

# Stellar supporting actors raise 'Great Expectations' to high level

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complexity of her character's messed-up mindset by never allowing the viewer to know for sure what she is thinking. It isn't until the final moments of the movie that she conveys some honest compassion, and even then the audience is left to wonder how real it is.

Ethan Hawke does a pretty good job of portraying the younger, naive and dim-witted Finn, but doesn't really pull off the character's transformation to a media-savvy, high-class New York artist with believable accuracy. Otherwise, Hawke's bewildered-yet-passionate spirit worked well, considering his character is fairly confused throughout most of the film.

If this movie were a large, chocolate malt, it would have two cherries on top: one named Anne Bancroft and another named Robert De Niro.

The two renowned actors made their presence felt throughout the film. Bancroft's portrayal of the spiteful Ms. Dinsmoor was perfect. She went from being somewhat charming - in a weird way, mind you - to a decaying entity of evil within the blink of an eye. She played off of her makeup and wardrobe to create a classic character.

While Robert De Niro's role was by far the smallest of the four main actors, his contribution to the film was enormous. His character first appears

## The Facts

**Title:** "Great Expectations"  
**Stars:** Ethan Hawke, Gwyneth Paltrow, Anne Bancroft and Robert De Niro  
**Director:** Alfonso Cuaron  
**Rating:** R  
**Grade:** B+  
**Five Words:** Scenery and stars make film.



as the escaped convict, but later reappears as a wealthy old man with mob ties that lead to his eventual downfall. His on-screen energy commands total attention, and even though he is only in a few scenes, his mysteriously endearing nature creates a classy and appealing character.

The flow of the film has good and bad aspects to it. Like an abstract painting, the film jumps between significant moments that aren't fully defined until you understand the big picture. While this gave the movie an artsy feel, it also made it hard to follow at times.

Also, the time period of the movie is somewhat hard to distinguish. While Finn is a young boy, the



COURTESY PHOTO

**ETHAN HAWKE** and **Gwyneth Paltrow** star in the modern-day adaptation of **Charles Dickens'** classic novel "Great Expectations." The film also features veteran actors **Anne Bancroft** and **Robert De Niro**.

time period appears to be around the late '70s, but the can of Mountain Dew he drinks looks very similar to the one I just finished drinking. This blurred time span continues throughout the movie, and though it doesn't really hurt the film, it is somewhat annoying.

Overall, the settings, combined with the actors' passion, makes for a romantic and mysterious

mood. Dialogue is used sparingly, which adds to the mysteriousness of the film, forcing the viewer to be more perceptive. Bancroft and De Niro add interesting twists to what otherwise could have been just another rags-to-riches, lost love story.

While the movie won't be as classic as the Dickens novel, it is an intriguing story and is definitely worth seeing.

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