

Film Review: In uplifting 'Hidden Figures,' three women rise

By JAKE COYLE
AP Film Writer

Theodore Melfi's buoyant "Hidden Figures" is an old-fashioned feel-good movie with powerful contemporary relevance, spearheaded by a trio of unstoppable actresses playing black women who wouldn't be stopped.

Set in 1961 Virginia, the fact-based "Hidden Figures," adapted from Mar-

got Lee Shetterly's non-fiction book, is about three peripheral characters at NASA who made important contributions to the space race. Their workplace is segregated (with separate bathrooms and drinking fountains) and the offices are run by white males in suits.

But the talent and smarts of mathematician Katherine Johnson (Taraji P. Henson), engineer Mary Jackson (Janelle Monae) and computer super-

visor Dorothy Vaughan (Octavia Spencer) are impossible to ignore.

While rockets lift off, the women of "Hidden Figures" strive for their own upward movement.

Johnson is pulled out of a pool of computers (human ones, though a room-sized IBM makes an appearance) and brought into the all-white rocket center to check the calculations of the scientists rushing to lift John

Glenn (Glen Powell) into space. Their leader is Al Harrison (Kevin Costner).

But "Hidden Figures," punctuated by original songs by Pharrell Williams, avoids the typical notes of a civil rights drama and keeps its focus on its three indomitable leads and their characters' private lives. Nobody would mistake it for an examination of segregation, and no one will wonder if Melfi's film is going to end on a high note.

Instead, "Hidden Figures" is a straightforward, satisfying tale of triumph, full of crowd-pleasing scenes that its excellent cast lends spirit to. Henson fiercely delivers the film's big, cathartic moment, one that will surely resonate for audiences familiar with her plight. In both scenes, "Hidden Figures" feels both of the '60s and of now. These are figures that have often been hidden from movie screens, too.



THE DAILY ASTORIAN

TV LISTINGS

Evening listings
FRIDAY-SUNDAY

Table with columns for time slots (6 PM, 6:30, 7 PM, 7:30, 8 PM, 8:30, 9 PM, 9:30, 10 PM, 10:30, 11 PM, 11:30) and rows for various TV channels (KATU, KOMO, KING, KOIN, KIRO, KGW, KRCW, KOPB, KPVT, KPDX, KCPQ, TBS, KZJO, ESPN, ESPN2, NICK, DISN, FNC, LIFE, ROOT, FS1, SPIKE, COM, HIST, A&E, TLC, DISC, NGE0, TNT, AMC, USA, FOOD, HGTV, FX, CNN, FNC, CNBC, BRAV, TCM, SYFY, RFD) listing their respective programs.

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Advertisement for Clatsop Animal Assistance. Text: "Make a difference be a volunteer! Call the shelter today to find out about our volunteer orientations & to reserve your spot! www.dogscats.org Open 12-4 pm, Tues-Sat" Includes images of a dog named Gary and a cat named Patch (Piglet).