



Cranston unsure at first about ‘Godzilla’

By Bruce Fessier
The Desert Sun

“Godzilla” is one of the most anticipated big budget films of the summer. But, after winning multiple Emmys for “Breaking Bad” and co-starring in the Academy Award-winning “Argo,” Bryan Cranston wasn’t sure it was the film for him.

“At first I pushed away from it,” Cranston told The Desert Sun after completing the production last summer, “because, coming off of ‘Breaking Bad,’ I thought, ‘Anything I do is going to be scrutinized now and I don’t want to do something that’s frivolous.’ I didn’t know how it was going to be handled and I heard terrible things about the last ‘Godzilla,’ which I didn’t see.”

Cranston, who is a part owner of Cinemas Palme d’Or in Palm Desert, was interested in starring in a play in L.A. that was written by a friend of his. But the play didn’t work out, he said, and his agent persuaded him to at least read the “Godzilla” script.

“I got a call from my agent saying, ‘You know, I just read the ‘Godzilla’ script and it’s actually quite good. There’s a strong father-son component to it and you might want to take a look at it. The director wants to talk to you.’

“I read it,” said Cranston, “and sure enough, it was like, ‘This seems like a character-driven monster movie. This is unusual.’ Then I had a preliminary conversation with Gareth Edwards, who directed it, and I liked the things he was saying. I told him I had a couple issues with certain things and he said, ‘Absolutely, let’s change that. We’ll make that work.’ It’s like, ‘OK...’

“Then he said, ‘Go look at my movie, ‘Monsters,’ ” which he made (on a) miniscule budget. He created all the CGI monsters himself on his own laptop. And now he’s doing this big budget movie. So I looked at his movie, starring one of the actors from ‘Argo,’ Scoot McNairy, and I thought, ‘This is really good.’

“So we had a couple more conversations and then I thought about it. ‘Am I being a snob? I’m going from ‘Breaking Bad’ so I can’t do a fantasy movie of a character that I loved when I was a boy?’ So I thought, no, this is exactly what I should do. It is such a departure from Walter White and ‘Breaking Bad,’ it can’t be compared.”

Cranston plays a nuclear scientist who has been trying for 15 years to discover the cause of the collapse of a nuclear power plant that was

Please see GODZILLA, E2



From left: Cast members Joni Naber, 78, Jane Owens, 65, and Greta Albritton, 65, wait in their dressing room before taking the stage at the Palm Springs Follies on May 1 in Palm Springs. MARILYN CHUNG/THE DESERT SUN

Curtain call

Performers Richard Byron, 65, left, and Wayne Albritton, 71, hang out in the dressing room at the Palm Springs Follies. MARILYN CHUNG/THE DESERT SUN



Dresser Aileen Aguas, 25, prepares costumes backstage on May 1 for Palm Springs Follies performers. The costumes must be put in proper order, and according to the preferences of the performers, because costume changes need to be done within a few minutes and in the dark. MARILYN CHUNG/THE DESERT SUN

The Fabulous Palm Springs Follies cast, crew prepare for final shows

By Beth Roessner
The Desert Sun

The faces of The Fabulous Palm Springs Follies are creased with laugh lines earned through the years and plastered in bright eye shadows and stage make-up. The six men and 11 women that comprise the dance company are considered by many to be inspirational because they’re all over 55.

But The Follies, a cheeky and popular downtown Palm Springs attraction during its 23 seasons in

Please see FOLLIES, E2



Dresser lead Kelsey Snook, 23 of Palm Springs puts finishing touches on dance heels. All the shoes get new crystals if they are missing and a fresh coat of paint to keep them looking new for each show. MARILYN CHUNG/THE DESERT SUN

DESERT STYLE



Michelle Touve-Holland, 34, and stylist Katie Guinan check Touve-Holland’s hair, which she has chosen to keep gray instead of coloring. MIKE CARDEW/MCT

Some women daring to explore shades of gray

Silver or gray is trending now in fashion, accessories and home decor. And while some stylists say going gray naturally may be a trend, others say it can make a woman look 10 years older.

So before you squeeze that tube of Vidal Sassoon on your locks, examine your shade of gray. Michelle Touve-Holland began going gray barely out of the starting gate of life. The 34-year-old has had only a couple of people suggest that she dye it.

“They have since accepted

it,” she said, chuckling.

Her stylist, Kristie Warner, noted that Touve-Holland has a “funky, trendy-looking haircut with gray that looks really sweet.”

Still, the majority of women, like Lorraine Fields, are on a mission to keep it covered up. When she recently turned 60, Fields said, streaks of gray sprouted near her ears — reminding her of “Frankenstein’s bride.”

She perused the aisles of a drugstore for a product with appropriate coverage, and enlisted her husband to help

her color her locks.

“Wow, what a dye job. ... I had a brown side of hair, the other almost black, and a chemically burned scalp. The gray streaks (were) unscathed by the attempt to cover,” she joked, adding that she is heading to a salon to get the job done right.

The thing to remember is that age is just a number, and hair color does not dictate whether you lead a sedate lifestyle or behave like a character in the “50 Shades of Grey.” The choice is yours.

MCT Information Services

Study rates men with whiskers

Just as millennials are beginning to get comfortable with this new follicle-based fad, science has to go and get in the way. In an Australian study published in the journal “Biology Letters,” researchers asked women to examine four types of photos — men with beards, clean-shaven men and men with light and heavy stubble — and rate their attractiveness.

What they found was that,

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A DAY WITH THE FOLLIES

6 a.m.-9 a.m. Crew members arrive to the Plaza Theater
10:14 a.m. Lydia Lindemans prunes and brushes a blonde medium-length wig, one of at least 100 used in “The Last Hurrah” performance
10:20 a.m. Kelsey Snook adheres white and citrus-colored gems with a safety pin onto several pairs of ladies heels
10:29 a.m. Seamstress Florinda Solis mends a turquoise bodice by hand
10:43 a.m. First of two mic checks. Crew member recites experts from “Hamlet” and “Midsummer Night’s Dream”
10:50 a.m. Speakers are checked for points of failure
10:52 a.m. Teleprompters are read through and checked
11:00 a.m. Stagecrew preps the curtains and double-sided flats to be used in day’s show. They also check and maintain the stair unit and prepare the tutu prop for the magician
11:10 a.m. Reservations manager Rusty Shahan goes through seating charts for upcoming shows with co-founder Mary Jardin
11:19 a.m. Group outreach coordinators work with touring groups and prepare the tickets and final details for remaining shows
11:30 a.m. Bus greeter Tina Stormont stands on the corner of Palm Canyon Drive and Tahquitz, awaiting tour groups
11:33 a.m. The Mayflower Gardens bus, which arrived more than 30 minutes late, pulls up onto the stoop. Stormont boards and welcomes them to Palm Springs
11:36 a.m. The bus empties and the crowd enters downtown Palm Springs
11:47 a.m. Performer Judy Bells leaves the green room singing and warming up
11:49 a.m. Production meeting in the green room
12:16 p.m. Usher meeting
12:24 p.m. Backstage quick-changes are prepared by dressers who place costumes and accessories for their intended performer
12:30 p.m. Performer call time
12:42 p.m. Production staff has until 12:45 to finish their checklists and “hand over the house” to the lobby.
12:45 p.m. House declared open and people are welcomed into the theater
1:02 p.m. Deck crew meeting outside backstage
1:15 p.m. The performers are finishing their wardrobe and dressers are on standby ready to help
1:30 p.m. Showtime
4:26 p.m. A Follies performance always comes to a close with a tribute to America
4:40 p.m. Red, white and blue balloons drop from the ceiling
4:41 p.m. Patrons exit the theater
4:45 p.m. Follies performers and guest star Darlene Love stand outside greeting and signing autographs



Wig stylist Lydia Lindemans, 67 of Cathedral City, talks about dressing the wigs. Wigs are washed, styled and sometimes clipped before performances. MARILYN CHUNG/THE DESERT SUN



Stage manager Emma Latimer, 24, left, and assistant stage manager Niki Beach, 24, look over the stage before a show at the Palm Springs Follies on May 1. MARILYN CHUNG/THE DESERT SUN

Follies

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the desert, is a family of more than formerly retired dancers. There are the seamstresses, the stagehands, the dressers, the lighting crew, the operations and marketing staff, IT department and crews in between that help to put on their weekly performances.
Now in its final season — aptly dubbed “The Last Hurrah!” — the feelings are bittersweet in the corps. Some employees have found other prospects after the Plaza Theatre shuts its doors on May 18, and others plan to re-enter retirement. Whether for one season or many years, their time on staff was more than just their job, their coworkers more than just their family. The Follies, for many, was their “religion.”
“Our success comes from having a passion for what we do, and having a staff and cast that has a passion for what we do,” said co-founder Mary Jardin. “Twenty-three years is a long time to be doing this in any theater.”

It took the help of everyone on staff to produce a season of The Follies, with pre-production beginning over a year in advance. Co-founder and show emcee Riff Markowitz oversaw all stages of production, including costume design and creation.
“[Markowitz is] very particular about what he wants,” said production manager Leah Gordon. “He knows what he wants and what works on the cast members’ bodies, knows what’s going to be the most flattering. And, after 23 years, he’s got the formula down.”
For their final show, for example, the performers needed a glitzy outfit that could transition with the music as it played songs from the 1930s to the ’70s. The outfits for the women began as pink and orange flapper-inspired dresses, but through Markowitz’s input, morphed into icy blue sequined one-pieces.
As the final show draws nearer, the entire staff is still putting in the same effort as they did the first show of the season.
Before each performance, the costumes are

scrutinized and repaired, oftentimes by hand. If a rhinestone falls off a shoe, the craft room is tapped for repairs. Wigs are washed, styled and sometimes clipped before performances. Like the costumes, the curtains, too, are checked for tears.
“It’s really important for us to produce the costume the same way every time and to repair it the same way every time,” Gordon said. “That detail may not show to the people in the back of the house, but the people sitting in the front row, they’re going to know. We’re playing to everyone in the audience.”
The crew wants each performance to be top notch from the first performance of the season to the very last.
“Every meeting we have, I say, ‘This audience is the same audience we had months ago, just new faces,’” Jardin said. “So these people deserve the same treatment that everyone else has.”
Success wasn’t always a given. When the show first opened, some said there would be a limited audience for such a niche production. They said it

would never be sustainable, and although it took 23 years, Jardin believes there might be some truth to that.
The onset of the recession in 2008, and the subsequent years, took a toll on the Follies, which relies on ticket sales and concessions.
The cast and staff have bittersweet feelings that, with the final season underway, once again nearly every seat in the 890-capacity theater is filled.
Markowitz has high hopes that the young staffers will be able to “move on and find greater and more wondrous things to do.”
“But the cast, and people my age, it’s not so easy to find meaningful things to do with your talents and your life,” he said.
It was a great financial risk, said Markowitz, to continue to stay open throughout the year. But it has been worth it.
“This season, for me, has been an opportunity to get it right. ...To be as close to excellence as possible. And then a chance to look into the faces of all these people ... and be able to say goodbye.”

The Fabulous Palm Springs Follies, The Last Hurrah! Through May 18. Information: www.psfollies.com or (760) 327-0225

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Style

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when beards were rare in the photos, women found them to be more attractive. When they were plentiful, the opposite was true.
“(The study) suggests that beard styles are likely to grow less attractive as they become more popular,” explained **Rob Brooks**, who was part of the research team, in a piece he wrote for the conversation.com.
The study’s findings are noteworthy, given that the beard seems to be the trend du jour among many 20- and 30-something men. The beard has become as ingrained in hipster culture as flannel, skinny jeans and a disdain for a Seattle-based coffee company.
Facial hair is a historically fickle beast, a trend that has ebbed and flowed with the decades. During the “Mad Men”-era 50s, the Don Drapers of the world wouldn’t think of arriving at the office without a fresh shave.
During the free-wheeling ’60s and ’70s, however, the biker beard became a staple. At various times, mustaches, mut-

ton-chop sideburns and goatees have also made appearances.
Today, the infatuation seems to be with the beard.
MCT Information Services
Ready for fall
Summer may just be starting up, but fashion magazines and sites are already buzzing with the hottest fall trends, many of which will work perfectly in the desert.
Our obsession with cowboy culture isn’t done yet as shearing and fur accents, and western prints are back again.
Women’s Wear Daily is on the lookout for stud-ded ankle-high booties or heeled boots given a cowboy makeover. Long cozy sweaters have also made the return, same with bold and bright prints, according to **Harper’s Bazaar**. **Vogue** is predicting all things tweed, leather or suede thigh-high boots or leggings, and going back to basics with ecru. Grunge will also be revived in the form of over-sized leather coats.
Plaid will be the print to be in during those cooler months, and the color that’s on everyone’s radar? Let’s just say, it’ll

make you green with envy.
Beth Roessner
Rodriguez cited as top designer
Narciso Rodriguez will receive a National Design Award this year from the **Smithsonian’s Cooper-Hewitt National Design Museum**, along with 10 other top names in design.
Rodriguez designed the black and red dress worn by first lady **Michelle Obama** in Chicago on election night in 2008. The dress recently went on display at the National Archives to represent her signature style. Earlier, Rodriguez designed Carolyn Bessette’s wedding dress for her 1996 marriage to John F. Kennedy Jr.
Asked to characterize what he considers to be his contributions to American style and design, Rodriguez said: “I have always been passionate about process and craft. My focus is to make clothes that celebrate women and are relevant to the way we live.”
The Associated Press
Desert Style appears every Sunday. Send tips and questions to style@thedesertsun.com.

Godzilla

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shut down with his wife (played by Juliette Binoche) trapped inside in order to save a Japanese

city. Now he discovers it wasn’t a natural disaster that caused the malfunction, but something the government has been trying to keep secret and trying to correct with the creation of new predator creatures.

Cranston shot the film last spring in Vancouver with a cast including Aaron Taylor-Johnson, Elizabeth Olsen, Sally Hawkins, Ken Watanabe and Binoche. He then got asked to play Lyndon Johnson in a new play titled “All the Way.” He recently was nominated for a Tony Award for his portrayal of the powerful Texas politician in the first year of his presidency.
“Godzilla” opens nationally May 16, but a sneak preview will screen the day before at Cinemas Palme d’Or.
“It’s fun,” Cranston said — “big, but there’s substance behind it.”

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