



## Universal's 'Fast Five' Opens to Record \$83.6 Million in North America



Hollywood's obsession with franchises paid off as Universal's Fast Five raced to an \$83.6 million opening at the domestic box office, the best showing in months and the top number ever for Universal. It's also the top April bow of all time.

Overseas, where it began rolling out a week ago, Fast Five grossed \$45.3 million for the weekend from 14 territories, bringing its international cume to \$81.4 million and worldwide total to \$165 million. The pic bested Paramount and Marvel Studios' Thor in several markets where the two both opened.

But Thor also made the record books. The superhero tentpole -- which doesn't open in the U.S. until May 6 -- easily won the weekend overall internationally, grossing \$83 million from 56 markets to grab the top foreign bow of the year. Including grosses from Australia, where Thor opened last weekend, the movie's total take is already \$93 million.

And 20th Century Fox's holdover toon Rio continued to dazzle, ending the weekend with an eye-popping world total of \$366 million. Domestically, the film came in No. 2 for the weekend with gross of \$14.4 million for a domestic cume of \$103.6 million in its third weekend. Overseas, it grossed \$31.7 million for a total foreign gross of 263 million.

Thanks to Fast Five, the North American box office -- which has endured a long-running slump -- was up 53% over the same frame a year ago, welcome news for the movie business as the summer season gets underway.

Fast Five is a huge, and much-needed victory, for Universal. Fast Five was originally supposed to open in June, but when Paramount's Super 8 moved onto the same date, Universal took a risk and pushed the film back to April 29.

"It all came together brilliantly. This is such a big deal, considering how depressed business has been," Universal president of domestic distribution Nikki Rocco said. "We made a number of strategic decisions along the way about what this movie was going to be. And then you had this



brilliant marketing campaign which told people this wasn't just another sequel."

Directed by Justin Lin, one of Hollywood's hottest young talents, Fast Five reunites franchise stars Vin Diesel, Paul Walker, Jordana Brewster and Tyrese Gibson. Joining the series is Dwayne Johnson.

In North America, Fast Five played in 3,644 theaters, including 243 Imax locations where the film did big business, grossing \$8.3 million.

Fast Five, drawing a stellar A CinemaScore, played well in all parts of the country, as well as to an ethnically diverse audience. Caucasians made up 35% of the audience, followed by Hispanics at 33% and African Americans at 19%.

Young people, who have been AWOL from the multiplex, returned in force, with 52% of those buying tickets to Fast Five under the age of 25. Plenty of females showed up, making up 44% of the audience.

The film easily eclipsed the \$70.5 million earned by Fast & Furious during its opening weekend.

Universal says Fast Five cost \$125 million to produce after production incentives and tax credits, but other put the price tag as high as \$150 million.

The Fast Five glow didn't extend to the weekend's other new films, Disney's tween-driven Prom and the Weinstein Co.'s Hoodwinked Too! Hood vs. Evil.

Prom -- the first film greenlit by Disney chair Rich Ross to hit theaters -- opened to a disappointing \$5 million from 2,730 theaters, although it only cost \$9 million to produce, minimizing Disney's financial exposure. However, the film's soft bow likely smarted.

The studio had hoped for an \$8 million debut for Prom, which targeted girls aged 8 to 13. Prom came in No. 5 behind Fast Five and holdovers Rio, Tyler Perry's Madea's Big Happy Family and Water for Elephants, respectively.

"We always knew we were going after a very specific audience, and while we got that audience, we just underdelivered in the number of those turning out," said Disney worldwide president of distribution Chuck Viane.

Prom drew a B+ CinemaScore, indicating that the film did indeed work with its core audience. A full 66% of Prom's audience was under the age of 18, while 82% were females.

Directed by Joe Nussbaum, Prom's cast includes Aimee Teegarden, Nicholas Braun, Danielle Campbell, Cameron Monaghan and Christine Elise McCarthy.

The Weinstein Co. and Kanbar Entertainment's 3D toon Hoodwinked Too! Hood vs. Evil grossed an estimated \$4.1 million from 2,505 theaters, although the companies had hoped for a \$6 million to \$9 million debut. The first Hoodwinked opened to \$12.4 million.

Like Prom, Hoodwinked Too received a B+ CinemaScore. The toon was a service deal for the Weinstein Co.

"Fast Five crushed everything else," one box office observer said.

In placing No. 3 for the weekend, Lionsgate's Big Happy Family grossed an estimated \$10.1 million from 2,288 theaters for a pleasing cume of \$41.1 million in its first 10 days.

Fox 2000's Water for Elephants grossed an estimated \$9.1 million from 2,820 theaters for a cume of \$32.3 million.

Rio, Big Happy Family and Water for Elephants all saw bigger than usual drops on Friday, since so many kids were out of school a week ago.



Among limited offerings, the Metropolitan Opera's *The Met: Live in HD* has its most successful showing of the season as Verdi's *Il Travatore* grossed an estimated \$2.5 million from 870 screens domestically.

Brandon Routh vampire pic *Dylan Dog: Dead of Night* failed to appeal, opening to an estimated \$884,625 from 875 theaters for a per screen average of \$1,100.

Everybody Loves Raymond showrunner Phil Rosenthal's new documentary *Exporting Raymond* grossed an estimated \$36,010 from 13 theaters in New York, Los Angeles, Philadelphia and other markets for a soft location average of \$2,770. Samuel Goldwyn Films is distributing the documentary, which chronicles Rosenthal's attempts to create a Russian version of his TV sitcom.

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