Euphoria has lost its spark

By Solé Scott
Editor-in-Chief

After what seems like an eternity, "Euphoria" Sundays are back with a new season.

The show premiered in the winter of my sophomore year of high school, and I was immediately hooked. A teen show that felt realistic to the school I attended was thrilling to me.

Season 2 premiered in spring of 2022 during my senior year, and I remember the excitement of going to math class and gossiping about each episode with my friend, Emma, and math teacher, Mr. Shelton.

Four years later, "Euphoria" has lost its euphoric feeing, Labrinth's background music and the sparkly makeup that evoked a sense of a lucid dream.

Instead, viewers are watching Rue swallowing bags of drugs with lube to transfer across the border. That scene alone proved to me that this season would be a hot mess, and I am ready for it to be over.

Sex and nudity scenes seem to have doubled from the previous seasons. Graphic scenes have always been a part of the story, yet it feels less like storyline development and more like gratuitous sexuality.

The use of the n-word by non-Black characters this season is unnecessary as well, and Sam Levinson needs to answer for his crimes.

Two cast members have died since the last season wrapped up, and you can feel how the dynamics of the characters had to be reconfigured.

Angus Cloud's character, Fezco, is in prison for 30 years following the drug raid in Season 2. Eric Dane's character, Cal Jacobs, is still making appearances in the new season, as he still acted before his amyotrophic lateral sclerosis diagnosis took over.

I understand that the characters are out of high school now and living life, but the character development is truly lacking.

This series has been on since 2019, and Rue is still a drug addict bouncing across North America without a stable job or home.

My darling Maddy is still a baddie, but she is living in the basement of her parents' home and plotting revenge against her ex-best friend Cassie.

Cassie is still a sexual deviant that loves attention and has turned to OnlyFans amidst her engagement to Nate.

Nate is still manipulative and emotionally unavailable. He has taken over his father's construction company and accumulated $600,000 in debt.

Lexi is the only successful person so far, as she is living her Hollywood dream of writing and directing at Warner Brothers Studios.

Viewers deserve closure on the story of Jules, Nate and their unresolved feelings for one another.

If you have not watched this season yet, I would say you can skip the first two episodes and dive straight into the messiness of the wedding episode because my eyes were fixed to the screen.

I will keep watching, but for heaven's sake, I hope Rue's debts to Laurie will finally be paid and that everyone will have a happy ending except for Cassie and Nate who can both rot.

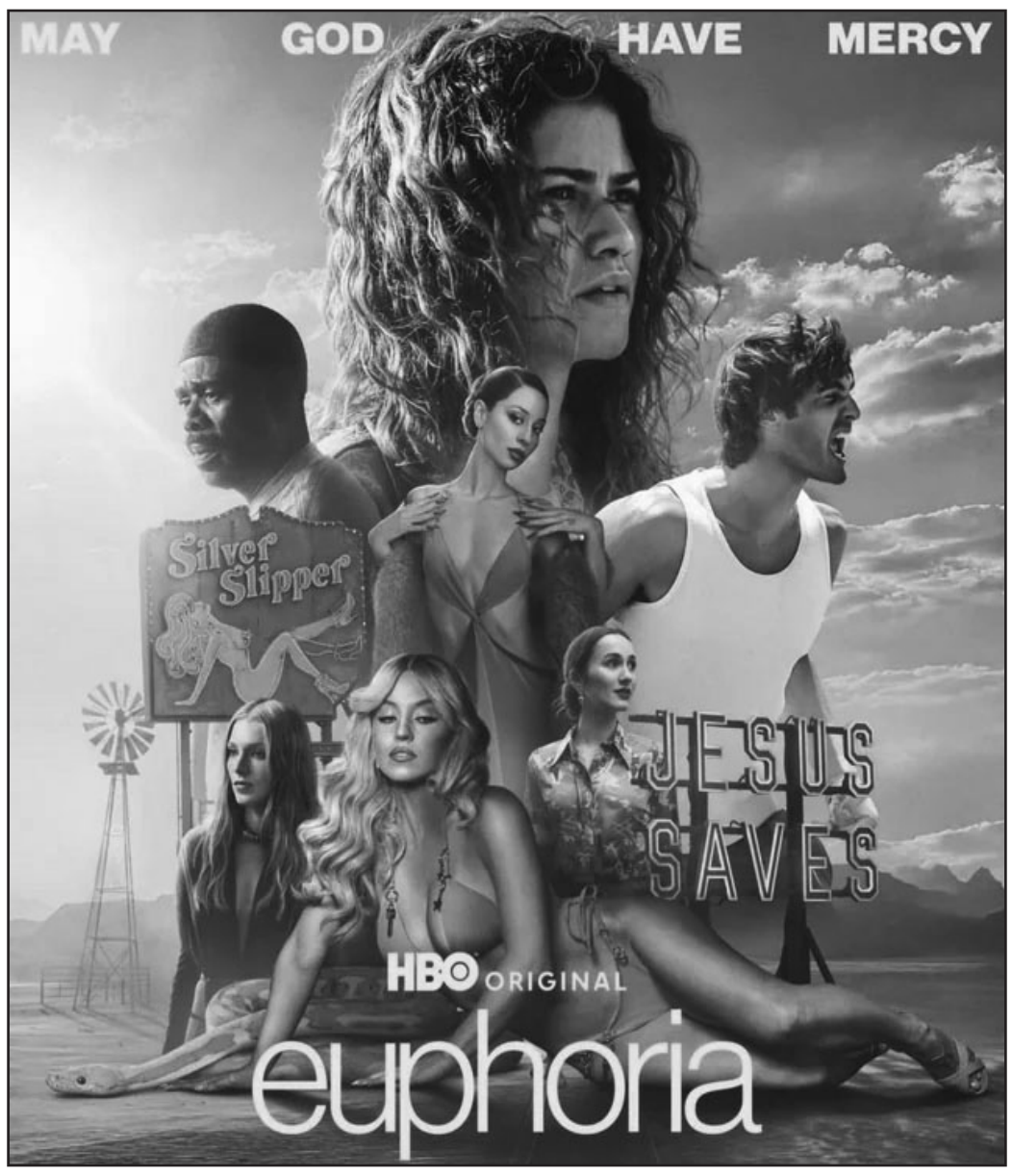

PHOTO | HBO MAX

A poster for "Euphoria" Season 3.

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'Michael' fell short of being a good biopic

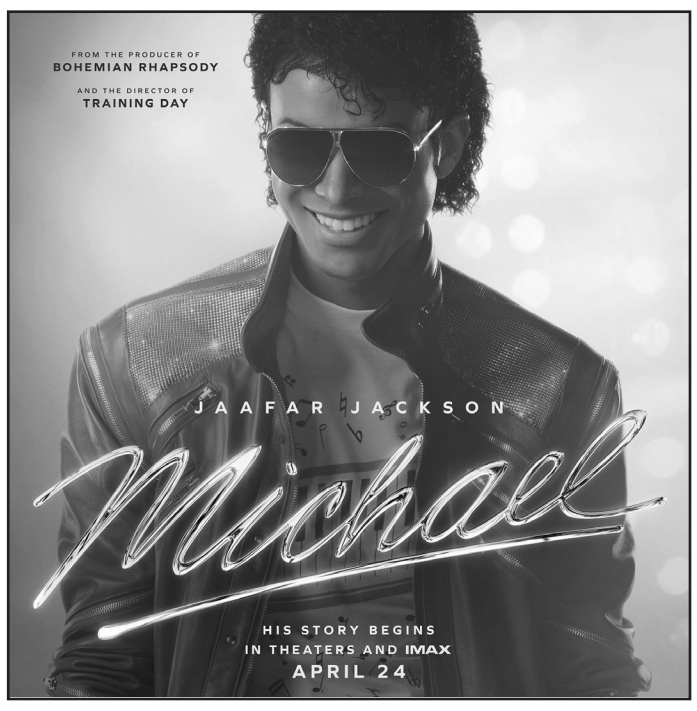

PHOTO | IMDB

A movie poster for "Michael."

By Jay'Mi Vazquez
Managing Editor

The Michael Jackson biopic, titled "Michael," was a lackluster attempt at confronting all of the controversies that continuously defined Michael Jackson's legacy.

I heavily anticipated this film. So, when tickets were available, I jumped on it immediately. But after viewing, that decision felt questionable.

I had the privilege of viewing the film via an early screening IMAX experience in a packed theater on April 22.

The film starts off in Gary, Indiana, showcasing a younger Michael, played by Juliano Valdi, and his brothers, The Jackson 5, practicing singing in front of Joe Jackson, played by Colman Domingo.

Domingo looked phenomenal in this role. The prosthetics used were an immediate stand out.

The introduction of the film showed the child abuse Michael experienced at the hands of his father. But this idea was brushed off throughout the film.

The film did not fully explore the controversies surrounding Joe and Michael. Several important topics are introduced but then cut short.

Joe's presence defines the story more than Michael's own voice ever does. Because of that, the film plays less like a true portrait of Michael and more like a story about surviving his father.

The film has a noticeable issue with pacing, often skipping over large stretches of time without fully grounding the audience in what has changed or why it matters.

After every crucial scene, there were time jumps, which made me wonder what was going on.

For example, the film started with a young Michael singing for Motown records. Then, the narrative shifts to him recording with Quincy Jones.

Since the film has these pacing issues, the story starts to feel less like a complete narrative and more like a sequence of selected moments.

That issue with execution carries into how the film handles Michael as a person.

The film had a weird narrative about Michael's obsession with Peter Pan and Neverland. However, the film never showcased Michael's own version of Neverland where he would invite children to hang out with him.

I found this weird because the film oddly tried to justify how Michael longed for childhood innocence, yet it stopped short of exploring how that desire manifested later in his life.

I think parts of this uneven storytelling stem from the film's perspective.

With members of the Jackson family involved in its creation, the narrative at times reflects their framing of events rather than offering an objective retelling.

The musical performances are easily the film's strongest asset.

From the staging to the costume design, each sequence feels carefully constructed to mirror the spectacle that defined Michael Jackson's career.

Jaafar Jackson delivers an especially impressive performance in these moments, capturing not just the choreography but the smaller, more specific elements of Jackson's stage presence.

At times, the film feels more confident recreating the performances than it does telling the story around them.

By the end, "Michael" loses focus on Michael Jackson and feels overshadowed by Joe Jackson's influence.

The ending sequence of this film was ambiguous and fell short. The phrase "His Story Continues" appeared prominently on screen, making me wonder if a sequel is planned.

But even then, with the way this film was set up, how can his story continue when there was barely one to begin with?

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