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Godzilla vs. Kong review: A bigger, better clash of two titans



by Victoria Davis 1 week ago

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Godzilla vs. Kong has even more monster mashing, laser-blasting, and city smashing than you'd expect, and it's phenomenal.

When it came to not only recreating a 1960s classic, but combining everything Kong and Godzilla fans loved about previous mega monster films, director Adam Wingard certainly delivered a "smashing" masterpiece. [Godzilla vs. Kong](#) has the city-wide explosions, the thunderous roars, the cringy spilling of decapitated monster guts, and, lest we forget, the tear-jerking, wholesome relationship between giant, destructive beast and sweet, wide-eyed child.

Yes—Wingard's Warner Bros and Legendary Entertainment adaptation to showcase a bigger, better clash between the world's two most famous colossal titans has

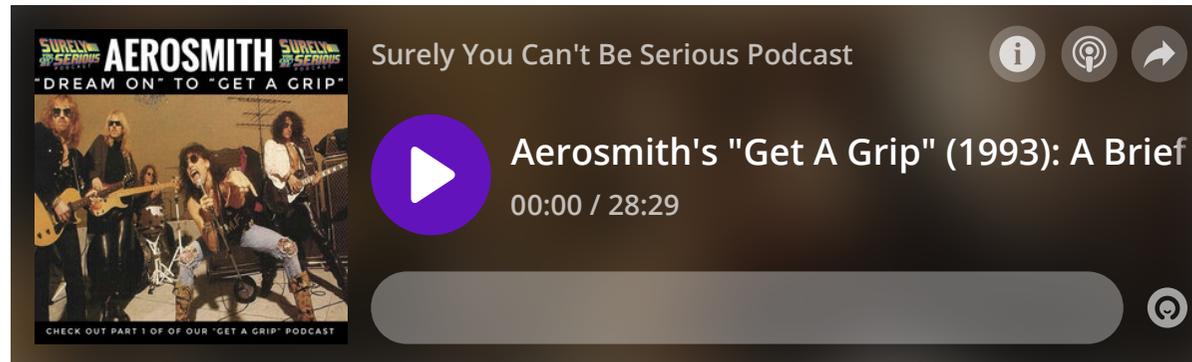
everything you would expect from a modern rendition of a B-monster film with 2021 visual effects capabilities. But *Godzilla vs. Kong* shines from not only its purely awesome smashing and bashing, but also with its nostalgic undertones, mecha twists, and catering to the fact that violence without adventure is just plain boring.

The story starts off in familiar territory—on Skull Island—where Kong, the revered King of the Apes awakes from a snooze and goes about his morning routine in the jungle, bathing, scratching, sharpening the end of a tree trunk. As a young girl (Kaylee Hottle) approaches carrying a hand-made Kong doll, it's understandable to suspect Kong might be interested in an adolescent snack. But, instead, he launches his hand-made spear into the sky, shattering the artificial scenery. Not something you see every day in the jungle.

It's explained that Kong is in a type of containment zone in order to keep him safe from Godzilla, who scientist Ilene Andrews (Rebecca Hall) suspects will hunt down Kong in order to engage in a historic, long-awaited battle to the death. After all, there can only be one reigning titan and, as Andrews later explains, Kong bows to no one, not even a monster that can blast cataclysmic lasers from its ginormous mouth.



But, her plans to keep Kong isolated are derailed when Nathan Lind (Alexander Skarsgård), a Hollow Earth theorist, insists on using Kong as a guide to finding the titan's power source.



Meanwhile, the said gigantic, aquatic lizard rolls into Apex Cybernetics headquarters in Florida, blowing everything to smithereens.

While the actions of the formerly considered "savior titan" appeared to be unprovoked, conspiracy theorist and former Apex employee Bernie Hayes (Brian

Tyree Henry) believes otherwise and is later joined by Madison Russell (Millie Bobby Brown) and friend Josh Valentine (Julian Dennison) to investigate, all three (mostly Russell and Hayes) hypothesizing that Godzilla knew something fishy was up at Apex.

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As these two stories and monsters continue to collide, Moving Picture Company—famous for their work on numerous DC superhero films such as *Wonderwoman* and *Aquaman*—shows the true scope and potential of visual effects artistry. Kong and Godzilla battle it out on and under the high seas—tearing apart battleships like legos—and brawl amidst the concrete, neon jungle of Hong Kong.

And while the leveling of military and metropolis is a glorious work of CG animated genius, there are also **easter eggs** scattered throughout *Godzilla vs Kong* for long-time fans who have followed the journey of these two larger-than-life beasts, whose conceptions, adaptations, and recreations span the past seven decades.



Kong being transported to Antarctica via helicopter and large net comes from Toho Studios' 1967 kaiju classic *King Kong Escapes*. Kong shoving the handle of an ax down Godzilla's throat is inspired by the sometimes referred to as "cheesy" 1962 film *King Kong vs. Godzilla*. It's about as shocking and gross as when Kong rips off the head of a new Hollow Earth monster species and slurps down its stringy brains.

But those are the shock values that also make Wingard's *Godzilla vs Kong* the over-the-top monster action movie we were all hoping for.

Other oldies-but-goodies referenced in this mesmerizing 2021 adaptation include *Godzilla vs. Megalon* (1973), *Son of Godzilla* (1967), *All Monsters Attack* (1971), *Godzilla vs. Mechagodzilla* (1975), *Destroy All Monsters* (1969), and *Godzilla, Mothra and King Ghidorah: Giant Monsters All-Out Attack* (2001).

But not all of the jaw-dropping CGI and VFX work takes place during Kong and Godzilla throw-downs. *Godzilla vs Kong*, we also see Hollow Earth in its full glory,

post an almost psychedelically trippy journey to the center of the earth, somewhat bringing viewers back in time to 2003 with Jon Amiel's *The Core*.



Volcanic mountains, lush jungles, and epic cliffsides surrounding the screen *Inception*-style—all surging with a bright blue energy source—is a sight to behold.

With music that's beautiful as well as daunting and ominous, Kong's excursions in Hollow Earth make for some of the more emotional moments in *Godzilla vs Kong*, bringing the King's past and present together. The other primary source of emotion is the relationship between Kong and the child Jia, Skull Island's last Iwi native.

While both Godzilla and Kong have made contact with humans before—Godzilla having established somewhat of a bond with the young Russell in *Godzilla: King of the Monsters*—the backbone of Kong's stories always seem to center around his being family-oriented and ability to make a genuine human connection, even with outsiders.

Jia being deaf also lent itself a strong tool in putting the focus on Kong and Godzilla's facial expressions to tell their dialogue rather than spoken words used by all other cast members, except Jia.

It might be why, throughout the film, you may find yourself rooting for the more personable primate rather than his cold-blooded rival. Perhaps the one and only critique for an otherwise flawless film is that we could have done with a Russell and Godzilla reunion, just to even the emotional score for those who may take a side in the rivalry while watching the film.



But, all-in-all, *Godzilla vs Kong* has all the makings of a future classic, with aesthetics that outshine *Avatar*, explosions that rival Marvel, and beastly action sequences that leave *Jurassic Park* in the dust.

The film combines the best of action, monster, and drama films with no underlying political, social or philosophical agenda. *Godzilla vs Kong's* only goal is to make viewers transfixed on what's before their eyes—be it violent, beautiful or both—and

to make you a believer in monster mash-ups, if you weren't already. And they succeed.

While the film is a culmination of two titans who have proven to be natural selection's prime pick of the herd in their own story arcs, *Godzilla vs Kong* still leaves audiences wanting more. With any luck, there could be a sequel in sight, though there's no cliff-hanger credit scene to speak to that fact.



Either way, if you have a love for VFX, CG animation, monsters turned soft by children or monsters tearing each other's arms and heads off, then *Godzilla vs Kong* deserves a spot on your to-watch list.

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Godzilla vs. Kong is now in theaters and available to stream on HBO Max. Have you seen it? Tell us your thoughts in the comments below!



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