

EVENTS

Are fans growing weary of overhyped superheroes?

BY ANN HORNADAY
WASHINGTON POST

Before Warner Bros. gets too carried away with the record-breaking box office take of “Batman v Superman: Dawn of Justice” over the weekend, the studio might want to take a breath. The grim, galumphing behemoth has earned an admittedly impressive \$424 million since Thursday, \$254 million of it in overseas markets. But many observers estimate that “Batman v Superman,” which had a combined production and marketing budget of about \$400 million, will need to earn at least \$1 billion in order to break even, after theaters take their cut. Over the weekend, “Batman v Superman” earned an OK-not-great B CinemaScore based on audience polls — the gentlemen’s C of the movie world. (The much-reviled “Green Lantern” and the quickly forgotten “Catwoman” earned similar marks.)

Even if word of mouth on the movie isn’t quite as damning as its poor reviews, chances are that business will drop off precipitously this week, making it hard to go too far past that magic \$1 billion number.

For those keeping score at home, “Batman v Superman” was announced with great fanfare by its director, Zack Snyder, at ComicCon a few years ago, bringing DC Comics fans to near-fainting levels of anticipation. But what Snyder didn’t predict

— and apparently wasn’t nimble enough to respond to — was how much the superhero gestalt would change while he was fitting Ben Affleck into a brand new Batman and encouraging Jesse Eisenberg take **COMMENTARY** his manically giddy Lex Luthor even broader. “Batman v Superman” was nominally Warner Bros.’ chance to get into the comic-book franchise game, which Disney has parlayed so brilliantly with its Marvel-based “Avengers” series. Boasting some adroit, ingenious filmmakers (Joss Whedon, Anthony and Joe Russo) and some truly inspired casting (Robert Downey Jr., Mark Ruffalo, Chris Hemsworth), the “Avengers” movies have defined the gold standard of spinning individual properties into intra-universe gold.

Warner was so successful with the Chris Nolan-era “Batman” movies that setting up the Caped Crusader for similar cross-pollination was a vertically integrated no-brainer. But even before “Batman v Superman” had started, they’d boxed themselves into a corner even he couldn’t fly out of. Nolan and his star, Christian Bale, were widely credited with lending soul and gravitas to the brooding, broken Bruce Wayne, who presided over a billion-dollar company by day and turned grim-faced vigilante by night. By the time of the final installment of the Nolan trilogy, though,



ED SUBA JR. | AKRON BEACON JOURNAL | TNS
Comic books from a large private collection of Marvel/DC comics recently from a vintage toy store in Salem, Ohio.

the self-seriousness was starting to wear thin. “The Dark Knight Rises” earned a more-than-respectable \$1 billion at the box office, but less of that came from American viewers than with its predecessor. Two years later, the big comic-book-based hit wasn’t a downbeat meditation on grief and the burdens of unchecked power, but “Guardians of the Galaxy,” a gleefully irreverent riff on superhero tropes.

This year’s version of the “Guardians” zag is “Deadpool,” a similarly cheeky, if far more cynical, exercise in

self-referential japery. When “Batman v Superman” lurched into theaters with its unsmiling stars, paranoid vibe, weak-tea color scheme and by-the-numbers action scenes, audiences could be forgiven for experiencing cultural whiplash: Weren’t we just laughing at Ryan Reynolds profanely taking the mickey out of all of this stuff?

In counting on Snyder to usher in a new era of shared-universe glory, Warner Bros. might have made a fatal error: At a time when everything is “execution dependent” — a term that was

once reserved for quirky one-off comedies and sophisticated dramas with no built-in audiences — the person behind the camera needs to have unerring instincts for fan service plus an impeccable sense of story, aesthetics, tone and performance. J.J. Abrams skillfully threaded that very needle with “Star Wars: The Force Awakens,” nicely teeing up that threadbare franchise for the brilliant director Rian Johnson to send it into genuinely novel and reinvigorating territory. In the right hands, Affleck and Henry Cavill could still

make convincing caped conferrers, and Eisenberg might even be able to dial his performance back to a recognizably human level of malevolence.

The question raised by the success of such movies as “Guardians of the Galaxy” and “Deadpool” is whether they prove what many of us have been saying for years, which is the typical, monotonously glum genre that Hollywood has worked over like the bones of so much carrion is, finally, exhausted beyond resuscitation — at least in America. Although foreign markets are still eager to accept comic book spectacles into their spanking new theaters, here at home, an unmistakable malaise has set in when it comes to tight-lipped men in tights, marshalling their Y-chromosomal angst to once more do what a man’s gotta do.

Which explains a bona fide phenomenon that “Batman v Superman” might be credited with creating: According to a Fandango poll, most of the viewers who were excited to see the film this past weekend were most hyped about one character — the same one who received the only spontaneous outburst of applause at a preview screening a few days before. It should come as no surprise that the person best equipped to save superheroes for Hollywood is none other than Wonder Woman.

Things to Do

AUGUSTA — All Breed Fun Day hosted by Kennebec Valley Shetland Sheepdog Club, 9 a.m.-4 p.m. Sunday, April 3, Buker Community Center gymnasium, 22 Armory St. Registration on site. Conformation handling skills, 9 a.m.-noon, \$10; rally obedience run-throughs, 12:30-4 p.m., \$10 per dog per class; obedience run-throughs, 10:30 a.m.-3 p.m., \$10 per dog per class. Colleen Golding, 453-2631, or woodlandfarm@roadrunner.com.

BANGOR — “Through the Looking Glass” annual spring auction, 5:30-9 p.m. Friday, April 1, John Baptist Memorial High School, 100 Broadway. Dinner, dessert, cash bar, raffles and auction to support the school. jbauction.bpt.me or 947-0313, ext. 115.

BANGOR — Literacy Volunteers of Bangor’s annual Literacy Tea, with 40 tables decorated with themes from children’s books, 3-5 p.m. Sunday, April 3, John Baptist Memorial High School, 100 Broadway. Maine author/illustrator Mark Scott Ricketts will perform his book “Adventures in Vacationland.” Tickets \$20. 947-8451 or www.lvbangor.org/literacytea.

BANGOR — Lobster stew dinner, 5 and 7 p.m. Saturday, April 2, All Souls Church, 10 Broadway. Takeout meals available beginning at 4 p.m. Cost of dinner \$15. Tickets must be purchased in advance. 942-7354.

BANGOR — Pulitzer Prize-winning journalist Jim Sheeler of Case Western Reserve University, “Final Salute,” 3 p.m. Wednesday, March 30, 6:30-8 p.m. Wednesday, March 30, Bangor Public Library.

BANGOR — “The Foundation for Development: Plan Your Work and Work the Plan” workshop, 1-4 p.m. Wednesday, March 30, Rangeley Hall, Eastern Maine Community College, 354 Hogan Road. 871-1885 or Learn@NonprofitMaine.org.

BANGOR — Budgeting

workshop, 9 a.m.-noon Wednesday, March 30, Rangeley Hall, Eastern Maine Community College, 354 Hogan Road. Learn how to develop a real budget that will improve your organization. 871-1885 or Learn@NonprofitMaine.org.

BANGOR — Eastern Maine Community College’s annual Maine Trivia Tournament, 5-9 p.m. Thursday, March 31, Johnston Gymnasium, 354 Hogan Road. Proceeds benefit EMCC Foundation, which develops resources and scholarships to assist students. Registration \$200 for one team of three to five people. eventbrite.com/e/maine-trivia-tournament-2016-registration-20833513600.

BAR HARBOR — Mount Desert Island Hospital’s Lisa Stewart Women’s Health Center annual Spring Frock Swap, 5-8 p.m. Thursday, March 31, Wolf Conference Center, second floor, 330 Main St. Cost to participate, \$10. 288-8100 or carmen.sanford@mdihospital.org. Benefits health of women in MDI region.

BAR HARBOR — Talk and tasting with Pat O’Brien of FIORE Artisan Olive Oils, hosted by Giuseppe Taibi, whose family creates Olio Taibi, 7 p.m. Wednesday, March 30, Jesup Memorial Library. 288-4245 or kchagnon@jesuplibrary.org.

BAR HARBOR — Folk duo John and Rachel Nicholas, 2-3 p.m. Sunday, April 3, Jesup Memorial Library. Free and open to all. 288-4245 or kchagnon@jesuplibrary.org.

BAR HARBOR — Bob Thayer discussing history, geography and the beauty of Ireland in a slideshow and talk, 7-8 p.m. Friday, April 1, Jesup Memorial Library. 288-4245 or kchagnon@jesuplibrary.org.

BLUE HILL — “The Art of the Book” exhibit, during library hours through March, Howard Room glass cases, Blue Hill Public Library, 5 Parker Point Road. 374-5515.

BLUE HILL — Rainbow Warriors writing group for ages 12 to 18, 4-5

p.m. Tuesdays, Blue Hill Public Library. Open to artists, gamers, readers, movie enthusiasts, bakers, crafters, social justice warriors and more. Discussion, writing prompts, games. Libby, 374-5515.

BLUE HILL — Display of Maine sea shells collected by Alison Dibble of Brooklin, during regular library hours through April, Larchwood Room, Blue Hill Public Library. Hands-on workshop with Dibble for children about shells of Maine, 4 p.m. Thursday, March 31. Open to all.

BLUE HILL — Friends of Blue Hill Public Library first-Saturday-of-the-month book sale, 9 a.m.-2 p.m. Saturday, April 2, library’s basement book nook. Accepting donations of books in good condition. 374-5515.

BLUE HILL — Flash! In The Pans steel drum band and Planet Pan joint “street dance,” 7-9 p.m. Saturday, April 2, George Stevens Academy cafeteria, 23 Union St. Benefits Island Nursing Home and Care Center of Deer Isle.

ORONO — Pulitzer Prize-winning journalist Jim Sheeler of Case Western Reserve University, “Final Salute,” 3 p.m. Wednesday, March 30, at Wells Conference Center, University of Maine.

PORTLAND — An evening with Wu Man and the Shanghai Quartet with screening of Wu Man’s short film, 6:15-8:30 p.m. Wednesday, March 30, Osher Hall, Maine College of Art, 522 Congress St. 775-3052, info@meca.edu or meca.edu.

THOMASTON — Friends of the Weskeag hosting Hammon Buck of Plants Unlimited discussing “Native Plants for Watershed Gardens,” 7 p.m. Thursday, March 31, South Thomaston Historical Society Building, corner of Route 73 and Dublin Road. Free and open to all. Vivian Newman, 691-2120 or newviv@roadrunner.com.

VAN BUREN — Cary Medical Center’s Healthy You Program’s free Community Heri-

tage Film Screening of “Acadians of the St. John Valley” by Crown of Maine Productions, 6 p.m. Wednesday, March 30, Van Buren High School auditorium. Doors open 5:30 p.m. Bake sale refreshments. Copies of film available for purchase. Bethany Zell, 498-1361 or bzell@carymed.org.

For a complete listing of calendar items or to submit your event, visit www.bangordailynews.com.

Ex-TV star David Cassidy loses driver’s license in Florida

REUTERS

David Cassidy, the one-time star of “The Partridge Family” 1970s TV series, agreed to give up his driver’s license for five years after pleading no contest to charges involving a hit-and-run with another vehicle in Florida, the Sun Sentinel newspaper reported.

Cassidy, 65, will also

spend two years on probation over the September 2015 infraction, the Fort Lauderdale-based newspaper said. He was charged with reckless driving, leaving the scene of an accident and driving with a suspended license, court records showed.

His lawyer could not immediately be reached for comment on Monday’s court proceeding.

Wednesday prime time										MOVIES																
	7 PM	7:30	8 PM	8:30	9 PM	9:30	10 PM	10:30	11 PM																	
BROADCAST	2 NBC 207 Inside Ed. Heartbeat (N) (HD) [TV] Law & Order: SVU Chicago P.D. (N) (HD) [TV] News	4 CBC Dragons' Den (N) marketplace Figure Skating ISU World Championships. (N) [L] National	5 CBS Big Bang Broke Girl Survivor (N) (HD) [TV] Criminal Minds (N) [TV] Criminal Minds News	6 CW Family Guy Family Guy Arrow (N) (HD) [TV] Supernatural (N) (HD) [TV] News Seinfeld [TV] Cougar	7 NBC 207 Inside Ed. Heartbeat (N) (HD) [TV] Law & Order: SVU Chicago P.D. (N) (HD) [TV] News	8 ABC Wheel Jeopardy! [TV] The Middle Goldbergs Mod Fam blackish [TV] Nashville (N) (HD) [TV] News	9 WAGM FOX The Insider Ent. Tonight Rosewood (N) (HD) [TV] Empire (N) (HD) [TV] News Big Bang Big Bang	10 ABC Wheel Jeopardy! [TV] The Middle Goldbergs Mod Fam blackish [TV] Nashville (N) (HD) [TV] News	11 MPBN PBS PBS NewsHour (N) (HD) Nature (N) (HD) [TV] NOVA (HD) [TV] TED Talks (N) (HD) [TV] C. Rose	12 PBS Criminal Minds Arrow (N) (HD) [TV] Criminal Minds (N) [TV] News-Lisa CTV News Daily Show	13 CBS Ent. Tonight The Insider Survivor (N) (HD) [TV] Criminal Minds (N) [TV] Criminal Minds News	22 FOX Mod Fam Mod Fam Rosewood (N) (HD) [TV] Empire (N) (HD) [TV] FOX 22 News at 10 (N) The Closer [TV]	33 IND M*A*S*H [TV] M*A*S*H [TV] Andy Griffith Andy Griffith Happy Days Laverne Hogan Hero Hogan Hero C. Burnett	38 IND Big Bang Big Bang The Closer (HD) [TV] The Closer (HD) [TV] WBZ News (N) (HD) Seinfeld [TV]												
	NICK Splitting Adam (2015, Comedy) Jace Norman. Full House [TV] Full House [TV] Lopez [TV] Full House [TV] Friends [TV]	DISN Girl Meets Bunk'd [TV] Dr. Seuss' Horton Hears a Who! (2008) Austin Liv-Mad. K.C. Under. Best Fr.	FREE Back to the Future Part II Young Baby Daddy Stitches [TV] Stitches [TV] 700 Club	HIST American Pickers [TV] American Pickers [TV] (:01) American Pickers [TV] Pawn Stars Pawn Stars Join or Die	DISC Bering Sea Gold (ESP) [TV] Bering Sea Gold: Dredged Bering Sea Gold (N) [TV] Survivorman: Wild Bering Gold	TLC My 600-Lb. Life [TV] My 600-Lb. Life: Where Are They Now? (N) [TV] 600-Lb. Life	A&E Wahlburgers [TV] Wahlbrgs Wahlbrgs Wahlburg Wahlburg Donnie Donnie Wahlburg	ANPL North Woods Law [TV] North Woods Law [TV] (:01) North Woods Law [TV] (:03) North Woods Law [TV] Rugged	CSNE SportsNet Sports NBA Basketball: Celtics at Clippers Sports SportsNet Sports	ESPN SportCtr College Basketball (N) High School Basketball SportCtr	ESPN2 ATP Tennis Miami Open, Men's and Women's Quarterfinals. From Miami. (N) [L] Baseball	NBCSP NHL Live (N) [L] NHL Hockey Washington Capitals at Philadelphia Flyers. (N) (:45) NHL Overtime (N)	NESN Outdoors C. Moore Behind B Bruins Behind B Bruins Sports Sports Sports	CNBC Secret Lives Secret Lives Shark Tank [TV] Shark Tank [TV] Secret Lives Secret Lives Secret Lives	CNN Erin Burnett OutFront (N) Anderson Cooper 360 [TV] CNN Special Report (N) CNN Tonight Cooper 360	FNC Greta Van Susteren The O'Reilly Factor (N) The Kelly File (N) Hannity (N) O'Reilly	MSNBC Hardball Chris Matthews Trump Town Hall (N) Rachel Maddow Show The Last Word All In With									
	AMC The Monuments Men ** The Lost World: Jurassic Park (1997, Adventure) Jeff Goldblum. (PG-13) Rambo III (R)	BRV Real Housewives/Beverly Housewives/Atl. Housewives/Atl. Quit Your Day Job (N) Vander	CMT Last Man Last Man Last Man Last Man **** Stand by Me (1986) Wil Wheaton. (R) Redneck	COM Futurama [TV] Futurama [TV] South Park South Park South Park South Park Broad City [TV] Broad City [TV] Daily Show	E! E! News (N) [TV] ** A Cinderella Story (2004) Hilary Duff. (PG) L.A. Clippers Dance E! News [TV]	FOOD Diners Diners Diners Diners Diners Restaurant: Impossible [TV] My Diners	FX White Hse *** World War Z (2013, Horror) Brad Pitt. (PG-13) The Americans (N) [TV] Americans	GAC Flippin' RVs Flippin' RVs Flippin' RVs Flippin' RVs Flippin' RVs Flippin' RVs	HALL Last Man Last Man Last Man Last Man The Middle The Middle The Middle The Middle The Middle Golden Girls	HGTV Property Brothers: Buying Property Brothers [TV] Property Brothers [TV] Property Brothers [TV] Property Brothers [TV] Property	LIFE Little Women: LA [TV] Little Women: LA (N) [TV] Little Women: LA (N) [TV] Terra Terra Terra	MTV Teen Mom Catfish: The TV Show Catfish: The TV Show Catfish: The TV Show Catfish: The TV Show (N) Suspect	OXY (:15) *** Pretty Woman (1990, Romance-Comedy) Richard Gere. (R) Quit Your Day Job (N) Pretty	SPIKE (5:00) ** Iron Man 2 Face Off [TV] Pirates of the Caribbean: On Stranger Tides (2011) Johnny Depp. (PG-13) Inc Hulk	SYFY Charlie's Angels Face Off [TV] Face Off (N) [TV] The Internet The Internet Face Off [TV]	TBN Bless Lord Potters John Gray Turning Prince S. Furtick Living Proof Blessed Life John Gray	TBS Seinfeld [TV] Seinfeld [TV] Big Bang Big Bang Big Bang Big Bang Big Bang Big Bang Conan (N) [TV]	TCM (6:00) Shock Corridor (NR) *** Pennies From Heaven (1936) *** The Artist (2011) Jean Dujardin. The Sniper	TMCMirror *** The Talented Mr. Ripley (1999) (ESP) Matt Damon. (R) *** Spring Breakers (2012) (R)	TNT Castle [TV] Castle [TV] Castle [TV] Castle [TV] Castle [TV]	TRAVEL Expedition Unknown [TV] Expedition Unknown [TV] Expedition Unknown (N) [TV] Expedition Unknown [TV] Expedition	TRU Carbonaro Carbonaro Imp. Jokers Imp. Jokers Imp. Jokers Imp. Jokers Carbonaro Carbonaro Billy-Street	TVL Andy Griffith Andy Griffith Raymond Raymond Raymond Raymond Lopez (N) [TV] Soul Man Jim Gaffigan	USA NCIS [TV] NCIS [TV] NCIS [TV] NCIS [TV] NCIS [TV] Mod Fam	VH1 Family Therapy Family Therapy Family Therapy Love & Hip Hop [TV] Family Therapy Selena (PG)	WGN-A *** Backdraft (1991, Action) Kurt Russell, William Baldwin, Robert De Niro. (R) Underground (N) [TV] Underg.
	ENC (5:30) *** Kingdom of Heaven (2005) (ESP) (R) ** Eraser (1996) Arnold Schwarzenegger. A government agent protects a witness from gunrunners. (R) (9:55) ** The Day After Tomorrow (2004) (ESP) Dennis Quaid. (PG-13)	HBO (6:50) ** The Longest Ride (2015, Drama) (ESP) Scott Eastwood, Britt Robertson, Alan Alda. (PG-13) VICE [TV] Girls (ESP) [TV] Vinyl Richie and Zak travel to Las Vegas [TV] (:05) Sandrea (ESP) [TV]	MAX (5:25) Children of Men (ESP) Tom Hardy. (R) (:20) *** The Drop (2014, Crime Drama) (ESP) Tim Roth, Michael Fassbender, Jason Bateman, Charlie Day. (R) (:10) ** Horrible Bosses 2 (2014, Comedy) (ESP) Jason Bateman, Jason Sudeikis. (R) Banshee (ESP) [TV]	SHOW (6:30) Meru (2015, Documentary) (R) ** Frank Miller's Sin City: A Dame to Kill For (2014, Action) (ESP) Mickey Rourke, Jessica Alba. (R) Spring Broke (2016, Documentary) (NR)	STARZ (:10) **** The Terminator (1984, Science Fiction) (ESP) Arnold Schwarzenegger, Linda Hamilton. (R) Black Sails (ESP) [TV] (9:55) *** Courage Under Fire (1996) (ESP) Denzel Washington. (R)																					