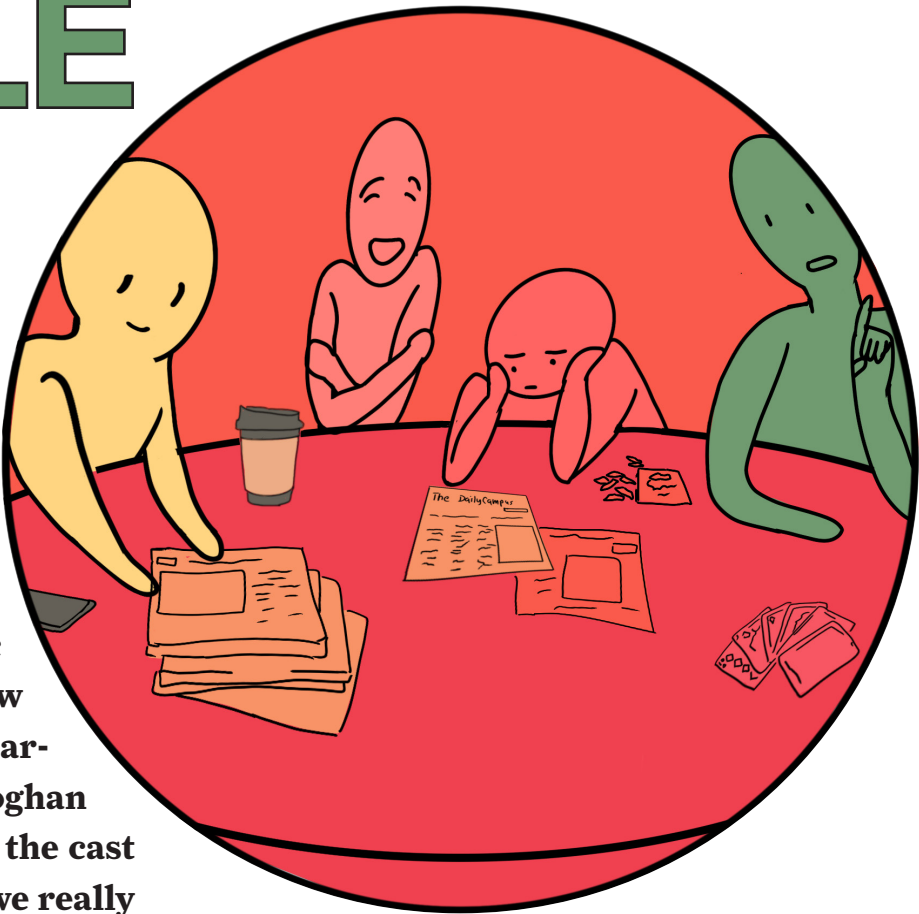


ROUNDTABLE

The Beatles Biopic: SEE OR SKIP?

As one of the most recognizable bands of all time, the Beatles have unsurprisingly found an eternal foothold within the world of pop culture. In keeping with the current biopic trend, director Sam Mendes is currently working on a new film featuring the Fab Four, starring Paul Mescal (Paul), Harris Dickinson (John), Joseph Quinn (George) and Barry Keoghan (Ringo). But with the release of new set photos showing off the cast dressed as the iconic band, one question has remained: Do we really need a Beatles biopic?



LOGO BY LILLIAN LAFEMINA, ASSOCIATE ARTIST EDITOR/THE DAILY CAMPUS

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Unfortunately, I am very tired of biopics, and the Beatles movies are adding to that frustration. Don't get me wrong, I think if a group deserves a movie, it is definitely the Beatles (despite them not even being one of my favorite bands), but I find the timing poor and inauthentic. Audiences have already become well acquainted with biopics delving into the worlds of musicians through a series of movies, such as "Elvis" by Baz Luhrmann and "Prescilla" by Sofia Coppola. I am interested in seeing the world of The Beatles strung together by one sole director, but I think waiting a few more years or even a decade could have made these movies more impactful. To me, it just feels very strange to have well-known Hollywood actors playing some of the most iconic musicians of all time — two of whom are still living. Maybe if lesser-known actors, as opposed to Eddie Munson (Joeseeph Quinn) from "Stranger Things" or Sabrina Carpenter's famous ex (Barry Keoghan) were cast, I would feel less uneasy about the films.

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This is exactly what the world needs right now, a music biopic on The Beatles; one of, if not, the most well-documented bands in history. Even so, I wouldn't mind hitting theaters for a quadruple feature on all four members. For one, the cast doesn't seem too half-bad; Paul Mescal and Barry Keoghan are playing two of the Fab Four and Saoirse Ronan somehow managed to sign on for this project. Also, in all the deluge of post-breakup anthologies, films and box sets, we've never had a biopic on any of the Beatles, as far as I know. I'm excited to see how Sam Mendes and co. will explore the lives of these four extraordinary people through the language of film. Hopefully, they won't go down the "Bohemian Rhapsody" route and create a bog-standard rags-to-riches story that's played up for nostalgia. Lastly, why are all four films being released simultaneously? I think it makes more financial and practical sense to spread out the release dates. The films will take over a year to shoot, and you're putting yourself in post-production hell to get these films ready for 2028. I hope the editors get paid overtime.

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It feels like biopics, especially those about music stars, are all the rage these days, so a new cinematic exploration of The Beatles was bound to happen. Sam Mendes' ambitious spin, having a film for each specific Beatle, seems pretty exciting. But I still find myself wondering: what's the point? The Beatles already have the documentary "Get Back," an authentic portrayal that covers the later portion of their career. When projects like that exist, I don't see the point of fictional retellings, especially when it demands actors to try singing like the musician they're emulating (I commend Timothée Chalamet's Bob Dylan impression, but it really isn't the same). Fortunately, my knowledge of actors is very poor, so three of the actors cast as a Beatle didn't immediately ruin my immersion off looks alone. However, I did recognize Barry Keoghan, and even in costume, he will never match the look of Ringo enough to sell me.

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The Beatles absolutely deserve an officially sanctioned biopic. It seems that the four-movie set-up will allow director Sam Mendes to go in depth into their lives and avoid the "Wikipedia Problem:" trying to condense every detail of a person's life into a two-hour movie. This is the problem that plagued films such as "Bohemian Rhapsody." As for the casting choices, it's obvious that they don't look very much like the Fab Four. It's even more obvious when you realize that in the promotional pics likely will be the most the cast will ever resemble the real members. I'd be willing to sacrifice a lookalike for better acting ability any day, however. We aren't supposed to be watching Paul McCartney talk about his life. If I wanted that, I would watch the recently remastered "Anthology" series. We are watching an entertaining, artistic portrayal that captures his essence. I'm willing to give the actors the chance to effectively do so.

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The Beatles are by far one of the most significant bands that anyone has ever known. I love the Beatles, primarily John Lennon, and it'll be interesting to see how Sam Mendes tells the story of the Beatles in the upcoming biopic, considering that biopics can misrepresent certain parts of a celebrity's story. Yet Mendes is known for directing notable movies such as "American Beauty" and "1917." So, maybe he'll make the plot and storyline of the biopic stay true to the actual story of the Beatles. One thing about the biopic that concerns me is the casting. The casting for Ringo Starr was exceptional, as the person who's playing him has a similar look and energy to Ringo. However, the actors playing John Lennon, Paul McCartney, and George Harrison don't look like the musicians. Additionally, the actors playing the Beatles are not in their early twenties like the Beatles were when they first began their career. So, if the casting doesn't reflect the real Beatles, then will the plot and storyline not reflect the real Beatles either? We don't know for certain. However, as I mentioned, Mendes has directed some fabulous movies. So, while the casting of the biopic is skeptical, it may still turn out to be an excellent series of movies.



The album cover for Abbey Road, the eleventh studio album by the English rock band the Beatles. It was released on Sept. 26, 1969, by Apple Records.
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