



## Margot at the Wedding

Noah Baumbach

USA, 2007  
English

92 minutes ■ Colour/35mm  
Production Company: **Scott Rudin Productions**

Producer: **Scott Rudin**  
Screenplay: **Noah Baumbach**  
Cinematographer: **Harris Savides**  
Editor: **Carol Littleton**  
Production Designer: **Anne Ross**  
Sound: **Paul Urmson**  
Principal Cast: **Nicole Kidman, Jennifer Jason Leigh, Jack Black, John Turturro, Ciarán Hinds, Zane Pais**

Production: **Scott Rudin Productions, 120 West 45th Street, 10th Floor, New York NY 10036 USA. T (212) 704-4600**

### CONTACT INFORMATION

Canadian Distributor:  
**Paramount Vantage**  
US Distributor: **Paramount Vantage**  
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Noah Baumbach has developed one of the more distinctive voices in contemporary American cinema. At its root is a biting wit, underplayed to the extreme by the accomplished actors inexorably drawn to his disciplined, intense writing. The relief of humour allows audiences to join him in exploring otherwise unbearable battles between individuals bent on humiliation and Pyrrhic emotional victories.

I have always found the frequent comparisons of Baumbach to Woody Allen somewhat suspect: while they are both New Yorkers mining personal history for their stories, Baumbach has little interest in Allen's sentimentality; his touchstones are more literary and his humour far more unnerving. That said, Baumbach's new film could well be considered a response to Allen's *Interiors* (itself a tribute to the work of Ingmar Bergman). *Margot at the Wedding* shares with that film a quietness dramatically interrupted by existential outbursts, and a desire to explore a family's most painful secrets.

Instead of Bergman's attenuated visual compositions, Baumbach employs a deeply moody home-movie style, conjuring up the grainy yellows and browns of seventies album covers – think Carole King's *Tapestry*. It gives the film, set primarily in and around a crumbling country house, a raw intimacy and atmospheric immediacy.

Margot (Nicole Kidman), a successful and neurotic writer, has been estranged from her sister Pauline (Jennifer Jason Leigh) for some time. Pauline's impending marriage to

Malcolm (Jack Black), however, spurs Margot to visit the old family house where the couple and their daughter live. Her adolescent son, Claude (Zane Pais), accompanies her; through his eyes, we see the sisters re-engage in the combat that marked their years together. Margot's drive to judge everything and everyone alienates her from the world and inspires the family to mischief. The ensuing trouble threatens to unravel the emotional bonds so carefully maintained before Margot's arrival.

Like Baumbach's exquisite *The Squid and the Whale*, this new film's script is dense – the director has cited Eric Rohmer's similarly nuanced *Pauline à la plage* as an influence here – so the precision of these performances is particularly impressive. The cast excels across the board, with Kidman and Leigh particularly incendiary in their use of language and steely, barely disguised aggression.

### ■ Noah Cowan



**Noah Baumbach** was born in Brooklyn and attended Vassar College. His feature films include *Kicking and Screaming* (95), *Mr. Jealousy* (98) and *The Squid and the Whale* (05), for which he earned an Academy Award® nomination and both the fiction screenwriting and directing awards at the Sundance Film Festival. He also co-wrote Wes Anderson's *The Life Aquatic with Steve Zissou* (04). *Margot at the Wedding* (07) is his latest feature film.