

The Oscars overlook people of color

By Solé Scott
Editor-In-Chief

The Oscars will host their 98th ceremony on March 15, and to be honest, I hope it is their last.

The ceremony has been notorious for not sufficiently awarding Black actors compared to their white counterparts.

It is a travesty that Halle Berry is still the only Black woman to win Best Actress back in 2002. The Academy Awards were first held in 1929, and since then, only one Black woman has won this award.

Another academy farce: only four Black men have won Best

Actor over the years. That brief list includes Sidney Poitier in 1964, Denzel Washington in 2002, Jamie Foxx in 2005 and Forest Whitaker in 2007.

89 white males have won the prestigious award, while 96 white women have won.

I am so disturbed by this statistic; that an awards ceremony recognized for excellence in cinema is completely biased and underrepresented.

Astonishing is an understatement; we are still failing to make progress, as the award show premieres in less than a month, leaving this debate still looming. This Black History

Month, I have been watching films that shaped not only my life but culture as well. Films such as “Malcolm X,” “Boyz n the Hood,” “Hidden Figures,” “The Color Purple” and “Eve’s Bayou.”

One of the films that blew me away was “What’s Love Got to Do with It,” starring Angela Bassett.

I researched whether Bassett won an Academy Award for the film, and no surprise: she did not. In fact, she lost the Best Actress in a Leading Role at the 1994 ceremony to Holly Hunter for “The Piano.”

Fast forward to 2023, Bassett again lost to Jamie Lee Curtis in a

controversial win for Best Supporting Actress.

I want to acknowledge other communities as well that are massively underrepresented, such as members of Hispanic, Indigenous, Middle Eastern and LGBTQ communities, as well as women in non-acting roles.

The Academy Awards are stuck in a time where winners are still predominately white, straight and male.

Their mission, according to their website, is to connect audiences from around the world through films that the academy recognizes for their excellence.

This mission needs to

be thrown out because it has nothing to do with the reality of who wins.

A movement on social media called #Oscars-SoWhite spanned from 2015 to 2016, calling out the Oscars for their lack of diversity.

In both years, all 20 nominations went to white actors.

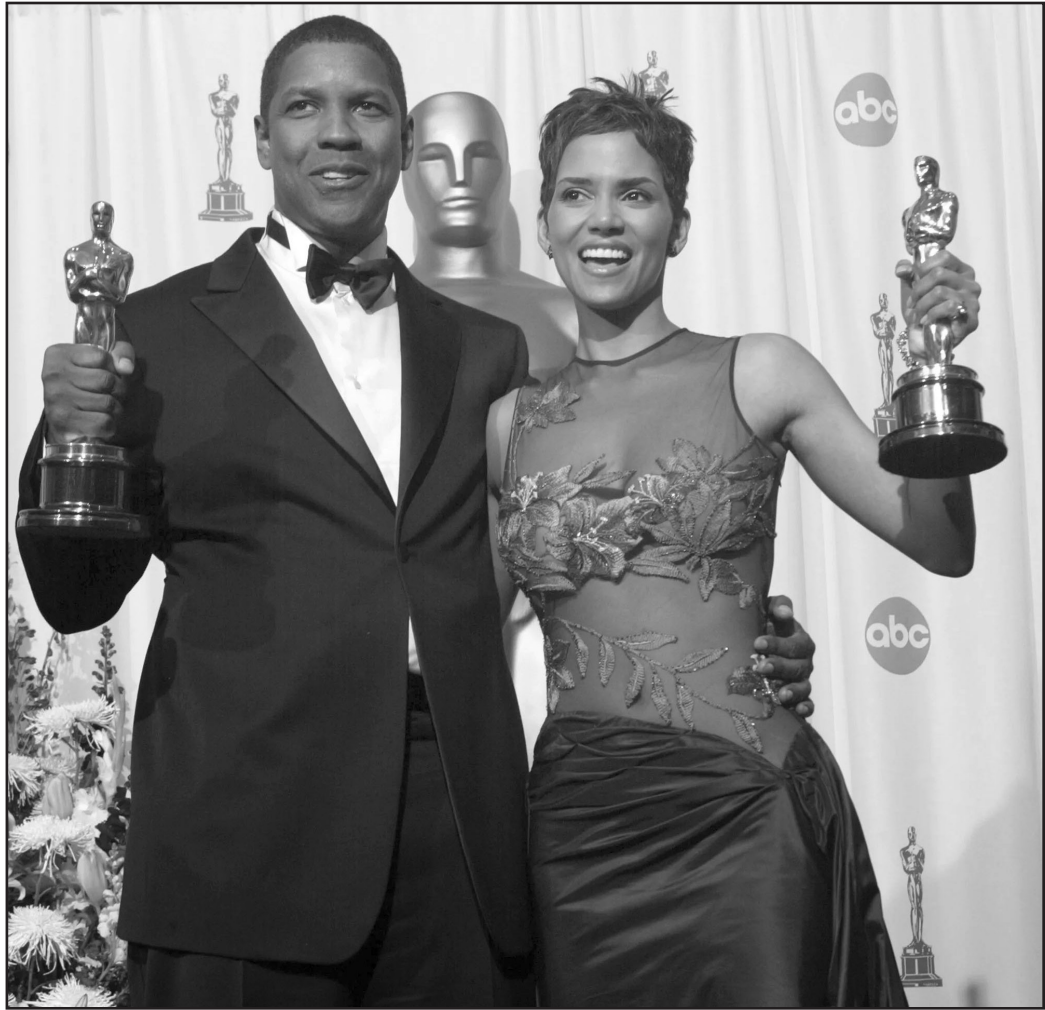
In 1988, Eddie Murphy famously called the Academy out onstage. The segment was meant to be funny with loud discomfort, but also a stark reminder that the Academy turns a blind eye to the serious issue.

“And I’ll probably never win an Oscar for saying this, but hey, what the hey – I gotta

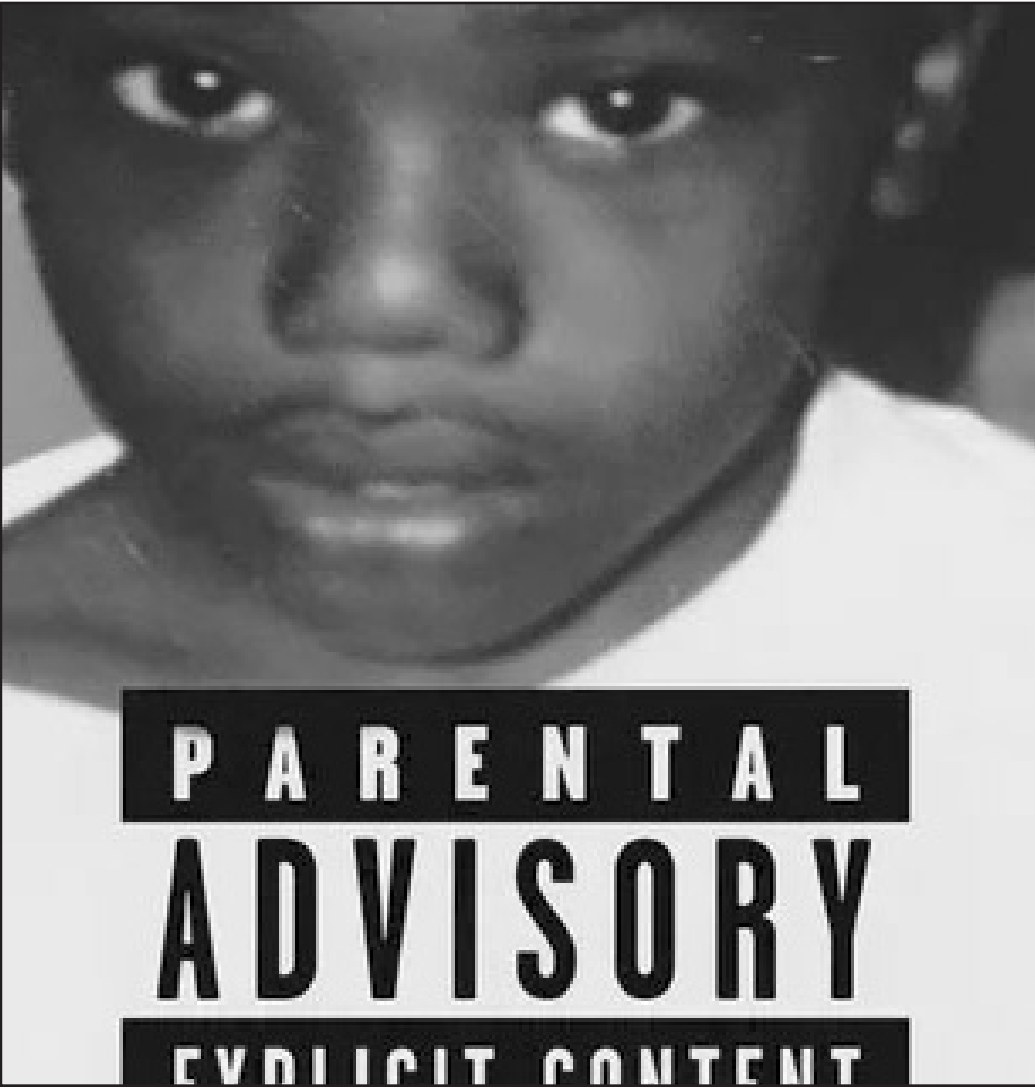
say it. Actually, I might not be in any trouble because the way it’s been going is about every 20 years we get one, so we ain’t due to about 2004. So, by that time, this will all be blown over,” Murphy said.

I don’t believe the upcoming Academy Awards will be any different, as change has already been slow for almost 100 years.

I just want the academy and all its voters to put their money where their mouth is and actually live by their mission statement. Real commitment is investing in diverse storytelling and not predictable Hollywood social norms.



Halle Berry and Denzel Washington at the 2002 Oscars after winning Best Actress and Actor.



Baby Keem’s “Ca\$ino” album was released on Feb. 20, which marks his second studio album.

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Baby Keem’s newest album in five years was an interesting gamble

By Jay’Mi Vazquez
Managing Editor

Baby Keem’s newest album, titled “Ca\$ino,” arrives at a pivotal moment in his career.

After earning mainstream attention with “The Melodic Blue” and scoring Grammy recognition alongside Kendrick Lamar for “family ties,” Keem has positioned himself as one of the most unpredictable voices in modern rap.

“Ca\$ino,” released on Feb. 20, is a tight, 11-track project. Keem leans heavily into West Coast textures and amazing beat production.

The title track, “Ca\$ino,” immediately establishes the sonic blueprint of the project.

The production on this track is explosive. It fully captures the album’s central themes: risk, ego and high-stakes living.

Keem’s vocal performance rides the beat confidently, even if his lyrical content leans more into mood than memorable bars. What stands out most is the polish. The mix is clean, the transitions are seamless, and the instrumental choices feel intentional.

That same production excellence carries into “Birds & the Bees.” The beat here is cinematic, almost theatrical, with a sense of movement that

keeps the track from feeling static. This is where “Ca\$ino” shines most.

Keem has always been a rhythm-first artist, and on this record, he seems fully aware that the instrumentals are the backbone. While I did not find his flow particularly groundbreaking on this track, the soundscape alone makes it memorable.

The album’s best song however, is “House Money.” If there is a thesis statement for “Ca\$ino,” it is here. The aggression mirrors the energy that made “family ties” such a breakout moment.

Keem’s delivery is sharp and animated, his cadence snapping into place with each bar. Subtle ad-libs from Lamar hover in the background without overpowering the record.

The beat is infectious and percussive, which strikes a balance between chaos and control effortlessly.

Then there is “I am not a Lyricist,” arguably the album’s most introspective offering.

Here, Keem slows things down and leans into reflection. The track blends spoken-word passages with a melodic hook that adds emotional texture.

Thematically, it reads like a self-assessment of

his personality rather than technical rap prowess.

Growing up between Las Vegas and Los Angeles has always shaped his artistic lens, and that regional influence is embedded in the tone of this record. The vulnerability here provides contrast to the braggadocious tracks, giving “Ca\$ino” dimension beyond flex-heavy anthems.

However, not every moment on this album lands perfectly.

“Highway 95 pt. 2” expands on a previous concept but lacks the urgency that made its predecessor compelling. It feels more like an extension than a reinvention. Still, its inclusion reinforces the album’s continuity and Keem’s interest in revisiting themes, which I find enjoyable.

Ultimately, “Ca\$ino” succeeds because of its production consistency and selective focus. By keeping the track list concise and zeroing in on a handful of strong concepts, Keem avoids overstaying his welcome.

I walked away wishing for sharper lyricism in spots, but I cannot deny the sonic confidence. This is an artist betting on his instincts, and more often than not, the gamble works.

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