received a nomination for the BAFTA Award for Best Actor in a Supporting Role . The movie itself walked away with three wins , including the honour for Outstanding British Film of the Year . This was accompanied by praise for McAvoy 's performance .

Following that , he played Irish attorney Tom Lefroy and love @-@ interest to Jane Austen in Becoming Jane , a 2007 historical movie inspired by the author 's early life . Next up was Penelope , which premiered at the 2006 Toronto International Film Festival . Also starring co @-@ producer Reese Witherspoon , it generated polarised reviews . The breakthrough role in McAvoy 's career

came in *Atonement* , Joe Wright 's 2007 adaption of Ian McEwan 's novel of the same title . A romantic war film , it focuses on lovers Cecilia and Robbie 's (Keira Knightley and McAvoy) lives being torn apart after her jealous younger sister , Briony (Saoirse Ronan) falsely accuses him of rape . Upon reading the script , McAvoy said he thought " If I don 't get the part I 'm not reading the book because it 'll be devastating . It 's an amazing role and I really wanted it . " McAvoy has called the movie " incredibly sad " but considers it an uplifting experience . He also shared that he hoped viewers will be left " absolutely devastated and harrowed . " Screenings of *Atonement* were held at the 2007 Toronto International Film Festival , where it was one of the most acclaimed films present , and Venice Film Festival . *Atonement* was a big awards contender ; it was nominated for fourteen BAFTAs and seven Academy Awards . Both McAvoy and Knightley were nominated for their performances at the 65th Golden Globe Awards , respectively . Additionally , the film was lauded by critics , with Metacritic reporting it to have an approval rating of 85 . The Hollywood Reporter writer Ray Bennett said the duo gave " compelling and charismatic performances " .

= = = Wanted , X @-@ Men and subsequent work = = =

One of the biggest highlights of McAvoy 's career was starring with Angelina Jolie and Morgan Freeman in *Wanted* , an action film where he portrayed Wesley Gibson , a young American slacker who learns he is heir to a legacy of assassins . When McAvoy screen @-@ tested for the role , he was initially rejected because the studio was seeking an actor with conventional Hollywood leading @-@ man looks and physique . He later recalled being considered the " runt of the litter " of those who tested , but ultimately got the role in late 2006 since the studio " wanted someone geeky " . While shooting action scenes for *Wanted* , he suffered several injuries , including a twisted ankle and an injured knee . Nonetheless the actor said he had a " good time " doing the movie . McAvoy had never done this type of genre before and thought of *Wanted* as a chance to be more versatile . Loosely based on the comic book miniseries of the same name by Mark Millar , it saw a June 2008 release worldwide . It received favourable reviews from the press , who generally liked that it was fast @-@ paced . At the box office , *Wanted* was a success , grossing \$ 341 million against a \$ 75 million production budget . Next was *The Last Station* (2009) , a biopic that details the final months of celebrated writer Leo Tolstoy and also stars Anne @-@ Marie Duff , McAvoy 's wife at the time . It was shown at a limited number of screens in the US . Although most critics ' awards paid attention to co @-@ stars Helen Mirren and Christopher Plummer , the Satellite Awards nominated McAvoy for Best Supporting Actor . In 2009 , McAvoy voiced Angelina 's father , Maurice Mouseling , in the television series , *Angelina Ballerina : The Next Steps* .

He also appeared onstage in 2009 at Apollo Theater 's *Three Days of Rain* . He voiced the male titular character in *Gnomeo and Juliet* (2011) , an animated movie based on William Shakespeare 's play *Romeo and Juliet* . In Robert Redford 's historical American drama *The Conspirator* , McAvoy played the role of an idealistic war hero who reluctantly defends a co @-@ conspirator charged in the Abraham Lincoln assassination . It premiered at the 2010 Toronto International Film Festival . While this movie garnered mixed reception , critics lauded the actor for his work . In Owen Gleiberman 's assessment of *The Conspirator* , he found it " stiff @-@ jointed " and tedious , but regarded McAvoy as " an avid presence " .

In mid @-@ 2010 , McAvoy was cast as telepathic superhero Professor X , leader and founder of the X @-@ Men , in *X @-@ Men : First Class* . He joined an ensemble that included Michael Fassbender , Jennifer Lawrence and Kevin Bacon . Based on the Marvel Comics and a prequel to the film series , it is set primarily during the build @-@ up to the Cuban Missile Crisis and focuses on the relationship between Professor X and Magneto and the origin of their groups . McAvoy did not read comics as a child , and thus was unfamiliar with the Stan Lee originals which began publication in the 1960s , but was a fan of the X @-@ Men animated cartoon series . Released to the UK on 1 June , *First Class* topped its box office with ticket sales of around £ 5 million in its opening weekend . *First Class* was also reviewed favourably . In 2011 , McAvoy began filming the role of Max Lewinsky in the British thriller *Welcome to the Punch* . He played the lead role in the Danny Boyle film *Trance* .

In 2012 , McAvoy was cast as Bruce Robertson in *Filth* , an adaptation of an Irvine Welsh novel of the same name . The film 's ensemble cast includes Jamie Bell , Jim Broadbent , Eddie Marsan , and Imogen Poots . For his role , McAvoy won Best Actor at the British Independent Film Awards in December 2013 . It was also announced that he would co -@ star with Jessica Chastain in a double @-@ feature film project , *The Disappearance of Eleanor Rigby* . He performed the male lead in radio play adaptation of *Neverwhere* written by Neil Gaiman .

McAvoy starred in Shakespeare 's *Macbeth* on London 's West End in early 2013 . *Macbeth* was the first performance at the *Trafalgar Transformed* , running from 9 February until 27 April . The production was directed by Jamie Lloyd who also directed McAvoy in his last stint on the stage in 2009 's *Three Days of Rain* . In 2015 , McAvoy won the Best Actor award at London 's Evening Standard Theater Awards for his portrayal of Jack Gurney in *The Ruling Class* , a revival of the Peter Barnes play directed once again by Jamie Lloyd . It ran at Trafalgar Studios from 16 January to 11 April 2015 .

McAvoy reprised his role as Professor X in *X @-@ Men : Days of Future Past* (2014) , which grossed \$ 747 @.@ 9 million worldwide , making it the sixth highest grossing film of the year 2014 , and the second highest grossing film in the *X @-@ Men* franchise and in 2016 's *X @-@ Men : Apocalypse* .

= = Personal life = =

While working on *Shameless* , McAvoy started a relationship with his character 's love interest , Anne @-@ Marie Duff , and they married in October 2006 in a quiet ceremony . They have one child together , a son named Brendan (b . 2010) . On 13 May 2016 , McAvoy and Duff jointly announced their decision to divorce .

After McAvoy won the " Rising Star " award from the BAFTAs , his estranged father spoke to the *Sunday Mirror* , stating that he would love to get in touch with his son , but did not know how to reach him . Though the actor did not read the piece , he heard about it and was unmoved . He enjoys fantasy themes which he said started from the age of 11 with *The Lord of the Rings* . His big interest outside acting and science fiction is football ; he is a huge fan of Celtic Football Club , stating that his dream role would be to play Celtic legend Jimmy Johnstone . McAvoy considers himself a spiritual person who no longer practices Catholicism . Speaking to *Sky News* , McAvoy said he believed that British filmmakers belittle and dumb down their productions to please American audiences . " It 's like we 're patronising them and short changing ourselves , " the actor commented . He had previously called 3 @-@ D films a " waste of money " , accusing film studios of using the effect to get more money out of their theatre audiences .

= = Charity = =

At one point , McAvoy did a " terrifying " BASE jump from the world 's tallest hospital building in a bid to help raise money for Ugandan children 's charity *Retrak* , an organisation which assists children on the streets . Additionally , McAvoy is a celebrity supporter of the British Red Cross with whom he travelled to Uganda to raise awareness of the projects there . He had become involved with the charity after shooting *The Last King of Scotland* there for several months and was shocked by what he saw . In February 2007 , he visited northern Uganda and spent four days seeing projects supported by the British Red Cross .

= = Filmography = =

= = = Film = = =

= = = Television = = =

== Stage ==