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# Thelma the Unicorn

*Thelma the Unicorn* is a 2024 American animated musical adventure comedy film written by Jared and Jerusha Hess, and directed by Jared Hess and Lynn Wang. Based on the children's book series of the same name by Aaron Blabey, the film stars the voices of Brittany Howard, Will Forte, Jemaine Clement, Edi Patterson, Fred Armisen, Zach Galifianakis, Jon Heder and Shondrella Avery. The film marks the acting debut of Howard.<sup>[2]</sup>

*Thelma the Unicorn* was released on Netflix on May 17, 2024. It received positive reviews from critics.

## Plot

Thelma is a small farm pony who dreams of becoming a famous musician alongside her band mates Otis the donkey and Reggie the llama, who form a band called The Rusty Buckets. After humiliating herself at an audition that would have guaranteed them a spot in the singing showcase event SparklePalooza, a clumsy truck driver accidentally drenches Thelma, while wearing a carrot on her forehead, in glitter and pink paint, giving her the appearance of a unicorn. Her appearance attracts a small crowd to her farm and seizes this opportunity to sing in front of them. Despite Otis' objections of lying to people in favor of performing as their true selves, Thelma decides to stick with her facade.

A blind retired record dealer named Peggy Purvis, after watching The Rusty Buckets on TV, decides to make them her new comeback attraction. Soon, Thelma gains the attention of a snooty manager named Vic Diamond, who works for the arrogant singer, Nikki Narwhal. Vic contacts Peggy and after some arm-twisting, convinces her to make Thelma an opening attraction at Nikki's new concert. Reluctantly, Peggy agrees and when they go to rendezvous with Vic, the latter uses a missile to destroy a limo carrying Peggy, her husband Gerald, Otis and Reggie while he and Thelma go to Nikki's mansion.

At Nikki's show, when her friends fail to make it in time, Thelma is forced to sing solo, where she receives a standing ovation from the crowd. Vic makes her sign a contract to make him her manager, which also allows him to leave Nikki. Outraged over being upstaged, Nikki attempts to attack Thelma, but is booed by the audience, causing her fame to plummet. Outside while walking through a crowd of fans, Thelma meets Otis and the two have an

### Thelma the Unicorn



Release poster

<b>Directed by</b>	<u>Jared Hess</u>
	<u>Lynn Wang</u>
<b>Screenplay by</b>	<u>Jared Hess</u>
	<u>Jerusha Hess</u>
<b>Based on</b>	<i>Thelma the Unicorn</i> by <u>Aaron Blabey</u>
<b>Produced by</b>	<u>Pam Coats</u>
<b>Starring</b>	<u>Brittany Howard</u>
	<u>Will Forte</u>
	<u>Jemaine Clement</u>
	<u>Edi Patterson</u>
	<u>Fred Armisen</u>
	<u>Zach Galifianakis</u>
	<u>Jon Heder</u>
<b>Edited by</b>	<u>Shondrella Avery</u>
	<u>Edie Ichioka</u> <sup>[1]</sup>

argument about him and the rest of her friends' not being at the show, resulting in the two falling out. Thelma soon reveals her secret to Vic, but Vic doesn't care, stating that putting on a facade is the only way to succeed in the industry. Vic convinces Thelma to pretend dating internet star Danny Stallion to increase her fame. Meanwhile, Nikki orders her assistant, Megan, to find some dirt on Thelma in order to ruin her image.

Eventually, Vic manages to book Thelma a spot on SparklePalooza. However, during an awards ceremony in which Thelma is attending, Megan, after discovering her "horn" coming loose, confronts Thelma in the bathroom, washes off her unicorn disguise and threatens to reveal her deception unless she permanently quits the music business. Reluctantly, Thelma agrees and leaves, causing her to be declared as missing as a result. Two weeks later, Thelma hitches a ride with the driver who instigated her unicorn disguise and reveals that he's been hiding a secret from his girlfriend, as he feels that she wouldn't accept him for who he is. Inspired, Thelma tells the driver to drop her off at a gas station where she reunites with her friends.

Wanting to fix things, Thelma and her friends go to SparklePalooza just as Nikki is about to go on. After evading Nikki and Megan, Thelma dons her unicorn persona and proceeds to reveal her true self by wiping off her disguise. Although outraged at first, the crowd soon accepts Thelma for who she is when she and her friends play a song about embracing one's true self. Touched by her performance, a reformed Nikki rejects both Megan and Vic as her clients.

Sometime later, Thelma and her friends are still in the music business, now under a record deal made by Peggy. Suddenly, the driver arrives and accidentally drenches Otis in white paint and feathers, giving him the appearance of a pegasus.

<b>Music by</b>	<u>John Powell</u>
<b>Production companies</b>	<u>Netflix Animation</u>
	<u>Scholastic</u>
	<u>Entertainment</u>
<b>Distributed by</b>	<u>Netflix</u>
<b>Release date</b>	May 17, 2024
<b>Running time</b>	93 minutes
<b>Country</b>	United States
<b>Language</b>	English

## Voice cast

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- Brittany Howard as Thelma, a mini-sized pony that is painted to resemble an unicorn
- Will Forte as Otis, a donkey and Thelma's best friend
- Jemaine Clement as Vic Diamond, a talent agent
- Edi Patterson as Megan, a rival talent agent
- Fred Armisen as Danny Stallion, a horse
- Zach Galifianakis as Crusty Trucker
- Jon Heder as Reggie, a llama
- Shondrella Avery as Zirconia<sup>[3]</sup>
- Ally Dixon as Nikki Narwhal, a famously pampered but vicious narwhal
- Maliaka Mitchell as Peggy Purvis, a blind elderly record dealer
- Jared Hess as Gerald

## Production

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In June 2019, it was announced that Netflix acquired the film rights to Aaron Blabey's children's book *Thelma the Unicorn* after a bidding war, and was developing an animated musical adaptation. It would be directed by Jared Hess (who wrote the script with his wife Jerusha) and Lynn Wang with Blabey serving as

an executive producer alongside Patrick Hughes.<sup>[4][5]</sup> Pam Coats was announced to produce the film in April 2023.<sup>[6]</sup> Mikros Animation provided the animation.<sup>[7]</sup>

In January 2024, Brittany Howard, Will Forte, Jemaine Clement, Edi Patterson, Fred Armisen, Zach Galifianakis, Jon Heder, Maliaka Mitchell, and Ally Dixon were announced as part of the cast. This is the second collaboration between Heder and Hess since *Napoleon Dynamite* (2004) and the 2012 animated TV series of the same name.<sup>[8]</sup>

## Music

Brittany Howard's cover of "Are You Gonna Go My Way", by Lenny Kravitz, is heard in the film but not included on the soundtrack.

Additionally, "Hold On, I'm Comin'" by Sam & Dave, a rerecording of "Conga" by Gloria Estefan, "Diamond Girl" by Nice & Wild, "After Midnight" by Chappell Roan, "Dance Across The Floor" by Jimmy Horne, "Shake Your Pants" by Cameo, "Hollywood Swinging" by Kool & the Gang, "Bodyshakin'" by 911, "Dancing To The Beat" by Clarence Murray, "Slam" by Onyx, "Jump into the Fire" by Harry Nilsson, and Jeff McCollister's "The Hardest Part of Breaking Up" and "Right Where It Counts", are also heard in the film but not included on the soundtrack album.

Despite not partaking in the film's ensemble voice cast, Baraka May recorded an original song "Blubber Trouble" for both the film and its soundtrack.

## Musical numbers

No.	Title	Performer(s)	Length
1.	" <u>Are You Gonna Go My Way</u> "	<u>Brittany Howard</u>	3:32
2.	"Blubber Trouble"	Baraka May	2:24
3.	"Fire Inside"	Howard	1:57
4.	"Pool Boys"	Pool Boys & Big Freddie	2:15
5.	"Hurricane"	Howard	1:16
6.	"Big"	Howard	2:21
7.	"Here Comes The Cud"	<u>Fred Armisen &amp; Howard</u>	2:33
8.	"3 C's To Success"	<u>Jemaine Clement</u>	3:18
9.	"Only Unicorn"	Howard	2:16
10.	"Just As Your Are"	Howard	3:26
11.	"Goldmine"	Howard	3:55
Total length:			28:03

## Score

In December 2023, John Powell was confirmed to compose the film's score, beginning work the same month.<sup>[9]</sup>

## Soundtrack

The soundtrack album, *Thelma the Unicorn: Soundtrack From The Netflix Film*, is produced by Mike Elizondo. It was released alongside the film's premiere on May 17.

Track listing

No.	Title	Producer(s)	Length
1.	"Fire Inside" (performed by <u>Brittany Howard</u> )	<u>Mike Elizondo</u> • <u>John Powell</u>	1:57
2.	"Blubber Trouble" (performed by Baraka May)	Elizondo	2:24
3.	"Pool Boys" (performed by Pool Boys and Big Freedia)	Elizondo • Powell	2:15
4.	"Hurricane" (performed by Howard)	Elizondo • Powell	1:16
5.	"Big" (performed by Howard)	Elizondo • Powell	2:21
6.	"3 C's To Success" (performed by <u>Jemaine Clement</u> )	Elizondo • Powell	3:18
7.	"Here Comes The Cud" (performed by <u>Fred Armisen</u> and Howard)	Elizondo • Powell	2:33
8.	"Only Unicorn" (performed by Howard)	Elizondo • Powell	2:16
9.	"Just As You Are" (performed by Howard)	Elizondo • Powell	3:26
10.	"Goldmine" (performed by Howard)	Elizondo • Powell	3:55
11.	"Diners and Carrots"	Elizondo • Powell	3:24
12.	"Becoming a Unicorn"	Elizondo • Powell	1:03
13.	"They Liked Our Music"	Elizondo • Powell	1:37
14.	"Red Carpet"	Elizondo • Powell	2:36
15.	"Schemes and Fantasies"	Elizondo • Powell	2:53
16.	"Blackmail Loo"	Elizondo • Powell	2:30
17.	"Thelma Missing"	Elizondo • Powell	2:02
18.	"Rescue & Coming Clean"	Elizondo • Powell	2:13
19.	"Resolutions"	Elizondo • Powell	2:02
Total length:			45:48

Release

*Thelma the Unicorn* was released on Netflix on May 17, 2024.<sup>[10][8]</sup>

Critical response

On the review aggregator website Rotten Tomatoes, 69% of 13 critics' reviews are positive, with an average rating of 6.1/10.<sup>[11]</sup>

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## External links

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- *Thelma the Unicorn* (<https://www.netflix.com/title/81110501>) on Netflix
  - 
  - *Thelma the Unicorn* (<https://www.imdb.com/title/tt10442352/>) at IMDb
  - *Thelma the Unicorn* (<https://www.metacritic.com/movie/thelma-the-unicorn>) at Metacritic
  - *Thelma the Unicorn* ([https://www.rottentomatoes.com/m/thelma\\_the\\_unicorn](https://www.rottentomatoes.com/m/thelma_the_unicorn)) at Rotten Tomatoes
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