

EVENTS

‘Ghostbusters’ suffers from lack of innovation

BY PETER DEBRUGE
VARIETY.COM

LOS ANGELES — All reboots are haunted by the specter of the movie that inspired them, but Sony’s new gender-swapped “Ghostbusters” — which substitutes comedienne Melissa McCarthy, Kristen Wiig, Kate McKinnon and Leslie Jones for the previously all-male paranormal exterminator squad — suffers from a disappointingly strong case of déjà vu. While both funnier and scarier than Ivan Reitman’s 1984 original, this otherwise over-familiar remake from “Bridesmaids” director Paul Feig doesn’t do nearly enough to innovate on what has come before, even going so far as to conjure most of the earlier film’s cast (including Slimer and the Stay Puft Marshmallow Man) in cameos that undercut the new film’s chemistry.

For Feig, who has carved out his niche in the comedy sphere by helming such staff-led laffers as “The Heat” and “Spy,” this property offers a unique opportunity to test how a major Hollywood franchise might fare if entrusted to a female-driven ensemble — although it would be wrong to blame this side-splitting quartet for the film’s underwhelming box office performance. The problem isn’t that Bill Murray, Dan Aykroyd, Harold Ramis and Ernie Hudson created characters too iconic to surpass; the fault lies in the fact that this new “Ghostbusters” doesn’t want us to



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Ghostbusters (from left) Patty Tolan (Leslie Jones), Abby Yates (Melissa McCarthy), Erin Gilbert (Kristen Wiig) and Jillian Holtzmann (Kate McKinnon) star in “Ghostbusters.”

forget them, crafting its new team in the earlier team’s shadow.

McCarthy is amusing as always, but veers dangerously close to repeating her same old shtick, while Wiig is a poor substitute for Murray’s horn-dog Dr. Peter Venkman, playing a brainiac incapable of maintaining a respectful professional relationship with members of the opposite sex. (It’s one of the movie’s more inspired gags to flip the sexual harassment in the other direction, offering up “Thor” hunk Chris Hemsworth as the group’s straight man, an assistant too dumb to realize he’s being objectified.) And yet the one-line idea that made the original such a success — a comedy team fights ghosts — is so rich that surely Feig

and co-writer Katie Dippold could have taken the franchise in a totally new direction.

Instead, channeling the earlier film at every opportunity, “Ghostbusters” opens with an effects-driven phantom menace before introducing audiences to three scientists who’ve jeopardized their academic careers by believing in the paranormal. Like Venkman before her, Wiig’s tenure-track Erin Gilbert is the resident skeptic, while McCarthy and McKinnon — as labmates Abby Yates and Jillian Holtzmann — look and sound like loonies, setting out to prove that ghosts really do exist. Once kicked out of their respective institutions, the trio have no choice but to go into business for themselves,

adopting roughly the same costumes, logo and Ecto Mobile (a converted hearse) that their male counterparts did in the original, while spending far more time than that earlier film did explaining each of these choices.

At first, the funny ladies’ mission is simply to be taken seriously, as they investigate every ghost sighting in the newly hyper-haunted New York City area, including one from an MTA subway worker named Patty, played by Jones, who inexplicably decides to quit her job in favor of facing her biggest fear. Though Jones gets some of the film’s most memorable lines, her character channels a shameful racial stereotype — one that traces back to the days of blackface when it

amused audiences to see African-American characters spook easily, bugging their eyes and running for their lives whenever confronted with a ghost — except that the ghosts here really are frightening (especially in 3D screenings of the film), when they literally appear to leap off the screen, projecting ectoplasm past the confines of the widescreen frame.

Turns out there’s a reason that business is booming for the Ghostbusters. In a cartoonishly feeble-minded plot twist that suggests Feig might be better suited to be directing the new “Scooby-Doo” reboot, a disgruntled white guy (Neil Casey), has been inviting noxious visitors from the spirit world to cross over for his own nefarious purposes. Once the ladies manage to track this sad sack down, the movie grinds to a halt as the heavily armed group of scientists (whose arsenal has gotten a major upgrade since the earlier film) try to talk him out of destroying the world. That’s pretty much the point where “Ghostbusters” stops being funny enough to sway the haters who’ve become such a vocal presence online — a phenomenon the film actually goes out of its way to acknowledge, as McCarthy dismisses such sexist comments as, “Ain’t no bitches gonna hunt no ghosts,” that appear beneath the group’s YouTube videos.

Whereas Feig has previously managed to cross genre streams successfully (building up to exciting spy- and cop-movie set pieces in his earlier comedy hybrids), here he suc-

cumbs to the familiar curse of the digital-effects era: When there’s almost nothing the computer can’t conjure, it falls to the director to know when to stop. The film’s unwieldy finale begins with an amusing possession gag, as the spirit villain inhabits first McCarthy’s and then Hemsworth’s body, but then it quickly spirals out of control as a flood of computer-generated ghosts cross over and start wreaking havoc around Gotham’s Mercado Hotel — a melee reminiscent of Robert Schwentke’s similarly unwieldy high-concept bomb, “R.I.P.D.”

In an unnecessary nod to fans, Feig resurrects nearly every actor or entity from the 22-year-old original — except for Ramis, who died last year, and the all-but-retired Rick Moranis — while leaving little room for memorable new spir-its (stay through the end credits to hear even Zuul’s name invoked). Those that do appear make little sense, including a winged dragon creature that crashes a heavy metal concert, and a Godzilla-scale anthropomorphic version of the animated series logo. In any number of strange ways (from McKinnon’s Egon-esque blonde coif, to the too-dominant role of uglier-than-ever ghoulish Slimer), 1986’s “The Real Ghostbusters” cartoon appears to have had every bit as much an influence on the team as the live-action original did. That’s enough to make one nervous for all the ways Sony intends to exploit the franchise in the future — which could be moot, considering the write-down they’re likely to take on this reboot.

Things to Do

ATKINSON — 29th annual quilt show, 9 a.m.-3 p.m. Saturday, July 16, Atkinson United Methodist Church. Luncheon, 11 a.m.-1 p.m. Admission \$2. Linda Roebuck, 564-7060, or Martha Andrews, 564-2435.

BANGOR — River City Cinema presents “Summer of Love” outdoor summer movie series, sundown Fridays in July, Pickering Square: “The Princess Bride,” July 15; “Say Anything,” July 22; “You’ve Got Mail,” July 29; rain date Aug. 5. Free.

BANGOR — Downtown Bangor Partnership’s 11th annual Cool Sounds Summer Concert Series and Fresh Air Market presented by Emera Maine and Beal College, 5-8 p.m. Thursdays, July and August, West Market Square and along Merchants Plaza. Free. Trendy Robots, July 14; to be announced, July 21; William Joseph Jordan, July 28; Broadway Rocks Bangor, Aug. 4; The Rotating Taps, Aug. 11; RetroRockerz, Aug. 18; Jon King, Aug. 25.

BANGOR — Penobscot Theatre Company Dramatic Academy youth production, “School of Rock,” 7 p.m. Thursday through Saturday, July 14-16; 2 p.m. Saturday, July 16; 3 p.m. Sunday, July 17, 131 Main St. 626-674-0942 or penobscot-theatre.org.

BREWER — Brewer Historical Society membership meeting, 7 p.m. Tuesday, July 12, Brewer First Methodist Church meeting room, 40 South Main St. Guest speaker Brittany Goetting discussing her work on history of Brewer First Congregational Church and church’s induction into Brewer Register of Historic Places. Meeting open to the public. Refreshments served. David Hanna, 989-2245 or thanna51@yahoo.com.

CAMDEN — “Peyton Place” revival with selection of images and scenes from the movie as filmed in Camden in 1957, 7-8 p.m. Thursday, June 14, Camden Public Library. Library staff offering remarks about the popularity and impact the book first had, fol-

lowed by modern-time film clips featuring the movie locations. Share memories about the filming.

CASTINE — Landscape architect Bruce John Riddell of Boothbay speaking on “LandArt: Artistic Expression, Nature and Creativity in Maine Gardens,” 5 p.m. Tuesday, July 12, Delano Auditorium, Maine Maritime Academy. castinehistoricalsociety.org or 326-4118.

CASTINE — Castine Historical Society’s Castine House and Garden Tour, 10 a.m.-4 p.m. Wednesday, July 13. Thirteen homes and four gardens. Tickets purchased \$40. Special luncheon available at The Manor Inn, \$25. castinehistoricalsociety.org or 326-4118.

CHARLOTTE — Baked bean supper, 5:30-7 p.m. Wednesday, July 13, Charlotte Fire and Rescue Station, Route 214. Beans, casseroles, salads, rolls, pies and cakes. Raffle in the tent. 454-8825.

CRANBERRY ISLAND — Heliker-LaHotan Foundation and Great Cranberry Island Historical Society presenting Meet the Artists, 4 p.m. Tuesday, July 12, Cranberry House, Great Cranberry Island. Linda Casbon of Brooklyn, New York, 2016 July artist fellow-in-residence, talking about her about her work. Free. Refreshments are provided. 244-7772.

ELLSWORTH — Tea Time Tours, 3 p.m. Wednesdays, July 13, 20 and 27, Woodlawn Museum. Staff-led tour followed by tea and cookies. \$12 Woodlawn members, \$15 others. Space limited. Reservations, woodlawnmuseum.org.

ELLSWORTH — Cine-Grand film series: “Brooklyn,” 7:30 p.m. Tuesday, July 12, The Grand. \$7, \$6 seniors and students, \$5 for Grand members. 667-9500 or grandonline.org.

GREAT CRANBERRY ISLAND — Meet the Artists, 4:30-6 p.m. Tuesday, July 12, Cranberry House, 251 Great Cranberry Road. Painters Susanah Howland of Lincoln, Massachusetts, and Tom Fitzharris of New York, printmaker Gene Shaw of Lancast-

er, Pennsylvania, and sculpture/ceramic artist Linda Casbon of Brooklyn, New York, are fellows-in-residence June 30-July 24 at The Heliker-LaHotan Foundation. Free.

LUBEC — Mary Potterton Memorial Concert: The Halcyon Duo, composed of Roberto Pace, piano, and Eve Friedman, flute, 7:30-9:30 p.m. Wednesday, July 13, Congregational Christian Church, upstairs. Free, but donations for piano tuning gratefully accepted. Intermission refreshments provided by local businesses. 733-2316, sks-mail@summerkeys.com or summerkeys.com.

MACHIAS — Free concert by West African master drummer Jordan Benissan, 2 p.m. Wednesday, July 13, Performing Arts Center, University of Maine at Machias, 116 O’Brien Ave. 255-3933.

MILO — Park Street United Methodist Church annual Strawberry Festival, 5-6:30 p.m. Wednesday, July 13, at the church. Ham, potato salad, cole slaw, peas, rolls, strawberry shortcake and beverages. \$8, \$5 children under 12. 943-3474 or trmudgett@roadrunner.com.

ORONO — Women of the World hosting international potluck supper, as part of University of Maine’s Mandela Washington Fellowship program, 7-9:30 p.m. Tuesday, July 12, Church of Universal Fellowship, 82 Main St. Participants invited to bring food to share. Families and children welcome. 581-1506.

ROCKPORT — Concert by Highland Pipes and Drums of Anah Shrine Temple, Bangor, 6-7 p.m. Wednesday, July 13, Rockport Masonic Center lawn, 361 Main St., just up from Simon-ton Corner four-way stop signs. Free and open to all. Rain or shine. Hat will be raised to collect donations for the band. Bring lawn chair or blanket for seating. Hamburger and hot dog plates with side, chips, drink and ice cream available. 50-50 raffle drawn at end of concert. Jeff, 691-2270.

SEARSPORT — Members of Searsport Congregational Church serving first fish chowder supper

of summer, 5-6:30 p.m. Wednesday, July 13, at the church. Chowder, biscuits, homemade pies with ice cream and beverages. \$9, \$4 children under 12.

SOMESVILLE — Strawberry Festival, in collaboration with Seal Cove Auto Museum, 1-3 p.m. Tuesday, July 12, Somesville Fire House. Shortcake made of biscuits topped with fresh

Maine strawberries and crowned with whipped cream. 276-9323.

STOCKTON SPRINGS — Meetinghouse Fair sponsored by Ladies Aid of Congregational Church at Sandy Point, 9 a.m.-1 p.m. Wednesday, July 13, 684 Route 1. Luncheon, 11 a.m.-1 p.m. Rain or shine. Hand-made quilt made by Glenna Salley and Jane Bourassa will be raffled.

Books, attic treasures, furniture, glassware, knives, and hand crafted crochet and knitted goods. Proceeds go toward heating church in winter. Quilt raffle tickets available at the event or by calling 567-3073, leave a message.

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

Tuesday 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.	America's Got Talent (N) (HD) [P]					Maya & Marty (N) (HD) [P]	News	
	4 CBC Rick Mercer 22 Minutes	Standing Baroness	The National (N)				CBC Coronation	Stampede	
	5 CBS Big Bang	Broke Guy NCIS (HD) [P]	Zoo (N) (HD) [P]				NCIS: New Orleans [P]	News	
	52 CW Family Guy	Family Guy	The Flash (HD) [P]	Containment (N) (HD) [P]			News Seinfeld [P]	Cougar	
	6 NBC 207 Inside Ed.	America's Got Talent (N) (HD) [P]					Maya & Marty (N) (HD) [P]	News	
	7 ABC Wheel	Jeopardy! [P]	Celebrity Family Feud [P]	The \$100,000 Pyramid [P]			To Tell the Truth (N) [P]	News	
	WAGM FOX	The Insider Pregame	2016 MLB All-Star Game American League at National League. (N) (L) (HD)				League. (N) (L) (HD)	Big Bang	
	8 ABC Wheel	Jeopardy! [P]	Celebrity Family Feud [P]	The \$100,000 Pyramid [P]			To Tell the Truth (N) [P]	News	
	MPBN PBS	PBS NewsHour (N) (HD)	The White House: Inside Story (N) (HD) [P]				Frontline (HD) [P]	C. Rose	
	9 IND Motive (N) (HD) [P]	Amazing Race	Zoo (N) (HD) [P]				News-Lisa	CTV News	Daily Show
KIDS	13 CBS Ent. Tonight	The Insider	NCIS (HD) [P]				NCIS: New Orleans [P]	News	
	22 FOX Mod Fam	Pregame	2016 MLB All-Star Game American League at National League. (N) (L) (HD)				League. (N) (L) (HD)	FOX 22	
	33 IND M*A*S*H [P]	M*A*S*H [P]	Andy Griffith	Happy Days	Gilligan Isle		Hogan Hero	Hogan Hero	C. Burnett
	38 IND Big Bang	Big Bang	The Walking Dead [P]	The Walking Dead [P]			WBZ News (N) (HD)	Seinfeld [P]	
KIDS	NICK Crashletes [P]	Thunder	Nicky, Ricky	Thunder	Full House [P]	Full House [P]	Full House [P]	Full House [P]	Friends [P]
	DISN Stuck	Bizaardvark	K.C. Under.	Walk the	Walk the	Best Fr.	Liv-Mad.	Bunk'd [P]	Stuck
	FREE Pretty Little Liars [P]		Pretty Little Liars (N) [P]		Dead of Summer (N) [P]				700 Club
LEARN	HIST Cnt. Cars	Cnt. Cars	Cnt. Cars	Cnt. Cars	Cnt. Cars	Cnt. Cars	Big Easy	Big Easy	Big Easy
	DISC Deadliest Catch: On Deck		Deadliest Catch: The Bait		Deadliest Catch (N) [P]		(:02) American Tarzan [P]		Catch
	TLC Little People, Big World [P]		Little People, Big World		Little People, Big World [P]		(:01) My Giant Life (N) [P]		Little People
	A&E Zombie House Flipping [P]		Zombie House Flipping [P]		Zombie House Flipping [P]		Zombie House Flipping [P]		Zombie Flip
ANPL	River Monsters [P]		River Monsters [P]		(:01) Life After Chernobyl		River Monsters		River
SPORTS	CSNE SportsNet	Early	MLS Soccer: Crew SC at Revolution				Sports	SportsNet	Sports
	ESPN SportsCenter (N) (L)		NBA Summer League Basketball: Spurs vs. Bulls				E-60 [P]		SportCtr
	ESPN2 NBA Summer Basketball		City Slam		City Slam		City Slam		Streetball
	NBCSP Indy Lights (N)		2016 Tour de France Stage 10. From Escaldes-Engordany to Revel.						Triathlon
	NESN (6:00) NHL Hockey		NHL Hockey From March 7, 2016.				Sports	Sports	Sports
NEWS	CNBC Jay Leno's Garage [P]		Shark Tank [P]		Shark Tank [P]		West Texas		Shark Tank
	CNN Erin Burnett OutFront (N)		Anderson Cooper 360 [P]		Town Hall: Paul Ryan		CNN Tonight		Tonight
	FNC Greta Van Susteren		The O'Reilly Factor (N)		The Kelly File (N)		Hannity (N)		O'Reilly
	MSNBC Hardball Chris Matthews		All In With Chris Hayes		Rachel Maddow Show		The Last Word		All In With
VARIETY	AMC Breakfast	*** Pretty Woman (1990) (ESP) Richard Gere, Julia Roberts. (R)					Feed the Beast (N) [P]		Feed the
	BRV Below Deck		Below Deck		Below Deck		Housewives/NJ		Happens
	CMT Last Man	Last Man	*** Sister Act (1992, Musical Comedy) Whoopi Goldberg, Maggie Smith. (PG)				S. Austin		
	COM Futurama [P]	Futurama [P]	Tosh.0 [P]	Tosh.0 [P]	Tosh.0 [P]	Tosh.0 [P]	Tosh.0 (N) [P]	Not Safe	Daily Show
	E! E! News (N) [P]		Botched (N) [P]		Botched (N) [P]		Famously Single (N) [P]		E! News [P]
	FOOD Chopped [P]		Chopped Junior (N) [P]		Chopped [P]		Chopped (N) [P]		Chopped
	FX Anchorman 2		** The Heat (2013, Comedy) Sandra Bullock, Demián Bichir. (R)		** The Heat (2013) (R)				
	GAC Barnwood Builders [P]		Barnwood Builders [P]		Barnwood Builders [P]		Barnwood Builders [P]		Barnwood
	HALL (6:00) Let It Snow (2013)		Christmas Land (2015, Romance) Nikki Deloach. (NR)				The Middle	The Middle [P]	Golden Girls
	HGTV Fixer Upper [P]		Fixer Upper [P]		Fixer Upper [P]		Vintage	Hunters Int'l	Fixer Upper
VARIETY	LIFE Celebrity Wife Swap [P]		Celebrity Wife Swap [P]		Celebrity Wife Swap [P]		Gold Medal Families (N) [P]		Gold Medal
	MTV Ridiculous.	*** Forgetting Sarah Marshall (2008) Jason Segel. (R)					Scream (N) [P]		Proposal
	OXY Sisterhood of Hip Hop [P]		Sisterhood of Hip Hop [P]		Sisterhood of Hip Hop [P]		Sisterhood of Hip Hop [P]		Top Model
	SPIKE Homefront	** Four Brothers (2005, Crime Drama) Mark Wahlberg. (R)					** Brick Mansions (2014) (P-G-13)		
	SYFY (6:30) ** From Dusk Till Dawn (1996, Horror) (R)		** Turistas (2006, Horror) (R)				Josh Duhamel. (R)		Cabin
	TBN Supernat.	Potters	Trinity	Everyday	Prince	Cornelius	Praise the Lord		
	TBS Seinfeld [P]	Seinfeld [P]	Big Bang	Big Bang	Big Bang	Big Bang	Wrecked [P]	Big Bang	Conan (N) [P]
	TCM (5:30) ** Cimarron (NR)		*** The Naked Spur (1953) James Stewart. (NR)				*** The Man From Laramie (1955)		
	TCM Rules of Engagement (R)		*** The Seven Five (2014, Documentary) (ESP) (R)				*** Welcome to New York (2014) (R)		
	TNT (6:30) ** Red 2 (2013, Action) Bruce Willis. (P-G-13)		Animal Kingdom (N) [P]		Animal Kingdom [P]		Animal Kingdom [P]		Law
PREMIUM	TRAVEL Bizarre Foods America [P]		Delicious Destinations		Bizarre Foods/Zimmer		Bizarre Foods/Zimmer		Bizarre
	TRU Imp. Jokers	Imp. Jokers	Imp. Jokers	Imp. Jokers	Imp. Jokers	Imp. Jokers	Greatest	Greatest	Imp. Jokers
	TVL Andy Griffith	Andy Griffith	(:12) George Lopez [P]		George	Raymond	Raymond	Raymond	King
	USA Law & Order: SVU		Law & Order: SVU		Law & Order: SVU		Law & Order: SVU		Law-SVU
	VH1 Love & Hip Hop: Atlanta [P]		Love & Hip Hop: Atlanta [P]		Love & Hip Hop: Atlanta [P]		VH1 Hip Hop Honors: All Hall		
	WGN-A ** XXX (2002, Action) Vin Diesel, Asia Argento. (P-G-13)						** XXX: State of the Union (2005) Ice Cube.		
	HBO The Night Of A student is arrested for murder. (ESP Part 1 of 8) [P]		Any Given Wednesday		** Maze Runner: The Scorch Trials (2015, Science Fiction) (ESP) Dylan O'Brien. (P-G-13)				Absolutely Fabulous
	MAX (6:15) * The Number 23 (2007) (ESP) Jim Carrey. (R)		(7:55) ** Batman Forever (1995, Action) (ESP) Val Kilmer, Tommy Lee Jones. (P-G-13)		Jim Carrey. (ESP) (P-G-13)		*** Crimson Peak (2015, Horror) (ESP) Mia Wasikowska. (R)		
	SHOW Ray Donovan An intruder breaks in. [P]		Roadies A music blogger posts about the band. [P]		** Shooter (2007) Mark Wahlberg. A wounded sniper plots revenge against those who betrayed him. (R)		(:05) Roadies [P]		
	STARZ (6:35) *** The Good Dinosaur (2015) (ESP) (P-G)		(:10) ** Regarding Henry (1991, Drama) (ESP) Harrison Ford, Annette Bening, Bill Nunn. (P-G-13)				Outlander Claire reveals the truth to Brianna. (ESP) [P]		
STZENC	(6:15) *** Bull Durham (1988) Kevin Costner.		(:04) Spartacus: Gods of the Arena (ESP) [P]		Power Holly's disappearance worries Tommy. [P]		Survivor's Remorse [P]	Survivor's Remorse [P]	Johnson Fam.