



Choose a Section

Search bar with a magnifying glass icon.

## REVIEWS

### ANNIE

| Roger Ebert

January 1, 1982 | 0

In the abstract, "Annie" is fun. It has lots of movement and color, dance and music, sound and fury. In the particular, it has all sorts of problems, and I guess the only way to really enjoy the movie is to just ignore the particulars. I will nevertheless mention a few particulars.

One is the story itself, about how Little Orphan Annie is rescued from a cruel orphanage by a billionaire who wants a Rent-An-Orphan for Christmas. This is said to be a universal story. Critics have written that you just can't help cheering for Annie as she faces the cold world with pluck and courage. I didn't find myself cheering much, though, since Annie didn't seem to need the encouragement; as played by the feisty young Aileen Quinn, she is the sort of child who makes adults run for the hills.

The adventures she gets herself into are likewise questionable. I've never thought of "Oliver!" as a particularly realistic musical, but at least when its little hero said "Please, sir, more food?" there was a hint of truth. "Annie" has been plunged into pure fantasy, into the mindless sort of musical boosterism that plays big for Broadway theater parties but almost always translates to the movie screen as sheer contrivance. "Annie" is not about anything. It contains lots of subjects (such as cruel orphanages, the Great Depression, scheming comen, heartless billionaires, and President Franklin Delano Roosevelt) but it isn't about them. It's not even really about whether Annie will survive her encounters with them, since the book of this musical is so rigorously machine-made, so relentlessly formula, it's one of those movies where you can amaze your friends by leaving the auditorium, standing blindfolded in the lobby and correctly predicting the outcome.

And yet I sort of enjoyed the movie. I enjoyed the energy that was visible on the screen, and the sumptuousness of the production numbers, and the good humor of several of the performances -- especially those by [Albert Finney](#), as Daddy Warbucks, and [Carol Burnett](#), as the wicked orphanage supervisor, Miss Hannigan. Aileen Quinn sort of grew on me, too. She cannot be said to really play a child --at least not the sort of plausible flesh-and-blood child that [Henry Thomas](#) creates in "[E.T. The Extra-Terrestrial](#)" But Quinn is talented, can dance well and sing passably, and does not seem to be an overtrained puppet like, say, [Ricky Schroder](#). She seems more like the kind of kid who will get this acting out of her system and go on to be student body president.

If there is a center to the film, it belongs to Albert Finney. He has a thankless task: He must portray Daddy Warbucks as a self-centered, smug rich man who has everything in the world, except love, and who learns to love through the example of a little girl. This is the sort of role actors kill over -- to avoid playing. Albert Finney has the true grit. He's gone through this personality transformation twice; he starred in "[Scrooge](#)" in 1970. This time, he even pulls it off, by underplaying. He isn't too aloof at the beginning, and he's not too softhearted at the end. He has a certain detachment. Annie may win his heart, but she'll still have to phone for an appointment.

Will kids like the movie? I honestly don't know. When I was a kid, I didn't much like movies about other kids, maybe because I was jealous (why does that kid get to ride a horse in the Derby?). The movie was promoted as a family entertainment, but was it really a family musical, even on the stage? I dunno. I think it was more of a product, a clever concoction of nostalgia, hard-sell sentiment, small children, and cute dogs. The movie is the same mixture as before. It's like some kind of dumb toy that doesn't do anything or go anywhere, but it is fun to watch as it spins mindlessly around and around.

Print Page

Like 13

+1 0

Tweet 1

More Reviews and a Few Great Offers!

Ads by Adblade



16 Celebs Who Ruined Their Faces Beyond Repair...



10 Screen Characters You Never Knew Were Based on Real People



Celebs taking bare selfies seem to think that Nude is the new Black



29 of The Most Well Endowed in Hollywood!



9 Celebs Who Ruined Their Faces To The Point Of No Return...



30 Child Actors Who Tragically Died Young

## POPULAR BLOG POSTS

---

**Who do you read? Good Roger, or Bad Roger?** Roger Ebert

This message came to me from a reader named Peter Svensland. He and a fr...

---

**10 Underrated Female Performances of 2014** Matt Fagerholm

Ten underrated female performances from 2014 worthy of Oscar consideration.

---

**The Ten Best Films of 2014** The Editors

The ten best films of 2014, as chosen by the film critics of RogerEbert.com.

---

**"Pan"'s Labyrinth** Eric Haywood

Rooney Mara is playing Tiger Lily in the new "Pan." Eric Haywood took notice of the casting on Twitter and the respon...

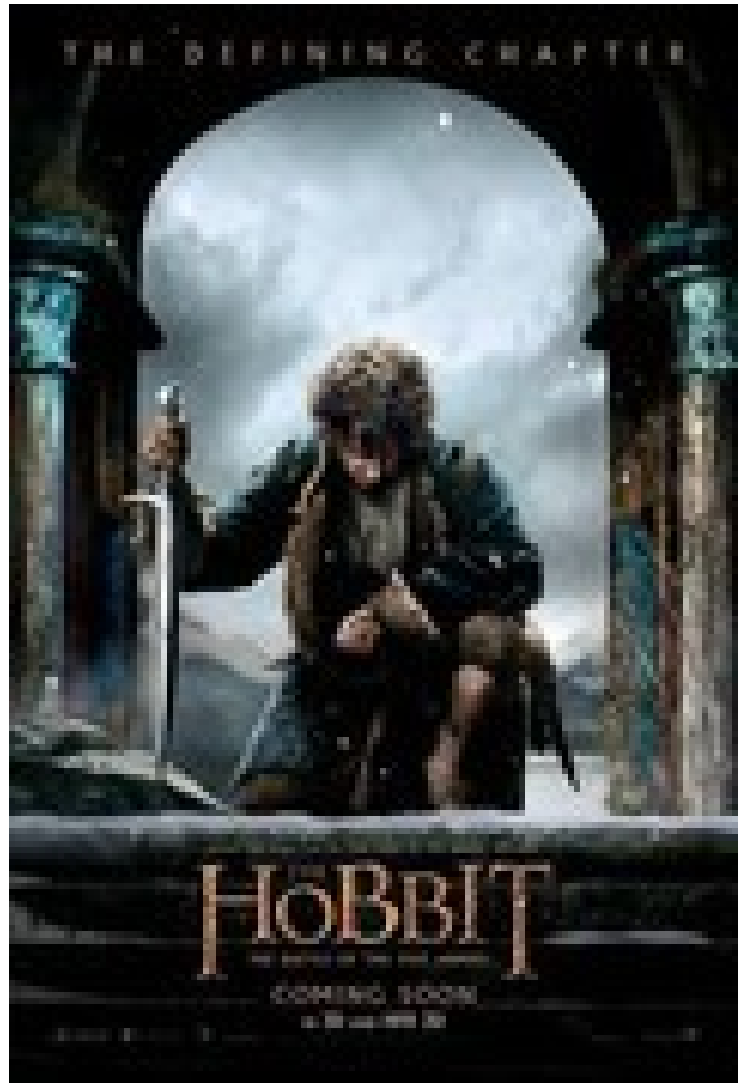
---

## POPULAR REVIEWS



Exodus: Gods and Kings

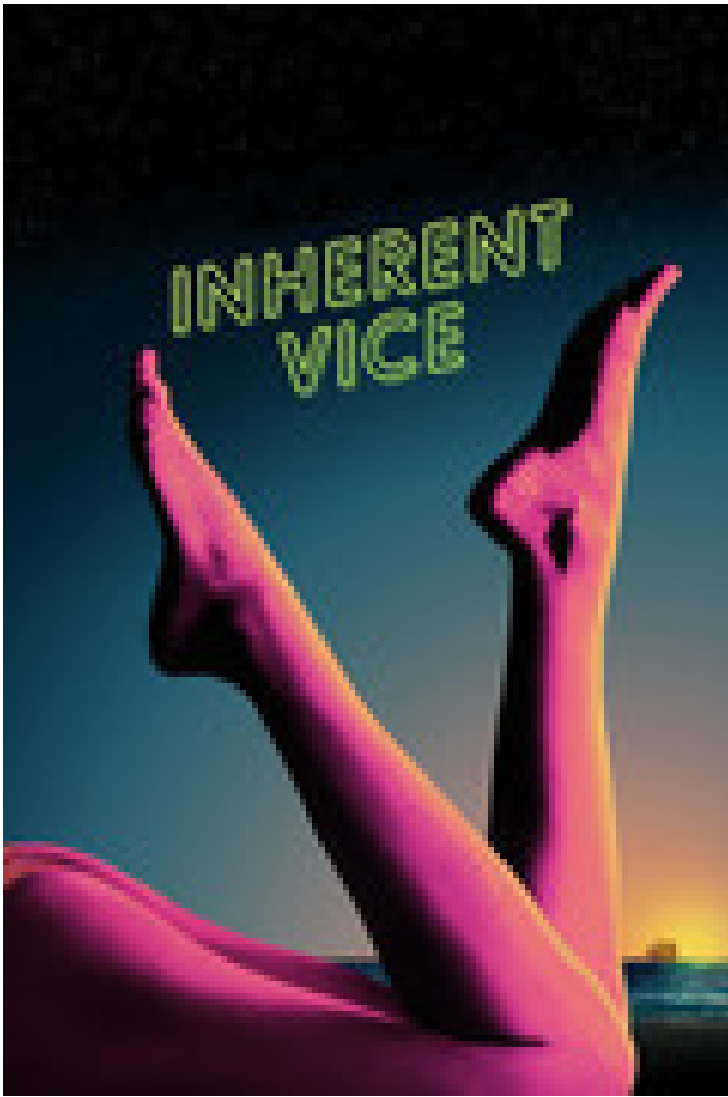
□ □



The Hobbit: The Battle of the Five Armies

□ □ □





Inherent Vice  
□ □ □ □



Dying of the Light  
□ □

Reveal Comments



**ANNIE (1982)**  
 Drama, Musical  
 Rated PG  
 128 minutes

**WATCH THIS MOVIE**

Google Play (Streaming)  
 iTunes (Streaming)

[Queue It](#)

Powered by GoWatchIt

A D V E



## EXCLUSIVE:

These 70 Year olds look 40 - You wont believe their transformations!

[LEARN MORE >>](#)

### SUBSCRIBE TO OUR MAILING LIST

Enter Your Email Address

Subscribe

A D V E

SEE HOW TUNDRA STACKS UP

TOYOTA Let's Go Places

COMPARE TUNDRA FIND A DEALER SEE OFFERS

## The Ebert Club

The Ebert Club is our hand-picked selection of content for Ebert fans. You will receive a weekly newsletter full of movie-related tidbits, articles, trailers, even the occasional streamable movie. Club members also get access to our members-only section on RogerEbert.com

Premiere Member : \$20.00USD - yearly

Subscribe



A D V E

[REVIEWS RSS](#)

## RELATED ARTICLES



### "PAN"'S LABYRINTH

by Eric Haywood

### JOY AND TRIUMPH: RECLAIMING THE IMAGE OF BLACK WOMEN IN CINEMA

by ReBecca Theodore-Vachon

### BONNIE & CLARK: HOW A GORY GANGSTER PICTURE LED TO HOLLYWOOD'S FIRST SUPERHERO BLOCKBUSTER

by Brian Doan

## IN THEATERS



If You Don't, I Will

The Hobbit: The Battle of the Five Armies

After The Fall

Exodus: Gods and Kings

Inherent Vice

Magician: The Astonishing Life and Work of Orson Welles

[□ □ □ The Captive](#)

[□ The Color of Time](#)

[□ □ □ Top Five](#)

[□ □ □ We Are the Giant](#)

## MOVIE REVIEWS

[Reviews](#)  
[Great Movies](#)

## BLOGS

[Roger Ebert's Journal](#)  
[Chaz's Blog](#)  
[MZS](#)  
[Tom Shales At Large](#)  
[Far Flungers](#)  
[Scanners](#)

## CHANNELS

[Cannes](#)  
[Demanders](#)  
[Interviews](#)  
[Opening Shots Project](#)  
[Festivals & Awards](#)  
[Sundance](#)  
[Balder and Dash](#)  
[Tributes to Roger](#)  
[Letters](#)  
[Thumbnails](#)  
[Life Itself](#)

## CONTRIBUTORS

[Roger Ebert](#)  
[Chaz Ebert](#)  
[Matt Zoller Seitz](#)  
[Brian Tallerico](#)  
[Simon Abrams](#)  
[Godfrey Cheshire](#)  
[Odie Henderson](#)  
[Glenn Kenny](#)  
[Christy Lemire](#)  
[Sheila O'Malley](#)  
[Susan Wloszczyna](#)  
[Ali Arikan](#)  
[Jim Beaver](#)  
[Steven Boone](#)  
[Danny Bowes](#)  
[Dave Bunting](#)  
[Sean Burns](#)  
[Dan Callahan](#)  
[Christopher Campbell](#)  
[Jen Chaney](#)  
[Seongyong Cho](#)  
[Olivia Collette](#)  
[Edward Copeland](#)  
[Brian Doan](#)  
[Aurore Duiguo](#)  
[Justine Elias](#)

Steve Erickson  
Matt Fagerholm  
Sam Fragoso  
Bruce Fretts  
Michael A. Gonzales  
Ian Grey  
Scott Jordan Harris  
Rowan Kaiser  
Wael Khairy  
Ben Kenigsberg  
Joyce Kulhawik  
Kevin B. Lee  
Donald Liebenson  
Craig D. Lindsey  
Laya Maheshwari  
Marsha McCreadie  
Patrick Z. McGavin  
Nell Minow  
Michael Mirasol  
Jana Monji  
Omar Moore  
Omer M. Mozaffar  
Lisa Nesselson  
Scott Nye  
Michał Oleszczyk  
R. Kurt Osenlund  
Kartina Richardson  
Alyssa Rosenberg  
Lisa Rosman  
Nick Schager  
Barbara Scharres  
Charlie Schmidlin  
Tom Shales  
Krishna Bala Sheno  
Peter Sobczynski  
Bill Stamets  
Scout Tafoya  
ReBecca Theodore-Vachon  
Katherine Tulich  
Gerardo Valero  
Pablo Villaça  
Ignatij Vishnevetsky  
Grace Wang  
Anath White  
Max Winter

---

© Copyright 2014, Ebert Digital LLC

[About the Site](#) [Contact Us](#) [Privacy Policy](#) [Terms of Use](#)

[Movies by Letter](#) [Cast and Crew](#)



