



NEW RELEASES

Elvis

*There must be lights burning brighter somewhere
Got to be birds flying higher in a sky more blue
If I can dream of a better land
Where all my brothers walk hand in hand
Tell me why, oh why, oh why can't my dream come true
Oh why...*

‘While this story is called *Elvis*, it’s also Colonel Tom Parker’s story—the telling of it at least; he’s our way in, our narrator, and an unreliable one at that,’ states writer/director/producer Baz Luhrmann, whose extensive research into the music icon Elvis aided in his discovery of the strange partnership behind the artist’s public success and personal struggles. ‘As I like to say, Colonel Tom Parker was never a colonel, never a Tom, never a Parker, but a fascinating character all the same. He was a carnival barker dedicated to finding that one great act.

‘Nineteen-year-old Elvis Presley had lived for a period of time in one of the few white-designated houses in a Black section of Tupelo, Mississippi,’ the filmmaker continues, ‘where, along with a group of neighbourhood friends, he absorbed the music of both the local juke joints and the Pentecostal revival tents. As he grew up, he fused this with his love of country music. Parker had no ear for music whatsoever, but he was absolutely struck by the effect Elvis’s whole package had on young audiences. As the Colonel says in the film, “It was the greatest carnival act I had ever seen”.’

Luhrmann further adds that, ‘In the mid-1950s in parts of America, carnivals were transitioning into music, mainly country and western. But Parker was always looking for the extraordinary—the one that made the most money, had a great costume, excited the audience, had a strange twist... Just something special, like Elvis.’

Luhrmann recruited Oscar winner Tom Hanks to play the role of Parker, stating, ‘I’d never worked with Tom previously, but I just told him the story and before I even got to the video I’d brought along to show him what I had in mind, he said, “Well, if you want me I’m your guy.” What a gift!’

Hanks has said of the real-life Parker, ‘He was both a genius and a scoundrel. He was a very disciplined man, a wicked smart businessman and a dime-squeezing skinflint, but also a pioneer in a big type of show business that did not exist until Elvis Presley came along. He knew instantaneously that Elvis was a unique artist, he saw his grand potential and knew that if he didn’t make a ton of money off him, somebody else would.’

As Luhrmann reveals in the film, money was a key motivator and, as such, Parker was also possibly the first person to see the financial potential beyond the music: merchandising. ‘He sees how this boy, Elvis, has an effect on an audience, an effect like he’s never seen before and certainly beyond anything

he's seen on the carnival circuit,' the filmmaker notes. 'To Tom Parker, it's the greatest carnival act he's ever witnessed, and he must have it.'

To bring to life the man whose electrifying art and image have permeated the four corners of the world for more than six decades, the filmmakers conducted an extensive search before coming across Austin Butler. Says Luhrmann, 'I knew I couldn't make this film if the casting wasn't absolutely right, and we searched thoroughly for an actor with the ability to evoke the singular natural movement and vocal qualities of this peerless star, but also the inner vulnerability of the artist. I had heard about Austin Butler from his stand-out role opposite Denzel Washington in *The Iceman Cometh* on Broadway, and then I got a call from Denzel, whom I do not know, going out of his way to state that this young actor had a work ethic like no one else he had seen before. Through a journey of extensive screen testing and music and performance workshops, I knew unequivocally that I had found someone who could embody the spirit of one of the world's most iconic musical figures.'

Butler offers, 'What always fascinates me about any icon is the fact that they're first and foremost human. Elvis was the first of his kind, in a way – a kid who comes from absolutely nothing and then becomes the most famous man on the planet. It's the American dream. He also embodied so many eras that it feels like he lived 100 years; it's amazing that he was only here for 42.'

Luhrmann's producing team on *Elvis* consisted of his long-time collaborator Catherine Martin who, as she has since they teamed up for the director's inaugural feature *Strictly Ballroom*, also headed up the production and costume designs, as well as veteran producer Gail Berman of the Jackal Group, Patrick McCormick, and Schuyler Weiss.

Martin relates, 'Baz has always been interested in Elvis so this had been kind of percolating in the background before really coming into focus for us a few years ago. I think I always admired the way that Elvis brought meaning to songs through the quality of his voice. I understood his cultural importance but once Baz related his vision for the film to me, I realised that Elvis's rise to fame was like Icarus flying towards the sun, an extremely poignant and operatic cautionary tale showing the exploitation of fame at all costs.'

Berman states, 'This film is much more than a biopic; we owe that to Baz's deep understanding and appreciation of Elvis not just as a human, but also as a captivating, epic figure through which to tell the story of America. Baz himself is uniquely capable of telling a story that is gripping on its surface while exploring deeper, resonant truths. Elvis' story is packed with so much more than many people know, and Baz, with his unmistakable style and mastery of both film and music, is really the only artist I know who could bring this life to the screen.'

Production notes

ELVIS

Directed by: Baz Luhrmann
©: Warner Bros. Entertainment Inc.
A Bazmark production
A Jackal Group production
A Warner Bros. Pictures presentation
Executive Producers: Toby Emmerich, Courtenay Valenti, Kevin McCormick
Produced by: Baz Luhrmann, Catherine Martin, Gail Berman, Patrick McCormick, Schuyler Weiss
Unit Production Manager: Anne Bruning, Patrick McCormick
Financial Controller: Jeremy Atcliffe
Production Accountant: Prue Williams
Supervising Location Manager: Lauren Cooper
Post-production Supervisor: Henry Karjalainen
Casting by: Denise Chamian, Nikki Barrett
Screenplay by: Baz Luhrmann, Sam Bromell, Craig Pearce, Jeremy Doner
Story by: Baz Luhrmann, Jeremy Doner
Director of Photography: Mandy Walker
A Camera Operator: Jason Ellson
B Camera Operator: Jay Torta
Steadicam Operator: Jason Ellson
Stills Photographer: Hugh Stewart
Visual Effects Supervisor: Tom Wood
Visual Effects by: Rising Sun Pictures, Method Studios, Luma, Mr X
Visual Effects & Opticals by: FIN Design+Effects
Visual Effects by: Cumulus, Future Associate, Resin, Double Barrell, Slate, Mist Studio, Motion Associates, The Avatar Factory, Hollywood Visual Effects
Special Effects Supervisor: Brian Cox
Edited by: Matt Villa, Jonathan Redmond
Production Designers: Catherine Martin, Karen Murphy
Supervising Art Director: Ian Gracie
Set Decorator: Bev Dunn
Costume Designer: Catherine Martin
Hair and Make-up Designer: Shane Thomas
Main Titles by: Inc. Devastudios
End Titles by: The Post Lounge

Music by: Elliott Wheeler
Score Conducted by: Cliff Masterson
Music Supervisor: Anton Monsted
Choreography: Polly Bennett
Sound Design: Wayne Pashley
Production Sound Mixer: David Lee
Re-recording Mixers: Andy Nelson, Michael Keller
Supervising Sound Editor: Wayne Pashley
Publicist: Fiona Searson
Digital Intermediate and Digital Dailies by: The Post Lounge
Filmed at: Village Roadshow Studios

Cast

Austin Butler (*Elvis Presley*)
Tom Hanks (*Colonel Tom Parker*)
Olivia DeJonge (*Priscilla*)
Helen Thomson (*Gladys*)
Richard Roxburgh (*Vernon*)
Kelvin Harrison Jr (*B.B. King*)
David Wenham (*Hank Snow*)
Kodi Smit-McPhee (*Jimmie Rodgers Snow*)
Luke Bracey (*Jerry Schilling*)
Dacre Montgomery (*Steve Binder*)
Leon Ford (*Tom Diskin*)
Gary Clark Jr (*Arthur ‘Big Boy’ Crudup*)
Yola (*Sister Rosetta Tharpe*)
Natasha Bassett (*Dixie Locke*)
Xavier Samuel (*Scotty Moore*)
Adam Dunn (*Bill Black*)
Alton Mason (*Little Richard*)
Shonka Dukureh (*Big Mama Thornton, Pentecostal singer*)

Australia-USA 2022
159 mins

A Warner Bros release

NEW RELEASES

Nitram
From Fri 1 Jul
Wayfinder
From Fri 1 Jul
Brian and Charles
From Fri 8 Jul
Elvis
From Fri 22 Jul
Kurt Vonnegut: Unstuck in Time
From Fri 22 Jul
Hit the Road (Jaddeh Khaki)
From Fri 29 Jul
The Feast
From Fri 19 Aug
Where Is Anne Frank
From Fri 19 Aug
Queen of Glory
From Fri 28 Aug

RE-RELEASES

The Big City (Mahanagar)
From Fri 22 Jul
Alice in the Cities (Alice in den Städten)
From Fri 15 Jul
The Harder They Come
From Fri 5 Aug (+ intro by season curator and author Lloyd Bradley on Fri 5 Aug 18:15)
Burning an Illusion
From Fri 19 Aug

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