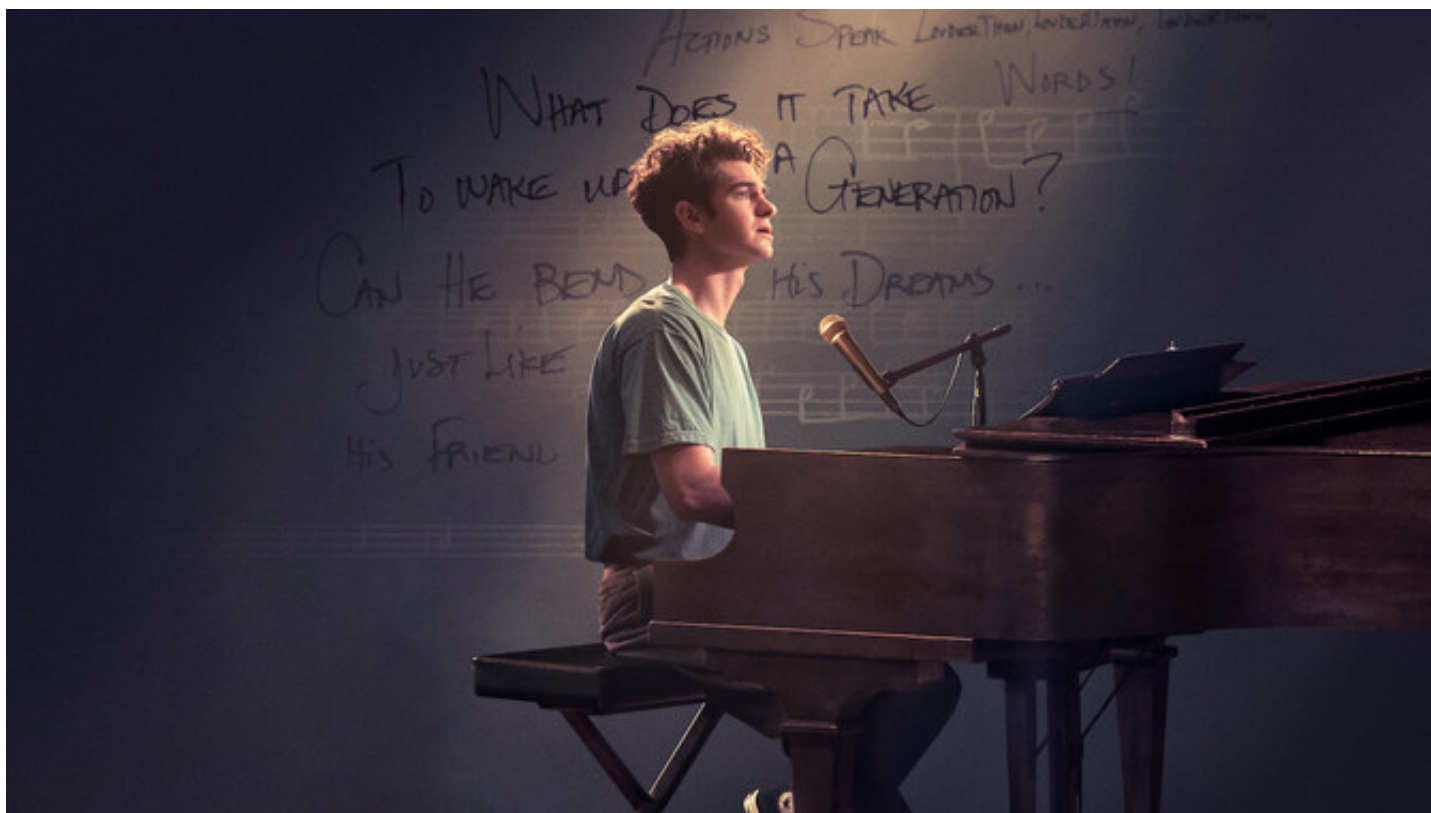


Netflix musical 'Tick, Tick...Boom!' a magical mix of great acting, songs



CHENNAI: When American playwright and composer Jonathan Larson's rock opera "Superbia" was rejected, he was disappointed, disillusioned and distressed. And it is Larson's early struggle that the creator of smash hit musical "Hamilton," Lin-Manuel Miranda, weaves into his latest feature, "Tick, Tick...Boom!"



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Now streaming on Netflix, the film, which is based on a musical, intersperses songs and dance numbers with scripted conversation — a welcome bonus for those who aren't sold on all-singing musicals.

"Spiderman" star Andrew Garfield essays a young Larson struggling to find success in 1990s New York. He does so brilliantly, with a clear high pitch voice and a twinkle in his step and manages to capture the emotion of a man battling to make it big. Sadly,

when success finally knocks on Larson's door, he is not around to witness it. He was just 35 when he died, hours before his famed musical "Rent" opened off-Broadway.

A simple story, viewers have the chance to learn about Larson's writer's block and his jittery days as the clock ticks on and his life ebbs away. We find ourselves in a New York flooded with mixtapes and cigarettes as Larson waits tables to make ends meet. The cast is rounded out by Larson's dancer girlfriend, Susan (a fantastic Alexandra Shipp), and best friend and ex-roommate, Michael (a great Robin de Jesus), who add their own tales to the heady mix.

Garfield is simply marvelous, presenting the contrast between being a frustrated lover, serving Sunday brunches at a restaurant in SoHo and writing verses between the orders. He exhibits Larson's infallible drive, struggling with writer's block and tensions associated with it.

Miranda and screenwriter Steven Levenson ("Dear Evan Hansen") have pulled off an on-screen version of "Tick, Tick...Boom!" featuring facets from the entire body of Larson's work. Surprisingly, it has not resulted in a jumbled mess and is instead a tight, neat piece of work. Meanwhile, Miranda's collaborators, director of photography Alice Brooks and editors Myron Kerstein and Andrew Weisblum, manage to give "Tick, Tick...Boom!" a compellingly poignant feel.
