Written by Jeff Ignatius
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Slumdog Millionaire has slipped in and out of the Box Office Power Rankings since the weekend starting December 19 — spending four of those weeks in the rankings and two weeks out.

It seems telling that this past weekend, *Millionaire* again came out on top of our rankings, five weeks after it initially won. In both cases, *Slumdog*'s victory accompanied a significant increase in the number of venues at which the movie was playing — 169 to 589 on December 19, and 582 to 1,411 on January 23.

But there's also evidence that the Danny Boyle-directed movie has been able to maintain public interest and enthusiasm over an extended period of time, beyond simply expanding its release. In each of its four appearances in our rankings, it has been in the top three for per-theater average.

That six-weekend performance is pretty amazing when you consider the cultural half-life of most movies now can be measured in *days*; *Slumdog Millionaire* has a staying power that rivals *The Dark Knight*.

Consider it one more reason the movie is approaching being a shoo-in for the Best Picture Oscar.

About Box Office Power Rankings

Box Office Power Rankings balance box office and critical reception to create a better measure of a movie's overall performance against its peers than gross receipts alone.

The weekly rankings cover the 10 top-grossing movies in the United States for the previous weekend. I assign equal weight to box office and critical opinion, with each having two components. The measures are: box-office gross, per-theatre average, Rotten Tomatoes (RottenTomatoes.com) score, and Metacritic (Metacritic.com) score.

Why those four? Box-office gross basically measures the number of people who saw a movie in a given weekend. Per-theatre average corrects for blockbuster-wannabes that flood the market with prints, and gives limited-release movies a fighting chance. Rotten Tomatoes measures critical opinion in a binary way. And Metacritic gives a better sense of critics' enthusiasm (or bile) for a movie.

For each of the four measures, the movies are ranked and assigned points (10 for the best performer, one for the worst). Finally, those points are added up, with a maximum score of 40 and a minimum score of four.

For more Box Office Power Rankings, visit CultureSnob.net/bopr . Culture Snob is the Web site of Reader Managing Editor Jeff Ignatius.

Box Office Power Rankings: January 23-25, 2009

Box Office Ranks		Critics' Ranks			
Rank	Movie	Last Week	Gross	Per T	
Rotten Tomatoes					
Metacritic					

1	***Slumdog Millionaire***	3	6 ($10.7M)
2	***Gran Torino***	1	8 ($16.2M)
3	***My Bloody Valentine 3D***	4	5 ($10.0M)
3	***Underworld: Rise of the Lycans***	-	9 ($20.8M)
5	***Hotel for Dogs***	7	7 ($12.9M)
6	***Paul Blart: Mall Cop***	5	10 ($21.6M)
7	***The Curious Case of Benjamin Button***	-	2 ($6.1M)
8	***Notorious***	2	1 ($5.8M)

9	***Inkheart***	-	4 ($7.6M)
10	***Bride Wars***	10	3 ($6.9M)