

# 'Juno' delivers bundle of joy to audiences

BY LAURA PRATHER  
Staff Reporter

Along with bringing new life into the world, "Juno" brings new stars to Hollywood.

Ellen Page, who plays Juno MacGuff in what could be this season's top comedy, already has a nice résumé of works for a soon-to-be 21-year-old. But the Canadian's performance as a sarcastic, loving and pregnant teenager has put her at the top of the charts.

The movie starts out "Napoleon Dynamite"-esque with its cartoon intro, quirky text and bluegrass tunes. The audience meets Juno walking down the street, drinking a family-size carton of Sunny D. She walks into a convenience store, takes a pregnancy test (third time's a charm), and the puns begin. Witty phrases from the convenience clerk such as "fertile myrtle," "your eggo is prego" and "this is a doodle that can't be undid," along with the red plus sign all confirm Juno's suspicion she is pregnant.

And who better to play the father, Paulie Bleeker, than Michael Cera, known for his awkwardly hilarious performances in "Superbad" and TV's "Arrested Development."

Bleeker's dangerously short, gold running shorts, obsession with orange Tic-Tacs and shared love of music make him the perfect candidate for edgy and quick-witted Juno.

Once Juno learns what's cooking in the oven, she handles the situation maturely, despite bumps along the road. Juno initially plans on visiting Women Now to solve the problem, but once a former classmate informs her that her baby already has fingernails, she decides to keep it.

She and her best friend, Leah, find married couple Vanessa and Mark



Photos courtesy of Fox Searchlight Studios  
Ellen Page from "X-men" and Michael Cera from "Superbad" deal with a teenage pregnancy and the complications of the adoption process in this year's award-winning comedy. "Juno" has grossed \$51.6 million in the box office.

Loring (Jennifer Garner and Jason Bateman) who plan to adopt Juno's baby because they can't reproduce on their own.

Viewers can immediately notice the tension between the Loringas about the adoption. Vanessa, who has wanted nothing else in life but to be a mother, delights in Juno's updates on the baby.

Mark, on the other hand, hangs on his past experiences as a guitarist in a rock band. He and Juno bond almost immediately because of their love of music, cartoons and horror movies.

Dozens of blue surplines, catchy tunes and brilliant quips later, Juno finds her way to the hospital and experiences the miracle of life. Juno's

journey of pregnancy proves to be just as emotional as it is facetious.

Page isn't the only one stunning people with her breakout performance. Director Jason Reitman ("Thank You for Smoking") and writer Diablo Cody also have made their marks on audiences and caught the attention of film critics.

Cody's screenplay is genuinely entertaining and endearing, and she deserves her award for Breakthrough Screenwriter of the Year at the Hollywood Film Festival.

Fellow Canadian Reitman scored an incomparable cast, which also includes Allison Janney and J.K. Simmons who play Juno's stepmother and father.



## Movie Review

### "Juno"

Directed by Jason Reitman  
Fox Searchlight  
Released: Dec. 25

### Rating



# Sweeney Todd brings bloody brilliance

BY ALEX BOLES AND  
JESSICA RAPP  
Index Staff

Only director Tim Burton has the ability to turn horrified gasps into smiles.

The razors and cannibalism surging through Burton's adaptation of Stephen Sondheim's musical, "Sweeney Todd: The Demon Barber of Fleet Street," bring the film to first-class bloody brilliance.

The story follows barber-turned-butcher Sweeney Todd (Johnny Depp), whose actions are fueled by seeking revenge against the creepy Judge Turpin (Alan Rickman). After a 15-year wrongful sentence from the Judge, Todd, formerly Benjamin Barker, returns to London with the help of a young sailor, Anthony Hope (Jamie Campbell Bower).

Todd intends to rescue his daughter Johanna (Jayne Wisener), who Turpin adopted when her mother poisoned herself. He keeps Johanna locked in a second story bedroom without human interaction, intending to marry her. Before Turpin can win his daughter's blessing, Anthony spots Johanna at her window and vows to rescue her by stealing her in the night and running away with her.

When Todd stumbles back into the London scene, he finds a familiar place on Fleet Street, Mrs. Lovett's Meat Pie Shop owned

by Mrs. Lovett (Helena Bonham Carter). Lovett, recognizing Todd's pale, sunken face, rents the apartment above her shop to him.

While staying with Lovett, Todd finds that a twist on his old resources will allow him to eliminate the Judge and save his daughter. This sudden revelation unsurprisingly turns Todd into a cold-blooded killer.

Reunited with his silver shaving knives and promising the closest shave in London, Todd and Lovett go into a business together. He provides the meat for her pies, and they split the cash. The odd contrast between characters, costume and song gives Burton's film a quality that is easily comparable with his other movies, such as "Edward Scissorhands" and "The Nightmare Before Christmas." Depp's character in "Sweeney Todd" is startlingly similar to his former casting as Edward.

Yet Depp always brings something new to the screen, and this time, it was his voice that generates awe, achieving harmonious duets with his fellow cast members. Depp has not graced his audience with his singing voice since 1990s "Cry Baby" as Wade Walker.

Plenty of other well-known faces shower the screen with talent. A sprinkling of familiar "Harry Potter" cast members contribute to the daunting aura of the screenplay. Professor Snape and Judge Turpin are one in the same man and ac-

companied in his villainy is fellow "Harry Potter" character Peter Pettigrew, actor Timothy Spall as Beadle Bamford. Mrs. Lovett might be remembered for the same wickedness as her Harry Potter character Sirius's cousin Bellatrix Lestrange.

"Borat"'s Sacha Baron Cohen makes an unexpected entrance with his own sharpened scissors in his attempt to fool the town with his cutting talent.

He instills some hesitant laughter with his color-popping costume and acting that has a faint similarity to that hero from Kazakhstan. When he breaks into song, one can only chuckle at his daring attempt to bring a certain level of silliness to a serious situation.

By the climax of the movie, however, the actors lose any connection to former character ties, making their superb performances memorable in their own ways. In fact, the vengeful Depp and the crazed Bonham Carter will have Todd and Lovett stamped on their foreheads for a long time.

When filming the movie, Burton uses his familiar style, except that the frightening factor surges way past that of his other classics. The exaggerated gore reminds one of a bad "ER" cut but carefully balances with the creative jest found in the plot itself.

If only the dark romance in the film could find the harmony it deserves with a bit of lightheartedness. Burton masters this too with a memorable song found on the soundtrack, "Kiss Me."

Although some of the more repetitive and predictable choreogra-

## Movie Review

### "Sweeney Todd: Demon Barber of Fleet Street"

Directed by Tim Burton  
Paramount  
Released: Dec. 21

### Rating



phy fails to add to the intensity of the script, Burton filmed many of the shots creatively. Swirling camera effects and eye-opening angles not only take the audience into the scenes, but also leave it mesmerized.

According to PBS.org, the tale of Sweeney Todd, taken from Stephen Sondheim's 1979 Broadway musical, originated from a 19th century story out of a "penny dreadful," or what was known at the time as a British tabloid manual.

The story printed in the magazine differed from the major motion picture, but even that particular publication supposedly had roots that can be traced to actual crimes. However, whether any truth lurks behind the tale of Sweeney Todd still is unknown.

For those in the mood of a deliciously satisfying, scary film, this is the one to see. Sweeney Todd is for the fan of the meat pie and anyone else with good taste.

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