

Screen Themes: Wonder Woman vs GLOW

By *John Turnbull*

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It's time for some female action, as entertainment editor [John Turnbull](#) checks out a big screen action blockbuster and small screen character study that celebrate the power of women.

Wonder Woman (2017)

Directed by Patti Jenkins

Created by the same guy that invented the lie detector, [Wonder Woman](#) recently celebrated her 75th birthday, which makes the fact that she had to wait until 2017 to get her own movie even more heinous. Ignoring for a moment the excellent [DC Universe](#) animated movies, Batman has had at least half a dozen big-screen films with his name on them, Superman almost as many, and even B-listers like [Green Lantern](#) have headlined their own sub-par flicks.

While critics were divided on [Batman vs Superman: Dawn of Justice](#), almost everyone

agreed that [Gal Godot's](#) Wonder Woman was a standout, bringing a bright spark to an otherwise relentlessly dark movie.

Demonstrating that even film studios can eventually learn from their mistakes, DC have embraced this lighter tone, lifting Wonder Woman from what could have been a very heavy movie into an enjoyable action movie with a surprising level of emotional depth.

Set in a remarkably realistic World War One, Wonder Woman is essentially an origin story, tracing Princess Diana's life from childhood among the Amazons to the battlefields of Europe. Along the way she meets charming American spy Steve Trevor ([Chris Pine](#)) and his band of racially diverse war buddies; Fez-wearing Frenchman Sameer ([Said Taghmaoui](#)), Scottish sharpshooter with PTSD Charlie ([Ewen Bremner](#)) and stoic Native American with the imaginative name of The Chief ([Eugene Brave Rock](#)).

Of course, every good hero needs a villain and the villains here are Ares, the God of War, and General Von Ludendorff, based on a real German General in WWI. [Danny Huston](#) and [David Thewlis](#) take turns chewing the scenery, and their almost-human villainy is a nice change from the faceless hordes that populate most comic book movies.

Young Princess Diana ([Lilly Aspell](#)) is super-cute in origin scenes and the supporting cast of Amazons (including [Robin Wright](#) and [Connie Nielsen](#)) are great, but movie belongs to one actress alone: Gal Godot. Charming, fierce and sympathetic, Godot captures the

essence of what it is to be a superhero — the desire to help people and make the world a better place. From a supporting role in the Fast & Furious franchise, the Israeli actress has been elevated to super-stardom in her role as Wonder Woman, defining the female superhero for a whole generation of children.

As the late, great [Adam West](#) was to me, Gal Godot is to my 8 year old daughter. And that's maybe the best thing I can say about this movie. Highly recommended.

GLOW (2017)

Created by Liz Flahive & Carly Mensch

Created by the people who brought you [Orange is the New Black](#), GLOW tells the story of the Gorgeous Ladies Of Wrestling, a low-rent women's wrestling show in the 1980's heyday of Hulk Hogan and Rowdy Roddy Piper. Told through the eyes of struggling actress Ruth Wilder ([Alison Brie](#)), GLOW is classified by Netflix as a comedy, but is a little more complex once you get below the surface.

Much like the aforementioned OITNB, the main character in GLOW is both the least interesting and least likeable character in the show. The reason that Ruth is a struggling actress is that she sucks, but she constantly behaves like a spoiled diva. Her clichéd attempts at developing an evil Russian "heel" character are tough to watch, and the series really only starts to soar when it looks in to the lives of the other weird and wonderful characters attracted to the seedy world of independent wrestling.

There's former sitcom star Debbie Eagan ([Betty Gilpin](#)), who initially only took the job because it afforded her the chance to beat up her former best friend and current marriage-wrecker Ruth. Then there's the ultra-sweet Carmen, a second generation wrestler

christened Machu Pichu who suffers extreme anxiety any time she gets in the ring. There's also Sheila the She-Wolf, Welfare Queen and the tag team that start out as senior citizens but somehow become the KKK...

It takes a few episodes for the series to find its groove, adding warmth and depth to what start out as broadly sketched character archetypes. For a supposed comedy, laughs are pretty thin on the ground until mid-way through the series and if not for the presence of one character I may have given up on the series before it got good. That character is cynical, coke-snorting promoter/director Sam Sylvia, played with sleazy brilliance by podcaster [Marc Maron](#). Accompanied by puppy-dog like producer Bash ([Chris Lowell](#)) Sam faces a myriad of challenges, including personality clashes, lack of talent and his own self-destructive personality, but somehow manages to keep the whole thing together.

Fans of the squared circle will recognize a bunch of ex-WWE and indie wrestling faces, including Chris Daniels, John Morrison, Carlito, Brodus Clay and Alex Riley, who was far more compelling in his brief role of Steel Horse than he ever was in the WWE. True fans of 80's wrestling will realize that the crappy quality of the wrestling in the GLOW ring was pretty accurate — while there were a couple of talented workers, the majority were hired on their look rather than their [skill](#).

At the end of the day, GLOW may be a series that struggles to find an audience, caught between the macho cliché of wrestling fans and viewers who consider wrestling akin to bear-baiting in terms of being a legitimate form of entertainment. This would be a shame, as GLOW has a lot of heart, a lot of laughs (particularly in the back half of the season) and some genuinely engaging characters.

The Verdict

Even if you don't like superhero movies,

Wonder Woman is worth a look. This is best represented by my lovely wife, who referred to the film as "Super Woman" and only came reluctantly, but admitted to really enjoying the movie, with the possible exception of all the CGI stuff at the end. Wonder Woman is the best DC movie since [The Dark Knight](#) and leaves me cautiously optimistic for the upcoming Justice League movie.

If you're a fan of Orange is the New Black, wrestling or well-written TV series in general, GLOW is worth a look. It won't change your life, but it will provide you with a slice of genuine 80's fashion, bad hair and fun.

Wonder Woman — 9/10

GLOW — 7/10

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