

# NEW TO THE GALAXY

## John Boyega and Kelly Marie Tran adjust to stardom in sci-fi’s biggest franchise

By **SANDY COHEN**  
*AP Entertainment Writer*

John Boyega may have a lot in common with Finn, the character he plays in “Star Wars: The Last Jedi,” but a trip to a London toy store left the actor floored.

Boyega said one of the most surprising experiences he had while making the film was seeing his own larger-than-life likeness at the Toys “R” Us store he frequented as a kid. The actor had gone to find a gift for his newborn nephew when he came face to face with a giant cardboard cutout of himself as Finn.

“There were toys everywhere, and I was just like, ‘Wow,’” Boyega said in a recent interview. “I’m on the shelf. It’s strange.”

While he has gotten more accustomed to his place in the Star Wars universe after making his debut as Finn in “The Force Awakens,” both he and his character remain awed by the scope of that world.

A former Stormtrooper who escapes the First Order to join the Resistance, Finn is now emboldened to discover where he fits into the fight, Boyega said.

“It creates a very brave Finn and he’s eager to do anything to find out and prove that this is my position,” said Boyega.

The 25-year-old actor is poised to do the same in Hollywood: His work in Star Wars has led to other high-profile roles,

including a part in Kathryn Bigelow’s “Detroit” and in next year’s “Pacific Rim Uprising.”

“I feel like during the filming of ‘The Last Jedi,’ we were kind of living parallels to our characters in a sense,” Boyega said. “Because Finn is now well known in the Star Wars universe, and for me, I’m known within the industry and our planet and whatever. Now he has this reputation and it’s hard for him to keep that up while still figuring himself out because he’s been labeled as a hero.”

Finn’s onscreen heroics in “The Last Jedi” include an epic battle with Captain Phasma (Gwendoline Christie) that took months of training and preparation.

Off-screen, Boyega was a hero to newcomer Kelly Marie Tran, who plays Rose Tico. The two met while she was auditioning for the role, and he has advocated for her ever since.

“He’s so generous in terms of being an actor and really kind of teaching me the ropes because I was new to this,” Tran said. “I truly feel like I couldn’t have had a better partner in this whole experience.”

As for Boyega, he’s had some time to get used to the idea of seeing himself as an action figure. But that was only the beginning of “The Last Jedi” branding.

“I recently went to the grocery store and saw myself on water,” he said. “That’s the biggest it gets for me. Everybody needs water, you know what I mean?”



Photos by Jordan Strauss/Invision/AP  
**John Boyega (top) and Kelly Marie Tran pose for photos during the ‘Star Wars: The Last Jedi’ press junket in Los Angeles.**

Kelly Marie Tran still can’t quite believe she’s in a Star Wars movie.

The 28-year-old was about to give up on her dreams of becoming an actress when she landed a breakthrough role in “The Last Jedi.”

So after years of toiling and hoping and working disposable jobs, Tran is now a movie star, the kind of person who holds hands with Laura Dern at media events and considers Gwendoline Christie a good friend.

“I know, right? Let me pinch myself real quick,” Tran said, her effervescent excitement bright and obvious. “I am just trying to stay present and really trying to experience every moment of this. It still feels very impossible and very much like it’s all a big dream or something.”

Tran was plucked from obscurity to play Rose Tico, a Resistance mechanic in “The Last Jedi.” Rose idolizes Resistance fighters like pilot Poe Dameron and former Stormtrooper Finn, but does her work behind the scenes.

“She’s never been someone who has been in the limelight,” Tran said of her character. “And then we get to see her get pulled into the forefront of the action, and you see how she deals with it.”

Sounds like art imitating life for a certain actress.

“Totally, 100 percent,” Tran said with a beaming grin.

Director Rian Johnson

found her after “a huge, exhaustive casting search” that included well-known actresses and newcomers.

“And Kelly just, I don’t know, she really jumped out at me as someone who I was looking for in the character,” he said. “I wanted someone who — thinking back to me as a kid being a genuine nerd you could relate to — someone who didn’t feel like they belong; someone you wouldn’t necessarily imagine as a big Star Wars hero. Let’s throw them in the mix and see the world through their eyes.”

John Boyega, who plays Finn, said he could tell during the audition process that Tran had something special.

“We would do chemistry reads and it was so blatant from the beginning that she was the right girl for the part,” he said.

Both Boyega and Daisy Ridley (Rey) were also relative unknowns when they joined the Star Wars universe for 2015’s “The Force Awakens,” and Tran said they’ve been like spirit guides as she navigates a new world of international appearances and near-religious fandom.

“It is such a strange experience,” she said. “You know, it’s not like taking your driver’s test or breaking up with your boyfriend, where you can call whoever you want to be like, ‘Hey, remember when that happened?’ This is truly like you have two other people you could talk to about it.”



Contributed photo  
**Little Watts presents “A Seussified Christmas Carol” Sunday at the Power House Theater in Walla Walla.**

### Dr. Seuss meets Charles Dickens

WALLA WALLA — A whimsical reinvention of Charles Dickens’ most beloved Christmas story will be staged in Walla Walla.

Performed in wacky rhymed couplets, “A Seussified Christmas Carol” is Sunday at 2 p.m. and 6 p.m. at the Power House Theater, 111 N. Sixth St., Walla Walla. Reserved seats are \$12 for adults and \$8 for youths. Photo opportunities with the characters follow each performance.

Presented by Little Watts, the show features zoot-fruited juices and binka bird geese, from Bed-Headed Fred to Timmy Loo Hoo. The tale of glorious holiday cheer is similar to something Dr. Seuss might have come up with.

For more information or to reserve tickets, call 509-529-6500 or visit [www.phtww.com](http://www.phtww.com).

### Arts Portal hosts final exhibit of 2017 season

MILTON-FREEWATER — The photographs of Fran Walker and jewelry art of Geri Honn are featured in the upcoming exhibit at Arts Portal Gallery.

The opening reception for Season of Magic is Saturday, Dec. 9 from 2-4 p.m. at the gallery, 508 N. Main St., Milton-Freewater. The free event includes refreshments and live entertainment. In addition, the Mask Project by Milton-Freewater kindergarten students made with the Carnegie Picture Lab is on display.

After the close of the 2017 season, the gallery is planning to re-open at a new location in April 2018.

The gallery’s regular hours are Saturday and Sundays from noon to 5 p.m. There is no admission charge. For more information, call 541-938-5516 or visit [www.facebook.com/artsportalgallery](http://www.facebook.com/artsportalgallery).

### Festivals

- Christmas Light Show**
  - Begins Dec. 1; nightly
  - SAGE Center, 101 Olson Road
  - [www.visitsage.com](http://www.visitsage.com)
  - Free. Light show accompanied by Christmas music (tune into 106.9 FM on car radio).
- Holiday Stroll**
  - Saturday, Dec. 9; 3-7 p.m.
  - Downtown Pendleton
  - Free. Tree lighting (5 p.m.), special deals, hot chocolate stations, guitar raffle and Santa.
- North Main Magic Crawl**
  - Thursday, Dec. 14; 5-8 p.m.
  - North Main Street, Milton-Freewater
  - Free. Features fun, food, wine/beer, vendors, lights, holiday magic and Santa.
- Skating with Santa**
  - Saturday, Dec. 16; 11 a.m.-2 p.m.
  - Roy Raley Ice Rink, 1205 S.W. Court Ave., Pendleton
  - [www.pendletonparksandrec.com](http://www.pendletonparksandrec.com)
  - Free, but kids 10 and under must be accompanied by an adult. Pictures with Santa, on-ice activities, bonfire and warm drinks.
- Hermiston Farmers Christmas Market**
  - Saturday, Dec. 16; 2-6 p.m.; Sunday, Dec. 17; 8 a.m.-4 p.m.
  - Hermiston Conference Center, 415 S. Highway 395
  - [www.facebook.com](http://www.facebook.com)
  - Free. Includes festivities, crafts, food.

### Art, Museums & Authors

- “C-Lager: Stalag Luft IV and the 86-Day Hunger March”**
  - Saturday, Dec. 9; 11 a.m.
  - Pendleton Public Library, 502 S.W. Dorion Ave.
  - [www.pendletonlibrary.weebly.com](http://www.pendletonlibrary.weebly.com)
  - Free. Vietnam veteran and clinical therapist David Dorfmeier shares a multi-media presentation about his book that recounts his father’s World War II military service.
- “A Brush with Life”**
  - Saturday, Dec. 9; 4-8 p.m.
  - 370 W. Moore Ave., Hermiston
  - Free. Features new oil paintings by landscape artist Jim Simpson. The 22 framed works, ranging from 8-by-10 to 38-by-30, are also for sale during the exhibit and reception.
- “Season of Magic”**
  - Saturday & Sundays, noon-5 p.m.
  - Arts Portal Gallery, 508 N. Main St., Milton-Freewater
  - [www.facebook.com](http://www.facebook.com)
  - Free. Holiday-themed art exhibit. Runs through Dec. 17.
- The Art of the Gift**
  - Tuesday-Fridays, 10 a.m.-4 p.m.; Saturdays, noon-4 p.m.
  - Pendleton Center for the Arts, 214 N. Main St.
  - [www.pendletonarts.org](http://www.pendletonarts.org)
  - Free. Gallery features creative gifts from craftspeople from across the nation. Runs through Dec. 30.
- Great Gifts Show**
  - Tuesday-Sundays, 10 a.m.-6 p.m.
  - Peterson’s Gallery and Chocolatier, 1925 Main St., Baker City
  - [www.petersonsgallery.net](http://www.petersonsgallery.net)
  - Free. Features hand-selected recommendations for

## WHAT TO DO

### Great Pacific wraps up Christmas pageant

PENDLETON — With a promise to ramp up (or amp up) the holiday spirit, a variety of regional musicians will take the stage during the Great Pacific Xmas Pageant.

The annual holiday musical extravaganza, hosted by James Dean Kindle & the Eastern Oregon Playboys, is Sunday, Dec. 17 from 3-7 p.m. at Great Pacific Wine & Coffee Co., 403 S. Main St., Pendleton. The all-ages event won’t compete with your holiday budget, as there is no cover charge.

The afternoon and evening will be filled with brief musical performances by local musicians. People are invited to come down and hear renditions of Christmas tunes, both popular and obscure.

In addition to Kindle and the Playboys, this year’s guest performers include Murray Dunlap, Drew Langton & Jayati Ramakrishnan, Misty Mouth, REV, Joe Pitt, The Noodlers and Lincoln Barr.

For more information, contact Kindle at [jamesdeankindle@gmail.com](mailto:jamesdeankindle@gmail.com) or the Great Pacific at 541-276-1350.



Photo contributed by Michelle Hackney  
**Dressed in festive attire, Murray Dunlap heads to the 2016 “Great Pacific Xmas Pageant.” This year’s holiday extravaganza is Dec. 17 at Great Pacific Wine & Coffee Co., Pendleton.**

Christmas gifts from new productions by local favorite artists. Items include ornaments, vases, photography and unique pieces that can be used as stocking stuffers.

**“Art of Survival - Enduring the Turmoil of Tule Lake”**

- Monday-Saturdays, 10 a.m.-5 p.m.
- Tamastslit Cultural Institute, near Wildhorse Resort & Casino.
- [www.tamastslit.org](http://www.tamastslit.org)
- \$10/adults, \$9/senior citizens, \$6/youths, free/5 and under or \$25/family of four. Exhibit probes the complexity of the Japanese-American confinement site in Newell, California, during World War II. Runs through Jan. 7.

### Music

- Light of the World**
  - Saturday, Dec. 9; 7:30-9:30 p.m.
  - Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 850 S.W. 11th St.
  - [www.facebook.com](http://www.facebook.com)
  - Free. Features the Hermiston Community Choir singing holiday favorites, Dallin Puzey and other local talent. Refreshments served.
- Cory Wilds Band**
  - Saturday, Dec. 9; 8 p.m.
  - No cover
  - Wildhorse Sports Bar, Wildhorse Resort & Casino, off I-84 Exit 216, Mission.
- Holiday Music Festival**
  - Sunday, Dec. 10; 3:15 p.m.
  - Vert Auditorium, 480 S.W. Dorion Ave., Pendleton
  - [www.oregoneastsymphony.org](http://www.oregoneastsymphony.org)
  - \$20/adults, \$15/students, seniors, \$45/family. Features the Oregon East Symphony and Chorale, Our Songs Are Alive, the Pendleton Men’s Chorus and the Eastern Oregon Community Big Band.
- Christopher Duffley**
  - Sunday, Dec. 10, 6:30 p.m.
  - Heppner High School
  - Wednesday, Dec. 13, 6:30 p.m.

- Condon High School
- [www.facebook.com/communitycounselingsolutions.org](http://www.facebook.com/communitycounselingsolutions.org)
- Free. Autistic 16-year-old New Hampshire youth overcomes the odds to present message of inspiration through presentation and song.
- Eryn Bent**
  - Thursday, Dec. 14; 7-9 p.m.
  - 40 Taps, 337 S.W. Emigrant Ave., Pendleton
  - No cover during Live Music Thursday.
- Christmas with John Wambeke & students**
  - Friday, Dec. 15; 6:30-9:30 p.m.
  - Sno Road Winery, 111 W. Main St., Echo
  - No cover. All ages welcome. Share the holiday season with an evening of Christmas music and budding stars.
- The Spirit of the Season**
  - Friday, Dec. 15, 7 p.m.; Saturday, Dec. 16, 4 p.m.
  - Echo Community Center, 20 Bonanza St.
  - Sunday, Dec. 17, 4 p.m.
  - Connell High School, 1100 W. Clark St., Connelly, WA
  - [www.inlandnorthwestmusicians.com](http://www.inlandnorthwestmusicians.com)
  - Free, donations accepted. Holiday concert of the Inland Northwest Musicians (due to limited seating, reservations are required for the Echo concerts by calling 541-289-4696).
- Debra Arlyn & the Goodness**
  - Friday, Dec. 15; Saturday, Dec. 16; 8 p.m. No cover
  - Wildhorse Sports Bar, Wildhorse Resort & Casino, off I-84 Exit 216, Mission.
- Great Pacific Christmas Extravaganza**
  - Sunday, Dec. 17; 3-7 p.m.
  - Great Pacific Wine & Coffee Co., 403 S. Main St., Pendleton
  - No cover. All ages. Get ready to amp up your holiday spirit with James Dean Kindle & the Eastern Oregon Playboys, Lincoln Barr and a whole host of other local musicians. Holiday cheer starts at noon

- and continues into the afternoon/evening.
- Nuketown**
  - Friday, Dec. 22; Saturday, Dec. 23; 8 p.m. No cover
  - Wildhorse Sports Bar, Wildhorse Resort & Casino, off I-84 Exit 216, Mission
- Night life**
- NFR Watch Party**
  - Saturday, Dec. 9; 6:45 p.m. No cover
  - Mac’s Bar & Grill, 1400 S.W. Dorion Ave., Pendleton
  - No cover. 21 and older. Food specials, \$500 hot seat, play Fantasy Rodeo to win prizes.
- Karaoke w/DJ David**
  - 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.
- Christmas Trivia**
  - Wednesday, Dec. 20; 8 p.m.
  - 40 Taps, 337 S.W. Emigrant Ave., Pendleton
  - No cover. Includes ugly sweater contest and prizes.
- Wine tasting**
  - Fridays, 4-8 p.m.
  - Sno Road Winery, 111 W. Main St., Echo.
- Karaoke w/DJ David**
  - Fridays; 8 p.m.
  - Riverside Sports Bar, 1501 Sixth St., Umatilla
- 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
- Cimmi’s Late Night Mar-**

- tini Lounge**
  - Fridays; 9 p.m.-midnight
  - Virgil’s at Cimmiyotti’s, 137 S. Main St., Pendleton
  - No cover. Features martinis, mixology and music.
- Holiday Barrel Tasting**
  - Saturday, Dec. 9; noon-5 p.m.
  - Echo Ridge Cellars, 551 N. Thielsen St. & Sno Road Winery, 111 W. Main St.
  - \$5/tasting fee at both venues. Both wineries offer holiday wine deals and samples of future releases straight out of the barrel. Also, a gift basket workshop is at Echo Ridge.
- Theater, stage, film & lectures**
- “Despicable Me 3”**
  - Saturday, Dec. 9; 2:15 p.m.
  - SAGE Center, 101 Olson Road, Boardman
  - [www.visitsage.com](http://www.visitsage.com)
  - \$3/includes popcorn. A meet-and-greet with a Despicable Me minion is 45 minutes prior to both screenings (no charge with movie admission). Non-perishable food donations accepted.
- Swim Team Talent Show auditions**
  - Tuesday, Dec. 12; 6:30-8 p.m.
  - Hermiston High School commons, 600 S. First St.
  - Free. All ages and talents welcome. The show, which includes prizes, is Saturday, Jan. 6 (admission \$10). Raises money for transportation costs for Hermiston High School swim team. (Lynne Hamblin at 541-571-5691 or [lynn.hamblin@hermiston.k12.or.us](mailto:lynn.hamblin@hermiston.k12.or.us)).
- “Elf”**
  - Friday, Dec. 22; 7:15 p.m.
  - SAGE Center, 101 Olson Road, Boardman
  - [www.visitsage.com](http://www.visitsage.com)
  - \$3/includes popcorn. People are encouraged to wear their pajamas. Fundraiser for Riverside High School Operation Graduation. Additional donations accepted.
- “As the Ball Drops on Times Square”**
  - Sunday, Dec. 31; 5:30 p.m.
  - Maxwell Siding Event Center, 145 N. First Place, Hermiston
  - \$45. Murder mystery dinner theater presentation features prime rib or lemon chicken dinner. Also, party favors and toasting in the New Year with sparkling cider. Formal wear encouraged, but not required. For tickets, call 541-571-7293 or 541-567-8774.

- Hot tickets**
- Dirty Voltage.** (AC-DC tribute band) Dec. 31, Pheasant Bar & Grill. Tickets (\$20) via <http://thepestant.ticketleap.com>
- Dancing with the Hermiston Stars.** Jan. 13, Hermiston High School. Tickets (\$10-\$20) via [www.desertartsouncil.com](http://www.desertartsouncil.com)
- Chicks with Hits** (featuring Pam Tillis, Terri Clark and Suzy Bogguss), Jan. 26 at Wildhorse Resort & Casino. Tickets for the 21-and-older shows (\$49-\$79) available via the Wildhorse Gift Shop or [www.wildhorseresort.com](http://www.wildhorseresort.com)
- Want to get your event listed in our calendar? Send information to [community@eastoregonian.com](mailto:community@eastoregonian.com), or c/o Tammy Malgesini, 333 E. Main Street, Hermiston, OR, 97838.*