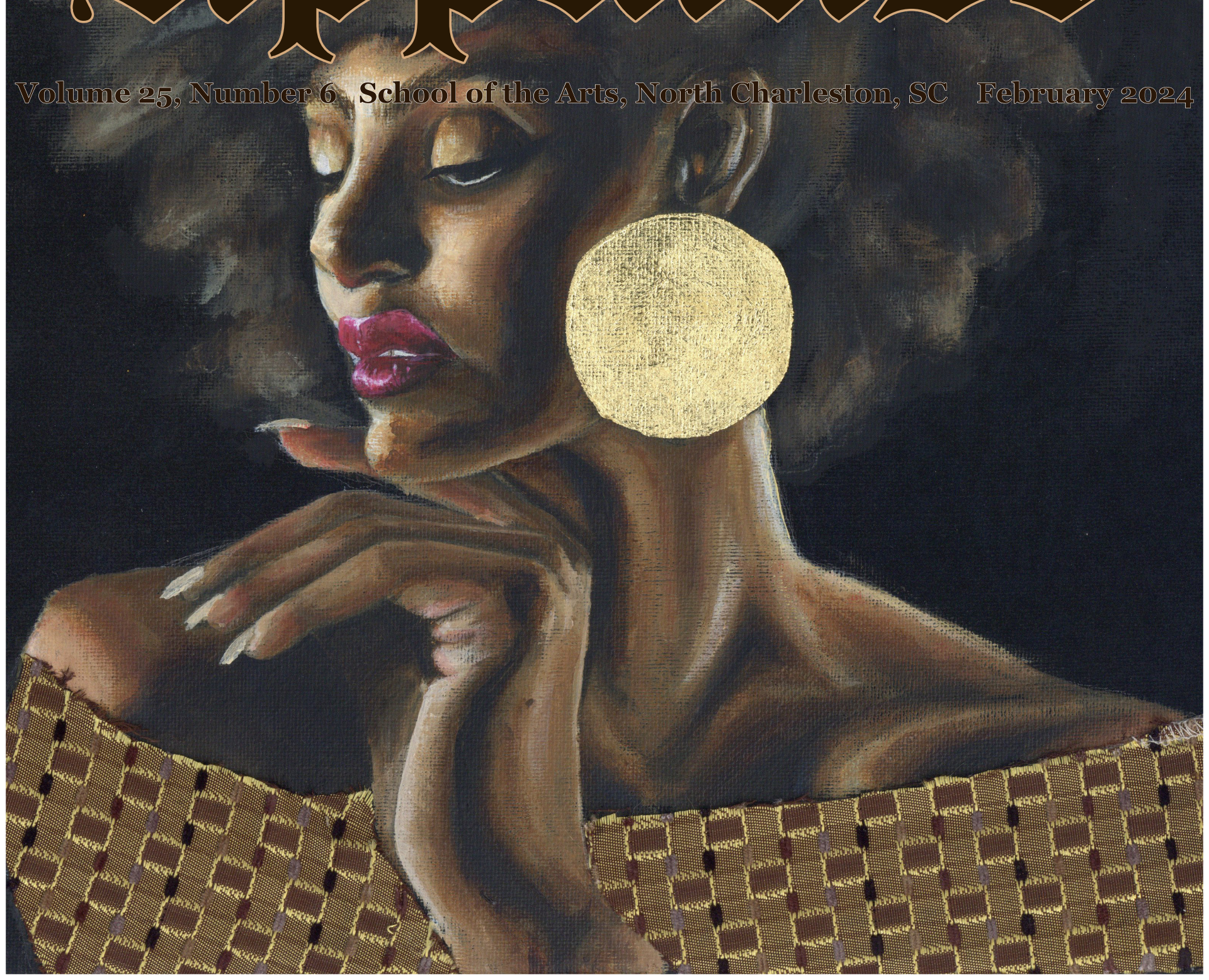


Applause

Volume 25, Number 6 School of the Arts, North Charleston, SC February 2024



DIAMOND

Blue Bicycle Books
The Fox Family
The Traywick Family

EMERALD

The Bundy/Richardson Family
Dr. Shannon Cook
Beverly Feagin
Eliot & Kimberly Hobbs
Heidi Printz
Wimberly Design

RUBY

Angelos Advisory Group, LLC
Anonymous
The Charleston Mattress
Cooper & Bilbrey, P.C.
Duffy & Young, LLC
Sylvia Edwards
The Felbers
Da'Lonzo A Gibson
Jennifer Gomez
Julie Gotz & The Place Girls
The Hanna Family
Eloise Hastie
The Hayes Family
The Hinske Family
Macie Hoffman's Adoring Parents
The LaRoche Family
The Leluc Family
Anthony Varallo and Malinda McCollum
Congratulations! Merrik Moriarty
The Núñez Family
Ohio Supports the Applause!
Thomas and Nicole Payne
Pamela and Todd Peterson
The Pineda Family
Barb Richardson
David Rieder
The Ronkon-Morse Family
Tracy Shelton
Lantie and Dave Slenzak
The Sunshine Simons Family!
South City Public Relations

Cameron Thomson
Jeny & John Tyler
Myles Owens-Walker

SAPPHIRE

The Kamen Dewhirst Family
The Lawson Family
Amanda and Ben Pritchett

AMETHYST

Ben Sarah and Yasir Abdul
The Carrier Family
Nayeon Casey
Abasi and Krysta Champman
The Cooper Family
The Cromwell Family
Shamus and Lynn Anne Gillen
Nate Alex Gilly
Hickerson Family
The Howell Family
Badi and Amanda Jones
Natasha Kavarana
The Kazley Family
The Largent Family
MAUDE COUTURE
Curtis McGinnis & Tharon Shiley
The Mears Family
Derek Pickens
The Spanglers
The Stavrinakis Family
The Woodlee Family
Younts

TOPAZ

Anonymous
Anonymous
The Billew Family
The Boone Family
Ms. Bednarczyk
The Cusatis Family
Cake Traywick Rocks <3 Ms. VCD
Donna Chesborough
Esthela Cuzmar
Evy's House Cleaning (goated)
The Davis Family
The Do Family
Lucas Fetten
Natasha Fields
The Finch Family
Rhetta Foster
Robert Grant
Lila Hayes and Family
Emilia Hall
Dr. Happy Byrd
The Hughes Family

Nevergonn A. Giveyouup
Grauer
Tristan Hill
Amber Honeycutt
The Johnsen Family
Katharine Johnson
Alissa Julian
Beth Lasley
Brandon Lyons
Mr. & Mrs. Mac~
Ethan Mallari
Patrick Martin
Kenneth E. Melton
Amanda Miller
Austin Miller and Family
Rebecca Mortensen
The Mundy Family
Peter O'Malley
Ashley Peterson
Ellie and Sadie Polk
Ms. Rumph
Josie Saldana
Dr. Schuster

Jamison Sigmon: We are so proud of you!
Laura Smith
Van Smith
The Southwick Family
The Stones
The Svendsens!
Matt Verone
Melanie Wise
Sarah Wetmore Butler & Family
Mrs. Whittemore

GARNET

Anonymous
Coach Butts
The Magnificent Mr. Colie
Beth Webb Hart
Brian Johnson
Leslie Jones
Sinclair & Nicole Holmes
Stacey LeBrun/Craft & Canvas
Eleanor Lucas
The Morelli Family
Josie Oakley
Zoe Roff and Family
Mrs. Stephanie Smalls
Cyle Tang
Milo Throop
Mr. V
Everilda Velasquez

TURQUOISE

Carson Daigneault
Greg Durishan
Kylene Gerideau-Grant
Donovan "Hamp" Hamilton
Dr. Selby
Trowbridge Weeks

From the Editors

Most Beloved Readers,

Somehow, the novel month of January has come and gone, and we are deep into the trenches of both 2024 and this school year. Yet, our fabulous staff has been ringing in the new semester right by working diligently to cook up a fabulous February issue.

In this issue, we are absolutely thrilled to celebrate Black History Month by featuring the Black Student Union as well as prominent black artists. Check out page 6 to get a closer insight into the events BSU has planned for this month! In honor of their show opening this week, the cast of *Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat* sat down with *Applause* for exclusive interviews, which can be found on pages 10 and 11.

For those of you brave enough to seek out love this Valentine's Day, our self-described Cupid, Jovanny Silva-Velasquez has crafted eight unstoppable couples (check them out on page 7).

That being said, to those of you who are uncoupled and unloved during this time of love, we urge you to sign up for journalism and join the *Applause* staff next year, where you will be year-round unconditionally loved. Have a fantastic February!

Until next time,
Riley Borkowski and Cate Traywick

Riley Borkowski Cate Traywick



Applause

since 1999, the official student publication of
School of the Arts

Founded in 1995 by Rose Maree Myers

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Cover by Azaria Richardson

SOA Calendar

by Ashley Peterson

Feb 8, 9, 10: *Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat*, RMMT, 6:30pm

Feb 11: *Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat*, RMMT, 2pm

Feb 12 & 13: 10/11/12 grade Theater: *Hourglass Tales 5.0*, BBT, 4pm and 6:30pm

Feb 13: Piano Senior Thesis, RMMT, 5:30pm

Feb 16: 6th grade dance, Cafe

Feb 16: Early Release (Teacher Work Day)

Feb 19: Presidents Day (No School)

Feb 20: Band Pre-JPA Concert, RMMT, 6:30pm

Feb 27: MS & HS Band Pre-CPA Concert, RMMT, 6:30pm

Feb 28: HS Orchestra Pre-CPA Concerto Concert, RMMT, 6:30pm

Mar 4: Convocation

Mar 5: Dance Thesis Adjudication Performance #2, RMMT, 4pm

Mar 6: MS Classical Piano Spring Concert, RMMT, 6pm

Mar 6: 9th grade Theater Performance: *Devised Theater*, BBT, 4pm and 6:30 pm

Mar 7: HS Classical Piano Spring Concert, RMMT, 6pm

Mar 7: 9th grade Theater Performance: *Devised Theater*, BBT, 4pm and 6:30 pm

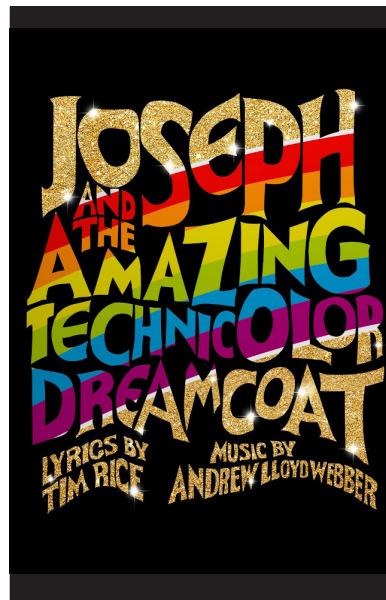
Mar 9: SOA Prom, Trinity Hall, 7pm



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Applause Valetines Day Matchmaker

by Jovanny Silva Velasquez

SOA Creative Writer Elucidates Life of Famous Poet and Great-grandfather

by Braeden LaRoche

Meet The Cast of *Joseph And The Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat*

by *Applause* Staff

Sass Attack: Easy Weeks

by Jovanny Silva Velasquez

“Sass Attack” was started in 2007 by Applause writer David Sass and continued for seventeen years. Our senior Piano major, Jovanny Silva Velasquez, has continued the tradition.

As long-time students, there exists a feeling we understand all too well. We’re on a Monday or Tuesday of a full day week, and the weekend feels as though it’s so far away, refreshing, luminary oasis standing behind miles and miles of a dry, harsh desert. We begin to get desperate for ways to get by. Suddenly, you might be contemplating slacking off, sleeping in class, and worst of all... skipping. The most desperate and despairing ones (such as I) even think about the hasty decision to drop out entirely.

This feeling is ever so more tumultuous after what I like to call an easy week, named after prophet/rapper Eazy E. They come in a variety of flavors. Maybe it’s a one-off holiday like Labor Day, MLK Day, and President’s Day, or an “E-learning” day (assuming that any of you do any actual learning). Perhaps it’s just the regular teacher’s workday. It could be an early release or even the rare and ever-so-elusive half-day. Either way, they all mean one thing: Another day of freedom from our shackles. Somehow, knowing we have even just one less day of school lifts our spirits, gives us hope, and inspires us. It makes us believe that we CAN make it to the end.

Alas, this momentary relief is spoiled as soon as the full week hits. That glimmering hope is snatched away as if you were a monkey that suddenly gained consciousness. All that can be done by this point is to hold your breath and dive right into a full week of pain, misery, and pain.

Opinion: Valentine’s Day Doesn’t Have To Be Expensive

by Isabella Pineda

Every year, people romanticize Valentine’s Day and the idea of spending a fortune for their loved ones on social media. We’re all guilty of it, whether it’s by posting content that’s filled to the brim with red and pink hearts, viewing and sharing it with friends, or reposting on TikTok. Of course, there’s absolutely no hate for those who find themselves shopping for hours in their local Target’s Valentine’s Day aisle; do what you’d like. However, as high school students, we make little to no money, and if you think about it, the idea of spending the entirety of our savings on a holiday that lasts only a day doesn’t seem like too good of a plan in the long run. Not to mention, spending money on seasonal Valentine’s Day merchandise isn’t the most sustainable option. Especially when it’s just going to become obsolete and unused, collecting dust in some random part of a bedroom once the holiday’s over. Trust me, your loved ones will still love and cherish you all the same regardless of how many heart-holding teddy bears you buy them.

Personally, I’d much rather spend the holiday with my Valentine than receive a myriad of themed stuffed animals, balloons, and chocolate hearts. Don’t get me wrong, there’s nothing unfitting about those items. They’re cute! They’re sold every year for a reason. But I think they’re a bit overdone, and I’d much rather receive a meaningful gift that shows my partner really knows me or go on a date that I know my partner’s been planning for a while. This year, let’s say goodbye to spending frivolously and say hello to spending intentionally and thoughtfully. Why stress over making Valentine’s Day expensive when you can make it memorable



Jovanny Silva Velasquez

Provided

Opinion: Social Media’s Destruction of Self

by Riley Borkowski

“Are you deer pretty, fox, pretty, or bunny pretty?” “What is your canthal tilt?” “There are four different types of pretty.” As ridiculous as all of these questions and statements sound, these are only some of the captions I have seen on TikTok videos in the past forty-eight hours. Social media continues to tighten its grip on our lives, and we continue to allow nonsensical trends to dictate what we wear, how we do our makeup, what we eat, and how we act.

The idealized beauty standards promoted on social media by influencers are often carefully constructed to encourage the viewer to purchase products from whatever brand that celebrity is being sponsored by at the time of release. I’m sure most of you have seen the videos of “ten-year-old Sephora children” that have gained significant amounts of internet traction by causing havoc in beauty stores, selling out the most expensive products, and constantly reapplying their Dior lip oil. While it is easy to look at these little kids and say, “When I was ten years old, I was playing with Barbies and using Claire’s makeup pallets,” have you ever stopped to think about why there has been such a drastic change over the last few years?

While many factors contribute to this sense of urgency to gain maturity in young children, I can confidently say that social media, specifically TikTok, is one of, if not THE most critical cause for this extreme change. On TikTok, you get a total of four videos between ads directly from brands, meaning twenty percent of the media you consume on TikTok is already advertisements, not to mention the independent sponsorships posted by internet stars. Most of these ads are targeted towards teenagers and young adults, promoting retinoids, revealing clothing, and top-of-the-line makeup products such as Drunk Elephant and Dior. While TikTok is an app intended for people thirteen or older, it has made its way onto the phones of young children, and unlike young adults who may discern marketing tactics, young children often struggle to distinguish between genuine content and advertisements.

While I can’t tell you to stop falling for these unrealistic expectations set by social media and ignore the promotions you may come across, I am telling you to unplug. Go for a walk. Try a new hobby. And for my music majors out there, practice your instrument. Your life should not be centered around a platform designed for regular people to fail and celebrities to prosper.

Opinion: Supporting Small Businesses This Valentine’s Day

by Neo O’Dell

With Valentine’s Day coming up, stores are filling up with all kinds of Valentine’s Day-themed items for people to gift to their loved ones during the holiday. Still, many of the principal gifts bought during this time are mass-produced, lack quality, and are just all-around unethical, but there are ways to avoid that. By buying from small businesses, you can ensure that all the products you buy for the people you care about are ethically made, good-quality items.

One of the main gifts bought around this time is jewelry. Whether it be rings, necklaces, or bracelets, people enjoy wearing all sorts of love-themed decor. But where are these products coming from? According to Human Rights Watch, 90 million carats of rough diamonds are mined for jewelry annually, generating over 300 billion dollars in revenue annually. For millions of workers worldwide, diamond and gold mining is a lucrative source of income. Still, the conditions that these workers are under can be harsh, with many people being injured and killed while working in small-scale gold and diamond mining pits. Mines also have polluted soil and waterways filled with toxic chemicals that cause harm to the health and livelihood of the surrounding communities.

Along with that, it’s no secret how terrible fast fashion can be when it comes to the way that products are produced. Jewelry from these large sites is bound to be a worse alternative when looking for gifts due to a lack of durable and quality materials being



Riley Borkowski

Provided



Isabella Pineda

Provided



Neo O’Dell

Provided

used. Buying from a small business will help you avoid unethically sourced products, and with the vast number of businesses out there, it can also be cost-effective.

Another trendy item bought around Valentine's Day is chocolate, and large-scale chocolate companies don't tend to produce preeminent products. Many of the ingredients used are unethically sourced and devoid of nutritional value. When buying chocolate from small businesses, it's just the logical choice. Not only will you be helping out your local community, but you'll also be receiving a delicious and wholesome treat you can feel good about eating. Some businesses I would recommend for buying chocolate would be The Chocolate Smiths and The DRST Co., which can be found online.

Buying from a small business is significantly more rewarding than buying from somewhere mainstream because you not only know that the products you are getting are well made, but you also know who you're giving your money to. For many small business owners worldwide, their businesses are their only source of income. There are vast amounts of small businesses you can find online and in person, including those I've already mentioned. If you're finding it hard to find local businesses to support, a few ways you can look include searching Etsy, looking on Facebook groups, and searching local hashtags. Supporting these businesses can do so much more than meets the eye, and it's something everyone should consider when shopping this year.

Applause Editorial: Rediscovering Vinyl

The resurgence of vinyl in the 21st century has taken a lot of people by surprise. Young enthusiasts are joining the ranks of the once-few-and-far-between seasoned collectors, and you can find records at almost any store currently. However, there are a lot of people who simply don't get it. Why spend a significant amount of your hard-earned money on a physical copy of music you can stream directly from your phone anytime? Not to mention the cost of a nice player and speaker system, plus the space that records take up in your home. It just doesn't sound worth it.

Well, that is untrue for a couple of reasons. First of all, investing in records can help you hone in on the music you really like. When you buy an album, you are committing to listening to the whole thing, which many people choose not to do when they listen on their regular streaming service, which allows you to get to know your favorite artists better and discover songs you may have otherwise not gotten to hear in your usual playlist rotation. It certainly feels rewarding to have a curated collection of albums you know inside and out.

Record stores often have a selection of used vinyl for under two dollars. These bins can be a gold mine for obscure music that could never have been discovered on Spotify or the like. For just a couple of dollars, you can sift through hundreds of superb underground artists and take home a few records to try out. It's a fun surprise to play an album and have no idea what it will sound like, and if you like it, you can brag about how you found an amazing artist that hardly anyone has ever heard of.

The rise of vinyl collecting has also created a sense of community between fellow music enthusiasts. It is something that both older and younger generations can bond over, with collections getting passed down through families. There is an extreme disconnect between our generations at the moment, so having something to connect us is crucial. Everyone who has the means and loves music should try collecting vinyl. Spend an hour, visit your local record store, and browse the dollar bins. You might find a real gem and a new hobby.

February Sports

by Luciano Cusatis

With spring right around the corner, winter sports seasons are coming to a close. SOA Athletes have done very well competing in basketball and wrestling, and many will soon begin spring sports if they have not already.

One wrestler who has had a highly successful season is sophomore Theater major **Andrew Blind**, who currently holds an impressive 19-7 record. In one recent match,

Andrew's opponent was called for committing several illegal slams, resulting in a concussion. However, Andrew would not be beaten.

"I still had two minutes left and was concussed. But I came back and won the match," Andrew told *Applause*. He is one of twelve students who wrestled successfully for Magnet this season.

Eleven SOA students competed on either the Boys or Girls JV and Varsity basketball squads this winter. The Boys JV team recently beat Timberland 36-28 in a conference game and the girl's Junior Varsity won two critical conference games against Timberland and Lake Marian. The Varsity Girls beat Ashley Hall 35-29 last week after a tough loss against Oceanside. Piano major **Josie Barrineau**, who is just a sophomore, is SOA's representative on the Varsity team. She told *Applause* that the best part of the season has been meeting new people, learning more about the game, and improving her skills. She also said she has become faster and much better at working with her teammates on the court.

SOA students have already begun practicing for the AMHS spring sports season, which includes baseball, softball, lacrosse, soccer, tennis, and track, so be sure to check back next month to see how they are doing. Good luck to all our athletes!



Applause Staff

Josie Barrineau warming up for a basketball game



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Natural Hair and the History it Holds

by Emma Shelton

Black people and their hair have historically had an incredibly complex and entangled relationship. For them, hair can be such a large form of self-expression, identity, and culture. Most non-black people have trouble understanding why hair is so important and what it means both emotionally and ancestrally. From a young age, black kids are taught that their hair is important. There is a common memory of sitting in front of a grandmother, aunt, or parent for hours while having your hair combed through and braided, each strand treated as a symbol of love and identity. At the start of their lives, black people are taught that hair is not just protein filaments that come from the scalp but something that deserves kindness and consistent care. There is history embedded in every single root. During the transatlantic slave trade, millions of Africans had their heads shaved, ridding them of cultural and spiritual practices and free will. When their hair grew back, they braided maps and seeds into it as a method of helping them escape. Black women were not allowed to celebrate their hair, and many of them were forced to cover it up or adjust it to Eurocentric beauty standards. This led to the natural hair movement during the 1960s, which intertwined itself with civil rights, attempting to unlearn the negative stereotypes about natural hair. We are now at a time where hair is seemingly accepted without judgment. Yet I still so frequently see black people (women, especially) being mocked for their hair. Let's not forget the mockery of Ice Spice's natural hair, because apparently hair can only be worn naturally if it fits into the small box of what non-black people are willing to accept. Culturally, hair is treated as such a personal, special thing, throughout history we have seen how important it is to black people. Shared history and familial practices have made hair a major symbol of black culture.



emmelanin.com

Black History Month Jamboree is Back and Better Than Ever

by Isis Hanna

Last year, SOA's Black Student Union organized a Jamboree, where black speakers from different career paths came to speak to our students about what they do and how to succeed in their field. We learned about everything from teaching a college class to face painting. This year, BSU presidents Pagelyn Smalls and Ramere Kelly have brought back the Jamboree in a new and improved fashion.

Starting Thursday, February 1, each week of Black History Month at SOA will be filled with themed events leading up to a surprise event on February 26. Throughout the first two weeks, there will be several speakers that you can sign up to see via a Google Site, including representatives from a basketball academy and a political scientist. There will also be various food vendors and black-owned businesses selling food for under five dollars.

The week leading up to the 26th will be a spirit week. Tuesday will be Unity Day, where students will wear red, yellow, and green. On Wednesday, wear your HBCU (historically black colleges and universities) gear. Thursday is Soul Train Day, a 70s-present-day music-themed outfit day, and finally, Friday is Sneakers and Sunday Best. BSU is a club that is open to any students of any race who are interested in advocating for the black community and talking about issues facing the community in today's society. If you wish to join, see Pagelyn Smalls or Ramere Kelly for information on upcoming meetings. In the meantime, enjoy SOA's second annual BHM Jamboree!



Scan this QR code to sign up for speakers!

Ms. Amanda Miller Named 2024 Teacher of the Year

by Ruby Varallo

High school math teacher and statistics extraordinaire Ms. Miller is "truly honored" to be named SOA's 2024 Teacher of the Year. "The fellow colleagues that were in the running for Teacher of the Year with me are so talented and passionate (shout-out to Mr. Hill, Mr. Morelli, Ms. Roff, and Mr. Colie). It was an honor to have my name in the running alongside these amazing educators," she says. Each teacher is nominated by their colleagues, and the top five nominees are put on a ballot that is sent out and voted upon by all faculty members. Ms. Miller is now in the running for the district-level Teacher of the Year position; wish her luck!



Ms. Miller enjoying a surprise visit from her family after winning 2024 teacher of the year

Ms. Miller's favorite part about teaching at SOA is "getting to work with the amazingly talented student body." She continues, "The students make each day different and exciting. I get to work with students who are highly motivated, incredible thinkers, and overall really likable humans. I love that I get to share my excitement for math with them, and they don't judge me for getting overly enthusiastic about nerdy things." Ms. Miller also supports her students beyond the classroom: "I try to catch as many student performances as I can so I have the opportunity to see them share their passions with the world." Any student of hers can confirm she absolutely deserves the title of Teacher of the Year. Congratulations Ms. Miller!

Patrick Martin



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Applause Valentine's Matchmaker

Why bother with dating apps when our self-proclaimed cupid, **Jovanny Silva-Velasquez**, is here to weave romantic magic? No need for tedious interactions, SOA's Valentine's love bugs have been expertly paired with their scientifically chosen perfect match!

Preface: These aren't inherently romantic.. unless you want them to be.

The Match Made in Heaven:

Law Fox and an oyster!

While it may seem like an unorthodox pair, this couple would rise above all odds with their free-spirited natures. The oyster is your world Law!

The Brainiacs:

Charlotte Whitley and Nicholas Grayson

With Charlotte's self-described "mature and knowledgeable" personality as well as Nicholas' sophisticated perception of music and life (he listens to Beethoven), there's no doubt they'll make it through the struggles of life off of facts and knowledge.

The Olive Haters:

Luciano Cusatis and Pia Oronce

Connected by their hatred towards olives, such a deeply driven similarity will surely drive them even closer to one another as the olive hating couple finds more things to bond over.

The Olive Lovers:

Mayson Dillard and Cahal Finch

On the contrary, this pair is destined to overcome any obstacle, such as olives, through the power of love alone.

The Anti-Social Butterflies:

Ace Tin and Madie Fletcher

With Madie's tendency to burst into tears and Ace's willingness to listen to Korn for the rest of their life, these anti-social butterflies might find solace in one another!

The Nonconformers:

Lucy Cromwell and Susan White

These two ain't afraid to break locks, break bones, and break some deals with their passionate bartering!

Presenting those who wished to be paired with one another:

Ava Dawson and Ellie Hudgins

Mia Gonzalez and Mary Grace Leatherbury

Well, they didn't exactly ask to be paired with one another but it never hurts to change things up a bit!

And finally, here are some folks with some secret admirers:

Hey *Jay Meloy*, you've got a secret admirer who likes Drake, crying, and surfing! What a catch!

Samuel Owens, you've got a secret admirer who already describes themselves as "Sam's Boyfriend." If that isn't love, then I don't know what is!

CHAMBER MUSIC CHARLESTON



2/14/24 - SOUTH CAROLINA SOCIETY HALL

Guest violinist Amy Oshiro of the Philadelphia Orchestra joins musicians of CMC for string quartets of Beethoven and Debussy.

3/10/24 - SOTTILE THEATRE

Pianist Andrew Armstrong brings his good friends Amy Schwartz Moretti (violin), Matt Lipman (viola), Raphael Bell (cello), Alexander Fiterstein (clarinet) and R.J. Kelly (horn) to Sottile Theatre for a spectacular program of music including Rachmaninov's Piano Trio No. 1 Dohnányi's Sextet in C Major

3/24/24 - DOCK STREET THEATRE

Pianist Andrew Armstrong and violinist Gabriela Diaz joins the winds of CMC for a program of music including Mozart's Quintet for Piano and Winds and Bartok's Contrasts.

STUDENT AND PARENT TICKETS: \$5
WWW.CHAMBERMUSICCHARLESTON.ORG

Predicting the Winners of the 2024 Oscars

by Ruby Varallo

With the Oscars coming up on March 10, I've gathered my thoughts on who will emerge victorious this year. I like to think I will be right about everything, and although I absolutely will not be, here are my predictions for the 2024 Oscar winners!

Best Picture: *Oppenheimer*

Oppenheimer as the Best Picture winner is practically guaranteed, as Christopher Nolan's depiction of the life of J. Robert Oppenheimer and the development of the atomic bomb is nothing short of captivating.



Best Directing: Christopher Nolan

Hand in hand with Best Picture, Christopher Nolan is the mastermind behind *Oppenheimer*. My runner-up for this category would be Martin Scorsese for *Killers of the Flower Moon*, as both are very long but well-directed movies, but I think Nolan may pull ahead and win. Nolan called *Oppenheimer* the darkest film he's ever worked on, saying he was drawn to the tension between the successful tests of the atomic bombs versus their actual usage in Hiroshima and Nagasaki.

Best Actor: Paul Giamatti

I have gone back and forth between Paul Giamatti and Cillian Murphy winning this category so many times that the whole section I just wrote on why I think Murphy is going to win is now deleted and replaced. The *Holdovers* was really well received, and I think a huge part of that is Giamatti's performance. I could still also see Murphy winning, and both deserve it as their performances were both fantastic, but I think at the end of the day Giamatti might just win this one.

Best Actress: Lily Gladstone

Gladstone made history with this nomination as the first Native American woman to be nominated in this category, and she absolutely deserves the win for her haunting performance in Scorsese's *Killers of the Flower Moon*. While Emma Stone also has a good shot of winning this category for her performance in *Poor Things*, I think the Academy may go for something less experimental, but considering Stone's Golden Globes win, who knows!

Best Actor in a Supporting Role: Robert Downey Jr.

I may be wildly over-predicting the amount of wins for *Oppenheimer*, but Robert Downey Jr.'s performance as Lewis Strauss definitely deserves the recognition. He plays a crucial role in a twist of the movie, delivering a chilling performance that allows his unexpected change in character to work.

Best Actress in a Supporting Role: Da'Vine Joy Randolph

I love *The Holdovers*, and Da'Vine Joy Randolph's performance as a grieving mother and school cook is one to remember. She won the Golden Globe for Supporting Actress, and I'm almost positive she'll keep it up with the Oscars. I had never seen her in anything before *The Holdovers*, but I hope she appears in many more movies to come.

Best Writing (Adapted Screenplay): *Oppenheimer*

Honestly, I want Barbie to win this, because as much as I think *Oppenheimer* is a fantastic movie, it does hurt a little to write it this many times. I haven't read *American Prometheus* by Kai Bird and Martin J. Sherman, which is the book that *Oppenheimer* is based on, but it must be good because the writing of the movie is great.

Best Writing (Original Screenplay): *The Holdovers*

The Holdovers is truly one of my favorite movies of the year, so I'm hoping it gets well-awarded, at least in this category! The movie follows a cranky instructor at a New England boarding school who has to stay behind and look over a small group of students who can't return home over Christmas break, including the class's troublemaker and the head cook, both of whom he forms unexpected bonds with. This is the coziest movie I have ever seen, and even if it doesn't win, you should definitely give it a watch.

Best Cinematography: *Poor Things*

The cinematography of *Poor Things* is one of my favorite things about it; it enhances the surreal nature of the movie perfectly. For example, in one of the movie's only scenes shot on-site, Emma Stone's character Bella dances in a fancy restaurant in Lisbon. Director Yorgos Lanthimos wanted to use a vignettted wide lens for this scene to make the viewer feel like they were looking into another world through a portal, which works just as intended.

Best Makeup and Hairstyling: *Maestro*

The Academy loves a prosthetic, and I think Bradley Cooper's controversial prosthetic nose might just give him the win on this one. Cooper's nose initially faced backlash, as it was called antisemitic, but he defended it. He said he was attempting to resemble the maestro himself, Leonard Bernstein, who was the son of Jewish-Ukrainian immigrants. Bernstein's children even took to social media to defend the use of the nose, claiming they were sure their dad would be okay with it. I think all the conversation surrounding the nose will make it the front-runner for this category.

Best Costume Design: *Barbie*

This goes without saying—it's *Barbie*! There are many other categories, but I am not well versed in documentaries, short films, or what has the best visual effects. Also, the more I predict the more I will inevitably get wrong, so I'm stopping myself here. Be sure to tune in to see who wins on March 10!

SOA Strings Majors to Play in SCMEA All-State Orchestra

by Riley Borkowski

The following Strings majors were chosen for the SCMEA All-State Orchestra which will be held in Columbia. Congratulations to the following students!

6-8 Orchestra

Violin I:
Kenneth Joyce
Max Kai
Annabella Cusatis
Isaiah Liu
Evan Baker

Violin II:
Rebecca Xu
Lily Ruff
Lois Hwang

Viola:
Mickey Rayburn
Logan Jetter
Gus Fowler

Cello:
Maya Pehl
Abigail Lin

Bass:
Alex Lemstrom
Pablo Perez

9-10 Orchestra

Violin I:
Elijah Liu
Ava Whitener
Elliot MacDonald
Callie Williams

Violin II:
Victoria Chan
Santiago Calzada

Viola:
Alison Wagner

Cello:
Myles Owens-Walker
Abigail Morea

Bass:
Juvon Gilliard

11-12 Orchestra

Violin I:
Lydia Plante
Alex Lim
Eloise Hastie

Violin II:
Gabrielle Chinnis
Trow Weeks
Nicholas Grayson
Emma Parker

Viola:
Riley Borkowski

Cello:
Jade Williams
Kate Selby

Bass:
Justin Gilliard



SOA Creative Writer Elucidates Life of Famous Poet and Great-grandfather

by Braeden LaRoche

Vachel Lindsay was one of America's most significant poets, influencing the country's poetic tradition and inspiring generations of writers within the Lindsay family, including SOA's own Jack Lindsay, a senior thriving in the Creative Writing program.

Active in the early twentieth century, Vachel's innovations to the poetry of his age involved the introduction of performative elements. Drawing on the Old World concepts of the troubadour and Ancient Greek musical poetry, Vachel's work was far more concerned than that of his contemporaries with its effect when experienced spoken and was often accompanied by song and instrumentals.

He termed his work "Higher Vaudeville," as he sought to elevate the medium of "common" performative art through his poetic tact and attention to the meaning and quality of his work.

Vachel famously toured the country on foot, delighting audiences in dozens of states with his energetic performances. Over journeys of hundreds of miles, he traded his poetry for food and lodging.

A notable figure in his day, he was close with contemporaries such as Robert Frost and lauded by the likes of William Butler Yeats.

"Vachel Lindsay and Frost were good buddies. They came up with a collaborative poem when they were young... My grandfather, Nicholas Lindsay Sr., stayed in touch with Frost until he died. He was a family friend," said Jack Lindsay.

Unfortunately, since his day, Vachel has fallen into comparative obscurity, though his influence on modern and contemporary poetry is undeniable. At least three of his books, *General William Booth Enters into Heaven and other Poems*, *The Congo and Other Poems*, and *The Chinese Nightingale and other Poems* have been critically and popularly acclaimed.

Three of his poems, including his widely anthologized "Abraham Lincoln Walks at Midnight," were included as selections in this year's national poetry recitation contest "Poetry Out Loud." And his poem, "The Congo" is famously featured in the 1989 movie *Dead Poets Society*, featuring Robin Williams and Ethan Hawke.

The performative elements he re-popularized can be seen in poetry today: in the emphasis many poets place on a work's spoken quality, in the return some have made to traditionally metered and rhyming poetry, and in the poetic forms of spoken word and slam poetry.

Furthermore, Vachel began a tradition of writing within the Lindsay family, extending from his son, Nicholas Cave Lindsay Sr., a professor of English and poetry, to his great-grandson, Jack Lindsay, a senior Creative Writer at SOA.

"For quite a few generations, the men in the family have been reading a variety of books to the kids... During the evening, they would mix in family stories that fit in with the stories being read," said Jack.

The family has many documents and artifacts passed down from Vachel, such as unpublished poems, letters, programs, drawings, and photographs providing fascinating personal insights into Vachel's life.

A sample of Jack's own work can be found in the January issue of *Applause*.

"I've been shaped by the Lindsay literary and thinking tradition: reading aloud to one another, conversing on ideas, sharing poems and quotes. I write because writing is how I was taught to think, through stories, pages, lines, and words."



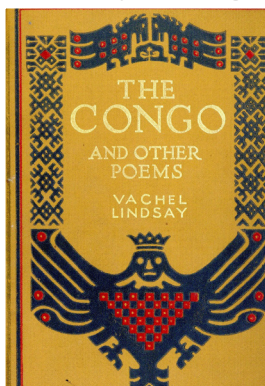
Photograph of Vachel, his wife, and children.

Lindsay Family Collection



Illustration by Vachel Lindsay

Lindsay Family Collection



Vachel Lindsay's 1918 book *The Congo and Other Poems* appears in the movie *Dead Poets Society*.

Applause Archive

Makeup by Si'Mya

by Neo O'Dell

Neo O'Dell: When did you first discover that you were interested in makeup?

Si'Mya Stanely: Around the age of five or six, I remember my mom used to take me to the beauty supply store, and makeup would always be on display, and I'd just stand there looking at them because I thought the products were so pretty. Then, my mom started to pick up that I liked makeup, so she bought my first makeup kit from CVS. It also caused me to start wandering off in stores just so I could check out the makeup aisles, and not only did my mom start to pick up on the fact that I liked makeup, but my aunt did as well, so she started to give me little things such as makeup palettes lip glosses, etc., and I started to experiment with it. Then COVID began, and I started to take it more seriously. Since I was bored in the house with barely anything to do, I started watching YouTube videos, TikToks, and Instagram makeup tutorials.

NO: Why and when did you decide to sell your services?

SS: Around ninth to tenth grade. People told me I should start doing makeup on others and put myself out there. That gave me inspiration to try and put myself out there. I don't post often on my socials regarding my makeup, but I'm trying to get better at it. In the middle of 2022, I started to post tutorials and such. Last summer, I tried to make flyers with me doing makeup and offering my services to others, but unfortunately, that didn't work out how I wanted it.

NO: Who are some of your biggest inspirations?

SS: For the most part, I learned and got my information from others on social media such as @tiaynna on Instagram and TikTok, @babyleska on Instagram, @isabelleikpeme on TikTok and Instagram, my friend Azaria @naezrahlooks on Instagram and TikTok NikkiTutorials on YouTube.

NO: Was it difficult when you were first learning how to do makeup?

SS: To be honest, yes, very much so. Not only did I have trouble finding my shade, but that's when I also found out I had sensitive skin. I remember one time in 2021, I went to a birthday party and showed up in full glam. The next day, I looked like a pufferfish. My cheeks were red and blotchy, and my eyes were swollen shut; I couldn't see anything. I had an allergic reaction to the eyelash glue, which caused my eyes to burn.

NO: Is there a specific style of makeup that you prefer to do/ specialize in?

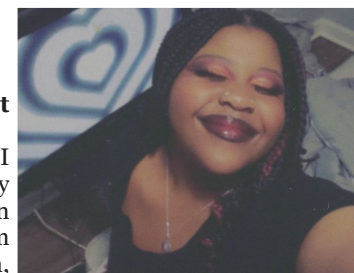
SS: I've always liked glam, but now I'm more into the artistic type of glam makeup like the colorful eyebrows, big lashes, colorful eyeshadow and liner, and just out of the ordinary, but it works. Also, during the end of COVID-19 and into the beginning of my ninth-grade year, I got into SFX makeup. When I watched horror movies, I'd always pay attention to specific details of the special effects makeup, and I always thought it was so cool. Also, I would watch YouTube videos behind the scenes of how they got their makeup to look like that, which also inspired me.

NO: What are some of your future goals for your business?

SS: My main goal is to become a well-known makeup artist and an actress. I want people to recognize my talent and want them to know that I have what it takes to achieve my goal. I may not wanna be an "A-list" celebrity, but I think having some recognition is enough for me. I would also like to be a model for an *Edwiggery* magazine.

NO: Where can people find you?

SS: You can find me on Snapchat @sailorjooonie07, TikTok @sailorjooonie, and Instagram @makeupbymya07.



Si'Mya Stanely

Provided

The History of Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat

by Isis Hanna

This spring, SOA's vocal department is putting on a production of the 1965 musical *Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat*, a retelling of the Book of Genesis story of Jacob and his twelve sons. In the story, Joseph, the preferred son, receives a "coat of many colors" from his father. His brothers become jealous of him and begin to plot his demise. The first performance on a stage took place in 1970, and the role of Joseph was first played on Broadway by Bill Hutton. The original Broadway production was nominated for seven Tony Awards, including Best Musical and Best Original Score.

Joseph is a fun and more lighthearted show, despite being a Bible story, which can tend to be more serious in nature. Andrew Lloyd-Webber and his production partner (continued from page 9) Tim Rice reimagined the story to create an eclectic mix of

musical styles and moods. The songs in the show include French ballads, rock, country, and more. The SOA Vocal Department has been hard at work learning complex and different choreography for each of these songs along with their singing. The show will run in the RMMT during school on the 8th and 9th of February and in the evening on the 9th, 10th, and 11th, so be sure to come and see the talented cast when you can!

SOA Vocal Department Presents *Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat*

Applause staff members sat down and asked several members of the cast of *Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat* about their roles, audition process, and what it takes to make this production become a reality.

Austin Smith, Joseph

by Ashley Peterson

Ashley Peterson: What was the audition process like?

Austin Smith: The Audition process was a little bit stressful! It coincided with the Christmas Concert, so everyone was working double time to prepare for the auditions. We also didn't receive word back about the auditions until after Christmas break, meaning that we practiced over the break, not really knowing if we would actually get the part.

AP: Tell me a bit about your role.

AS: Joseph is the favorite son of Jacob with an affinity for interpreting dreams. Despite being a little bit full of himself at times, he is ultimately a good-hearted and hard-working person.

AP: How are you preparing for your role in the show?

AS: Practice never hurts! I find that a good spot for me to practice singing is our garage, even if there is a possum that is sometimes spotted there.

AP: What is your background in theater?

AS: In middle school, I first joined the James Island Players for their production of *Fiddler on the Roof*, and have been hooked on theater ever since! Since then, I've had a brief time at Charleston Stage, been in the SOA vocal productions of *Les Mis*, *Phantom*, and recently was able to go back to the James Island Players for their new production of *Fiddler on the Roof* again!

AP: What are your plans for after high school in the musical theater world?

AS: I'm not entirely sure. I'm probably going to be majoring in Composition next year to pursue a career in film scoring or music teaching, but I don't really want to stop acting. I'm sure that there will be amateur theater productions wherever I go though, so who knows? Also,



If I choose CofC, I can dual major in both Vocal and Composition, which would mean I could do stuff with Devon and Brett!

Aidan Aycock, Jacob

by Isis Hanna

Isis Hanna: Tell me a little about your role in the show and how you plan to embody him during the performance.

Aidan Aycock: My character is Jacob, also known as Israel. He is the father of the brothers, but his favorite son is Joseph.

IH: What has the rehearsal process been like? Is it hard to balance rehearsal with your other responsibilities?

AA: We've had pretty frequent rehearsals and they are only going to get more frequent from here. It certainly takes a lot of time away from doing schoolwork, but it's decently manageable.

IH: Do you find that you relate to a lot of the characteristics of Jacob?

AA: No, not particularly. I can't say I relate much to having twelve sons and four wives.

IH: What are some challenges you have faced while preparing for your show, especially amid the semester ending?

AA: Finalizing casting and reorganizing schedules has been stressful, especially because we only had a few weeks to prepare after winter break.

IH: What are you most excited about in the show?

AA: I think I'm most excited about just getting to have fun on stage. *Joseph* is not as serious of a musical as the ones we've done in the past, so there's a lot more room to be silly.



Carson Daigneault, Simeon

by Riley Borkowski

Riley Borkowski: What do your rehearsals entail? How do you balance these rehearsals with other responsibilities?

Carson Daigneault: Rehearsals are super busy! we have had super little time to get everything together, so instead of learning all of the stuff individually, we're going through it all at once. it's honestly pretty tough finding a balance between my other responsibilities and *Joseph*. I often have to pull out my Chromebook in the middle of rehearsal!

RB: What has been the biggest challenge in playing your role?

CD: Probably finding a balance between silly and serious during my song, while it is a funny goof, it's also a powerful



ballad, so it's hard to find the balance between the two.

RB: Tell us a bit about your character. What does he contribute to the show?

CD: Simeon is the second oldest brother, who is initially for getting rid of Joseph, but after the famine hits, he's the first to sing about how he misses Joseph's entertaining dreams. He drives the group to journey to Egypt, where they find their brother, Joseph!

RB: What is one of your favorite moments from the show?

CD: One of my favorite moments is my scene! I love French Bistro style music, and it has some powerful harmonies that really make you feel the pain of the famine.

RB: Do you plan to continue your passion for vocal after high school?

CD: Yes! I plan to become a choir teacher when I'm older, so rather than pursuing my voice, I'll be helping younger people pursue theirs.

Kenny Schaffer: Potiphar

by Ashley Peterson

Ashley Peterson: What was the audition process like?

Kenny Schaffer: The audition process was pretty easy. We rehearsed the part a few times and then we auditioned.

AP: Tell me a bit about your role.

KS: In *Joseph & The Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat*, I play Potiphar. Potiphar is the man who bought Joseph when he was sold into slavery by his brothers.

AP: How are you preparing for your role in the show?

KS: To prepare for my role, I've been working on embodying the character so his personality is shown.

AP: What is your background in theater?

KS: As a child I did a little bit of musical theater and also was in a few plays.

AP: What are your plans for after highschool in the musical theater world?

KS: After high school, I plan to continue singing and possibly musical theater according to whatever opportunities arise.



Lauren Bas, Narrator

by Ella Kay

Ella Kay: What does your role contribute to the production?

Lauren Bas: I am extremely excited to play the Narrator with Emma and Vivian because she teaches the story of *Joseph*, while still getting to dance and have fun like the other characters. She interacts with the characters and moves the story along. The Narrator kind of throws herself into all of the scenes, following Joseph as he goes through his life.

EK: How was your audition process?

LB: The audition process was pretty simple, anyone who wanted to play the Narrator learned a sample of "Jacob

and sons” and sang it in front of Ms. Hammond and Mr. Rogers. I was definitely nervous though because Jacob and Sons is one of the more difficult songs in to show and there were several girls who did a really good job.

EK: How long have you been in vocal?

LB: I have been in vocal since the sixth grade, so this will be my seventh year at SOA.

EK: What has been the biggest obstacle with your role?

LB: The biggest problem I have faced has been dancing. The Narrator is in a lot of songs where she has to dance and sing and while the moves aren’t super complex, it becomes difficult to remember the dances and the words all at once. However, with Emma and Vivian both excelling with their dancing, they have been extremely helpful and a great inspiration throughout the show so far.

EK: How do you feel about this being your last production SOA?

LB: This is definitely bittersweet being my last performance. I am super excited to perform the show with some of my closest friends but I’m sad that this is the last show I’ll ever do with them. Every show I have done in vocal has pushed me to be a better performer, especially surrounding myself with all of the talented people who are part of the vocal department.

Vivian Gordon, Narrator

by Elle Baker

Elle Baker: How do the roles alternate?

Vivian Gordon: The best way to describe it is like the Fates from HadesTown or the Muses from Hercules.

EB: How do you work with the other narrators?

VG: On stage, our choreography allows us to interact and dance with each other, and we work towards the same goal of telling the story. However, off stage, Emma, Lauren, and I work so well together on harmonies and blocking, and I wouldn’t want to share a role with anyone else.

EB: How is the role split up?

VG: Because the three of us have different strengths, we split up the lines to best showcase each voice.

EB: How did you end up with this role?

VG: I auditioned.

EB: What is a challenge you’ve faced so far with this role?

VG: Memorizing my blocking and lines. The role is very demanding, and the Narrator sings in most songs.

EB: What is something you’ve enjoyed in your role so far?

VG: I have loved working with such talented people who put in so much effort no matter what role they are



Emma Ladd, Narrator

by Cate Traywick

Cate Traywick: How did the auditions work?

Emma Ladd: We didn’t have formal auditions for *Joseph*, other than our normal audition process which consisted of us circling around the piano and going one by one!

CT: How do the rehearsals/production of *Joseph* differ from *Phantom* or *Les Mis*?

EL: *Joseph* definitely has more choreography than *Phantom* or *Les Mis*. Jordan, our amazing choreographer, has helped us these past few weeks to create amazing visuals for the show.

CT: How is the Vocal Department going about splitting up the role of the Narrator?

EL: Vivian, Lauren and I all sing the whole show together! We split up into harmonies here and there and have our own little personal moments to showcase our individual strengths!

CT: What’s it like sharing the Narrator role with other vocalists?

EL: Vivian and Lauren are both incredibly talented musicians and I feel so lucky to be able to spend so much time and learn from them. We all have something so different to bring to the table. I can’t wait for people to see!

CT: What’s a favorite moment of yours in the show?

EL: I love how spunky and curious the Narrator is, and how well-rounded the character’s voice has to be. I especially love the song, “Poor Poor Pharaoh” because I get to sing a pretty high note along with beautiful harmonies that all three of us made up.



Will Marchant, Reuben

by Cate Traywick

Cate Traywick: What was the audition process for *Joseph* like?

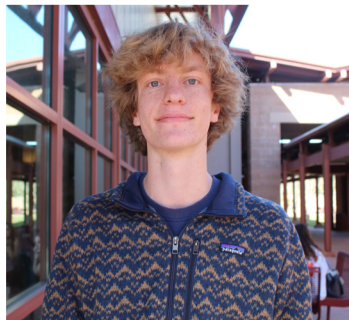
Will Marchant: Since there are only about three female roles in the musical, there were a lot of male roles available. Since I could sing in a pretty good country accent, I got offered the role of Reuben.

CT: How do the rehearsals for *Joseph* differ from rehearsals for *Phantom* or *Les Mis*?

WM: With much less time to prepare and rehearse for *Joseph* than for *Phantom* and *Les Mis*, it’s been tough having to learn the whole musical so quickly while also mastering the choreography for each scene.

CT: What’s your favorite moment from the show?

WM: Each scene of *Joseph* usually has a different style or theme, such as hip-hop, reggae, Elvis, etc. My favorite



scene has to be “Go, Go, Go, Joseph,” which has a disco theme. It’s super fun. Everyone is on stage doing all these disco dance moves.

CT: How does your role as Reuben differ from the roles of the eleven other brothers?

WM: Reuben is the oldest of the brothers and has a thick country accent. He acts as the leader of the brothers.

CT: Do you find any similarities between you and your character?

WM: The only similarity between Reuben and myself is our shared hatred for the character Joseph. In the musical, Joseph is an arrogant, spoiled brat.

Zion Platt, Pharaoh and Judah

by Braeden LaRoche

Braeden LaRoche: You play both Judah and the Pharaoh. How have you managed the work involved in rehearsing for two separate roles?

Zion Platt: I’ve tried to not overwhelm myself and divvy up working on the parts into separate days. Trying to balance creating my senior thesis, getting into and auditioning for the colleges I want, and doing shows at the same time has proved challenging but it’s a fun challenge.

BL: What inspired you to audition for these roles?

ZP: I was inspired to audition for Pharaoh because growing up watching the musical, every time he came on screen I felt like he just stole the show. He has so much presence and is just a funny role to play.

From his dancing to his Elvis voice and mannerisms, it just leaves a lot for acting and is so fun. Judah has a number towards the end that always was so funny to me. The strong Caribbean accent

and exaggerated movements never fail to make me laugh.

BL: What do you expect will be the most challenging aspect of the performance for you?

ZP: I think the most challenging part of the performance will definitely be the singing as someone who’s not me. Pharaoh is based on Elvis so I will really have to keep in mind the voice I’m going for and just stay in it for the whole performance.

BL: What is your favorite part of playing these two roles?

ZP: My favorite part is that they’re different but both somewhat silly roles. One is the absolute peak of the Egyptian government while one is the lowest of the low, but each requires different acting and different accents. It’ll be a fun challenge.

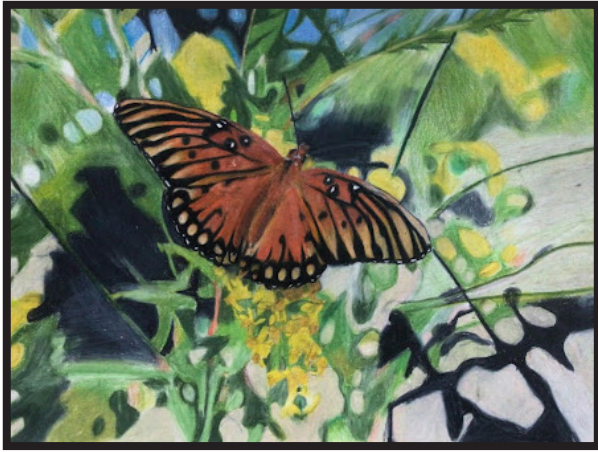
BL: Which role do you enjoy playing more, and why?

ZP: I think the role I enjoy more is Pharaoh. The dancing and the singing and the jokes are just all so fun to do. I’m enjoying both though.

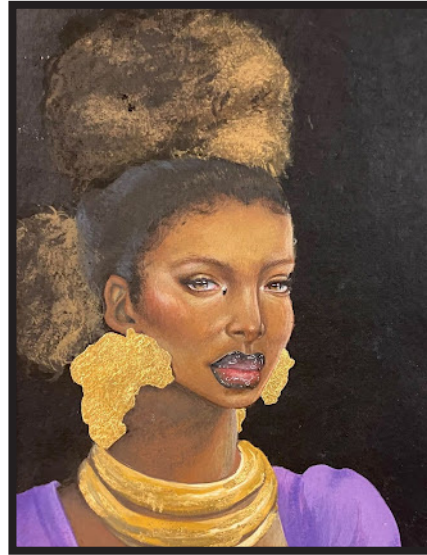
BL: What is your favorite song from the musical?

ZP: It’s a little basic, but my favorite song in *Joseph* would have to be “Close Every Door”. It’s a really beautiful song and the lyrics show Joseph’s inner thoughts when he’s in a tough spot and it’s backed up by a really beautiful melody.

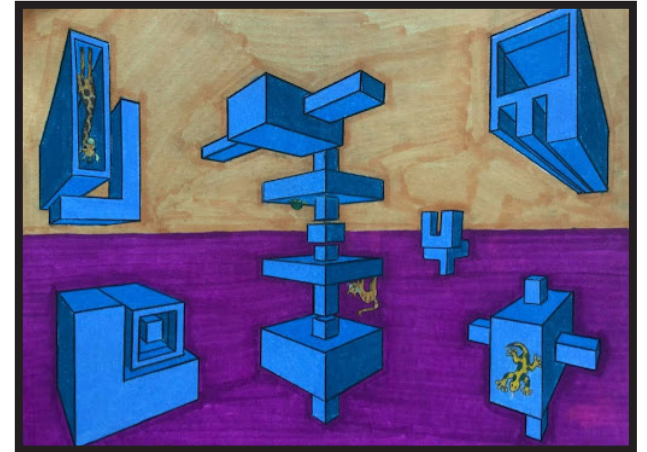




“Untitled”
by Mary Rublero Morales, 6th



“Untitled”
by Azaria Richardson, 11th



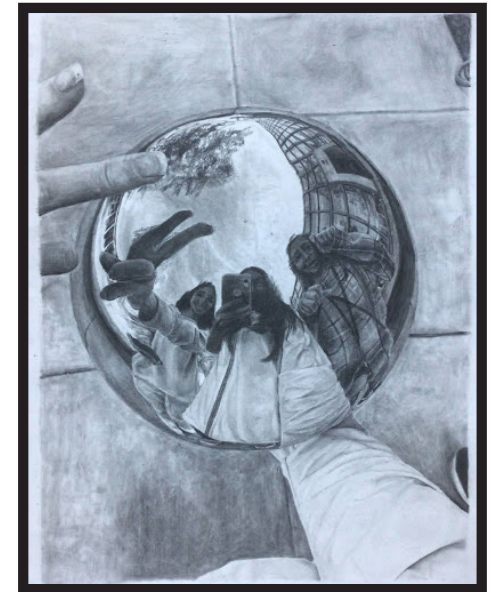
“Untitled”
by Louisa Seminaroti, 7th



“Gotcha”
by Jaidon Richardson, 10th



“Untitled”
by Verde Vasilevski, 6th



“Untitled”
by Audrey Cen, 8th



“Untitled”
by Priya Cardelb, 8th



“Untitled”
by Ella Bailey, 11th



“Untitled”
by Riley Henderson, 7th

SOA Advice Column: Ask Ashley!

After digging through the Applause archive, staff writer extraordinaire, **Ashley Peterson**, decided to revitalize the timeless classic, "SOA Advice Column." With queries coming directly from students (via @soaapplause on Instagram), Ashley was sure to thoroughly answer some of SOA's most burning academic, artistic, and general advice.

Anonymous: I feel like I keep getting walked all over. How do I stop being a people pleaser?

Ashley Peterson: As a fellow people pleaser, I'm aware of how hard it is to stand your ground, especially when it's your friends or people you care about who are walking all over you. Sometimes, you have to put yourself first even when it creates some tension because, in the end, it's your life, and your happiness is more important. The main thing is to learn how to say no. Saying yes to everything people want you to do isn't servicing yourself and, in the end, won't service your relationships. If people take advantage of your kindness, they aren't your friends because real friends will understand that you may not want to do something. It also could hurt your true friendships by building resentment for them when they ask something of you. I'm not saying you have to be rude about it, especially in the beginning, but if they persist after you say no, you may need to be a little more stern about your answer. It takes time to unlearn being a people pleaser all the time, but in the end, it's worth it.



Ashley Peterson

Anonymous: I want to put myself out there more. What should I do to start?

AP: Baby steps are the way I would approach this, especially in the beginning. Don't throw yourself into a situation that makes you very uncomfortable, but do something that will give you a somewhat new experience. You could join a new club or go to an event with some friends that usually wouldn't be your style. Maybe pair up with a new person during a group project or even spark a conversation with the person next to you in class; I have made many new connections with people by doing that. I believe we miss out on so many experiences that we back out of because it's new, but that's what helps us grow. I've found that a lot more people regret not doing something than doing something because, in the end, you tried something new to better yourself.

Anonymous: How do I balance the stress of Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat, 4 APs, and college decisions?

AP: Balancing a show as big as *Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat* can be a struggle, especially going into the second semester, where AP classes are throwing information at you in time for the AP exam. I highly suggest not procrastinating, even though that seems impossible for every student (including myself,) and remembering that both the show and your classes are equally important. Also, don't freak out over the workload before you begin because that will cause you to put it off longer. We are all human, and most teachers understand if you need extensions on assignments as long as you talk to them about it, especially if you're having such a big performance coming up. In my experience, every teacher just wants you to succeed, and going to an art school, teachers and students have to learn to manage academics and arts. Don't only focus on school. Give yourself time to do things you enjoy, like hanging out with friends or watching your favorite show, because the last thing you want to do is get burned out before you finish. As a senior also deciding where she wants to attend college, I know how stressful it can be. You have to weigh so many factors that you didn't realize would come up, like finances and distance, not to mention the whole FAFSA thing. This choice is yours alone to make. Don't think about what your parents or friends want you to do because this determines where you spend your future time and money. You can always change colleges if you realize your initial pick wasn't the best fit for you, but allow it to be your decision, not someone else's.

SOA Vocalist Explores New and Exciting Music Opportunities

by Isis Hanna

Senior Vocal major Sunshine Simons has performed live many times, whether for school, church, or an extracurricular, like singing the National Anthem. She has sung the anthem at many games all over the place, including a College of Charleston basketball game, but this January, she had her biggest crowd yet. She sang at the UCLA @ USC basketball game on the 28th to a crowd of around 16,000 people! She spent the whole

ride up to Columbia preparing for her big moment and afterward received congratulations from USC fans and staff alike. It was truly a moment to behold.

Sunshine has had a passion for music her whole life, and she appreciates opportunities like this not only because she's racking up stage experience but constantly performing helps to reduce her stage fright. She plans on majoring in Music Business at Belmont University in Nashville, TN after graduation. "I want to learn more about the production process so I can sing but also create music for others to enjoy," she told me. Sunshine is already well on her way to being a successful musician, as her first EP, *Journey of Acceptance*, was released on all platforms on January 5. It's exciting to imagine where she will go next with her talent!

When asked how she manages to come across all of these wonderful performance opportunities, Sunshine says it is all thanks to her mom, who helps her apply to various organizations to sing the anthem at their sporting events. Just recently, she received a call saying she has been invited to sing at a Savannah Bananas baseball game in May. If you want to see the legend in action before she gets too famous, grab a ticket!



Sunshine Simons singing at a basketball game

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Congratulations, Austin and Brady!



Laila Henderson



Laila,
"If you think it,
want it, dream it,"
you can have it!
You can do all
things through
Christ who
strengthens you!
Wishing on your
star!

Mom, Dad, and the
Family

Vaughn Hickerson



Vaughn,
We are so proud of you,
Mom, Dad and Victoria

Dublyn Barley

Dearest Dublyn,



Thank you for
sharing your
beautiful gifts
with the world.
You are the
source of light
and warmth
every place you
go.
Love,
Us

Maya Bundy

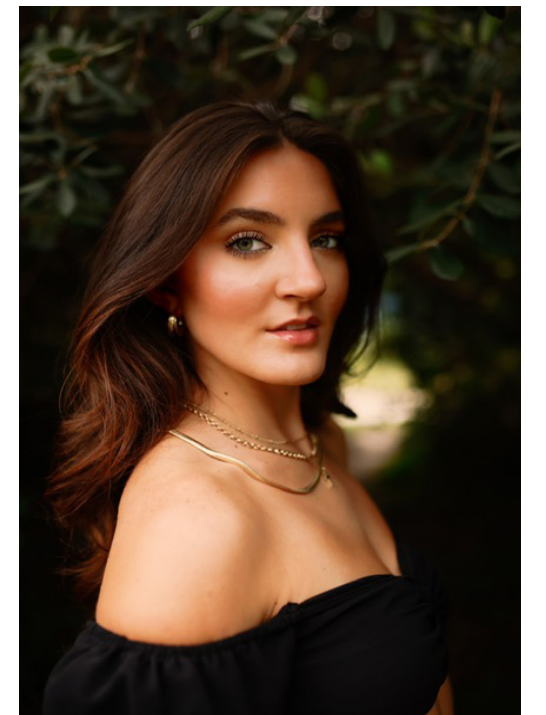


Some folks dream
of the wonders they'll do
Before their time on this planet
is through
Go Go Go Go Go Go Go Maya Bundy!

Vivian Gordon



Vivian,
We are so proud of you!
If your dreams don't
scare you, they aren't big
enough!
Keep shining
Love,
Mom and Dad





Capers Markham

Congratulations, Capers!
Hard work and talent pay
off! Remember the source of
your gifts and continue
using them for the benefit of
others! Proud of you, son!

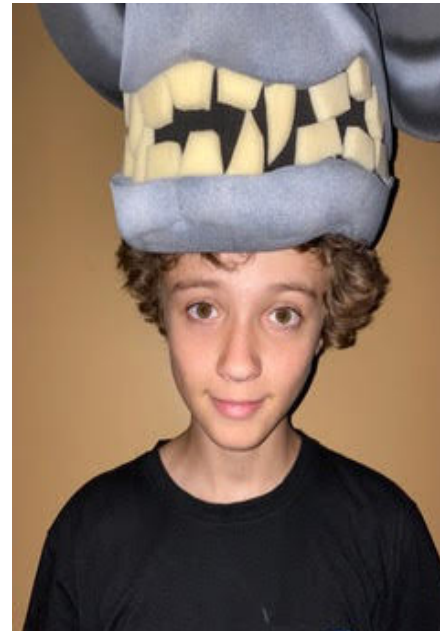


Will Marchant



Congratulations, Will! We
ALL love you!

Capers Markham



From singing in
the backseat of
the car, to sing-
ing on the SOA
stage!
So proud of you
and your
accomplish-
ments!
Love you big as
the sky! Teppi

Emma Roerden



Dearest Emma,
We are so proud
of you.
Your motivation
and determination
to just be YOU
is so beautiful to
watch. We love
you so much!

Vivian Rachman



Vivian,
We appreciate your hard work and
dedication.
Thank you for honoring your
beautiful voice and sharing it!
We love you,
Mommy, Daddy & Sissy

Joshua Simonis



“Yeti” or not,
we can’t wait
to see the
AMAZING
Joshua
Simonis!
Love,
Mom & Dad
(and Yeti)

Brooks Wetmore

Brooks B-
Keep on
shining!
Love, your
whole big
crazy family



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Jessie Leitzel Wins National YoungArts Award

by Linda Garziera

While SOA was busy regaining its rhythm after the winter break, senior creative writer Jessie Leitzel flew to Miami in January for an eight-day all-expenses-paid trip to National YoungArts Week. Jessie was one of three students in the nation to be awarded the YoungArts Award with Distinction in Non-fiction.

YoungArts is a national competition that aims to connect young artists across ten different disciplines—including Dance, Film, Theatre, Photography, and Writing, as well as encourage a lifelong endeavor to create, exhibit, and maintain a passion for the arts. Jessie was among 151 national winners and twenty writing winners chosen for this year's retreat. Some notable past alumni are Timothee Chalamet, Amanda Gorman, Viola Davis, Ben Levi Ross, and Nicki Minaj.

The week started in full swing, with a schedule that ran from 8 am to 10 pm each day and included masterclasses in writing as well as interdisciplinary work. Jessie had no idea what to expect when they arrived. At first, it was awkward and even daunting to talk to other winners. "Everyone was scared," they recall, thinking about the first day. But through the activities and events planned each day, the artists quickly got to know each other and became close friends.

This was particularly true when every night the group would watch artists from other disciplines perform after dinner in the New World Center of Miami. Because the days were mostly spent within their area of art, Jessie would take the chance at dinner and after the performances to talk to people from different disciplines. Here the artists would find ways to bond outside of their art focus, bridging the gaps between them with a shared passion for baking, discussions about favorite movies, their schools, and extracurricular endeavors. One interaction particularly stuck with Jessie: meeting their RA, Honsik Park, a previous YoungArts winner and world-class musician who also works in the field of Biotechnology. "These are the people that make me feel alive," they said. The writing classes were unlike what Jessie was expecting, too. Although YoungArts combined some of the best writers in the nation, the week was spent challenging the traditional approach to the writing process itself, with games that tested the writers' malleability in the process of crafting work. This was also life-changing to Jessie, who realized that "we don't have to be 'good' all the time" but should be "willing to have fun" while creating.

These games were dispersed between masterclasses led by some experts in the craft of writing, with panelists that included the play writer Vanessa Garcia, Grace Tulsan for non-fiction, Noel Quiñones for spoken word, and guest speakers Ana Menéndez, Dr. Joan Morgan, and Christell Victoria Roach. The week was filled with unique activities—one day Jessie would take a theater improv class and another they'd watch a publishing talk with Mitchell Kaplan, the founder of the Miami Book Festival and Books&Books.

As soon as they arrived, Jessie heard people telling them just how quickly the week would be over, but they completely underestimated how true this would be. Meeting people whose art was their "raison de vivre," as they called it, and the week's activities were formative for Jessie's identity as a writer. "It taught me to trust myself and my instincts while writing," something they will carry forward with them through their senior thesis and life as an artist. While they'd thought that writing would be the biggest takeaway from the week, they later realized it was the people. "It also taught me about community; I now have a family that stretches across the nation."

SOA Shares Their 2024 Fashion Ins and Outs

by Isabella Pineda

We're still on the brink of the new year, meaning there's plenty of time for new and old fashion trends to cycle in and out. Every year, we go through countless trends, some of them being incredibly unpredictable and, in my opinion, a little odd. As the more



SOA senior Jessie Leitzel reads from their award-winning non-fiction piece, "The Deer I'll Never Shoot," at National YoungArts Week in Miami in January,

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fashionable counterpart of the Bonds-Wilson campus, I found it fitting to ask SOA students to predict 2024's fashion ins and outs.

Helena Meloy, 12th Grade Strings

Ins: Y2K, loungewear

Outs: brightly colored leggings, flare jeans, high-waisted jeans with a giant belt buckle



Bella Condon, 11th Grade Band

Ins: camo, funky belts, cowboy boots, backless anything, leopard print, jorts (always), chunky jewelry, hats/beanies, babydoll dresses, slim pants, Adidas, piercings

Outs: bras, MSCHF "big red boot," high-water pants, barbie-core, stacked jeans, Zara high-waisted sailor jeans, puffed sleeves, ruffles, microtrends, Heydudes



Kyle Klugman, 11th Grade Strings

Ins: hair accessories, dressing like Spider-man, wearing formalwear to casual places, dressing how you want to dress, dressing like Mr. Martin

Outs: cuffed cargo, crocs, tight-fitting sweatpants, wearing Lululemon for anything but exercise, spending a ridiculous amount for good clothes



Nicko Palilhan, 10th Grade Vocal

Ins: baggy clothes, y2k, grunge, indie/vintage, retro, dark academia, accessorizing

Outs: big colorful boots, skinny jeans, Chubbies, shirts tucked into shorts with a belt, highlighter-colored clothing, loose-fit/bulky pants with fitted shoes, big shoes with fitted pants



Lila Elm, 10th Grade Strings

Ins: wearing whatever you want, vintage leather jackets, baggy jeans

Outs: fast fashion

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Where Are They Now: Sophie Heinold

Since graduating SOA in 2021, former Visual Arts major **Sophie Heinold** has ventured to Virginia Commonwealth University and pursued her passion for track and graphic design. Curious about how her time at SOA affected her college life, Applause staff writer **Ashley Peterson** sat down with her and asked a few questions.

Ashley Peterson: Where are you currently going to school and what are you studying?

Sophie Heinold: I am a junior at Virginia Commonwealth University in Richmond, VA and I'm a graphic design major. Go Rams!

AP: Are you continuing track?

SH: I am! I love my coaches, teammates, and the program. Unfortunately, I am currently recovering from a stress fracture, but I am excited for the outdoor season.

AP: If so, what events are you participating in college?

SH: Hurdles are still my primary event and in addition to the 100m hurdles and 400m hurdles I did in high school, I also started doing 60m hurdles during the indoor track seasons here. I also still do high jump and various open events, and I did one pentathlon!

AP: How did SOA prepare you for college and what you're doing now?

SH: The workload at SOA prepared me for college as well as time management skills. Having to focus on your major and the rest of your classes in high school feels like balancing my college major with general education courses. The SOA visual arts program specifically prepared me really well for college critiques and assignments.

AP: What is your biggest accomplishment since graduating from SOA?

SH: Since graduating from SOA, I have made projects that I have spent entire semesters on so I would say each of my art projects feels like an accomplishment. I built a five foot tall shelf with a ladder, I made a 250-page book in a month, and many more small projects along the way. Not any sort of major accomplishments honestly, the work I create is just the first thing that comes to mind.

AP: Do you do any activities that involve your major from SOA at college?

SH: I would say my major! While I'm a graphic design major, in my first year at VCU as an art major we have to complete the year-long Art Foundations program which consists

traditional drawing classes, woodworking, sculpture, design, and video production. I think the visual arts major gave me a good and diverse skill set to complete all of that.

AP: What are your goals for the future?

SH: Since being in college I've found a love for designing and binding books and zines, so my goal for the future is to continue down that path. I'd love to work for any sort of magazine or anything in print.

AP: How did you balance a sport alongside school and an art major in high school? What is your advice for students wanting to continue their sports and/or art major after high school?

SH: Balancing a sport and an art major is definitely difficult! I think my passion for each of the two helps make it easier. I would say time management is the most important thing. My advice for students wanting to continue their sport after college is to go for it! Meet coaches and athletes visit campuses and see where you fit in beyond just your times and stats. Consider where

you see yourself going to school, not just where you see yourself playing a sport. My advice for students wanting to continue their art major after high school is to also go for it! I would suggest looking at schools other than just art schools. I think going to a large state school with a nationally ranked art program was the best decision for me because it allowed me to meet so many different people and have a well-rounded college experience.



Sophie posing in for her track portrait, ready for whatever hurdles get in her way

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Sophie posing with her piece created at the end of her freshman year at VCU

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Where Were They Then: Coach Butts

Curious about beloved teacher and coach, **Durel Butts'** past, Applause staff writer **Luciano Cusatis** sat down with Coach Butts to ask her a few questions about her time before SOA.

Luciano Cusatis: Where did you grow up and what were your interests as a kid?

Durel Butts: I grew up in Georgetown, SC.

Growing up, I loved playing sports, such as soccer, softball and basketball. I especially enjoyed playing football with my older brothers and boys at school. Travelling with my family was also a favorite part of growing up.

LC: What was your life like after high school and where did you go to college?

DB: After high school, I went to Lander University on a basketball scholarship. Due to injuries and life events, I left Lander and headed to Fayetteville State University.

LC: Where did you work before coming to SOA?

DB: Prior to coming to SOA I was a clinical counselor for Mental Health America. I counseled adults who suffered from various mental health issues and helped them become more self-sufficient.

LC: What made you want to start coaching?

DB: Coaching was my first volunteer job. I loved working with kids and being around sports so I got 2-1. I began coaching four and five year olds in soccer and basketball at the local recreation department. Because it brought me so much joy as a teen, I decided to be a volunteer coach in my spare time in college and during the summer.

While playing basketball in college, I suffered a career ending injury my senior year. After taking some time for myself, I went back to coaching because it's the next best thing to playing. I love teaching kids how to play the sports that I love, watching them mature as a player and develop life skills while doing what they love. Here I am, twenty years later.

LC: What has been your favorite part of working at SOA?

DB: I enjoy spending time with my students and supporting them in their performances. I've always had an appreciation for arts but never have been hands-on involved. I try to attend all or as many performances as possible when my students invite me. It makes me happy to see them sharing their talents with the school, community and soon the world.

LC: Do you have any advice for SOA students?

DB: I love to tell my students; "It's not how you



Coach Butts at one month old in 1977

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Coach Butts in 2004 playing for the Womens Professional Football League

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Sign of the Month: “I Love You/Sweetheart”

by Luciano Cusatis

Demonstrated by Kate Figueroa
10th grade ASL & Deaf Culture



1. Hold your hand with your index, pinky, and thumb up
2. Hold your fists over your heart with both thumbs up
3. Bring both of your thumbs down

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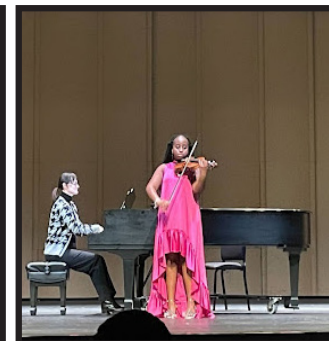
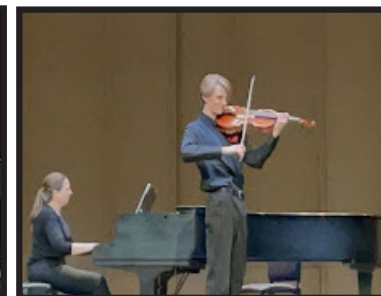


Strings Majors Perform Senior Thesis

Photos by Lucy Cromwell, Isabella Pineda, and Riley Borkowski

On Wednesday, January 17th, senior Strings majors held their departmental thesis, a show that the ten performers had spent the past semester preparing for. Five violinists, one violist, and four cellists took the stage, presenting crisp renditions of classics from composers such as Haydn and Mendelssohn.

Throughout the two hour performance, the seniors kept the audience hanging on the edge of their seats, with Christian Curran, violist, kicking it off with “Sonata for Viola and Piano” by Rebecca Clarke. The last soloist, cellist Adam Kremer, played Dvorak’s “Concerto No. 2 in Minor for Cello and Orchestra.” Thesis ended with two quartets featuring every performer, the first quartet composed of Kayley Genova, Kennedy Mack, Manny Stavrinakis, and Pagelyn Smalls performing String Quartet No. 2 by Borodin. The second, who masterfully played String Quartet No. 2 by Prokofiev, was composed of first chair violinist, Lydia Plante, violinist Carolina Agrest, violist Christian Curran, and cellist Adam Kremer.





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February Horoscopes

by Riley Borkowski and Emma Shelton



Aquarius (January 21 - February 18): Aquarius. Let's Aquarius (January 20 - February 18): Aquarius! I hope you're having a great birthday season, but please remember that not everything is about you. If you want everyone to have a good time, which I know you do, make sure to stop putting yourself in the center of attention. I know you're not a pick-me. You have great intentions, but they keep falling flat.



Pisces (February 19 - March 20): You are doing so great sweetie. It must be tough carrying the weight of the world on your shoulders. Here's your daily reminder to take care of yourself; you deserve it. Read a book or watch a movie. Do anything other than study. I know you want good grades, but you are putting in WAY too much effort. The SAT isn't even that hard, so please, for the love of god, take a break. I'm getting really worried about you.



Aries (March 21 - April 19): You are so cute! I love you! You think so negatively about yourself, but I need you to know that no one else thinks those things. Everyone who has ever met you loves you because you are a sweetheart. Keep doing exactly what you are doing. Don't change a single thing. But maybe get a haircut because your ends are looking a little dry.



Taurus (April 20 - May 20): You have the biggest heart but the most tiny brain. You are so incredibly full of love, and I aspire to be as kind-hearted as you are, but sometimes, you remind me of a little lost dog. It's okay to let your guard down when needed. But remember, not everybody has good intentions. I love you, and so many people would do anything for you, but this year, you need to stop letting people take advantage of you.



Gemini (May 21 - June 20): Gemini, I know you said in the second semester you were going to "lock in" and be an academic weapon, but from the looks of it, you are an academic victim. Just remember, it's never too late to turn in those missing assignments. I can see that you are trying to have the aesthetic of Rory Gilmore, but doing your makeup in the middle of the night to make TikToks will not turn those D's into A's, and no, your teacher will not round your 23% up to a 90%.



Cancer (June 21 - July 22): To put it bluntly, you are nothing like Light from *Death Note*. You are not a "master manipulator." You are just bossy, and people don't feel like arguing with you. Embrace your intelligence, but understand that you are not the only person in the world who can form a coherent thought.



Leo (July 23 - August 22): Hey babes! I love you so much, but I wanted to let you know that some of your jokes are not funny. Yelling "Derp" at random times has never been funny. When you tell a joke, make sure to ask yourself: "Is anybody laughing?" if the answer is no, it probably wasn't a good joke. I hate to be this person, but you are not funny. Try listening to what actually makes people laugh instead of relying on a meme you read three years ago on the Instagram discover page.

Virgo (August 23 - September 22): My sweet Virgo, it's the season of love! While I would say to have a romantic dinner date with your partner to celebrate, I know you will be spending this season dreading the failed relationship you had six months ago, and that's okay. Here at *Applause*, we want you to take all the time you need to get over it, but we also want you to know that they were never good enough for you.

Libra (September 23 - October 22): I know you grew up a gifted child and read at an eighth-grade level when you were nine, but that doesn't mean you should constantly compare yourself in the present to you in the past because, let's face it, AP Calculus is a little bit harder than memorizing your multiplication tables and learning long division. You are doing your best, and that's all that matters.

Scorpio (October 23 - November 21): Please stop flinching when I move my arm. You know I'm not going to hit you, and saying "Please don't hurt me again" isn't funny; it's going to get me sent to administration one day. Please understand that while I love you and find you hilarious, you need to keep your voice down in public spaces because other people exist too, you know?

Sagittarius (November 22 - December 21): You're perfect, and I want you to know that. I know you've struggled for the past few months, but it's looking up. Times are changing. However, I need you to stop being delusional. The first two weeks of the quarter do matter, and cleaning your room won't fix your entire life. Please just turn in your work and listen to your parents.

Capricorn (December 22 - January 20): Capricorn, there are two kinds of people in this world. There are the good and noble people who toast their marshmallows to golden-brown gooey perfection, resulting in a perfectly balanced s'more. And there are the unhinged anarchists who allow their marshmallows to burst into flame, resulting in a charred mess of graham crackers, chocolate, and carbonized

Classic Album Review: *From The Secret Laboratory* (1990)

by Braeden LaRoche

Despite producing an average of one and a half albums a year from 1969 to his death in 2021, Lee “Scratch” Perry consistently released fresh-sounding projects that took Jamaican dub and reggae down new avenues of experimentation, and Perry’s 1990 album *From The Secret Laboratory* is no exception.

As is typical for the dub genre, the album consists largely of sampled recordings spliced and placed over steady reggae beats, though Perry imparts his unique style on each song through his wandering, free-association vocals and experimentations in electronica. Each track is catchy in its rhythmic quality and almost meditative in its steady, unflinching procession and repetitive chorus-like vocal motifs that contrast with Perry’s musical ramblings.

Certain songs, such as “Secret Laboratory (Scientific Dancehall),” “Inspector Gadget,” and “Seven Devils Dead” best represent these qualities, with “Seven Devils Dead” being a particularly excellent use of a beautiful, almost angelic refrain accompanying Perry’s vocals, enhanced by a befitting, organ-centered beat.

In other songs, such as “You Thought I Was Dead” and “Too Much Money,” Perry provides the sole vocal elements, drifting between many topics in his stream-of-consciousness-style vocals. Other songs, still, such as “Push, Push,” feature him singing consistent refrains rather than randomly coming to them in his almost conversational jabber.

While Perry is often satisfied with his innovations in regard to sampling and electronic elements, this album lacks enough variety in these areas. Each song is formulaic, and if one cannot immerse oneself in the somewhat meditative quality of the music, it would begin to bore them. Furthermore, certain songs lack the characteristic flair and powerful rhythms that impart “Secret Laboratory (Scientific Dancehall)” and “Seven Devils Dead” with their memorable quality.

Nonetheless, the album is, as a whole, very enjoyable, and well worth Lee “Scratch” Perry’s move to Switzerland to begin producing records from his “Secret Laboratory.”

Contemporary Movie Review: *Twilight: Breaking Dawn Part 2*

by Emma Shelton

It’s the end of an era. *Twilight: Breaking Dawn Part 2* is the final movie in the saga, and this is my final *Twilight* review. This is the craziest movie I’ve ever seen and such a fitting end to the series. Bella Swan (Kristen Stewart) is finally a vampire and has a terrifying baby, only for her baby to be imprinted on by Jacob (Taylor Lautner). He tells Charlie about Bella’s newfound supernatural status to prevent the Cullens from leaving town with Renesmee (Mackenzie Foy). Then Alice Cullen (Ashley Greene) has a psychic vision of the Volturi (the vampire government) coming to execute the Cullens and Renesmee. This movie is so wild. The vampire government literally pulls up to Forks, Washington, with their army to kill a child. The most soul-crushing, mind-numbing, and emotionally cruel plot twist in the world graces the screen, and then there is a cute montage of Bella and Edward’s (Robert Pattinson) best moments.

I actually cannot believe this film exists; while watching it, I fell into a sort of trance-like state. I think I may have lost my mind. Somehow concepts like werewolves imprinting on children seemed casual to me, and I did not find them inherently strange. This movie is not good, but it is the most entertaining thing I have seen in quite some time. There is nothing like *Bloodshed* and Michael Sheen’s uncomfortable performance as Aro. While I love *Twilight*, I am so happy it’s over because these are terrible. Aesthetically, *Breaking*



Dawn: Part 2 is phenomenal; it seems like an ode to the aesthetics of the entire series and serves as the last glimpse into the world of Forks. Snow-covered landscapes and gorgeous shots of evergreen forests grace the screen, displaying a world that is almost impossible not to fall in love with. *Twilight* as a whole is such a wild ride, but strangely, I think it’s worth wasting your time on.

Contemporary Album Review: *Donuts*

by Jovanny Silva Velasquez

Sampling: the art of using a pre-existing recording in a new interpretation of music. Propelled into fame by hip-hop producers by early stars such as Rick Rubin, Grandmaster Flash, and Marley Marl, sampling solidified its role in hip-hop as an essential production technique and a whole subculture in its own right. Within the midst of it was an up-and-coming producer in the 90s, going under the moniker J Dilla in Detroit. While never achieving true mainstream success, J Dilla’s legacy, influence, and production are not to be underestimated. Innovating a new type of feel along straight/swing (nicknamed Dilla Time,) setting the groundwork for lo-fi hip hop, and defining a new generation of producers, Dilla’s career as a producer broke boundaries and ultimately reached its highest point with the release of instrumental hip-hop album *Donuts*.

Comprised of almost entirely samples, breaks, and loops, Dilla drew material for this album from a variety of genres to create an album that never quite sits still. A key factor of this record that separates itself from other hip-hop instrumentals is how many of the beats featured aren’t keen to be used as actual beats to rap over. This takes away from the “What if I rap over it” factor featured on albums such as Pete Rock’s *Petestrumentals* and emphasizes the musical aspect of Hip-Hop that J Dilla loves. This means that many of the tracks featured on *Donuts* consist of erratic beat switches, rhythms, and grooves that many average rap fans would find themselves confused by. While this may scare off a few listeners at first, the unconventional styles found in *Donuts* begin to grow and I found myself not only grooving to tracks such as “Workinonit” and “Lightworks,” but also fascinated by the artistic choices that Dilla took.

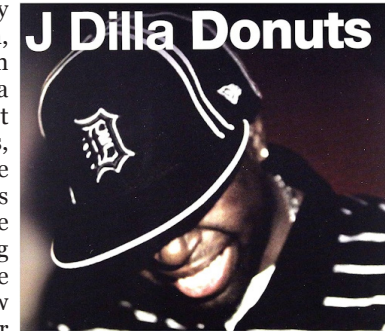
Considering the limitations that were placed on Dilla such as recording many of the tracks from the hospital bed, I was amazed by the sheer creativity from each track. An aspect of sampling, chopping is a technique in which pieces of the sample are completely rearranged. While easier to do using audio software such as Ableton and FL Studio, J Dilla was limited to solely an analog sampler and record player, meaning that he had to go off of ear alone when it came to how/what to chop (a ridiculously hard feat.) The song “Don’t Cry,” for example, consists of 22 chops, while the average producer would only use around 4-8. Outside of being technically impressive, “Don’t Cry” also succeeds in the aspect of sounding like an entirely new song once Dilla breaks it down to a funky soup. Many of the songs on *Donuts* consist of this style, strange, bouncy, and groovy. While the unconventionality may steer you away, a front-to-back listen of the album will absolutely manage to floor you away at least once, and certainly get you invested in the brainchild of J Dilla.

Contemporary Book Review: *The Unhoneymooners*

by Neo O’Dell

When it comes to romance books, they’re usually not my first choice, but after reading the description found on the back of *The Unhoneymooners* by Christina Lauren and seeing all the love that this book was getting, I decided to give it a try. The entire book has a lighthearted, rom-com feel, and if you can get past the cheesy dialogue, it’s a pretty good book.

The Unhoneymooners is told through the perspective of the main character, Olive, who, despite her streak of bad luck throughout her life, ends up getting the chance to go on an all-expenses-paid honeymoon to Maui, but there is a catch: she has to pretend to be married to the man she hates. The honeymoon was won by her twin sister, who had recently gotten married. Due to a terrible case of food poisoning from the catering at their wedding, she and her husband were not able to go on the trip. So she decides to give the trip to Olive and have her pretend to be her, which throughout the book proves to be



harder than they thought.

When it comes to genres within romance books, I typically don't gravitate towards enemies or lovers. Don't get me wrong; when it's done well, it can be really good, but in a lot of books, that's not the case, and in this book, it's mediocre at best. There are several ways that enemies can become lovers, and in the case of this book, it takes the route of miscommunications that lead to constant prejudice throughout the entire book, which ultimately ends up just being frustrating to read. Another thing that I don't like that this book has is the whole "I do like you because I like you" vibe going on throughout the book and it's honestly just annoying and feels unnecessary to put in. It's so overdone; I don't know how authors aren't tired of using it yet.

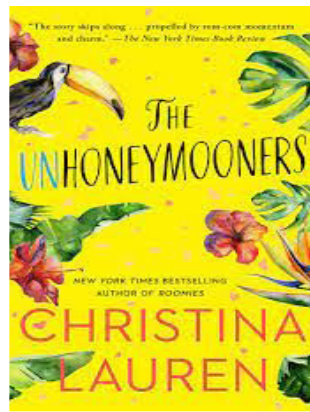
One thing that I did enjoy in this book was the ending. I like that Christina Lauren solves all the problems presented throughout the book by the end of it, which is surprisingly hard to find in a lot of books. She goes through it at the end and makes sure that even the little issues from the beginning of the book are resolved, and I just really appreciate that.

Overall, besides the slightly annoying dynamic between the main love interests, I still think this book is a good read, and I would recommend it to anyone looking for a cute story with a beautiful setting and a lot of misunderstandings. It's good for whenever you need a lighthearted read that doesn't make you think too hard but is still able to keep you entertained through the entirety of it.

Classic Book Review: *The Bluest Eye*

by Elle Baker

Author Toni Morrison won over thirty-two awards for her eleven novels, including the National Book Critics Circle Award, the Pulitzer Prize, and the Nobel Prize in Literature, before her death at eighty-eight years old in 2019 at the hands of pneumonia. Her novels tackle social and cultural issues, struggles with identity, and what it means to be African American, especially as a woman. Born and raised in Lorain, Ohio in 1931 to a sharecropping family that migrated North, many of Morrison's novels take place in her birth state and are loosely inspired by events she experienced in her childhood. Such is the case with her debut novel *The Bluest Eye*, published in 1970 and made to be an instant classic. Opening with a foreword from the author herself, Morrison reflects on the difficulty of representing and acknowledging all the deeply rooted issues present in the novel, believing now that she didn't fully satisfy this intention. She tells the origin story and inspiration behind the novel: a childhood friend, barely elementary school-aged, wished desolately for blue eyes, and Morrison was horrified by her friend, who expected sympathy. The interaction stuck with her for over twenty years until she began writing the book in 1962 and inspired the main issues of the book: race and gender. The book opens with a Dick and Jane primer that serves as a synopsis and represents the "ideal white" life that the main character, twelve-year-old Pecola Breedlove, is indirectly taught to desire. The story is about her life and family, the Breedloves, who live in a run-down storefront and believe that they are irredeemably handicapped in life by their own physical ugliness. Pecola is oftentimes used as a vessel for others' stories, particularly that of her family. One of the narrators, Claudia MacTeer, is also a very present character and is an encompassing view, telling much of the story through other characters' perceptions of Pecola and her family. The story is not told chronologically but is instead divided into four sections, each labeled as a season. Beautifully expository at times and lyrically narrative at others, each chapter is prelude by a snippet of the primer and hyper fixates on a character, telling the story of their lives while also contributing to the overall plot. Characters' morals are questioned and later explained, cogitation is developed, and idiosyncrasies are unraveled through childhood anecdotes. The language and structure of the novel are difficult to follow at times, but it has an ultimately moving effect when you finish the book and realize what a masterpiece you just read. It makes a beautiful statement on our society in regard to



beauty standards, race, gender expectations, and prejudices, and how we treat and raise our children. There isn't too much I can say about the book without spoiling anything, because every detail is so precious, so to anyone curious about *The Bluest Eye*, I would say, read it, and stick with it!

Sixth grade Theater Presents: *Robin Hood: Naught in Nottingham*

Photos by SOA Students

On January 17th and 18th, the sixth grade Theater department put on a production of *Robin Hood: Naught in Nottingham* in the Black Box Theater



Black History Month Trivia

by Luciano Cusatis

1. What year was Barack Obama elected President?
2. What sport did Jesse Owens compete in?
3. Who holds the record for the most total Grammy wins?
4. What baseball team did Jackie Robinson play for?
5. Which black inventor revolutionized agricultural methods?
6. In what year did MLK deliver his famous "I Have a Dream" speech?
7. Which activist's arrest caused the Montgomery Bus Boycott?
8. Which actor starred as T'Challa in the Black Panther movies?
9. Who became the first rapper to win a Pulitzer Prize in 2018?
10. Who was the first African American Supreme Court Justice?

Answers

1. 2008 2. Track & Field 3. Beyonce 4. Dodgers
5. George Washington Carver 6. 1963 7. Rosa Parks 8. Chadwick Boseman 9. Kendrick Lamar
10. Thurgood Marshall

TJ Griffin, 12th grade Creative Writing



Luciano Cusatis

7/10

1. 2008
2. Track
3. Michael Jackson
4. Red Sox
5. George Washington Carver
6. 1963
7. Rosa Parks
8. Chadwick Boseman
9. Kanye West
10. Thurgood Marshall

Axel Gruber, 11th grade Band



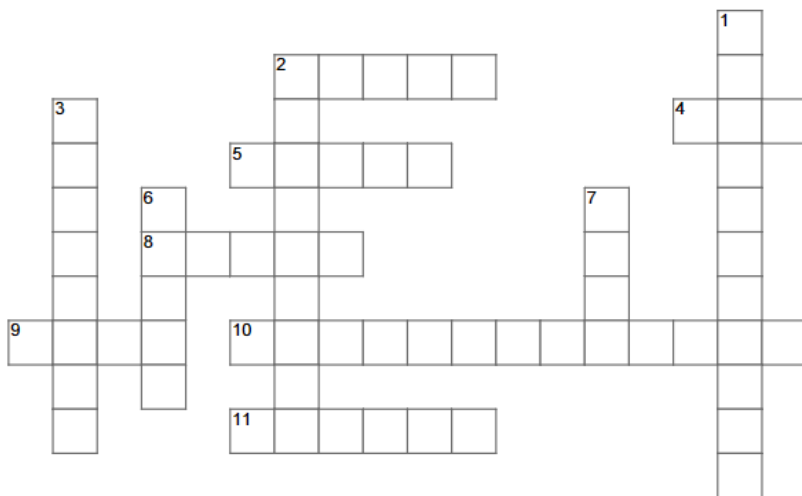
Luciano Cusatis

2/10

1. 2008
2. Track
3. Jay-Z
4. Red Sox
5. Skip
6. 1963
7. Rosa Parks
8. Chadwick Boseman
9. Travis Scott
10. Clarence Thomas

Valentine's Day Crossword

by Isis Hanna



Across

2. Mythological cherub with wings
4. Favored Valentine's Day color
5. Flower given on Valentine's Day
8. When shot with this, you fall in love
9. You might receive one from an admirer or friend
10. The name of the holiday in question
11. "Be ____."

Down

1. Heart-shaped candy with words
2. You might get a box of this on Valentine's Day
3. The current month
6. The sweetest gift to receive
7. What Valentine's Day is all about



Valentine's Day Word Search

by Neo O'Dell

- ADORE
- COUPLES
- TENDERNESS
- CANDY
- DATE
- MARRIAGE
- VALENTINE
- CHOCOLATE
- HEART
- SWEETS

Help Coach Butts find her duck!

by Isis Hanna

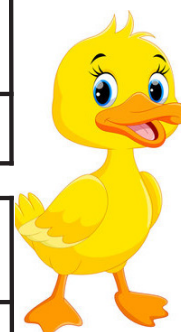
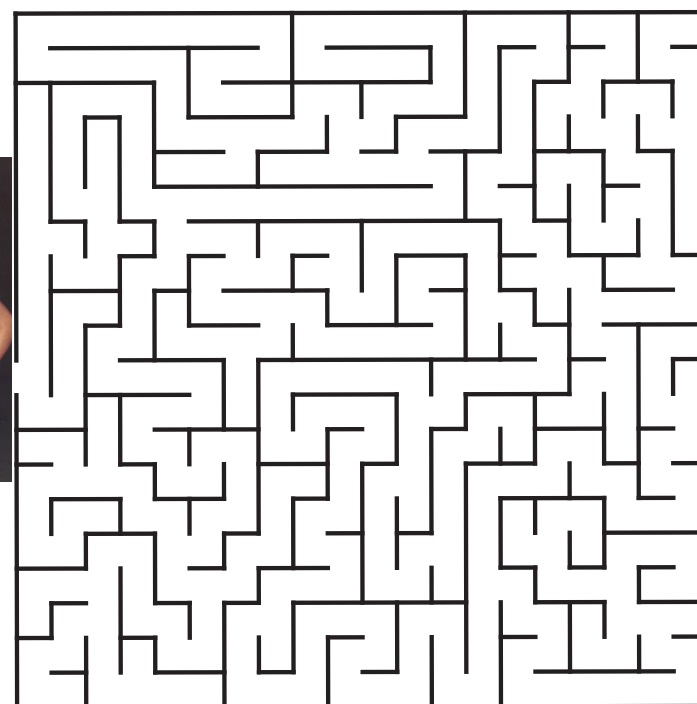
SOA Sudoku

by Isis Hanna

	5		4		3	1		
			9				7	
3		2				4		6
5		6	8		2			
	8			9			2	
			5		1	7		8
4		5				9		7
	6				5			
		8	2		9		6	



20



Copyright



“Blake Shelton. I really like his music.”

Simone Gross, 6th grade Creative Writing



“Walker Scobell because of Percy Jackson.”

Mina Hawkins, 7th grade Dance



“Thomas the Tank Engine, he’s hot as heck!”

Aaron Johnson, 8th grade Piano



“Scarlett Johansson. Just look at her.”

Mr. Hill, High School Spanish Teacher



“Maybe Margot Robbie.”

Mr. McCauley, High School Social Studies Teacher

Who is Your Celebrity Crush?

by Isabella Pineda,
Riley Borkowski, and
Emma Shelton



“Cristiano Ronaldo.”

Ms. Harman, High School Spanish Teacher



“Beyoncé, she’s so talented, and a really good singer, and pretty.”

Alicia Valdes, 9th grade Vocal



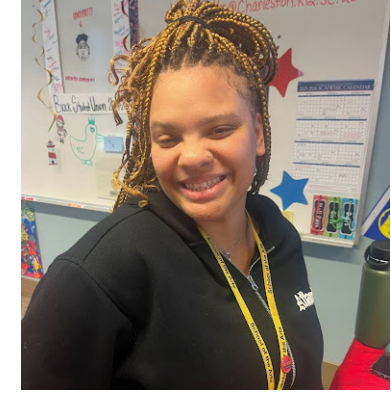
“Timothée Chalamet, I love him in Little Women.”

Maddie Snider, 10th grade Theater



“Not a celebrity, but Mother Gothel. She’s just so mother. It’s even in her name.”

Mads Heffner, 11th grade Vocal



“Robert Pattinson, I want to be Bella when I grow up.”

Alajah Thompson, 12th grade Fashion