



This combination of file photos shows singer Taylor Swift (Top) in the press room at the 58th Grammy Awards and (Bottom from left to right) Liam Payne, Louis Tomlinson, Niall Horan, and Harry Styles of One Direction at the 2015 American Music Awards. — AFP

Jennifer Lopez, Miranda release Orlando tribute

US pop diva Jennifer Lopez and Broadway superstar Lin-Manuel Miranda on Monday put out a musical tribute to victims of the Orlando nightclub attack, with proceeds going to charity. "Love Make the World Go Round" is tinged with an uptempo synthpop beat and resilient messages, such as when Lopez sings, "Those who hate us and fear us cannot keep us down." Lopez and Miranda, who had teased the song a week ago, performed it on NBC's "Today" show on a brilliant New York summer day to fans outside Rockefeller Center.

The pair, who will also play on "The Tonight Show Starring Jimmy Fallon" on Tuesday night, put the song on sale over iTunes. The title of "Love Make the World Go Round" comes from a Tony Awards acceptance speech by Miranda, who has created one of Broadway's biggest hits in years with "Hamilton." Miranda acted for the last time in the trailblazing hip-hop musical on Saturday, with the cast's final performance attended by celebrities ranging from Lopez to filmmaker Spike Lee to US Secretary of State John Kerry.

Lopez and Miranda are both of Puerto Rican origin. Many of the victims of the June 12 attack were also Hispanic. Forty-nine people were killed and another 53 injured when gunman Omar Mateen attacked the Pulse nightclub in Orlando. The mass shooting was the deadliest in modern US history. Proceeds from the song will go to the Hispanic Foundation's Somos Orlando fund, which will provide mental health services to survivors. Lopez also took part in a more mournful charity song, "Hands," which came out last week and features a range of stars including Gwen Stefani, Britney Spears, Mary J Blige and Imagine Dragons. — AFP



'Hamilton' creator and star Lin-Manuel Miranda and Jennifer Lopez perform 'Love Will Make The World Go Round,' their tribute to the victims of the 11 June gun attack at the Orlando. — AFP

Cranston goes undercover in drug war drama



In this image released by Broad Green Pictures, Diane Kruger, left, and Bryan Cranston appear in a scene from, "The Infiltrator." — AP

There's no shortage of drug trade dramas on the big and small screens, and Bryan Cranston has the unique misfortune of having been in one of the best. It makes his decision to go anywhere near that genre again a curious choice. "The Infiltrator," starring Cranston as an undercover agent who loses track of himself in the glamour of the lie, is not "Breaking Bad," nor is it trying to be. Yet the shadow of that defining, once-in-a-lifetime role continues to follow the actor as he reaches beyond Walter White. The film is actually based on a true story - that of federal agent Bob Mazur (Cranston), who in the mid-1980s collected evidence around the money laundering practices of the bigwigs in the drug trade for a number of years by posing as Bob Musella, a fancy business man with mob ties.

He followed the money in the most literal sense, befriending those in the drug business and the crooked bankers embroiled in the operation of shuffling the dirty money around legitimate institutions. The years-long operation led to the arrest and indictment of 85 big time criminals. But for such an extraordinary story, "The Infiltrator," from director Brad Furman, feels very by the books. That's not necessarily a bad thing for those looking for a straightforward crime drama. But passable is not enough to stand out in this already overcrowded genre. It's framed as a "one last job" for Mazur, a family man who dabbles in undercover work that has been getting a little dangerous.

'The Big Short'

He's skeptical of his partner Emir (John Leguizamo, who was in Furman's "The Lincoln Lawyer" with Cranston), a fellow undercover agent in it for the thrills, but it's his job and he's going to see it through. And whaddaya know, Mazur finds out he kind of likes living the high life as Musella - the expensive clothes and cars, the marbled mansions, the all-night parties and the power of being a trusted insider in the high-stakes hustle. He indulges in nearly everything except for women, which gets him in a bit of trouble when he declines a paid-for prostitute because he says he's engaged. His boss (Amy Ryan) then has to back up his lie by assigning a green agent, Kathy Ertz (Diane Kruger), to pose as Musella's fiancée.

Kruger's Kathy is frustratingly underused. She's little more than eye candy in Bob's game and then Furman expects us to care when the film inserts a scene between her and Mazur's real wife Evelyn (Juliet Aubrey) where Kathy has to pick up Mazur's real wedding tux for his fake wedding as Musella. I wish there had been a narrative break here like they used in "The Big Short" to tell the audience that yes, this preposterous encounter really did happen. Because the clumsy way in which it's executed not only doesn't achieve the emotional depth it thinks it does, but is a glaring and borderline offensive contrivance rooted in some retrograde assumptions about women.

Feels underdeveloped

"The Infiltrator" might have done well to take a page from "Argo," which knew to let the characters service the story, instead of using the story to service the character. Cranston is good and fearsome as Mazur, but he still feels underdeveloped. Also, "The Infiltrator" often feels more manipulative than informative, like the late-in-the-game entry of Pablo Escobar confidant Roberto Alcaino (Benjamin Bratt) and his loving family which sparks a crisis of conscience in Mazur as the clock ticks down to the big bust.

Defaulting to "big and movie-like" just makes everything feel cliched, when interesting and true would have been more than sufficient. "The Infiltrator," a Broad Green Pictures release, is rated R by the Motion Picture Association of America for "strong violence, language throughout, some sexual content and drug material." Running time: 127 minutes. Two stars out of four. — AP

Javier Bardem eyed for Frankenstein role in Universal's monster Universe

Having already filled its upcoming monster universe with A-list talent including Tom Cruise, Johnny Depp and Russell Crowe, Universal is now eyeing another star to revive a famous character. Sources tell Variety that Javier Bardem is in talks to star as Frankenstein in Universal's classic monster movie series. It's currently unknown which monster feature Bardem would first appear in. Cruise and Crowe's "The Mummy," the first film in the monster series, is nearly done with filming.



Javier Bardem

Universal is also developing a "Bride of Frankenstein" feature, but sources indicate that Bardem's Frankenstein would likely appear in another monster pic first with the

possibility of getting a spin-off down the road. Related Universal Dates Third Monster Movie for 2019 Last summer, the studio tapped Alex Kurtzman ("Star Trek") and Chris Morgan to help develop the monster pics as connected universe.

Ironically, Bardem had been approached about playing the Dr. Jekyll role opposite Cruise in "The Mummy," but ultimately passed on the part, which opened the door for Crowe. Bardem was most recently seen in Sean Penn's "The Last Face" and is currently filming Darren Aronofsky's untitled film opposite Jennifer Lawrence. He also has "Pirates of the Caribbean: Dead Men Tell No Tales," which bows next summer. — Reuters

Taylor Swift tops Forbes highest paid celebrity list

Singer Taylor Swift has topped this year's Forbes list of the world's 100 highest paid celebrities, earning \$170 million - mainly thanks to her hugely successful "1989" world tour. The "Shake It Off" singer, 26, came ahead of boy band One Direction, currently on a break, who took second place with \$110 million. "The pop superstar smashed the Rolling Stones' North American touring record, grossing \$200 million on the continent en route to a quarter-billion dollars in total for her 1989 World Tour," Forbes said in a statement. With earnings of \$95 million, American

author James Patterson came in third. US television personality Dr Phil McGraw and Real Madrid soccer star Cristiano Ronaldo were tied fourth with earnings of \$88 million, the magazine said. The other top 10 spots were held by American comedian Kevin Hart, British singer Adele and Barcelona footballer Lionel Messi alongside US radio hosts Howard Stern and Rush Limbaugh. "The world's 100 highest-paid celebrities pulled in \$5.1 billion pretax over the past 12 months, more than the GDP of Belize, Gambia and Bhutan combined," Forbes said. — Reuters



Transgender pop band and dancers shake up India's prejudices

Transgender people in India have traditionally been an invisible minority in India, seen only at traffic lights begging for alms or blessing newlyweds and newborn babies. But a pop band of transgender women is on the soundtrack of the latest Bollywood blockbuster, showing that two years after a landmark judgment gave transgender people equal rights, they are more widely accepted, even as jobs are scarce and biases remain.

A song by 6 Pack Band, comprising six transgender women, features in the Salman Khan-starrer "Sultan" released last week. Their other songs, released earlier in the year, have also featured Bollywood stars and had millions of views on YouTube.

"Transgender people are worse off than other minorities in the country - they are not even on the radar," said Ashish Patil, head of Y-Films, an arm of Bollywood production house Yash Raj Films, that put the band together. "This was an effort to get the community front and centre, and get people talking. I decided, why not do it with song and dance, which are so integral to their tradition," he said. India has about 2 million transgender people. In 2014, the country's Supreme Court ruled that they had equal rights under the law, and granted legal status to the third gender.

Alongside the right to marry and inherit property, they are also eligible for quotas in jobs and educational institutions. Transgender women, known as hijras, have long been considered auspicious, and their blessings are sought at weddings and births. Yet abuse and exploitation are common. Often thrown out of their homes by their families, many lack a for-

mal education and are denied jobs. So they are forced into sex work, begging, or dancing at weddings to make ends meet.

To address gender and sexuality in a more accessible manner, Abhina Aher, a transgender rights activist, founded the Dancing Queens in Mumbai a few years ago. The group of transgender and gay people uses dance for advocacy, as well as to earn a living. The Dancing Queens - "because we're called queens, and we dance", Aher said - perform at weddings and corporate events. "Since we began performing, there has been greater acknowledgment, greater visibility and greater respect for us, for the community," said Aher, a trained kathak dancer. "While the law was very welcome, there is still a gap between the rights on paper and what happens on the street. There is still violence, there still aren't enough job opportunities," Aher said.

Social welfare

The eastern state of Odisha last month became the first in the country to give transgender people social welfare benefits such as pension and housing. India is also revising its rehabilitation scheme for forced or bonded labourers to include transgender people. There have been other efforts to integrate them. In Thane, near Mumbai, more than 1,000 transgender people have been trained by the police and designated as Friends of the Police to help with traffic control and crowd management. But it is the 6 Pack Band that has had the most glamorous outing yet. Their first song, Hum Hain Happy, a cover of the Pharrell Williams hit Happy, was released in January this year. — Reuters



In this image released by Universal Pictures, from left, characters Max, voiced by Louis CK, Duke, voiced by Eric Stonestreet, and Katie, voiced by Ellie Kemper, appear in a scene from, "The Secret Lives of Pets." — AP

'Pets' fetches big earnings, sinking Dory



In this image released by Universal Pictures, Gidget, voiced by Jenny Slate, left, and Max, voiced by Louis CK, appear in a scene from, "The Secret Lives of Pets." — AP

After a three-week reign, the beloved fish Dory's top box office spot has gone to the dogs-literally. "The Secret Life of Pets" racked up an impressive \$103.2 million in its debut weekend, according to industry tracker Exhibitor Relations, raking in five times the earnings of its closest competition to nab first place. It's the third-biggest premiere for an animated film, behind "Finding Dory" and "Minions."

The Illumination-produced comedy centers on the misadventures of two canines unleashed on the streets of New York, featuring the voices of comedian Louis CK and Eric Stonestreet. "The Legend of Tarzan," starring Alexander Skarsgard and Margot Robbie, clung to number two for the second straight week, making \$21.6 million. After floating on top of the charts since its record-breaking June 8 premiere, "Finding Dory" sank to third

place with \$20.3 million. The sequel to the 2003 hit "Finding Nemo" earned \$135.1 million its debut weekend, and experts project the comedy will hit \$1 billion this summer. "Max and Dave Need Wedding Dates" about hard-partying brothers searching online for plus-ones opened at \$16.6 million, taking fourth place. Fifth with \$11.7 million was "The Purge: Election Year", a dystopian thriller in which the government has sanctioned an annual night of lawlessness, violence and murder. Rounding out the top 10 films of the weekend were: "Central Intelligence" (\$8.1 million) "Independence Day: Resurgence" (\$7.7 million) "The BFG" (\$7.6 million) "The Shallows" (\$4.8 million) "Sultan" (\$2.2 million) —AFP