

Sonic the Hedgehog (film)

Sonic the Hedgehog^[b] is a 2020 action-adventure comedy film based on the video game series of the same name published by Sega. The film was directed by Jeff Fowler and written by Pat Casey and Josh Miller. It stars Ben Schwartz (as the voice of Sonic the Hedgehog), James Marsden, and Jim Carrey. The plot follows Sonic, a blue anthropomorphic hedgehog who can run at supersonic speeds, who teams up with a town sheriff to stop mad scientist Dr. Robotnik.

Development for a *Sonic* film began in the 1990s but did not leave the planning stage until Sony Pictures acquired the film rights in 2013. Fowler was brought in to direct in 2016. After Sony put the project in turnaround, Paramount Pictures acquired it in 2017. Most of the cast signed on by August 2018. Principal photography took place between September and October that year in Vancouver and on Vancouver Island. Following the negative reaction to the first trailer's reveal of Sonic's appearance in April 2019, Paramount delayed the film release by three months to redesign Sonic.

Sonic the Hedgehog premiered at the Paramount Pictures studio lot on January 25, 2020, before its theatrical release in the United States on February 14, and received mixed reviews from critics. It set the record for the biggest opening weekend for a video game film in the United States and Canada and grossed \$319.7 million worldwide, becoming the sixth highest-grossing film of 2020 and the highest-grossing video game film adaptation in North America.

The film has spawned two sequels: *Sonic the Hedgehog 2*, which released in 2022, and *Sonic the Hedgehog 3*, which is scheduled for release in December 2024. A spin-off miniseries, *Knuckles*, starring Idris Elba, released on Paramount+ on April 26, 2024.

Plot

On a distant planet, Sonic, a young anthropomorphic blue hedgehog who can run at supersonic speed, is unexpectedly attacked by an echidna tribe. His guardian, an anthropomorphic owl named Longclaw, gives him a bag of golden rings that open

Sonic the Hedgehog



Theatrical release poster

Directed by	Jeff Fowler
Written by	Pat Casey <div>Josh Miller</div>
Based on	<i>Sonic the Hedgehog</i> by Sega ^[a]
Produced by	Neal H. Moritz <div>Toby AscherToru NakaharaTakeshi Ito</div>
Starring	James Marsden <div>Jim Carrey</div>
Cinematography	Stephen F. Windon
Edited by	Stacey Schroeder <div>Debra Neil-Fisher</div>
Music by	Tom Holkenborg
Production companies	Sega Sammy Group ^[3]

portals to distant locations. She uses one to send him to Earth while she stays behind to hold off the echidnas, leaving Sonic alone.

Ten years later, a teenage Sonic enjoys a secret life in a cavern under the rural town of Green Hills, Montana, but longs to make friends. He idolizes the local sheriff Tom Wachowski and his wife Maddie, unaware that the pair are planning to relocate to San Francisco as Tom plans to accept a job at the SFPD.

One night, Sonic grows upset over his loneliness while playing baseball alone and, while running at unusually high speeds, accidentally triggers an electromagnetic pulse that causes a massive power outage across the Pacific Northwest. The U.S. Department of Defense reluctantly enlists the services of eccentric roboticist and scientific genius Dr. Robotnik to determine the cause of the outage. Realizing his cover has been blown, Sonic reluctantly plans to leave Earth for a different planet only containing mushrooms and fungi.

As Sonic prepares to leave, Tom discovers him in his shed and tranquilizes him. Upon reading the writing on Tom's shirt, Sonic accidentally opens a portal to San Francisco and drop his bag of rings through the portal to the Transamerica Pyramid's roof before passing out. After Sonic recovers, Tom hesitantly agrees to help him and the two flee when confronted by Robotnik, who falsely labels Tom a domestic terrorist. The two bond as they make their way to San Francisco, with Tom relating to Sonic's desire for friends. Sonic creates a bucket list in a western-themed bar where Tom helps him complete several entries, culminating in a bar fight.

Meanwhile, Robotnik discovers that one of Sonic's quills holds an almost limitless amount of energy and plans to capture and use Sonic to empower his machines. As he tracks them down, Sonic and Tom manage to fight off several mechanized drones sent by Robotnik, but Sonic is injured in the battle.

Arriving in San Francisco, Tom brings Sonic to Maddie, who treats him at her sister Rachel's home, where Rachel's daughter, Jojo, gives Sonic new shoes. The group heads to the roof of the Transamerica Pyramid and recovers the rings as Robotnik arrives in an advanced hovercraft powered by the quill. Sonic fights off Robotnik's drones, hastily using one of his rings to send Tom and Maddie back to Green Hills to protect them; however, Robotnik uses the quill's power to match Sonic's speed. Sonic fights Robotnik in a chase across the world utilizing the rings before Robotnik subdues Sonic in Green Hills. Tom and the townsfolk intervene, and Tom acknowledges Sonic as his friend, causing Sonic to regain consciousness and strength. The empowered Sonic defeats Robotnik by destroying his hovercraft and, with help from Tom, sending him through a ring portal to the mushroom planet.

Following the incident, Tom and Maddie decide to stay in Green Hills and let Sonic live with them, treating him as a surrogate son. The government erases all evidence of the events, including records of Robotnik's existence. Some time later, Robotnik, who is still in possession of Sonic's quill and usable equipment salvaged from the remains of his hovercraft, plans to return to Earth and get his revenge against Sonic.

	<u>Original Film</u> ^[3] <u>Marza Animation Planet</u> ^[3] <u>Blur Studio</u> ^[3]
Distributed by	<u>Paramount Pictures</u> ^[3]
Release dates	January 25, 2020 (Paramount Pictures lot) February 14, 2020 (United States) June 26, 2020 (Japan)
Running time	99 minutes ^[4]
Countries	<u>United States</u> ^[5] <u>Japan</u> ^[6]
Language	English
Budget	\$85–90 million ^{[7][8]}
Box office	\$319.7 million ^[7]

In a mid-credit scene, an anthropomorphic two-tailed fox^[c] emerges from a ring portal on Earth, searching for Sonic.

Cast

Voice cast

- Ben Schwartz as Sonic the Hedgehog, an anthropomorphic blue hedgehog with superhuman speed who finds himself on the run from Robotnik and the United States Government. Schwartz also provided the motion-capture for Sonic.^{[9][10]}
 - Benjamin L. Valic voices Young Sonic.
- Donna J. Fulks as Longclaw, an anthropomorphic brown owl and Sonic's caregiver.^[11]

Additionally, Colleen O'Shaughnessey reprises her role from the games as Miles "Tails" Prower, an anthropomorphic yellow-orange two-tailed fox, in the mid-credits scene.^[12]

Live-action cast

- James Marsden as Tom Wachowski (*/wə'kaʊski/*), the sheriff of Green Hills who became a father figure to Sonic and aids him in his quest to stop Robotnik.^[13] Prior to Marsden's casting, Chris Pratt and Jason Bateman were considered for the role, with Pratt even getting to the audition stage, seen on an early teaser poster with Sonic's original design.
- Tika Sumpter as Maddie Wachowski, a veterinarian and Tom's wife, who helps him and Sonic stop Robotnik.^[14]
- Jim Carrey as Dr. Robotnik, a brilliant robotics expert and mad scientist who works with the American government, covets Sonic's abilities, and plans to exploit them for personal gain, leading him to become Sonic's archenemy.^[15] Carrey compared his character to his portrayal of the Riddler in *Batman Forever*, saying: "I wouldn't put one against the other. I think they'd be a great team. But you know, it's like Robotnik and every supervillain in Marvel or DC basically comes from a place of neglect with a feeling of absolute worthlessness that manifests itself in magnificent creations that are designed to control the world, put their brand on everybody, and maybe even get inside your bloodstream with some nanotechnology occasionally."^[16]
- Lee Majdoub as Agent Stone, a government agent who works for Robotnik.^[17]
- Adam Pally as Wade Whipple, a dim-witted deputy sheriff in Green Hills and Tom's closest loyal friend.^[18]
- Natasha Rothwell as Rachel, Maddie's older sister who dislikes Tom and frequently attempts to encourage Maddie to leave him.^[19]
- Tom Butler as Commander Walters, the Vice Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff who orders Robotnik to investigate the power outage caused by Sonic.^[20]
- Neal McDonough as Major Bennington, a soldier tasked with assisting Robotnik in his efforts to capture Sonic.^[18]
- Melody Nosipho Niemann as Jojo, Rachel's daughter and the niece of Maddie and Tom.
- Frank C. Turner as Crazy Carl, a conspiracy theorist who seeks to prove Sonic's existence.^[21]
- Garry Chalk as the U.S. Navy Chief of Staff. Chalk previously voiced Grounder and Robotnik in *Adventures of Sonic the Hedgehog* and *Sonic Underground* respectively.^[22]

- Michael Hogan as the Air Force Chief of Staff.^[23]
- Elfina Luk as the Secretary of Homeland Security.
- Shannon Chan-Kent as a roadhouse waitress.

Production

Prior efforts

Development for a film adaptation of the *Sonic the Hedgehog* video games began in 1993 during production of DIC Entertainment's television show *Adventures of Sonic the Hedgehog*. Michealene Risley, the newly appointed consumer products director who helped license Sonic for *Adventures*, negotiated with several Hollywood producers. Sega of America CEO Tom Kalinske was wary of damaging the brand, citing the commercial and critical failures of the *Super Mario Bros.* and *Street Fighter* films. Despite Kalinske's concerns, Sega was enthusiastic. In August 1994, Sega struck a development deal with MGM and Trilogy Entertainment Group, with Pen Densham as executive producer.^[24]

MGM and Sega hired Richard Jefferies, an associate of Risley from her days at Marvel Comics, to write a film treatment. At the time, Sega was developing the video game *Sonic X-treme* (which was canceled in late 1996) for its next console, the Sega Saturn, and asked Jefferies to feature the Saturn in the screenplay. Jefferies' treatment, *Sonic: Wonders of the World*, was submitted in May 1995. While the draft received a positive response among MGM and Sega executives, Sega COO Shinobu Toyoda suggested Kalinske replace Robotnik with a meaner villain. MGM canceled the project after a failed attempt to revive it at DreamWorks. Jefferies suggested that the film was scrapped as both Sega and MGM wanted a higher share of the profits, while Densham said it followed creative differences between Sega and Trilogy.^[24]

During the late 1990s, Ben Hurst attempted to revive and properly conclude the animated *Sonic the Hedgehog* television series, in which he worked as a writer. After failing to tell the conclusion in an Archie Sonic Super Special comic,^[25] and after being dissuaded from attempting to continue the series as a network show during an interview with Robby London,^[26] a DIC Entertainment executive, he decided to pursue telling the rest of the SatAM story in a feature film. Robby London put Hurst in contact with a Sega executive interested in the idea. Hurst was contacted by Ken Penders, writer of the Archie Comics' Sonic the Hedgehog comic book series, who had been alerted of Hurst's plans. Though Hurst told him his strategy and offered to include him in his effort, Penders allegedly told Sega that Hurst was trying to co-opt the franchise, leading Sega to dismiss Hurst and his proposal.^[27] Ben would attempt to get the movie made once more from 2005 to 2006, but this ultimately fell through.

In September 2003, Penders pitched his own concept for a *Sonic* film, *Sonic Armageddon*. In Penders' words, the movie would have been an origin story and a series reset, resolving the plot threads which began in the animated *Sonic* show and continued in Archie's comic series. The project was dropped in 2007 due to a corporate upheaval and the death of Sega licensing manager Robert Leffler, who had supported Penders.^[28]

Development

In 2013, Sony Pictures Entertainment acquired the rights to produce and distribute a *Sonic* film.^[29] On June 10, 2014, a live-action animated film was announced as a joint venture between Sony Pictures's Columbia Pictures and Marza Animation Planet, a Japan-based subsidiary of Sega Sammy Holdings which had

produced CGI cutscenes for several *Sonic* games.^[30] It would be produced by Neal H. Moritz by his Original Film banner alongside Takeshi Ito, Mie Onishi, and Toru Nakahara, and written by Evan Susser and Van Robichaux.^[30] In February 2016, Sega CEO Hajime Satomi said the film was scheduled for 2018.^[31] Blur Studio's Tim Miller and Jeff Fowler were hired in 2016 to develop it; Fowler would make his feature directorial debut, and Miller would serve as executive producer. Blur Studio previously produced cutscenes for the games *Shadow the Hedgehog* (2005), for which Fowler directed cutscenes, and *Sonic the Hedgehog* (2006).^[32] Patrick Casey, Josh Miller, and Oren Uziel were writing the screenplay, while Casey and Miller wrote the story.^{[32][33]}



The film's logo

On October 2, 2017, Paramount Pictures announced that they had acquired the rights after Sony put the film in turnaround. Almost all of the production team remained unchanged. Coincidentally, Paramount and Sega had once been sister companies under Gulf and Western Industries; Gulf and Western sold Sega's assets in 1984.^[34] In February 2018, it was announced that the film would be released in November 2019.^{[35][36]} During production the film used the working title "Casino Night", named after one of the stages in the *Sonic* games.^[37] Early drafts featured Sonic's Super Sonic form from the video games; the ideas were latterly discarded, as Fowler felt that "it didn't make sense to obviously bring in the Super Sonic thing just yet" and instead wanted to focus on the origins of Sonic and Robotnik's relationship.^[38] Casey and Miller reportedly described the film as not faithful to the game, while producer Toby Ascher favored their buddy comedy approach.^[39] Inspirations for the story also include many other buddy comedies, such as *Midnight Run* and *Dumb and Dumber*.^[40]

Casting

In May 2018, it was reported that Paul Rudd was in talks for a lead role as Tom, "a cop who befriends Sonic and will likely team up to defeat Dr. Robotnik"; however, this was later denied by Paramount.^[41] A day later, it was announced that James Marsden was cast in an undisclosed role, but later revealed to be Tom Wachowski.^[13] In June, Tika Sumpter was cast as Tom's wife Maddie, with Jim Carrey cast to play the villain, Dr. Robotnik.^[42]

In August, Ben Schwartz joined the cast to voice Sonic.^[43] This marked a rare occasion in which the character would not be voiced by Roger Craig Smith, who voices Sonic in most incarnations since 2010.^[44] Schwartz, a fan of the original video games, was chosen for the role after Fowler and Miller cast him for a test reading as they pitched the project to several studios.^[45] Having enjoyed his performance, they officially cast Schwartz as the voice of Sonic.^[45] Adam Pally and Neal McDonough were added to the cast later that month.^[46] Debs Howard and Elfin Luk joined the cast the following November.^[47] Riff Raff was cast in an undisclosed role, but was cut from the film.^{[48][49][50]}

Filming

Principal photography began in mid-September 2018 and ended in Vancouver, Ladysmith, and Vancouver Island on October 16, 2018.^[51] Key production scenes were also filmed in Liwa Oasis, United Arab Emirates.^[52] During filming, Ben Schwartz was unavailable, so a stand-in performed alongside Marsden.^[53]

Visual effects and design

The visual effects are provided by Moving Picture Company (MPC), Marza Animation Planet, Blur Studio, Trixter, and Digital Domain.^[54] The production team created a live-action version of Sonic using CGI, adding fur, new running sneakers, two separate eyes,^[55] and a more human like physique.^[56] They used Ted, the living teddy bear from the *Ted* films, as a reference to insert a CGI character into a real-world setting. Executive producer Miller said: "It would be weird, and it would feel like he was running around nude if he was some sort of otter-like thing. It was always, for us, fur, and we never considered anything different. It's part of what integrates him into the real world and makes him a real creature." According to Miller, Sega was not "entirely happy" with the design of Sonic's eyes.^[55]

On May 2, 2019, in response to the criticism, Fowler announced on Twitter that Sonic would be redesigned.^[57] The film was delayed from its original release date of November 8, 2019, to February 14, 2020, as a result.^[58] Artist Tyson Hesse, who worked on previous *Sonic the Hedgehog* media, was brought on to lead the redesign. Sonic was given larger and differently colored eyes, new sneakers, white gloves, and a less humanlike body to better resemble Sonic's video game design.^[59] Sonic was redesigned by Marza Animation Planet.^[60] The redesign added an estimated \$5 million to the production budget,^[61] took around five months, and was achieved without overtime.^[40]

Music

In February 2019, Tom Holkenborg, who previously worked with executive producer Miller on *Deadpool*, was hired to compose the score.^[62] The soundtrack was released alongside the film on February 14, 2020, in both digital and physical formats. Riff Raff, who had a role in the film but was cut due to controversy against him, appears on the soundtrack.^[63] An original song, "BOOM" by X Ambassadors, appears on the soundtrack, the single was released on January 24, 2020 by Atlantic Records. "Speed Me Up" by American musicians Wiz Khalifa, Lil Yachty, Ty Dolla \$ign, and Sueco The Child received 15 million streams, along with 1.8 billion views for the "Speed Me Up" TikTok challenge.^[64] "Friends" by Hyper Potions, which previously appeared as the opening theme of *Sonic Mania*, also appears, along with arrangements of tracks from Masato Nakamura's score for the original *Sonic the Hedgehog* (1991).^[65] Holkenborg attempted to capture the feel of Nakamura's soundtracks for the *Sonic* and *Sonic the Hedgehog 2* (1992) games, using Yamaha digital FM synthesizers (such as the DX7) similar to the Sega Genesis/Mega Drive console's Yamaha YM2612 sound chip.^{[66][67]}

Release

Marketing

Test footage was screened at the Comic Con Experience in Brazil on December 6, 2018.^[68] It was followed by a teaser poster released on December 10, 2018, revealing the silhouette design of Sonic, with the tagline "A Whole New Speed of Hero".^[55] It received a negative response from critics and fans,^[69] and

was compared unfavorably to another 2019 video game film adaptation, *Detective Pikachu*, which added fur and skin textures to the *Pokémon* characters.^[56] Sonic's humanoid appearance was described as evoking an uncanny valley response.^[70] Former members of Sonic Team, who created the *Sonic the Hedgehog* games, also expressed surprise.^[71] A second poster was leaked online shortly after. Fans complained of a lack of resemblance to the games and criticized the positioning of Sonic's legs, spawning an Internet meme in which users recreated the position.^{[72][73]} The film's official Twitter account posted an image of Sonic behind a sign reading: "Can't a guy work out?"^[74] Images of the Sonic design were leaked in March 2019 to more fan criticism. Sonic co-creator Yuji Naka was "shocked" by the design and felt the ratio of Sonic's head and abdomen was imbalanced.^[75]



The film was delayed to re-design Sonic after the original design (pictured) was heavily criticized.^[57]

The first trailer premiered on April 4, 2019, at CinemaCon in Las Vegas,^[76] and was released online on April 30. It received near-unanimous criticism,^{[77][78][79]} with Gita Jackson of *Kotaku* calling it "horrific" and "a blight upon this weary earth".^[77] Sonic's design was heavily criticized by fans for its humanoid appearance,^{[77][79]} while some found the use of Coolio's "Gangsta's Paradise" jarring.^{[80][81]} Conversely, *CNET's* Sean Keane praised the humor and references to the games.^[82] Within two days, the trailer was viewed more than 20 million times on YouTube, and had received hundreds of thousands of dislikes, drastically outnumbering its likes.^[83]

A second trailer revealing the redesigned Sonic was released on November 12, 2019.^[84] The trailer received far more positive responses, with many praising Sonic's new design. The tone and the humor also received positive reviews, as did the choice of song, J. J. Fad's "Supersonic" and Ramones' "Blitzkrieg Bop".^[85] Naka said he felt the new design was "much more Sonic-like".^[86] The second trailer received thousands of likes and the highest like-to-dislike ratio of any trailer on Google in the last three years.^[87] The trailers have garnered a total of more than 500 million views worldwide.^[64] As a promotional tie-in, the version of Sonic seen in the film was added as a playable character to the mobile games *Sonic Dash* and *Sonic Forces*.^[88] Since *Sonic the Hedgehog*, other films and television series based on video game series have made it a production priority to assure characters and the details of the film are true to the works they are based on to appeal better to viewers that are fans of the games.^[89]

A modified version of the original design, named "Ugly Sonic", appears as a minor character in the 2022 film *Chip 'n Dale: Rescue Rangers*, playing off the Internet's reaction to the first trailer. According to that film's director Akiva Schaffer, they had also used Moving Picture Company for their animation studio, and MPC was able to provide the original Sonic model for the film.^[90] The character was voiced in the film by comedian Tim Robinson.^[91]

Theatrical

Sonic the Hedgehog was scheduled for 2018 by Sony Pictures Releasing.^[31] In February 2018, shortly after taking over the rights, Paramount Pictures rescheduled the film to November 15, 2019.^[92] It was later moved a week earlier to November 8, 2019.^[93] Following the announcement of Sonic's redesign in May 2019, the film was delayed for the final time by three months, to February 14, 2020; this was to provide enough time for the redesign to be completed.^[94] *Playing with Fire* took the original release date.^{[95][96]} The world premiere took place at the Paramount Pictures studio lot in Los Angeles on January 25, 2020.^[97]

The film was released theatrically in the United States in 4DX and Dolby Cinema formats.^{[98][99]} The film was originally going to be released in Japan on March 27, 2020, but had to be moved to June 26, 2020, due to the COVID-19 pandemic.^[100]

Home media

On March 20, 2020, Paramount announced that *Sonic the Hedgehog* would be released to home media in the United States and Canada before the end of the usual 90-day theatrical run, as many film studios took the decision to release films earlier due to movie theaters closures in mid-March because of the COVID-19 pandemic restrictions.^[101] The digital version was released on March 31, 2020,^[101] and was released on DVD, Blu-ray, and Ultra HD Blu-ray by Paramount Home Entertainment on May 19, 2020. All home media releases include an original short film, *Around the World in 80 Seconds*.^{[102][103]}



Jim Carrey (right) at the premiere of the film

The film topped the American Blu-ray and DVD charts for several weeks upon release.^[8] It was the sixth top-selling home video title of 2020 in the United States.^[104] The DVD and Blu-ray releases crossed 2 million units sold in the United States by January 2021 and earned about \$50 million in US sales revenue as of 16 April 2022.^[8]

After its release to Digital HD in 2020, Paramount Pictures announced that the film would land on the streaming service EPIX on November 20, 2020. The movie then made its move to streaming service Hulu on February 18, 2021, and on Amazon Prime Video the next day on February 19, 2021.^[105] Paramount Pictures also confirmed that the movie as well as its sequel entitled *Sonic the Hedgehog 2* would release later on Paramount+ with its sequel being released 45 days after its theatrical release window.^[106]

Reception

Box office

Sonic the Hedgehog grossed \$149 million in the United States and Canada, and \$170.7 million in other territories, for a worldwide total of \$319.7 million.^[7] It was the sixth-highest-grossing film of 2020, and the highest-grossing superhero film of the year, ending Marvel Studios' decade-long run of having the highest-grossing film of the genre (from 2010 to 2019).^{[107][108]} The film's budget was estimated at being between \$85 million^[7] and \$90 million.^{[109][110][8]}

In the United States and Canada, the film was released alongside *Fantasy Island*, *The Photograph*, and *Downhill*, and was initially projected to gross \$40–50 million from 4,130 theaters in its four-day President's Day opening weekend.^{[111][112]} After making \$21 million on its first day (including \$3 million from Thursday night previews), estimates were raised to \$64 million.^[113] It went on to top the box office with a \$58 million debut over the three-day weekend, and \$70 million over the four, breaking *Detective Pikachu's* record for the biggest opening weekend by a video game-based film. It was also the fourth-best President's Day holiday weekend and Jim Carrey's second biggest opening weekend, behind *Bruce Almighty* (2003).^[64] The success was attributed in part to the redesign of Sonic and the publicity it created, and the

delayed release date, which meant it opened with less competition from other family films.^[114] Opening day audiences were 56% male and 44% female, with 70% under 25 years.^[64] In its second weekend, *Sonic the Hedgehog* made \$26.2 million and retained the top spot at the box office, bringing its ten-day domestic gross to \$106.6 million.^{[115][116]} *Sonic the Hedgehog* made \$16.3 million in its third weekend and was dethroned by newcomer *The Invisible Man*.^[117] On March 14, 2020, it became the highest-grossing film based on a video game in US box office history, surpassing *Detective Pikachu*.^[118]

Sonic the Hedgehog was released in 40 countries during its three-day opening weekend, topping the international box office with \$43 million. Its strongest international regions were Latin America and Europe, with its largest openings being \$6.7 million in Mexico, \$6.2 million in the United Kingdom, \$4.3 million in France, \$3.3 million in Germany, and \$3 million in Brazil. Worldwide, it made \$101 million over the three-day weekend and \$113 million over the four days.^{[119][120]} In its second weekend the film again topped the international box office with \$38.3 million from 56 countries for a ten-day overseas gross of \$96.5 million, and topped the global box office again with \$64.6 million for a ten-day worldwide gross of \$203.1 million. Its largest international markets in its first ten days were the United Kingdom (\$19.1 million), Mexico (\$12.3 million), and France (\$9.1 million), retaining the top spot in these markets. The film opened in 16 new markets, led by a number-one debut in Russia (\$6.3 million).^[121] The film was released in Japan on June 26, 2020, after being postponed from a previous March release due to the COVID-19 pandemic, and debuted at No. 6 that weekend.^{[122][123]} In China, the release was also postponed due to the pandemic,^[124] eventually receiving a July 31 date and underperforming at the Chinese box office due to new pandemic-related theatre policies there.^{[125][126]}

In terms of box office admissions, the film sold 15,876,790 tickets in the United States and Canada (annual rank #3), 6,811,679 tickets in Mexico (annual #1), 893,634 tickets in Peru (annual #2), 468,697 tickets in Ecuador (annual #1), 67,230 tickets in the Dominican Republic (annual #2),^[127] 12,454,206 tickets in Europe (annual #3),^{[128][129]} 3,001,403 tickets in Brazil (annual #3),^[130] 698,500 tickets in China,^[131] 687,740 tickets in Argentina (annual #3),^[132] and 118,725 tickets in South Korea,^[133] for a combined 41,078,604 tickets sold in these territories.

Critical response

Sonic the Hedgehog received mixed reviews, with critics praising Sonic's redesign, humor and cast performances, but criticizing its product placements and screenplay for its lack of ambition and departures from the source material.^{[134][135][136][137] [138]} On Rotten Tomatoes, 63% of 254 reviews are positive, with an average rating of 5.9/10. The website's critics consensus reads: "Fittingly fleet and frequently fun, *Sonic the Hedgehog* is a video game-inspired adventure the whole family can enjoy -- and a fine excuse for Jim Carrey to tap into the manic energy that launched his career."^[139] On Metacritic, the film has a weighted average score of 47 out of 100, based on 42 critics, indicating "mixed or average reviews".^[140] Audiences polled by CinemaScore gave the film an average grade of "A" on an A+ to F scale, and PostTrak reported it received an average 4 out of 5 stars, with 66% of viewers they surveyed saying they would definitely recommend it.^[64]

Akeem Lawanson of IGN gave the film a score of 7 out of 10, praising the performances and the nostalgia, stating, "While this family-friendly action-comedy suffers from a simplistic story and leans too heavily on tired visual clichés, *Sonic the Hedgehog* is nevertheless boosted by solid performances from Ben Schwartz as Sonic and Jim Carrey as Dr. Robotnik. Their ongoing cat-and-mouse game is entertaining, and passionate fans of the Sega franchise should appreciate all the nods to Sonic's history."^[141] Dami Lee of

The Verge gave the film a positive review, praising the nostalgic elements seen in the film, writing that it "shines when it remembers it's based on a video game, and there's some genuinely fun stuff—like when Sonic uses his time-stopping powers or Robotnik's elaborate 'evil-plotting' montage that makes you wonder why more movies don't feature bad guys with choreographed dance sequences. Carrey plays up Robotnik as the cartoon villain he is, and it's a true delight to watch him in his element."^[142] Corey Plante of *Inverse* called it a "road trip superhero movie" and "the best superhero movie of 2020" so far.^[143] John DeFore of *The Hollywood Reporter*, gave the film a positive review, saying: "Flesh-and-blood actors help keep this game derived kids' flick afloat."^[144]

Gene Park of *The Washington Post* gave the film a positive review, saying it was "the furthest thing from *Cats*, despite the early comparisons. Wary fans expecting the usual easy target to mock will instead find something to fervently celebrate for years."^[145] Amon Warrman of *Empire* gave the film two out of five stars, writing, "An on-form Jim Carrey can't stop Sonic's live-action debut from feeling like a missed opportunity. If the teased sequels do materialize, here's hoping the storytelling levels up."^[146] Ben Kenigsberg of *The New York Times* gave the film a negative review and wrote, "Sonic now resembles a cartoon hedgehog instead of a spray-painted marmot. But if anything was done to de-genericize the script, it hasn't helped. Not that the Sega games—in which the fleet-footed hero zips around doing flips and collecting gold coins (which here encircle the Paramount mountain) gave the director, Jeff Fowler, much to work with."^[147]

Variety's Owen Gleiberman criticized the tone: "For all the borderline tedium I felt at *Sonic the Hedgehog*, I do realize that this is a picture made for 8-year-olds. And they'll probably like it just fine. Yet I would also call the overly kiddified tone of the movie a mistake."^[148] Writing for *The Guardian*, Steve Rose gave the film two out of five, saying elements were "clearly indebted" to other films, such as Quicksilver's powers in the *X-Men* movies, and finding the message of friendship "trite and familiar".^[149] Simon Abrams of *RogerEbert.com* gave the film one out of four, writing, "*Sonic the Hedgehog* is only as successful as the amount of time you want to spend watching its animated protagonist go on instantly forgettable adventures, and boy, is that unfortunate."^[150] Tim Grierson of *Screen Daily* also gave the film a negative review,

writing, "The film projects enough benign cheerfulness that the experience is never unpleasant, but one can't help but feel the filmmakers' strain in crafting a sly action-comedy for audiences expecting over-the-top spectacle and nonstop quips. Sadly, Sonic isn't swift enough to deliver."^[151]

Accolades

Year	Award	Category	Recipients	Result	Ref.
2020	SXSW Film Festival	Excellence in Title Design	<i>Sonic the Hedgehog</i>	Nominated	^[152] ^[153]
	People's Choice Awards	The Family Movie of 2020		Nominated	^[154]
2021	Critics' Choice Super Awards	Best Superhero Movie		Nominated	^[155] ^[156]
		Best Villain in a Movie	Jim Carrey	Won	
		Best Actor in a Superhero Movie	Ben Schwartz and Jim Carrey	Nominated	
	Hollywood Critics Association Awards	Best Animated or VFX Performance	Ben Schwartz	Won	^[157]
		Best Blockbuster	<i>Sonic the Hedgehog</i>	Nominated	
		Best Visual Effects	Ged Wright	Nominated	
	Nickelodeon Kids' Choice Awards	Favorite Movie	<i>Sonic the Hedgehog</i>	Nominated	^[158]
		Favorite Movie Actor	Jim Carrey	Nominated	
	Ursa Major Awards	Best Motion Picture	<i>Sonic the Hedgehog</i>	Nominated	^[159] ^[160]
	Saturn Awards	Best Fantasy Film Release		Nominated	^[161]

Other media

Novelization

A chapter novel based on the film, titled *Sonic the Hedgehog: The Official Movie Novelization*, written by Kiel Phegley and published by [Penguin Books](#), was released alongside the film on February 14, 2020.^[162]

Sequels

Paramount confirmed that a sequel was in development on May 28, 2020. Fowler returned as director, while Casey and [Josh Miller](#) returned as writers. Neal H. Mortiz, Toby Ascher, and Toru Nakahara produced the sequel, having co-produced the first film alongside Takeshi Ito, while [Tim Miller](#), Hajime Satomi, and Haruki Satomi returned as executive producers.^[163] Filming took place between March 2021 and May 2021, under the working title *Emerald Hill*.^[164] This was a reference to "Emerald Hill Zone", the first level of the game *Sonic the Hedgehog 2* (1992);^[165] in addition, the film's title announcement trailer features a remix of the level's music.^[166]

On December 8, 2020, it was confirmed that artist Tyson Hesse would reprise his role for storyboard artist Fill Marc as he said the following: "I wrapped up work on *Lower Decks* Season 2 last week. Excited 2 announce I've been working on the Sonic the Hedgehog 2 Story Team with Jeff Fowler and Tyson Hesse at

Blur Studio. My first live action feature coming in 2022." This will be Marc's first live-action project.^[167] In January 2021, Sumpter announced that she was reprising her role as Maddie. She also announced that the sequel would film in Vancouver and Hawaii.^[168] The film's title, *Sonic the Hedgehog 2*, was confirmed on February 10, 2021.^[169] On March 15, 2021, Jeff Fowler confirmed that production of the film had begun.^[170] The film was released on March 30, 2022 in France and the Netherlands, April 1 in the U.K. and on April 8 in the U.S.^[171]

In February 2022, a third film was confirmed to be in development, scheduled for release on December 20, 2024.^{[172][173][174]}

Television series

In February 2022, a spin-off miniseries starring Knuckles the Echidna was announced. It was released on Paramount+ on April 26, 2024, with Idris Elba reprising his role as the character.^[172]

See also

- List of films based on video games

Notes

- Sonic the Hedgehog* was developed by Sonic Team, published by Sega, directed and programmed by Yuji Naka, designed by Hirokazu Yasuhara, and illustrated by Naoto Ohshima.^{[1][2]}
- Known in Japan as ***Sonic the Movie*** (Japanese: ソニック・ザ・ムービー, Hepburn: *Sonikku za Mūbī*)
- Identified offscreen as Tails.

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External links

- Official website (<https://www.paramountmovies.com/movies/sonic-the-hedgehog>)
 - Sonic the Hedgehog* (<https://www.imdb.com/title/tt3794354/>) at IMDb
 - Sonic the Hedgehog* (<https://www.tcm.com/tcmdb/title/2198027/sonic-the-hedgehog/>) at the TCM Movie Database
 - Sonic the Hedgehog* (<https://www.allmovie.com/movie/v602193>) at AllMovie
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