

Making a Grand Entrance

If you are thinking about making a grand entrance to the family Thanksgiving meal, think again. The bar has been set high.

The artist Salvador Dali once arrived to deliver a London lecture accompanied by two Russian wolfhounds and dressed in an old-fashioned diving suit. He nearly suffocated before friends and a stagehand freed him from the helmet.

Mary Poppins made a practically perfect descent from on high, and it was love at first sight.

A lot of critics didn't love David Bowie's 1987 Glass Spider tour at the time, calling it pretentious and "overkill," but that's the real beauty of David Bowie: The moment he beamed down from that massive spider was rather remarkable. Also, considering how much time and effort went into building that set (and reconstructing it for each show), it's nothing to be snuffed at. In fact, it helped pave the way for similarly theatrical concerts later on. And to think, after all that, he set fire to the spider in New Zealand at the end of the tour, calling it a "relief".

In the beloved 1939 classic, *The Wizard of Oz*, the ultimate statement of intent comes from the green-faced terror, the Wicked Witch of the West. This grotesque, cackling specter arrives in an actual puff of smoke, which is pretty much what appears under the dictionary definition of "making a grand entrance." Arriving just as the munchkins are rather unceremoniously celebrating her sister's death, the fear and terror she instils in those around her perfectly sets up her character as someone to be feared at every turn.

James Bond entrances are never uneventful, and they started with Doctor No.

Saturday Night Fever is not only one of the most '70s things ever to happen, it's also one of cinema's coolest character introductions. At first, we just see a pair of shoes striding their way down a city street, before finally the camera pans up and shows John Travolta in all his '70s splendor red shirt, leather jacket and gold chain firmly in place.

A character as iconic as Darth Vader deserves a proper entrance. As a smoke-filled corridor lies in recovery following the shoot-out that just raged inside it, Stormtroopers flood in and promptly make way for the arrival of their apparent leader. When he does arrive, Darth Vader makes quite the lasting impression. Head to toe in black and towering over his minions, this striking figure simply strides confidently down the hallway, his cape billowing behind him and a startling mask covering his face. That unforgettable mask adds volumes to Vader's chilling emotionless façade and not being able to read his face only makes him that bit more imposing.

Dazzling Liberace in his outrageous sequined outfits made stage entrances like nothing early television viewers had ever seen before.

The Flying Wallendas, a circus act and daredevil stunt performers, most known for performing high wire acts without a safety net, captivated my attention high on Times Square last June. Talk about a grand entrance, there was one balancing right over my head.

If you can pull a grand entrance off, by all means, do so; otherwise, consider coming around to the side door and slipping in unobtrusively.