

SWEENEY TODD: THE TIM BURTON REDEMPTION!

Written by Dave Crackpot

The Tim Burton/Johnny Depp Sondheim adapt serves up a bloody good time. While the tone does feel a bit too familiar (i.e. "Nightmare meets Scissorhands") the gorefest tuner delivers.

Based a rumored story, Benjamin Barker returns to his lethargic London roots after spending 15 years behind bars for a crime he didn't commit. Bent on avenging the Judge (Alan Rickman) who put him there, he re-invents himself as **"Sweeney Todd: The Demon Barber of Fleet Street."** While he awaits his perfect shave with destiny, he hacks up the unsuspecting locals. He is soon joined by neighboring baker Mrs. Lovitt (Helena Bonham Carter) in an ingenious idea to conceal the bodies, bake them into pies of course!

Depp and Carter give deliciously macabre and frequently hysterical performances. Both look quite similar to live action counterparts from "Nightmare Before Xmas." Also excellent is Sasha Baron Cohen in a two scene cameo early on. In "BORAT" we learned that Cohen's biggest talent was his true commitment to character. This time he proves that he has the chops to play someone else's creation. Cohen shreds it up in his two scenes and is definitely a dark horse pick come Oscar time.

The art department, as with all Burton flicks, steals the show. Led by [Dante Ferretti](#) and featuring a crew of dozens, the dreary Fleet Street comes alive. The only break from the grey scale is during the numerous murder scenes. The usually projectile bloodlettings are in sharp contrast to everything else in the frame. It's too over the top to be taken seriously, yet too realistic to be laughed off. The viewer is drawn in not knowing if their chuckle is appropriate. To me it became quite a comment on violence in movies.

All this can be a little overwhelming, so Burton gives us a break with a vacation sequenced of a more vibrant nature. In fact it seems as if the film is turned inside out while the ever monochromatic Todd and Lovitt watch the world go by.

Is this best picture I have seen this year? No. Without a doubt it IS one of the best films Hollywood has produced in recent memory. Academy Award nominations will abound. That is if the Academy can get that large stick out of their buttocks when it comes to a bit of the old Ultra-violence.

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The biggest tragedy of the film is its release date. "Who is the genius in Marketing who thought this Goth scarlet splatterer would be good for Xmas?" However with a sluggish January ahead there is hope for Sweeney Todd, the Tim Burton redemption!