

# Godzilla vs. Kong: A heavyweight bout with a light touch

By **Ryan Pearson**  
The Associated Press

**L**OS ANGELES — The original 1950s Godzilla movies stomped into theaters carrying a metaphor about nuclear destruction. Two years ago, *Godzilla: King of the Monsters* sounded alarms about climate change.

But don't fret about finding a message amid the mayhem as the towering radioactive lizard clashes with that instantly-recognizable giant ape in *Godzilla vs. Kong*.

"It's about two big guys bashing each other around," laughed actor Rebecca Hall, who plays a researcher studying King Kong. "There is a sense that the less that humans meddle with stuff, the better, is a general theme.

"But yeah, it's mostly a big fight," she said.

Director Adam Wingard's clash of the titans caps Legendary Entertainment's "Monsterverse" series, which also includes 2014's *Godzilla* and 2017's *Kong: Skull Island*. While not all were winners with critics, they've grabbed plenty of cash at the box office — more than \$1.4 billion worldwide.

All four films take their central creatures seriously — both within the stories and by pouring money into nuanced special effects — while often winking at audiences with self-aware references. The films have featured performances from top-caliber actors enjoying the silliness of it all: Bryan Cranston, Ken Watanabe, Tom Hiddleston, John C. Reilly, Sally Hawkins, Vera Farmiga.

In the newest entry, the returning Millie Bobby Brown and Kyle Chandler are joined by Hall, Alexander Skarsgård, Brian Tyree Henry, and Eiza González, among others. No matter the scene, the actors always knew who was filling the top spots on call sheets during production —



Godzilla and King Kong.

"They're divas, that's what's so difficult. You go on to set, they don't look at you in the eye. It is in their contracts. Whatever. I found it really difficult to work with specifically Kong, just because he thought he ruled the roost," cracked Brown. "You just want your close-up. And Zilla is like 'rawr' and you're like, 'Bro, calm down.'"

Wingard said he focused on keeping the humans "as close together as possible" with the monsters throughout his film, including an *E.T.*-evoking moment with deaf actor Kaylee Hottle.

But when the titular showdowns start, "it was really important to me to do what the original films did. Like if you look at all the Showa-era films, when the monster battles happened, it just stays with the monsters. ... We wanted to make sure the

monsters were able to do their thing and just get into it."

That includes a fight on and underneath an aircraft carrier in the middle of the ocean, with Kong struggling and Godzilla moving smoothly and realistically through water. Later, shattering neon highlights an eye-popping clash among and through the skyscrapers of a heavily-stylized Hong Kong.

Skarsgard, whose character leads a human team following Kong to the film's most fantastical location, said Wingard's approach was to "really lean into the craziness of it. And his take on it was, well, if you're going to go big, go really big. Go crazy, let's have fun with it, we haven't seen these titans go toe-to-toe in 50 years, 60 years. So let's really enjoy this."

Godzilla's atomic breath and Kong's

**MONSTER MATCH.** Kaylee Hottle (top photo) plays Jia in the new action adventure *Godzilla vs. Kong*, a Warner Bros. Pictures and Legendary Pictures release. In the bottom photo, *Godzilla and King Kong* fight on an aircraft carrier in the middle of the ocean. (Photos courtesy of Warner Bros. Pictures and Legendary Pictures)

chest-thumping were crafted for maximum sensory impact, but viewers can also see it on the small screen. A pandemic-disrupted rollout had the film debuting March 31 both at theaters and on streaming service HBO Max. The film's stars say they're just happy to share the spectacle, whether it's on an IMAX or iPhone screen.

"These are extraordinary times that demand extraordinary measures," said Demián Bichir, who plays an overreaching tech mogul. "This is one of those films that will be seen in every corner of the planet. And that alone makes me very, very happy."

Henry, the "Atlanta" series star who plays a conspiracy-theorizing podcast host, said the film's extravagance feels right for this moment in the pandemic.

"People need something to just like celebrate and cheer and have fun and see millions of dollars of special effects," he said. "It's like we shifted what we do in summer blockbusters to the spring because it's like we just need something to break out, something to have fun with."

Legendary and distributor Warner Bros haven't announced any future "Monsterverse" installments after *Godzilla vs. Kong*. Wingard said he'd be happy to return to a "phase two" of the franchise, envisioning a "nearly silent film where we just watch the monsters do their thing."

"There are enough characters that are well-enough defined where we can imprint whatever we want on them," he said. "I think audiences are ready. And I think the special effects world is up-to-date to be able to handle that."

## Upcoming events

Continued from page 12

produced and directed short films about the Asian-American experience since 2013. Laura Ng is a Ph.D. candidate in the Department of Anthropology at Stanford University. Her parents immigrated from Taishan (Hoisan/Toisan) County and she grew up in Los Angeles. To register, e-mail <info@portlandchinatown.org> or visit <www.portlandchinatownmuseum.org/hidden-histories-virtual-event-making-ties-the-candong-village-project>. For more information, call (503) 224-0008.

### Timbers play at home April 13 & 24

April 13 at 5:00pm & April 24 at 7:30pm

The Portland Timbers return to the soccer pitch in front of a limited number of fans at Providence Park on Tuesday, April 13 at 5:00pm. The contest, against C.D. Marathón, is a CONCACAF Champions League Round of 16 match. When the Timbers play at home again on Saturday, April 24 at 7:30pm, they will be competing against the Houston Dynamo, a Major League Soccer (MLS) opponent. The club plays its away games on April 18 at 7:00pm and May 1 at 5:00pm. Matches are televised on FS1, Root Sports, or KPDX; please consult the online schedule for viewing options. For more information, or to buy tickets, call (503) 553-5555 or visit <www.timbers.com>. (Ticket presale for the home games begins for annual member on April 5 at 10:00am.)

### Renowned theoretical physicist Michio Kaku to be featured on April 15

April 15, 5:00pm

Powell's City of Books is presenting a Zoom event with renowned theoretical physicist Michio Kaku on Thursday, April 15 at 5:00pm. Kaku is a professor of physics at the City University of New York and the author of several widely acclaimed science books, including *Beyond Einstein*, *The Future of Humanity*, *The Future of the Mind*, *Physics of the Impossible*, and others. Kaku's new book is *The God Equation: The Quest for a Theory of Everything* (Doubleday). For more information, call (503) 228-4651 or visit <www.powells.com>. To register, visit <https://bit.ly/3o9T5DF>.



A talk about Making Ties — The Cangdong Village Project is scheduled for April 10 at 10:30am. (Photo courtesy of Barre Fong)

### Kalakendra to present an evening of Indian classical music

April 24, 7:00pm

Kalakendra, which is celebrating its 34th year of presenting classical performing arts from the Indian subcontinent, is live-steaming Indian classical music on Saturday, April 24 at 7:00pm. The virtual concert features Hindustani vocalist Anol Chatterjee with Kousik Banerjee on *tabla* and Jyotirmoy Banerjee on harmonium. A suggested donation is \$15 per person (or \$25 for a family). The concert link will be released closer to the event date. For more information, call (503) 308-1050 or visit <www.kalakendra.org>.

### Author and illustrator Jonny Sun to appear in virtual Powell's event

April 27, 5:00pm

The author of *Everyone's a Liebn When Ur a Liebn Too*, Jonny Sun, has a new book — *Goodbye, Again: Essays, Reflections, and Illustrations* (Harper Perennial) — a collection of touching and hilarious personal essays, stories, poems, and illustrations covering topics such as mental health, happiness, and what it means to belong. The author and illustrator's virtual event takes place on Tuesday, April 27 at 5:00pm. For more information, or to obtain the event weblink, call (503) 228-4651 or visit <www.powells.com/eventsupdate>.

## I'm fully vaccinated. Do I need a mask?

You should still take steps to protect yourself and others like wearing a mask, staying at least six feet apart from others and avoiding crowds and poorly ventilated spaces whenever you are:

- In public
- Gathering with unvaccinated people from more than one household
- Visiting with an unvaccinated person who is at increased risk of severe illness or death from COVID-19 (or, who lives with a person at increased risk)

Health



## Wipes clog pipes

Avoid sewer backups and protect your pipes! Dispose of these items in the trash, NOT the toilet.

- Disinfecting wipes
- Baby wipes
- Towelettes
- Paper towels
- Facial tissues



www.portlandoregon.gov/bes/WhatNotToFlush  
City of Portland Bureau of Environmental Services

Wondering when our next issue is published? Sign up for e-alerts at <news@asianreporter.com>!

For timely information about upcoming events, please visit <www.facebook.com/TheAsianReporter>.