

## Mary and Max

Australia 2010

**Directed by**  
Adam Elliot**Written by**  
Adam Elliot**Director of photography**  
Gerald Thompson**Original Score**  
Dale Cornelius**Voice Cast***Mary* Daisy Dinkle  
Toni Collette*Max* Jerry Horovitz  
Philip Seymour Hoffman  
narrator

Barry Humphries

*Damien Popodopolous*  
Eric Bana

88 min

Welcome to our second animated film of the season after the success of *Chico and Rita* back in November. We sense another hit!

A belated but hugely welcome release for the audaciously glum, poignant and funny feature debut of Australian mud-moulder Adam Elliot, whose marvellous 2003 short *Harvie Krumpet* won him an Oscar. Elliot is a talent eccentric enough to make Nick Park look like an office drone, and the serious sadness underpinning his vision only makes the humour work better.

*Tim Robey, Daily Telegraph*

There are a myriad of reasons why *Mary and Max*, the long-awaited full-length animated feature from Adam Elliot, didn't receive its just praise last year, none of which are very convincing. But Elliot's downtrodden, highly imaginative fable became something of a cult item. What the film negligibly lacks in narrative drive, it makes up with a vast array of character nuances and a joyfully beguiling use of imagery; it's nice to see such ambitious camera work in such a small, animated film. The sight gags are plentiful and, though undeniably twisted, the cumulative emotional heft of Elliot's work here is ultimately quite hopeful.

*Chris Cabin, Slant Magazine*

Alternately heart-warming and heart-breaking, the elegiacally faltering, drawn-out pen pal relationship between Mary and Max is at bottom a canny device which provides a window on to the interior world of two lonely, marginalised souls. Their platonic love affair plays out like a ballroom dance between two terminally left-footed but devoted partners - awkward, fumbling, funny and tender all at once. Philip Seymour Hoffman in particular deserves kudos for his brilliantly droll, expressive voicing of Max - well, expressive insofar as a persistent monotone, punctuated by off-kilter syntax and intonation can be. So too do Adam Elliot and his 50-strong crew, whose labour of love took 57 weeks to shoot. The boldly sombre palette urges you to look for subtleties in technique, rather simply be dazzled by the rainbow effect characteristic of most contemporary animation. Some touches are pristinely realistic and subtle, like the quivering of lips or the welling up of eyes on a face about to cry. Others, like the monochrome, unwelcoming vision of Max's New York are abstractly poetic. While the film's swerves in tone can at times feel as uncomfortable as its protagonists, just like them, Elliot's unique film - a perfect marriage of form and content - has charm, curiosity and heart in spades.

*Sophie Ivan, Film4*

Our next screening...

**Meek's Cutoff (US)**

Tue 21 February 2012

Dir: Kelly Reichardt

Superb western focusing more on the women-folk than the gun-toting males.

