

Not even Wonder Woman can save 'Justice League'

By LINDSEY BAHR
AP Film Writer

It's hard not to feel a little bad for the DC Comics films at this point. They have the unenviable task of having to form an identity in the shadows of the films of the Marvel Cinematic Universe, which are usually good and rarely unwatchable, and the continued glow of Christopher Nolan's Dark Knight trilogy, which are seeming more and more like transcendent anomalies as we get deeper into this never-ending cycle of super humans crowding our multiplexes. DC got off to a rocky start and then Patty Jenkins went and made a very good "Wonder Woman."

And yet somehow it is no surprise that "Justice League" tips the balances back in the wrong direction. Although marginally better than "Batman v Superman" and "Suicide Squad," director Zack Snyder's latest is still a profound mess of maudlin muscles, incoherent action

"Justice League"
★★☆☆
PG-13, 121 minutes

and jaw-droppingly awful CGI. It is big, loud, awful to look at and oh-so-dumb. With Superman (Henry Cavill) dead, and the world facing yet another devastating threat (yawn) this time at the hands of some ancient creature named Steppenwolf (Ciaran Hinds) and his army of giant alien mosquitoes, which look like Saturday morning Power Rangers villains, Batman/Bruce Wayne (Ben Affleck) and Wonder Woman/Diana Prince (Gal Gadot) go in search of some new recruits: Barry Allen/The Flash (Ezra Miller), a quippy "kid" who's excited to join the team; Arthur Curry/Aquaman (Jason Momoa) who talks like a surfer bro and looks like a Nordic bodybuilder with ombre locks and fishermen's knits; and Victor Stone/Cyborg (Ray Fisher), who is still in the sulky "why me"

phase of his superhero career. There are some good moments, thanks in large part to the addition of Miller, whose quick, self-deprecating humor (likely the result of Joss Whedon's script and reshoot work) and general liveliness steals scenes away from his brawnier and moodier counterparts. But everything else about "Justice League" feels labored, from a preposterous underwater battle that comes out of nowhere and the camaraderie between the superheroes that never clicks into place, to Batman's lumbering gait (does the batsuit weigh 300 pounds?) and Superman's mouth which looks a little...off. And never has it been so obvious that the character of Wonder Woman is now being presented through a man's eyes. Snyder chooses on multiple occasions to let the shot linger on Gadot's figure, whether panning up her legs unnecessarily to get to a normal scene of dialogue or making sure that the camera is there to capture the

moment when her skirt flies up in an action sequence. It is, quite frankly, gross and a wildly disappointing departure from what Patty Jenkins was able to accomplish with the character earlier this year. There's even an attempt to humanize the potential destruction with a random impoverished Eastern European family struggling to defend their homestead. The story focuses in on the family's young daughter, who, in braided pigtails picks up a can of bug spray as a defense. You'd think that this might come back and provide an opportunity for her to a) see and be inspired by Wonder Woman in action or b) at least get saved by her. It would be so obvious. But they don't even meet. It's just a tiny example of how "Justice League" feels like a bunch of disconnected moments with no governing theory behind it other than the fact that this movie has to come at this time to introduce audiences to characters whose stand-alone movies have already been promised to shareholders.



Photo contributed by Dorothy Lochert
Carolyn Lochert [left], Janis Carper [right] perform as Jezebel's Mother.



Warner Bros. Entertainment Inc. via AP
Jason Momoa, from left, Gal Gadot, Ezra Miller and Ray Fisher in a scene from "Justice League."

Americana and jazz, blended

Fall seems to be bringing with it a cornucopia of new recordings from Northeast Oregon. Last month I touched upon the upcoming debut album by the Ukiah-based singer-songwriter Elwood Haney, and this week I turn my attention to Jezebel's Mother, associates of Haney who have a debut album of their own. In fact, both Elwood and Jezebel's Mother recently performed together at the album release show for the latter in Enterprise.

Jezebel's Mother is the moniker of two Wallowa Valley singer-songwriters performing in tandem: Janis Carper and Carolyn Lochert. The duo has been casually playing together for about a decade but it has only been within the past few years that their activities together took off and they adopted the name Jezebel's Mother. Their debut album "Real Pearls" was recorded at Janis's home studio — MiCasa Studio — in Enterprise and is full of folk-rock that would be at home in your local coffee shop. Carper and Lochert trade off songwriting duties throughout the album but blend their harmonious voices together no matter whose song they're performing. Highlights include the bluesy swamp rock number "River Don't Care" (though the lyrics evoke imagery of the Wallowa Mountains rather than a bayou), the funeral jazz dirge "Far From Here," and the atmospheric "Blue Eyes," which sounds a bit like a Daniel Lanois production.



J.D. KINDLE
Comment

Upon first listening to "Real Pearls" one is immediately struck by the contrast between Carper and Lochert's songwriting styles: Carper favors straightforward, Americana-style songs while Lochert explores the jazz tradition, embracing extended chord voicings. Their divergent styles can be explained by their respective histories. Janis has a long history of performance in the Pacific Northwest, fronting a country-rock band in Spokane, performing as a folk singer-songwriter in Seattle, and touring in the musical production "Woody Guthrie's American Song." Since moving to Eastern Oregon in 2004, she has played regularly with Grande Ronde Valley-based rock band The Alibis, penning most of the songs from their sole album.

Although Lochert cut her teeth performing with a country rock band in Flagstaff, Arizona, it was in Corvallis where she developed a love affair with jazz. There she studied jazz composition with free jazz trumpeter Rob Blaksee. Lochert moved to the Wallowa Valley in 2002 and eventually produced her first solo album of jazz material in 2014.

The eclectic nature of their songs brought by their distinct backgrounds is considered an advantage by the band. "I think our diversity is what keeps us fresh," said Janis. "We have a habit of not playing a song the same way twice. It's always different. We'll change up the tempo or the feel. That might be what drew me to Carolyn's music because I didn't have any jazz influence growing up. I had a bit of swing jazz that my dad played and listened to, but not jazz. It was probably the blues that we had most in common and then it branches off from there."

"Real Pearls" is also a bit of a family affair. Carper's son Joey contributes drums to the entire album and co-wrote the protest song "Shout About It" while Lochert's daughter Emma contributed vocals. Said Janis: "It's great to finally have something that represents what we do even though those songs were recorded at the moment we recorded them and they sound totally different now."

"We listen back [to the album] and say, 'Oh man! We don't play it like that at all anymore!'" Carolyn adds. Even in renditions presented on the album aren't spot-on renditions of how the songs are performed live, "Real Pearls" provides a wonderful illustration of the warm musical partnership between Carper and Lochert. If anything it provides a good incentive for catching the duo live.

J.D. Kindle is entertainment columnist for the East Oregonian.

WHAT TO DO

Festivals

- Red Kettle Kick-off Dinner**
 - Saturday, Nov. 18; 5:30-8 p.m.
 - Salvation Army, 150 S.E. Emigrant Ave., Pendleton
 - \$25. The dinner event helps kick off the Red Kettle season to raise money for those in need. Includes live music and an auction.
- Pendleton WinterFest**
 - Friday, Dec. 1; 6 p.m., gala event
 - Saturday, Dec. 2; 10 a.m.-4 p.m., family day
 - Pendleton Convention Center, 1601 Westgate
 - \$35/gala event, free/Family Day. Formerly the Festival of Trees, the holiday extravaganza's evening gala features hors d'oeuvres, cocktails, a three-course meal, jazz music, live/silent auction with decorated trees, experience packages and gift baskets. The free Family Day features tree viewing and holiday activities.
- Winterfest, Bazaar & Light Parade**
 - Saturday, Dec. 2; 10 a.m.-2 p.m.; 5 p.m. parade
 - Pilot Rock Community Center
 - Free. After shopping for homemade goodies and gifts, get ready for the Light Parade, followed by a chili feed (\$) and float awards.

- Hermiston Festival of Trees**
 - Saturday, Dec. 2; 6 p.m., gala event
 - Sunday, Dec. 3; noon-4 p.m., family day
 - Hermiston Conference Center, 415 S. Highway 395
 - \$40/gala event, \$5/suggested Family Day donation. The gala event features a live and silent auction for Christmas trees and other holiday decor and gift baskets. The Family Day features tree viewing and holiday fun.
- Light Festival & Parade**
 - Saturday, Dec. 2; 5:30 p.m.
 - Downtown Condon
 - Free. People are encouraged to come early to shop at local merchants, caroling on Main Street and a 4 p.m. screening of "A Charlie Brown Christmas" at the Liberty Theater. After party at the Elks Lodge includes (\$) food, drinks and pictures with Santa.

- Art, Museums & Authors**
- The Art of the Gift**
 - Friday, Nov. 24; 4:30 p.m., members sneak peek
 - Friday, Nov. 24; 5:30-7 p.m., general public
 - Pendleton Center for the Arts, 214 N. Main St.
 - Free admission. The East Oregonian Gallery is transformed into a showcase of creative gifts from craftspeople from across the nation. Unique stocking stuffers available for under \$10. Also, one-of-a-kind gifts as well as



Contributed photo
Ed Edmo, an American Indian storyteller, poet, lecturer and performer.

- functional and wearable items for sale. Memberships available for \$25. Regular hours Tuesday-Fridays from 10 a.m.-4 p.m. and Saturdays from noon-4 p.m. Runs through Saturday, Dec. 30.
- "Drawn Narratives"**
 - Monday-Thursdays, 9:30 a.m.-1:30 p.m.
 - Betty Feves Memorial Gallery, BMCC, 2411 N.W. Carden Ave., Pendleton.
 - Free. Features Christopher Troutman, whose work explores the differences and similarities of two places he lives each year: the Midwestern United States and southern Japan. Gallery also open by appointment by calling 541-278-5952. Runs through Dec. 7.
- "Season of Magic"**
 - Saturday, Dec. 2; 2-4 p.m.
 - Arts Portal Gallery, 508 N. Main St., Milton-Freewater
 - Free. Holiday-themed art exhibit opening. Exhibit hours Saturday & Sundays, noon-5 p.m. through Dec. 17.

Music

- Willow Creek Symphony**
 - Saturday, Nov. 18; 4 p.m.
 - Irrigon Elementary School, 490 S.E. Wyoming Ave.
 - Sunday, Nov. 19; 4 p.m.
 - Helix School, 120 Main St
 - Free, donations accepted. An ensemble of the Inland Northwest Musicians. Reception follows to visit with performers.
- Humtulpis**
 - Saturday, Nov. 18; 8 p.m. No cover
 - Wildhorse Sports Bar, Wildhorse Resort & Casino, off I-84 Exit 216, Mission.
- Latino Night/Danza Mexicana**
 - Saturday, Nov. 18; 9 p.m.
 - Sub Zero Restaurant & Lounge, 100 W. Highway 730, Irrigon

Tribal storytelling flows through Celilo

PENDLETON — A Portland man will share about his experiences growing up along Celilo Falls and some traditional stories. Ed Edmo, who has tribal affiliation with Shoshone, Bannock and Nez Perce, serves as a consultant for the National Museum of the American Indian-Smithsonian Institution. He is a poet, playwright, performer, traditional storyteller, tour guide and lecturer. A featured presenter as part of Blue Mountain Community College's Native American Heritage Month, the public is invited to a pair of free presentations. The events are Tuesday, Nov. 21 in Bob Clapp Theatre, located in Pioneer Hall at BMCC, 2411 N.W. Carden Ave. In a 1 p.m. presentation, Edmo will share about growing up near the falls. And, at 6 p.m., he will share traditional stories. For questions, contact Annie Smith, BMCC Native American liaison and success coach, at smith@bluucc.edu or 541-278-5935. For more about Edmo, visit <http://ededmo.tripod.com>.

- No cover. DJ with Latin music.
- Fun Addicts**
 - Friday, Nov. 24; Saturday, Nov. 25; 8 p.m. No cover
 - Wildhorse Sports Bar, Wildhorse Resort & Casino, off I-84 Exit 216, Mission.
- The Wasteland Kings**
 - Friday, Nov. 24; 9 p.m. No cover
 - Hamley Steakhouse & Saloon, 8 S.E. Court Ave., Pendleton
- Super Saturated Sugar Strings**
 - Monday, Nov. 27; 7-9 p.m.
 - Great Pacific Wine & Coffee Co., 403 S. Main St., Pendleton
 - No cover. All ages. Funky and alt-folky group from Anchorage.

Night life

- Santa Express Donation Event**
 - Saturday, Dec. 2; 5-11 p.m.
 - The Pheasant, 149 E. Main St., Hermiston
 - \$10. Features UFC 218 Holloway vs Aldo 2, raffle items, door prizes, drink/food specials. DJ Diego Ariola will be start the dancing right after the fights. Benefit event for Hermiston Police Christmas Express.
- Karaoke w/DJ David**
 - Fridays and Saturdays; 8 p.m.
 - Riverside Sports Bar, 1501 Sixth St., Umatilla
- DJ & Trivia**
 - Saturdays; 9 p.m.
 - Midway Tavern, 1750 N. First St., Hermiston
- Mac's Trivia Night**
 - Tuesdays; 7 p.m. No cover
 - Mac's Bar & Grill, 1400 S.W. Dorion Ave., Pendleton
 - 21 and older. Eat. Drink. Think. Teams of 2-8 compete in trivia contest with other teams. Live host and prizes, including \$50 gift card for winning team.
- Digital Karaoke**
 - Thursdays and Fridays, 8 p.m.
 - The Pheasant, 149 E. Main St., Hermiston
 - DJ and dancing**
 - Fridays, 8 p.m.
 - The Pheasant, 149 E. Main St., Hermiston
 - Karaoke**
 - Fridays; 9 p.m.
 - Midway Tavern, 1750 N. First St., Hermiston

Theater, stage, film & lectures

- "All in the Timing"**
 - Saturday, Nov. 18; 7:30 p.m.; Sunday, Nov. 19; 2 p.m.
 - BMCC Bob Clapp Theatre, 2411 N.W. Carden Ave., Pendleton
 - \$15/adults, \$10/youths, students of all ages. College Community Theatre presents a collection of short comedies by playwright David Ives. Not suitable for young children.
- "Fearsome Pirate Frank"**
 - Saturday, Nov. 18; 2 p.m. & 5 p.m.
 - Armand Larive Middle School, 1497 S.W. Ninth St., Hermiston
 - \$10/adults; \$5/students. Cast of a play about pirates is kidnapped by real pirates.
- "The Nutcracker"**
 - Thursday, Nov. 30, Friday, Dec. 1; 7 p.m.
 - Saturday, Dec. 2; 2 p.m.
 - Bob Clapp Theatre at BMCC, 2411 N.W. Carden Ave., Pendleton
 - \$5/adults, \$3/children under 12. Celebrate the 10th anniversary of "The Nutcracker" with 30 local dancers from Pendleton Ballet Theatre under the direction of Julie Sneden-Carlson.
- Journey to Bethlehem**
 - Friday, Dec. 1-Sunday, Dec. 3; 5-9 p.m.
 - Seventh-day Adventist Church, 855 W. Highland Ave., Hermiston