

'Marry Me' is a rom-com tailor made for Jennifer Lopez

By Katie Walsh
Tribune News Service

In the past, rom-coms starring Jennifer Lopez often saddled her with professions that are just too unbelievable. "Maid in Manhattan"? "The Wedding Planner"? Not our Jenny from the Block. So it's refreshing to see J.Lo, in a much-heralded return to the romantic comedy fold, playing a character who just makes sense for her: a global pop superstar. But it's not just a professional life that Lopez shares with her character, Kat Valdez, in "Marry Me," directed by Kat Coiro, based on a graphic novel by Bobby Crosby, and



Barry Wetcher/Universal Pictures
Jennifer Lopez, left, and Owen Wilson in "Marry Me," directed by Kat Coiro.

that's a good thing.

Lopez brings authenticity to her portrayal of Kat Valdez, a heightened version of Lopez herself. Kat Valdez plays huge concerts at Madison Square Garden wearing spangly uni-

tards; J.Lo plays huge concerts at Madison Square Garden wearing spangly unitards. Kat Valdez has been married three times; J.Lo has been married three times. Kat Valdez has a messy public breakup with a charm-

ing cad, Bastian (Colombian Latin pop singer Maluma), who is caught on social media kissing her assistant; J.Lo had a messy public breakup with a charming cad caught on social media messaging a Bravo star. Kat Valdez finds true love with a bland white guy, Charlie (Owen Wilson), and J.Lo, well, she's found true love again with her favorite bland white guy, Ben Affleck.

This delightfully meta Venn diagram of character and star is placed within a preposterously high-concept scenario for a rom-com. Massive superstar Kat is publicly humiliated at what's supposed to be her wedding to Bastian, a huge concert at which

they will perform their duet "Marry Me" before saying their vows. Right after she performs a number dressed as a (checks notes) golden crucifix, surrounded by sexy latex-clad nuns, she dons a wedding dress right before she discovers Bastian's infidelity, an illicit smooch caught on camera. In a moment of desperation, Kat sees a sign in the crowd, held by a milquetoast math teacher and single dad, Charlie (Wilson) reading "Marry Me?" She says yes and the two get married on stage, at first sight, in front of the whole world.

Can these two fall in love while managing their differences across a high-profile PR fiasco?

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