

Luca (2021 film)

Luca is a 2021 American animated coming-of-age fantasy film produced by Walt Disney Pictures and Pixar Animation Studios and distributed by Walt Disney Studios Motion Pictures. The film was directed by Enrico Casarosa in his feature directorial debut, produced by Andrea Warren and written by Jesse Andrews and Mike Jones from a story by Casarosa, Andrews, and Simon Stephenson. It stars the voices of Jacob Tremblay, Jack Dylan Grazer, Emma Berman, Saverio Raimondo, Marco Barricelli, Maya Rudolph, Jim Gaffigan, Peter Sohn, Lorenzo Crisci, Marina Massironi, and Sandy Martin in supporting roles.

Set on the Italian Riviera in 1959, the film centers on Luca Paguro (Tremblay), a young sea monster boy with the ability to assume human form while on land, who explores the town of Portorosso with his new best friends, Alberto Scorfano (Grazer) and Giulia Marcovaldo (Berman), experiencing a life-changing summer adventure.

Luca draws inspiration from Casarosa's childhood in Genoa, Italy. Several Pixar artists were sent to the Italian Riviera gathering research from Italian culture and environment to create Portorosso, the primary setting. The sea monsters, a "metaphor for feeling different", were loosely based on old Italian regional myths and folklore.^{[3][4]} As with the short film *La Luna* (2011), the design and animation were inspired by hand-drawn and stop motion works and Hayao Miyazaki's style. Casarosa described the result as a film that "pays homage to Federico Fellini and other classic Italian filmmakers, with a dash of Miyazaki in the mix too".^[5] Development on *Luca* lasted for five years, with production being done remotely during the COVID-19 pandemic. Dan Romer composed the film's musical score.

Luca premiered at the Aquarium of Genoa on June 13, 2021,^[6] and was released direct-to-streaming on Disney+ in the United States on June 18, 2021 in response to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic. It was released in theaters in countries without the streaming service, and given a simultaneous one-week theatrical run at Hollywood's El Capitan Theatre, from 18 to 24 June 2021.^[7] It was theatrically released in the United States on March 22, 2024.^[8]

Luca



Release poster

Directed by	<u>Enrico Casarosa</u>
Screenplay by	<u>Jesse Andrews</u> <u>Mike Jones</u>
Story by	<u>Enrico Casarosa</u> <u>Jesse Andrews</u> <u>Simon Stephenson</u>
Produced by	<u>Andrea Warren</u>
Starring	<u>Jacob Tremblay</u> <u>Jack Dylan Grazer</u> <u>Emma Berman</u> <u>Saverio Raimondo</u> <u>Maya Rudolph</u> <u>Marco Barricelli</u> <u>Jim Gaffigan</u>

The film received generally positive reviews from critics, and was the most-viewed streaming film of 2021, with over 10.6 billion minutes watched.^{[9][10][11]} It was nominated for Best Animated Feature Film at the 79th Golden Globe Awards and the 94th Academy Awards. A short film sequel, *Ciao Alberto*, was released on Disney+ on November 12, 2021.^[12]

Plot

In the summer circa 1959,^[13] timid sea monster child Luca Paguro herds goatfish off the coast of the Italian town of Portorosso. One day, Luca meets Alberto Scorfano, a fellow sea monster kid living alone in an abandoned lighthouse. Alberto demonstrates how sea monsters can turn into humans, as long as they stay dry. Luca begins sneaking out to meet Alberto against his parents' order to stay away from the surface, fearing that he might be hunted by humans. The boys quickly become friends, wishing to own a Vespa and travel around the world.

Upon discovering Luca's actions, his parents decide to send him to live in the deep with his uncle Ugo. In retaliation, Luca runs away from home and hides in Portorosso with Alberto. The boys run afoul of Ercole Visconti, the local bully and five-time champion of the Portorosso Cup, a triathlon of swimming, pasta-eating, and biking. When Ercole tries to soak Luca in a fountain, Giulia Marcovaldo, a young girl, stops him. In hopes of winning the money needed for a Vespa, the boys team up with Giulia for the triathlon.

Giulia invites them to stay at her house and introduces her fisherman father, Massimo, who is prejudiced against sea monsters. Meanwhile, Luca's parents infiltrate the town to find their son. Giulia and Luca bond over their love of learning, to Alberto's ire. When Luca shows interest in attending school, Alberto intentionally reveals his own sea monster form to Giulia to prevent it. Unwilling to give himself up, Luca feigns shock at the transformation, and a betrayed Alberto flees as Ercole's gang arrives to hunt him. Heartbroken, Alberto trashes everything in his hideout. Shortly after, Giulia finds out that Luca is a sea monster as well, and sends him away for his safety.

Luca heads to Alberto's hiding place in an effort to reconcile with him, and learns that Alberto was abandoned by his father long ago. Though Alberto declines to participate in the triathlon, Luca promises to win the Vespa to rebuild their friendship. The triathlon begins with Luca and Giulia competing separately. Luca successfully completes the swimming race in a diving suit and the pasta-eating contest without revealing himself, but rain begins during the bike race. Alberto shows up to give Luca an umbrella, but Ercole knocks it away, exposing Alberto's sea monster form and shocking the spectators. Luca rescues Alberto, revealing his own true form, and the two bicycle towards the finish.

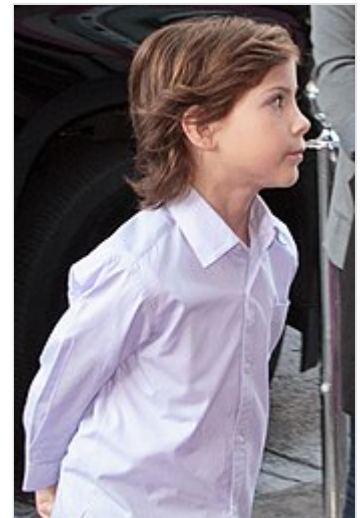
Cinematography	David Juan Bianchi Kim White
Edited by	Catherine Apple Jason Hudak
Music by	<u>Dan Romer</u>
Production companies	<u>Walt Disney Pictures</u> <u>Pixar Animation Studios</u>
Distributed by	<u>Walt Disney Studios</u> <u>Motion Pictures</u>
Release dates	June 13, 2021 (<u>Aquarium of Genoa</u>) June 18, 2021 (United States; <u>Disney+</u>) March 22, 2024 (United States; theatrical) April 5, 2024 (United Kingdom; theatrical)
Running time	95 minutes
Country	United States
Language	English
Box office	\$51.1 million ^{[1][2]}

Giulia deliberately collides with Ercole's bike to stop him from harpooning Luca and Alberto, who unintentionally cross the finish line before turning back to help Giulia. When Ercole and the other townsfolk confront the boys, Massimo stands up for them and insists that they have won. Luca is reunited with his family, and the humans accept the sea monsters, except Ercole, who is thrown into a fountain by his much-abused henchmen.

Luca and Alberto buy an old Vespa, but Alberto sells it to get a train ticket for Luca, allowing him to go to school in Genoa with Giulia. Luca's family, Massimo, and Alberto see Luca and Giulia off at the train station, where they all promise to stay in touch. During the credits, Luca meets Giulia's mother and attends school with Giulia, while Massimo adopts Alberto as his son.

Voice cast

- Jacob Tremblay as Luca Paguro, a 12-year-old^[a] Italian boy and Alberto's best friend who is curious about the world above the sea.^{[14][15][16]} He lives in the waters next to the Italian coast, in a farm where he herds goatfish with his parents.^[17] Although he has been warned his whole life that the human world is a dangerous place, he longs for something beyond his quiet farm life, so when Alberto takes him to explore Portorosso, his eyes open up to a whole world of possibilities.^[17] He and all other sea monsters take on human form when they are dry. Paguro means "hermit crab" in Italian.
- Jack Dylan Grazer as Alberto Scorfano, a 14-year-old Italian boy and Luca's best friend who is enthusiastic to explore the human world.^{[14][15]} He is a free-spirited, expressive and gregarious boy who is "all about having fun".^[17] Despite his outgoing and free-spirited nature, he secretly hates living alone, as it is revealed that his only parent figure abandoned him in an island tower, leading him to feel lonely and insecure. Scorfano means "redfish" or "scorpionfish" in Italian.
- Emma Berman as Giulia Marcovaldo, a 13-year-old Italian girl who is an outcast in Portorosso and befriends Luca and Alberto.^{[14][15]} She is an "outgoing and charming adventurer with a love of books and learning".^[17] To prepare for the role, Berman did some research by visiting a local Italian restaurant in San Francisco and met with an Italian waiter working there, who taught her how to speak Italian through some Zoom sessions.^[18]
- Saverio Raimondo as Ercole Visconti, an 18-year-old^[b] who is a cowardly bully.^[19] A repeat champion of the town's Portorosso Cup race despite many people pointing out he is too old for it, he is "a Vespa-owning, pompadoured blowhard who believes that everyone loves him and enjoys watching him eat sandwiches".^[17] He has two followers, Ciccio and Guido, who are ready to do his bidding.^[17] Voicing him, Raimondo was partly inspired by Giuseppe Anatrelli's performance as Luciano Calboni in the *Fantozzi* film series.^[20] Raimondo reprised his role in the Italian-language dubbing of the movie.^{[21][22]}
- Maya Rudolph as Daniela Paguro, a sea monster, Grandma Paguro's daughter, Lorenzo's wife, and Luca's mother who is determined to keep her son safe.^{[15][17]}
- Marco Barricelli as Massimo Marcovaldo, an Italian fisherman, cook and Giulia's father.^[15] He is an imposing and tattooed man born with only one arm. Despite Luca and Alberto being intimidated by his big size and skill with a knife, Massimo has a soft heart, especially for his daughter.^[17]



Jacob Tremblay voiced the title character

- Jim Gaffigan as Lorenzo Paguro, a sea monster, Ugo's brother, Daniela's husband, and Luca's father,^[15] a "well-meaning, but sometimes distracted dad who's very passionate about raising his prize-winning crabs";^[17] Gaffigan based his performance on his own parenting skills.^[23]
- Peter Sohn and Lorenzo Crisci as Ciccio and Guido, Ercole's cronies.
- Marina Massironi as Mrs. Marsigliese, a lady who runs the Portorosso Cup race and its sponsor.^[24] Massironi reprised her role in the Italian-language dubbing of the movie.^{[21][22]}
- Sandy Martin as Grandma Paguro, a sea monster who is Daniela's mother and Luca's grandmother.^[25] Grandma knows that breaking some rules is a part of growing up and she is a little too happy to look the other way if Luca's rebellious side should emerge.^[17]
- Sacha Baron Cohen as Ugo Paguro, an anglerfish-like sea monster, Luca's uncle, and Lorenzo's brother who lives in the depths of the ocean and has a see-through torso.^[26]

Giacomo Gianniotti and Gino La Monica voice Giacomo and Tommaso respectively, two local fishermen (they reprised their roles in the Italian-language dubbing of the movie).^{[25][21]} Elisa Gabrielli and Mimi Maynard play Concetta and Pinuccia Aragosta, two elderly women who are later revealed to be sea monsters. Francesca Fanti voices a female police officer that gets annoyed with Ercole's antics. Jonathan Nichols voices Don Eugenio, a local priest (voiced by Gino D'Acampo in the British version).^[27] Jim Pirri voices Mr. Branzino, a sea monster who is the Paguro family's neighbor. Casarosa voices an angry fisherman and a Scopa player.

Production

Development

On July 30, 2020, Pixar announced a new film titled *Luca* as an "Italy-set coming-of-age story", with Enrico Casarosa directing and Andrea Warren producing.^[28] It is the feature-length directorial debut of Casarosa, who has previously directed the 2011 Academy Award-nominated short film *La Luna*.^[29] It is the first Pixar film to be made almost exclusively at crew members' homes because of the closing of Pixar campus in Emeryville, California, due to the COVID-19 pandemic.^[30] However, Casarosa stated it took five years to complete the development of *Luca*.^[31]

Casarosa has described *Luca* as a "deeply personal story", being inspired by his childhood in Genoa, Italy, with the title character based on himself and Alberto on his best friend Alberto Surace (who voices a fisherman in the Italian dub version).^{[32][33]} Casarosa has stated: "my summers were spent on beaches ... I met my best friend when I was 11. I was really shy and I found this troublemaker of a kid who had a completely different life. I wanted to make a movie about those kinds of friendships that help you grow up."^[5]

He also declared that the film's core is a celebration of friendship:

Childhood friendships often set the course of who we want to become, and it is those bonds that are at the heart of our story in *Luca*. So, in addition to the beauty and charm of the Italian seaside, our film will feature an unforgettable summer adventure that will fundamentally change Luca.^[34]



Director Enrico Casarosa stated that the film was inspired by his own childhood.

According to Casarosa, the result is a film that "pays homage to Federico Fellini and other classic Italian filmmakers, with a dash of Miyazaki in the mix too".^[5] In addition of Fellini and Miyazaki's works, the films *La Terra Trema* (1948), *Stromboli* (1950) and *Stand by Me* (1986) were also cited as source of inspiration,^[35] and Aardman Animations and Wes Anderson's stop-motion films influenced Casarosa's artistic sensibilities.^[36]

During earlier drafts of the film, Casarosa stated that the chief creative officer of Pixar at the time, John Lasseter, pushed for the film to be bigger scaled which included a climax where the town of Portorosso was threatened by a giant kraken. Casarosa stated that Lasseter "had great instincts but it was a little more dogmatic". After Lasseter departed Pixar in 2018, Casarosa was allowed and encouraged to pursue the smaller intimate film he wanted to make as well as experiment with the animation by Lasseter's replacement and the film's executive producer, Pete Docter.^[37] The approach of using more personable stories for the film due to Docter's oversight shifted the direction that the studio took with both storytelling and film production.^[38]

To prepare for the film, Pixar sent several of the film's artists to the Italian Riviera for a research trip, during which they took photos of the area's landscape and peoples.^[39] The film is rooted in the 50s and 60s, that Casarosa has described as a "golden age that feels timeless", with the music and designs inspired from that period "to capture a little bit of this timelessness of summer."^[32]

The sea monsters featured in the film were pulled from Italian myths and regional folklore,^[19] including the Tellaro octopus and local "little legends about sea dragons, creatures that either come to help or get into trouble".^{[40][3]} Casarosa said: "I always found the old sea monsters on maps really fascinating. The mystery of the sea was so represented in the weird creatures that we used to draw. And that area has a lot of wonderful myths".^[19] Production designer Daniela Strijleva stated: "We were really inspired by old sea maps. Some design details that carried through to the final film are things like the shapes of the fins of the sea monsters, how decorative their scales are, and the curves of their tails."^[41] Casarosa also stated that the sea monster is a "metaphor for feeling different".^[3]

Disney filed for copyright registry of the names "*Portorosso*" and "*Isola del mare*" ("Sea island"). In the final film, Luca's surname is Paguro (Italian for "Hermit crab"), while Portorosso is the name of the village in which the film is set.

Animation and design

To create the setting of the movie, Portorosso, the studio sent several of the film's artists to the Italian Riviera for a research trip, including on the *Cinque Terre*, during which they took photos of the area's landscape and peoples. During the research trip, Deanna Marsigliese, the film's art director, noted that they were watched by curious onlookers and chose to incorporate that into the character designs. Isola del mare is inspired by the Italian island Tino.^[42]

According to production designer Daniela Strijleva, it took a year to design Luca because they wanted to get to know him: "Enrico always wanted Luca to be a bit of an introvert and



Pixar's artists embarked on research trips to the Italian Riviera to prepare the setting of the film (Vernazza pictured).

someone who was curious, but it took us a bit longer to figure out that Luca is a dreamer. He has a strong imagination and a really evolved inner life. That's when the character came to life for me."^[17] A clay figure of sea monster Luca was sculpted to assist with the design process for the character.^[39]

Casarosa described the characters' transformation scenes as "a big effort" due to the many iterations done. He also stated that another big effort was finding a different look: "So, you're using the same tools roughly and you're not completely reinventing, but you're trying to bring some warmth, some texture, some imperfection. The computer naturally kind of wants to be a little bit realistic and perfect. So, for me, it was like, why don't we bring some painterly vibes to our pictures? How do we bring texture so that it's a little more imperfect? And watercolor paper. I love to draw and I love to see the hand of the artist showing through and being a little bit expressive – in the world, because we were also wanting to take people to [see] Italy in this wonderfully enhanced and stylized way, but also in performances and the characters, wanting to make them feel a little bit handmade".^[32]

Animation supervisor Mike Venturini stated: "Enrico, as a director and as an artist, was inspired in his youth largely by Miyazaki's film library, starting with one of his first projects ... *Future Boy Conan*. That was one of Enrico's favorite things as a kid. So, initially, we watched a lot of episodes of that show. And they use a multi-limb style; it's boys being silly with a really broad physicality. He really liked that and hoped we could be influenced by that in some way. Then we kind of expanded our universe into the rest of Miyazaki's film library, which a lot of the animators on the show were already familiar with. So, on a larger feature film scale, we were looking at what were some of Miyazaki's characteristics. That's what inspired us to try things." In addition of Miyazaki's works, Casarosa stated that Aardman and Anderson's stop-motion movies also influenced his artistic sensibilities: "Some of that ends up in my drawings, that sketchy and expressive style. We wanted to bring that to the film because it felt like this is a kid's world. This is a playful world. And it felt true to the story to go in that direction. I love the immersion of 3D, but I sometimes I feel it can go towards coldness. So, I wanted to bring the warmth of imperfection. That's why some of the silly drawings made us laugh when we started boarding them and then put them on a screen."^[36]

Casarosa and the team began testing new animation concepts, hoping to bring playful silliness to the characters by taking away some of the typically large amount of detail. Areas of immediate focus were using a more 2D pose style, wider mouths with rounded, rather than angled corners, and multi-limb motions that brought a sillier feel to character movement. Referring to the multi-limb motion, Casarosa said: "It's an old-fashion cartoon technique in some ways ... It came out of the drawings, the essence of someone running extremely fast. We wanted to use the multi-limb technique in areas of the film where the characters were doing extreme physicality, where it would add to the personality of the silliness of the moment. There were only so many chances to use it. I wish there were more. But it was so much fun to use it when we could."^[36]

Writing

On July 30, 2020, Jones announced that he would co-write the screenplay with Andrews, and that he was proud of it.^[43]

It is the first Pixar film to involve Andrews, while Jones had previously co-written *Soul* (2020) and is also credited as a Senior Story and Creative Artist at the studio.^[44]

Jones stated: "To force a writing partnership is not an easy thing. Jesse and I ended up having a really great meeting of the minds about what we really wanted to say with this movie. Jesse had been on it for two years before me. He had really put in the time. This is about the greatest summer in these two boys lives and Jesse's voice with both of those boys was just so wonderful and hilarious and special and emotional. I felt in many ways that I'm just helping Jesse 'plus' that by trying to kind of apply a little bit more of story foundation."^[45]

Casting

On February 25, 2021, with the release of the teaser trailer and poster, Tremblay, Grazer, Berman, Rudolph, Barricelli, Raimondo (*it*) and Gaffigan were announced as part of the cast.^[19] Martin and Gianniotti were announced on April 28 after the official trailer and poster were released.^[25]

Tremblay voices the title character; Casarosa stated that working with him was "such a pleasure", and "I love how earnest and innocent he is naturally. And he's playful and he's not afraid to try stuff so it was so much fun to improvise with him ... he's actually one of the few actors we had time to work with before the pandemic, so there it was so much fun."^[32] According to Tremblay: "[Luca] really wants to explore the world and I can really relate to that, especially now. I really want to get back out there and just learn about different cultures, just like Luca. He really wants to go to this town in Italy and learn about their culture and become part of it."^[46]



Jack Dylan Grazer
voices Alberto Scorfano.

Casarosa stated that Grazer, who voiced Alberto, brings "a natural confidence and vulnerability" to the character, "who's a free-spirited teen sea monster with unbridled enthusiasm for the human world." Giulia, an "outsider, misfit girl", is voiced by newcomer Berman. Rudolph and Gaffigan, playing Daniela and Lorenzo, did get the chance to improvise, with Casarosa highlighting the depth and warmth they bring to the roles: "She's a stern mother. She's a difficult and very controlling mother, but there's this other warmth to her that balances it."^[46]

Luca's supporting cast includes actual Italian actors: Raimondo voices Ercole; Barricelli, who has a "booming voice", voices Massimo;^{[19][46]} Gianniotti voices Giacomo;^[25] Lorenzo Crisci voices Guido; Massironi voices Mrs. Marsigliese;^[24] Gino La Monica voices Tommaso; and Francesca Fanti voices a cop.

Raimondo was chosen by Casarosa after seeing his Netflix stand-up comedy show *Saverio Raimondo: Il satiro parlante*. Raimondo compared Ercole to the character Odd Henderson from the short story *The Thanksgiving Visitor*, and voicing him he was inspired by Giuseppe Anatrelli's performance as Luciano Calboni from the *Fantozzi* film series.^[47]

Tremblay stated that the relationship between Luca and Alberto "is gonna bring back a lot of memories when people watch this and I'm hoping that when people watch this, they'll be able to forget about COVID [...] It's so cool I get to be part of someone else's childhood. I think especially now the story is really special

because, for me, I haven't really been able to see my friends because of COVID, of course, and this movie is all about friendship. So, when people see it in theaters, I hope they'll be able to remember hanging out with friends during summer vacation and just having a blast."^{[19][46]}

Themes and inspirations

Casarosa stated that the movie is a celebration of friendship, and "a love letter to the summers of our youth – those formative years when you're finding yourself",^[40] inspired by his childhood in Genoa. Casarosa based the title character on himself, while Alberto is based on his best friend, Alberto Surace, to whom the film is dedicated and who also voices a fisherman in the Italian dub.^[32] Casarosa stated: "My best friend Alberto was a bit of a troublemaker, [while] I was very timid and had a bit of a sheltered life — we couldn't have been more different ... Alberto pushed me out of my comfort zone, and pushed me off many cliffs, metaphorically and not. I probably would not be here if I didn't learn to chase my dreams from him. It's these types of deep friendships that I wanted to talk about in *Luca*, and that is what's at the heart of this film."^[40]

The sea monsters, based on old Italian myths and regional folklore, were defined by Casarosa as a "metaphor for feeling different",^[3] explaining: "We were also a bit of 'outsiders', so it felt right to use sea monsters to express the idea that we felt a little different and not cool as kids". Casarosa stated: "I always found the old sea monsters on maps really fascinating. The mystery of the sea was so represented in the weird creatures that we used to draw. And that area has a lot of wonderful myths".^[19] Producer Andrea Warren expanded: "We always liked the idea that the metaphor of being a sea monster can apply to so many different things. There is a theme of openness, showing oneself and self-acceptance, as well as community acceptance. Confronting the idea that there's more to sea monsters than they realized. You know that they've only seen it through one perspective, one lens, and so I think that that's a wonderful theme in the film, which is that those ideas weren't right and that there's more to learn." Casarosa agreed: "We hope that 'sea monster' could be a metaphor for all [manners] of feeling different — like being a teen or even pre-teen — any moment where you feel odd. It felt like a wonderful way to talk about that and having to accept ourselves first, whatever way we feel different."^[40]

Some have seen Luca and Alberto hiding their true sea monster identities as an allegory for people who are members of the LGBTQ+ community, feeling as though they need to hide their true selves in order to be accepted.^[48] Casarosa said this was unintentional and that his original vision for the film was to explore the time in a child's life before romance,^[49] while stating "but it is a kind of love, right? There's a lot of hugging and it's physical and my experience as a straight man certainly wasn't that."^[50] He has welcomed the interpretation after the film's release, also stating: "While I identify with pronouns he/him and I am a straight man, the themes of diversity, acceptance and inclusion in our movie are dear to my heart".^[51]

Casarosa has stated that some people have interpreted the story as being a metaphor for refugees and immigrants as well. While he stated that this was unintentional too, he was welcome to all interpretations: "We were aware making the movie that this was a wonderful journey of owning your own identity, and coming out with it – whichever that identity is. I thought that everyone would bring their own identity to it."^[52]

Casarosa later stated that the film was intended to be a metaphor for race and while romance was only briefly discussed, it was never meant to be a focal point to the story; "some people seem to get mad that I'm not saying yes or no, but I feel like, well, this is a movie about being open to any difference."^[50]

Music

On April 1, 2021, Dan Romer was revealed to be the film's composer.^[53] Romer influenced Italian and folk-pop music genre from the 1950s and 1960s, while scoring for the film, and a wide range of instruments were used while recording the score.^[54] It was composed during July 2020 and recorded mid-March 2021, adhering to strict safety guidelines during the COVID-19 pandemic restrictions.^[55] The film features songs by Mina, Edoardo Bennato, Gianni Morandi, Rita Pavone and Quartetto Cetra, and excerpts from operas by Giacomo Puccini and Gioachino Rossini.^{[56][57]} The soundtrack album was released by Walt Disney Records on June 18, 2021.^[57]

Marketing

In November 2020, some concept art of the film and the clay figure of sea monster Luca were shown in the second episode of *Inside Pixar*.^[39] In December 2020, an early look to the film was screened at Disney Investor Day, and the clips and some screenshots were later leaked online.^[58] On January 18, 2021, the first official image from the film was released by *Empire*.^[59] On January 19, a promotional still was released on the cover of Italian magazine *Il Venerdì di Repubblica*, featuring Luca, Alberto, and Giulia on a Vespa in one of the scenic backdrops from the film.^[60]



Advertisement for the film on a Caravaggio train in Manarola

A series of books based on the film was published on May 14, 2021.^[61] Funko produced a line of Funko Pops based on the characters of the film.^[62] A line of action figures and toy packs by Mattel was released on July 1, 2021.^[63] In June 2021, Trenitalia unveiled their *Luca*-themed livery for a Caravaggio train.^[64]

To promote the film's release, McDonald's launched its promotional campaign by including one of eight bathtub toys free with the purchase of a Happy Meal.^[65]

A month after the release of the film, the world builder video game *Disney Magic Kingdoms* included a limited time "*Luca* Event", including Luca, Alberto, Giulia, Ercole and Machiavelli as playable characters, in addition to attractions based on locations of the film.^[66]

Theme park attractions

A new dining area themed to *Luca* opened at the Pizzeria Bella Notte restaurant in Fantasyland at Disneyland Paris. Luca and Alberto appear as meetable characters in the parks.^[67]

Release

Theatrical and streaming

Luca had its premiere on June 13, 2021, in Italy at the Aquarium of Genoa, with a three-day run by the non-profit organization MediCinema to raise funds for the Istituto Giannina Gaslini and other entities in the Ligurian territory.^[6] The film was originally set to be theatrically released in the United States on June 18, 2021, by Walt Disney Studios Motion Pictures.^[34] However, on March 23, 2021, Disney announced the cancellation of the film's theatrical release, and it instead was released worldwide on Disney+ in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, on the same date.^[68] The film also played a one-week theatrical engagement at Hollywood's El Capitan Theatre from June 18–24, 2021.^[69] In international markets where Disney+ is not available, it was released theatrically.^[68] On December 5, 2023, it was announced that *Luca*, as well as *Soul* (2020) and *Turning Red* (2022), would be released in theaters in the United States throughout early 2024, with *Luca* being released on March 22, 2024, accompanied by the short film *For the Birds*.^{[70][c]}

Home media

Following an announcement on July 1, 2021, Walt Disney Studios Home Entertainment released *Luca* on Ultra HD Blu-ray, Blu-ray, DVD and Digital on August 3, 2021, in the United States, and August 23, 2021, in the United Kingdom.^[71]

Reception

Audience viewership

According to Nielsen ratings, following its opening weekend, *Luca* topped all original movies in its first days on streaming, with 1.573 billion minutes of viewing time.^[72] Nielsen reported that the movie topped the weekly streaming Top 10 list for the June 14–20 week, and ranking at No. 2 on the overall streaming rankings after the TV series *Manifest* on Netflix.^[72] The film continued to play well in subsequent weeks, logging 1.15 billion minutes of viewership between July 21–27 (equal to about 1.2 million total watches), the second-most for an original film behind *The Tomorrow War*.^[73] *Luca* was the most-watched streaming film of 2021, with over 10.6 billion minutes viewed.^[9]

Box office

By December 2021, the film had grossed \$51.1 million worldwide,^[2] with its largest markets being China (\$14 million), Russia (\$8.2 million), Poland (\$3.6 million), Hong Kong (\$3.6 million), South Korea (\$3 million), the United Arab Emirates (\$2.1 million), and Romania (\$1.02 million) in its international release^[1] and United States (\$1.3 million), Mexico (\$307,884), Australia (\$63,292) and Spain (\$34,474) in the 2024 re-release.^[74]

Critical response

On the review aggregator website Rotten Tomatoes, the film holds an approval rating of 91% based on 304 reviews, with an average rating of 7.3/10. The website's critics consensus reads, "Slight but suffused with infectious joy, the beguiling *Luca* proves Pixar can play it safe while still charming audiences of all ages."^[75] Metacritic, which uses a weighted average, assigned the film a score of 71 out of 100 based on 52 critics, indicating "generally favorable reviews".^[76]

Alonso Duralde of the TheWrap wrote: "*Luca* is sweet and affecting, capturing the bond that strangers can build over a summer, and how that friendship can endure. And like its shape-shifting protagonists, it's got plenty going on beneath the surface."^[77] From The Hollywood Reporter, David Rooney said that "the real magic of *Luca* is its visuals. The character designs are appealing both in the marine world and on land, and the richness of the settings in both realms is a constant source of pleasure. The play of light on the gloriously blue water's surface is almost photorealistic at times, while a sunset spreading its orange glow over rocks on the shoreline makes you yearn to be there."^[78]

Charlie Ridgely, writing for ComicBook.com praised the film for its uniqueness, feeling that it highly deviated from Pixar's usual narrative formula and clichés but it didn't make it "lesser" than other of the company's classics like Toy Story and Up, highlighting the animation, the design of the Italian Riviera, the score and the story.^[79]

Conversely, Phil De Semlyen, writing for *Time Out*, branded the film a "letdown", writing "Charming but slight, *Luca* definitely isn't Pixar firing on all cylinders. The studio's trademark daring, pin sharp sight gags, and big ideas are missing from a fishy coming-of-age yarn that's a little damp around the edges."^[80]

Accolades

Award	Date of ceremony	Category	Recipient(s)	Result	Ref.
<u>Academy Awards</u>	<u>March 27, 2022</u>	<u>Best Animated Feature</u>	<u>Enrico Casarosa</u> , <u>Andrea Warren</u>	Nominated	^[81]
<u>American Cinema Editors Awards</u>	<u>March 5, 2022</u>	<u>Best Edited Animated Feature Film</u>	<u>Catherine Apple</u> , <u>Jason Hudak</u>	Nominated	^[82] ^[83]
<u>ADG Excellence in Production Design Awards</u>	<u>March 5, 2022</u>	<u>Excellence in Production Design for an Animated Film</u>	<u>Daniela Strijleva</u>	Nominated	^[84]
<u>Alliance of Women Film Journalists</u>	<u>January 25, 2022</u>	<u>Best Animated Film</u>	<i>Luca</i>	Nominated	^[85]
		<u>Best Animated Female</u>	<u>Emma Berman</u>	Nominated	
<u>Annie Awards</u>	<u>March 12, 2022</u>	<u>Best Animated Feature</u>	<i>Luca</i>	Nominated	^[86]
		<u>Best Character Animation – Feature</u>	<u>Tarun Lak</u>	Nominated	
		<u>Best Character Design – Feature</u>	<u>Deanna Marsigliese</u>	Nominated	
		<u>Best Direction – Feature</u>	<u>Enrico Casarosa</u>	Nominated	
		<u>Best Music – Feature</u>	<u>Dan Romer</u>	Nominated	
		<u>Best Voice Acting – Feature</u>	<u>Jack Dylan Grazer</u>	Nominated	
		<u>Best Writing – Feature</u>	<u>Jesse Andrews</u> , <u>Mike Jones</u>	Nominated	
		<u>Best Editorial – Feature</u>	<u>Catherine Apple</u> , <u>Jason Hudak</u> , <u>Jennifer Jew</u> , <u>Tim Fox</u> , <u>David Suther</u>	Nominated	
<u>Austin Film Critics Association</u>	<u>January 11, 2022</u>	<u>Best Animated Film</u>	<i>Luca</i>	Nominated	^[87]
<u>British Academy Film Awards</u>	<u>March 13, 2022</u>	<u>Best Animated Film</u>	<u>Enrico Casarosa</u> , <u>Andrea Warren</u>	Nominated	^[88]
<u>Black Reel Awards</u>	<u>February 27, 2022</u>	<u>Outstanding Voice Performance</u>	<u>Maya Rudolph</u>	Nominated	^[89]
<u>Cinema Audio Society Awards</u>	<u>March 19, 2022</u>	<u>Outstanding Achievement in</u>	<u>Vince Caro</u> , <u>Christopher Scarabosio</u> , <u>Tony Villaflor</u> , <u>Greg</u>	Nominated	^[90]

		<u>Sound Mixing for a Motion Picture – Animated</u>	Hayes, Jason Butler, Richard Duarte		
<u>Chicago Film Critics Association</u>	<u>December 15, 2021</u>	<u>Best Animated Film</u>	<i>Luca</i>	Nominated	[91][92]
<u>Critics' Choice Movie Awards</u>	<u>March 13, 2022</u>	<u>Best Animated Feature</u>	<i>Luca</i>	Nominated	[93]
<u>Dallas–Fort Worth Film Critics Association</u>	<u>December 20, 2021</u>	<u>Best Animated Film</u>	<i>Luca</i>	Nominated	[94]
<u>Detroit Film Critics Society</u>	<u>January 5, 2022</u>	<u>Best Animated Feature</u>	<i>Luca</i>	Nominated	[95]
<u>Florida Film Critics Circle</u>	<u>December 22, 2021</u>	<u>Best Animated Film</u>	<i>Luca</i>	Nominated	[96]
<u>Georgia Film Critics Association</u>	<u>January 14, 2022</u>	<u>Best Animated Film</u>	<i>Luca</i>	Nominated	[97]
<u>Golden Globe Awards</u>	<u>January 9, 2022</u>	<u>Best Animated Feature Film</u>	<i>Luca</i>	Nominated	[98]
<u>Hollywood Critics Association</u>	<u>July 1, 2021</u>	<u>Midseason Award – Best Picture</u>	<i>Luca</i>	Nominated	[99][100]
	<u>February 28, 2022</u>	<u>Best Animated Film</u>	<i>Luca</i>	Nominated	[101][102]
		<u>Best Animated or VSX Performance</u>	<u>Jacob Tremblay</u>	Nominated	
<u>Hollywood Music in Media Awards</u>	<u>November 17, 2021</u>	<u>Original Score — Animated Film</u>	Dan Romer	Nominated	[103]
<u>Houston Film Critics Society</u>	<u>January 19, 2022</u>	<u>Best Animated Feature</u>	<i>Luca</i>	Nominated	[104][105]
<u>Motion Picture Sound Editors Golden Reel Awards</u>	<u>March 13, 2022</u>	<u>Outstanding Achievement in Sound Editing – Feature Animation</u>	Chris Scarabosio, André Fenley, Rich Quinn, Ronni Brown, Justin Doyle, Pascal Garneau, E. Larry Oatfield, Jana Vance, Ronni Brown, Lodge Worster	Nominated	[106]
<u>NAACP Image Awards</u>	<u>February 26, 2022</u>	<u>Outstanding Animated Motion Picture</u>	<i>Luca</i>	Nominated	[107]
<u>Nickelodeon Kids' Choice Awards</u>	<u>April 9, 2022</u>	<u>Favorite Animated Movie</u>	<i>Luca</i>	Nominated	[108]
<u>Online Film Critics Society</u>	<u>January 24, 2022</u>	<u>Best Animated Feature</u>	<i>Luca</i>	Nominated	[109][110]
<u>People's Choice Awards</u>	<u>December 7, 2021</u>	<u>Family Movie of 2021</u>	<i>Luca</i>	Won	[111]
<u>Producers Guild of America Awards</u>	<u>March 19, 2022</u>	<u>Outstanding Producer of Animated</u>	Andrea Warren	Nominated	[112]

		<u>Theatrical Motion Pictures</u>			
<u>San Diego Film Critics Society</u>	<u>January 10, 2022</u>	<u>Best Animated Film</u>	<i>Luca</i>	Won	[113]
<u>San Francisco Bay Area Film Critics Circle</u>	<u>January 10, 2022</u>	<u>Best Animated Feature</u>	<i>Luca</i>	Nominated	[114]
<u>Satellite Awards</u>	<u>April 2, 2022</u>	<u>Best Animated or Mixed Media Film</u>	<i>Luca</i>	Nominated	[115][116]
<u>Saturn Awards</u>	<u>October 25, 2022</u>	<u>Best Animated Film</u>	<i>Luca</i>	Nominated	[117][118]
		<u>Best Performance by a Younger Actor</u>	Jacob Tremblay	Nominated	
<u>Seattle Film Critics Society</u>	<u>January 17, 2022</u>	<u>Best Animated Feature</u>	<i>Luca</i>	Nominated	[119]
<u>St. Louis Film Critics Association</u>	<u>December 19, 2021</u>	<u>Best Animated Film</u>	<i>Luca</i>	Nominated	[120][121]
<u>Visual Effects Society Awards</u>	<u>March 8, 2022</u>	<u>Outstanding Visual Effects in an Animated Feature</u>	Enrico Casarosa, Andrea Warren, David Ryu, Jon Reisch	Nominated	[122][123]
		<u>Outstanding Animated Character in an Animated Feature</u>	Gwendelyn Enderoglu, Laurie Nguyen Kim, Tanja Krampfert, Maria Lee (for Luca)	Nominated	
		<u>Outstanding Created Environment in an Animated Feature</u>	Airton Dittz, Jr., Jack Hattori, Michael Rutter, Joshua West (for Portorosso Piazza)	Nominated	
		<u>Outstanding Effects Simulations in an Animated Feature</u>	Amit Baadkar, Greg Gladstone, Emron Grover, Tim Speltz	Nominated	
<u>Washington D.C. Area Film Critics Association</u>	<u>December 6, 2021</u>	<u>Best Animated Film</u>	<i>Luca</i>	Nominated	[124]
		<u>Best Voice Performance</u>	Jacob Tremblay	Nominated	

Short film

A short film sequel to *Luca* titled *Ciao Alberto* was released on Disney+ on November 12, 2021.^[125] It is written and directed by McKenna Jean Harris and produced by Matt DeMartini with Enrico Casarosa on board as executive producer.^{[126][127][128]} It focuses on Alberto as he continues to grow accustomed to working with Massimo; eventually accepting him as a father figure.

Future

The cast expressed interest in returning for a sequel, and presented different ideas of what it would be about, among which was the joking suggestion they frequently made of giving Uncle Ugo a spin-off series. Casarosa expressed interest in doing a sequel that would be similar to *The Parent Trap*, which would center

upon Luca and Giulia's attempt to reunite Massimo and his wife.^[129] In October 2022, Casarosa stated that there were no present plans for a sequel to *Luca*, but that he was developing a new, original film, presumably for Pixar.^[130]

Notes

- a. Other official information describes him as a 13-year-old.
- b. While Ercole's age is not revealed in the film since he won the Portorosso Cup the last five years in a row and also claimed to be 16 (apparently the oldest possible age to compete in it) for the year around 1959 and the previous year, he must be 17 at the absolute youngest (assuming that he was 12 the first time he won the Portorosso Cup). Eventually, director Enrico Casarosa confirmed that Ercole's age was around 18.^[14]
- c. *For the Birds* was previously shown with *Monsters, Inc.*

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External links

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 - *Luca* (<https://www.disneyplus.com/movies/wp/7K1HyQ6HI16P>) on [Disney+](#)
 - *Luca* (<https://www.imdb.com/title/tt12802134/>) at [IMDb](#)
 - [Official screenplay \(https://deadline.com/wp-content/uploads/2022/01/Luca-Read-The-Screenplay.pdf\)](https://deadline.com/wp-content/uploads/2022/01/Luca-Read-The-Screenplay.pdf)
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