That's My Boy: Film Review
9:00 AM PDT 6/14/2012 by Justin Lowe

The Bottom Line
A proven comedy formula that's facing diminishing returns attempts another rally.

Opens
Friday, June 15
(Columbia Pictures)

Director
Sean Anders

Cast
Adam Sandler, Andy Samberg, Leighton Meester, Vanilla Ice, Tony Orlando, Will Forte, Milo Ventimiglia

Adam Sandler plays a former reality TV star and Andy Samberg portrays his son in the comedy directed by Sean Anders.

By now a well-recognized brand unto themselves, Adam Sandler and his Happy Madison production company represent a firmly entrenched comedy formula that can claim a global fan base prepared to follow wherever the laughs may lead. With enough wedding-related shenanigans to pull in the date crowd, the guffaw-to-gag ratio remains relatively respectable, though there's nothing here that hasn't been attempted many times over. Resistance is futile, however, and will hardly prevent the middling That's My Boy from opening to brisk business, most likely in the midrange of recent Sandler releases.

PHOTOS: '90s All Over Again: 'That's My Boy'
Premiere Draws Sandler, Spade ... and Vanilla Ice

Donny Berger (Sandler) is a burned-out former reality TV star with no job and practically no family, at least none that who stand by him. Now well into his 40s, he's infamous for having slept with his eighth-grade teacher (currently serving a 30-year sentence in the Massachusetts penal system), fathering a son while still a teen and leveraging his notoriety to launch a lucrative TV show and series of celebrity endorsements. But he's pissed it all away and dodged paying taxes in the process -- now he has a $43,000 IRS bill that will land him in jail if he can't quickly raise the cash to pay it off.

He also has neglected his son Todd (Andy Samberg), who moved away as soon as he turned 18 and hasn't spoken with his epically incompetent dad ever since. Despite his traumatic
childhood and a bucketful of neuroses, Todd — whose birth name is Han Solo Berger — is now a
wealthy and successful hedge fund manager who’s about to marry the woman of his dreams. The last
thing he expects is for his estranged father to show up, which Donny does in classic wedding-crasher
style after devising an unsavory scheme to settle his tax debt.

Mortified and about to see the lie he’s told everyone about his deceased parents exposed, Todd
introduces Dad to fiancée Jamie (Leighton Meester) and her family as his best friend. Improbably,
Donny utterly charms the other wedding guests and is soon getting along with everyone except his
son, even after people recognize him as the notorious TV personality with an insatiable addiction to
cheap beer.

Donny’s determined to see his son through an increasingly bumpy wedding weekend, however, as
Todd is confronted by the hostility of Jamie’s Marine brother Chad (Milo Ventimiglia), a
pugnacious priest (James Caan) and a series of mishaps leading up to some serious father-son
bonding over Todd’s calamitous bachelor-party night out. Todd’s quandary over forgiving Donny’s
past and current transgressions begins to pale in comparison to his mounting marriage woes, leaving
the groom with the unenviable choice between a parent he’s tried to avoid and a bride he soon might
want to escape.

This being an Adam Sandler comedy, crude humor predominates at the expense of inherently unique
situations or characters, with a by-now familiar strain of sentimentality emerging in later reels.
Director Sean Anders and screenwriter David Caspe follow the game plan adequately enough, but
the movie is overburdened with incidents that prove only mildly amusing. Anders’ background as an
R-rated comedy writer could have served him better with shepherding the disparate cast and
animating the pacing, but instead the outcome is a bloated runtime that narrowly tips two hours.

VIDEO: 'That's My Boy' Red-Band Trailer With Adam Sandler and Andy Samberg Hits
the Web

In all-on man-child mode, Sandler plays a stereotypical Northeastern white-trash character
recognizable from his exaggerated regional accent, nonstop substance abuse, profanity-dominated
speech and fixation on sex. It’s nothing new for Sandler, who inhabits Donny’s low-life personality like
an alter ego, alternately mugging and emoting with predictable charm.

Every buddy movie needs a straight man, but Samberg is rather more rigid than the role requires,
rarely modulating his performance enough to generate genuine hilarity. Samberg and Sandler’s shared
Saturday Night Live DNA barely registers, and their interactions lack much of the zaniness of the TV
series. Meester remains relegated to a largely functional role that’s essential but hardly inspired. Deft
casting that includes supporting actors Tony Orlando as Todd’s slimy boss, Vanilla Ice as Donny’s
best bud and a sexy Susan Sarandon in a brief cameo as Donny’s incarcerated teacher helps to
enliven the overall mood.

Serviceable lensing by DP Brandon Trost is marred by some inexpertly executed special effects,
but a soundtrack dominated by hairband rockers including Van Halen, Kiss, Foreigner and Def
Leppard provides plenty of tuneful distraction throughout.

That’s My Boy delivers the outrageous situations, nonstop raunchiness and juvenile humor that
Sandler fans typically seek — for those who are actually still in the market for this particular brand of
comedy.

Opens: June 15 (Columbia Pictures)
Production company: Happy Madison Productions
Cast: Adam Sandler, Andy Samberg, Leighton Meester, Vanilla Ice, Tony Orlando, Will Forte, Milo
Ventimiglia, Susan Sarandon, James Caan
Director: Sean Anders
Screenwriter: David Caspe
Producers: Adam Sandler, Jack Giarraputo, Heather Parry, Allen Covert
Executive producers: Barry Bernardi, John Morris, Dennis Dugan, Tim Herlihy
Director of photography: Brandon Trost
Production designer: Aaron Osborne
Costume designer: Ellen Lutter
Editor: Tom Costain
Music: Rupert Gregson-Williams
Rated R, 116 minutes

PHOTO GALLERY
90s All Over Again: 'That's My Boy' Premiere Draws Sandler, Spade ... and Vanilla Ice
Adam Sandler needs to give up, his movies just aren't funny anymore.

8 people liked this.  LIKE  REPLY

I agree

1 person liked this.  LIKE  REPLY

Go away Adam Sandler. You haven't been funny since....never.

3 people liked this.  LIKE  REPLY

You guys are idiots. Obviously his movies have fans if they continue to gross big numbers consistently at the box office.

1 person liked this.  LIKE  REPLY

Come back tomorrow and see how pathetic this weekend's box office take will be. Then ask yourself who the real idiot is. Still don't know? It's you.

4 people liked this.  LIKE  REPLY

what crap.

3 people liked this.  LIKE  REPLY

Adam Sandler hit his peak in the early 90's now any of the movies all suck and aren't worth seeing at all we've seen every joke hit in the groin joke he's got to offer. Sorry but should of quit while he was ahead if he ever was

2 people liked this.  LIKE  REPLY

adam sandler has turned into the new eddie murphy
sandler is to comedy what michael bay is to action