

Reel lives

To celebrate the release of *Jobs*, the simply named story depicting the life of the late Apple pioneer, *Rob Garratt* rounds up some of the greatest biopics brought to the screen

Bird (1988)

Clint Eastwood's lifelong love of jazz found a voice in this moving tale of Charlie Parker's tragic life. Focusing primarily on the saxophonist's health trials and personal tribulations over the music, we're left with a humane portrait of a great but battered genius, a template many music biopics have imitated since, although rarely as well. Forest Whitaker gives an astounding turn in the lead role.



Capote (2005)

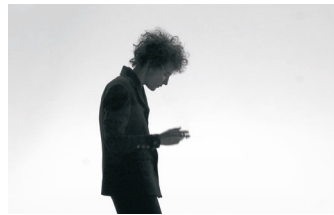
The name of this film is misleading. It's not really a film about Truman Capote, we'd argue, but about the subjects of the great American writer's 'non-fiction novel', *In Cold Blood*. Those subjects are drifters Perry Smith and Richard Hickock, the men behind a brutal quadruple murder, who told their story to Capote from behind bars. A haunting depiction of a writer wrestling with both disgust and the lust for a good story.



I'm Not There (2007)

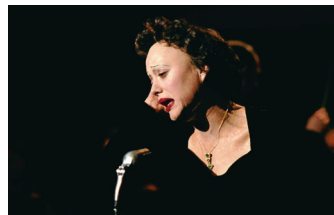
There's much to dislike in Todd Haynes' rambling, multi-chaptered depiction of 'the many lives of Bob Dylan', in which six different actors play six different interpretations of the songwriting enigma. Cate Blanchett inevitably stole the headlines with her flashbulb-bursting

depiction of a hedonistic mid-'60s Dylan, but it was quieter passages by Heath Ledger and Christian Bale that deserve repeated viewing. For all its self-consciously art house indulgences, *I'm Not There* is perhaps the only fitting tribute that could be made while the great riddle of its subject continues to baffle audiences nightly.



La Vie En Rose (2007)

It's been said that Edith Piaf didn't need a biopic; her life was a movie already. Discovered singing for her supper on the streets, she became an international star. When a year-long romance with boxer Marcel Cerdan ended with his death, Piaf was left in a pit of despair she was unable to escape until her death, aged 47. While Richard Marizy's jumpy, non-chronological approach sometimes confuses matters, Marion Cotillard's career-defining performance makes this as heartbreaking as any of her subject's sorrowful classics.



The Last Emperor (1987)

There's much to learn and admire in Bernardo Bertolucci's epic portrait of China's last emperor, using half a century of flashbacks to chart how a two-year-old Pu Yi was made ruler of half the world's population, only to later be imprisoned as a war criminal for ten years, ending up a humble gardener in the new Communist

People's Republic of China. As much a portrait of the country's transition as its ruler's, sometimes the spectacle overwhelms our sympathy, but never without a decent struggle.



Man on the Moon (1999)

Remarkable primarily for being inspired by the song of the same name – rather than the other way round – this is a relatively straight portrayal of chameleon comedian Andy Kaufman's oddball existence, played by a surprisingly restrained Jim Carrey. Few questions about the real Kaufman are ever answered, but it's engaging nonetheless.



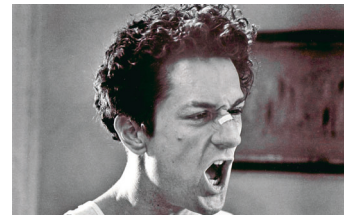
The Pianist (2002)

This startling epic saw controversial filmmaker Roman Polanski return to the ravaged world of his childhood, adapting the memoirs of Polish concert pianist, Wladyslaw Szpilman, which recount his survival of the holocaust.



Raging Bull (1980)

Often hailed as one of the greatest films ever, Martin Scorsese's epic adaptation of boxer Jake La Motta's autobiography is more than just an on-screen depiction of a washed-up athlete. It's the story of the director's own redemption, coaxed out of addictive malaise by Robert De Niro – who gained 27kg to play the lead role.



The Social Network (2010)

No one was more surprised than us when David Fincher turned the tale of a few socially outcast geeks sitting round on laptops into engaging cinema in this tale of courage, celebrity, betrayal and facebook.



Stoned (2005)

Rolling Stones guitarist Brian Jones, was found drowned in his swimming pool in 1969. This inventive British picture uses flashbacks to chronicle Jones' prophetic last days.

Jobs is in cinemas. Read our review on p57.



► **NEXT WEEK:** Luke Skywalker's lightsabre and a Von Trapp dress go under the hammer