

# Out of Hours Film

## TIME'S ARROW

**The Theory of Everything**  
Directed by James Marsh

*Focus Features. On general release.*

The film of Stephen Hawking's life is based on Jane Hawking's memoir: *Travelling to Infinity: My Life with Stephen*, so if you're expecting science, you may be disappointed. It is a love story and you will need some tissues. It starts with the able-bodied Hawking (Eddie Redmayne) negotiating the cobbles of Cambridge on a rickety bicycle, keeping pace with his friends. He drops a few things and his writing is spidery (but we all know that is expected of a scientist) so when he delivers an equation to his professor on the back of an envelope, no one is surprised. It is only when he has a catastrophic fall while running in the college quad that the devastating sentence is delivered: 2 years. Hawking was only 21. His father, a doctor, warns 'this will not be a fight Jane but a very heavy defeat'. The film then follows the monumental battle against physical decay that both Stephen and Jane endure.

The fact that Hawking is still alive 50 years later, operating his voice command with the one remaining working muscle in his right cheek seems an almost messianic victory over time and fate. For an astrophysicist



**The Theory of Everything | The Power of Love.** Stephen Hawking (Eddie Redmayne) and Jane Wilde (Felicity Jones). The film is based on the memoir *Travelling to Infinity: My Life with Stephen*, by Jane Hawking.

who passionately believes in time's ending if only he could find the equation, this is paradoxical. The film suggests that there may be something even more inexplicable than time such as spirit and love that are the most important predictors of the

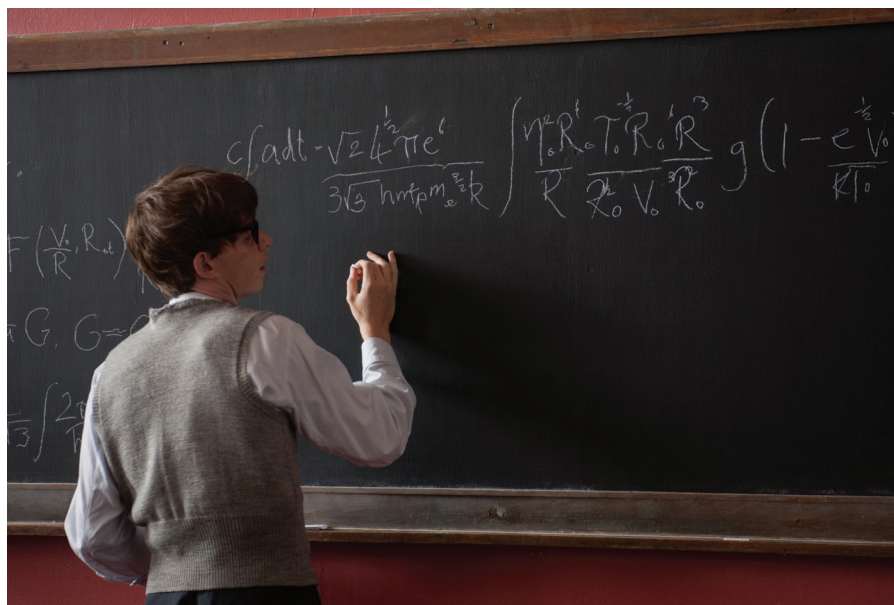
future. From close-ups of cream swirling in a coffee cup to overhead shots of spiral staircases that bend upwards towards the oculus and into the air, the imagery always hints towards the transcendence and circularity of things.

Eddie Redmayne's performance is a masterclass of method acting but Felicity Jones is easily his equal. She embodies that spare, brushed and washed Englishness that is both iron-clad and sensitive. That is to say nothing of her allure. The film ends with a sudden rewinding of the film's events with Hawking restored to physical fitness and youth, kissing on the bridge under the fairy lights of the May Ball. This parting shot reminds us that we are all of us time travellers, with that most capricious of faculties, the memory.

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**The Theory of Everything | Exploring the Universe of the Mind.** Stephen Hawking (Eddie Redmayne).



DOI: 10.3399/bjgp15X684541