

LADY BIRD (2017)

- Released on November 22nd, 2017
- 1 Hour 34 minutes
- \$10,000,000 (estimated)
- Directed by Greta Gerwig
- Written by Greta Gerwig
- Scott Rudin Productions, Entertainment 360, IAC Films
- Rated R for language, sexual content, brief graphic nudity and teen partying

QUICK THOUGHTS

- Demetri Panos
- Marisa Serafini
- Phil Svitek

DEVELOPMENT

- “It did feel very special while we were making it, and it was really the people who made it. It was everyone from my P.A., Dana [Nelson], who was so wonderful and did the job of 10 people, to my favorite gaffer to Saoirse [Ronan] to my DP, Sam Levy, to Eli Bush, who is a producer. Every single person was really a storyteller and every single person really put not only their art into it, but their whole heart. So, it felt special while we were making it, but you just never know if people will connect with it or not. You try to make it as honestly as you can, and then you cross your fingers.”

WRITING (Greta Gerwig)

- By 2013, Gerwig had thrown all her ideas into a 350-page first draft. She then spent years whittling it down, slowly and deliberately.
- MOVIE TITLE: “There’s a Mother Goose nursery rhyme, “Lady bird, lady bird, fly away home.” ... I think that had lodged itself somewhere in my brain.” - Gerwig. “I had been writing all these other scenes and I couldn’t find exactly how it all fit together. I felt like I kept hitting a wall. And then I put everything aside and I wrote at the top the page, “Why won’t you call me Lady Bird? You promised that you would.”
- “I write and write and write. To me, it’s about taking things away. I read a lot out loud to myself. It’s almost a rhythmic thing, something will catch wrong, you go back and rewrite it. Writing takes a long time; it’s that process of knowing what I have on the page is what I want in the movie. The movie you see is pretty nearly how it read. I think about writing every single day. When I’m working on it and it’s not done, it’s bad. It’s humbling every day to be confronted with the thing that’s not written. It takes more courage than you would think. You have to let go of your critical mind.” - Gerwig
- Joan Didion Shaped the World of Greta Gerwig’s *Lady Bird*. Both *Lady Bird* and Gerwig cast themselves in junior Didion molds, artistic spirits who want to flee somewhere more famous—only to look back on the town they left with a warm, nostalgic lens. Like Didion, Gerwig eventually decamped to Manhattan, becoming part of the artistic scene. “It was the first time I experienced an artist’s eye looking at my home,” she said. “I had always thought art and writing had to be about things that were ‘important,’ and I was certain that my life was not at all important. But [Didion’s] writing, so beautiful and clear and specific, was about *my* world.” And *Lady Bird* is even more so.
- Mother/Daughter relationship: “I never really thought about [women’s fighting] being different until I had the script for the film and I was going around and I was talking to different financiers about putting money into the film and making it. And most of those people are men. And if they were raised with sisters or if they had daughters, they knew what it was. ... But if they didn’t, they had no idea that that was how women fought — and how they loved, too. I think it was kind of like they were getting to look into a world that they didn’t know existed.” - Gerwig
- “I try to get into a state where I’m allowing the characters to talk to me and talk to each other, because in the beginning of the writing process, I don’t know who they are yet. And this is the

most pleasurable part of writing, because they're telling me who they are and what they want and where they want to go. They'll often say things I had no idea they were going to say, and so much of the plot is built off of me consciously going through the dialogue that's jumping out at me. But the actual writing — the gathering of material — is a very mysterious process. You're sort of shuttling back and forth between something that feels quite unconscious and something that feels very deliberate." - Gerwig

STORY/TOPICS

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CAST:

SAOIRSE RONAN (Christine 'Lady Bird' McPherson)

- [Gerwig] met Ronan at Toronto in 2015. "She was there with *Brooklyn* and I was there with a film called *Maggie's Plan*. I had given her the script to read and she really loved it, and then we sat in her hotel room and read the whole thing out loud. She read all of Lady Bird's lines and I read everybody else's lines." As they read through the script, she knew Ronan was right. "With auditions, I almost listen more than I'm looking," she said. "It's like a musician playing the song correctly or even better, doing it better than you expected." - Gerwig
- "I was going to shoot in the spring, and I moved it to the fall for her. By the time I saw her that fall, it was a year later that we started shooting, so I had all this time to feed her little bits of information and give her things to read and songs to listen to." - Gerwig

TIMOTHEE CHALAMET (Kyle Scheible)

- Grew up in Hell's Kitchen, Manhattan.
- Won the Best Actor award at the New York Film Critics Circle Awards and to 'Lady Bird'

LAURIE METCALFE (Marion McPherson)

- "I don't know any woman who has a simple relationship with their mother or with their daughter," Gerwig says. "It has a tremendous amount of love — and a tremendous amount of angst."

LUCAS HEDGES (Danny O'Neill)

- Gave the 20-year-old Hedges an excuse to sing *Into the Woods*, and to have a fully fleshed-out arc with Ronan — whom he says he idolizes
- "**Giants in the Sky**" - "That was in the script. I'm a burgeoning musical-theater fan."
- Greta Gerwig says in the press notes that she approached you with the *Lady Bird* script, told [Hedges] to choose the role you wanted, and [he] chose Danny. "Well, the only two roles I could consider would be Danny and Kyle. I don't have enough confidence in myself to play that part, to play Kyle. I was like, if I do this I will make a fool out of myself, because no one's going to believe me. Also, I just connected more to the heart ..."
- "I connected to Danny so much. He's so earnest and loving and passionate and romantic. He dreams of going to Paris and France and being in a far-off land. That was my experience growing up; I always wanted to be from Europe. I got a chance to sing musical theater and have a romantic story line with Saoirse Ronan, who I think is one of the best." - Hedges
- "[Gerwig] made me a playlist for Danny and gave me movie recommendations and a book of poetry. She gave me all these things that were reminiscent of that time and place in her life." - Hedges

BEANIE FELDSTEIN (Julie Steffans)

- Younger sister of Jonah Hill
- "I love to be the best friend," "It's like my dream in life to be everybody's best friend."
- Working with Ronan "We felt like this gaggle of sisters that were creating this thing that really mattered to us." She desperately wanted to deliver for Gerwig, and described the joy of hearing the director "cackling" in the background during particularly funny scenes, like the one where

Lady Bird and Julie break into the communion wafers. “It really felt like we were doing something right.”

ODEYA RUSH (Jenna Walton)

- Ten years after moving from Israel to the United States and starting her career with modeling work and acting classes.
- “I’m a huge Greta fan,” says Rush. “Her writing is so smart. Each character has their own world.”
- “Every character feels like their own person, and I read it and I knew who Jenna was, how to play her, how to embody her. She’s dry and not over the top. Greta’s style is more natural.” On set, getting into Jenna’s character changed her own personality a bit. “I needed to be a little closed off to be Jenna’s narrow-minded self,” Rush explains. “Greta captured that in her writing, to be at that age and think you know everything already. Jenna’s very closed-minded.”

SYMBOLISM/TRIVIA/EASTER EGGS

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DIRECTING (Greta Gerwig)

- Co-wrote “Frances Ha” with Noah Baumbach, she met “Orlando” director Sally Potter at a party.
- Directing debut
- Sacramento native herself
- She went to Barnard, not film school, but she’s been writing and acting in films for 11 years.
- “When I finished the script for this movie, I had a moment where I thought, ‘I know a lot of great directors and I could give it to them and they’d take good care of it — make something that I would be proud of. But I just knew that if I didn’t do it, I would regret it forever, even if I made a less-great movie than they would have.’”
- “I try to do rehearsals and have as much hangout time as I can. It breaks the ice and allows everybody to get to know each other, and I can watch everyone interact, which helps a lot.” - Gerwig

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PRODUCTION (Sam Levy)

- “The very first person I brought on was Sam Levy, who was the DP, and we had about a year to work on it before we went into pre-production.... No one was getting paid, but he was happy to spend his free time with me and really build a shared language. But then, you give it to the production designer, the costume designer, your actors and your editor, and it feels like this ever-widening circle of people that you give it to.” - Gerwig
- “Sam and I have worked together on *Mistress America* and *Frances Ha*, and I love his eye. We started talking about the film, probably a year before we started pre-production. Because we both live in New York, we’d get together and look at movies and photographs and paintings, and we spent hours storyboarding and setting the look and creating a shared visual language.” - Gerwig

EDITING/VFX (Nick Houy)

- “The final cut is very, very close to the shooting script. Something like 95% of the script is exactly what’s in the cut, and in the same order.” - Gerwig

SOUND/MUSIC (Jon Brion)

- *Hard Eight, Magnolia, and Punch-Drunk Love, I Heart Huckabees,*
- Soundtrack features an original score by GRAMMY®-nominated singer-songwriter/composer **Jon Brion** (*Magnolia, Eternal Sunshine of the Spotless Mind*)
- “Jon Brion is my all-time favorite musician/composer/producer, and working with him was a dream come true. It is an old-fashioned movie score with melody, which is exactly what I had hoped for. I didn’t want the score to feel like background or ambience, I wanted it to be very present and structured, in the foreground of the storytelling.” - Gerwig
- In New Jersey he formed a band out of high school.

- He played with artists like Aimee Mann and The Wallflowers before becoming a producer—and sometimes songwriter—for Fiona Apple, Rufus Wainwright, and Kanye West (among others).

PROMOTION

- Ronan appeared on SNL with Greta Gerwig.
<http://ew.com/tv/2017/12/03/snl-greta-gerwig-saoirse-ronan-digital-short/>

BOX OFFICE

- Total Lifetime Grosses (As of December 3rd): \$17,089,441
- Domestic: \$17,089,441
 - + Foreign: \$X
 - = Worldwide: \$X
- Domestic Summary
 - Limited Opening Weekend: \$364,437
 - (#26 rank, 4 theaters, \$91,109 average)
 - % of Total Gross: %
- > View All Weekends
 - Widest Release: 1,194 theaters
 - In Release: 5 days / 0.7 weeks
- Since it was released on Nov. 3, the film has made more than \$10 million with only having played in under 800 theaters nationwide.
- Amassing the highest per screen average of any film this year for its opening weekend.

RECEPTION

- IMDB: 8.5 / 10
- Cinemascore: N/A
- RT: 100% / Audience 80%
- *Lady Bird* is one of only six films to earn a perfect score so far this year alongside *Faces Places*, *Jane*, *The Happiest Day in the Life of Olli Mäki*, *Truman*, and *Bright Lights*.
- Greta Gerwig's coming-of-age story, *Lady Bird*, has officially become the best-reviewed movie ever on Rotten Tomatoes, beating out the beloved classic *Toy Story 2*.
- "It's been incredibly moving having people relate to it," she said. "And more than anything, it's women who come up to me and tell me about their daughters. They say, 'I've been that daughter, and I've been that mother, and I understand.' Oh God, mothers are all trying so hard. It's what's so difficult about being a mother: It's an endless series of knowing your daughter doesn't get it until that moment's gone." - Gerwig.
- 'Lady Bird' Named Best Picture by New York Film Critics Circle. "Lady Bird" was named best picture and also netted lead actress Saoirse Ronan her second NYFCC prize in three years (she was previously honored in 2015 for "Brooklyn").

SEQUEL/LEGACY