



**STOP MOTION: CELEBRATING HANDMADE ANIMATION ON THE BIG SCREEN**

# Mary and Max

## Mary and Max

*Directed by:* Adam Elliot  
©: Screen Australia, SBS Television, Mel-O-Drama Pictures, Film Victoria  
*Production Company:* Mel-O-Drama Pictures  
*In association with/With the assistance of:* Film Victoria  
*In association with:* SBS Television, Adirondack Pictures  
*Presented by:* Screen Australia  
*Developed/financed with the assistance of:* Screen Australia  
*Australasian Distribution:* Icon Film Distribution  
*International Distribution:* Icon Entertainment International  
*Executive Producers:* Mark Gooder, Paul Hardart, Tom Hardart, Bryce Menzies, Jonathan Page  
*Co-executive Producers:* Andrew Mackie, Richard Payten, Iain Canning  
*Produced by:* Melanie Coombs  
*Line Producer:* Tom Wild  
*Associate Producer:* Pauline Piechota  
*Producers Associate:* Leanne Smith  
*Accountant:* Monika Gehrt  
*Post-production Producer:* Henry Karjalainen  
*Producers Assistant:* Joni Rubin  
*Production Assistants (Additional):* Justin Oldstein, Val Elliot, Elvis Pramod  
*1st Assistant Director:* Sue Collins  
*2nd Assistant Director:* Jemima Daly  
*Continuity:* Jemima Daly  
*Casting:* Chameleon Casting  
*Dramaturg:* Julie Forsyth  
*Script Editor:* Melanie Coombs  
*Written by:* Adam Elliot  
*Director of Photography:* Gerald Thompson  
*Lighting Cameras:* Jon Billington, Robin Plunkett, Ben Speth  
*Visual Effects Supervisor:* Michael Allen  
*Visual Effects Artists:* Curt Sundberg, Darren Bell, Leath Mattner, Giselle Hunter, Reece Sanders  
*Animation Technical Director:* Darren Burgess  
*Animators:* Darren Burgess, Dik Jarman, Anthony Lawrence, John Lewis, Jason Lynch, Craig Ross  
*Armature Design:* Scott Ebdon  
*2D Animation:* BigKidz Entertainment  
*Character Painting:* Isabelle Peppard  
*Motion Control Design/Build:* Gerald Thompson  
*Motion Control Assistant:* Scott Venner  
*Editor:* Bill Murphy  
*1st Assistant Editor:* Glen Whelan  
*2nd Assistant Editor:* Patrick McCabe  
*Designed by:* Adam Elliot  
*Art Director:* Craig Fison  
*Art Department Production Manager:* Bridget Callow  
*Concept Art/Design:* Square i  
*Lead Sculptors:* Darren Bell, Kailem Nutt, Darcy Prendergast  
*Set Construction Manager:* Shaun Patten  
*Costume Designers:* Felicity Hardy, Marion Marks  
*Title Design:* Melanie Etchell  
*Digital Intermediate:* Digital Pictures  
*Film Laboratory:* DeLuxe Melbourne  
*Original Score:* Dale Cornelius  
*Sopranos:* Antoinette Halloran, Danielle Calder  
*Conductor:* Will Larsen  
*Orchestrations:* Dale Cornelius  
*Re-arrangements:* Dale Cornelius, Will Larsen  
*Music Supervisor:* Leanne Smith  
*Copyists:* Will Larsen, Louise Woodward  
*Music Editing:* Dale Cornelius, Will Larsen  
*Score mixed at:* Score Studios

## Adam Elliot on 'Mary and Max'

*Mary and Max* is my fourth clayography, and up to now, each of my films has explored the life of a singular person. With *Mary and Max*, I explore two simultaneous biographies. I see this film as the third major artistic leap in the creation of my films over the last ten years.

The Trilogy, *Uncle*, *Cousin* and *Brother*, are all very similar in style, structure and delivery. My aim with those films was to tell very droll, minimal and static, short 'mini' biographies that enjoin the audience to see and celebrate the unique qualities of 'ordinary' people.

*Harvie Krumpet*, the next film, was a much longer and thorough exploration of a person's life. The production values were much higher, the animation more dynamic, and the plot structure more complex. With *Harvie*, I again aimed to maintain the simplicity of my visual style and again chose deliberately to maintain the single narrator delivering the narrative. And again, the story explored themes of difference, acceptance and loneliness.

With *Mary and Max*, I hope I've maintained my visual style, but delivered the story in a more dynamic way to ensure it maintains the audience's interest over the longer duration. This film again explores our desire for acceptance and love, no matter how different we are! There is still a narrator, the wonderful Barry Humphries, but to this I've added the voices of the two leads, Mary (Toni Collette) and Max (Philip Seymour Hoffman).

I have always avoided too much self-analysis for fear of making my work too prescribed and constructed. I write from the heart, with a desire for a compassionate connection with audiences. I do not write for a specific niche audience, but rather try to tell stories that are universal. I imagine that I am telling the story of someone's life to a very large group of very diverse people from many various countries around an enormous campfire. I try to keep everyone engaged by peppering the story with moments of humour and melancholy. I attempt to mix and balance comedy and tragedy; humour and pathos in a rhythmic and potent manner. With each film I try and arouse ALL the senses; not just the ears and eyes! I see that my job is to 'nourish the audience in a compost of sensory stimulation'.

I have found it very hard to compare *Mary and Max* to other films. I can't find anything 'animated' that is similar. In fact I find more similarities with 'live action' films than animated ones (*45 Charing Cross Road*, *About Schmidt*).

My creative storytelling influences are mainly from other art forms. I am inspired by the portrait photographer Dianne Arbus, the performer Barry Humphries, and the cartoonist and philosopher Michael Leunig.

I treat each new film as a blank canvas that I try to fill with original, potent, and often taboo content. I really hope and feel that *Mary and Max* will push the boundaries and present to the audience something refreshing and different that the animation world has not yet served up.

The film has many dark moments; there is a lot of 'black' amongst the colour palette to heighten the mood of the story. There are two simultaneous worlds represented: Mary's Australian suburban world, and Max's New York City urban world. Mary's world is in a brown palette and Max's is in tones of black, white and grey. Both worlds use spot red to make certain objects more symbolic. I always try to keep the variety of colours to a minimum; this ensures the visual style is strong and acts as a point of difference to the 'wacky,' 'zany', 'colour'-filled world of most animated films.

Score/Re-arrangements recorded at:  
 Allan Eaton Studios (Melbourne, Australia)  
 Supervising Sound Designer: Peter Walker  
 Location Sound Supervisor: Erin McKimm  
 Six Track Surround Location Recordings:  
 Brian Laurence  
 Sound Post-production: Soundwaves  
 Sound [Re-recording] Mixer: Andrew McGrath  
 Re-recording Mixer (Additional): Doron Kipen  
 Supervising Sound Editor: Andrew McGrath  
 Guidetrack Performers: Sarah Sutherland,  
 Julie Forsyth, Adam Elliot  
 Additional Voice Recording: PostWorks NY,  
 De Lane Lea, Tracks Post Production  
 Voice Track Breakdown: Ingvarr Eagle Daye  
 Foley Facility: Feet'n Frames Pty Ltd  
 International Recording Consultant: ABC  
 Sound Mix Consultant: Peter Walker  
 Dolby Sound Consultant: Bruce Emery  
 Time Lapse Photography: Nic Kocher  
 Website: Ben Tollady  
 Behind the Scenes Stills Photographer: Suzy Wood  
 Voice Cast:  
 Toni Collette (*Mary Daisy Dinkle*)  
 Philip Seymour Hoffman (*Max Jerry Horowitz*)  
 Barry Humphries (*narrator*)  
 Eric Bana (*Damien Popodopolous*)  
 Bethany Whitmore (*young Mary Daisy Dinkle*)  
 Ian 'Molly' Meldrum (*homeless man*)  
 Renée Geyer (*Vera Lorraine Dinkle*)  
 John Flaus (*Harvie Krumpet/Ken/Len Hislop*)  
 Julie Forsyth (*bus stop mother/kissing woman*)  
 Chris Massey  
 (*911 operator/ambulance/derisive observer*)  
 Oliver Marks (*alleyway bully one*)  
 Daisy Kocher (*alleyway bully two/ bird injury girl/*  
*bus stop girl/ Katherine Ramsay*)  
 Daniel Marks (*alleyway bully three*)  
 Hamish Hughes (*miscellaneous animals/thespian*  
*two/mad jury member*)  
 Dan Doherty (*BMX bandit*)  
 Mandy Mac  
 (*Cher the chihuahua/Sonny the chihuahua*)  
 Patrick McCabe (*Datsun Sunny driver*)  
 Mr Peck (*Ethel the rooster*)  
 Michael Allen (*Ferrari driver*)  
 Bill Murphy (*Frankston icebreaker one*)  
 Shaun Patten (*Frankston icebreaker two*)  
 Bernie Clifford (*Garbo one*)  
 Adam Elliot (*Dr Bernard Hazelhof/Garbo two/*  
*Grandpoppy Ralph/Ivy Ruby Bevan/Mr Ravioli/*  
*Postmaster/runover kitten/worm*)  
 Milly (*Hal the cat*)  
 Henry Karjalainen (*Henry the fish*)  
 Kevin (*Kevin the pug*)  
 Chris Wallace (*lottery caller/New Yorker two*)  
 Marlee Bevan (*Mary's baby*)  
 Indy (*Mr Biscuit the parrot*)  
 Melanie Coombs (*Mrs Pendergast*)  
 Carolyn Shakespeare-Allen  
 (*New York callgirl/New Yorker one*)  
 Alf Klimek (*New Yorker three*)  
 Antoinette Halloran (*opera singer*)  
 Leanne Smith (*Overeaters Anonymous tutor/Post*  
*Office customer*)  
 Stephen Carroll (*thespian one*)  
 Athanasios Kourtidis, Yorgos Kourtidis  
 (*wedding reception guests*)  
 Leanne Smith (*Zelda Glutnik*)  
 Australia 2008©  
 92 mins  
 Digital

Finally, *Mary and Max* has far more dynamic camera moves than in my previous films, as a result of working with our cinematographer Gerald Thompson, who is also a motion control expert. Gerald has made the film far more potent with his very fluid and seamless camera moves and lighting design that makes the worlds far more realistic than a conventional animated film. He has applied live action principles to create an original aesthetic.

Why this story....

Max is based on my penfriend in New York, who I have been writing to for over 20 years. He is such an interesting person and the creation of this film will be a testimony to him and the archetypical underdog that so many audiences around the world engage with. He, like Max, has Asperger's and I have spent a long time researching this syndrome. My aim is to not just enlighten the world to ASPIES, but to demystify the many misconceptions others have about these people (even the so-called experts).

A lot of people say they often feel different; that they don't fit in. I am one of those people. Even with all the success, acknowledgement and acceptance that has been derived from my films, I often still feel alone and not in tune with the rest of the world. I often feel sad, persecuted and unsure about things; I find the world so often unjust. I truly empathise with the lost and disregarded, marginalised and melancholic. I am drawn to these people and their stories; I cannot help it. I find people so fascinating, from the ordinary to the truly odd. These are the people I relate to; these are the people whose stories I want to hear and want to see on the big screen.

And I KNOW audiences also want to hear these stories of difference; thousands of people all over the world have told me so over the last decade. I have a box in my hallway that contains the hundreds of press clippings, emails, and letters I have received in regards to my work. Nearly every single day we receive fan mail; many of which arrived way before the Academy Award® came our way. We receive moving letters from people with Tourettes Syndrome, Alzheimer's and depression. These letters are from the young and old, from Sweden to Tokyo. People who've watched the films on the big screen, on an airline, at a film festival, on the Internet and even on their phone. They all say similar things, that they were affected in some way watching my film/s. For some it has been life-changing; for others it simply added a bit of relief to their day.

For example, just last week I had a phone call from a woman who said her best friend chose to watch *Harvie Krumpet* over and over in her final hours before she died from cancer. I am moved to tears so often and am constantly reminded of the power of storytelling. I feel very humbled by people's responses and feel so lucky I have the ability and opportunity to keep making a difference in people's lives.

I'm not making films to elicit these reactions; it is real, unasked for and still happening to me every day. I often say if I could, I would make my films for free. No amount of money could ever buy the feeling of sitting with an audience watching something you have given your heart and soul to, knowing that you are not just entertaining them, but also nourishing and moving them. I learnt a while back, that to have a positive effect on your fellow human beings is such a wonderful feeling opportunity and privilege.

So, who knows? Maybe the reason I make my films is purely selfish. Either way, there is nothing else I am particularly good at, and so, for the time being, moving blobs of plasticine around in a slow and expensive manner seems to be my lot.

Production notes