

# Applause

Volume 25, Number 9 School of the Arts, North Charleston, SC May 2024



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**From the Editors**

Lovely Readers,

Welcome to the penultimate issue of *Applause* for the 2023-2024 schoolyear. Despite the fond memories your editors have of junior year, we are so incredibly happy to be free for the summer. With AP exams, our demanding majors, and most importantly, *Applause*, we have been criminally overworked (and we know you are too!) So why not sit back and enjoy yet another fabulous issue of *Applause*.

In this issue, we are proud to feature "Sounds Like Teen Spirit!" This will be the seventh iteration of Dr. Cusatis's well-loved SOA/AMHS concert series, and we are over the moon to be its sponsor! This feature will double as the program for the first show, which will be May 5th from 2-5 PM at the Charleston Area Convention Center.

In addition to "Sounds Like Teen Spirit" we've featured the cast of SOA Theater musical, *Big Fish* (pages 30-32), as well as our trip to the Post and Courier! As always, we are endlessly grateful to our patrons and advertisers, and we can't wait to bring you our graduation issue this June.



Your Editors,

Riley Borkowski and Cate Traywick

*Riley Borkowski* *Cate Traywick*

**SOA Calendar**

by Ashley Peterson

**May 5th:** *Sounds Like Teen Spirit*, Charleston Convention Center, 2pm

**May 6th:** *Theater, GnomeComing 2024*, BBT, 6:30pm

**May 7th:** Welcome to SOA Night, Campus Wide, 5:30pm

**May 8th:** MS Band Spring Concert, RMMT, 6:30pm

**May 8th:** MS Mega Art Show, Visual Arts Hallways and Studios, 5:30pm

**May 10th:** MS Theater Adjudication, BBT, 4pm

**May 16th:** 8th Grade Creative Writing Reading, SOA Media Center, 6pm

**May 17th, 18th, 19th:** SOA Music Down in my Soul, Cafeteria, 6pm

**May 20th:** HS Band Spring Concert #1, RMMT, 6:30pm

**May 20th:** *Improv That* - HS Improv Experience Show, BBT, 6:30pm

**May 21st:** HS Orchestra Spring Awards Concert, RMMT, 6:30pm

**May 22nd:** HS Band Spring Concert #2, RMMT, 6:30pm

**May 22nd:** HS Bring Your Best Art Show, Visual Arts Hallway and studios, 5:30pm

**May 23rd:** Visual Arts Senior Thesis, Cafeteria, 6:30pm

**May 23rd:** 7th grade Creative Writing Reading, SOA Media Center, 6pm

**May 23rd:** HS Band Awards Ceremony, RMMT, 6pm

**May 23rd:** HS Theater Banquet, BBT, 6pm

**May 23rd:** Yearbook Distribution Day

**May 24th:** Early Release Day

**May 24th:** Senior Challenge, Parade, and Grub on the Green, school day

**May 25th:** *Sounds Like Teen Spirit*, Commonhouse Aleworks, 2pm

**May 26th:** *Sounds Like Teen Spirit*, Piccolo Spoleto, Hampton Park, 7pm

**May 27th:** Memorial Day (no school)

**Applause**

since 1999, the official student publication of

**School of the Arts**

*Founded in 1995 by Rose Maree Myers*

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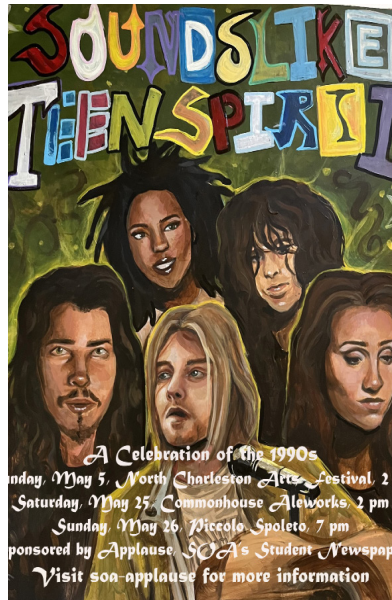
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**In This Issue:**

**Reflecting on *Sounds Like Teen Spirit***

by Isabella Pineda

***Sounds Like Teen Spirit* Set list**

by Isabella Pineda

**Meet the Cast of *Big Fish!***

by Applause Staff

## Sass Attack: Seasonal Allergies

“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.

Outside of law enforcement and a McDouble, there isn't too much in this world that can stop humankind dead in its tracks, unless it's springtime, in which case one might find oneself affected by the dreaded seasonal allergies, a sickness that seemingly comes at the worst possible moments. It begins with that funny feeling that hits you in your throat and you begin to suspect that it might just be an overreaction on your end, but by then it's too late.

Generally, being sick doesn't warrant too big of a reaction. Unfortunately, there's something about allergies specifically that causes it to be unnecessarily cruel. Regardless of all the FAKE science behind it, the symptoms always seemed to be stretched out to an extreme degree. Why do I still have a sore throat after being sick for three weeks at the time of writing this?



Provided

**Jovanny Silva-Velasquez**

Adding insult to injury is the timing of when these allergies strike. It seems like it is always just at that particular moment that I need the full possession of my faculties that my throat fills with mucus and my eyes begin to ache. I barely have time to say “gosh darn it” before I'm lying in bed with a weight on my head and I can't do any school work at all.

I think we can all agree that allergies should be outlawed by the United States government. If Joe Biden runs on a campaign involving the utter annihilation of allergies as a concept, he's got my vote secured. Or Trump, whatever, I don't mean to get political. You know that sentient nose on those billboards in Mount Pleasant? If that thing ran for president on the promise that it would no longer be runny and stuffy and whatever, I would vote for it purely for that singular promise.

Could a nose make responsible executive decisions? Probably. If you have ever read Nikolai Gogol's short story “The Nose,” you'll know that it's possible for this part of the human face to gain noble status. Well, realistically, I don't think that nose has the same ontological designation. That is, the one on the billboard. Different cinematic universes. I don't think Gogol ever met the designer of this one billboard in Mount Pleasant. It's definitely not impossible, though. Anyways, big J, otherwise known as Trepidatious Bogart, out.

## Opinion: How much autonomy should students be allowed in their work?

by Elle Baker

High school is often thought of as a movie-like breeze, with shining prom crowns and bright graduation caps, but the harder parts often go unnoticed. Individually, students struggle greatly— whether it be with bullying, a partner, grades, or home issues, students at SOA often choose their art form as their outlet. In Creative Writing, through personal essays, poetry, short stories, and scripts, students show the deepest parts of themselves, their highs and their lows. Often, the work gets flagged by administration, usually understandably so, and we get called into what we call the “Shadow Realm,” which is really just our teachers' offices where we're summoned after our work raises concerns. Without the amazing teachers that grace our department and our tight knit group, the “Shadow Realm” would be terrifying, intimidating and threatening, but now that we've been getting called back there for years, it's an ongoing joke. We say goodbye and wish each other luck when one of us gets called into the small office connected to the classroom, and even our teachers laugh,

before they gently inquire about our well-being, or whatever the case may be.

In Visual Arts and Fashion Design, students do the same in one literal image or collection, pushing boundaries and conventionality. Whether it be a poem, a painting, or a garment, legal and social obligations from higher ups in the school and district are often a concern as students try to avoid awkward conversations about their art, while administration tries to avoid trouble about just how risqué their students dare to be. Students explore everything from mental health issues to familial relationships to their own relationships to substance abuse issues. Students are sometimes asked to dumb down their work to avoid any problems or attract trouble and attention to their programs from the higher ups in the district. Boundaries and guidelines are placed around what is appropriate to create, intentionally or unintentionally, tearing down the freedom gifted by art in the process.

While it's understandable to want to avoid conflict or unwanted attention for the sake of a few students' work, the message this sends wrecks the time spent in school building the raw honesty and emotional reflection that a good piece of artistic work often requires. At the end of the day, art is a vessel used to communicate. At a school that nurtures these skills from such a young age, shouldn't we embrace this to its full potential? Is it not our jobs and those in power's jobs at our school to ensure a space for students to fully express themselves and exercise their skills?

## Opinion: Coachella Fashion Breakdown

(by someone who wears jeans every day, and a fashion major)

by Riley Borkowski and Emma Shelton

As *Applause's* resident fashionista and editor-in-chief, we took one look at the Coachella wardrobe and immediately shut our computers. guys. we can do better than this. This is not our Coachella. We expected to open our Vogue Runway accounts and have our feed flooded with beautifully crocheted tube tops, denim hot pants, and flower crowns, but our eyes were met with the unfortunate sight of duct tape tube tops and string fringe.

### Kayla Malecc:

Why did you feel the need to troom troom your Coachella top? I just know you were sweating it off within the first forty five minutes, so what made you think it was a good idea? I know you were completely aware of the audacity of your outfit, as you took to social media stating “apparently I'm the first to wear duct tape to Coachella... LOL!” of course you were, but hey, gotta give you credit for embracing the audacity of it all and turning heads in the process. Who needs comfort when you can be a walking, talking fashion experiment, right?

### Lil Uzi Vert:

Babe, its Coachella, why are you wearing fur sleeves and pants. Its time to be fun in the sun! I want to see some skin please, you cant put on some fun sunglasses and act like you have style. Bring the jorts around its Coachella for gods sake. I can feel your sweat through the screen. The worst part is your outfit was ranked one of Coachella's worst, so all that unnecessary fabric was wasted. Shame.

### Young Miko

You got the jorts down, but everything else is up in shambles. Why does your outfit look like that? I can see your efforts of individuality, but I implore you to take a step back and rethink your approach. Coachella is all about expressing yourself, but your mishmash of patterns and textures is giving me a headache. I loved the sunglasses, though.



Provided

**Elle Baker**

## SOA Athletes Shine at Region VII Track and Field Championships

by Luciano Cusatis

Many SOA athletes with AMHS at the Region VII Track and Field Championships at Lake Marion High School on Wednesday and Thursday, May 1st and 2nd. Chanelle Lemon, Aaliyah Lemons, and Znyah Nelson ran the Girls 100 Meter Dash, as well as racing together in the 4x100 Meter Relay, alongside Mackenzie Wilbourn. Mackenzie and Znyah also ran the 200 Meters and did the 4x400 Meter Relay with Sona Harris and Kate Childers. Sona also competed in the 800 Meter Dash and the 4x800 Meter Relay, with Parker Blessinger. Trenton Pinckney raced in both the 110 and 400 meter hurdles, as well as competing in the Long Jump and Triple Jump, and Gio Valdez threw the Shotput and Discus. Rhian Highsmith competed in the long jump and the triple jump for R.B Stall. High finishers from the meet will move on to Lower State and potentially States, so make sure to check out the June Issue to see the results.



Rhian Highsmith continues to eclipse her own school triple jump record for Stall.

Provided



Applause Archive

Senior **Jessie Leitzle** traveled to Washington, DC, to represent South Carolina in the Poetry Out Loud National Championship. As of press-time, Thursday, she had qualified for the finals and was one of nine competing for the National title.

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## SOA Middle School Teacher's Double Life in Sports Journalism

by Braeden LaRoche

Sixth-grade social studies teacher Mr. Rieder has kept himself busy working as a sports journalist for over a decade, a commitment that has afforded him the opportunity to cover the Olympics.

He has published consistently with the renowned magazine *Swimming World*, which sent him to the 2016 Olympics in Rio de Janeiro and will be sponsoring his trip to the Paris Olympics this summer.

Mr. Rieder is also a swim coach and an athlete himself, which originally inspired his interest in sports writing. He told me in an interview:

"I was just following swimming and I started writing blogs once. Someone found them and was like, 'we love how you can use results and see what they mean.' That was when I was fifteen years old."

He writes on a variety of events and often travels in the southeast and beyond to attend them. His coverage includes news, analysis, meet recaps, and meet previews.

Additionally, he hosts the livestream of the annual Coastal Carolina Aquatic Association Championship Meet for WCBD News.

"So much of what journalism is is trying to get something and make sure you get it right but also get it quickly. It's fun and it definitely gets the adrenaline going. You're right there trying to pop off a good six hundred words ten minutes after a race ends, or maybe you pre-wrote something, or maybe there's a great story that suddenly emerged. One thing I love is that you never know where the good stories are going to come from."

A self-proclaimed "history nerd," Mr. Rieder attended Duke University for history and journalism. It was directly after he graduated that he covered the 2016 Olympics for *Swimming World*.

"Being able to cover the biggest sporting event in the world is exhilarating; it's exciting. The stories I know I can do are about the moments that matter the most. It's cliché, but legacies are written at the Olympics, and you're seeing that happen in real time."

He shared how an average day looked for him at the 2016 Olympics: "We were staying an hour away by bus. . . Finals were at ten p.m., which meant the qualifying session started at one p.m."

"Breakfast at the hotel would close at ten a.m., so we'd get up at nine-fifty, race down to get something, and then go back upstairs and shower and get on a ten-thirty bus to the Olympic Park to cover the sessions."

"We'd usually get something to eat before ten p.m. Then the races and writing about them."

"I'd say you're easily there two hours after finals, sometimes more—press conferences or interviews, transcribing, getting your stories written. You're not on a deadline but people are waiting; if you don't get it out, other people will." Mr. Rieder was committed full-time to *Swimming World* after 2016 for a year and a half before switching to part-time, attending graduate school, and seeking a more stable full-time job in teaching while doing journalism on the side.

"Print has become such a hard business, and this is not unique to me—this is a nationwide problem."

"Advertising is just really hard as your primary source of revenue unless you're really good at it, and we've seen massive layoffs in newspapers across the country. You see newsrooms that are a third or a fourth of the size that they once were. It's just a tough industry."

As more and more people get their news from alternative sources like social media, subscriptions are falling for both print and online publications. In order to cut labor costs, some publications are turning to artificial intelligence technology to replace writers.



@David\_Rieder on Twitter

Nonetheless, aspiring journalists should not be dissuaded. Mr. Rieder's dedication to both his students and his writing allows him to balance his two occupations and achieve stability and success therein.

"Do it for the right reasons," he said of sports journalism. "Do it because you enjoy it. Don't do it because you're a fan, because you don't cheer in the press box."

"Also, don't stress about having your life figured out when you're eighteen—even when you're twenty-two—but don't do nothing. Keep your options open, but if you're twenty-four or twenty-five and you don't know everything, that's not the end of the world."

"Just do what you need to do and make sure you find something you love doing."

## Where Were They Then: Ms. Potter

*Curious about everyone's favorite Visual Arts teacher, Ms. Hailee Potter, Applause staff writer, Ashley Peterson interviewed Ms. Potter and asked her a few questions about her time before SOA.*

**Ashley Peterson: Where did you grow up and what were some of your interests?**

**Hailee Potter:** I grew up in Woodbury, Minnesota. I enjoyed playing outside with friends and playing sports. I was never a fan of the snow and cold, which is what led me to move out of the Midwest.

**AP: Where did you go to college?**

**HP:** I got my MFA in Photography from Savannah College of Art and Design in 2017

**AP: What inspired you to get into visual arts?**

**HP:** I have always enjoyed creating art and it's been an awesome outlet for me since I was a little girl.

**AP: Why did you start teaching?**

**HP:** I started teaching because I wanted to give back to students and share my knowledge with them. I truly believe in the power of art and sharing that with students.

**AP: What were your jobs prior to teaching at SOA?**

**HP:** I was a professor of Visual Art at Pensacola State College in Pensacola, Florida.

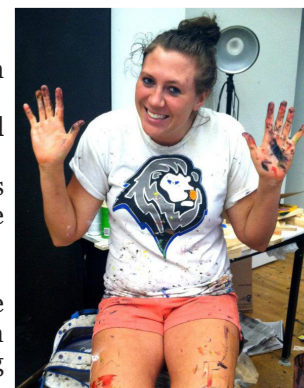
When I moved to Charleston in 2023, I was a substitute teacher and took a long term sub position at SOA in Visual Arts, which is what led me to here. Additionally, I am a professor of Foundation Studies at Savannah College of Art and Design

**AP: What is your favorite part of working at SOA?**

**HP:** I truly enjoy working with such talented and hardworking kids that love art. My colleagues are amazing and this place feels like a family away from home.

**AP: What advice would you give to students?**

**HP:** Never give up on yourself, and you CAN do it, no matter how hard it feels.



Provided

Ms. Potter expressing her love for painting

## Behind the Applause: A Visit to the Post and Courier

by Lucy Cromwell

On a beautiful, sunny Tuesday afternoon, the *Applause* staff took our first field trip of the year to the Post and Courier to witness our paper being printed in real time.

I carpooled with fellow senior staff writer, Ashley Peterson, where we discussed everything from our driving woes to *Applause* matters on our quest to not get lost. The main offices of the Post and Courier are located in a maze

of industrial buildings; Ashley and I were stuck inside the concrete labyrinth until we caught sight of business manager Luciano Cusatis running into the road, desperately trying to direct “traffic.”

Once inside the main printing building, we were led by seasoned professional printers and given a firsthand look into how *Applause*, alongside nearly 50 other papers in the state of South Carolina, are made every day. From the transformation of negatives and digital files into plates to the careful CMYK color selecting, the very first steps of printing are impossibly hard to understand the engineering behind. Past the plate station, hulking digital presses looked like taffy machines, except for paper. The whirring contraptions, pushing out nearly fifteen thousand copies an hour, deepened our understanding and appreciation for the journalistic process. It was truly an immersive experience and a look into the true world of print media.

Our staff bid farewell to the Post with many group photos and a celebratory reading of our paper—hot off the press. We then sped off to Ashley Lanes. A celebratory bowling excursion to honor our eight issues over the past year was definitely necessary, and an *Applause* tradition. Of course, seniors had their own lane, with Dr. Cusatis opting to compete with the juniors. Despite his confidence, copy editor Ruby Varallo crushed him as well as editor Cate Traywick and staff writer Elle Baker. The same GOAT status was not granted to senior Visual Artist Braeden LaRoche, who flushed the ball nearly every time, despite getting blessings from Luciano Cusatis. LaRoche embarrassingly collected himself a whopping zero points, horrifying his teammate Jovanny Silva-Velasquez.

Apart from the great, recreational “team bonding” (as dubbed by Dr. Cusatis), our field trip was a valuable insight into the hidden work that goes into our paper. It provided a lesson on teamwork as well as flexibility and gratitude. The Post and Courier has been a huge help and supporter of *Applause* for years, and it’s easy to see why our staff has an annual pilgrimage to visit the press.

## Applause Staff Members Take a Trip to the Strawberry Festival

by Isabella Pineda and Riley Borkowski

If there’s anything you should know about my friends and I, it’s that our ability to plan and get to outings on time is very limited and nothing short of nightmarish. Miraculously, our plan to attend the annual Lowcountry Strawberry Festival, hosted at Boone Hall Farms, managed to make its way out of the groupchat. We’d known we wanted to do something together that weekend, but had no clue what that something would be until the morning of when Riley sent a voice memo to our Snapchat group chat, asking if we could go to the festival. The idea immediately received a good response from Emma, Lydia, Kate and I and we quickly bought tickets and arranged a plan for carpooling.

We planned to dress cute and spring-like and meet at the festival around noon. However, half of the group decided to meet at IHOP in Towne Center to grab some grub before the event. With Kate coming from Mount Pleasant (bless



Lucy Cromwell



Provided



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her heart) to pick me up in West Ashley, we were a bit late to the party, but we still managed to be able to sit with the rest of the group for a couple minutes while they paid for their food. Soon, we were en route to Boone Hall Farms. It felt so strange to see the farm during the daytime without Halloween scare actors and haunted houses. With Boone Hall being so far from me, I rarely make the time to visit for anything other Fright Night. Not to mention, this was my first time visiting the Strawberry Festival! I was surprised to find that it was similar to a carnival, but with added strawberry-related activities. I was just expecting strawberry picking, a farmer’s market, and maybe a tractor ride through some strawberry fields.

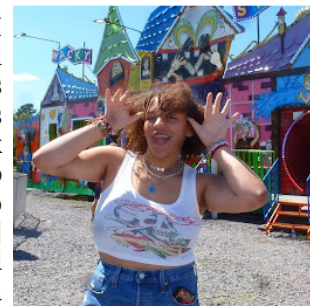
Upon arrival, we instantly grouped together and swarmed the amusement rides, our first ride being the swing carousel. The ride wasn’t going too fast so we found it funny to watch the parents who were hollering and screaming while riding next to their (very small) children. Shortly, we began to board. Riley and Lydia sat together with Emma and I behind them. Kate sat behind us, but was sadly separated from the group and moved to the opposite end of the ride so two younger girls could sit together. In a twinkling, we were in the air and spinning at a leisurely pace. Emma suggested I look up towards the sky during the ride, as it would make it more fun. However, I just felt dizzy. The ride seemed to only last a second and was, in my opinion, a little underwhelming but I felt whimsical. Our second ride, on the other hand, was not anywhere close to underwhelming. We had decided to go on the Screamer, which we later regretted. It didn’t look terrifying when we were looking at it, but we quickly realized how much we’d underestimated it. In no time, we were being swung upside down at increasing speeds while almost slipping through the (unreliable) safety bars. Poor Lydia was curled up into a ball while trying to hold onto the multiple objects that were trying to fall off the ride. We got off the ride as changed people; we were disheveled and Lydia was desperately searching for her sunglasses that had fallen off and slipped through the ride’s bars and onto the ground. Luckily, a mom who was watching her young child get thrashed around by the Screamer grabbed the sunglasses and returned them to our friend.

We couldn’t stomach the idea of going on another ride, so we decided to get rolled ice cream. Considering we were at the Lowcountry Strawberry Festival, it felt appropriate to get the strawberry shortcake flavor. Despite Kate and I messily sharing the cup of ice cream and spilling it on the ground multiple times while trying to walk to the nearest picnic table, we enjoyed it! It was hot out and it felt refreshing to have something cold. That wasn’t enough though. Since Kate and I had missed the majority of the IHOP trip, we were famished. We decided to get corn dogs and devoured them, which prompted me to question if they were actually good or if we were just hungry. Lydia had gotten a large cup of lemonade, which was later passed around by Riley, Kate, and I as a prop for pictures when Lydia and Emma left to go to the Monkey Maze next to our table. Eventually, we got sick of the Monkey Maze dialogue, which Kate had memorized by the time we finished eating, and the monkey-related music and decided to leave to go on more rides.

Our next ride was the hang glider, which I skipped out on since I was wearing a skirt and still needed time to recover from the Screamer. I was defeatedly put in charge of holding everyone’s things and taking photos and videos for them to look back on later. Riley and Lydia (possibly as an attempt to not make me feel left out) would wave and say hello every time they passed me. Lydia stated that, “[she] found it quite funny how everyone was confused on how to ride the hang glider, but [she] had a good time.” After the hang glider, we went on the Gravitron, which was my favorite. I was dizzy the entire time, of course, but I



Provided



Provided

screaming, pausing to lean over to me to ask me questions about the ride, then resume his screaming. Our final ride of the day was the ferris wheel, which had much too long of a wait time, but was still fun to ride. Our group got split up again with Riley, Lydia, and Emma in one cart and Kate and I in the one next to it. We attempted to take cute pictures, but a lot of them weren't that great. We were all starting to wear down.

Deciding to finish out our trip to the Strawberry Festival by getting loaded tots (Emma got loaded tots and we tried bits and pieces of it), taking pictures in another shaded picnic area (these turned out so much better than the ferris wheel pictures), and visiting the BeeHive. The BeeHive, which served as a mental wellness rest area, had to be our group's favorite part of the trip. It was nice to take a step back and relax for a moment and it was neat to see a business, like the Beehive, be based in Charleston and focused on mental health. We may not have done any strawberry picking, but we still had fun and made the most of the beautiful weather.

## Yearbook Staff Reflects on the Yearbook

by Isis Hanna

May is here, and that means yearbook distribution day will be upon us very soon. On May 23rd, yearbooks will be released to SOA and we will finally be able to see this masterpiece that Ms. Hepburn and her talented students have been working tirelessly on all year. Editor-in-Chief Ella Schrecker and Marketing Manager Emma Ladd (11th Grade Dance and Vocal, respectively) gave *Applause* some insight into the process to share with you all.

Making a yearbook is a challenging task, and the staff faced some obstacles along the way. Just selecting the theme took them a whole two months, but they settled on "In The Spotlight," which they felt was the best representation of our school out of the options they'd been debating on. Another difficulty was resisting the urge to procrastinate, which is something we all struggle with, but they always managed to get their heads in the game and meet their deadlines, no matter the price. "For one deadline, all the editors stayed after school for 5 hours and finished up the pages for that deadline," said Emma. It sure paid off, because this year over 700 copies of the yearbook were sold!

Being on the staff requires a lot of cooperation and willingness to adapt, but Ella said her staff were the best at both. "After some time, we all became close friends and it led to some great teamwork moments." Ella's job as Editor-in-Chief was to help assign roles such as writer, designer, and photographer based on resumés that the staff gave her. It was hard at first, as not everyone was assigned their first choice, but the staff adapted and were able to work cohesively to make the perfect yearbook.

This year's distribution day will be a bit different from others in the past. Emma and Ella say there will be food, performances, and more to enjoy while you read your new 2023-2024 yearbooks and reminisce on all the good times you've had. Make sure



SOA Yearbook staff

to thank your yearbook staff for being there with a camera and a notepad to capture the funny, sweet, or sentimental moments you've all experienced throughout this school year. And, if being a part of Ella's staff next year interests you, be sure to sign up for the Yearbook class. You'll find it grants you a whole lot of new skills and possibly some great new friends.

## 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 life advice questions.

### Anonymous: How do I cope with my senior friends graduating and leaving me behind?

**Ashley Peterson:** I went through this same thing last year so I know how hard it is to watch them graduate and go onto new exciting things. As a senior, I'm going to miss my friends in grades below me just as much as you're going to miss your senior friends and it can be difficult to leave a school we've been a part of for potentially seven years. If possible, I would spend time with them as much as you can during these last few weeks of school and into the summer before they go onto this new part of their lives. Discuss how you can keep in touch with them once they leave so it doesn't feel like they're just walking out of your life. Also make sure when they're back in town, try to see them even if it's for a few hours. Change happens and we all eventually will leave highschool; I promise everything will turn out okay and we're just as scared as you are.

### Anonymous: What should I do as a junior towards my college applications during the summer?

**AP:** I highly recommend getting a head start on college applications and your college essay if you choose to do one. I definitely wish I did more during the summer before my senior year because I spent a lot of time stressing over it while I had my senior year classes on top of that. I know that Common App doesn't open until the end of summer but you still have the option to work on your essay; the prompts are usually the same each year so those are easily accessible. You don't have to necessarily write the whole essay by the time the school year starts but have some ideas of what you could potentially write about. Once Common App does open then I would fill in your basic information or as much as you know so you get that out of the way.

### Anonymous: How do I get through these last few weeks of school?

**AP:** Believe me, I know how hard these weeks have been and the coming weeks will be because of these upcoming exams taking over our lives and this summer weather isn't helping those constant thoughts of the break. Especially for my fellow seniors out there, I know it's difficult to keep up with your work when we're so close to graduation and a lot of us have been accepted into colleges. Sometimes it feels like there's no point in turning in work or even coming to school at all but we're so close to the end, we have to power through. This part of the year feels difficult now but it will be over in no time and we will look back during the summer and be grateful we got through it because it was all worth it. Those AP exams may be daunting now but you can only try your best and after those three hours, you're pretty much done with the class. Just keep pushing through; I know we're all burned out but soon we'll all be enjoying summer break!

## Reflecting on Sounds Like Teen Spirit

by Isabella Pineda

The three *Sounds Like Teen Spirit* concerts, hosted by *Applause*, are quickly approaching and performers from both SOA and AMHS have been working diligently every Tuesday and Thursday since February to put together a diverse three hour setlist.

Dr. John Cusatis hinted at the possibility of doing the annual *Applause* concert early in the school year, but things weren't put into motion until the beginning of 2024. He held an interest meeting at the start of February where it was decided that the show would be centered on the nineties with the title, "*Sounds Like Teen Spirit*." Throughout the time leading up to the concerts, performers would post song suggestions into the Google Classroom and a setlist was quickly built. Every rehearsal was spent listening to the music on Youtube, signing up for different roles within the songs, and trying them. Each song would take around two to three rehearsals to perfect then be put away until later rehearsals for review.

Dr. Cusatis, looking back on the past two months, stated, "Despite the initial challenges we faced with all of the majors' pullouts, the kids really adapted and pulled the show together during the last few rehearsals." Since the shows aren't



Ashley Peterson

Cate Traywick



based out of one major, it's been difficult to get everyone together and reserve practice spots and pullouts. However, the rehearsals have been a great experience for all the performers. Keveon Ford, a junior Academic Magnet student, expressed that "it's nice to have an outlet of escape from all the stress we experience everyday." Considering that many of the performers are used to their majors giving them music, it's been refreshing to be able to pick their own. The show's setlist is composed of nineties music from various genres, such as R&B, grunge, latin rock, reggae, and pop. Fellow Academic Magnet junior, Randy Villariza, shared that "Being able to learn all these new songs and jam out with new musicians has really furthered my skills and interests in music-related activities." All of the performers come from different musical backgrounds, so the rehearsals have given everyone great opportunities to learn and grow together.



Eloise Pritchett

Each performer has put in so much work and effort into pulling this show together and is so excited to share a night of nineties music with their friends and family. Farrah Ali, a junior SOA vocal major and two-time performer of the annual *Applause* concert, voiced her enthusiasm for the show saying that "This has been my personal favorite concert to perform in. It's freeing and fun and I'm sure that everyone who comes will have a good time." On behalf of the performers and *Applause* staff, we'd love for everyone to come to at least one of the three shows to support us! As Farrah said, you'll be guaranteed a great time!



Eloise Pritchett

## Junior Creative Writing Major Wins International Competition

by Cate Traywick

Amongst a pool of over 750 essays, junior Creative Writing major Lillian Hughes has been named the winner of the "Live Deliberately" essay contest. This competition, organized by The Walden Woods Project, prompted students to submit essays responding to Thoreau quote, "We, too are out, obeying the same law with all nature. Not less important are the observers of the birds than the birds themselves." With submissions from forty-six states and 11 countries, this is an incredible achievement that has garnered Lillian a scholarship as well as an annotated copy of *Walden*.



  
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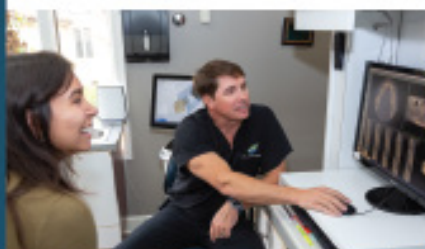
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## The Performers



**Amani Affonso** is a senior Vocal major who has attended SOA since the sixth grade. She found a passion for singing and performing at a young age, and she has been selected for multiple All-State and Regional Choirs over the years. Amani has been featured in the SOA productions of *The Phantom of the Opera*, *Les Misérables*, and *Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat*. She also enjoys dancing in a competitive hip hop team, photography, acting, traveling, and painting! Amani will be attending the College of Charleston Honors College in the fall to double major in Vocal Performance and Arts Management, and she intends to pursue a career in the arts.

**Ella Aikman** is a junior Band major at School of the Arts, who has been playing the French horn at SOA since sixth grade. She has been selected for Region band for the past four years and earned “Superior” rating for the past two years for her French horn solo in the Solo and Ensemble event. Ella also loves to sing at church, which she has been doing since elementary school. She has performed many solos and has earned a spot in the “honor choir” at Montreat. This is her first time performing in the SOA/AMHS rock concert, and she has had so much fun being involved!



**Aidan Aycock** is a junior Vocal major who has been at SOA since the 9th grade. He has been playing guitar since middle school and played piano before that. He enjoys a wide variety of music, but his love of it originated with 90s music. He has his own band and also played the role of Jacob in the Vocal department’s recent production of *Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat*.

**Cameron Barnett** is one of the drummers featured in our 80’s show last year, “I Want My MTV,” and is back again to blow away the audiences with music from the ‘90s. He’s a junior Band major at SOA. His dedication and love for music far exceeds his desire to pursue a higher education.



**Michelle Barrios** is a sophomore Visual Artist at SOA and has been practicing her art since she was four, while also maintaining an equal passion for singing and the beauty of music in general. Ever since sixth grade, she wanted opportunities to showcase her passion, but claims she was always too shy. She has grown to love art competitions and being on stage displaying her musical talents.

## The Performers



**Rin Baylock** is a senior at Academic Magnet High School planning on attending Johnson & Wales University - Charlotte to pursue a major in entrepreneurship down a baking path. The oldest of four siblings, Rin has often had to take on a leadership role, like in their AMHS drum group, The Dirty Birds, where they perform as an active soloist on the quad toms and djembe. Starting off on the drums, then the guitar, bass, ukulele, and even vocal performance, Rin has felt that music was always a part of their life, considering that they started playing those instruments in kindergarten. This is Rin's third SOA/AMHS show, and it means a great deal to them as a musician to be able to perform for the last time during their senior year.

**Max Besta** is a senior Dance major at the School of the Arts. He is a locally known music artist, songwriter, and dancer. At SOA, Max has developed his musical discography and has had the opportunity to perform original choreography through the dance department. In his most recent senior thesis performance, Max collaborated with vocal major Amani Affonso. He danced to his own music that he wrote and produced and choreographed the entire four-minute piece. Max is partaking in "Sounds Like Teen Spirit" as one of his last events here at SOA to showcase the best of his musical performance abilities. He plans to attend the College of Charleston this fall as an Arts Management Major with a Music Industry concentration and continue pursuing music.



**Beckett Carrington** is a freshman Vocal major at SOA. Although it's his first year singing, he was selected for the 2024 Southern Regional Choir and performed in SOA's production of *Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat*.

**Dante Criscitiello** is a freshman SOA Band major, who plays drums, guitar, bass, and piano. He has been playing music since age four. His genres of expertise are funk, rock, jazz, and latin. He has been at SOA since sixth grade. He has performed at Carnegie Hall, Western Carolina University, Smoky Mountain Music Festival, and other venues. This will be Dante's first SOA rock concert.



**Annabella Cusatis** Annabella Cusatis is an eighth grade Strings major at SOA. Before SOA, she attended Ashley River Creative Arts Elementary school where she studied violin under Debby Menick. For six years she was the student of Chris Gawlik, and she now studies with Frances Hsieh. Annabella was selected to both Region and All State Orchestra in seventh and eighth grade. She has been a member of Charleston Youth Symphony Strings and Charleston Youth Symphony Orchestra. She has performed in all seven SOA/AMHS concerts since she was in kindergarten, as a vocalist, a violinist, and a percussionist.

## The Performers



**Dr. John Cusatis** has been performing his audience-interactive acoustic show throughout the Southeast since 1993, the same year he began teaching at St. John's High School. He joined the SOA faculty in 1999, where he teaches AP English and is advisor to *Applause*. He has written extensively about popular music as literature. In 2019 he spoke at the international "World of Bob Dylan Symposium" at the University of Tulsa during the unveiling of the Bob Dylan Museum. He started the SOA/AMHS concert series in 2016.

**Luciano Cusatis** is a sophomore Strings major at School of the Arts. He has been at SOA since sixth grade and has been playing the cello since second grade, beginning at Ashley River Creative Arts Elementary. He has been a part of the Region Orchestra for the past four years, and All-State in 2022. He is also a sophomore class representative on the SOA Student Council. He has performed in all seven SOA/AMHS rock concerts.



**Ella Duffy** is a junior vocal major at SOA. She has been a part of All-State Choir since seventh grade and also participated in ACDA's National Choir last year. Although she's a vocal major, Ella is an active member of her local theater community. Ella has loved performing from a young age and hopes to continue to pursue theater in the future.

**Keveon Ford** is a junior at Academic Magnet and has been playing guitar since his sophomore year. He is a guitarist for his band, Bring The Hype, along with other amazingly perfect performers today, that being Donovan, Randy, Isa, and Sam. If like what you hear today don't hesitate to reach out and let them know. Hope you enjoy the show!!



**Rhetta Foster** is enjoying her seventh year of teaching English at School of the Arts. In addition to teaching, she loves to sing, dance, read, play tennis, travel, and revel in nature. Music has always been a central part of her life, from playing the piano and viola in her younger years, to singing with bands as an adult. Rhetta is very thankful for her husband George, and twins, Willa and Jonas, with whom she is living her best life!

## The Performers



**Law Fox** is a senior Theater major at SOA. He has performed in many shows since childhood, notably playing Moritz in *Spring Awakening* and the title character in *Hamlet*. Aside from his acting experiences and accolades, he began playing acoustic guitar two years ago, and he now writes and performs his own songs. “Sounds Like Teen Spirit” will be his first live music performance, and he can’t wait to continue growing as an actor and musician throughout his career.

**Donovan Hamilton** is the Junior Class President at Academic Magnet and he enjoys singing and grooving on the bass guitar as well as some acoustic guitar. He’s a proud musician for the Student band Bring The Hype and an outstanding athlete for Magnet’s Football and Track & Field teams. He’s an open-minded optimist and looks forward to creating relations and bonds with all sorts of people!



**Isaac Hilton** is a senior who has been playing instruments since he was three years old, mostly the drums. He has been at SOA since ninth grade and plays for SOA’s Wind Ensemble and the SOA Jazz Band as a percussionist. His fondest memory related to music is when he played drums at church in front of a large crowd for the first time at the age of eight. He is thankful for his God-given talent and hopes to share his passion for music with the world someday.

**Jack Hinske** is a senior Vocal major at School of the Arts. He has been performing on stage since middle school. He has appeared SOA’s production of *Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat* and *Les Miserables*. Jack has played piano and sung since he was a young child. He was a standout as both performer and emcee of last year’s concert, “I Want My MTV.” He loves ‘90s music and is thrilled to be performing today!



**Dennora Legare** is a sophomore Dance major at School of the Arts and has always been warmly interested in music and performance. She has been singing almost as long as she has been dancing, but without the same professional guidance that she gets as a dance major at SOA. Outside of school, she spends her time singing and playing such instruments as the piano and ukelele, as well as older instruments like the lyre, but she’s never had an actual outlet for this hobby. Dennora is excited to perform in Sound Like Teen Spirit this May, and spread that same warm, long-time passion of hers with others.

## The Performers



**Emani McNeal** has always enjoyed every type of music. She is a sophomore band major at SOA, and she also is a singer-songwriter. She looks forward to being part of “Sounds Like Teen Spirit”!

**Marley Rose Mendes** is a freshman Vocal major at School of the Arts. From a young age, she’s been involved in many on-stage productions and received intensive training in both vocal and musical theatre. She is so excited to be getting her feet wet in this style of performance, thanks to Dr. Cusatis.



**Rex Mincey** is a sophomore Vocal major at SOA. She’s performed in productions such as *SpongeBob the Musical* and *Phantom of the Opera*. In fourth grade, she was also played the Evil Stepmother in a production of *Cinderella* at Sires Eugene Elementary. She performed as part of the ACDA Southern Regional Choir in Kentucky in February. She is excited to participate in “Sounds Like Teen Spirit.”

**Alex Muñoz** is a junior Visual Artist at SOA. He’s been here since sixth grade, but he started growing an interest in music when he was thirteen. He has been a self-taught guitarist since then, and last year’s show, “I Want My MTV” gave him the opportunity to step out of his comfort zone and learn more about music with others who share his love for it. This year will be his second time playing for the band. Compared to the 80’s performance, the number of songs he’s playing on has increased considerably, which he’s really excited about.



**Sam Persinger’s** musical journey started young, rising to first chair percussionist in his middle school band. Now as a junior at Academic Magnet, Sam has joined several different groups, including the Jazz Band and the Dirty Birds, and is the proud drummer for Bring the Hype! He also plays for his youth group at Life Park and plays professionally for his church. Sam is thankful for the many opportunities he has found to play music, and for the many talented musicians he has met along the way.



## The Performers



**Isabella Pineda** is a junior Strings major at SOA. She began studying music in elementary school when she took piano lessons for a year at Carolina Voyager Charter School. She moved on to playing violin and participating in choir after transferring to Ashley River Creative Arts in the fourth grade. She taught herself basic guitar skills a few years later and has continued to sing and play violin and guitar. She hopes to continue progressing as a musician while performing with her friends.



**Ruby Reddington** is a sophomore Vocal major at SOA. She has performed in SOA's productions of *Phantom of the Opera* and *Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat*. She comes from a musical family and plays multiple instruments such as drums, bass, and guitar. She's enjoyed singing from a very young age.



**James Robertis** is a junior Strings and Band Major at SOA. He has been playing guitar for more than a decade. James also plays upright and bass guitar. He started building guitars several years ago.



**Jovanny Silva-Velasquez** is a senior Piano major at SOA and has a passion for music production and performance. He loves playing pretty much anything, especially jazz, RNB, and funk. He performed last year at the Pour House for the *Applause 80's* concert, "I Want My MTV," and he is excited to go for one more round. He cites influences such as Kanye West, J Dilla, D'Angelo, and James Poyser.



**Sunshine Simons** is a senior Vocal major at SOA. She has been involved in many music activities; she sings and plays guitar in her church's worship band, has been apart of many musicals, and released her very first EP "Journey of Acceptance" this past January! Sunshine plans to study Music Business with an emphasis in Music Production at Belmont University in Nashville, Tennessee this fall. Music means everything to Sunshine, so she is elated to perform in "Sounds Like Teen Spirit" with many other talented musicians!!

## The Performers



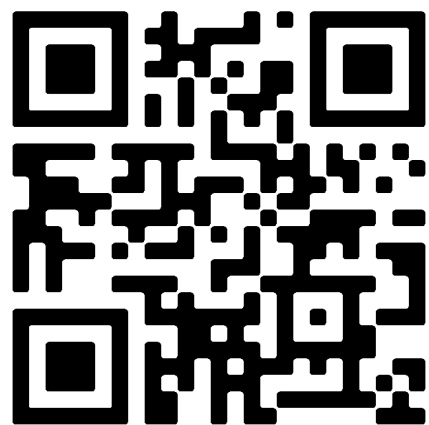
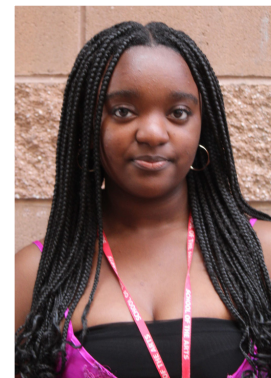
**Randy Villariza** is a junior at Academic Magnet and 5-time South Carolina Music Teachers Association state champion for piano. Playing piano since the age of two, with a lot of interest shown in guitar and bass guitar, Randy has always had a liking for music, but has just discovered his profound love for music since joining the prestigious high school band “Bring the Hype.” Randy is grateful to the founder of Bring the Hype, Keveon Ford, for giving him the opportunity to show off his skills on the big stage.

**Trowbridge Weeks** is a junior at Charleston County School of the Arts. He is primarily a violinist and has studied the instrument in a classical setting since he was six years old. He has qualified for the South Carolina All-State Orchestra every year since 2020 and was a member of the SOA Sinfonietta when that group won the Grand Prize at the ASTA National Orchestra Festival. Outside of a classical environment, he has been learning guitar independently since he was eight, and mandolin since he was fourteen. Trow is super excited to participate in recreating the music of the 1990s with fantastic youth musicians from SOA and Academic Magnet.



**Callie Williams** is a freshman Strings major at School of the Arts. She has been playing violin since kindergarten and recently started playing viola. While she is passionate about classical music, she is excited to explore playing other genres in “Sounds Like Teen Spirit,” especially since she loves ‘90s music (thanks to cleaning and singing with her mom). She’s always been focused on violin, but has taken voice lessons from time to time and has been encouraged to continue.

**Zoë Winston** is a sophomore Vocal major at School of the Arts. She has been selected for South Carolina All-State Choir for five years and recently participated in the Southern Region Honor Choir during February. Zoë enjoys singing different genres of music and is excited to share the stage with her talented peers.



***Applause* is overjoyed to feature talented young musicians and present the SOA/AMHS concert series free of charge! To support our annual concert as well as our monthly paper please consider becoming an *Applause* patron! Scan the provided QR code to direct you to our RevTrak.**

**The Duffy Family Supports “Sounds Like Teen Spirit!”**

## Program of Events

*The order and selection of songs is likely to differ among the three shows.*

### **“Nothing Compares 2 U,” Sinead O’Connor (1990)**

Zoe Winston, vocals; John Cusatis, guitar; James Robertis, bass; Luciano Cusatis, cello, Callie Williams, violin

### **“There She Goes,” The La’s (1990)**

Sunshine Simons, vocals, guitar; Amani Affonso, vocals; Ella Duffy, vocals; Max Besta, guitar; James Robertis, bass; Sam Persinger, drums

### **“Don’t Let the Sun Go Down on Me,” George Michael and Elton John (1991)**

John Cusatis, vocals, guitar; Beckett Carrington, vocals; James Robertis, bass; Cam Barnett, drums

### **“Losing My Religion,” REM (1991)**

John Cusatis, vocals, guitar; Jack Hinske, vocals; James Robertis, bass; Cam Barnett, drums; Trow Weeks, mandolin

### **“It Ain’t Over ‘Til it’s Over,” Lenny Kravitz (1991)**

Emani McNeal, vocals; Zoe Winston, vocals; Rin Baylock, guitar; Dante Criscitiello, bass; James Robertis, drums; Jovanny Silva Velasquez, keyboard

### **“Smells Like Teen Spirit (Unplugged),” Nirvana (1991)**

Sunshine Simons, vocals, guitar; Ella Aikman, vocals; Donovan Hamilton, vocals; Keveon, guitar; James Robertis, bass; Sam Persinger, drums

### **“If I Had a Million Dollars,” Bare Naked Ladies (1992)**

John Cusatis, vocals, guitar; Jack Hinske, vocals; Keveon Ford, guitar; James Robertis, bass; Cam Barnett, drums (brushes); Randy Villariza, keyboard; Trow Weeks, mandolin

### **“What’s Up,” 4 Non Blondes (1993)**

Rhett Foster, vocals; Sunshine Simons, vocals; John Cusatis, guitar; Alex Munoz, guitar; James Robertis, bass; Cam Barnett, drums

### **“Fade Into You,” Mazzy Star (1993)**

Michelle Barrios-Aguilar, vocals; Dennora Legare, vocals; Aidan Aycock, guitar; Keveon Ford, guitar; Donovan Hamilton, bass; Sam Persinger, drums; Randy Villariza, keyboard

**“Creep,” Radiohead (1993)**

Sunshine Simons, vocals, guitar; Marley Mendez, vocals; James Robertis, bass; Sam Persinger, drums; Randy Villariza, keyboard

**“Linger,” The Cranberries (1993)**

Sunshine Simons, vocals; Ella Duffy, vocals; Amani Affonso, vocals; Max Besta, guitar; Aidan Aycock, guitar; James Robertis, bass; Cam Barnett, drums

**“Cryin’,” Aerosmith (1993)**

Sunshine Simons, vocals, guitar; Keveon Ford, guitar; Donovan Hamilton, bass; Sam Persinger, drums; John Cusatis, harmonica

**“Mary Jane’s Last Dance,” Tom Petty and the Heartbreakers (1993)**

John Cusatis, vocals, guitar, harmonica; Keveon Ford, vocals, guitar; Donovan Hamilton, bass; Cam Barnett, drums

**“Hurt,” Nine Inch Nails (1994)**

Law Fox, vocals, guitar; Max Besta, guitar

**“1979,” Smashing Pumpkins (1995)**

Max Besta, vocals, guitar; James Robertis, bass; Dante Criscitiello, drums

**“Always Be My Baby,” Maria Carey (1995)**

Farrah Ali, vocals; Alex Munoz, guitar; Sam Persinger, drums; Randy Villariza, keyboard

**“Killing Me Softly,” Fugees (1996)**

Isa Pineda, vocals; Alex Munoz, guitar; Randy Villariza, bass; Sam Persinger, drums

**“One Hand in My Pocket,” Alanis Morissette (1995)**

Rhett Foster, vocals; Rex Mincey, vocals; Sunshine Simons, vocals; James Robertis, guitar; Dante Criscitiello, bass; Trow Weeks, drums; John Cusatis, harmonica

**“Criminal,” Fiona Apple (1996)**

Ruby Reddington, vocals; Trow Weeks, guitar; Cam Barnett, drums; Randy Villariza, keyboard

**“I Will Survive,” Cake (1996)**

John Cusatis, vocal, guitar, Keveon Ford, guitar, James Robertis, bass, Cam Barnett, drums

**“Kiss Me,” Sixpence None the Richer (1997)**

Sunshine Simons, vocals, guitar; Amani Affonso, vocals; Sam Persinger, drums; Callie Williams, violin

**“Santeria,” Sublime (1997)**

John Cusatis, vocals, guitar; Marley Mendes, vocals; Keveon Ford, guitar; Sam Persinger, drums

**“Make You Feel My Love,” Bob Dylan (1997)**

John Cusatis, vocals, guitar, harmonica; Dennora Legare, vocals; Luciano Cusatis, cello; Annabella Cusatis, violin

**“Doo Wop (That Thing),” Lauryn Hill (1998)**

Marley Mendes, vocals; Zoe Winston, vocals; Emani McNeal, vocals; Donovan Hamilton, bass; Isaac Hilton, drums; Jovanny Silva Velasquez, keyboard

**“Thank You,” Dido (1998)**

Marley Mendes, vocals; Zoe Winston, vocals; Alex Munoz, guitar; James Robertis, bass; Cam Barnett, drums; Rin Baylock, congo drum

**“Cathedrals,” Jump, Little Children (1998)**

Law Fox, vocals, guitar; Luciano Cusatis, cello; Callie Williams, violin

**“Duvet,” Boa (1998)**

Marley Mendes, vocals; Emani McNeil, vocals; Alex Munoz, guitar; Sunshine Simmons, guitar; Donovan Hamilton, bass; Sam Persinger, drums; Randy Villariza, keyboard

**“Corazón Espinado,” Santana (1999)**

Isa Pineda, vocals; Keveon Ford, guitar; Donovan Hamilton, bass; Randy Villariza, keyboard

**“Say My Name,” Destiny’s Child (1999)**

Farrah Ali, vocals; Zoe Winston, vocals; Isa Pineda, vocals; Keveon Ford, guitar; Donovan Hamilton, bass; Sam Persinger, drums; Randy Villariza, keyboard

**“All Star,” Smash Mouth (1999)**

Isa Pineda, vocals; Keveon Ford, guitar; Donovan Hamilton, bass; Sam Persinger, drums; Randy Villariza, keyboard

**“Paper Bag,” Fiona Apple (1999)**

Isa Pineda, vocals; Donovan Hamilton, bass; Sam Persinger, drums; Randy Villariza, keys

**“Hold My Hand,” Hootie & the Blowfish (1994)**

John Cusatis, vocals, guitar; Ella Aikmen, vocals; Aidan Aycock, vocals; James Robertis, bass; Cam Barnett, drums

## Behind The Scenes



**Cate Traywick** is a junior Creative Writing major at School of The Arts. Her creative work has won three Gold Keys at the Scholastic awards as well as been published in numerous literary anthologies. After six years at SOA, her passion for writing has blossomed into an ardent love for art in every form. Outside of her major, she is Co-Editor-In-Chief of *Applause*, sails competitively, journals habitually, and has recently picked up the acoustic guitar. Her favorite '90s artists include Pearl Jam and Phish. She has assisted in managing the graphics and business side of "Sounds Like Teen Spirit" and is incredibly honored to share a room with the talented musicians performing.

**Ella Rogers Kay** is a junior Visual Artist at SOA. She is a huge '90s grunge fan and saw the opportunity to combine the two things she loves, art and music. Some of her favorite '90s bands include Alice In Chains, Melvins and Janes addiction. Ella has been a student at SOA since 6th grade and has a deep passion to do what she loves. As an *Applause* staff member she took the opportunity Dr. Cusatis presented her, and created a beautiful work of art used for the program and posters.



## Past Applause Rockumentaries



## Sunshine Simons



Sunshine,  
 You were born to  
 be a STAR!  
 Never stop being  
 you!  
 Love Mom and  
 Daddy Rob

## Zoe Winston



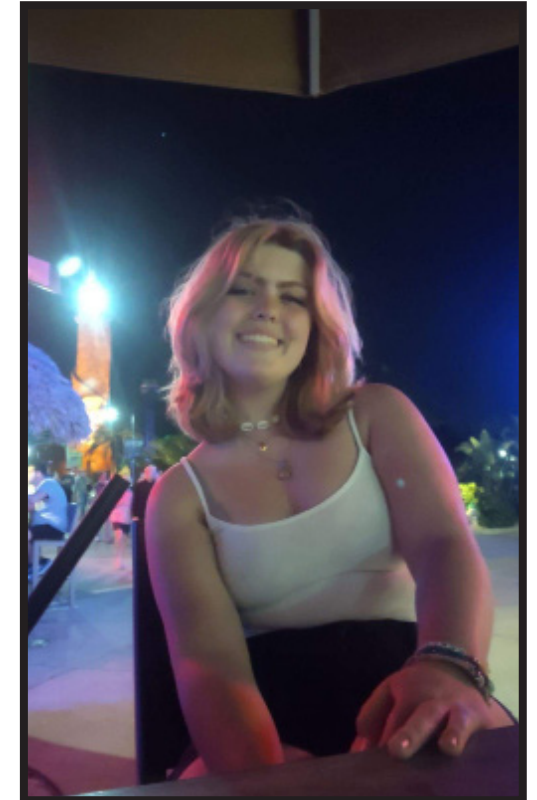
Always cheering you on!  
 Love Jennifer (Mom),  
 Destiny (Sis), Dezmond  
 (Bro), and Nick (Bro).  
 Keep shining bright, Zoe.  
 Zealous  
 Outgoing  
 Encouraging

## Callie Williams



HAPPY BIRTHDAY, CALLIE!  
 “When you were 3-years-old on  
 your daddy’s knee, we said you can  
 be anything you wanna beeeee!”  
 Now you’re 15, and it holds true  
 because you really can do it all, even  
 cut your own bangs!  
 We love you so much and are so  
 proud of you!

Love, Mommy and Daddy





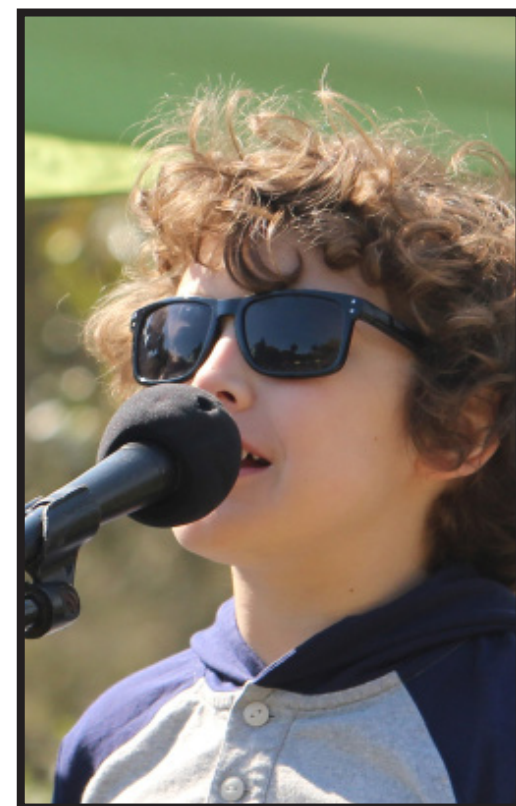
## Luciano and Anabella Cusatis

“May your heart always be joyful / May your song always be sung/ And may you stay ... forever young.”

-Bob Dylan

So proud of you!

Love,  
Daddy, Mama, Giovanni,  
Gemma, and Smokey



## Randy Villariza



Randy, your piano performance is not just music to our ears, but also the sweet sound of our happiness.

Love,  
Mama, Daddy and  
Reggie

## Law Fox



As you step onto stage to share your debut as a musician- your journey as a performing artist continues to blossom. Heading to NYC to pursue your BFA in Acting, your dedication to honing your craft shines brightly. Bursting with pride, we're certain your future will shine brightly on every stage!



## '90s Music Memories

Applause asked SOA teachers to share their favorite musical memories from the '90s. Featured below are memories from teachers of Spanish to Biology to Theater, all with fond memories of '90s music.

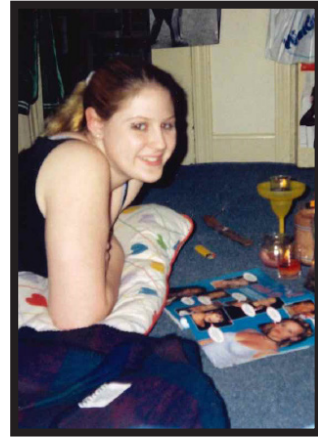


### Durel Butts

In my opinion, the 90s are the best era ever; for everything! Most of my all time favorite groups and songs are from the 90s era. I attended high school from 1991-1995. Some of my favorite artists were Prince, Mary J Blige, Snoop Dogg, Linkin Park, TLC, Hootie & The Blowfish, Boyz 2 Men, Tupac, Biggie, Aerosmith, Backstreet Boys, Red Hot Chili Peppers and Michael Jackson to name a few. Growing up, I was blessed to see Prince, Tina Turner, Ray Charles, Patti Labelle, PussyCat Dolls & Hootie & the Blowfish in concert. In 1995, one of my graduation presents was 5 tickets for me & my besties to see Boyz 2 Men & Brandy in concert. We had the time of our life! It was the 1st concert I attended without my parents. I'll never forget it.

### Leslie Campbell

Being a teenager in the '90s in a small farm town in South Carolina meant that if we wanted to hear great live music we had to make our way to Columbia and sometimes Charlotte or Atlanta if we had money for gas. I've been to some awesome shows downtown in Columbia at places like New Brookland Tavern and the Elbow Room. One memory that stands out that I still think about is going to the Elbow Room to see Jump little Children and having the best time but while in the concert my purse got stolen out of my brothers car but the person that broke into his car left a Snickers candy bar on the center console so I guess it was a win win.



### Dayton Colie

Charleston in the early 90s was a sidestop for several bands, and was the launching point for Hootie and the Blowfish, Edwin McCain, and Jump, Little Children. Several touring acts would stop and play here because they loved the city. I saw the Dead Milkmen at the Music Farm, the Ramones at Myskyns (still can't believe that happened), and went to this music festival hosted by the legendary radio station 96 Wave called Free Fall Jam. I lived downtown for the entire decade, so I was able to walk or ride my bike everywhere, but my vehicle of choice at the time was my 1974 Volkswagen. Song vibe of the time = 1979 by Smashing Pumpkins. Here's a photo from me in a main stage production at College of Charleston (4 Musketeers, Fall of 95 I believe).

### Rhetta Foster

So many of my memories from the '90s, which spanned from my middle school to college years, are wrapped in music, often in cars, and almost always with my best buds. Coasting down the road in my friend's 1970's Polara while attempting to harmonize to Phish's "Bouncin' Round the Room" on a jam box, because there was only a radio in this boat of a car that he bought for 200 dollars, and blasting Dr Dre and Snoop Dog, and knowing every word, in my friend's Prelude with her brand new CD player and speakers, instantly come to mind. Listening to "Fade into You" in the car with my wanna-be Kurt Cobain/ Jim Morrison high school boyfriend, and then to "Glycerin" by Bush, after we broke up, and forever connecting the two thereafter. Beyond the car were some really fun shows with the most notable being the Grateful Dead in 1995, just months before Jerry Garcia died. I also saw Phish (multiple times), Dave Matthews, Willie Nelson, Live, and various bands at the H.O.R.D.E. Festival, and Lilith Fair. The late '90s took me into the world of indie rock with bands like Neutral Milk Hotel and so many more..... '90s music was and will always be the soundtrack to my life!





### Liz Galizia

I am so glad to have come of age in the 90s, what I consider one of the best decades ever, especially for music. We had CDs, thanks to good 'ol Columbia House, but our cars still had tape decks. My best friend and I made so many mixed tapes of our favorite bands: Metallica, The Smashing Pumpkins, Sublime, The Counting Crows, Bush, Seven Mary Three, Everclear, SilverChair, Blind Melon, Pearl Jam, Green Day, I could go on and on. If you haven't, listen to these bands; they are some of the greatest!

### Jennifer Gomez

I was lucky enough to learn my music during the 80s (high school) and 90s (college); my taste in music was (and still is) eclectic. I was lucky enough to see Billy Joel \*and\* Def Leppard in concert, as well as Tom Petty \*and\* Aerosmith. One of my fondest music memories is attending the H.O.R.D.E festival [Horizons of Rock Developing Everywhere] in Maine in the summer of 1993. We saw a bunch of bands (Blues Traveler, and my favorite at the time, Big Head Todd and the Monsters) with a bunch of friends, outside. That was awesome! But perhaps my funniest music memory is the lip sync I performed with a friend in front of the entire student body (1500 people, SOA kids do that all the time, but not this librarian) at my college's annual talent show. He was Dolly Parton and I was Kenny Rogers, and we lip synced their duet "Islands in the Stream!"



### Robert Grant

As a lil' kid...HIP HOP was always a mainstay in my household. My older brother Greg always had a radio blasting some new Hip Hop song! I soon grew captivated by the verbal acrobatics of the MC, the hypnotic drum beats and the culture as a whole. As I grew older I realized that many of my favorite Rap Jams of the '90s sampled Funk music from the 70's and 80's. DJ Rob Base and Easy Rock's "It Takes Two" sampled Lyn Collins' "You better Think" '72. Snoop Doggy Dogg's classic "What's My Name?" in '93 sampled George Clinton's "Atomic Dog." And Ice Cube's monster hit "Today Was a Good Day" ('92) sampled The Isley Brothers hit "Footsteps in The Dark" ('77). My brother and I got turned on to Funk Music because we found that it was the foundation of Hip Hop's origin. We would be cruising down The Cross Bronx Expressway jamming to the likes of James Brown's "Funky Drummer" and then transition to Public Enemy's "Fight The Power". Yeah Greg...those were good times. "I dedicate this to you for believing in me"...Reminisce" - Pete Rock & CL Smooth.

### Meredith Harman

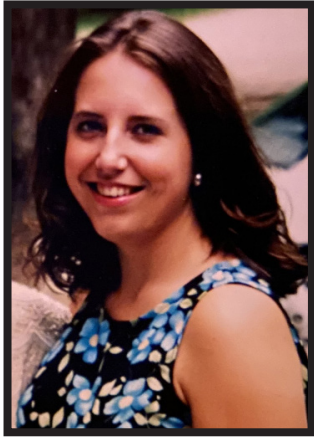
Grateful Dead, RFK Stadium, Washington, DC, June 14, 1991. Many of my friends went "on tour" with the Dead every summer. They didn't have to work, I suppose. I was lucky enough to see them twice. This pic was us cooking stir fry in the parking lot all day before the show. We made quite a bit of cash! I later left the car key in the stadium NOT AT MY SEAT but miraculously found it!



### Jacqueline Healy

Living in California in the '90s was my coming of age. Music filled my soul. Going to concerts on the beach, Whiskey A Go-Go, Longfellows, The Amphitheater and more. I even attended a house party where Pearl Jam performed. I have so many great memories from this time. I remember so vividly seeing The Red Hot Chili Peppers perform. Flea was the most amazing bassist I have ever witnessed and was full of non-stop energy. Other great bands I experienced live during this time include, The Ramones, True Sons of Liberty, Sublime, No Doubt, Oasis, National People's Gang, 311, The Cult and, just for fun, BonJovi.



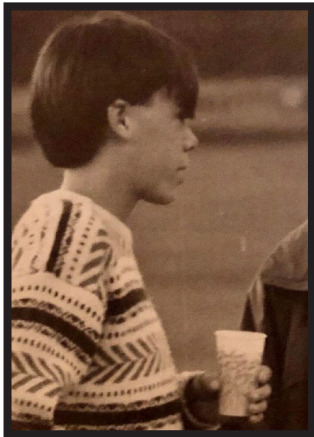
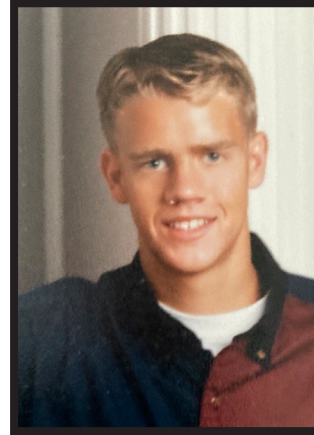


### **Amber Honeycutt**

I saw The Allman Brothers Band live for the first time in 1996 and it led to a lifelong love of seeing live music. I only have a few ticket stubs from those 90s Allmans shows, but I kept the flyer to the Pepsi Smoky Mountain Jam 98 in Knoxville, TN, which was an amazing day of live 90s music that included my first time seeing the legendary Buddy Guy, Lucinda Williams and Sam Bush. Sitting on a blanket on the lawn with friends and dancing under the stars of the World's Fair Park are some of my favorite 90s memories. When the Allman Brothers would do a summer southeast run, we'd follow them from show to show - Knoxville to Asheville to Raleigh to Atlanta - and the setlists were wildly different every night.

### **Brian Johnson**

I was in high school and college throughout the 90s. I loved the music and was fortunate to see quite a few concerts. I went to Lollapalooza, WaveFest, and Aerosmith to name a few. My favorite concert was Alice in Chains at the Fox Theater in downtown Detroit. I will occasionally play the 90s alternative station in the gym during PE classes. While it is for my own enjoyment, many students also know and like the songs.

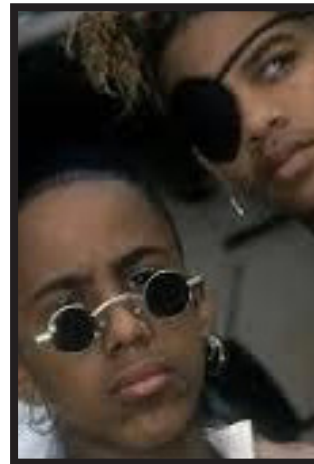


### **Patrick Martin**

I was big into Dave Matthews. I was in Virginia and he played every Wednesday at a place in Richmond called the Flood Zone. Tickets were only 2 dollars. We all had bootleg collections of Dave Matthews, The Grateful Dead, Burning Spear, and others. The most iconic band of the 90s for me was James Addiction, and I got to see them live at the first Lollapalooza.

### **Iisha Pinckney**

My first concert was in March of 1995 in DC... I had just turned 14 and the only way I was allowed to go was if my older brother was also going. He didn't want to go because he was going to be bored. I told him about all the cute girls that would be there chasing after "stars," and he probably had a chance since they would never have a chance with anyone from the group. He got several numbers that night and I got to be a "one and only time groupie" for Romeo from Immature. They signed my poster and I remember chasing after their white limo after the concert... and no, we had no backstage passes, so go figure...



### **George Younts**

Heading East on I-20 out of Atlanta, I was in a Ford F-100 after making sawdust for the day as a carpenter's assistant building funky playgrounds at a daycare center inside the I-285 donut. It was a decent starving artist day job in my mid-20s, as I did theatre work for no pay in the evening. Alanis Morissette's "Hand in My Pocket" came on the radio. Had heard it before but never really listened. Ever since then it's been a "go to tune" for me when life is tough, good, bad or just okay.



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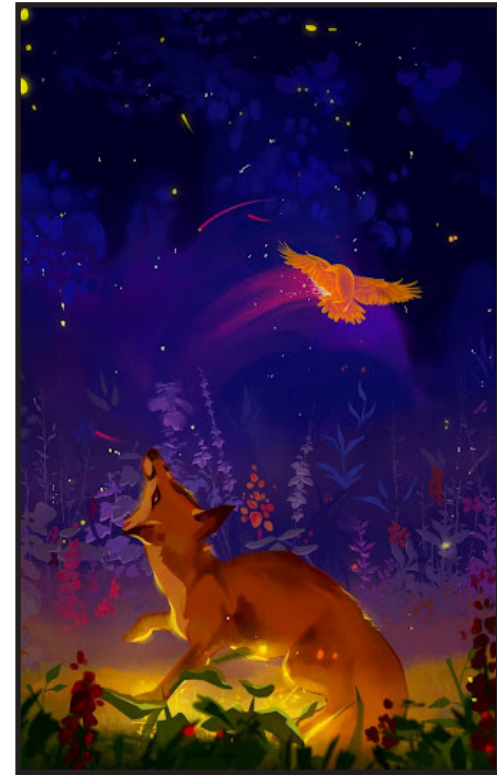
Golf cart housecalls for  
maintenance, repair and modification.



"Untitled"  
Scarlett Johnson, 8th grade



"Cardinal Camper"  
Whitney Werking, 10th grade



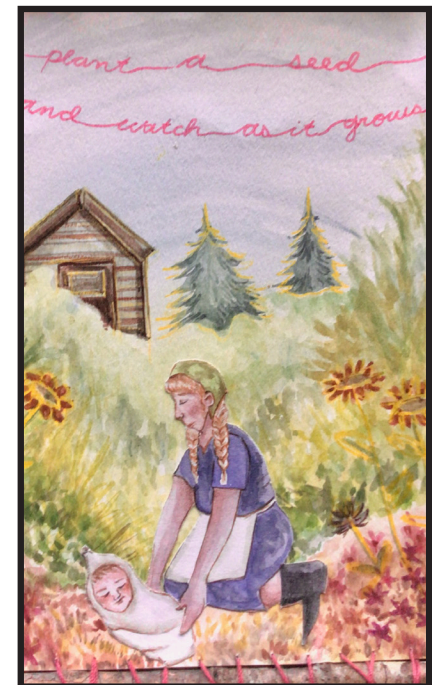
"Fox in the flower bed"  
Ava Dawson, 12th grade



"Cups."  
Lucy Cromwell, 12th grade



"Harvest moon"  
James Herring, 12th grade



"Plant a seed and watch it grow"  
Reanna Wolf, 11th grade



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## Meet the Cast of *Big Fish*!

*Intrigued by the inner workings of SOA Musical Theater's rendition of Big Fish, Applause staff sat down with select cast members to delve into their roles and experiences within the production.*

### Gavin Lahmon, Karl the Giant

by Ruby Varallo

**Ruby Varallo:** Describe how a typical rehearsal for *Big Fish* goes.

**Gavin Lahmon:** A typical day of rehearsal varies from day to day depending on what we're focusing on. Some days are completely dedicated to learning music, we all sit around the piano in our vocal sections as Mr. Pickens teaches us the various harmonies in group songs. When he is working on solos with the principals, the rest of the ensemble does rigorous character work into the deeper motivations of their characters, or we just play cards, depending on the day. Recently we have been learning the blocking (stage direction) of the scenes, and running them with both casts as our show is approaching as I'm writing this.

**RV:** What is the most challenging part of your role?

**GL:** The most challenging part of my role is definitely learning how to walk on drywall stilts and perform at the same time. While I'm not as high in the air as say circus performers, the extra 2 feet is still a worrying factor. Having to be extra attentive of where my weight is, how far to step, how wide of steps to take, and so on, as well as acting like I'm not horrified is a true challenge, but a fun and unique one to tackle.

**RV:** How does your role as the giant differ from other roles you've played?

**GL:** I haven't really been given the opportunity to play a role in which I have to carry myself in a very specific way. For a lot of shows, I don't put that much effort into the way my body sits on stage, like a lot of time I'm just putting on a slightly altered way of how I normally walk, so it's exciting to really have to be conscious of my physical performance on stage.

**RV:** What is your favorite part about playing Karl the Giant?

**GL:** My favorite part about playing Karl the Giant is having the opportunity to pour a lot of effort into my physicality. His sparse but memorable appearances in the show really give me a chance to focus on those moments, which is something you don't get being totally a lead, or totally in the ensemble.

### Bryce Beasley, Will Bloom

by Luciano Cusatis

**Luciano Cusatis:** Can you describe your character?

**Bryce Beasley:** Will is a serious, fact-finding, war reporter who just returned from Afghanistan to his childhood home in Alabama to get married. He has a poor relationship with his father, Edward, and blames him for having a poor childhood.

**LC:** What was the audition process like for your role?

**BB:** It was very straightforward. I had to prepare a cut of one of Will's songs, "What's Next" and two sides. A few days later we got emailed the roles we were called back for. The next day, all the boys were taught a song together that we then had to perform for Mr. Pickens.

**LC:** How have you approached your role?

**BB:** My main goal has been to make Will relatable.



Almost everyone has a family member that they may resent but still care about them because they are your family. I want the audience to see themselves as Will as he finally attempts to reconcile with his father before it is too late.

**LC:** What is your background in musical theatre?

**BB:** I have been doing theatre for as long as I can remember. I've done several shows with Charleston Stage, South of Broadway, and Footlight Players. I am currently a member of the Senior Company Troupe at Musical Theatre Center.

**LC:** What has been the biggest challenge in preparing for this show?

**BB:** Will is a very emotional role to play so it took me a long time to find the difference between when Will is aggressive versus when he is more solemn, and having to go between the two seamlessly.

**LC:** What are you looking forward to most with the show?

**BB:** Just doing it! Mr. Pickens, Mrs. Ball, and the whole cast have been working for so long on this show and I am so excited for all of my friends and family to see all the hard work that has gone into this show.

### Lyles Bruorton, Will Bloom

by Isis Hanna

**Isis Hanna:** Tell us a little bit about your character.

**Lyles Bruorton:** I am playing the role of Will Bloom. Will is a very serious and realistic character. Will struggles to believe the magical stories his father tells. Because Will is a realist, he is a very factual person. It's difficult to relive and believe the crazy stories his father tells, when Will has no evidence or proof. Will has a big heart, but struggles to understand his father.

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

**LB:** The music in "*Big Fish*" is so beautifully written. There are so many precise, but perfect things that Andrew Lipka wrote, when composing this musical. I am thrilled for people to hear and see the beauty of this show. The music truly helps convey the story in so many ways that are just simply "Magic." This show has live orchestration too, making the experience even more magical.

**IH:** Other than your own, who is your favorite character in *Big Fish*?

**LB:** The role of "Jenny Hill" is such an underrated character in my opinion. Jenny is a key part of "Edward Bloom's" story, and she truly brings so much life to the show.

**IH:** What has the rehearsal process been like? Is it challenging?

**LB:** For me personally, the rehearsal process has been difficult. Because the show is double cast, on my off night I am in the ensemble and also playing the role of the mayor. It's been difficult to learn two different roles at once. I had to learn ensemble harmonies and dances, as well as learn Will's harmonies and dances. It's been a new process for me, but it's been a very good experience.

### Sam Owens, Edward Bloom

by Ella Kay

**Ella Kay:** What was your audition process like?

**Sam Owens:** The audition process didn't take too long, I think from the start Jesse and I knew we would both be excellent, not knowing it would be double cast certainly added stress but eventually roles were sent out and after two weeks of doing readings and songs I think most people were happy.

**EK:** Tell me about your role, and how you connect with it.

**SO:** I really connected through my role because of its very presentational nature, brings able to play a big character and still portray realism really



speaks to me as an actor

**EK: How are rehearsals going, do you feel prepared?**

**SO:** Rehearsals are going ok, bringing double cast certainly makes the whole process much longer but I think we'll definitely have a show by the dates.

**EK: What has been your biggest challenge with this role so far?**

**SO:** As for my biggest challenge, having such a large part is very new to me, last year into the woods I played the narrator and mysterious man and although those parts were sizable, they don't compare to the size of Edward bloom, the amount of endurance and vocal health needed is very taxing

**EK: Do you plan on pursuing musical theatre after highschool?**

**SO:** Currently, I don't know if I'll be pursuing musical theatre after highschool, a lot of it will depend on college processes and finances



In

## Isobel Foggon, Sandra Templeton

by Ashley Peterson

**Ashley Peterson: What is your role in *Big Fish*?**

**Isobel Foggon:** Sandra Templeton

**AP: What was the audition process like?**

**IF:** Mine was slightly different from everyone else's due to being out of town. I filmed recorded videos of my singing and acting auditions.

**AP: What is your favorite part about your role?**

**IF:** It's different from most of the roles I have played in the past! Normally I get casted as a dumb blonde role but Sandra is a very intelligent character which has been amazing to get to experience.

**AP: Is this role like any other that you've had?**

**IF:** No, this role goes through many different ages in one show. So during some scenes I am playing an 18 year old girl and in others I'm playing a 55 year old.

**AP: What is the biggest challenge that has come with this show?**

**IF:** The biggest challenge for me has been becoming more confident in my singing abilities and singing in front of other people.

**AP: How have you prepared for the show?**

**IF:** Preparing for this show has consisted of a lot of singing practice and some memorization of lines.

**AP: Are you planning on continuing theater after graduation?**

**IF:** Yes, I will be continuing my studies at the University of Arts London as an Acting and Performance major!!

## Abby Harris, The Witch

by Cate Traywick

**Cate Traywick: Who do you play? Tell us about your character!**

**Abby Harris:** I play the witch. She resides in the swamps of Alabama and is widely rumored in their small town to be a fortune teller. At the start of the show, she meets young Edward in the woods, where she tells him his future. This marks the beginning of young Edwards adventures.

**CT: What was the audition process like?**

**AH:** We were given a few days to prepare excerpts of the songs and sides from each of the characters we wanted to audition for. Everyone took turns singing



in front of the class and we performed the sides in small groups. Mr. Pickens then selected the cast list.

**CT: What are your thoughts on *Big Fish*? Are you happy to be doing the show?**

**AH:** *Big Fish* is a really great show. I hadn't heard of it before Pickens announced it as our musical. The music is amazing and there is really beautiful underscor throughout the show. Our band does an incredible job and everyone in the cast really brings the story to life, especially through the music.

**CT: Do you have a favorite moment or character in the show?**

**AH:** One of my favorite moments is towards the end, when Edward is standing at the river and everyone he has met throughout his life is there. Him and the witch exchange knowing looks because she showed him this very scene. It is such a nice full circle moment and definitely one of my favorites.

## Marin Morris, Sandra Bloom

by Riley Borkowski

**Riley Borkowski: Tell us a bit about your character, Sandra.**

**Marin Morris:** Sandra Bloom is Edward's wife and Will's mom and is definitely the rock of the family. She cares deeply about both her husband and son and brings Will back to Alabama to help fix his strained relationship with Edward.

**RB: What has your process preparing for your role looked like?**

**MM:** We had auditions in February where we sang a cut of Time Stops and did two scenes Sandra is in. Preparing for this audition was really nerve wracking because the specific cut of the song for Sandra was definitely tough so I basically just had to sing through it every night until the audition to make sure I hit all the right notes. For the acting part, I read through the pages a lot with some people in my class and got some helpful notes and feedback from them

**RB: What challenges (if any) have come up while preparing for the show?**

**MM:** The main challenge for me has been finding the difference between the two versions of Sandra in the play. Some of the scenes in the show take place when Sandra is younger and some are when she's older so creating these two elements of the same character has been tough.

**RB: What are your thoughts on *Big Fish*? Are you happy to be doing the show?**

**MM:** I love the show and am very happy this is what Mr Pickens chose for our class. I love how it's fun and bright but also emotional and deep. I'm so glad to be a part of this show and I hope people love it!

**RB: Do you have a favorite moment from the show?**

**MM:** My favorite moment in the show is Time Stops. It's definitely the hardest moment for me onstage but it's also so important for my character. The way we've staged it is so cool and I hope audiences will really enjoy this song.



## Jesse Price, Edward Bloom

by Cate Traywick

**Cate Traywick: Tell us a bit about your character, Edward Bloom?**

**Jesse Price:** Edward Bloom is a flawed man who makes up for it by having charisma and a "go get em" personality. He has a lovely wife Sandra and a son named Will who he tends to butt heads with.

**CT: What strategies have you used to prepare you for your role?**

**JP:** I've definitely focused on the "why" for this character. Edward Bloom is after all a very challenging man to understand. I had to work out what his motives were and why he acts the way he does as you will see in the play.



**CT: Have any unexpected challenges come up during rehearsals?**

**JP:** Well, what was unexpected was the addition of double casting as Mr. Pickens had sworn off doing it. However I could not be happier and more honored to share the stage with our incredible cast and the role of Edward Bloom with the amazing Sam Owen's. It was a challenge at first, believe me, to learn the role with time being split in half, though I soon learned that I could lean on Sam for help and that two heads truly are better than one.

**CT: What are your overall thoughts on *Big Fish*? Are you happy to be doing the show?**

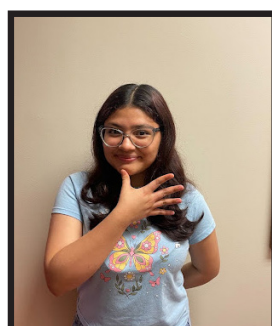
**JP:** I am thoroughly relieved to finally be so near to the performances. I've been at SOA for all seven years and could not be more thrilled for this show to be my last full show here. *Big Fish* is really inspiring as a Senior getting ready to venture out into the world as Edward lives by the motto "Be the Hero of Your Story".

**CT: What's your favorite moment from *Big Fish*?**

**JP:** What I'll never forget is the ending. Don't worry there are no spoilers. Edward winds up center stage as the entire cast appears around him. Standing on stage and looking at the talent around me truly made me feel encouraged, confident, and excited for the amazing art I know will continue to be produced at this school for years to come.

## Sign of the Month: "Happy Mother's Day"

by Luciano Cusatis  
Demonstrated by Katerin Figueroa  
ASL & Deaf Culture



1. Place your hands on your chest and slide them up.
2. Open up your hand and touch your thumb to your face.
3. Hold one arm perpendicular to the other, and point your index finger.
4. Move your arm down so they touch.

## SOA Contemporary Theatre Presents "The Awesome 80's Prom"

Photos by Luciano Cusatis

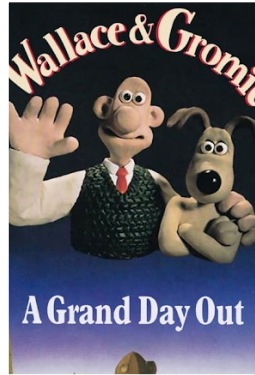
On April 25-27, SOA's Contemporary Theatre department presented a show unlike any other. Audience members were invited to roam around the "Prom," in full 80's attire, interacting with characters, taking polaroids, and dancing to the groovy tunes. This immersive show was a rousing success!



## Classic Movie Review: A Grand Day Out (1989)

by Ruby Varallo

On April 8, millions of people looked up at the sky (hopefully wearing their protective glasses) to watch the solar eclipse. In the hours leading up to the eclipse, many turned to their favorite news sources or trusted weather stations for information on when to catch the maximum percentage of sun coverage. But only the wisest folk turned to the true moon experts: Wallace and Gromit.



In Nick Park's *A Grand Day Out*, Wallace and Gromit visit the moon upon running out of cheese, because, in the words of Wallace, everyone knows the moon is made of cheese! However, the moon's robotic caretaker is not thrilled that the two are taking bites out of his home. I've been a fan of Wallace and Gromit since I was a kid, but I somehow missed out on ever watching this wonderful piece of art. I'll forgive the real life eclipse for being somewhat underwhelming because without all the buzz about the moon to inspire me, I may have gone my whole life without watching this movie.

This short is genuinely funny and overall just quite pleasant. Wallace and Gromit is a prime example of claymation being used in a way that is enticing and entertaining, and even with minimal dialogue, it's impossible not to be drawn to the two and their dynamic. It also helps that the moon looks absolutely delectable in this, allowing the viewer to empathize with Wallace and Gromit and their need for cheese. Some of my favorite moments come in the beginning when Wallace realizes the two are out of cheese, and when the robot on the moon discovers some of Wallace and Gromit's magazines about skiing that they've left behind, which leads to a sweet ending between all three of them.

*A Grand Day Out* was the first Wallace and Gromit short film Nick Park ever made, and the process had many stages. Wallace was originally a cat in Park's sketches, but he realized it was easier to make a dog because it allowed him to roll the clay into larger sausage-sized shapes. When he heard Peter Sallis, who voices Wallace, say "No cheeese, Gromit" for the first time, he realized Wallace's mouth needed to be wider and toothier to convey the true nature of his speech. The short took seven years total to create, with prior drafts including McDonalds and banana milkshakes on the moon.

I would recommend this movie to anyone and everyone. Clocking in at a twenty-three minute-long runtime, everyone has time for a little Wallace and Gromit. Not only will you learn an

abundance of scientifically-backed facts about the moon and its cheesy nature, you will experience immense feelings of joy, as well as a perfect solution for the next time you run out of cheese!

## Contemporary Book Review: Sea of Tranquility (2022)

by Braeden LaRoche

*Sea of Tranquility* is a novel that bridges five centuries in roughly two-hundred and fifty pages. With a plot involving time travel, speculation on humanity's future, and questions as to the nature of reality, it is intriguing in its premises and doubtlessly ambitious. An experienced writer, Emily St. John Mandel succeeds in many of her ambitions for *Sea of Tranquility*, but the novel falls disappointingly flat in other regards.

The story's tension is built via the establishing of several plotlines centering around a spatial anomaly before Mandel begins to tie things together by introducing the Time Institute, an organization in the year 2401 with the capacity to travel in time. It hires a man named Gaspary-Jacques to investigate the anomaly.

One of the major timelines within the story, involving a fictional author in the year 2203 who writes about pandemics and finds her life affected by one, can be read as Mandel's meditations on life during the Covid-19 pandemic.

This is a brief and greatly abridged summary. In all, the book does a lot. It is not surprising, then, that it spreads itself thin.

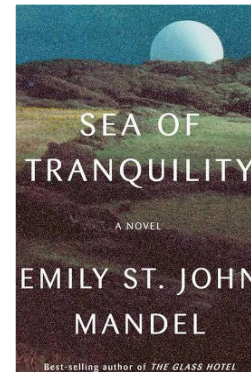
*Sea of Tranquility* boasts a wealth of interesting concepts, from the various psychological implications of time travel to the complex timelines it produces to philosophical theory to life during a pandemic to future human society (including colonies across the solar system), and more. These concepts, though, are only ever explored at a surface level.

No single one of them sees enough emphasis to carry Mandel's novel from start to finish under the epithet of "conceptual."

Furthermore, the sci-fi concepts of *Sea of Tranquility* are at best vague enough so as to be intriguing, and at worst uninspired and derivative.

The anomaly is eventually revealed to be an aberration in the simulation that is the reality the characters experience. There is an immense variety of ways this plot point could be interesting, and while it does not go without any philosophical bearing on these characters that they live in a simulation, Mandel does nothing to make this compelling.

Mandel seems to want to treat the simulation



as some subtle yet omnipresent idea affecting all of the characters and anchoring them to one another to make up for the fact that not one of the various plotlines seems most significant or is worth a reader's emotional investment, but the simulation as a fact alone is nothing; nothing in the characters' lives is changed by it and it leaves the novel hollow.

Besides these topics of complaint, though, everything is well-executed. The aforementioned meditations on Covid-19 are genuinely interesting, as is the complex time travel plot, the unexpected turns it makes, and how things tie together. *Sea of Tranquility* is most disappointing in that it presents a sea of missed opportunities.

## Contemporary Album Review: Graduation by Kanye West

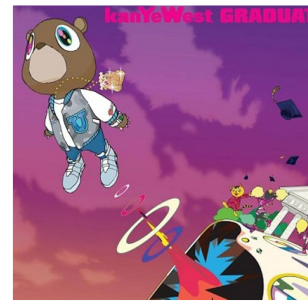
by Jovany Silva-Valesques

"B-but he made *Graduation!*" Okay, let's review it then to see if it's all that. I do not endorse any of Kanye West's actions. *Graduation* is a Kanye West album released in 2007 and is frequently considered one of the greatest rap albums of the 2000s, as well as one of the controversial rapper's best. Its creation represented yet another change in Kanye's approach to music-making, infusing even more pop elements into his production, to the point where many songs come across as borderline anthemic (i.e. Imagine Dragons if they were good).

While it does reflect many of the late 2000s pop scene production styles, that isn't to say that this album has aged badly in the slightest. (Mostly) Every single track is equally consistent in quality, and to be completely frank, Kanye's lyricism is at

one of its highest points in this album. With that being said, what is it that makes such an exaggeratedly poppy work of music considered one of the greatest albums of all time by many avid rap fans?

At its core, *Graduation* attempts to hone in on one central theme: *Graduation* (duh!) More specifically, Kanye's "final" lap within the music business both proves his status as a competent artist as well as enables his ever-expansive ego. The opening track, however, does touch base with a more sensitive side to him. "Good Morning" serves as a tongue-in-cheek compliment to the album, as it discusses the errors of the American school system. While the lyrics of the song provide great commentary, the production (done by Kanye himself) immediately thrust you into a world of



grandeur, and you feel the atmosphere behind the world Kanye has built for himself. The following tracks follow a similar sense of extravaganza, equally managing to captivate the listener such as the elegant piano sample on “I Wonder,” robotic harmonies featured on “Stronger,” and uplifting vocals from T-Pain on “Good Life.” Kanye’s lyrics also act as outlets for motivation with lines such as “When it feel like living’s harder than dyin’ / For me givin’ up’s way harder than tryin’” combining both his endurance and ego. The momentum unfortunately falters slightly when it comes to the track “Barry Bond” with subpar production from Kanye and a very disappointing Lil Wayne verse, coming from arguably the peak of Wayne’s career. Regardless, the momentum comes right back into full swing with “Flashing Lights,” a song that perfectly encapsulates the core of *graduation*. Flashy production, autotuned-to-death vocals, and an unapologetic Kanye rapping about a relatable yet unobtainable subject matter that combines issues of relationships and a lavish lifestyle, perfectly bridging the gap. The following tracks contain great production and stellar rapping performances by Kanye. The track “Everything I Am” describes issues surrounding the black entertainment industry, “Homecoming” is an homage to Chi-Town, and lastly, “Big Brother” discusses Kanye’s tumultuous relationship with at-the-time boss Jay-Z.

Ultimately, what is my consensus on such a hit as *Graduation*? Well to answer that is simple: This album front to back holds up its name as one of Kanye’s finest, a ten out of ten. But the issue is that while it may be a ten out of ten, there are no true peaks within the album that stand out as much as “Gone” on *Late Registration* or “Through the Wire” on *The College Dropout*. So while the album quality is consistent, there isn’t a particular song I can consider the best or even the worst. While that isn’t a horrible quality (as I can essentially recommend any song to anybody), it doesn’t make the album that memorable in comparison to the rest of Kanye’s discography.

## Classic Movie Review: *Trainspotting* (1996)

by Emma Shelton

Since the fashion show wrapped, my brain has been a cluster of new ideas. I didn’t know how to combine everything I wanted, so I resorted to obsessively watching all the films recommended to me by friends for inspiration. *Trainspotting* is a cult classic British film that covers addiction, rehabilitation, and life. After going on a rant about how aesthetically pleasing I found Nuns, drugs, 2014 Indie Pop, and London, someone told me it was a combination of all those things; obviously I would love it.

Based on the novel with the same title, *Trainspotting* was released in 1996. This was the

first Danny Boyle film I’ve seen, and I was efficiently warned by my peers that “its kinda a lot.” I had no clue what to expect, and I am so happy it turned out that way. This is an incredible film, stock full of beautiful shots of Glasgow and London (my favorite place on earth). Every single scene had me intrigued and confused, but more importantly, emotionally invested in the betterment of every single character.

The film opens with a witty, slightly pessimistic monologue that sets an incredibly important tone: Why care about life when you can have fun? We follow Renton (Ewan McGregor) on his harrowing journey to sobriety; that’s pretty much all I can say about the film without spoiling it. Renton spends most of his time with his friends, who are also heroin addicts, except for Begbie (Robert Carlyle), who’s just addicted to violence. *Trainspotting* would be a great watch for the kids that liked gore My Little Pony music videos. The relationship dynamics displayed throughout the movie are dysfunctional, like most things in Renton’s life, but they are full of strange love.

## Classic Album Review: *Houses of the Holy*

by Riley Borkowski

In the colorful world of rock music, some albums shine brighter than others. Led Zeppelin’s “*Houses of the Holy*,” released in 1973, is one such gem. It arrived during a period of musical exploration and cultural change, marking a pivotal moment for the band. With its mix of powerful anthems and soulful ballads, the album captivated audiences then and continues to do so today. It still stands as one of my favorite albums, and I heavily encourage you to listen to it.

The album opens with “The Song Remains the Same,” a thunderous declaration of intent that immediately grabs the listener’s attention. With its electrifying guitar riffs, pulsating rhythm section, and Robert Plant’s soaring vocals, the track serves as a fitting introduction to the epic odyssey that lies ahead. From the outset, it’s clear that Led Zeppelin is poised to take us on a musical adventure unlike any other.

As we delve deeper into the album, we

encounter “The Rain Song,” a hauntingly beautiful ballad that showcases the band’s softer side. Against a backdrop of lush orchestration and delicate guitar arpeggios, Plant delivers a soul-stirring performance, channeling a sense of introspection that leaves me staring at my ceiling long after the final note is played.

“Over the Hills and Far Away” transports us to distant realms with its folk-inspired melodies and electrifying energy. Here, Jimmy Page’s virtuosic guitar playing takes center stage, weaving intricate patterns of sound that captivate the imagination and ignite the senses. It’s a testament to the band’s ability to seamlessly blend diverse musical influences into a cohesive and compelling whole.

Next, we encounter “The Crunge,” a playful and irreverent track that defies categorization. With its funky grooves and tongue-in-cheek lyrics, the song stands out as a lighthearted departure from the album’s more serious themes. Yet beneath its surface lies a sense of infectious joy and spontaneity that is quintessentially Led Zeppelin.

“Dancing Days” invites us to revel in the sheer exuberance of rock and roll with its infectious hooks and irresistible rhythms. Here, the band’s trademark swagger is on full display, as Plant’s impassioned vocals soar above Page’s searing guitar solos, creating a sonic tapestry that demands to be heard.

“D’yer Mak’er” sees Led Zeppelin exploring new musical territory with its reggae-inflected rhythms and laid-back vibe. It’s a testament to the band’s willingness to push the boundaries of their sound, embracing diverse influences and forging new paths forward.

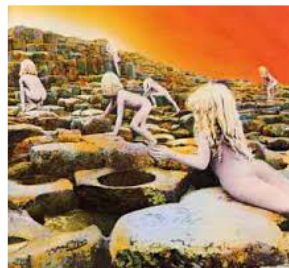
As we reach the album’s penultimate track, “No Quarter,” we are plunged into a world of darkness and mystery. With its brooding atmosphere and haunting instrumentation, the song conjures images of ancient rituals and forbidden rites, inviting listeners to lose themselves in its hypnotic embrace. This track is my personal favorite and my number one song on my Spotify wrapped in 2023 (I listened to it over 100 times).

Finally, there’s “The Ocean,” a triumphant closer that brings the album to a breathtaking climax. Here, the band unleashes raw energy and emotion, with John Bonham’s thunderous drums driving the song forward with relentless intensity. It’s a fitting conclusion to a musical journey that has taken us to the very limits of our imagination.

*Houses of the Holy* stands as a testament to Led Zeppelin’s enduring legacy and influence on the world of rock music. With its groundbreaking sound and timeless appeal, it continues to inspire and captivate listeners of all generations, reminding us of the transformative power of music to transcend boundaries and unite us in a shared sense of wonder and awe.



Trainspotting





**KENNETH MILLER**  
ARCHITECTURE



WE ARE COMMITTED TO BEING A RESPONSIBLE STEWARD OF OUR NATURAL RESOURCES AND, AS A LEADER IN ARCHITECTURE, INTEND TO PROVIDE LEADERSHIP IN DEVELOPING AN ETHIC OF SUSTAINABILITY IN ALL OF OUR PRACTICES. ATTENTION TO DETAILS, HELPING ESTABLISH THE BUDGET, AND PLANNING EACH PHASE OF THE DESIGN PROCESS HELPS US ACHIEVE YOUR TRUST AND SATISFACTION.

## May Horoscopes

by The Applause Astrologer



**Aries (March 21-April 19):** Summer is the destroyer of fashion, I know. What's the point of putting on a cute outfit if you can't layer to your heart's content? But trust me, it is not worth the heatstroke to wear that vintage leather jacket with the velvet lining that you just thrifted. Take to Pinterest and start finding some new inspiration for ways you can express yourself in more temperature-appropriate clothes.



**Taurus (April 20-May 20):** Have you been putting off telling your counselor about the changes you want to make to your schedule? Is there a half-finished scholarship application sitting among the many tabs you refuse to close? How about the two-weeks notice you have typed out but not sent to your awful job? Don't be afraid to take control of your life and where it's going. This is your sign to sit down and do what needs to be done!



**Gemini (May 21-June 20):** With summer comes the inevitable Minecraft phase, and yours is in full swing. I am impressed by your skills and dedication, staying up until three in the morning to turn a ravine into a fairy village, and in Survival mode no less! I have two tips for you: please build a more humane habitat for your villagers, and remember to take meal breaks every once in a while. Your health comes before mining.



**Cancer (June 21-July 22):** You are a saint for all us struggling AP students. Your quizlets and color-coded study guides that you made on your iPad solely meant for note taking are saving the lives of so many who have spent the entire year playing the Watermelon Game instead of doing their practice exam materials. Please bestow us with a tutorial on how you became such an academic weapon, because we can only get by on your coattails for so long.



**Leo (July 23-August 22):** Everyone loves a good sweet treat. Before or after school, on a weekend while you're shopping, anytime is sweet treat time. However, your bank account is crying. Maybe an \$8 coffee every single day before school is not the most sustainable habit. I suggest learning how to make your favorite drinks at home, at least until you get a summer job.



**Virgo (August 23-September 22):** I bet you're so happy that the weather is finally warming up! You get to break out your hippie pants and bandeau tops and go on hot girl walks with your organic matcha lattes. I envy your love for warm weather; I always find myself complaining when the sun is shining. Maybe we could go for a nature walk together and you could tell me all about why you love summer.



**Libra (September 23-October 22):** Don't let your perfectionism get in the way of picking up that new hobby. So what if your crocheted sweater looks more like a scarf? Keep at it! No matter if your guitar playing sounds like a dying cat. One day you'll be selling out stadiums (or at least be able to play a chord without your hand slipping). I believe in you.



**Scorpio (October 23-November 21):** I love that you keep it real, because we need more honesty in this world. That being said, maybe stop telling people their outfits are "giving senile" or that their haircut is "Karen-core." I know you are just trying to help them out, but sometimes a little white lie is worlds kinder than the truth.



**Sagittarius (November 22-December 21):** You're really on a roll with your reading goal for the year! How have you managed to get through that many books already? The Barnes and Noble cashier must know you by name at this point; you've spent the better part of every weekend there buying books and reading them with your coffee in the cafe. Honestly, I'm just impressed.



**Capricorn (December 22-January 19):** For some inconceivable reason, you are determined to pass all your finals without studying. It must be leftover gifted kid syndrome or just pure insanity, but either way, I am begging you to at least review some key concepts. Not everything can be accomplished on "vibes" alone.



**Aquarius (January 20-February 18):** I think it's time for a wardrobe cleanout. You've got clothes spilling out of your dresser and your closet, not to mention the piles of dirty and clean clothes alike littering your bedroom floor. There is absolutely no way you wear all of those. Take this as an opportunity to sell the ones you can part with and inevitably fund your obvious shopping addiction.



**Pisces (February 19-March 20):** Don't let the haters convince you it isn't cool to care about your grades. I know everyone around you is already making jokes about giving up on their exams and poking fun at you for tirelessly taking notes when the teacher talks, but trust me, it's a good thing, and a dedication I wish I had in me. You can laugh at them when you're President.

## Sculpture, Painting, and Architecture

### Trivia

by Braeden LaRoche

1. What structure had its complex engineering used to occasionally stage mock sea battles for enraptured Roman audiences?
2. What Van Gogh painting added an imagined village to the view out of his asylum window?
3. Who sculpted *David*?
4. What 19th-century art movement, associated with artists such as Monet and Cézanne, was primarily concerned with capturing the qualities of light and its changes with time?
5. What Spanish surrealist artist painted *The Persistence of Memory*, inspired by soft cheeses in his rendering of the famous melting clocks?
6. What Dutch artist painted *Girl With a Pearl Earring*?
7. The art movement commonly translated as “pictures of the floating world” was centered in what country?
8. What building, in use since 360 AD, has served variously as an Eastern Orthodox church, a Catholic church, a museum, and a mosque?
9. Who sculpted *The Thinker*, *The Kiss*, and *The Burghers of Calais*?
10. Damien Hirst’s *The Physical Impossibility of Death in the Mind of Someone Living* features what animal suspended in formaldehyde?

### Answers

1. The Colosseum 2. *The Starry Night* 3. Michelangelo 4. Impressionism 5. Salvador Dalí 6. Johannes Vermeer 7. Japan 8. The Hagia Sophia 9. Auguste Rodin 10. (Tiger) shark

TJ Griffin, 12th grade Creative Writing



Provided

6/10

1. The Colosseum
2. *The Starry Night*
3. Michelangelo
4. Romanticism
5. Dali
6. Max Verstappen
7. Japan
8. I don't know
9. Larry Butz
10. Shark

James Herring, 12th grade Visual Arts



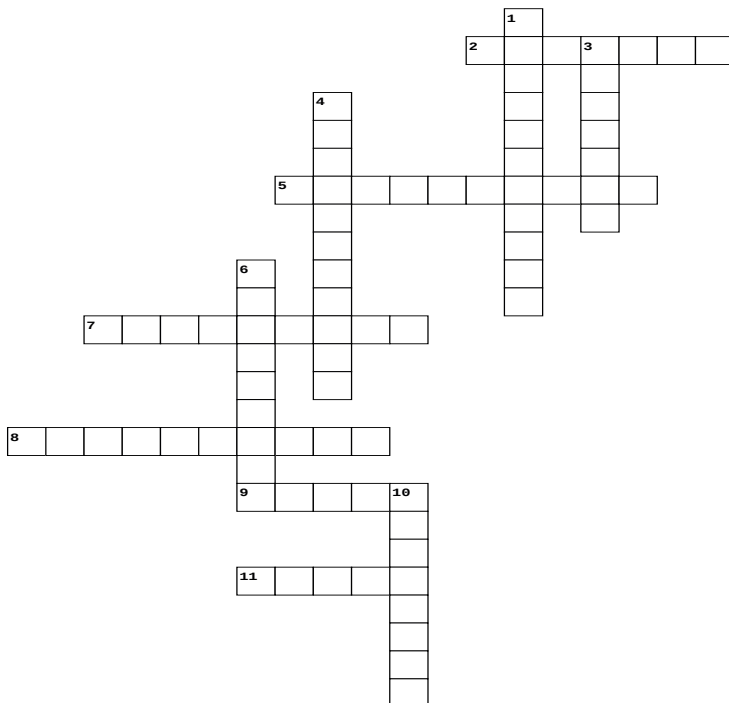
Braeden LaRoche

6/10

1. The Colosseum
2. *The Starry Night*
3. Michelangelo
4. Impressionism
5. Dali
6. I don't know
7. France
8. The Hagia Sophia
9. I don't know
10. Snake

## '90s Crossword

by Luciano Cusatis

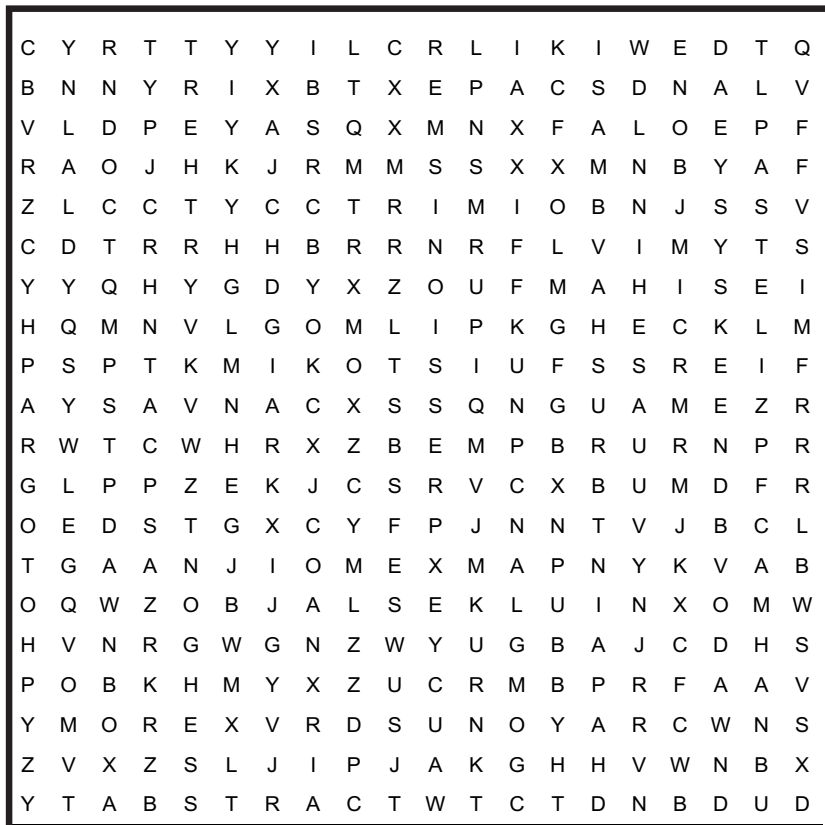


### Across

2. Highest Grossing Film of the '90s
5. Star of *Fresh Prince of Bel-Air*
7. UK Band who made “Ok Computer”
8. Lead Singer of Nirvana
9. NBA Team Michael Jordan Played for
11. Boyband Featuring Justin Timberlake

### Down

1. US President for the Majority of the '90s
3. Location of 1996 Olympics
4. The City where *The Simpsons* Takes Place
6. Cartoon Character who Worked at the Krusty Krab
10. 90s Movie Featuring the Looney Tunes



# Visual Arts Word Search

- Abstract
- Pastel
- Acrylic
- Photography
- Canvas
- Portrait
- Charcoal
- Realism
- Crayon
- Sculpture
- Expressionism
- Watercolor
- Landscape
- Abstract
- Paintbrush

## SOA Sudoku

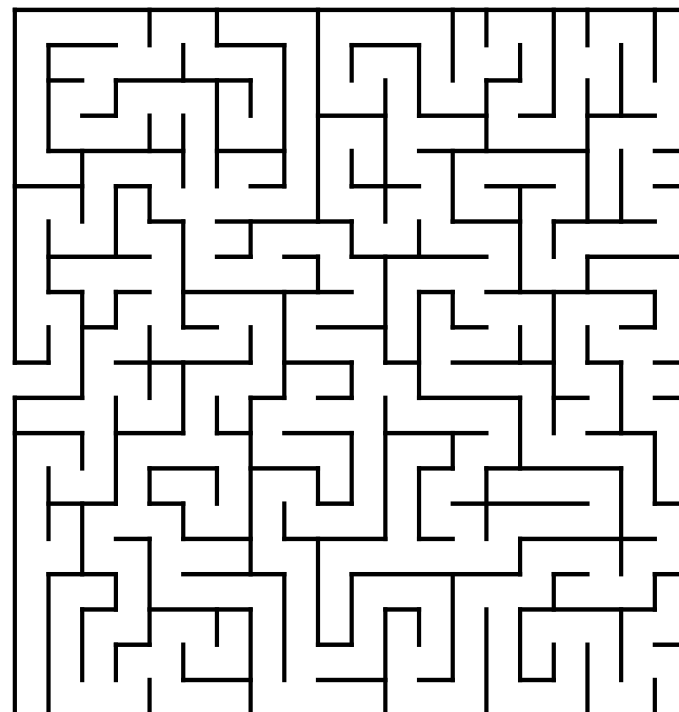
by Luciano Cusatis

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



## Help Ms. Potter find her paintbrush!

by Luciano Cusatis





“Leonardo DiCaprio. I love him in *Titanic* with Rose. He’s so good at acting.”

Pluma Rose Hyatt-Eakes, 6th grade Theater



“Bug Hall from *The Little Rascals*. He’s really funny.”

Carina Giuliano, 7th grade Band



“Jennifer Lopez. She’s done a lot for Hispanic people and I’m Hispanic, so I really appreciate the representation.”

Ailin Norales, 8th grade Piano



“George Clooney. Always simple and sophisticated and always well-liked.”

Mr. Miller, High School History Teacher



“John Carroll Doyle. He owns this really neat gallery here and I’ve spent a lot of time there.”

Mr. Colie, Visual Arts Teacher

# Who is your favorite ‘90s icon?

by Isabella Pineda, Riley Borkowski, and Emma Shelton



“Whitney Houston. Her music spoke to my soul.”

Ms. Henderson, Media Clerk



“Daniel Gildenlöw. He’s awesome.”

Beckett Carrington, 9th grade Vocal



“Mazzy Star and Chris Cornell.”

Suzie Nordoff and Ella Cutaia, 10th grade Visual Arts



“Lauryn Hill is definitely my favorite. She’s just such a queen.”

Gabbie Chinnis, 11th grade Strings



“Beyonce. She. Blows. It. Out. Of. The. Water. Every. Time.”

Henry Hipp, 12th grade Theater