

← “It’s shaping up to be the consensus film,” said Adrian Smith, president of domestic distribution for Sony. “What you will find is that it’s the easy and unanimous choice for families over the holidays.”

A pair of Sony releases will be testing audiences’ appetite for prestige dramas: “Roman J. Israel, Esq.,” starring Denzel Washington, and TriStar Pictures’ “All the Money in the World,” which faces a tight deadline of reshoots after Kevin Spacey was recast with Christopher Plummer last month following scores of sexual misconduct allegations against Spacey.

Meanwhile, “Pitch Perfect 3” returns the familiar all-female comedic cast introduced to audiences in previous installments. In the mix of family films, prestige dramas and fantasy or superhero action movies, Universal Pictures domestic distribution chief Jim Orr believes the studio’s film offers moviegoers a different option.

“We have great expectations for it,” Orr said. “It has a stellar cast. It has tremendous music. It doesn’t look like the other titles that are out there.”

“The Greatest Showman” is unique in that it’s an original musical that chronicles the rise of P.T. Barnum, starring Hugh Jackman, Zendaya and Zac Efron. The film, a Jackman passion project, hopes to capture some of the awards-season buzz that “La La Land” earned last year. “La La Land” songwriters Benj Pasek and Justin Paul also team on “Greatest Showman.”

Disney, which has two films debuting during the final six-week stretch of the year, is expected to help make up much of the ground lost during summer. In recent years, December has been largely dominated by the Burbank studio, which set a high bar in 2015 with “Star Wars: The Force Awakens.” That film shattered records, becoming the first picture to open to more than \$100 million in December, and hauling in nearly \$650 million by the end of that year.

Though it’s expected to lead the holiday box office, “The Last Jedi” is unlikely to equal the haul of “The Force Awakens,” which benefited from reuniting the original cast members decades after they last shared the screen.

The other Disney film, Disney/Pixar’s animated comedy “Coco,” arrived Nov. 22 after opening in Mexico last month and quickly becoming the biggest-selling film of all time in that territory. The film debuted domestically to more than \$70 million over the five-day Thanksgiving weekend.

“We’re in a great spot, and we have a lot to be confident about,” said Dave Hollis, president of worldwide theatrical distribution for Disney. “We have brands that are recognizable to consumers and content that has been very high quality.”

Disney’s dominance in 2017 is clear. Eight months after its release, “Beauty and the Beast” continues to top the year’s box office, with a worldwide gross of \$1.26 billion.

With so many films competing for eyeballs, one fear is that titles may cannibalize each other in a crowded marketplace. There are about 10 movies debuting in wide release this holiday season, with many others arriving in limited release, including Fox’s “The Post,” a drama about the Pentagon Papers starring Tom Hanks and Meryl Streep.

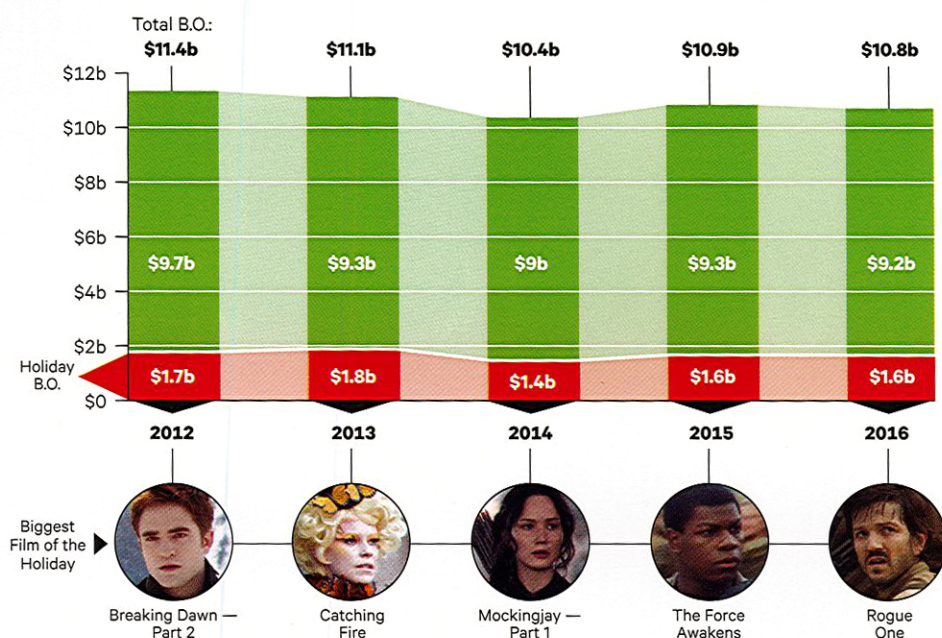
Studio executives say that 2017 has shown that the leading indicator of box office success is quality. A number of films this year sank after receiving negative reviews, and the surprise runaway success of “It” during the typically slow month of September showed that audiences will head to the multiplex any time of the year for the right picture.

“If you make a great movie,” Disney’s Hollis said, “you can put it just about anywhere in the calendar.”

Brent Lang contributed to this report.

## Disney’s December Domination

The studio has ruled the holiday box office since 2015’s “Star Wars: The Force Awakens.”



**Golden Moment**  
SZA, shown here at a 2016 performance, is nominated for five Grammys, including best new artist.

## Few Women Atop Grammy Noms

Looking for reasons why there are just two solo female acts among three of the key categories

By JEM ASWAD  
@jemaswad

A KEY NARRATIVE emerging from the nominations for the 2018 Grammy Awards announced Nov. 28 was the diversity on display in the four main categories — album, song and record of the year and best new artist: Jay-Z has eight noms, Kendrick Lamar nabbed seven and Bruno Mars, Hawaii-born and of Hispanic descent, has six. Luis Fonsi and Daddy Yankee’s ubiquitous hit “Despacito” (yes, featuring Justin Bieber) is up for both song and record of the year.

Yet that diversity only goes so far: Female artists are significantly underrepresented in the biggest categories. While three of the five new artist nominees are women — Alessia Cara, Julia Michaels and SZA — solo female artists received exactly two of the 15 total nominations in the other three categories. Lorde’s “Melodrama” received a high-profile nom for album and Michaels’ “Issues” is nominated for song, but the latter comes with a caveat: It’s a songwriters’ award she would share with four other (male) writers.

And though SZA, Cara and Ledisi had strong showings (with five, four and three noms, respectively), three men have five nominations, six men have four and 20 men have three. To paraphrase James Brown, this year’s nominees list is a man’s man’s world.

There are several initial explanations for this imbalance. The biggest female artists and/or winners in recent years — Beyoncé, Adele, Rihanna, Taylor Swift, Pink, Kelly Clarkson — did not release albums in the eligibility period, although the latter three are nominated for individual songs. And hip-hop, which dominates the top categories, is indisputably ruled →

### By the Numbers

A few notable Grammy-related digits:

**66**

Number of nominations Jay-Z has received since 1999 (he’s won 21)

**8**

Number of songwriters credited on Bruno Mars’ “That’s What I Like”

**55%**

Percentage of independent artists nominated in non-producer and non-spoken word categories, according to music org A2IM

**21**

Number of nominees represented by New York-based Shorefire Media, the highest tally for a single PR firm