

Film Review: Celebration of Creation in Warm ‘Saving Mr. Banks’

Submitted by [PatrickMcD](#) [1] on December 13, 2013 - 11:28am

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CHICAGO – The world of creation, and the imagination behind it, gets an honorable and elegantly performed treatment in the fascinating “Saving Mr. Banks.” What seems like a “making of” film about the legendary “Mary Poppins,” becomes much more rich in symbolism and consideration.



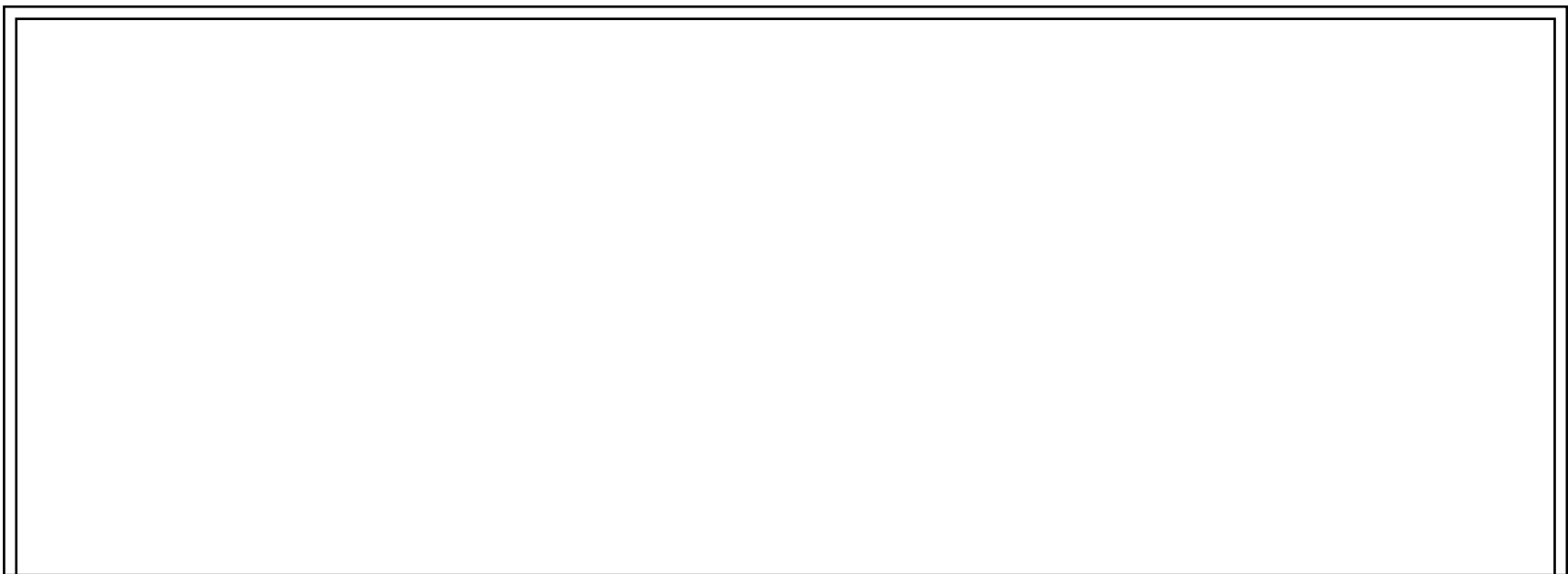
The story of the meeting between “Mary Poppins” author P.L. Travers and Walt Disney – played with precise grandfatherly charm by Tom Hanks – is really a tale of how individuals have to overcome their circumstances, yet are haunted by them still. In Travers case, it is a harsh childhood on the vast plains of Australia, and in Disney’s formative years it is the scratch-for-survival lower middle class at the dawn of the 20th Century Midwest. Both situations informed their creative souls, tempered by the realities of their own ambitions and the ambitions of the world that absorbed their creativity. The film celebrates it all in a based-on-truth fantasy about denial, loneliness, determination and yes, magic.

P.L Travers (Emma Thompson), the London-based author of the “Mary Poppins” series of books, is broke. Her agent reminds her that Walt Disney (Tom Hanks) has had an offer on the table for 20 years to convert her book into a Disney film. With almost bitter resignation, the author takes the big plane over the pond in 1961 and arrives in Mad-Men era Los Angeles, determined to have final script approval over her vision of Mary Poppins.

Meanwhile, Walt’s merry band of moviemakers, “Poppins” screenwriter Don DeGradi (Bradley Whitford), and the song composing team of the Sherman Brothers – Robert (B.J. Novak) and Richard (Jason Schwartzman) – are charged with the task of convincing the uptight Travers that adding tunes and a lighter touch will make Mary Poppins a character for the ages. As Travers revolts, she also flashes back to herself as a child (Anna Rose Buckley) in Australia, and an alcoholic father (Colin Farrell) that has informed her spirit forever.

‘Saving Mr. Banks’ has a limited release on December 13th, and opens everywhere on December 20th. See local listings for theaters and show times. Featuring Tom Hanks, Emma Thompson, Paul Giamatti, Colin Farrell, Ruth Wilson, Jason Schwartzman, B.J. Novak, Rachel Griffiths and Anna Rose Buckley. Screenplay by Kelly Marcel and Sue Smith. Directed by John Lee Hancock. Rated “PG-13”

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Walt Disney (Tom Hanks) and P.L. Travers (Emma Thompson) Visit Disneyland in ‘Saving Mr. Banks’

Photo credit: Walt Disney Pictures



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