

## THE GREATEST SHOWMAN (2017)

- Released on December 20th, 2017
- 1 Hours 45 minutes
- \$84,000,000 (estimated)
- Directed by Michael Gracey
- Written by Jenny Bicks, Bill Condon
- Chernin Entertainment, TSG Entertainment, Twentieth Century Fox
- Rated PG for thematic elements including a brawl

## QUICK THOUGHTS

- Marisa Serafini - **I.FREAKING.LOVED.THIS.FILM.**
- Phil Svitek

## DEVELOPMENT

- Project has been in development since 2009 with Jackman attached to play the showman
- "I wanted this to feel like a classic MGM musical, of a time gone by where it had a technicolour feel and the music wasn't just one or two good songs." - Gracey
- Laurence Mark and Bill Condon worked on the 2009 Academy Awards, watching Hugh Jackman host, an idea struck them. "I thought, 'Wow, this guy's the greatest showman on earth'—and that's when I went to P.T. Barnum in my head," Mark said in a statement
- In August 2011, Michael Gracey was chosen to direct
- In 2013, Fox hired lyricists Pasek and Paul to write the songs
- According to Jackman, the seven year development process was, in part, due to studios being unwilling to take a risk on an original musical

## WRITING (Jenny Bicks, Bill Condon)

- Scripted by Michael Arndt.
- Jenny Bicks (*Sex and the City*) wrote the original draft of *Greatest Showman*.
- Bill Condon was signed on to rewrite 20th Century Fox's contemporary musical. Film that Condon wrote was the 2006 musical *Dreamgirls*
- Condon wrote The 81st Annual Academy Awards, which was hosted by Hugh Jackman
- Condon also wrote *Dreamgirls*, *Chicago*, and directed *Beauty And The Beast*.

## STORY/TOPICS

### CAST:

- Among Barnum's "freaks", the film portrays two Asian conjoined twins. These are the real Chang and Eng Bunker, two brothers born in Siam, modern day Thailand, whose origin was the basis of the term "siamese twins". Chang and Eng retired after their life in Barnum's circus to North Carolina, got married and had 11 and 10 children respectively. However, they were broke after the American Civil War and went on touring again. They both died on 1874, Cheng from a brain blood clot and Feng from heart failure -or shock, the sources differ- merely three hours later
- The spectacular opening and closing numbers included additional and real life circus performers — fire jumpers, tight rope walkers, more aerialists

## **HUGH JACKMAN** (Phineus Taylor Barnum aka P.T. Barnum)

- **HISTORICAL ACCURACIES:**
  - In real life there was no Philip Carlyle, so when he went bankrupt - which he did multiple times - and lost everything, it was actually Tom Thumb who gave him the money to restart the circus and became his partner.
- Went through 10 weeks of rehearsals for the dancing numbers in the film. Rehearsed every single day for 10 hours a day for the role. "Our brilliant choreographer would not accept any complaining from me. I have done a lot of dancing, but this was the most challenging."
- "There are two things - one is that he was a deeply flawed character, and I genuinely think he put those people together just to make money. From all that I've read he was definitely getting these people together because he knew that the public would be fascinated and pay good money to see them. But in the film, I also think that there is something to be said for, over the course of time, realising that he didn't just take those people who were invisible to society and turn them into stars, he made them feel love for the first time in their lives and inadvertently created this family of circus performers." - Gracey
- Had help from acclaimed vocal coach Liz Caplan, who he credited with 'really [making him] fall in love with singing'
- "Vocally, sometimes you have those 'I can do anything' days, and the next day you're at 80% so on those days when you're feeling great, we would just pop over to the studio and record," Jackman
- "There's a couple of bits where I sing notes that I've never sung. I couldn't have done that live."
- 'I have never loved singing more,' he told the publication, adding, 'I find it really difficult to listen to myself sing. I'll be listening to the Broadway channel sometimes and they'll announce me and I immediately turn it off. But with this, I can actually listen to myself.'
- Hugh Jackman read some three dozen books on PT Barnum to prepare for the title role

## **MICHELLE WILLIAMS** (Charity)

- In 2014 she played Sally Bowles in Cabaret.
- "I have just found that it makes me happy. I find that singing and dancing is a direct path to joy. And I just wanted more of it, that's why I wanted to make the film. Singing is natural for me. I don't know if I'm the greatest in the world at it, but I just love it!"
- "I loved the story; it's an amazing musical and it meant I could sing and dance and see the wonderful Hugh Jackman all the time. I love working with him! Also, I really wanted to have a good time."
- "I needed a break from doing intense dramatic roles and this was the perfect project. Another great thing about it was that we shot the film in Brooklyn (New York), so I was 10 minutes from home. It was so great to be making a film that I will be able to take my daughter's Girl Scout troop to see!"
- Working with Hugh: "We just had a ball working with each other. We both love to sing and dance and we've been friends for a long time and so the whole time we were pinching ourselves and reminding ourselves that this is our job and that we got to make this film together."

## **ZAC EFRON** (Phillip Carlyle)

- “I’d met him years before and we’d stayed friends, so he was one of the first people I asked. He came on board very early on and was incredibly supportive of the film.” - Gracey
- Going back to Musical Genre: "It's not like riding a bike, you can't just remember instantly and pick up where you left off," he said. "These dances were leveled up for sure. The one with Hugh 'The Other Side,' I think we got it on take 56 or something like that. It was a long day at work. But it was nice when we finally got it."
- "Michael Gracey is someone I've always wanted to work with," Efron said. "I thought if there was any way I could add value or help him accomplish this movie then I wanted to. I heard Hugh was in it and that wasn't a bad thing either. Those are two of the greatest showman ever."
- When I first heard [Rewrite The Stars], I lit up," says the enthusiastic Efron, flashing that million-dollar smile. "I could envision us accomplishing that. And that was just me, driving alone in my car. I fell in love with it immediately."
- Michael Gracey was like, 'Do you want to hang out with Zendaya and see what she's like before you guys start shooting?'
- "I was nervous: Can I dance, still? Can I keep up with choreography? This was gonna be a level up from anything I'd ever done before. People keep thinking I'm a dancer. I'm not a dancer! I do the same two-step with a little twist."
- Efron studied classic dance legends like Gene Kelly and Fred Astaire. "Those guys are, I think, the bar. Who's ever danced better than those guys?"

#### **REBECCA FERGUSON (Jenny Lind)**

- **I LOVE HER. SHE'S AMAZING**
- **JENNY LIND HISTORY:**
  - September 1, 1850, 30,000 onlookers packed the waterfront around Canal Street in New York City, clamoring to catch a glimpse of the Swedish opera singer Jenny Lind as she disembarked from the steamship *Atlantic* to begin an American tour.
  - Jenny Lind tour was so successful, taking in the modern equivalent of \$21 million over a nine-month engagement and spawning an American mania for all things Lind: concert tickets, women's hats, opera glasses, paper dolls, sheet music, even Lind-branded chewing tobacco.
  - Born out of wedlock and into a dismal childhood, she was admitted to the Royal Theatre in Stockholm as a voice student at the age of nine, and by her tween years was a renowned professional singer. Lind's angelic voice and devotion to philanthropy charmed anyone with ears to hear, and when she retired from the opera circuit in 1849 at the age of 28, her final performance was attended by no less than Queen Victoria.
  - She retired from the opera circuit in 1849 at the age of 28, her final performance was attended by no less than Queen Victoria.
  - Barnum lured Lind from retirement to tour America, promising an unprecedented \$1,000 per night for up to 150 nights of performances—with expenses and musical assistants of Lind's choice included.
  - She made grown men cry solely through the purity of her voice, and impressed Americans particularly with her lack of pretension, donating thousands of dollars to local charities along her tour itinerary. (The New York Fire Department was so

enchanted with Lind and her generous bequests that they presented her with a gold box with the department insignia as a token.)

- After nine solid months of performances, Lind invoked a contractual right to end the tour early.
- Trained for 1 ½ months with Swedish vocal coach
- Has a background in music, having attended Adolf Fredrik's Music School in Stockholm, which puts a strong focus on choral music.
- Actually sang every take live on stage with playback in her ear. She wanted to actually sing so she could feel accomplished at the end of filming even if they didn't use her voice.
- Collaborated with Loren Allred. Ferguson asked Allred to break down her American so it sounded more English. Ferguson listened to Allred's intonations and the way she would breathe and how she used her voice so when she would sing it would be a collaboration of both Allred's voice and Ferguson's acting.
- "Never Enough" sung by Loren Allred- Allred is best known for getting to the final of the third season of The Voice in the USA. She shared her excitement about being involved in the film on Twitter, saying she was "so elated to announce my involvement in this incredible film as the voice of Jenny Lind, played by the incomparable Rebecca Ferguson."
- "There is a difference in being able to sing a tune and hold it and do a fairly good job... [and to] play the world's best opera singer. If I would F-U-C-K that up, I would be embarrassed. So I thought, 'Loren, you just go for it, girl!'"
- "Growing up in Sweden I knew [Jenny Lind] principally because her portrait is on our 50-krona banknote. I mean I did know she was a world-famous opera star but I didn't know the details of her life. I certainly didn't know about her time with P.T. Barnum."
- "I got unconditionally great encouragement and support from [Hugh]. I'm an actress, not a singer, and she [Jenny Lind] was at that time the most famous singer in the world. So I've got to act that. I've got to make that song ["Never Enough"] my song. When we were rehearsing Hugh was always there, cheering me on, fortifying me. And Benj and Justin [songwriters Benj Pasek and Justin Paul] were always on set, so if I had any questions or thoughts about interpretation they were readily at hand."
- "At first I had a tiny bit of stage fright, standing alone on stage in front of an audience of 400 extras. And, yes, knowing BAM's history, knowing that such monumentally talented actresses such as [Greta] Garbo and [Ingrid] Bergman had performed onstage at the same theater ... it was inspiring and exhilarating."

## ZENDAYA

- She and her mother met with director Michael Gracey (they were having a mother-daughter day and Gracey invited her mother to come along, earning points with the actress); he played them some of the project's infectious music composed and written by Benj Pasek and Justin Paul.
- "he said she bugged her agents, "trying to get in the room with the director" again. Then she was invited to what she calls a "chemistry read" with Efron.
- "I was like, 'Would it be cool if you could send me the song so I could record it?' I have, like, a studio set up in my garage." "I wanted to show them what I could do. So I recorded my own version of my half of the song. I was like," she says, pitch rising nervously, " 'You guys like it?' "

- Working with Zac: “Pretty much the first day, they hooked us up together and we’re in harnesses. We’re literally holding each other up,” she says. “That was the ice breaker.
- Gracey said: ‘You should start working out. I want to use your stunt double as little as possible. I want you to start trapeze training, I want to see some change in your arms, I want you to look like a trapeze artist.’ “So I was like, ‘That’s great. I don’t work out.’ I’m not that girl. Look, I’m lucky, I have a good metabolism. I’m not this guy,” the willowy, 5-foot-10 actress nods at Efron, who waves it off, biceps bulging as he does. “It’s not my world. But it became my world.”
- “Our number was impossible to rehearse all the way through. With all the rigs and all the setups and relying on weights — there are so many elements, we can’t run it from beginning to end.”
- “So we were all over the place ... running into each other and there were uncomfortable harnesses and bruises, but it was totally worth it.” “They had to catch us multiple times, flying through the air. Things were crazy,” says Zendaya, both of them smiling at the memory. “We’d sit there and say, ‘This is our life right now.’ ”
- “It was a nice blend of being able to be on the ground for a little bit and being able to be in the air. We have our ground team and our air team.”
- Zendaya did all of her own trapeze stunts in the film

#### **KEALA SETTLE** (Lettie Lutz)

- Started as an R&B singer, but made her way to Broadway in many notable roles including *Priscilla*, *Queen of the Desert* and *Hands on a Hardbody* — the latter earning her a Tony Award nomination. She also played the role of Madame Thenardier in the revival of *Les Misérables* and was in the original cast of the Broadway musical adaptation of the Adrienne Shelly-directed film *Waitress*.
- 2014- called as a performer to workshop regarding *The Greatest Show on Earth*. Needed a choir of 10 people. Kept getting called back for the workshops as the songs changed, writing changed, lyrics changed. At the 3rd workshop, “This Is Me” - got emotional and sang the whole song.
- First major role in a feature film.
- Researched a lady in London who had Polycystic ovarian, syndrome that causes hormone imbalances, acne, and some severe cases of over reproduction of hair.
- “This Is Me” - “Singing that song scared the living daylights out of me because of how well it was written and where it was within the sequence of the film and what I knew it would mean for not only those that were involved on set but for the rest of the world once they saw it.”
- “It still really is hard for me to sing this song because I relate to it every day,” said Settle, 42. “I wake up in the morning and I look in a mirror and I go, ‘Is this really all I got? Is this all the universe has given me?’”
- The eldest of five children, she grew up in Hawaii with her Polynesian, New Zealand-born mother, Susanne, and her British-born father, David. “Their life was very hard because they were an interracial couple,” Settle said. “They had to grow from that and then they had us biracial kids, and we had to grow from that, trying to figure out where we belonged.”
- Settle says she kept on “hustling” throughout her time in “Les Mis” in 2014, which is how she stumbled on Hugh Jackman’s recent passion project. At that point, “The Greatest Showman” was being presented as a series of read-throughs in New York, and a casting agency asked Settle to be a part of the workshopping. When “This Is Me” was introduced

in the third and final read-through, the production team proposed a nervous Settle perform it for the group.

- “I ended up booking the job. I didn’t believe them when they told me that until two months later when they provided me with a contract,” she laughed.
- Settle admits she struggled throughout the film’s production, in part due to the loss of her mother two years ago. Susanne was the inspiration behind every performance Settle did up until that point. All she ever wanted to do was make her mom proud. “So when she was gone, I had to reach deep down and figure out why I was going to continue on,” Settle recounted through tears. “I said, ‘Hugh, my mom is gone and I have no idea how to navigate this anymore.’ And he was like, ‘It’s all right, babe. We got you.’ And he wasn’t lying.”
- “Every day and every night on that set, we could trust everyone and fall on everyone because of how much of a passion project this was for [Hugh] and where it had to come from to reach where we needed to reach, and where we still need to reach.”
- “We actually had all of Janet [Jackson]’s dancers, all of Pink’s dancers, all of Beyoncé’s dancers and all of Gaga’s dancers backing *me* up in ‘This Is Me.’ So when we did that first rehearsal, I cried [to them], ‘You are making my dreams come true right now.’”

### **SYMBOLISM/TRIVIA/EASTER EGGS**

- At one point, when the circus is struggling, Barnum’s girls suggest him to get something fantastic, like “a unicorn or a mermaid”. In reality, Barnum famously bought and exhibited the “Fidji Mermaid”, a monkey carcass sewn to the body of a fish
- The large arched art nouveau stained glass window that is shown prominently above the entrance to the refurbished American Museum building is a replica of the large window above the main entrance to Flinders Street Railway Station, Melbourne Australia
- The headline of first newspaper review describes Barnum’s show as a “Circus of Humbug”. When he’s given his top hat before the next show, someone had put a gold crown around the top hat which says “Prince Humbug” or “Prince of Humbug”. The words gets mentioned another couple of times in the movie: when introducing Jenny Lind on stage in New York for the first time, Barnum says that people might dismiss the performance as “Barnum Humbug,” and when he comes home part way through her tour, he tells his wife that he has come home because he misses her and their girls. She tells him that sounds “like humbug”

### **DIRECTING (Michael Gracey)**

- Feature length directorial debut of Michael Gracey
- The Aussie got his start working in visual effects but developed a knack for directing after working on music video “Karma” by 1200 Techniques.
- I worked on an advertisement where a Hollywood star was doing a commercial just for Japan. The star was Hugh Jackman. Since I’m Australian, they just assumed I knew him, and I didn’t correct them. On the first day of rehearsals, Hugh walks in, he sees me, puts his arms out and shouts, “Michael!” As we’re hugging he whispers in my ear, “Yeah, mate, they think I know you, so just go along with it.” So we pretended like we were best friends the whole shoot, and we had so much fun. When Hugh said, “Let’s make a movie,” I wasn’t even that excited, and to this day he reminds me.
- “[Hugh] sent me a script for the first draft of “The Greatest Showman” and said he thought it could be really special.” “The script’s not right. But I love the idea of playing P.T. Barnum, because it is the birth of show business.’ And I was like, ‘Yeah. OK. That

sounds amazing.' So I read the script, and I kept going back to it and saying, 'Look, if you're going to put The Greatest Showman above your head on the poster, then you should really play to your strengths.' And I grew up watching him in Australia doing musicals. So I said, 'It should really be a musical.' And that really naïve remark cost me seven years of my life.

- I'm so excited. It took so many years to make, that you kind of forget the joy of watching others experience it for the first time. Just in the last few weeks, seeing what people take away from the film, sitting in screenings where they don't even know who I am, listening to their honest appraisal afterwards. It's been incredible. To me the ultimate thing is if people leave the cinema humming a song from the film - that to me is real success
- Hugh and myself felt really strongly about creating an original musical with all original songs, and that one decision meant years and years and years of work trying to find the right people. When we found Benj Pasek and Justin Paul, at the time they had only done an off-Broadway show which were not the credentials that anyone felt confident about.

## **PRODUCTION** (Seamus McGarvey)

- Rehearsals on the film began in October 2016 in New York City, and principal photography began on November 22, 2016
- Filmed mostly at the Steiner Studios in Brooklyn Navy Yard, and various other scenes at BAM Harvey Theatre.
- Recording studio on set to capture the actors at their best.
- "Taking a very direct visual reference, myself and the incredible productional designer and cinematographer, would often talk about the colour palette."- Gracey
- New York rooftop- Painted an enormous 360-degree traditional backdrop.
- Exteriors flying over New York City or Barnum walks up the fire escape. They're all miniatures. Built all the models in the computer and 3D printed the city and the buildings before having scenics paint them.
- McGarvey used Panavision Sphero 65s lenses. "They have more personality to them. "They have beautiful aberrations that I love," he says. "They're not quirky like a set of vintage lenses, but they have distinct attributes. We were making a period film, and the Spheros don't have the scientific feel that I've experienced with large format. I love how the skin tone reads, and there was a certain amount of falloff at the edges which was perfect. They just felt period."
- "At first, as the story is set up, we would keep things more structured and static – innocent, I suppose," says McGarvey, "knowing we were going to progress to a more carnivalesque, vaudevillian approach. We played a lot in close, and when the shift comes, we also ramp up from a more diminished color palette to a more saturated look."
- Tiffen Glimmerglass bloomed the highlights, helping to sell tungsten filaments as pre-electric gas and flame sources.
- "Also, as we were shooting 2.40, I could get edge to edge without cropping in any way, which you have to with other systems," says McGarvey.
- "For this film, we needed a format and lenses that give a sense of scale, as well as good portraiture, displaying both scenarios at their best. I couldn't be happier with the Spheros."
- In December 2017, it was reported that James Mangold, who had worked with Jackman on several projects (including 2017's Logan), had been brought in to oversee the film's reshoots and post-production. This was due to the studio's concern that Gracey, a first-time director, was overwhelmed with the scope of the film and struggling with the

pressure of an \$84 million budget. Mangold was eventually given an executive producer credit

#### **EDITING/VFX** (Tom Cross, Robert Duffy, Joe Hutshing)

- During the scene where Barnum (Hugh Jackman) tries to persuade Carlyle (Zac Efron) to join his circus, Barnum says that Carlyle has a flair for show business. The scene originally ran longer, with Carlyle remarking that he doesn't know what 'show business' means, to which Barnum responds that it is because he just invented it. This line featured prominently in trailer, but was cut from the finished movie
- Transitions:
  - A Million Dreams- Rooftop to bedroom
  - Caroline- Pointe Dancing in house to on stage
  - Tightrope- Curtain dancing, Window to Carriage window
  - Carlyle- The Greatest Show- running out with coat tails, into a red jacket

#### **WARDROBE** (Ellen Mirojnick)

- Many of the costumes used in the ensemble circus scenes at the beginning and end of the film were borrowed from Feld Entertainment, the current owners of Ringling Brothers and Barnum & Bailey Circus, and were used in productions of "The Greatest Show on Earth"
- "The period detail from 1845 to 1870 isn't 100% accurate. There is no hoop skirt. No corseted tops. Why? Because we suspended disbelief. We made it romantic. We made it classic. And we made it beautiful."
- Given a tall order to create up to 800 costumes
- "The first thing that I did was listen to the music and watch the taping of the rehearsal choreography," she explained. "When you see that and hear it, your imagination just flies without a question. But I knew that it had to be a mix of shapes and colors that would absolutely elevate each one of those characters in their story, so that you recognize [who they are] first hand."
- "I designed 321 principal costumes over a 16-week shoot that would dress a huge range of characters, including a circus audience of 400; 22 acrobat performers; children, who grew during production; hundreds of tattered townspeople; and a large array of royal guards. What's more, the characters included a three-legged man, a 7-foot-5-inch giant, a 4-foot-2 Napoleon, and a ringmaster with 25 complete suit ensembles."
- Over 60,000 Swarovski Xirius crystals were used. "I am really a crystal freak," says Ellen Mirojnick. "I love the light that they create. Anytime I can use crystal, I just lunge, truthfully. I am really a crystal freak. I love it because it sparkles, it creates light, it lifts everything — the mood, your face looks better, everything looks better with sparkles on it. Swarovski is so sophisticated in the way it's cut and how it's imagined together."
- inspiration ranging from 19th-century costumes to John Galliano for Dior, Mirojnick created a wardrobe that exudes fantasy as much as it sparkles
- Used a total of 60,000 Swarovski crystals throughout.
- "I looked to many different things, whether it be authentic costumes from 1845 going all the way until the turn of the century to John Galliano for John Galliano and then for Dior. I looked to Las Vegas, I looked to glamorous and romantic jazz films of the 20th century."
- "I learned early on that black was not an option because you don't put that in a musical...There were moderations of jewel tone and romantic colors and rich colors so



that whether it be blues or pinks — we ran the spectrum of reds, blues, pinks, purples, greens — all of it felt in part a bit bespoke.”

- PT BARNUM costume-
  - “What was most important creating this was that you could feel the costume around his body, that it moved with his body. We found fabulous red lush silken wool that reflected the light. He dances throughout these shows, so it’s really important that you feel the light encircling his body, giving him the freedom to move.”
  - “Luscious cashmere coats, rich velvet suits and perfect silk ascots.”
  - All of his ringmaster ensembles were made in New York by an amazing man I’ve worked with 25 years — Barak Stribling.
  - Custom-made buttons, gold bullion trim and embroidered with the B monogram.
- JENNY LIND Costume-
  - Designer deconstructed the skirt of a spectacular silk satin Zuhair Murad wedding dress.
  - “She was always angelic and always performed in white.” Jenny’s gowns were custom-built and reworked contemporary pieces,
  - Off-the-stage, the “temptress and seductress” wears color, but in rich, jewel tones, including a gold-embellished blue dress by Marchesa that she wears for a cozy train car ride. “There’s no softness in her coloration,” continued Mirojnick, comparing Jenny’s palette to Charity’s comforting pastels. “I used a purple on her that I just find to be gorgeous ... but threatening.”
- ANNE WHEELER Costume-
  - 14,000 hand-embellished crystals shine vividly on aerialist Anne Wheeler’s (Zendaya) lilac stretch-satin leotard
  - “We found a gorgeous orchid-purple rip satin that was quite beautiful on her skin, and we took a fabulous Swarovski crystal that has an orange-y, purple-y, graphite color. We started with the pink wig, went to the crystals and found the orchid stretch satin and her accessories, meaning her gloves and the tights — all of that is accented with Swarovski crystal. And some fly boots, which were gold leather.”
  - “Fabulous, fabulous, fabulous ruby red satin trunks trimmed with antique lace and vintage buttons and vintage detail.”
- THE ODDITIES Costumes-
  - Bearded Lady: Mirojnick first dressed her in a floral waterfall silk taffeta married with silk tulle number. Mirojnick first dressed her in a floral waterfall silk taffeta married with silk tulle number. “When Michael first saw the dress, he was not a fan of prints and unhappy,” she recalls. “We had to shoot in two days, so I turned the dress inside out.” The result was a sculpted magnificent two-tone dress that is a showstopper.

#### **SOUND/MUSIC** (Benj Pasek & Justin Paul- writers, John Debney & Joseph Trapanese- Score)

- Oscar-winning “La La Land” lyricists
- Received a Tony nomination for their work on *A Christmas Story*
- Soundtrack album currently at No. 1 in 60 countries
- “A Million Dreams,” was the song they used as an audition sample for director Michael Gracey.

- “This Is Me” has already been nominated Critics’ Choice award, and is on the Oscars shortlist for Best Original Song.
- No. 1 album on the Billboard 200
- No. 1 album on iTunes in 65 countries
- The soundtrack grew in such demand as the movie’s popularity soared around Christmas that it was temporarily on backorder.
- “Remember that we were in production before *La La Land* had come out and had its great reception at the box office, but original musicals are so reliant on the music.”- Gracey
- “I knew that when I met them and I heard the first songs that they wrote for the film, those two were the perfect people to write something that is a nod to musical theatre but is also very heavily influenced by contemporary pop music. We wanted to sit somewhere in the middle. Some songs, because they’re narrative songs, tend to be a little more musical theatre because you’re telling a story within the song, but others could afford to be a little more pop, lyrically.”- Gracey
- “Every song in the movie we wrote in a competitive way, because we were never hired as the songwriters for the movie,” Pasek says. “We had to submit a song for each song moment.” The duo drew on their strong theatrical knowledge of great composers, such as Stephen Sondheim, and their love for Disney animated musicals of their youth, as well as for Broadway musicals like *Rent*, and even for current hitmakers. “It was anything from listening to Jerry Herman for dramatic work, but also thinking what Imagine Dragons would do here,” Pasek says, “[We were] trying to combine those worlds and how they fit.”
- “We were rewriting all of those songs again and again and again before we even had a greenlit film. There was no guarantee that their work was ever going to see the light of day, so I owe them everything because there would be no film if it wasn’t for the work that they did. Their belief in me to continue working on it even when, at times people had told us to stop working on it because it wasn’t going to happen.”- Gracey
- “I’d put in placeholders where I thought the songs should go. It’s not genius, for me you sing when words no longer suffice. At an emotional low or high you break into song. And then Benj and Justin took those briefs - ‘here will be a song that’ll take you from this place in Barnum’s life all the way up to him as an adult, after doing A, B and C’. They would take those briefs and look at the lead in, and where it finished, and would then create a song to sit in that place.”- Gracey

## PROMOTION

- Oprah Winfrey named the soundtrack to her influential “Favorite Things” list
  - Amazon wrapped all packages with tape promoting the film, resulting in millions of impressions
  - On June 28, 2017, 20th Century Fox released the first international trailer to promote the film
  - On November 13, 2017, the second trailer was released
- On December 17, 2017, Fox televised a live performance of "Come Alive" from Warner Bros. Studios during its live musical special *A Christmas Story Live!* (which was based on fellow Pasek and Paul work *A Christmas Story: The Musical*). The number featured the film's stars and a cast of 150 dancers

## BOX OFFICE

- Total Lifetime Grosses (As of January 17th): \$101,377,346
- Opening Weekend: \$8,805,843
- Domestic: 101,377,346
  - + Foreign: \$103,087,650
  - = Worldwide: \$204,464,996
- Domestic Summary
  - (#4 rank, 3,006 theaters, \$2,929 average)
  - % of Total Gross: 9.0%
- > View All Weekends
  - Widest Release: 3,342 theaters
  - In Release: 5 days / 0.7 weeks
  - Third-biggest live-action original musical ever behind *Enchanted* (\$127m in 2007) and *La La Land* (\$151m last in 2016/2017).
  - Already earned 11x its \$8.8m Fri-Sun opening weekend and 7.25x its Wed-Sun \$13.4m debut haul.
  - Weekend-to-weekend increase in revenue (76.3%) marked the largest ever for a film playing in over 3,000 US cinemas, and the fourth largest ever.

## RECEPTION

- On review aggregator Rotten Tomatoes, the film has an approval rating of 55% based on 191 reviews, and an average rating of 6/10
- The website's critical consensus reads, "*The Greatest Showman* tries hard to dazzle the audience with a Barnum-style sense of wonder -- but at the expense of its complex subject's far more intriguing real-life story."
- On Metacritic, the film has a weighted average score of 48 out of 100, based on 43 critics, indicating "mixed or average reviews"
- Audiences polled by CinemaScore gave the film an average grade of "A"
- Owen Gleiberman of *Variety* gave the film a positive review, writing, "The Greatest Showman is a concoction, the kind of film where all the pieces click into place, yet at an hour and 45 minutes it flies by, and the link it draws between P.T. Barnum and the spirit of today is more than hype."
- Richard Roeper of *Chicago Sun-Times* gave the film 3/4 stars, saying, "With all that corn and cheese and old-timey sentiment, *The Greatest Showman* ends up scoring some very timely social arguments. P.T. Barnum himself would have approved the dramatic sleight of hand."
- Steve Persall of *Tampa Bay Times* gave the film an 'A', and said, "The Greatest Showman is the feel-good movie the holiday season needs," while William Bibbiani of *IGN* gave *The Greatest Showman* a score of 7.9/10, and called the film, "wildly entertaining."

## GOLDEN GLOBE NOMINATIONS:

- Golden Globe Award for Best Actor – Motion Picture Musical or Comedy
- Golden Globe Award for Best Motion Picture – Musical or Comedy
- Costume Designers Guild Award for Best Costume Design - Period Film
- **WON- Best Original Song - Motion Picture, Benj Pasek, Justin Paul - For song "This is Me"**

## SEQUEL/LEGACY

