

## Despite Cast, 'Sing' Fails to Strike a Chord

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Rating: **1.5/5.0**

CHICAGO – Singing is something that everyone can do. I tend to do it while in the shower or sitting in traffic. I've been told I have the singing voice of an angel... of death. Okay, I'm exaggerating, but the point is that while everyone can sing, not everyone should. The same extends to creating films like "Sing," which is loud but seldom harmonious.



Matthew McConaughey plays the eccentric Buster Keating in 'Sing'

*Photo credit: Universal Pictures*

This territory has been well-trodden, especially in the last decade. Musicals that lack the creativity to make original songs specific to the film's plot and emotional points. These films don't always turn into karaoke clusterfucks. Sometimes the plot perfectly mirrors the emotion of whatever top 40 pop song is being used as exposition. "Sing" suffers from the disconnect created by these kinds of songs. Being limited to contemporary-ish music, you have to make whatever songs are available work, even if the fit isn't perfect. Doing this continuously within a movie creates tiny fractures every time a song doesn't perfectly align with a situation. If this happens enough, the fractures turn into fissures that can end up collapsing the foundation the film was built on.

This might sound like a daunting task, but "Sing" showed it had promise during one dramatic scene. One of the most genuine moments in the film is when punk-turned-pop porcupine Ash (voiced by Scarlett Johansson) performs the only piece of original music in the entire film. By the time we are shown the true potential of "Sing" it is close to the end of the final act, and our interest is long gone. Everything about this film screams conventionality, not offering a single note of originality.





Seth MacFarlane plays Rat-Pack singer Mike in 'Sing'

*Photo credit: Universal Pictures*

Anyone could have directed this film, which is a shame, considering Garth Jennings' signature quirky and unconventional style. Every aspect of Sing is out of chord with any of Jennings' previous work, including "Son of Rambow." As the writer, Jennings had the opportunity to elevate this film from the predictable animated pop piece we see at least once a year, to something with a voice all its own. This is where the introduction of original music would have breathed life into an otherwise monotonous cash grab.

Sing casts a combination of actors and professional singers, which the film never quite harmonizes well together. The true stand outs in the film end up being Scarlett Johansson, Taron Egerton, Seth MacFarlane, and Nick Kroll, who didn't even sing so much as spoke words loudly. The rest of the cast tried to work with what they were given, delivering decent voicework yet underwhelming vocals. The clichéd characterizations completely limited the emotional range of these two-dimensional characters. Every emotional climax fell flat and felt forced.



Matthew McConaughey in 'Sing'

*Photo credit: Universal Pictures*

Sing hits more than a few sour notes, but what can you expect when the film has a conductor that is working outside of his wheelhouse. With nothing original to offer, no amount of A-list talent or emotionally manipulative use of The Beatles, (Golden Slumbers) could have made you feel anything but bored. Like that radio station that plays the same songs every half hour, Sing's repetition of the film genre's greatest hits are bargain bin at best.

*"Sing" opens everywhere on December 21st. Featuring Matthew McConaughey, Scarlett Johansson, Seth MacFarlane, Taron Egerton, Reese Witherspoon, Tori Kelly, Jennifer Hudson and Nick Kroll. Screenplay by Garth Jennings. Directed by Garth Jennings. Rated "PG"*

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