

The Muppets

Promotion, Synopsis, or
Review?

1

When an evil oil man discovers black gold beneath Muppet Theater, Kermit recruits a Muppet super-fan and his two best friends to help gather up the gang for a telethon that will save the venue from being razed and replaced with a giant oil pump. Tex Richman (Chris Cooper) never met an oil field he couldn't suck dry. So when Tex discovers a bountiful reservoir right underneath Muppet Theater, he begins drawing up plans to claim the land and start drilling. Little does Tex realize that devoted Muppets fan Walter is currently in Los Angeles with his best friends Gary (Jason Segel) and Mary (Amy Adams), and that he's not about to let one man's greed spoil a good thing for everyone. With Kermit by their side, Walter, Gary, and Mary hatch a plan to put on a big telethon that will help them raise the ten million dollars needed to keep Muppet Theater standing. But rounding up the gang won't be easy, because these days Miss Piggy's got a posh job at Vogue Paris; Fozzie has landed a gig at a Reno casino; Gonzo has become the owner of a successful plumbing company; and Animal is dealing with anger management issues in a Santa Barbara clinic. With

the drilling deadline fast drawing near and Tex wringing his hands in anticipation, the gang races to put on the performance of a lifetime and save Muppet Theater from certain destruction. Directed by James Bobin and written by Segel and Nicholas Stoller, *The Muppets Movie* features cameos by Zach Galifianakis, Billy Crystal, Jack Black, Alan Arkin, and Jean-Claude Van Damme, among others.

2

You can find movies with better scripts, direction, acting, songs, and jokes than **"The Muppets"** -- but you won't find one that's nearly so much fun.

More than a decade since the last Muppet feature, and more than two since the death of **Jim Henson**, gangly comic actor **Jason Segel**, of all people, has shepherded **Kermit, Fozzie, Piggy, Animal**, and the rest back to the big screen in a peppy, clever, open-hearted movie filled with gentle humor, celebrity cameos and an infectious spirit of joy. You could pick it apart, sure; you could also stand outside a department store Christmas village and tell kids that Santa is a fake: your call. Segel stars as Gary, a doofy

midwesterner whose brother, Walter, is, in a way that no one questions, made of felt and three feet tall. Together with Gary's fiancée (**Amy Adams**), they travel to LA to tour the Muppets studio, only to find that it's been abandoned and is under threat from an evil land baron (**Chris Cooper**). They warn Kermit, round up the old gang, and put on a telethon in hopes to raise enough money to save the day.

Nothing here will surprise you - which is, really, as it should be. Segel, serving as co-writer, and director **James Bobin** have, with a knowing wink, mined the old-time Muppet charm and humor, and they have hit paydirt.

3

In 1999, when the Muppets last hit theaters, real estate was booming and unemployment was a mere 4.3 percent. Twelve years later, there's nothing warm and fuzzy about a world where even the Muppets are in the grip of a financial crisis. A sinister tycoon (Chris Cooper) plans to buy and demolish their old studio, which sits atop oil reserves, unless—as balcony buddies Statler and Waldorf point out—the Muppets can raise \$10 million.

What are Jim Henson's fab felts to do? Get the old gang together—even though they haven't spoken to each other in ages and seem to still live in a world without Facebook—and organize an old-fashioned TV telethon. "It's the Muppets doing what they do best: putting on a show," says Jason Segel, who cowrote the screenplay. It may seem surprising to find the R-rated comedy actor sharing screen time with Fozzie Bear, yet "it's been on my secret wish list to do a Muppets movie," he says. "I always had the toys, even when I was way too old."

But will kids weaned on high-tech Pixar fare warm to cuddly characters whose idea of entertainment is to simply play the music and light the lights?

"We are still innocent and fun and accepting. I think people find that refreshing, especially today," says Kermit. And with the movie's smart winks at Gen X parents (a barbershop quartet version of "Smells Like Teen Spirit" is a highlight), Segel thinks audiences will happily come along for the ride. "If the new generation takes to it like I did," he says, "they're going to fall in love pretty quickly." A theater packed with fans has at least one Muppet seeing stars again. Says Miss Piggy, "I enjoy being 40 feet wide on the big screen."