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Magazine and Feature Writing

“Hidden Figures” Movie Review

“Hidden Figures” (2016), directed by Theodore Melfi, is based on the true story of three black women working at NASA during the early years of the US space program, also during a time of great prejudice towards black people in America. Katherine Goble, played by Taraji P. Henson, works alongside her two friends, Dorothy Vaughan, played by Octavia Spencer, and Mary Jacksons played by Janelle Monae. The three black women work in the West Area Computing Division of NASA, but when the Space Task Group needs Katherine’s assistance because of her sharp eye for analytic geometry and skill with numbers, she is thrown into a new environment filled with prejudice men who degrade her.

“Hidden Figures” tells the story of these three women making a name for themselves in a man’s world with some of the best acting, writing and directing. Director Theodore Melfi adds a powerful touch to this story to make it stand out and impact an audience through small details like the men that Katherine work for not allowing her to share the same coffee pot as them. These simple actions are powerful. They show the degrading wasteland that America was during the 1960s, treating humans as so unequal that they could not even touch the same objects as those of the white man.

Henson plays Katherine Johnson, a woman of her time unlike any other. She has a unmatched brain for numbers and she is strong in who she is. Henson takes the role of Katherine Johnson and makes her relatable. She opens up Johnson to allow the audience to feel

what she is feeling, to understand the struggle and the disappointment that Johnson goes through as she continually fights for herself and is continually turned down by the men of her society.

Octavia Spencer plays Dorothy Vaughan, a woman who has the skills to code the IBM mainframe system in NASA. Vaughan's character is the sense of comic relief in the story. She proves herself worthy as she studies the manual to the IBM system and makes it work, something even the men who are supposed to be the experts could not do. Spencer's character is kind and open hearted and she works hard at something that she knows she can do.

Janelle Monae plays Mary Jackson, a woman who is seeking further education, something that is unheard of for a woman like herself. Jackson plays the role of a strong woman, who knows what she wants and will not stop at anything until she gets it. Jackson appeals to the local church to allow her to take classes at the local high school. She gives a powerful and moving speech to the judge which ultimately allows her to take night classes with the boys at the local high school.

All three of these characters fight for something in this movie. They show how strong, intelligent and fearless women are. They give the message to every young girl sitting in the audience that they can do anything that they set their mind to and they should never be run down by anyone who will try and get in their way.

There is love in this movie, there is heart break, laughter, hope, joy, overcoming obstacles and more. "Hidden Figures" keeps you on the edge of your seat as all of these things are wrapped around the suspenseful plot of NASA sending the charming John Glenn into orbit around the world, at a pivotal time during the space race. "Hidden Figures" is a family friendly movie that is the untold story of three incredible women who changed the world.