

# Maltin's Movies

Title	Greenberg
Alt Title	
Year	2010
Director	Noah Baumbach
Rating	
Runtime	107
Review	<p>Sometimes a film takes time to sink in. I didn't dislike Greenberg while I was watching it—although its central character did get on my nerves a bit. But in the days that followed, I found myself thinking about the people in the story, and how fully developed they were.</p> <p>They seemed genuine, as tangible as the carefully-chosen Los Angeles locations in which the story unfolds. One can't help but admire that quality. Thus, the dilemma for me in writing about Greenberg is that it's a very well-written, well-made film about an annoying character.</p> <p>Writer-director Noah Baumbach and his wife Jennifer Jason Leigh conceived the story, which is anything but glib. Its treatment of Los Angeles is striking in that it resists cheap jokes, beauty shots, or recognizable landmarks, yet with Harris Savides' ability to capture its distinctive natural light) is accurate and readily identifiable.</p> <p>The verisimilitude of the setting suits the characters quite well. I recognized these people. Stiller gives a finely-tuned performance as a man most people would call a loser. Visiting L.A. after a nervous breakdown back East, he tries to hook up with an old girlfriend (Leigh) who's long since moved on, and rekindles his interrupted friendship with a one-time bandmate (Rhys Ifans), who seems to be the only person who can tolerate him.</p> <p>The only hope for <i>Greenberg</i> is Florence, a capable but unworldly young woman who has no real direction in her life; she's played with amazing freshness by Greta Gerwig, and her performance, like Stiller's, helps validate the film.</p> <p>How can I reconcile these contradictory feelings? I could take a hint from the film itself and say it's worth <i>**1/2</i>, or I could say that it's all a matter of taste. If you're expecting a Ben Stiller comedy, you're watching the wrong movie. If you like multilayered character portraits, and don't mind a laid-back film that's short on narrative drive, you may enjoy <i>Greenberg</i>. But if you wonder where the story is headed, or find the protagonist not worth bothering about, don't say I didn't warn you.</p>
IMDb	tt1234654
MPAA Rating	[R]
Cast	Ben Stiller, Rhys Ifans, Jennifer Jason Leigh, Juno Temple, Brie Larson, Greta Gerwig, Mark Duplass
Country	USA
Genre	Drama, Comedy
Review Plain Text	<p>Sometimes a film takes time to sink in. I didn't dislike Greenberg while I was watching it—although its central character did get on my nerves a bit. But in the days that followed, I found myself thinking about the people in the story, and how fully developed they were.They seemed genuine,</p>