

‘I Can Only Imagine’ ‘Vastly Overperformed’ to Stun Box Office and Critics Alike

I Can Only Imagine shattered box office predictions and stunned critics when it raked in \$17 million opening weekend.

“When we first saw this incredibly well-crafted, emotional and moving film, we jumped on the opportunity to work with the Erwins and their team and our partners at Lionsgate on *I Can Only Imagine*. And we were not disappointed,” Roadside Attractions co-president Howard Cohen says. “This is Roadside’s highest grossing opening ever! With the trifecta of the song’s double platinum crossover appeal, the Erwin brothers’ success with such films as *Moms’ Night Out* and *Woodlawn*, plus world-class talent like Dennis Quaid on board, we felt that the film’s inspiring story of hope and forgiveness made for a very compelling collaboration. With an A+ Cinemascore, we expect *I Can Only Imagine* will continue to play solidly through the Easter holiday and well into spring.”

Hollywood Reporter claimed the film “vastly overperformed. The movie debuted to \$17.1 million from 1,628 cinemas to defeat *A Wrinkle in Time* and *Love, Simon*—the first film from a major Hollywood studio featuring a gay teen protagonist—in a surprise upset.”

The movie, named after one of the top Christian songs of all time, tells the life story of MercyMe frontman Bart Millard and how his abusive father came to Christ.

“It was surreal, to say the least, to be approached,” Millard tells *Billboard* of his initial reaction to the film about his life. “I thought it was kind of silly at first that there are parts of [my] life someone thought would make a movie.”

He continued: "My dad was a monster and I realized if the gospel could change that dude, the gospel can change anybody. I just want people to not assume their story is over, especially when maybe they have somebody in their life that they've given up on or they think it's hopeless. If you had me list one person that would never ever come to Jesus [it would be] my dad. I was so angry, hurt and scared of this man that I thought there's no chance. To see the transformation that took place in his life to being my best friend and the Godliest man I ever knew, it was nothing short of a miracle. So I just hope people don't give up on people in their lives. As long as we're breathing there's a chance."

*Been trying to process what to say after this insane weekend. Thank you thank you thank you.
#icanonlyimaginemovie*

A post shared by Bart Millard (@bartmillard) on Mar 18, 2018 at 7:48pm PDT

Here's what other people are saying about the film:

My dear friends, collaborators/ powerful filmmakers, The Erwin Brothers have triumphed again. Their new film #icanonlyimagine opens NOW.

It's going to be a big weekend guys.

Congratulations!!!!@onlyimaginefilm

– Sean Astin (@SeanAstin) March 15, 2018

Go see I CAN ONLY IMAGINE at theaters this weekend! You'll be glad you did! #icanonlyimagine

– Kendrick Brothers (@KendrickBros) March 16, 2018

Saw #ICanOnlyImagineMovie today with some of my peeps in Baton Rouge. It was just as great the third time! Have you seen it yet? If not, you're going this weekend, right? #ICanOnlyImagine #ImagineInvitationChallenge

– Mandisa (@mandisaofficial) March 17, 2018

Congrats to my pals @ErwinBros on the success of their new film #ICanOnlyImagine !

– Patricia Heaton (@PatriciaHeaton) March 16, 2018

We're such huge fans of this movie and now it's finally out! We highly encourage you all to find time to see it this weekend! #icanonlyimagine

– Skillet (@skilletmusic) March 16, 2018

We believe we are going to surpass even these projections because of YOU! Let's shake Hollywood up and pack the theaters this weekend for #ICanOnlyImagine!

– Matt Dickerson (@MattDickerson) March 16, 2018

My nephew was so touched watching #ICanOnlyImagine and seeing his big cousin @brody_rose on screen. A movie for the entire family! @BartMillard @ErwinBros @jaybutler76

– Tara Rose (@tarabrose) March 15, 2018

Just saw #ICanOnlyImagine. Such a PHENOMENAL movie! Although he cried uncontrollably, glad I took my 8yr. old son. His love for Jesus is so real, I'm glad he got to see how prayer, faith and love for Jesus can change all things for the greater good. @mercyme @BartMillard THANK U

– Rhonda Bradford (@Rbradford39) March 16, 2018

Just a glimpse of how POWERFUL “I Can Only Imagine” is. This movie is going to reach deep into places where the need for forgiveness and redemption is the greatest! Don’t take our word for someone and go see for yourself!
#Icanonlyimaginemovie #ICanOnlyImagine

– City On A Hill (@COAHStudio) March 15, 2018