

■ MOVIES ■

Sinners is Ryan Coogler's MAGNUM OPUS

RAIAN ABEDIN

Around the second half of the movie, there is a scene involving the song "I Lied to You" in which one of our tritagonists shows off their skills as a blues player. The scene comes at the head of a capacious and meticulously built first half – which is filled to the brim with depictions of the Black South in the early 20th century, when racism ran rampant. It is within the established historical realism of this world that Ryan Coogler injects a measure of magical realism in a scene that celebrates the history of a culture's past and its future.

But there are layers to this narrative. The first half serves the task of establishing a world fully lived in by characters that are fully fleshed out. This is followed by a sharp turn in the second half, where the introduction of vampires completely shifts gears

for this film. But the story of *Sinners* shines because of its insistence on straying away from genre conventions. Here, Coogler presents us with a mix of horror, drama, and magical realism.

It also does not hurt to see *Sinners* be adorned with some of the most colourful characters we've seen in film all year. Stack twins, both by Michael B

Jordan who is front and centre in all the marketing, clearly have a rocky history with the world around them. Returning to their hometown after swindling the Italian and Irish mobs in Chicago, the twins buy property from a racist white man to start their own Juke Joint. This is how we find Sammie, the heart and voice of the film, played magnificently by Miles Caten.

The way these connect to the themes of culture and the subsequent theft of it adds to the overall world of *Sinners* in ways that feel inventive and meticulous.

While the film is not inherently horrific the way horror films tend to be, there is something unnerving about the history Coogler has put up on display.

From drawn-out scenes of cotton picking against a big blue sky and Country-Blues music to anecdotes of friends being lynched, *Sinners* is often more than what meets the eye.



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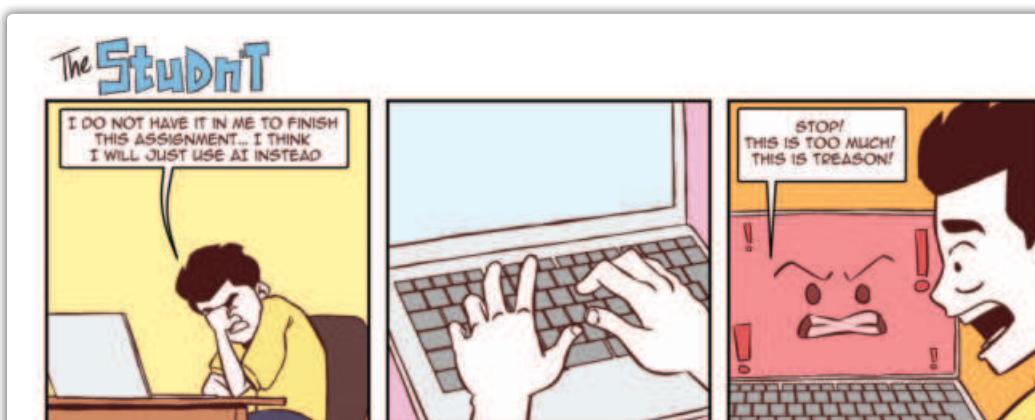
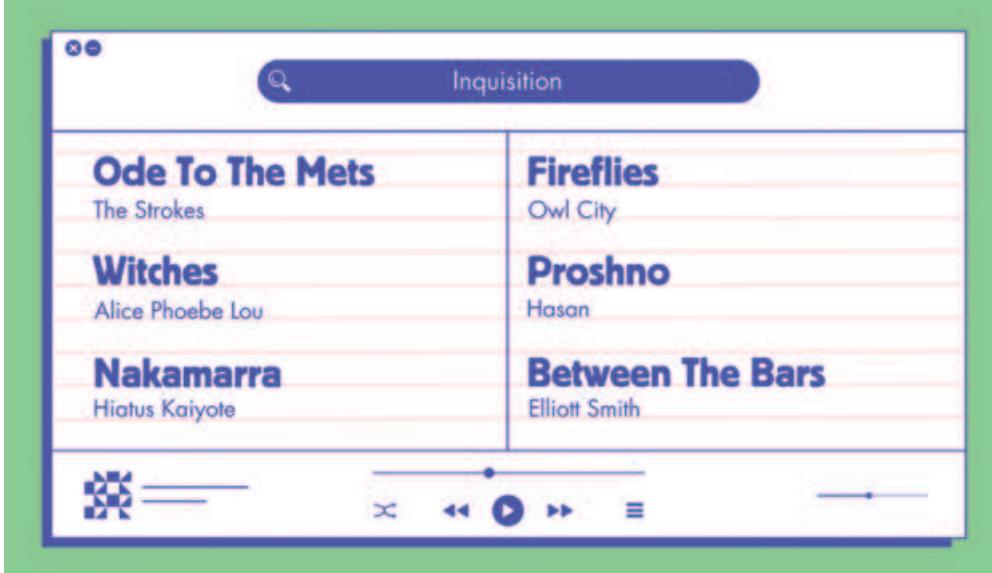
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