



MONDAY, JANUARY 06, 2025

MICHAEL GILTZ AT WORK

WORLDWIDE BOX OFFICE FOR WEEK
ENDING JANUARY 5, 2025

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A film's gross for the last seven days, followed by its total worldwide gross. I begin with data from

Comscore and then pull from every other source available.



1. **Mufasa: The Lion King**—\$148m / \$476m worldwide
2. **Sonic The Hedgehog 3**—\$124m / \$336m ww
3. **Moana 2**—\$77m / \$960m
4. **Nosferatu**—\$57m / \$100m ww
5. Octopus With Broken Arms aka Wu Sha 3 (Manslaughter 3)—\$54m / \$76m ww
6. **Big World**—\$49m / \$79m ww
7. **Wicked**—\$47m / \$681m ww
8. Honey Money Phony—\$25m / \$30m ww
9. A Complete Unknown—\$19m / \$42m ww
10. Gladiator II—\$15m / \$450m ww
11. **Detective Conan: Crossroad in the Ancient Capitol** (2003)—\$9m / \$46m ww
12. Harbin—\$9m / \$24m ww
13. Babygirl—\$9m / \$16m ww
14. Finist. The First Warrior—\$9m ww debut
15. **Conclave**—\$8m / \$61m ww

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BLOG ARCHIVE

- ▼ 2025 (38)
- ▶ March (7)
- ▶ February (25)
- ▼ January (6)

16. Kraven The Hunter--\$6m / \$59m ww
17. The Prosecutor--\$4m / \$32m ww
18. Homestead--\$4m / \$17m ww
19. The Firefighters--\$3m / \$23m ww
20. The Fire Inside--\$3m / \$7m ww
21. Red One--\$2m / \$185m ww
22. Paddington in Peru--\$2m / \$51m ww
23. The Lord of the Rings: The War of the Rohirrim--\$2m / \$18m ww
24. Bogota: City of the Lost--\$2m ww debut
25. Hot Pot Artist aka Huo Guo Yi Shu Jia --\$2m ww debut
26. Pushpa 2: The Rule--\$1m / \$210m ww
27. Her Story aka Hao Dong Xi--\$1m / \$100m ww
28. I Am What I Am 2--\$1m / \$10m ww

Bold: movies that have or likely will triple their reported budgets. That's my standard for a movie being a box office hit from theatrical alone. Many films will be profitable for a studio even if they don't triple their reported budget, but it's a good marker to indicate a big hit.

ANALYSIS

Let me make several pointed comments this week.

NORTH AMERICAN 2024 BOX OFFICE WAS GREAT -- The North American box office take of \$8.5b for 2024 is *terrific!* Anyone suggesting it's a disappointment is crazy. Studios released 25% fewer wide releases than was typical from 2016-2019. So we reasonably expected 25% lower box office than was the average for those years. To be conservative, we hoped for \$8 billion. But the movies that were released overperformed nicely and instead of a rock solid \$8.3b we scored \$8.5b. China, by the way fell 23% and only grossed \$5.8b. The reasons they're not equaling or surpassing North America as the biggest market? An economic downturn and government interference that's turned people from Hollywood films and made it harder to market those films even when they're granted permission to come to China. Further proof Hollywood should keep pushing to show their movies in China but not bothr catering in absurd or offensive ways to its totalitarian government.

Also, family films dominated, so the fear that families would never return to movie-going is utterly demolished. Indeed, from *Barbie* and *Oppenheimer* last year to a string of huge hits this year (the highest grossing R-rated film of all time, the highest grossing

THE ULTIMATE GRAMMY
PREVIEW: THE BEST
ALBUMS OF 2024

WORLDWIDE BOX OFFICE
FOR WEEK ENDING
JANUARY 26, 2025

THE 250 BEST ALBUMS OF
THE 21ST CENTURY...SO
FAR

WORLDWIDE BOX OFFICE
FOR WEEK ENDING
JANUARY 19, 2025

WORLDWIDE BOX OFFICE
FOR WEEK ENDING
JANUARY 12, 2025

WORLDWIDE BOX OFFICE
FOR WEEK ENDING
JANUARY 5, 2025

- 2024 (37)
- 2023 (8)
- 2022 (6)
- 2021 (8)
- 2020 (7)
- 2019 (93)
- 2018 (34)
- 2017 (6)
- 2016 (2)
- 2015 (11)
- 2014 (2)
- 2013 (5)
- 2012 (17)
- 2011 (15)
- 2010 (10)
- 2009 (43)
- 2008 (86)
- 2007 (781)
- 2006 (2405)
- 2005 (5)

live action musical of all time, etc.) it's very clear audiences are more than ready to go see movies. Hollywood just needs to make them, release them and LEAVE THEM IN MOVIE THEATERS.

HOLLYWOOD NEEDS MIDBUDGET AND SMALL BUDGET MOVIES

-- A mix of movies is essential. Yes, Hollywood had lots of sequels and remakes and spin-offs. It always had them and it always will. But look at the key role played by horror, films for adults, and by mid-budget and low budget films. *Nosferatu* was a huge gamble and paid off with its \$50mb for a horror flick based on an old silent movie most have never heard of before. It lines up director Robert Eggers as the next potential Guillermo Del Toro/Peter Jackson or maybe Christopher Nolan. But we also had *Conclave* and *A Complete Unknown* and *Heretic* and *Anora* and *The Best Christmas Pageant Ever* and *Babygirl*. They include mid-sized and very modestly budgeted films pitched to adults, families and a wide range of tastes. These movies are absolutely crucial for developing talent like Eggers and keeping theaters full. Not all of them will be hits of course.

STUDIOS ARE WRONG ABOUT STREAMING WINDOWS -- Studios have mostly lost their minds on streaming windows. None of them will release actual grosses for their Premium Video on Demand. So they're either making so much money they don't want talent to realize that (which is the reason they treated grosses from DVD and BLuRay rental and sales like a state secret) OR the more likely scenario that the take isn't that impressive. They insist it isn't hurting box office. Bull. I was about to go see a movie and saw an ad saying it was already available in the home and it made me feel a bit of a fool for going anyway. And I'm a definite outlier when it comes to movie-going, since I will go all the time.

Disney is perhaps the best about respecting windows, supporting the crucial theatrical experience and thus squeezing out every penny of profit at every stage. Universal is the worst. Even with a critically acclaimed leggy hit like *The Wild Robot*, they rushed it to PVOD in just 18 days. They of course would argue the film's success proves it's not a problem. But that's a remarkable word of mouth smash. And their ads for it almost kept me from going to see it in the cinema. And doing so teaches consumers to wait. Why bother going to a movie theater? You can just sit on your couch and wait.

Putting *Wicked* onto PVOD when the film was still making money worldwide is bonkers. They have the sequel coming in November. They have Oscar nominations ahead. They have three months of little competition. AND they could be grossing a lot more worldwide. But Universal knows the second it's online there will be high quality bootlegs everywhere, discouraging people from going to see it in a theater. This film is an event and should be treated as such. One trade said it's not as well known in the non-English speaking world. (It's a huge hit of course in the UK, Australia and New Zealand.) Not true. The stage musical ran for a blockbuster nine years in Japan. It saw productions in Germany, Mexico, Amsterdam, Norway, Sweden, Poland and so on, with a new production opening in Spain in October. It also toured many other countries not mentioned. Plus, a mini-

version played in theme parks around the world seen by tourists coming from countless countries. It is a worldwide property and treated right, *Wicked* should squeeze out every penny from every country and grow its overseas take for the sequel. Rushing it to PVOD when it's making oodles of cash is counterproductive in every way and a slap in the face to exhibitors. And not for nothing, but *Wicked* is far more enjoyable on the big screen with an audience than seeing it at home.

INDIA SHOULD TOUT ITS FILMS TO THE WORLD -- India and other countries need to learn the power of boasting about their box office. Too often, producers in China and India and Hong Kong and elsewhere care only about their home markets. They don't even bother to tout the grosses of their hits to Comscore and the trades, any easy step that brings them great press and free marketing. Why ever not? Two cases in point. *Pushpa 2: The Rule* is the top-grossing film of all time in India, passing *Baahubili 2*. (By the way, those are both Telugu films, showing how the outdated idea of Bollywood and its Hindi language films dominating Indian box office is long gone.) Now *Pushpa 2: The Rule* is about to challenge 2016's *Dangal* to become the highest grossing Indian film of all time worldwide. Simiarly, Hong Kong's *The Last Dance* is the highest grossing Hong Kong film of all time and has made oodles of money in China and elsewhere. Both films should be on the lips of anyone reading the trades but I have struggled just to get an accurate read on their grosses week to week. Producers in these countries *and* the film industry honchos are missing out. Report your grosses! Bang the drum for your big hits!

Happy New Year!

NOTES

mb = a film's budget in millions of US dollars; ww = worldwide

1. Mufasa: The Lion King—\$200mb

2. Sonic The Hedgehog 3—\$120mb

3. Moana 2—Is the budget lower since it was intended for tv, at first? Or higher because they had to rethink everything? Disney says it cost \$150mb, just like the original. You can bet Dwayne Johnson gets more than his share of coconuts, but that won't matter with a hit like this.

4. Nosferatu—\$50mb for Robert Eggers, acclaimed director of *The Witch*, *The Lighthouse* and *The Northman*. That had his biggest budget and was not a commercial success. I saw him as more of an arthouse guy. But backers stuck with him, gave him a big budget and a starry cast for a remake of *Nosferatu*, which I guess is classier than remaking *Dracula* but still a hard sell I thought. And on Christmas Day? That's counter-programming I was not behind. Happily, I was wrong and Eggers looks more like the next Peter Jackson/Guillermo Del Toro than a guy given big budgets too fast or for the wrong projects. Good for him!

5. Octopus With Broken Arms aka Wu Sha 3 (Manslaughter 3)– Chinese drama about businessman's daughter kidnapped from his home.

6. Big World—\$29m ww debut. Chinese drama starring pop star and actor Jackson Yee as a young man living with cerebral palsy. Yee has gone from boyband TFBoys to having the Mandarin song of the year in 2017 to success in TV and film. How's his English, asks Hollywood?

7. Wicked—\$150mb for each part, so \$300mb total plus beaucoup marketing. It's a big movie!

8. Honey Money Phony—Chinese rom-com about young woman suddenly burdened with debt who falls for a (very handsome) young con man. Will he go straight for her or teach her his wicked ways so she can get out from under this financial disaster?

9. A Complete Unknown—\$60mb+ for this Bob Dylan biopic? That's a lot of money for a film about Dylan going electric at Newport. I mean, I want to see it but then I'm a Dylan fanatic. Off to a very good start and star Timothée Chalamet is sure to get an Oscar nomination, so it should keep going. But \$180m worldwide seems highly unlikely to me, if not impossible. (Do other countries give a toss about this? Is Chalamet a big enough draw for this story? I doubt it.) I'm glad it was made, but it was made for too much. Like *Gladiator II*, this will be seen as a commercial success, but it's not.

10. *Gladiator II*—\$250mb for Ridley Scott sword and sandals epic. It needs \$750m worldwide for me to call it a hit from theatrical alone but \$600m would be just fine. It's got swords. It's got sandals. Does it have legs? No, it does not. This is the sort of film that everyone thinks of as a hit, but actually didn't deliver. The talk of *Gladiator 3* is nonsense. Maybe many years from now they'll use the name to launch a new franchise, but this is the end for now.

11. Detective Conan: Crossroad in the Ancient Capitol (2003)—China reissue of Japanese animated franchise entry. Film had \$32m before reissue in China. I mean, they keep making them so I *assume* they're profitable.

12. *Harbin*—Comscore has this at \$8m but the Korean box office shows it with \$15m total. It opened Dec 24, so I assume the national chart is more accurate. *Harbin* is a South Korean historical drama set in the early 1900s about rebels fighting against the Japanese occupation of Korea. When one rebel leader shows mercy to Japanese prisoners and his men pay the price, he vows to redeem himself by assassinating the first Prime Minister of Japan. So this one will probably *not* have a good run in Japan.

13. *Babygirl*—\$20mb for this Nicole Kidman sexy drama about a powerful businesswoman finding her kink with a younger, dominating man..her intern, no less! No milk was harmed in the making of this movie.

14. *Finist. The First Warrior*—a Russian fantasy film starring actor Kirill Zaytsev as "the strongest, most agile, and handsome hero of

Belogorye," according to Wikipedia. Zaytsev certainly fits the bill, though since Belogorye currently has fewer than 3000 people, that may not be such a major claim. Russians are surely starved for homegrown cinema; it's been a while since Russian films made the charts. But I couldn't even find a trailer for it on YouTube.

15. Conclave—a reported \$20mb for this Vatican thriller means this is a hit. It's at \$60m and still going strong, with a boost from potential Oscar noms. I do *not* see the point in putting it on PVD and flooding the market with bootlegs while potentially harming box office. This is exactly the sort of film that can play and play in theaters.

16. Kraven The Hunter—\$120mb. Ouch.

17. The Prosecutor—Chinese drama starring Donnie Yen, who uncovers a deep conspiracy when a poor young man is framed for drug trafficking. Not on Donnie's watch!

18. Homestead—faith-based post-apocalyptic drama from Angel Studios. A survivalist fantasy. Based on a series of ten, poorly reviewed novels.

19. The Firefighters—Korean drama with hot young newbie joining firefighter squad, only to butt heads with a legendary veteran.

20. The Fire Inside—\$12mb for this indie drama about the true story of female Olympian boxer from Flint, Michigan. It's a stellar week for director Barry Jenkins, who wrote and produced this film and sees his family film *Mufasa: The Lion King* finding its audience.

21. Red One—Dwayne Johnson and Chris Evans action/Xmas comedy. A budget reportedly up to \$250mb. It's a theatrical failure, but that failure would have been just as clear if it had gone straight to streaming. Now at least it is (almost) paying for a worldwide marketing blitz and that can only help. Remember how people rented crap movies at Blockbuster simply because they'd "heard" of it during the theatrical run? Same idea.

22. Paddington in Peru—\$50mb? I'm just guessing. (That's sort of midpoint between the original and *Paddington 2*.) Sadly, three times is not the charm artistically for this once-perfect franchise.

23. The Lord of the Rings: War of the Rohirrim—per Screendollar, the budget is \$30mb for this animated prequel to *The Hobbit* and *The Lord of the Rings* movies. Even at that price, it's a flop. Taken solely from minor footnotes in the novels, it was a gamble but a smart one. An animated film won't be compared to Peter Jackson's masterpiece. (See: the TV series.) And it's not retelling stories we've already heard. (See: superhero movies that go back to the well by redoing an origin story for Superman, Spiderman, et al.) Unfortunately, you still have to be good. The trailer I saw disappointed and audiences are not responding. A pity.

24. Bogota: City of the Lost—Korean drama about immigrants in Colombia who fall into illegal smuggling out of a desperate need to survive. No the best tourism ad for Bogotá.

25. Hot Pot Artist aka Huo Guo Yi Shu Jia –A young Chinese man dreams of becoming a film director, but somehow ends up running a hot pot restaurant for artists, instead.

26. 28. Pushpa 2: The Rule—\$60mb. This is now reportedly the highest grossing Indian film of all time, passing *Baahubili 2!* The Telugu language action film is also closing in on 2016's *Dangal* to maybe become the highest grossing Indian film of all time. It's a big hit, but it's been off the worldwide charts for a few weeks now, in part perhaps because Indian companies wrongly don't recognize the power of marketing box office hits to promote both the movie at hand and Indian cinema overall. We're an afterthought for an industry that historically focused on its domestic market alone. But now Indian films regularly debut in the Top 10 in North America. Since *Pushpa 2* grossed at least \$140m in India that means it's grossed a huge \$70m overseas, more than most of their movies make in total. They should be boasting about it. I'm in London and jaws dropped when I asked some Indian workers at Pret a Manger if they'd seen it yet. You've heard of it, they asked? One worker called over another worker and then asked me what I thought of it in front of her, just so she could be astonished as well.

First notes: The original Indian/Telugu film cost half as much and only grossed \$46m. So the sequel cost more than the original movie's total gross. But it *doubled* the original's entire gross in its first week. Originally, a chunk of the two films were shot at the same time, but they did significant reshoots, so just 10% came from the first go-round. Yes, it was the highest grossing Indian movie of 2021; yes it's the highest grossing Telugu films of all time. But even the lowest estimate of the original's budget is \$23mb, so it wasn't a huge hit to begin with. I am puzzled. Are the economics different for Indian films? I wouldn't be surprised if the calculations were different. There are no reports of the first film being a particular hit on streaming or on demand etc, which might justify all this. I think it's another example of Indian films committing to a sequel before there's any demand. Indeed, this film was cut into two parts before the first release. A number of other films seem to be two-parters, which is a very rare thing in Hollywood but less so in India. Is it a good idea? I don't think so.

27. Her Story aka Hao Dong Xi --Chinese drama, literally translated as "Nice One." Single mom moves in with another single gal; adventures ensue. I don't like calling film's hits without some reporting on its budget. But I can't imagine this type of film costing even \$20m, so it's a hit!

28. I Am What I Am 2—Chinese animated film is a sequel to a 2021 animated action comedy. This time, a newcomer to Shanghai agrees to fight in a boxing/martial arts tournament to raise money for his ailing dad. It's a spiritual sequel to the first film, which was critically praised but only grossed \$40m ww. In that film, a kid competes in a lion dancing competition while *his* ailing dad is in a coma.