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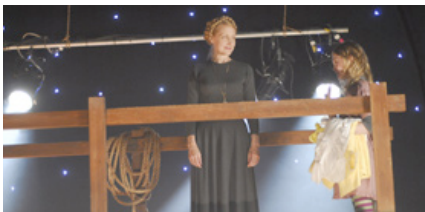
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## Phoebe in Wonderland

**Bottom Line: A star turn by a youngster invigorates this family drama.**

By Duane Byrge

Jan 22, 2008



Writer-director Daniel Barnz examines the disorienting and dispiriting world that kids often face in this compelling drama.

compulsive and blurts out inappropriate things. Her protective mother won't accept professional advice -- obsessive control disorder, Tourette's. Girls will be girls, she rationalizes. Yes, Phoebe's behavior confounds teachers and tears apart her family.

In this compelling drama, writer-director Daniel Barnz examines the disorienting and dispiriting world that kids often face: officious teachers, cruel classmates, confused adults. The mesmerizing performance of Fanning as the gifted and troubled young Phoebe sparks the picture. Charismatic and graceful, Fanning is wondrous. Patricia Clarkson as Phoebe's empathetic and inspiring drama teacher evinces the sympathetic fiber that only a person who also has suffered for being different can convey.

As the beleaguered and well-intentioned mother, Felicity Huffman crystallizes the frustrations and self-doubt of a loving mother, while Bill Pullman captures a father's feeling of helplessness.

PARK CITY -- "Phoebe in Wonderland" reverberates with the frustration of a young girl who seeks refuge in a fantasy world when her parents and school fail her. A jarring and sweet depiction of disability, "Phoebe" should win hearts on the art house circuit and appeal to female and family audiences on cable.

Angelic and talented Phoebe (Elle Fanning) has blessings and challenges: She is obsessively

Under Barnz's guiding directorial hand, technical contributions are masterful. Christophe Beck's score is aptly whimsical and fearsome, while Bobby Bukowski's smart visual compositions are similarly succinct.

### PHOEBE IN WONDERLAND

Silverwood Films

Director/screenwriter: Daniel Barnz Producers: Lynette Howell, Ben Barnz

Executive producers: Doug Dey, Chris Finazzo

Director of photography: Bobby Bukowski

Production designer: Therese DePrez

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Editor: Robert Hoffman  
Music: Christophe Beck  
Cast:  
Hillary Lichten: Felicity Huffman  
Miss Dodger: Patricia Clarkson  
Phoebe Lichten: Elle Fanning  
Peter Lichten: Bill Pullman  
Principal Davis: Campbell Scott  
Running time -- 96 minutes  
No MPAA rating


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