

EVENTS

How Netflix brought new life to '80s cartoon 'Voltron'

BY DAVID BETANCOURT
THE WASHINGTON POST

When producers Joaquim Dos Santos and Lauren Montgomery found out that Dreamworks had acquired the media rights to “Voltron” and were planning to release a new version on Netflix, the two frequent collaborators instantly began contemplating how they would revamp the classic 1980s cartoon if they were ever to get their hands on it.

Having previously had success on animated shows such as “Justice League Unlimited” and “Avatar: The Last Airbender” with Dos Santos as director and Montgomery as his storyboard artist, both remember frequent lunches where a reimagined Voltron universe was the main topic of conversation.

The only problem was they’d yet to be handed the keys to the “defender of the universe.”

Eventually, Dos Santos found himself in a meeting with Dreamworks’ Mark Taylor. They mostly talked about the future of animation at the company, but the moment Dos Santos saw Taylor preparing to say the V-word, he was ready to react.

“Let me do it!” Dos Santos excitedly told Taylor. “We’ll make it cool!”

Dos Santos shared his and Montgomery’s vision for a new “Voltron,” and a desire to bring in the crew they’d used on previous animated success stories.

The five robotic lions that merge to build the universe’s ultimate defense were about to be reborn.

One of the first major decisions the duo made after getting the gig was sticking to “Voltron’s” ’80s Japanese-anime animation style. While re-watching the old episodes in preparation for their new project, Dos Santos and Montgomery agreed that while they didn’t want to move away from the classic look, there was room for improvement when it came to story lines. They reached out to the current “Voltron” fandom and found that people could instantly remember the robot lions, the Paladins (otherwise known as the pilots of the lions) and the formation of Voltron, but when asked about specific plot points, most drew a blank. The shows brought about nostalgia, but the adventures the robot defender starred in didn’t — with the

exception of Voltron always saving the day from a giant robotic beast with his blazing sword.

“It was kind of the best of both worlds. The series was edited from two different Japanese anime, so as a result, it felt disjointed when you go back and watch the show with adult eyes,” Dos Santos told The Washington Post. “Having spoken to fans and people in the industry who grew up with [Voltron] as well, we felt more and more confident that we could be given a little more leniency with some of the [stories] because we all had this weird gray area where we remembered very specific things and not others.”

Montgomery says trusting their guts as fans of the original cartoon was the best thing she and Dos Santos could do. It allowed them to try and bring the series back to life while not diverting from the source material so much that it was unrecognizable to old fans.

“Just looking at it not only as fans, but as storytellers ... we had to follow our hearts,” Montgomery said.

Many things remain the same in Netflix’s iteration of the show, with slight mod-

ernized tweaks. The aesthetic basics — the color scheme of the lions (black, red, green, blue and yellow) and the Paladins’ suits — will bring back memories of the original show. But hardcore “Voltron” fans will notice the differences.

Sure, everyone on Team Voltron looks the same: Keith with his long, dark hair; Lance and his comedic arrogance; Hunk and his girth; Pidge, the youngest and tiniest of the bunch. But in this version, Keith is not the leader of the team and does not pilot the black lion. That designation goes to Shiro. (Many fans will see Shiro and think of Sven from the original series). Dos Santos and Montgomery suspect many fans probably assumed Shiro would die as Sven did in the original series, and Keith would leave the red lion, take over the black one and become Team Voltron’s leader. That didn’t happen in Season 1, a sign that Dos Santos and Montgomery are telling the best Voltron story they can without being handcuffed to what happened in the original iteration.

“Ultimately, we just kind of want the fans to know that we’re trying to do

what’s the best for our story,” Montgomery said. “We’re not trying to upset anyone, we just need to make sure that our story works for itself. We’re taking our time with it.”

“We all come to ‘Voltron’ from very similar places,” Dos Santos added. “We’re not doing it out of disrespect. I think we’re just generally trying to service the story as best we can.”

One of the major plot changes Montgomery asked for in initial production meetings was to make Pidge, the young, tech-savvy pilot of the green lion, a girl. The gender reveal doesn’t happen until midway through the first season, as the first few episodes see Pidge — having cut her hair — succeed in passing off as a boy.

“Pidge was literally the very first thing that I asked for,” Montgomery recalled. “As far as her being disguised as a boy upfront, it was my need to show those [passionate] fans that this character can occupy that space regardless of whether it’s a girl or a boy. When she reveals that she is a girl to the team it changes practically nothing. And it’s kind of a statement on action-adventure anima-

tion in general. It’s not that difficult to have more female characters in it. You don’t have to change anything. You don’t have to treat them differently because they’re female. They can occupy that same space.”

Since “Voltron’s” 10-episode debut on Netflix on June 10, Dos Santos and Montgomery have enjoyed the reactions from both longtime and new fans alike.

“It makes us emotional at times to see people talking so positively about it and, then coming up with their own theories and doing cool art on their own,” Dos Santos said.

As to whether or not fans can expect a second season of “Voltron,” both producers hope to be back for more robot action.

“There’s nothing official on the books but I can say that we are actively pursuing continuing the story and we’re so excited by the reception that the first season has gotten that we’re literally firing on all cylinders,” Dos Santos said. “The crew is fired up. The studios are excited by the reception Season 1 has gotten. That’s as far as we can tell you.”

Things to Do

BANGOR — Peony Society of Maine Garden Tours, 9 a.m.-4 p.m. Saturday, June 25, 1348 Ohio St.

BANGOR — Kitten Shower, 10 a.m. Saturday, June 25, at Bangor Humane Society, 693 Mount Hope Ave. Information on kitten adoption, spay/neuter and foster homes. Drop box in front entryway for those who want to donate items but cannot attend the shower. The wish list includes: kitten milk replacement, scoopable kitty litter, baby wipes, toys such as plastic balls, furry mice, feather teasers and catnip, small rounded cat beds for nursing cats, canned kitten food and bath and paper towels.

BANGOR — River City Cinema presents “Summer of Love” in its outdoor summer movie series at sundown in Pickering Square: “Pillow Talk” June 24; “Breakfast at Tiffany’s” July 1; “Harold and Maude” July 8; “The Princess Bride” July 15; “Say Anything” July 22; “You’ve Got Mail” July 29; rain date Aug. 5. Free.

BANGOR — Statewide band festival, R.B. Hall Day, 8:45 a.m. to dusk Saturday, June 25, Peaks Auditorium, Bangor High School. Band festival scheduling that day, bangorband.org.

BANGOR — A yard sale will be held 8 a.m.-2 p.m. Saturday, June 25, 20 Cherry Lane. Children’s books and teaching supplies, puzzles, games, decorations, household items, DVDs, CDs and more. Benefits Camp Invention Scholarship Fund. 385-7478 or mgladstone@bangorschools.net.

BAR HARBOR — Abbe Museum educator and Passamaquoddy George Neptune walking tour to visit places significant to Wabanaki history and culture, including information on local Wabanaki place names, traditional songs, and creation stories, 10-11:30 a.m. Saturday, June 24, meeting at the museum, \$6 Mount Desert St. Cost \$10 for members; \$20 for non-members; free for children under age 10. Call Abbe Museum to buy tickets: 288-3519.

BAR HARBOR — “The Green LadyLaughs,” a concert of music and poetry for solstice with Timbered Lake and Paul Weiss, 3 p.m. Sunday, June 26, Whole Health Center, 162 Gilbert Farm Road, Town Hill, Bar Harbor. For information, call 288-4128.

BREWER — Bangor Singles Club dances, 8 p.m.-

midnight Fridays, Brewer Eagles Club, 22 Atlantic Ave.: Steve and the Good Old Boys, June 24. Marilyn, 827-5751.

CANAAN — Grand opening new gallery space, 10 a.m.-5 p.m. Saturday, June 25, Pinnacle Studio, 242 Pinnacle Road. 474-6168, kperelka@myfairpoint.net or kathleenperelkaartist.com.

DOVER-FOXCROFT — 10-cent used book sale, 9 a.m.-5 p.m. Friday, June 24; and 9 a.m.-1 p.m. Saturday, June 25, Thompson Free Library, 186 East Main St. Includes hardcovers and paperbacks, children’s and young adult books, audio books, videos and DVDs and jigsaw puzzles. Cookbooks available at \$1 each. 564-3350.

DOVER-FOXCROFT — Maine Mathematics and Science Alliance STEM Guide Alicia Millete teaching children how to use different types of microscopes, including a digital one, 10 a.m. Saturday, June 25, Thompson Free Library. 564-3350 or email df@thompson.lib.me.us.

EASTPORT — The Eastport Moonlight Movies, 8 p.m. Fridays, Sutherland Amphitheater, 80 Water St.: June 24, “Penguins of Madagascar.” 214-0040 or lolly@sweetiesdowneast.com.

EDDINGTON — Pie sale, 4-6 p.m. Friday, June 24, Comins Hall, 1387 Main Road. Proceeds benefit preservation of Comins Hall. CominsHall.org.

FREEDOM — Strawberry festival, 4-6:30 p.m. Saturday, June 25, Dirigo Grange Hall, Route 137, to benefit Dirigo Grange.

MONSON — Rogan Taylor, watercolor artist born in Zimbabwe, autographing prints and sharing his art, Saturday, June 25, As The Crow Flies gift shop, 418 Greenville Road. Refreshments, 1-3 p.m. Rogan’s Watercolours on Facebook, 876-6182 or roganswatercolours@yahoo.com.

NORTHPORT — Belfast Garden Club Open Garden Days, 10 a.m.-4 p.m. Friday, June 24, Block residence, 1485 Atlantic Highway. Bring picnic lunch to enjoy at outdoor tables with water views. \$5 at the residence. Benefits the garden club. BelfastGardenClub.org or Martha Laitin, 323-2368.

OLD TOWN — Annual strawberry festival, noon-3 p.m. Saturday, June 25, Stillwater Federated Church, 80 Bennoch Road. Strawberry shortcakes, pies and sundaes, with beverages. Prices are \$3.50 for adults and \$1 for children. Whole

pies available to purchase.

PALERMO — Book, pie and vintage record sale, 10 a.m.-2 p.m. Saturday, June 25, Palermo Community Library, 2789 Route 3. CDs and DVDs also available for purchase. Benefits the library. 993-6088 or palermo@palermo.lib.me.us.

PORTLAND — Maine College of Art’s second annual Art in Exodus exhibition, 9 a.m.-5 p.m. weekdays through June 24, Porteous Building, 522 Congress St., in recognition of World Refugee Day on June 20.

PORTLAND — “Titanic: The Artifact Exhibition,” through Oct. 14, Portland Science Center, 68 Commercial St. Prices \$17-\$19.50. 888-718-4253, Info@PortlandScienceCenter.com or www.portlandsciencecenter.com.

PROSPECT — Ghost Camp, 6 p.m. Saturday, June 25-10 a.m. Sunday, June 26, at Fort Knox. Bring a tent, sleeping bag and join the East Coast Ghost Trackers in their overnight investigation. Sandwiches and light breakfast provided. Maximum of 30 people and alcohol-free. Call 469-6553 to make reservations. \$50 per person.

ROCKLAND — Two solo shows through June 26, Landing Gallery, 409 Main St. “Postcards from Home,” oil paintings by Sarah Faragher; “Passages: Time and the Sea,” 27 new ceramic boats by David Riley Peterson. 239-1223 or LandingArt.com.

ROCKPORT — Trivia Night hosted by DJ Jammin’ Jeff, 6-8 p.m. Friday, June 24, Penobscot Bay YMCA, 116 Union St. Light snacks will be provided. \$25 per team of three to five participants. Benefits YMCA aquatics department Learn to Swim Program. To register, 236-

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3375 or stop by.

SEDGWICK — Baked bean and casserole supper, 5-6:30 p.m. Saturday, June 25, North Sedgwick Baptist Church, Route 172. Beans, hot dogs, salads, homemade rolls and pies. Tickets at the door, \$8, \$5 children 12 and under. 359-4401 or 359-4677.

THOMASTON — Volunteers Jazz Band in an outdoor concert, 3 p.m. Sunday, June 26, in front of Mont-

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Friday prime time

	7 PM	7:30	8 PM	8:30	9 PM	9:30	10 PM	10:30	11 PM
BROADCAST	2 NBC 207 Inside Ed.	The Ranch		Gymnastics P&G Championships. From St. Louis. (N)	News				
	4 CBC Creek 22 Minutes	Mr. D	Mr. D	The National (N)	CBC Coronation	Blackstone			
	5 CBS Big Bang	Broke Guy	NCIS: Los Angeles	Hawaii Five-0 (HD)	Blue Bloods (HD)	News			
	52 CW Family Guy	Family Guy	Masters of	Masters of	News Seinfeld	Cougar			
	6 NBC 207 Inside Ed.	The Ranch		Gymnastics P&G Championships. From St. Louis. (N)	News				
	7 ABC Wheel	Jeopardy!	Shark Tank (HD)	(:01) What Would You Do?	20/20 (N) (HD)	News			
	WAGAM FOX The Insider	Ent. Tonight	Rosewood (HD)	MasterChef (HD)	News	Big Bang	Big Bang		
	8 ABC Wheel	Jeopardy!	Shark Tank (HD)	(:01) What Would You Do?	20/20 (N) (HD)	News			
	MPBN PBS PBS NewsHour (N) (HD)	Washington	Charlie	Jimmi Hendrix: American Masters (HD)	C. Rose				
	9 IND Blue Bloods (HD)	Shark Tank (HD)	Motive (HD)		News-Lisa	CTV News	Big Bang		
KIDS	13 CBS Ent. Tonight	The Insider	NCIS: Los Angeles	Hawaii Five-0 (HD)	Blue Bloods (HD)	News			
	22 FOX Mod Fam	Mod Fam	Rosewood (HD)	MasterChef (HD)	FOX 22 News at 10 (N)	Bones			
	33 IND M'A'S'H	M'A'S'H	Andy Griffith	Happy Days	Hogan Hero	Hogan Hero	C. Burnett		
	38 IND Big Bang	Big Bang	Bones (HD)	Bones (HD)	WBZ News (N) (HD)	Seinfeld			
	NICK The Thundermans	All In	Henry	Full House	Full House	Full House	Full House	Friends	
	DISN Nemo	Girl Meets	Adventures in Babysitting (2016)	Bizaardvark	Walk the	Girl Meets	Backstage		
	FREE Wedding	(:45) ** 17 Again	(2009, Comedy) Zac Efron. (PG-13)		Guilt!		700 Club		
	HIST Ancient Aliens		Ancient Aliens	Ancient Aliens (N)	(:03) Ancient Aliens	Great Minds			
	DISC Alaskan Bush People		Alaskan Bush: Off Grid	Alaskan Bush People	(:02) Homestead Rescue	Alaskan			
	TLC Say Yes	Say Yes	Say Yes	Say Yes to the Dress (N)		Say Yes			
LEARN	A&E The First 48		Streets of Compton (Part 1 of 2)		Streets of Compton	The First 48			
	ANPL Tanked		Tanked	(:01) Tanked	(:02) Tanked (N)	(:04) Tanked			
	CSNE SportsNet	The '86 Celtics		Felger	Sports	SportsNet	Sports		
	ESPN Baseball Tonight (N)	(L)	College Baseball NCAA World Series -- TBA vs. Texas Christian. Game 12. (N)		SportCtr				
	ESPN2 SportsCenter (N)	(L)	CFL Football Montreal Alouettes at Winnipeg Blue Bombers. (N)	(L)					
	NBCSP 2016 NHL Draft (N)	(L)			NHL Top 10	NHL Top 10			
	NESN Pitch	Red Sox	MLB Baseball Boston Red Sox at Texas Rangers. (N)	(L)		Extra			
	CNBC Undercover Boss		Undercover Boss	Undercover Boss	Undercover Boss	Undercover			
	CNN Erin Burnett OutFront (N)		Anderson Cooper 360	Anderson Cooper 360	Morgan Spurlock Inside	Declassified			
	FNC Greta Van Susteren		The O'Reilly Factor (N)	The Kelly File (N)	Hannity (N)	O'Reilly			
NEWS	MSNBC Hardball Chris Matthews		All In With Chris Hayes	Rachel Maddow Show	Hardball Chris Matthews	All In With			
	AMC (5:30) *** Bad Boys (R)	** Man on Fire (2004, Crime Drama) Denzel Washington, Dakota Fanning. (R)	Italian						
	BRV Before They	Housewives/OC	Housewives	(:08) ** Cheaper by the Dozen (2003, Comedy) Steve Martin. (PG)					
	CMT *** My Cousin Vinny (1992, Comedy) Joe Pesci, Marisa Tomei. (R)		Crossroads (N)	Still King					
	COM Futurama	Futurama	(7:50) ** Employee of the Month (2006) Dane Cook. (PG-13)	* Walk of Shame (2014)					
	E! E! News (N)	** Guess Who (2005) Bernie Mac. (PG-13)	E! NYC	E! News					
	FOOD Diners	Diners	Diners	Diners	Diners	Diners			
	FX (5:30) Men in Black 3	** Man of Steel (2013, Action) Henry Cavill, Amy Adams, Michael Shannon. (PG-13)							
	GAC Top 20 Countdown	Flea Market	Flea Market	Flea Market	Flea Market	Flea Market	Flea Market		
	HALL Last Man	Last Man	Home Imp.	The Middle	The Middle	The Middle	The Middle	Golden Girls	
VARIETY	HGTV Beach	Beach	Container	Container	Mighty Tiny Houses	Hunters	Hunters Int'l	Hunters	
	LIFE Grey's Anatomy	*** Friends With Benefits	(2011) Justin Timberlake. (R)	(:32) The Good Mistress					
	MTV Ridiculous.	TBA	Ridiculous.	Catfish: The TV Show	Catfish: The TV Show	Rush Hour 3			
	OXY Dateline Presents	Snapped	Snapped	Snapped	Snapped	Snapped			
	SPIKE Kimbo Slice	Bellator MMA Live (N)	(L)			Kickboxing			
	SYFY (6:00) Freddy vs. Jason (R)	WWE Raw (N)			Wynonna Earp (N)	Watchmen			
	TBN Supernat.	Potters	Joyce	Hal Lindsey	End/ Age	Perry Stone	Praise the Lord		
	TBS Seinfeld	Seinfeld	Big Bang	Big Bang	Big Bang	Big Bang	Eleague (N)		
	TCM Treasure	MGM	*** Witness for the Prosecution (1957) (NR)		(:15) **** Some Like It Hot (1959)				
	TCM The Death of "Superman Lives"		La Bare (2014, Documentary) (R)	* Basic Instinct 2 (2006) (ESP) (R)					
PREMIUM	TNT Bones (ESP)	*** Twister (1996, Action) Helen Hunt. (PG-13)		The Last Ship	Last Ship				
	TRAVEL Mysteries at the Museum	Mysteries at the Museum	Mysteries at the Museum	Mysteries at the Museum	Mysteries at the Museum	Mysteries at			
	TRU Top 20 Most Shocking	Funniest	Funniest	Funniest	Funniest	Funniest	Knockout		
	TVL Andy Griffith	Andy Griffith	** Sister Act (1992, Musical Comedy) Whoopi Goldberg. (PG)	Jim Gaffigan	King				
	USA Mod Fam	Mod Fam	Mod Fam	Mod Fam	Mod Fam	Mod Fam	Mr. Robot		
	VH1 (6:00) *** Speed (1994, Action) (R)	(:45) *** Gridiron Gang (2006, Drama) The Rock, Xzibit, Jade Yorker. (PG-13)							
	WGN-A Person of Interest	Person of Interest	Person of Interest	Person of Interest	Person of Interest	Person			
	HBO (6:20) ** The Transporter (2002) (PG-13)	Game of Thrones Jaime weighs his options.	Game of Thrones (ESP)	Real Time With Bill Maher (N)	VICE (N)	VICE (N)			
	MAX (6:20) ** Runaway Train (1985) Jon Voight. (R)	(:10) ** The Last Witch Hunter (2015, Fantasy) (ESP) Vin Diesel, Elijah Wood, Rose Leslie. (PG-13)	Outcast (N) (ESP)	Outcast (N) (ESP)	Outcast (ESP)	Outcast (ESP)			
	SHOW (6:15) ** The D Train (2015) (ESP) Jack Black. (R)	Miles to Go Before	(:35) ** Sleeping With Other People (2015, Romance-Comedy) Jason Sudeikis, Alison Brie. (R)	Miles to Go Before	Best In Sex: 2016 AVN				
STARZ	(6:55) ** The Day After Tomorrow (2004, Action) (ESP) Dennis Quaid, Jake Gyllenhaal. (PG-13)	*** Dodgeball: A True Underdog Story (2004) Vince Vaughn. (PG-13)	(:35) Outlander Claire has an unexpected reunion.						
	STZENC (6:10) ** Regarding Henry (1991) (PG-13)	** Legends of the Fall (1994) Brad Pitt. The forces of love and war slowly destroy a Montana family. (R)		(:15) * Me, Myself & Irene (2000, Comedy) (ESP) Jim Carrey. (R)					