viewpoint

Octavia Spencer

Biography

One of Hollywood's most sought-after talents, Octavia Spencer has become a familiar fixture in both television and the silver screen. Her performance as Minny in the DreamWorks feature film *The Help* won her the Academy Award, BAFTA Award, Golden Globe Award, SAG Award and Broadcast Film Critics' Choice Award among numerous other accolades. She has since received two additional individual Academy Award nominations and recently served as an executive producer on the critically acclaimed drama, *Green Book*, which won the 2019 Academy Award for Best Picture and Golden Globe for Best Motion Picture – Musical or Comedy.

Octavia will next be seen in Apple TV+'s *Spirited*, alongside Ryan Reynolds and Will Ferrell. The film is a musical version of Charles Dicken's story following a miserly misanthrope who is taken on a magical journey and will premiere in November. On the small screen, Spencer will return for the third season of Apple TV+'s thriller, "Truth Be Told," as Poppy Parnell, a true crime podcast host who risks everything in pursuit of truth and justice. In addition to starring in, she also serves as an executive producer on the program alongside Reese Witherspoon's Hello Sunshine and Chernin Ent / Endeavor Content.

In 2021, Spencer starred in Amazon Studios' *Encounter*, a sci-fi thriller following two brothers as they embark on a journey with their father, who tries to protect them from an outside threat. In 2020, Octavia starred as the title role in "Self Made: Inspired by the Life of Madam C.J. Walker," a limited series for Netflix about entrepreneur and social activist, Madam C.J. Walker, which she executive produced along with LeBron James and his production company, Springhill Entertainment. Her performance earned her a nomination for "Outstanding Lead Actress in a Limited Series or Movie" at the 72nd Primetime Emmy Awards as well as a nomination for the 52nd NAACP Image Awards in the category of "Outstanding Actress in a Television Movie, Limited–Series or Dramatic Special."

In 2021, Spencer starred alongside Melissa McCarthy in the Netflix comedy *Thunder Force*, and in 2020, she appeared in *The Witches*, Robert Zemeckis' adaptation of the Roald Dahl classic book, alongside Anne Hathaway. She was also previously featured as one of the voices in the Disney adventure animation, *Onward*, alongside Chris Pratt, Tom Holland and Julia Louis-Dreyfus; as well as the fantasy comedy film, *The Voyage of Doctor Dolittle* with Robert Downey Jr., Rami Malek, Emma Thompson, Antonio Banderas, and Selena Gomez.

Additionally, Spencer portrayed Harriet Wilson in the independent drama, *Luce,* alongside Naomi Watts and Tim Roth. Her performance in the film earned her a nomination for "Best Supporting Female" at the 35th Annual Film Independent Spirit Awards. In 2019, Spencer was seen in the psychological thriller, *Ma*, in which she played

the titular role and reunited with *The Help* director Tate Taylor. In 2017, she starred in Guillermo del Toro's Academy Award-winning fantasy drama, *The Shape of Water* alongside Sally Hawkins, Michael Shannon and Richard Jenkins. Spencer's performance was called "marvelous" and "irresistible" by critics. She received individual Golden Globe, BAFTA, and Academy Award nominations for her role in the film, in addition to the Academy Award for Best Picture, the film received the coveted Golden Lion Award at the Venice Film Festival, among numerous other accolades. Previous film credits include *Instant Family*, a comedy alongside Mark Wahlberg and Rose Byrne; *A Kid Like Jake* opposite Claire Danes, Jim Parsons and Priyanka Chopra; the independent drama *Small Town Crime* with John Hawkes and Anthony Anderson; *Hidden Figures*, the Academy Award-nominated drama that tells the true story of several African-American women who provided NASA with critical information needed to launch the program's early successful missions and earned Spencer her second individual nominations for the Academy Awards, SAG Awards, Golden Globe Awards and NAACP Image Awards; *The Shack*, based off the highly successful novel of the same name; Marc Webb's emotionally moving drama *Gifted*; *Allegiant*, for which Spencer reprised her role as Johanna in the third installment of Lionsgate's *The Divergent* Series franchise; the Disney animated film *Zootopia*, which won the Academy Award for Best Animated Film; *The Free World* which premiered at the 2016 Sundance Film Festival and also stars Elisabeth Moss and Boyd Holbrook; the drama *Fathers and Daughters* with Quvenzhane Wallis, Diane Kruger, Russell Crowe, Amanda Seyfried, and Aaron Paul; *The Great Gilly Hopkins*, the adaptation of Katherine Peterson's young adult Newberry Award winning novel; Mark Waters' *Bad Santa 2*, along with Billy Bob Thornton and Kathy Bates; *Black or White*, which premiered at the 2014 Toronto Film Festival; Tate Taylor's *Get On Up*, a chronicle of musician James Brown's rise to fame, including cast members Viola Davis and Chadwick Boseman; the sci-fi, action-adventure *Snowpiercer*; the indie-drama *Fruitvale Station* for which Spencer was awarded Best Supporting Actress from the National Board of Review; Diablo Cody's directorial debut *Paradise* alongside Russell Brand and Julianne Hough; *Smashed*, an independent film which premiered at the 2012 Sundance Film Festival; Bryce Dallas Howard's directed segment of *Call Me Crazy: A Five Film,* an anthology of five short films focused on various stories of mental illness; *Blues for Willadean, Fly Paper, Peep World, Dinner For Schmucks, Small Town Saturday Night, Herpes Boy, Halloween II, The Soloist, Drag Me To Hell, Seven Pounds, Pretty Ugly People, Coach Carter, Charm School, Win A Date With Tod Hamilton, Bad Santa, Spiderman, Big Momma's House, Being John Malkovich, Never Been Kissed* and *A Time to Kill.* In 2009, Spencer directed and produced a short film entitled *The Captain*, which was a finalist for the coveted Poetry Foundation Prize at the Chicago International Children's Film Festival.

On television, Octavia was a recurring guest star in several episodes of the hit CBS comedy, "Mom," opposite Allison Janney and Anna Faris. She made a memorable guest appearance in the final season of "30 Rock," starred in the Comedy Central series "Halfway Home" and appeared in a five-episode arc as the character Constance Grady on the hit series "Ugly Betty." Additional television credits include "The Big Bang Theory," "E.R.," "CSI," "CSI: NY," "Raising the Bar," "Medium," and "NYPD Blue."

In 2019, Octavia Spencer launched her production company, ORIT Entertainment which she runs with partner and producer Brian Clisham and Head of Production and Development Stephanie Kluft. Projects under the ORIT Entertainment banner include "Truth Be Told," "Self-Made: Inspired by The Life of Madam C.J. Walker," and their

award-winning documentary short, *Right to Try*. ORIT recently announced that they are teaming with ID, discovery+ and October Films in an expansive partnership and development deal for premium unscripted true-crime content.

Among her many other professional achievements, Spencer has co-authored an interactive mystery series for children called Randi Rhodes, Ninja Detective. The first title in the series, Randi Rhodes, Ninja Detective: The Case of the Time-Capsule Bandit was published by Simon & Schuster Children's Publishing in Fall 2013 and the second book, Randi Rhodes, Ninja Detective: Sweetest Heist in History followed the next year.

Spencer is a native of Montgomery, Alabama and holds a BS in *Liberal Arts* from Auburn University. She currently resides in Los Angeles.

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