



ARTS & CULTURE

Hope for Moviemakers with 'Godzilla vs. Kong' Strong Opening

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Moviemakers are hoping that watching a city getting destroyed will be popular at movie theaters.

That seems to be the case for *Godzilla vs. Kong*, a movie about a battle between the two huge **monsters**. It is one of the few **blockbusters** to be released while COVID-19-related restrictions are still in effect.

Godzilla vs. Kong opened last week with \$9.6 million in **ticket** sales. That is a one-day record during the pandemic. Before its U.S. opening, the film made \$123.1 million internationally in late March.

Joshua Grode is the head of Legendary Entertainment, which produced *Godzilla vs. Kong*. He thinks the early success of the movie shows that people still want to go to the theater to see movies.

“This tells everybody: the moviegoing business is here, and, yes, it may be different post-pandemic,” he said. “But there is a **viable** industry there.”

For the first time since last winter, a big Hollywood movie release is showing in more than 3,000 theaters. However, that is still about 1,200 fewer than normal for a movie like *Godzilla vs. Kong*.

There are still problems to face as movies return to more theaters. People remain concerned about sitting in a closed room with many other moviegoers. It also is very easy to watch a movie from home. Many films in the past year have been released through **streaming** services like HBO Max, Netflix or Disney+. For example, in addition to being shown in theaters, *Godzilla vs. Kong* is available for streaming in North America on HBO Max.

Ticket sales are slowly starting to rise but remain below normal. The top earning release of 2021 was *Tom & Jerry*, with \$13.7 million in sales in February. *Wonder Woman 1984* had the biggest launch during the pandemic, with \$16.7 million in December. Both of these movies were also released on streaming services.

Rich Gelfond is the head of IMAX, a specialized theater company. He said the success of *Godzilla vs. Kong* might persuade film companies to release more new movies.

Movie companies are concerned about releasing costly films while restrictions on public gatherings remain in place. While movie going in much of Asia has recovered, increases in COVID-19 cases in Europe and other countries have made a worldwide release impossible. *Godzilla vs. Kong* cost about \$160 million to make.

People in the movie industry hope the performance of *Godzilla vs. Kong* is a sign that things are improving.

“In years from now, when people write about coming back to the movies,” Grode said, “I’m very **proud** that *Godzilla vs. Kong* will be in that history.”

I'm Caty Weaver.

Jake Coyle reported this story for the Associated Press. Dan Novak adapted the story for Learning English. Mario Ritter, Jr. was the editor.

Words in This Story

monster -*n.* a strange or horrible imaginary creature

blockbuster- *n.* something (especially a movie) that is very large, expensive, or successful

ticket -*n.* a piece of paper that lets the owner see a show, movie or event

viable- *adj.* -capable of being done; capable of succeeding

convince- *v.* to cause (someone) to believe that something is true

streaming -*n.* playing continuously as data sent to a computer over the internet

proud- *adj.* very happy and pleased because of something you have done, something you own, someone you know or are related to, etc. : feeling pride
