

# Students prepare for last Avengers Movie

One of the most anticipated movies of the year is right around the corner, Avengers: Endgame. The film directed by Anthony Russo and Joe Russo is based on the Avengers by the late Stan Lee and Jack Kirby.

The first trailer came out on Dec. 7, 2018. The two and a half-minute trailer opens with Tony Stark in space sending a message to Pepper Potts. The scene depicts a depressed Stark as he mentions that his food and water is depleted and will soon be out of the oxygen the following day as well.

It is noted that Thanos fulfilled his promise and wiped out 50% of all living creatures. With Stark in space, the rest of the Avengers including Thor, Captain America, Black Widow, and Bruce Banner appear plotting for a showdown against Thanos in order to bring back their allies.

The epic teaser trailer concludes with Black Widow telling Steve Rogers that his plan will work to which he responds "I know it will."

"I can't wait until Endgame is released because I grew up watching Marvel movies so this the ultimate conclusion that will tie it all together," senior Javonte Durr-Cannon. "I'm looking forward to seeing how some of the superheroes that haven't met yet will react with each other."

The second Endgame trailer came out on Mar. 14th and answered some questions as well as sparked new ones. The trailer is mostly composed of the remaining Avengers training and getting stronger for what seems to be an attempt to finish off Thanos and bring back the other 50% of the living creatures that Thanos wiped out.

The biggest takeaway from this trailer and what seems to have

most fans excited and relieved is that Tony Stark, or Iron Man, was shown at the end of the trailer with the remaining Avengers. The previous trailer shows him near death so it can be assumed that he was saved somehow.

There is a lot of excitement building around the movie due to the cliffhanger conclusion that the first part of the film was ended on. Endgame is officially set to be released on April 26.

“I have watched all of the Marvel movies starting from Iron Man all the way to Avengers: Infinity War.” senior Abu Elsadeg said. “So I am eager to see how the Avenger bounce back from this major setback now that Thanos is wiping out half of the population in the universe,” Elsadeg said

The first movie of the two-part series to Endgame, Infinity War, depicts how each of the Avengers went through their own personal battles. The perspective of all the Avengers is showcased switching from Thor to Iron Man to others with each character getting around six minutes of screen time.

In the end credits of Infinity War, Nick Fury is shown calling Captain Marvel by the logo that came up. When Marvel was scheduled to release Captain Marvel before Endgame, people knew Captain Marvel would play an important role in saving the disappeared Avengers.

The previous movie also had a good balance of jokes and severity. “It was interesting seeing how they mixed humor with the seriousness of their mission that would save the universe, and I want to see more of that,” said Durr-Cannon

Some unconfirmed statements have left fans scrambling to guess what will go down. Many rumors have emerged about the movie after both trailers coming out. One of which being that only two original Avengers will survive.

Some viewers also noticed that fan favorite characters Hawkeye

and Ant-man were missing. Although Ant-man's absence was explained by his own movie, Hawkeye might be playing an important role in the late Avengers' rescue.

There are also confirmed sequels for several of the characters who disintegrated into dust in Infinity War such as Black Panther, Spider-Man, Doctor Strange, and the Guardians of the Galaxy so people can assume that the Avengers at least bring back this group of heroes.

After years of epic Avengers movies, Marvel looks to go out on top and satisfy their everlasting fanbase by answering all the questions sparked by the end of Infinity War and the two trailers that have released.

"This movie will define Marvel forever," Durr-Cannon said.

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## **61st Oscars Preview**

First created in 1929, the Academy Awards, also known as the Oscars, were vastly different from today's event that is filled with glitz and glamour. When it was first created, the Oscars wasn't a televised show at all, but rather a private black-tie dinner that celebrated the achievements of actors and directors.

As the Oscars have rolled around once more this year, the event has stirred up its share of controversy. The awards show drew criticism for removing several categories from the televised show. Instead, the four categories of cinematography, film editing, makeup/hairstyling, and live action will be featured during commercial breaks.

Previous Oscar winner actor Russell Crowe took aim at the

Academy Awards slamming the decision as “fundamentally stupid.”

Nevertheless, students are looking forward to the event on Feb. 24 as multiple major films and a number of A-List actors are nominated for awards across the board. Movies that have received a lot of buzzes and set box office records such as Black Panther and Bohemian Rhapsody are up for awards as well.

“I’m excited for the Oscars because I’m hoping to see Black Panther win the award for Best Picture,” senior Ruth Seyoum said. “Even though I’d prefer for Black Panther to win, I could see A Star is Born winning the category.”

Additionally, Green Book, Vice, BlacKkKlansman among other films are also nominated for Best Picture.

Alongside the Best Picture category, there a number of high profile actors and actresses nominated for the Best Lead Actor and Best Lead Actress awards categories, respectively. The Best Actor nominees are headlined by Christian Bale in Vice and Bradley Cooper in A Star is Born in company with Rami Malek’s performance in Bohemian Rhapsody.

“I think Rami Malek is the best actor nominated from the category,” senior Danica Tran said. “Bohemian Rhapsody was really good and so was his performance.”

Best Lead Actresses nominated include Lady Gaga in A Star is Born and Melissa McCarthy in Can You Ever Forgive Me alongside Olivia Coleman from The Favourite.

Awards are not only distributed to actors on Oscars night, but directors are given their share of praise as well. Nominees for the Best Director category include Spike Lee for BlacKkKlansman, Pawel Pawlikowski for Cold War, Yorgos Lanthimos for The Favorite, Alfonso Cuaron for Roma and Adam McKay for Vice.

“I thought that Ryan Coogler from Black Panther should have

been one of the nominees for Best Director,” Seyoum said. All eyes will be on the red carpet when the 91st installment of the Academy Awards kicks off from the Dolby Theatre in Los Angeles.

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# Celebrity misconduct continues

Public figures are looked to as ideal role models for the youth and many individuals in society. Figures such as professional basketball player LeBron James and actor Will Smith fit this standard, but with the occurrence of recent events, we have been exposed to the complete opposite.

The entertainment industry has been full of sexual misconduct and it has been a reoccurring act since the late 20th century. Big names like artists R. Kelly, 6ix9ine, Usher, soccer star Cristiano Ronaldo, Harvey Weinstein, and many others have been caught up with the law and facing legal repercussions regarding sexual harassment.

So how common is sexual misconduct in Hollywood? Based on a survey taken by USA Today, 94% of the 843 people surveyed say they have experienced harassment or assault. It is a frightening statistic that more and more people are becoming aware of.

“Many women in today’s society are afraid to report abuse and people don’t understand why and how hard it is for some people,” senior Hlina Wondwossen said. “We fear that we will receive criticism and backlash if we report it. People will say we are trying to ruin someone’s career, but they actually ruin it themselves.”

Of the people who do report their abusers, only 28% of the women say no improvement was made in their workplace, giving women another reason to keep quiet.

Harvey Weinstein, an American former film producer, was alleged to have sexually harassed and assaulted a “large” number of women, including actresses Rose McGowan and Ashley Judd. Among the accusations are that he would force women to massage him and watch him naked. He would also offer the women exorbitant amounts of money in order for them to keep their mouths shut. Allegations from over 13 more women were published in the New Yorker magazine, which included three accusations of rape which he strongly denies.

The sexual harassment and assault allegations against Harvey Weinstein that shook Hollywood sparked women from other industries to speak up, and it has reached beyond the U.S. borders.

“The Weinstein Effect” is what people call it, with the hashtag “#MeToo” used across social media. What does it mean? It’s the movement that has rippled across the globe, where women come forward to accuse famous and powerful men and release decade-old accusations. From the UK all the way to India, powerful government officials have lost their jobs due to this movement.

Former R&B artist R. Kelly has been trending dramatically on social media platforms the past few months. Similar to the Weinstein accusations, women have spoken out regarding abuse that they endured from the musician. Kelly’s alleged ex-girlfriend spoke out to BBC news, referring to the “nasty, degrading things” that he did to her in the year-long relationship that they had a few years back. Kelly has a deep history of allegations; he has been plagued by accusations since the 1990s.

Back in 1994, Kelly, then 27, married 15-year old singer Aaliyah, who had lied about her age claiming she was 18. The

marriage was declared invalid a year later in 1995.

In 2002, Kelly was charged with child pornography after getting caught with a video of him having intercourse with a 14-year-old girl. The trial took place six years later which caused controversy in the media. "I have lost all respect for him after learning about all the nasty things that he's done," senior Haley Moss said. "He is a monster in my eyes and there is no reason for him to not be in jail."

In 2017 he was accused of trapping six women in a sex cult. An article published by BuzzFeed talks about Kelly allegedly seducing young women. He basically took over their lives, dictating what they eat, how they dress, when they bathe, when they sleep, and how they engage in sex when he records. In 2018, the victims of the cult spoke to the press, speaking on how they were traumatized for life due to the actions that Kelly performed.

Lifetime had their debut for the documentary series, "Surviving R. Kelly", on Jan. 3. In the series, women emerge and share their stories with the world. They came forward with new allegations about his sexual, mental, and physical abuse. The show has made so much noise that R. Kelly is back under investigation.

Daniel Hernandez, known as rapper 6ix9ine, has also recently been caught up with the legal issues. He was sentenced to four years of probation for his 2015 sexual misconduct case on Sept. 18, 2018, on top of his attempted murder charge, which is 32 years to life in prison. Videos emerged of Hernandez committing numerous sexual acts on a 13-year-old girl at the time of the incident.

"I believe that famous people are privileged and can basically get away with anything these days," senior Tahid Mamun said. Hernandez was initially given a one to three-year sentence in prison but was granted four years probation instead. This

happens with many famous names and people believe it's because of the money they can pay to keep themselves out of jail.

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## Why are movies with black actors doing so well?

From the cultural impact that *Black Panther* had, to the fan base around Michael B Jordan's character, Adonis Creed from *Creed II*, predominantly African American casts are becoming more prevalent in the film industry. Movies with a majority black cast like *Get Out*, *Black Panther*, and *Creed II* have been successful and they seem to have the formula for success. Students have loved seeing a better representation of themselves on the big screen.

Within just 26 days of its release, *Black Panther* made over \$1 billion in the global box office. The movie about one of Marvel's Avengers, prince T'Challa taking over the throne and the *Black Panther* after his Father's passing. Some could argue it was not even Marvel's best film, but it was one of Marvel's most successful movies. How?

When it comes to casing and superheroes there is always the stereotype of the strong and very masculine hero who is always a white male and the black characters who get associated with the negative aspect of the film like villains, gangsters, and thugs. When a black protagonist emerges in a film, it appeals to a whole new audience.

"I was not surprised to see how much money some of these films were making. It is a simple formula for a director that is getting ready to cast a film," senior Chase Robson said.

By casting a role to an actor who is historically very popular or, a minority, that the director would be appealing to a new type of audience, but it can also be considered a risk.

*Get Out*, was African American director Jordan Peele's first ever film. Peele's vision was to illustrate his views on racism. The movie is about a black man and his white girlfriend going home to see her parents. The girlfriend's parents try to abduct him and turn him into one of their slaves.

The cast, however, had mostly been unheard of prior to its release. There was no Robert Downey Jr. or Chris Hemsworth on set and the film was still the 10th highest grossing in money made in the U.S. box office.

"I was surprised he did not win the Golden Globe award," Robson said.

It was a surprise to see the impact on the industry that these films have had and directors are starting to realize this.

On Nov. 21, the sequel to *Creed*, *Creed II* was released and made over \$60 million in its first weekend out.

The movie stars Michael B. Jordan who plays the long-lost son of Apollo Creed and his trainer, Rocky Balboa played by Sylvester Stallone in the movie. Director Steven Caple Jr.'s was strategic in his casting of the main protagonists in the film.

So why are movies with primarily black casts making money and having so much success?

"It starts with what we are used to seeing," senior IB Film student Javonte Durr-Cannon said. "After seeing white superheroes on the screen for my whole life, seeing someone who looks like me and may have had some of my same struggles be a hero is a reason for me to go watch."

Marvel's *Black Panther* is a great example this. About 37% of the movie's opening weekend audience in North America was

African American, compared to the 15% who typically make up the Marvel movie demographic. Caucasians made up 35% of the audience, according to The Box Office Mojo.

It has been a myth for years that international audiences do not particularly like watching movies that star or are directed by African Americans. In 2012, Anthony Hemingway, a black director, and George Lucas had struggles finding a producer for the film *Red Tails* about the Tuskegee Airmen, a group of African-American military pilots who fought in World War II.

*Black Panther* disproved the myth, "black films don't travel" by smashing overseas sales projections and making \$169 million abroad on opening weekend.

Race is not the only reason movies like *Black Panther* did so well. The film is part of the Marvel Cinematic Universe. By releasing this movie as one of the Marvel films, it attracted Marvel fans regardless of race.

The movies *Creed* and *Creed II* were of the first major movies to showcase black men and women who are fully developed, have aspirations and are well dramatized, instead of the stereotype roles, like thugs, villains or scapegoats.

*Get Out* was released at the perfect time for its success. The movie which showcases cultural appropriation was released as the Black Lives Matter movement was in full swing and while police brutality toward unarmed black people was under the microscope. These factors made for perfect conditions for this film to be successful.

"*Get Out* released at a very uneasy time in America and showed white people wanting to literally be in black people's skin," Durr-Cannon said.

The representation of black people in film has offered many opportunities to for young black actors and filmmakers, as well as discovered a new fanbase.

“Black culture, in a way has changed filmmaking,” Durr-Cannon said. “The film industry could be used as a tool to change stereotypes associated with black people. It may take a while, but that is my hope.”

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## Nappily Ever After

Nappily Ever After is based on a novel by Trisha R. Thoma. She was trying to revive the black romantic comedies of 1990s. The film’s goal was to acknowledge and uplift the unique beauty of black woman. Nappily Ever After has some of the necessary ingredients for a good romantic comedy. Sanaa Lathan has the presence for it, as films like Love and Basketball and Something New Prove.

Nappily Ever After opens with its thirtysomething protagonist, Violet. As the 11 year old girl jumps into the water, that her mother Pauletta forbids from swimming into. Violet straighten hair turns into her natural curly hair, after she gets it wet. Then several white kids make fun of the “Chia Pet” on top of her head.

Nappily Ever After implies that females are never free of gender pressure. Her mother pushing her daughter into socially desirable molds of femininity. Her mother Pauletta always made sure of pursuing perfectionist for her daughter Violet. Which left Violet a gorgeous shell of a person until the middle of the movie when she started to find inner beauty

with her natural self.

When we first meet Violet Jones a high-strung marketing exec obsessed with embodying everyone else's idea of perfection, she's slipping out of bed to do her makeup and have her marriage-obsessed mother flat-iron her hair, all before her handsome boyfriend, Clint , wakes up. But Violet is headed toward a breakdown even if no one else realizes it. When she gets a puppy instead of a marriage proposal from Clint, Violet unravels. She leaves Clint, shaves her head after several botched makeover attempts, rethinks her career, sparks a flirtation with a hairdresser, Will. Violet decides to mentor his gratingly precocious daughter, Zoe. Violet unexpectedly finds herself falling for this hairdresser. The hairdresser does not meet her perfectly ideal image and goes back to the doctor Clint, who propersues to her. The engagement party Clint and violet have made violet realize the shell she was hiding in and not being herself.

Nappily Ever After, is also about a black woman journey towards embracing herself and her hair. The movie could have been a light charming perfection love movie, but it also showed the beauty of black woman hair in all its forms. The movie doesn't only give us a message about how a young black woman finds love, but also tells us about how to find love within yourself. Love yourself ladies and the natural beauty within yourself. Nappily Ever After is aimed for a strong message and it should be inspirational. It fills a valuable gap in black woman and focuses on natural beauty. It lacks the charm we'd expect of the films it's indebted to and the refinement to handle the political dimension of this tale. It's a love story in search of a story to tell.

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# Students win many awards at annual IB film festival

The AHS IB film class presented its annual film festival on June 15. The festival featured various student-made films that covered a range of genres from documentaries to comedies.

The event was judged by both the audience and a faculty judge panel. After all the films were presented, seniors like Bailey Oliver, took most of the night's awards. Oliver's film "The Moment" was given three awards: Jury Prize, Audience Choice Runner-Up, and Best Screenwriting.

"The Moment" followed a family whose son was seriously injured in a car crash. The film was dedicated to AHS alumnus Mark Slough who attended Virginia Tech and died in a fatal bicycle crash October of last year.

"Honestly when I first won jury prize I wasn't able to fully grasp the accomplishment of all my hard work," Oliver said. "It wasn't until hours later that I was able to fully appreciate and feel proud of what I had done. I'm truly happy that I won and that the audience and Judges were able to appreciate my art."

The audience voted for their favorite film and "Up the River" was chosen as Audience Choice. The film also won runner up for Jury Prize, best cinematography, and featured senior Natnael

Weldigorgios who won Best Actor. The comedy written by seniors Shank Rai and Ahmad Ayub featured two thieves that were caught in the act of stealing and followed with more hilarious events.

“I wanted to chose a comedy because I want to make films that entertain people,” Rai said. “Having a genuine reaction from the crowd is what I look forward to after every film. My crew was carefully selected because I wanted to portray that type of image.”

Other awards were given to different genres and categories. Best documentary was given to seniors Ashley Britton, Sarah Deible, Katie Pacak, and Summar Ayoub for their film, “Pocket Change.” the documentary brought awareness to the problem of homelessness in D.C.

The award for best editing was given to junior Jessica Smith for her film “The Dangerous Power of Social Media” that revealed the various issues that social media raises.

Best actress was awarded to senior Stephanie Solorenzo for her comedy “The Excuse” that highlighted the struggles students go through to get to school on time.

The event displayed the great talent and effort the students have put forth in the class this year. The variety of genres and emotions portrayed in the films kept the audience entertained. It was also a wonderful opportunity for the film program to raise funds. The festival was a fundraiser and rose around 600 dollars due to admission from the 100 people that attended.

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# How to be the next Spielberg

## **Develop your ideas**

Once you have an idea for your film, write a treatment. This is a one page summary of your movie from start to finish. Now, present your treatment to your friends and family so they can help you to refine the plot. With their comments, make changes to your treatment as needed.

## **Write your script**

Once you have determined the basic elements of your movie, it is time to write your script. The key pieces to a script are the descriptions of the setting, the dialogue of the characters and all scene transitions you wish to add in later. Your script should include every detail that you want to have in your final product. Creating a good script is the first step to creating a good movie.

## **Make your vision come to life**

Once you have finished your script, you must prepare to begin the filming process. To do this, get your friends and family to be your actors and actresses as needed. This is also the stage in which you will select the setting for all of your shots and any props you may need in your scenes. Keep the mise en scene in mind as you plan. This means that all aspects of a scene must be significant to the scene's message.

## **Shoot your footage**

Once all of the individual pieces of your movie are in place, it is time to begin the daunting task of filming. When it comes to cameras, there is a wide range of type and quality. Simple cameras, such as Flip camcorders, can be found for just a little over \$100, while nicer ones can be as pricey as \$3500. It is important that you make sure every shot is

significant to your overall storyline. To make sure you get the shot you need, do multiple takes from various angles.

### **Edit your shots into one cohesive piece**

It is at this final stage of the film process that all last minute touches are made. Simple programs such as iMovie and Windows MovieMaker can get the job done, but there are also higher level options such as FinalCut, which offers more control over little details. In the editing process, it is important to cut out any mistakes and bloopers that occurred during filming. It is also at this step that you will add any scene transitions that you envisioned. Once you are satisfied with your final product, congratulations, you have finished your first movie! Come to the IB Film Festival on June 10 at 6 p.m. to see the student-created movies.

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## **Fun at the festival**

As the school year is coming to an end, many clubs have stopped meetings and activities. However, on June 11, the young directors, scriptwriters, actors/actresses, and cinematographers presented their major film project assignment at the 2010 AHS Film Festival.

At the end of the night, 11 awards were given out by the five faculty member judges, including top Jury Prize to *Tomorrow's Life* by juniors Samantha Pokraka, Rackel Jurdi and Sandra Abiloma. The coveted audience choice award went to the documentary *Like* by juniors Emma Barker, Tyler Britton, Chris Marshall and Lance Miller.

The IB Film students had planned, initiated and worked for months to present their movies at the Film Festival. These films are produced at various settings and were edited by those juniors and seniors who are enrolled in the class.

There was a total of over twenty music videos, documentaries, documentaries, mystery, comedy, or drama movies contributed to the festival this year.

As first time directors and editors, many juniors encountered challenges, such as using software programs and cameras.

Junior Arish Ali, the director and Best Cinematography winner for *Street of Embers* said, “[I had] no editing software available and had trouble exporting the finished product from the computer.”

Many junior students were unfamiliar with the equipments and programs that are used in creating films.

“I couldn't get a hold of the proper sound equipment from Mr. [Alan] Weintraut before one of our shoots so we had a few sound issues that I couldn't quite fix in post production that the judges made us pay for,” said junior Henry Smith, the director and Best Screenplay award winner for *Memory*.

Ali added, “I feel proud of the award because it was for a project that me and my team put a lot of hours into and believed in.”

Meanwhile, two of the junior class films won top two awards: *Tomorrow's Life* by Samantha Pokraka, Rachel Jurdi and Sandra Abilmona won the Jury Prize, and *Zombie Eric* by Liam McGhee received Jury Prize Runner-Up.

The students were also pressured to make their films as professional as possible. Junior Katie Masters, who worked with fellow junior Caroline Kane on *Just Another Day's Adventure* said, “Caroline and I had problems with our first

movie because we had envisioned a situation that called for three adult roles, but we could not get three adult actors, and so we tried to rely on high school students.”

For that reason, Masters and Kane had to change the whole plot of their film.

Despite each student’s efforts, the poor audio system quality at the auditorium caused the students to panic and the audience to become puzzled.

Because of inadequate sound system in the auditorium, students’ messages in films were not clearly conveyed to the audience.

“I felt sick to my stomach for the students who had sound problems—it was the fault of the school’s crappy sound system,” said IB Film teacher Alan Weintraut.

Through challenges, students have developed their skills, overcame their obstacles during the making of films, and all participants were able to submit their projects before the festival.

“I’m very proud of all the efforts of the film students. This was the largest line-up we’ve ever had,” said Weintraut.

All films shown at this year’s film festival can be seen on YouTube under AHSstudentfilms.