

The King's Speech (2010)



Cinematic release poster ([Wikipedia](#))

TOMATOMETER

All Critics

94

Average Rating: 8.6/10 Reviews Counted: 235 Fresh: 221 | Rotten: 14

Top Critics

96

Average Rating: 8.9/10 Critic Reviews: 45 Fresh: 43 | Rotten: 2

Colin Firth gives a masterful performance in The King's Speech, a predictable but stylishly produced and rousing period drama.

AUDIENCE

92

liked it Average Rating: 4.3/5 User Ratings: 134,610

Movie Info

After the death of his father King George V (Michael Gambon) and the scandalous abdication of King Edward VIII (Guy Pearce), Bertie (Colin Firth) who has suffered from a debilitating speech impediment all his life, is suddenly crowned King George VI of England. With his country on the brink of war and in desperate need of a leader, his wife, Elizabeth (Helena Bonham Carter), the future Queen Mother, arranges for her husband to see an eccentric speech therapist, Lionel Logue (Geoffrey Rush). After a rough start, the two delve into an unorthodox course of treatment and eventually form an unbreakable bond. With the support of Logue, his family, his government and Winston Churchill (Timothy Spall), the King will overcome his stammer and deliver a radio-address that inspires his people and unites them in battle. Based on the true story of King George VI, THE KING'S SPEECH follows the Royal Monarch's quest to find his voice. -- (C) Weinstein

PG-13, 1 hr. 58 min.

Drama

Directed By: Tom Hooper

Written By: David Seidler

In Theaters: Nov 26, 2010 Limited

On DVD: Apr 19, 2011

US Box Office:\$138.8M

The Weinstein Company

[http://www.rottentomatoes.com/m/the_kings_speech/]

The King's Speech

From Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia

The King's Speech is a 2010 British historical drama film directed by Tom Hooper and written by David Seidler. Colin Firth plays King George VI who, to cope with a stammer, sees Lionel Logue, an Australian speech therapist played by Geoffrey Rush. The men become friends as they work together, and after his brother abdicates the throne, the new King relies on Logue to help him make his first wartime radio broadcast on Britain's declaration of war on Germany in 1939.

Seidler read about George VI's life after overcoming a stuttering condition he endured during his youth. He started writing about the relationship between the monarch and his therapist as early as the 1980s, but at the request of the King's widow, Queen Elizabeth The Queen Mother, postponed work until her death in 2002. He later rewrote his screenplay for the stage to focus on the essential relationship between the two protagonists. Nine weeks before filming began, Logue's notebooks were discovered and quotations from them were incorporated into the script.

Principal photography took place in London and around Britain from November 2009 to January 2010. The opening scenes were filmed at Elland Road, Leeds and Odsal Stadium, Bradford, both locations standing in for the old Wembley Stadium. For indoor scenes, Lancaster House substituted for Buckingham Palace, and Ely Cathedral stood in for Westminster Abbey. The weaving mill scene was filmed at the Queens street weaving mill in Harle Syke, Burnley, Lancs, believed to be the only working weaving mill left in the country. The cinematography differs from that of other historical dramas: hard light was used to give the story a greater resonance and wider than normal lenses were employed to recreate the King's feelings of constriction. A third technique Hooper employed was the off-centre framing of characters: in his first consultation with Logue, George VI is captured hunched on the side of a couch at the edge of the frame.

Released in the United Kingdom on 7 January 2011, *The King's Speech* was a major box office and critical success. Censors initially gave it adult ratings due to profanity, though these were later revised downwards after criticism by the makers

and distributors in the UK and some instances of swearing were muted in the US. On a budget of £8 million, it earned over \$400 million internationally (£250 million). It was widely praised by film critics for its visual style, art direction, and acting. Other commentators discussed the film's representation of historical detail, especially the reversal of Winston Churchill's opposition to abdication. The film received many awards and nominations, particularly for Colin Firth's performance; his Golden Globe Award for Best Actor was the sole win at that ceremony from seven nominations. *The King's Speech* won seven British Academy Film Awards, including Best Picture, and Best Actor (Firth), Best Supporting Actor (Rush), and Best Supporting Actress (Helena Bonham Carter). The film also won four Academy Awards: Best Picture, Best Director (Hooper), Best Actor (Firth), and Best Original Screenplay (Seidler).

Plot

Prince Albert, Duke of York, the second son of King George V, stammers through his speech closing the 1925 British Empire Exhibition at Wembley Stadium, while the resulting ordeal is being broadcast by radio worldwide. The Duke has given up hope of a cure, but his wife Elizabeth persuades him to see Lionel Logue, an Australian speech therapist in London. During their first session, Logue breaches royal etiquette by referring to the Prince as "Bertie," a name used by his family. When the Duke decides Logue's methods and manner are unsuitable, Logue wagers a shilling that the Duke can recite Hamlet's "To be, or not to be" soliloquy without trouble while listening to "The Marriage of Figaro" on headphones. Logue records his performance on a acetate record. Convinced he has stammered throughout, Prince Albert leaves in anger, declaring his condition "hopeless" and dismissing Logue. Logue offers him the recording as a keepsake.



1934 photograph of George V delivering the Royal Christmas Message; an image recreated in the film

After King George V makes his 1934 Christmas radio address, he explains to his son the importance of broadcasting to a modern monarchy. He declares that "David" (Edward, Prince of Wales), Albert's older brother and the heir to the throne, will bring ruin to himself, the family, and the country when he accedes to the throne.

King George demands that Albert train himself, starting with a reading of his father's speech. He makes an agonising attempt to do so.

Later, the Duke plays Logue's recording and hears himself unhesitatingly reciting Shakespeare. He decides to return to Logue, where he and his wife both insist that Logue focus only on physical exercises. Logue teaches his patient muscle relaxation and breath control techniques but continues to probe gently and persistently at the psychological roots of the stutter. The Duke eventually reveals some of the pressures of his childhood, and the two men start to become friends.

In January 1936, George V dies, and David ascends the throne as King Edward VIII, but causes a constitutional crisis with his determination to marry Mrs. Wallis Simpson, an American socialite divorcée who is still legally married to her second husband. At a party in Balmoral Castle, Albert points out that Edward, as head of the Church of England, cannot marry Mrs. Simpson, even if she receives her second divorce; Edward accuses his brother of wanting to usurp his place.



Firth and Bonham Carter as the Duke and Duchess of York

At his next session, Albert expresses his frustration that his speech has improved while talking to most people—except his own brother. Albert reveals the extent of Edward VIII's folly with Mrs. Simpson. When Logue insists that Albert could be a good king instead of his brother, the latter labels such a suggestion as treason, and in his anger, mocks and dismisses Logue. When King Edward VIII abdicates to marry Mrs. Simpson, Albert accedes as King George VI. The new King and Queen visit Logue at his home to apologise, startling Mrs. Logue, who was unaware that the new king was her husband's patient.

During preparations for his coronation in Westminster Abbey, George VI learns that Logue

has no formal qualifications, as initially assumed by him. When confronted, Logue explains how he was asked to help shell-shocked Australian soldiers returning from the First World War. When George VI remains unconvinced of his fitness for the throne, Logue sits in King Edward's Chair and dismisses the underlying Stone of Scone as a trifle. Goaded by Logue's seeming disrespect, the King surprises himself with his own sudden burst of outraged eloquence.

Upon the declaration of war with Nazi Germany in September 1939, George VI summons Logue to Buckingham Palace to prepare for his upcoming radio address to millions of listeners in Britain and the Empire. The King and Logue are left in the room. He delivers his speech competently, while Logue guides him. By the end of his speech, George VI is speaking freely with little to no guidance from Logue. Afterwards, the King and his family step onto the balcony of the palace, and are applauded by the thousands who have gathered.

A title card explains that Logue was always present at King George VI's speeches during the war, and that they remained friends for the rest of their lives.

Cast

- Colin Firth as King George VI
- Geoffrey Rush as Lionel Logue
- Helena Bonham Carter as Queen Elizabeth
- Guy Pearce as King Edward VIII
- Timothy Spall as Winston Churchill
- Derek Jacobi as Archbishop Cosmo Lang
- Jennifer Ehle as Myrtle Logue
- Anthony Andrews as Stanley Baldwin
- Claire Bloom as Queen Mary
- Eve Best as Wallis Simpson
- Freya Wilson as Princess Elizabeth
- Tim Downie as the Duke of Gloucester
- Roger Hammond as Dr. Blandine Bentham
- Ramona Marquez as Princess Margaret
- Michael Gambon as King George V

Production

Development

"Not a great deal was written about His Majesty's speech therapist, Lionel Logue, certainly not in the official biographies. Nor was much published about the Royal stutter; it appeared to be a source of profound embarrassment."

— David Seidler

As a child, David Seidler developed a stammer, which he believes was caused by the emotional trauma of World War II and the murder of his grandparents during the Holocaust. King George VI's success in overcoming his stammer inspired the young Seidler, "Here was a stutterer who was a king and had to give radio speeches where everyone was listening to every syllable he uttered, and yet did so with passion and intensity." When Seidler became an adult, he resolved to write about King George VI. During the late 1970s and 1980s he voraciously researched the King, but found a dearth of information on Logue. Eventually Seidler contacted Dr. Valentine Logue, who agreed to discuss his father and make his notebooks available if the Queen Mother gave her permission. She asked him not to do so in her lifetime, and Seidler halted the project.

The Queen Mother died in 2002. Three years later, Seidler returned to the story during a bout of creative work inspired by a recovery from cancer. His research, including a chance encounter with an uncle whom Logue had treated, indicated he used mechanical breathing exercises combined with psychological counselling to probe the underlying causes of the condition. Thus prepared, Seidler imagined the sessions. He showed the finished screenplay to his wife, who liked it, but pronounced it too "seduced by cinematic technique". She suggested he rewrite it as a stage play to focus on the essential relationship between the King and Logue. After he had completed it, he sent it to a few friends who worked in theatre in London and New York for feedback.

In 2005, Joan Lane of Wilde Thyme, a production company in London, received the script. Lane started talking with Simon Egan and Gareth Unwin of Bedlam Productions, and they invited Seidler to London to rewrite the play again, this time for the screen. Together, Lane and Bedlam Productions organised a reading of the play in Pleasance Theatre, a small house in north London, to a group of Australian expatriates, among whom was Tom Hooper's mother. She called her son and said, "I've found your next project".

Instead of trying to contact his agent, Lane asked an Australian staff member to hand-deliver the script to Geoffrey Rush's house, not far away from hers in Melbourne. Unwin reports that he received a four-page e-mail from Rush's manager admonishing them for the breach of etiquette, but ending with an invitation to discuss the project further. Iain Canning from See-Saw Films became involved and, in Gareth Unwin's words: "We worked with ex-chair of Bafta Richard Price, and started turning this story about two grumpy men sitting in a room into something bigger." Hooper liked the

story, but thought that the original ending needed to be changed to reflect events more closely: "Originally, it had a Hollywood ending ... If you hear the real speech, he's clearly coping with his stammer. But it's not a perfect performance. He's managing it."

The production team learned—some nine weeks prior to the start of filming—of a diary containing Logue's original notes on his treatment of the Duke. They then went back and re-worked the script to reflect what was in the notes. Hooper said some of the film's most memorable lines, such as at the climax, when Logue smiles, "You still stammered on the W" to the King, who replies, "I had to throw in a few so they would know it was me" were direct quotations from Logue's notes. Changes from the script to reflect the historical record included Michael Gambon improvising the ramblings of George V as he signed away authority, and the decision to dress the Duke in an overcoat rather than regal finery in the opening scene.

Seidler thought Paul Bettany would be a good choice to play King George VI, Tom Hooper preferred Hugh Grant, though both actors refused the offer. Once they met with Firth and heard him read for the part, Seidler and Hooper were convinced of his suitability for the role.

The UK Film Council awarded the production £1 million in June 2009. Filming began in December 2009, and lasted 39 days. Most was shot in the three weeks before Christmas because Rush would be performing in a play in January. The schedule was further complicated by Bonham Carter's availability: she worked on *Harry Potter* during the week, so her scenes had to be filmed during the weekend.

Location and design



The Pullens buildings with a 1930s advertisement.

The set design presented a challenge for the film-makers: period dramas rely to an extent on the quality of production, but their budget was a relatively limited £8 million. The film had to be authentic—combining regal opulence with scruffy, depression-era London. On 25 November 2009, the crew took over the Pullens buildings in Southwark. The entire street was transformed into 1930s London. Large advertisements, for (among other things) Bovril and fascism were placed on the walls;

streets were sprayed with grit and buildings with grime. A neighbour of Hooper's had told him the smog in London at the time was so thick that cars had to be guided by someone walking in front. To create this scene the crew pumped in so much artificial smoke that the fire alarms in a nearby boutique sounded. According to Hooper, the scene was a good opportunity to show Logue's socio-economic background.

On 26 November, a week's filming with Firth, Rush, and Jacobi began at Ely Cathedral, the location used for Westminster Abbey. The production had asked for permission to film in the Abbey but were denied due to the demands of tourism. Though Lincoln Cathedral is architecturally a closer match to the Abbey, they preferred Ely, a favoured filming location. Its size allowed them to build sets showing not just the coronation, but the preparations before it.

Lancaster House, an opulent, government-owned period house in London, was used for the interiors of Buckingham Palace that the King walks through prior to making his speech and for the official photograph afterwards; it cost £20,000 a day to rent. The 1936 Accession Council at St. James's Palace, where George VI swore an oath, was filmed in February in the Livery Hall of Drapers' Hall, after principal photography had been completed. The room, ornate and vast, met the occasion: the daunting nature of the new King's responsibilities was shown by surrounding him with rich detail, flags and royal portraiture.

The crew investigated Logue's former consultation rooms, but they were too small to film in. Instead, they found a high, vaulted room not far away in 33 Portland Place. Eve Stewart, the production designer, liked the mottled, peeling wallpaper there so much that she recreated the effect throughout the entire room. In his DVD commentary, Hooper said he liked Portland Place as a set because it felt "lived-in", unlike other period houses in London. The scenes of the Duke of York at home with his family were also filmed here; showing the Prince living in a townhouse "subverted" expectations of a royal drama.

The opening scene, set at the closing ceremony of the 1925 British Empire Exhibition at Wembley Stadium, was filmed on location at Elland Road, home of Leeds United, and Odsal Stadium, home of Bradford RLFC. Elland Road was used for the speech elements of the prince stammering his way through his first public address, and Odsal Stadium was selected because of the resemblance of its curved ends to Wembley Stadium in 1925. The crew had access to the stadium only at 10 pm, after a football game. They filled the terraces with

inflatable dummies and over 250 extras dressed in period costumes. Live actors were interspersed to give the impression of a crowd. Additional people, as well as more ranks of soldiers on the pitch, were added in post-production with visual effects.

Other locations include Cumberland Lodge, Harley Street, Knebworth, Hatfield House, the Old Royal Naval College in Greenwich, Queen Street Mill Textile Museum in Burnley, and Battersea Power Station, which doubled as a BBC wireless control room. The final cut of the film was completed on 31 August 2010.

Dialogue

In developing his portrayal of George VI's stammer, Firth worked with Neil Swain, the voice coach for the film. His sister, Kate Firth, also a professional voice coach to actors, proposed exercises the King might have done with Logue, and made suggestions on how to imagine Logue's mix of physical and psychological coaching for the film. In addition, Firth watched archive footage of the King speaking. In an interview with Allan Tyrer published by the British Stammering Association, Swain said: "[It] was very interesting while we were working on the film just to think tonally how far we could go and should go with the strength of George's stammer. I think a less courageous director than Tom [Hooper] – and indeed a less courageous actor than Colin [Firth] – might have felt the need to slightly sanitise the degree and authenticity of that stammer, and I'm really really pleased that neither of them did." In May 2011 Firth said he was finding traces of the stammer difficult to eliminate: "You can probably hear even from this interview, there are moments when it's quite infectious," he said. "You find yourself doing it and if I start thinking about it the worse it gets. If nothing else it's an insight into what it feels like."

Music

The film's original score was composed by Alexandre Desplat. In a film about a man struggling to articulate himself, Desplat was wary of overshadowing the dramaturgy, "This is a film about the sound of the voice. Music has to deal with that. Music has to deal with silence. Music has to deal with time." The score is a sparse arrangement of strings and piano (with the addition of oboe and harp in one cut), intended to convey the sadness of the King's muteness, and then the growing warmth of friendship between him and Logue. The minimalist approach emphasises the protagonist's struggle for control. Desplat used the repetition of a single note to represent the stickiness of the King's speech. As the film progresses, growing banks of warm strings swaddle the deepening friendship between the two leads. The music rises to a climax in the coronation scene. Hooper originally wanted to film the scene without music, but Desplat argued that it was the real climax of the story—the point when the friendship was ratified by

their decision to trust each other. "That is really rare", said Desplat, "mostly you have love stories". To create a dated sound, the score was recorded on old microphones extracted from the EMI archives which had been specially made for the royal family. The music played during the broadcast of the 1939 radio speech at the climax of the film is from the 2nd movement (Allegretto) of Beethoven's 7th Symphony; it was added by Tariq Anwar, the editor. When Desplat later joined the team to write the music, he praised and defended Anwar's suggestion. Hooper further remarked that the stature of the piece helps elevate the status of the speech to a public event. The score was nominated for several awards, including Best Original Score at the Oscars, Golden Globes, and BAFTAs, winning the latter award. The score also won a Grammy at the 54th Grammys.

Visual style

Hooper employed a number of cinematic techniques to evoke the King's feelings of constriction. He and cinematographer Danny Cohen used wider than normal lenses to photograph the film, typically 14mm, 18mm, 21mm, 25mm and 27mm, where the subtle distortion of the picture helps to convey the King's discomfort. For instance, the subjective point of view shot during the Empire exhibition speech used a close up of the microphone with a wider lens, similar to the filming technique used for one of the Duke's early consultations with a physician. In *The New York Times*, Manohla Dargis wrote that the feeling of entrapment inside the King's head was rendered overly literal with what she believed to be a fisheye lens, though in these scenes the wider lenses were used. Hooper also discussed using the 18mm lens, one he likes "because it puts human beings in their context".

Roger Ebert noted that the majority of the film was shot indoors, where oblong sets, corridors, and small spaces manifest constriction and tightness, in contrast to the usual emphasis on sweep and majesty in historical dramas. Hooper used wide shots to capture the actors' body language, particularly Geoffrey Rush, who trained at L'École Internationale de Théâtre Jacques Lecoq in Paris and "is consequently brilliant in the way he carries his body". Hooper widened his scope first to capture Rush's gestures, then full body movements and silhouettes. The approach carried over to Firth as well. In the first consultation scene, the Duke is squeezed against the end of a long couch framed against a large wall, "as if to use the arm of the sofa as a kind of friend, as a security blanket?" Martin Filler praised the "low-wattage" cinematography of Danny Cohen, as making

everything look like it has been "steeped in strong tea".

At other times, the camera was positioned very close to the actors to catch the emotion in their faces: "If you put a lens 6 inches from somebody's face, you get more emotion than if you're on a long lens 20 feet away," Cohen said in an interview. Hooper sought a second subtlety while filming the first consultation room scene between the two men, having placed the camera 18 inches from Colin Firth's face: "I wanted the nervousness of the first day to percolate into his performances."

Historical dramas traditionally tend to use "soft light", but Hooper wanted to use a harsher glare, which gives a more contemporary feel, and thus a greater emotional resonance. To achieve the effect, the lighting team erected huge blackout tents over the Georgian buildings, and used large lights filtered through Egyptian cotton.

Historical accuracy

The filmmakers not only tightened the chronology of the events to just a few years but even shifted the actual timeline of treatment: the Duke of York actually began work with Logue in October 1926, ten years before the abdication crisis, and the improvement in his speech was apparent in months rather than years, as is suggested by the film. In a 1952 newspaper interview with John Gordon, Logue said that "Resonantly and without stuttering, he opened the Australian Parliament in Canberra in 1927"; this was just seven months after the Duke began to work with Logue.

Hugo Vickers, an adviser on the film, agreed that the alteration of historical details to preserve the essence of the dramatic story was sometimes necessary. The high-ranking officials, for instance, would not have been present when the King made his speech, nor would Churchill have been involved at any level, "but the average viewer knows who Churchill is; he doesn't know who Lord Halifax and Lord Hoare are."



Mr. Lionel Logue in London, c. 1930, exact date unknown.

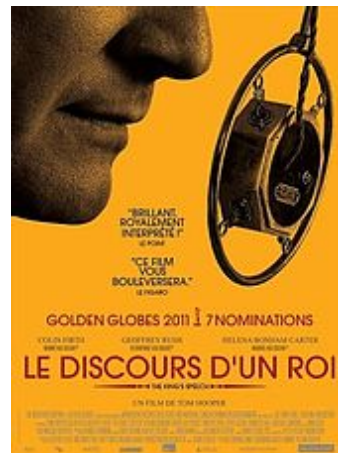
Robert Logue, a grandson of Lionel, doubted the film's depiction of the speech therapist, stating "I don't think he ever swore in front of the King and he certainly never called him 'Bertie'". Andrew Roberts, an English historian, states that the severity of the King's stammer was exaggerated and the characters of Edward VIII, Wallis Simpson, and George V made more antagonistic than they really were, to increase the dramatic effect.

Christopher Hitchens and Isaac Chotiner challenged the film's portrayal of Winston Churchill's role in the abdication crisis. It is well established that Churchill encouraged Edward VIII to resist pressure to abdicate, whereas he is portrayed in the film as strongly supportive of Prince Albert and not opposed to the abdication. Hitchens attributes this treatment to the "cult" surrounding Churchill's legacy. In a smart, well-made film, "would the true story not have been fractionally more interesting for the audience?" he wondered. They also criticised the film for failing to indict the appeasement of the era. While the film never directly mentions the issue, Hitchens and Chotiner argue that it implies that George VI was against appeasement, especially in the final scene portraying "Churchill and the King at Buckingham Palace and a speech of unity and resistance being readied for delivery". Far from distancing himself from Chamberlain's appeasement policy, King George VI despatched a car to meet Neville Chamberlain when he returned from signing the Munich Agreement with Hitler in September 1938. The King and Chamberlain then stood on the balcony of Buckingham Palace, acclaimed by cheering crowds. This led historian Steven Runciman to write that by acting as he did to endorse Chamberlain's foreign policy, King George VI perpetrated "the biggest constitutional blunder that has been made by any sovereign this century." *The Guardian* corrected the portrayal of Stanley Baldwin as having resigned due to his refusal to order Britain's re-armament, when he in fact stepped down as "a national hero, exhausted by more than a decade at the top".

Martin Filler acknowledged that the film legitimately used artistic licence to make valid dramatic points, such as in the probably-imagined scene when George V lectures his son on the importance of broadcasting. Filler cautions that George VI would never have tolerated Logue addressing him casually, nor swearing, and the King almost certainly would have understood a newsreel of Hitler speaking in German. Filler makes the larger point that both the King and his wife were, in reality, lukewarm towards Churchill because of the latter's support for his brother during the abdication crisis. They only warmed to Churchill later in the war, because of his performance as a wartime leader.

Commenting on the film's final scene on the balcony of Buckingham Palace, Andrew Roberts has written, "The scene is fairly absurd from a historical point of view – Neville Chamberlain and Winston Churchill were not present and there were no cheering crowds outside Buckingham Palace." Overall, Roberts praises the film as a sympathetic portrayal of the King's "quiet, unassuming heroism", and he states: "The portrayals by Firth and Bonham Carter are sympathetic and acute, and the movie's occasional factual bêtises should not detract from that."

Release



French version of the alternative cinema poster for *The King's Speech*

Cinema release

The film had its world premiere on 6 September 2010 at the Telluride Film Festival in the United States. It was screened at the 2010 Toronto International Film Festival, on Firth's 50th birthday, where it received a standing ovation and won the People's Choice Award. The cinema release poster was re-designed to show an extreme close-up of Firth's jaw and a microphone after Hooper criticised the first design as a "train smash". Tim Appelo called the original, air-brushed effort, which showed the three leads, "shockingly awful" though the new one "really is worthwhile".

The film was distributed by Transmission in Australia and by Momentum Pictures in the United Kingdom. The Weinstein Company distributed it in North America, Germany, Benelux, Scandinavia, China, Hong Kong, and Latin America. The film was released in France on 2 February 2011, under the title *Le discours d'un roi*. It was distributed by Wild Bunch Distribution.

Ratings controversy

The film was initially given a 15 certificate by the British Board of Film Classification, due to scenes where Logue encourages the King to shout profanities to relieve stress.

At the London Film Festival, Hooper criticised the decision, questioning how the board could certify the film "15" for bad language but allow films such as *Salt* (2010) and *Casino Royale* (2006) to have "12A" ratings, despite their graphic torture scenes. Following Hooper's criticism, the board lowered the rating to "12A", allowing children under 12 years of age to see the film if they are accompanied by an adult. Hooper levelled the same criticism at the Motion Picture Association of America, which gave the film an "R" rating, preventing anyone under the age of 17 from seeing the film without an adult. In his review, Roger Ebert criticised the "R" rating, calling it "utterly inexplicable", and wrote, "This is an excellent film for teenagers."

In January 2011 Harvey Weinstein, the executive producer and distributor, said he was considering having the film re-edited to remove some profanity, so that it would receive a lower classification and reach a larger audience. Hooper, however, refused to cut the film, though he considered covering the swear words with bleeps. Helena Bonham Carter also defended the film, saying, "[The film] is not violent. It's full of humanity and wit. [It's] for people not with just a speech impediment, but who have got confidence [doubts]." After receiving his Academy Award, Colin Firth noted that he does not support re-editing the film; while he does not condone the use of profanity, he maintains that its use was not offensive in this context. "The scene serves a purpose", Firth states. An alternate version, with some of the profanities muted out, was classified as "PG-13" in the United States; this version was released to cinemas on 1 April 2011, replacing the R-rated one. The PG-13 version of this film is not available on DVD and Blu-ray.

Reception

Box office

In the UK and Ireland, the film was the highest earning film on its opening weekend. It took in £3,510,000 from 395 cinemas. *The Guardian* said that it was one of the biggest takes in recent memory, and compared it to *Slumdog Millionaire* (2008), which, two years earlier, earned £1.5 million less. *The King's Speech* continued a "stunning three weeks" atop the UK Box office, and earned over £3 million for four consecutive weekends, the first film to do so since *Toy Story 3* (2010). After five weeks on UK release, it was hailed as the most successful independent British film ever.

In the United States *The King's Speech* opened with \$355,450 (£220,000) in four cinemas. It holds the record for the highest per-cinema gross of 2010. It was widened to 700 screens on Christmas

Day and 1,543 screens on 14 January 2011. It eventually made \$138 million in North America overall.

In Australia *The King's Speech* made more than A\$6,281,686 (£4 million) in the first two weeks, according to figures collected by the Motion Picture Distributors Association of Australia. The executive director of Palace Cinemas, Benjamin Zeccola, said customer feedback on the film was spectacular. "It's our No.1 for all the period, all throughout the country. ... I think this is more successful than *Slumdog Millionaire* and a more uplifting film. It's a good example of a film that started out in the independent cinemas and then spread to the mainstream cinemas."

Of the film's net profit, estimated to amount to \$30–40 million (£20–25 million) from the cinema release alone, roughly 20% will be split between Geoffrey Rush (as executive producer), Tom Hooper and Colin Firth, who receive their bonuses before the other stakeholders. The remaining profit is to be split equally between the producers and the equity investors. The UK Film Council invested £1 million of public funds from the United Kingdom lottery into the film. In March 2011 *Variety* estimated that the return could be between fifteen and twenty times that. The Council's merger into the British Film Institute means that the profits are to be returned to that body.

Critical response

"As the actor of the year in the film of the year, I can't think of enough adjectives to praise Firth properly. The King's Speech has left me speechless."

—Rex Reed, *New York Observer*

The King's Speech has received widespread critical acclaim. Rotten Tomatoes gives the film a score of 94% based on reviews from 233 critics; their average rating was calculated as 8.6/10. It summarised the critical consensus as: "Colin Firth gives a masterful performance in *The King's Speech*, a predictable but stylishly produced and rousing period drama." Metacritic gave the film a weighted score of 88/100, based on 41 critiques, which it ranks as "universal acclaim". *Empire* gave the film five stars out of five, commenting, "You'll be lost for words." Lisa Kennedy of the *Denver Post* gave the film full marks for its humane qualities and craftsmanship: "It is an intelligent, winning drama fit for a king – and the rest of us", she said. Roger Ebert of the *Chicago Sun-Times* awarded the film a full four stars, commenting that "what we have here is a superior historical drama and a powerful personal one." Peter Bradshaw of *The Guardian* gave four stars out of five, stating, "Tom Hooper's richly enjoyable and handsomely produced movie ... is a massively confident crowd-pleaser."

Manohla Dargis, whilst generally ambivalent towards the film, called the lead performances one of its principal attractions. "With their volume turned up, the appealing, impeccably professional Mr. Firth and Mr. Rush rise to the acting occasion by twinkling and growling as their characters warily circle each other before settling into the therapeutic swing of things and unknowingly preparing for the big speech that partly gives the film its title," she wrote. *The Daily Telegraph* called Guy Pearce's performance as Edward VIII "formidable ... with glamour, charisma and utter self-absorption". *Empire* said he played the role well as "a flash harry flinty enough to shed a nation for a wife." *The New York Times* thought he was able to create "a thorny tangle of complications in only a few abbreviated scenes". Hooper praised the actor in the DVD commentary, saying he "nailed" the 1930s royal accent. Richard Corliss of *Time* magazine named Colin Firth's performance one of the Top 10 Movie Performances of 2010.

The British Stammering Association welcomed the release of *The King's Speech*, congratulating the film makers on their "realistic depiction of the frustration and the fear of speaking faced by people who stammer on a daily basis." It said that "Colin Firth's portrayal of the King's stammer in particular strikes us as very authentic and accurate." The Royal College of Speech and Language Therapists welcomed the film, and launched their "Giving Voice" campaign around the time of its commercial release.

Allociné, a French cinema website, gave the film an average of four out of five stars, based on a survey of 21 reviews. *Le Monde*, which characterised the film as the "latest manifestation of British narcissism" and summarised it as "We are ugly and boring, but, By Jove!, we are right!", nevertheless admired the performances of Firth, Rush, and Bonham Carter. It said that, though the film swept British appeasement under the carpet, it was still enjoyable.

Queen Elizabeth II, the reigning monarch of the Commonwealth realms and the daughter of King George VI, was sent two copies of the film before Christmas 2010. *The Sun* newspaper reported she had watched the film in a private screening at Sandringham House. A palace source described her reaction as being "touched by a moving portrayal of her father". Seidler called the reports "the highest honour" the film could receive.

Awards and nominations



Hooper and Firth in January 2011. Each received multiple award nominations for their work.

At the 83rd Academy Awards, *The King's Speech* won the Academy Award for Best Picture, Best Director (Hooper), Best Actor (Firth), and Best Original Screenplay (Seidler). The film had received 12 Oscar nominations, more than any other film in that year. Besides the four categories it won, the film received nominations for Best Cinematography (Danny Cohen) and two for the supporting actors (Bonham Carter and Rush), as well as two for its *mise-en-scène*: Art Direction and Costumes.

At the 64th British Academy Film Awards, it won seven awards, including Best Film, Outstanding British Film, Best Actor for Firth, Best Supporting Actor for Rush, Best Supporting Actress for Bonham Carter, Best Original Screenplay for Seidler, and Best Music for Alexandre Desplat. The film had been nominated for 14 BAFTAs, more than any other film. At the 68th Golden Globe Awards, Firth won for Best Actor. The film won no other Golden Globes, despite earning seven nominations, more than any other film.

It is also the first Weinstein film to win the Oscar for best Picture.

At the 17th Screen Actors Guild Awards, Firth won the Best Actor award and the entire cast won Best Ensemble, meaning Firth went home with two acting awards in one evening. Hooper won the Directors Guild of America Awards 2010 for Best Director. The film won the Darryl F. Zanuck Award for Best Theatrical Motion Picture at the Producers Guild of America Awards 2010.

The King's Speech won the People's Choice Award at the 2010 Toronto International Film Festival, Best British Independent Film at the 2010 British Independent Film Awards, and the 2011 Goya Award for Best European Film from the Academia de las Artes y las Ciencias Cinematográficas de España (Spanish Academy of Cinematic Art and Science).