



'Funny People' tops weekend box office



"Funny People," which faced a dual marketing challenge as a departure from typical Adam Sandler comedies and from writer-director Judd Apatow's raunchier laffers, launched respectably at the top of a moderate weekend box office with \$23.4 million at 3,008 playdates.

That figure, however, marked the lowest tally for a No. 1 film this summer. The Universal dramedy came in with 23% less box office than the July 10-12 launch of U's "Bruno." And the pic finished the frame 23% behind Apatow's 2007 helming effort "Knocked Up," which opened to \$30.7 million.

Overall, biz was down 18% from last weekend and 19% from the year-ago frame. The best news came from the specialty arena, as holdovers "500 Days of Summer" and "The Hurt Locker," plus newcomer "Adam," posted solid numbers. "Harry Potter and the Half-Blood Prince" and "G-Force" remained strong among major studio fare.

With "Funny People," Universal's promo push aimed to position the pic, which clocked in at a longish 144 minutes, as a comedy, but one not in the vein of past Sandler hits, and to advance Apatow as an evolving filmmaker in the James L. Brooks mold.

The "Funny People" bow came in at the low end of rival forecasts, but was in line with U's expectations.

"We are dealing with something that's bit different from the norm, so I'm very optimistic about how this will play out," said Universal distribution chief Nikki Rocco.

The town's hopes for higher numbers on the movie were fueled by Sandler's track record: He's toplined 10 comedies that topped \$100 million domestically, including last year's "Bedtime Stories"



and "You Don't Mess With the Zohan." But his serious turns in Brooks' "Spanglish" and "Reign Over Me" delivered more modest results, with grosses of \$43 million and \$20 million, respectively.

In addition, it's uncertain whether "Funny People" can sustain its drawing power in coming frames. The film opened Friday with \$8.7 million and declined 15% to \$7.5 million on Saturday, suggesting that initial word of mouth was less than bullish. The audience was fairly even on the male-female demo at 53% male.

The weekend's other opener, Fox's family comedy "Aliens in the Attic," turned in a disappointing launch in fifth place with \$7.8 million at 3,106. Freestyle's home-invasion chiller "The Collector" scared up a modest \$3.6 million at 1,325.

Overall biz was off 18% from last weekend and 19% from the year-ago frame, when "The Mummy: Tomb of the Dragon Emperor" opened with \$42 million to edge the third frame of "The Dark Knight." At \$3.2 billion, total summer takings have fallen slightly behind the 2008 summer to date.

Specialty pics provided the frame's upbeat news, most notably Fox Searchlight's expanded "500 Days of Summer," which delivered \$2.75 million at 266 for a per-screen average of \$10,338; three-week cume is \$6.8 million. "Summer" widens to 800 venues next weekend.

Summit's expansion of "The Hurt Locker" turned in a respectable \$1.9 million at 523 for per-screen average of \$3,633 and a \$6.8 million cume.

A trio of specialty launches, each bowing at four venues, also scored well. Searchlight's offbeat romantic comedy "Adam" took in \$66,265 for a per-screen average of \$16,566, Roadside's docu "The Cove" bagged \$55,500 for a per-screen average of \$13,875 and Focus' Korean vampire thriller "Thirst" grossed \$55,173 for a per-screen average of \$13,793.

Sony Pictures Classics saw Belgian drama "Lorna's Silence" open decently with \$36,219 in half a dozen sites. And IFC's "In the Loop" grossed a solid \$308,947 at 35 in its second frame.

The third frame of "Harry Potter and the Half-Blood Prince" led holdovers with \$17.7 million at 4,393 to lift its 19-day cume to \$255.5 million. The weekend take included \$3.2 million from 166 Imax venues, which hadn't been able to screen the "Potter" pic until this frame as a consequence of Warner's decision last year to delay the movie until this summer.

"The Half-Blood Prince" also remained the dominant pic in international markets with \$42.7 million at more than 13,200 engagements in 64 markets, raising its three-week foreign cume to \$492.3 million. Worldwide total for the sixth "Potter" is now \$747.7 million.

A trio of entries in their soph session turned in moderate results, as Disney's kidpic "G-Force" finished third with \$17.1 million at 3,697, declining 46%, to bring its 10-day cume to \$66.5 million. Sony's Katherine Heigl comedy "The Ugly Truth" slid 53% to \$13 million at 2,668 for a total just short of \$55 million, while Warner's "Orphan" fell 44% to \$7.3 million.

Four long-lasting summer hits rounded out the top 10, led by the fifth frame of "Ice Age: Dawn of the Dinosaurs" with \$5.3 million at 2,750, the ninth weekend of "The Hangover" with \$5.08 million at 2,071, the seventh outing of "The Proposal" with \$4.85 million at 2,435 and "Transformers: Revenge of the Fallen" with \$4.6 million at 1,752.

The "Transformers" sequel is by far the year's top domestic grosser at \$388 million domestically, followed by "Up" at \$286 million and three at around \$255 million -- "The Half-Blood Prince," "The Hangover" and "Star Trek."

On the foreign front, however, "Ice Age: Dawn of the Dinosaurs" has shown far more traction than any other entry this year with \$550 million -- already the 11th-highest international total, and more than three times its domestic cume of \$181.8 million. The 3-D toon pulled in \$22.3 million more in overseas coin at 9,244 in its fifth frame.



Disney saw sturdy results from its second wave of international launches for "Up" with \$23.7 million at 2,109 in 23 markets, including \$9.1 million in France and \$8.7 million in Spain -- the top 2009 opening in that market. "Up," which has avoided head-to-head competition with "Dawn of the Dinosaurs" in foreign markets, has now cumed \$80.2 million overseas, with the U.K., Italy and Germany not opening until the fall.

The Mouse House also scored solid international results for "G-Force" with \$11.4 million at 1,615 in 15 markets, led by a \$4.5 million Brit launch. "The Proposal" delivered \$11 million at 2,692 for a \$78.2 million foreign cume, including a \$4.1 million German debut.

Universal's "Public Enemies" banked an additional \$9.7 million at 2,900 locations in 42 markets to boost its foreign cume to \$50.4 million, led by a \$2.7 million first-place launch in Australia. The Johnny Depp starrer has been the studio's top summer performer at \$93 million domestically while the rest of U's slate has lagged, with "Bruno" at \$59 million, "Land of the Lost" at \$49 million and "Drag Me to Hell" at \$42 million.

Next weekend's biz is expected to be dominated by Par's launch of "G.I. Joe: The Rise of Cobra." Also opening will be Sony's "Julie and Julia," starring Meryl Streep and Amy Adams, and Universal's thriller "A Perfect Getaway."

Tags: [Box Office](#) [1]

[G-Force](#) [2]

[Funny People](#) [3]

Source URL: <http://www.shakefire.com/news/2009/08/02/funny-people-tops-weekend-box-office>

Links

[1] <http://www.shakefire.com/tags/box-office>

[2] <http://www.shakefire.com/tags/g-force>

[3] <http://www.shakefire.com/tags/funny-people>