

Vulture

MAY WEEK 2016



FEATURES

*Feminist reflections
from head
to toe*

CULTURE

*Leave the tourists
behind this
summer*

FASHION

*A contrast of styles:
two looks for
May Week*

REVIEWS

*Escape to the
Edinburgh
Festival Fringe*

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Vulture

MAY WEEK EDITION

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COVER ILLUSTRATION *Evie Chalmers*

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the
**GENDERED
ORGASM**

*in a world of inequality, even the ability and
freedom to come is compromised*

•
WORDS
Richelle George
PHOTOGRAPHS
Callum Hale-Thomson
•



How far does the reach of the patriarchy extend and plant itself into the sex lives of cis men and women? Pretty far if we consider the phenomenon of the 'orgasm gap'; a phrase used to refer to the fact that women are less likely than men to experience an orgasm during heterosexual sex. An American study in 2014 found that women in heterosexual relationships orgasm less than 65 per cent of the time during intercourse, compared to 85 per cent for men. Another American study from 2000 found that for every time a woman orgasms, a man does so three times. The orgasm disparity has become so naturalised that it has resulted in the belief that it is just 'more difficult' to make a girl come than a guy. By this understanding, is the gap biologically determined, and based on the differences between male and female sexual anatomy? No – it is a product of the patriarchy, which frames sexual relationships to not only privilege male pleasure but also to deny any for females. This begs the question: 'Should women even enjoy sex?'

The orgasm gap is a social failure. Despite traditional 'scientific' opinions and widespread common belief, there's actually absolutely nothing in the anatomy of a vulva which should make it less likely for women to have orgasms during sex. Despite the pervading myth that somehow women's

continued on next page



orgasms are harder to come by, it actually takes, on average, the same amount of time for a woman to orgasm during masturbation (that's right, women masturbate!) as it takes a man to during intercourse: four minutes. The female body is entirely capable, and purposefully formed (see: clitoris) to reach orgasm, and women shouldn't be made to feel like their bodies are a burden on their pleasure. Women who orgasm regularly during masturbation routinely report fewer orgasms during sex with a partner; and, even when controlling for factors such as the increased likelihood of orgasm during masturbation for either sex, the glaring hole of the orgasm gap persists. So if biology isn't the problem, what is? A study in the *Journal of Sexual Medicine* found that women in lesbian relationships reportedly orgasm just as often as men do in heterosexual relationships. What is it about getting into bed with a man which negatively affects a woman's chances of achieving an orgasm, but has absolutely no effect on a man's? Some say that sex is about power; is that power patriarchal?

In a patriarchal world, the only thing worse than being the woman who has sex, is being the woman who desires it. This has immeasurable effect on the ways men and women view themselves sexually, and the ways they interact before, during, and after sex.

The total lack of attention, and prudish squeamishness, with which the female sexual organs are discussed perpetuates such an imbalance. Almost as many women failed a test

to identify the clitoris as men did. The point of this article isn't to say that every man actively and consciously dismisses the physical enjoyment of their partner, but rather that we're all informed by a system laced with male privilege, and that affects the way we think about and relate to a woman's body. An

exemplar of the unwillingness of our society to indulge in female pleasure is highlighted in the discourse surrounding male and female masturbation. It's not difficult to believe that part of the problem causing the orgasm gap is the shaming of women for exploring and becoming

comfortable with the sexual workings of their bodies, in a way that men are not. Female pleasure thus appears intrinsically related to male-asserted boundaries. Is it necessary that a woman who speaks openly about the self-fulfilment of her sexual desires is given the label of slut, or repulsive? Does the idea that a woman can possess sexual desire, just by virtue of her being a sexual person, make us uncomfortable?

The problem with the taboo of female masturbation and the pursuit of female sexual pleasure in its own right is that women feel unable to or uncomfortable with the idea of communicating to a partner exactly what they do or don't like during sex. This is symptomatic of the inequality of opportunity offered to women to grow comfortable with the sexual workings of their body.

We are taught that a woman's role is that of the passive subject, and sex is no exception. The reality is, most women masturbate in their lifetime and many do so regularly; this is completely normal. A person's decision to masturbate or not shouldn't be informed by gender stereotypes which manipulate their sexual identity. The difference between the taboo of female masturbation and the overt acknowledgement of male has resulted in a situation in which masturbation itself has become synonymous with the insatiability of the male sex drive – it's common knowledge that men have a higher sex drive than women (but women are hysterical and overly emotional), right?

After all, women crave sexual intimacy more than physical gratification, true pleasure for a woman comes from an emotional orgasm of closeness and connectedness. Oh wait. No. The desire for emotional intimacy isn't and shouldn't be gendered or treated as a mutually exclusive trade off with physical enjoyment. The belief that women are biologically inclined to prioritise emotional closeness from sex is a myth which exempts partners from attending to the fulfilment of a woman's physical desires. According to the patriarchy, the most important

**WE ARE TAUGHT
THAT A WOMAN'S
ROLE IS THAT OF THE
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SEX IS NO EXCEPTION**

thing to a woman isn't the female orgasm, it's the intimacy which follows male climax, and societal gratification that she was royally chosen to be a receptor for male pleasure.

A common theme in the research conducted on the orgasm gap is that many men haven't even realised that it exists. Irony aside, if you're a man and the content of this article comes as a shock, you're not alone –

research shows that men in heterosexual relationships believe that their female partners orgasm significantly more often than they actually do. Are women faking it out of guilt that the reason they can't orgasm is due to some bodily fault or the desire to protect the feelings of their partner? Or has the patriarchy produced some superpower by which men hallucinate orgasmic women in order to preserve some confidence in their sexual prowess? Perhaps it is the completely unrealistic portrayal of orgasms from pornography. Who can say, though steps are being made towards recognition that women and men still aren't equals, not even in bed.

Thankfully, things have come some way from the days of the sexual revolution. Women are becoming more comfortable with the idea of being open about what makes them orgasm, and know that desiring sexual pleasure doesn't inform their worth or identity. The tendency of porn, from which many early opinions on sex are formed, to focus on penetrative sex and male climax as the culmination of the sexual experience, inherently forgoes the female experience in favour of the male. This is because women are much less likely to orgasm from penetrative sex alone, and are much more likely to do so from oral sex and a combination of sexual activities.

Male sexual partners are better placed to help a woman to orgasm during sex if they care about her; research shows that women are much more likely to achieve an orgasm during sexual relations with a regular partner, though men have roughly the same chance of having an orgasm with a regular partner, as with a one-night stand. The reasons for this remain speculative, but could be partly due to a sense that a woman can only escape the guilt of sex and focus on her own enjoyment once she has established a relationship with a regular partner.

As if the equation of promiscuity and guilt isn't a strong enough aphrodisiac, the unrealistic beauty standards placed on women by society aren't just left at the bedroom door. A key ingredient to generally enjoying sex, and to orgasm, is relaxation, and this is hard to do without desperately trying to maintain a perfect figure in the meantime. Tummy rolls and stretch marks are beautiful, and it doesn't do to worry more about the way your body looks than the way it feels. Your appearance is never a commodity for your partner's consumption and enjoyment •

Bye, Bitch

WORDS

Beth Cloughton & Imogen Shaw

ILLUSTRATIONS

Charlotte & Holly Thomas



Ooo May Week is here, OO but it is also JUNE, and OOOO fancy parties and crying because you're leaving and you don't know whether to be sad because all of your 'friends' are going to piss off to the City to get 'money', or because your life being molly-coddled is over; unless you're actually really wealthy and posh and your life here is actually a deduction from home-life, then you're crying coz you got Bolly (see: Bollinger) in your eye and it hurt you. Maybe your tears are joyous ones, and if not, this May Week edition of 'Bye, bitch' will turn that frozen, into a see-ya crozen 'ha'! •

01 The real, inescapable pressure of a time, known by others as, 'Easter Term', 'Term before Summer', 'a period of education where the weather is decent', but here as: EXAM TERM.

02 You can see and be around your old friends. Remember them? They knew you before you could get away with being seen as cool because you bought an addidas fils jumper from Urban Outfitters for £75, and still willingly hung around you. They knew you when you had a side fringe and rejected getting disgustingly rekt in a field at 14 to go to your oboe lesson and get a 'head start' on your additional maths homework for next year.

03 Libraries won't be mentally concurrent with prison now.

04 You will now be able to get away with the whole 'silently intelligent' type. You couldn't get away with this before. Before it was "I remain silent because I have no idea how to speak Latin, I thought I took English, why is everyone name dropping Italian poets and not Kim Kardashian, I can't contribute I don't have a preferred caviar brand. Haddock? Cod? That's all the fish I know."

05 This conversation with a male fresher in a college bar: "Oh, is that a Women's College? That's really interesting... can I ask you; do you think that will disadvantage you in the workplace?

I read this really interesting article in *The Telegraph*..."

06 EXAM PAPER: Discuss "kneeling" in Shakespeare's drama. BRAIN: *EXPLETIVES*

07 Going to a college where a fine for having a dusty mirror in your room is literally a thing that exists.

08 STUDENT: Wow, this concept is really complex and difficult to grasp. How will I condense it into this 2,000 word essay? SAME STUDENT: Wow, this concept is really complex and difficult to grasp. Naturally, I will instigate a massive Twitter argument about it because 140 characters is totally enough space for this kind of nuanced socio-political discussion. Yep.

09 This conversation with a male fresher in a college bar, part two: "But seriously, I mean, do you think it will hamper your relationships with men, because..."

ME: Well actually, not every student at Newnham is...

MALE FRESHER: Like, knowing how to assert yourself so you're not talked over is something that I personally think you might just, like, miss out on...?

10 Any student who uses the phrases "townie" or "Dangerspoons". "Ironically" is very much not an excuse. •

Running in heels

An exploration of the height of oppression embedded in the stiletto

WORDS

Aditya Basrur

ILLUSTRATION

Imogen Shaw



These are slippery times for the high heel. Nicola Thorp, a temporary receptionist at PricewaterhouseCoopers, claims that she was sent home from an assignment after refusing to wear heels for eight hours, in a role that required frequent walking. Ms Thorp has started a petition to make it illegal for companies to make women wear high heels at work. She now has over 140,000 signatures.

In search of some background on this scourge, I excavated *The New York Times's* online archive. A piece entitled 'The Origin of High Shoe Heels' from August 1893 notes that a "vagary of fashion still somewhat tolerated is the high shoe heel...this libel upon nature is of ancient origin...its use, once valuable and needed, has been perverted into an inartistic and unsanitary service". The earliest heels, the piece goes on, originated in Ancient Persia, to raise the feet from the "burning sands of that country, and were about two inches high". In Venice, "the motive was comically different...jealous husbands thought they would be able to keep

their wives at home".

120 years on, the "libel upon nature" continues to frustrate and divide. I have several thoughts on this issue. The first is that, as a heterosexual cis-male, I ought to have no opinion at all. Heels are the preserve of those who wear them. Lonely experience has taught me that, as in most matters to do with women, my attentions are probably unwanted.

Still, I barrel on; among other things, high heels are an issue between genders, too. Whatever its precursors, the raising of height cannot be entirely separated from a need to elevate and an attempt to be closer to eye level when surrounded by taller people. There is a sexualised element to this, too. Some see the leg on heels as more attractive, with corns and bunions a small price to pay for calves that appear more defined in heels.

The price is tangible in other ways. Jimmy Choo pumps start at £395. A glance at the Manolo Blahnik website points to an average price of £500. Christian Louboutin's signature red soles in black leather will set you back at least £425. No wonder the cost of Carrie Bradshaw's 100 pairs of heels amounted to a deposit on an apartment in New York 15 years ago. The element of privilege and class warfare inherent in the way we deal with heels extends to the office. Both the women who have complained about dress requirements are in roles that might be regarded as less powerful. I doubt that edict would require a female partner to wear heels at PricewaterhouseCoopers. Higher shoe height is less egregious when it is a choice.

When available, the way that choice is exercised can be a telling intimation of intention. A lawyer friend tells me that she tends not to wear heels to work when she wants to signal that she means business. "I'm telling people that I want to be taken seriously, not that I want to be their wife." Perceptions cut both ways. Men I know judge women based on how steady they seem on their feet. Someone who looks likely to fall over might suggest an unfamiliarity with heels and hence other things about her background. This is unfair. Storm grates seem designed to trap thin-tipped heels. The polished marble floors of office buildings

are as likely to catch those of us wearing leather-soled shoes unawares as they are the wearer of a pair of three-inch pumps.

Socially, too, the choice to wear heels of a certain height has connotations. I am not the only man of about 6' who's lived in New York and been filled with dread when confronted with an online dating profile of someone acceptable that reads "I'm 5'11" and I like wearing heels; midgets needn't apply". There are ethnic and socio-economic aspects to such selection masked as "just personal preference". Studies correlating height with ethnicity and nutrition levels (and hence class or parental wealth) are legion. If Carrie were a self-interested male, she might ask: by determining that some people are just too short, do we risk excluding those who might be just right?

These are minor considerations as we prepare to dress our best before behaving our worst. One acquaintance planning to attend the Bacchanalian orgy at St John's says she'll be wearing heels not because she wants to look tall (and despite the pain they are likely to cause), but because her long ball dress will trail otherwise and she doesn't want to ruin it. All of the women with whom I've spoken tell me that no-one is forcing them to wear heels. It is their own choice to do so. I am glad that this is true for my friends. It was not for Ms Thorp, and is not for many

women in service positions or a host of other jobs where autonomy is compromised.

I risk mansplaining by saying much more than that I hope everyone exercises that choice thoughtfully, and that we realise what a privilege it is to have the

choice. I've recently engaged in an earnest Facebook discussion regarding the appropriateness of pairing a cummerbund with braces this May Week, so am conscious of the privilege inherent in the way men dress here, too. My final hope is that no-one wears heels that are longer than they want. As a few well-intentioned women have told me when trying to calm my sobs, how long something is matters much less than what you do with it. This May Week, I think it will be no bad thing to dress to ensure that what we do above all is have good, clean, fun – whatever our height for the night might be •

**ALL OF THE WOMEN
WITH WHOM I'VE
SPOKEN TELL ME
THAT NO-ONE IS
FORCING THEM TO
WEAR HEELS.**

An ode to my library seat

• WORDS *Ellie Gould* ILLUSTRATION *Sanjukta Sen* •



This year, also known as the fourth and final year of my degree, I decided I was going to get a seat in the library. Never having been much of a studious library-goer (or studious full-stop) before, I had the sudden brainwave that if I could become one of those library regulars and make a seat my own, somehow I might finally get what this whole studying lark is about. And so, in the first week of Michaelmas, I chose my seat.

That seat, my seat, was on the top floor of the Pembroke library. It was towards the back, on a table of four, under the vigilant gaze of a bronze cast of George Stokes and in the shadow of the gently curving wooden beams that criss-cross the ceiling. There, I sat facing the cinema books: 'Grierson on Documentary', 'The Skin of the Film', 'Death 24x a second', and Braudy & Cohen's hefty collection of seminal essays.

During my year abroad, cinema had slowly evolved into a central pillar of my MML degree and sitting in the presence of these eminent critics' works was quite inspiring. That's not to say I read all

of them, of course. But the sheer potential of all the words and all the thoughts in all those books made up the distinct quality of the library air. A bit musty, admittedly, but fizzling with the opportunity for education like nowhere else.

There were (are, and will be long after I'm gone, as I've realised) three other seats at the table. Generally at least two of these were occupied by my study buddies, companions as much in the art of studying as they were in distracting me with fits of laughter that more than once forced me to leave the seat. We all became loyal to that table. When we couldn't get those seats, there was a pathetic sense of entitled outrage at the fact that others had chosen them. They felt like ours. And staying for a week over Christmas – a bit like Harry Potter, if he had opted to crawl through a 10,000-word dissertation on idiots in Ionesco – I became ever more rooted in my spot. Not that it was always the dreamy academic experience the prospectus suggested it would be – a gentle osmosis of knowledge, slowly building into an everflow-

ing stream of wisdom. Deadlines brought me close to breaking point in that seat but there were also moments when knowledge seemed to suddenly sew itself into a patchwork in my head, and I credit the divine intervention of exactly that seat.

A year ago, even a few weeks ago, I'd never have believed I'd be saying this, but I'm going to miss that seat. Perhaps it's the crushing identity crisis of graduation looming on the horizon: the transition from undergraduate to unemployed through the early June haze of cheap cava and barbecue smoke isn't exactly an easy one. But there's no denying that the seat became a part of my student identity, and by losing that I'm a bit scared to lose something of myself along the way. Probably the only way to counter this is to let go of the entitlement of a false sense of ownership I built over the year, realising and relishing in the fact that I'm just one of many to sit on its slightly itchy cloth. To have felt that I belonged there, even just for a short year, was quite a special thing. •

WORDS

Jade Cuttle

ILLUSTRATION

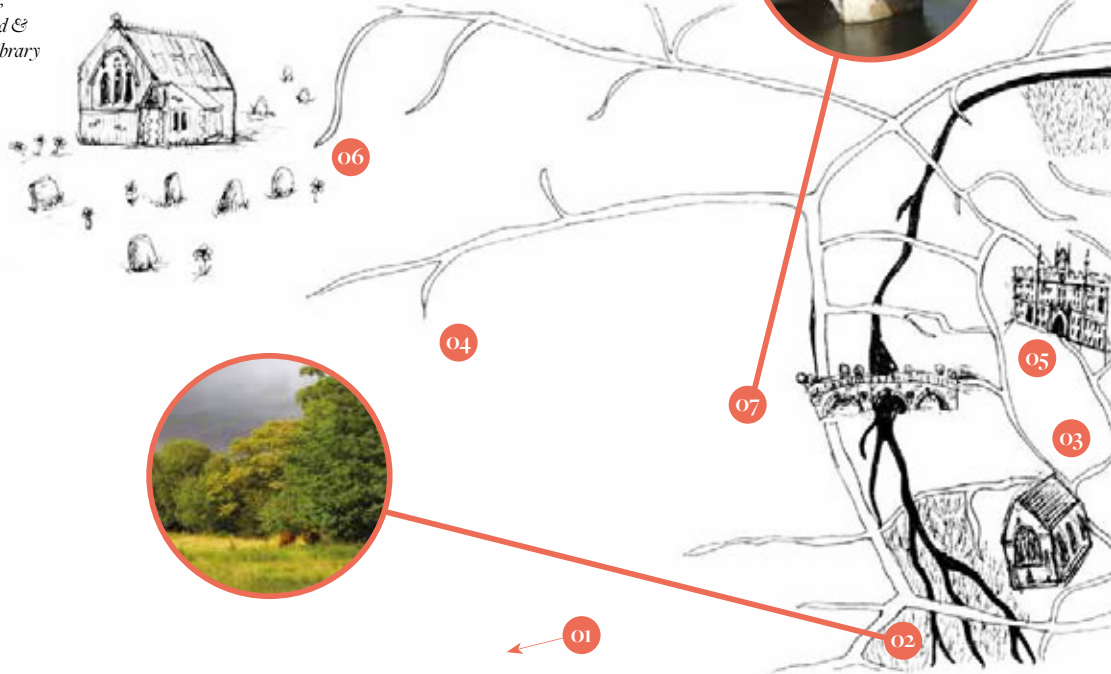
Sophie Buck

PHOTOGRAPHS

James Bowe,

Jim Linwood &

Espresso Library



off the BEATEN TOURIST TRACK

As exams come to an end, home friends vie to visit 'the city of perspiring dreams'. But the tourist hotspots soon lose their appeal when faced with a battle through the tight jungle of tourists and selfie-sticks, endless afternoon teas at Fitzbillies and tours through the same-old colleges. Fortunately, Varsity is here to give you an alternative list, for an authentic tour of Cambridge that your standard guide can't deliver. The seekers of the obscure will not be disappointed by some of the city's best kept (and most reasonably priced) secrets •

Hidden spots on the Cam

If the sun is scorching, one of the longest outdoor pools in Britain is certainly a safe bet to cool down. But why not go a step closer to nature and dip a toe in the clean part of the river; take a poetic plunge in Lord Byron's Pool (01) after a quiet picnic. There might be midges, save during a midnight skinny-dip in the moonlight, but joys abound in diving into the depths and following Lord Byron and, later, the likes of Rupert Brooke and Virginia Woolf. If swimming doesn't rock your boat, then the woodland site by its weir lays claim to a lovely circular walk by the River Cam.

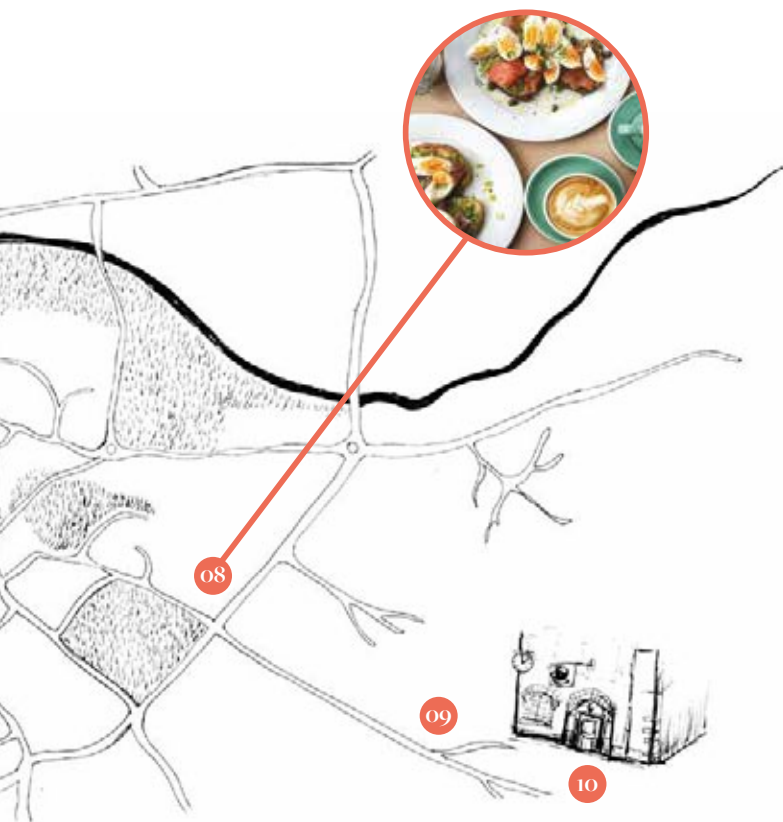
Sheep's Green

While the wooden bathing sheds and diving boards that once shivered at daring somersaults are sadly no more, a solitary handrail of the Ladies Bathing Place still exists (02). The stone summerhouse, Hodson's Folly,

was built in 1887 beside the footbridge at Sheep's Green as a father's watch place over his bathing daughter. A perfect stop over on a jolly to Granchester.

Little St Mary's gardens and the Corpus Leckhampton site

In theme with this thread of nature, the wild garden at Little St Mary's church (03) shelters in the shadow of Peterhouse without much of a second glance. But this secret and sacred site is a plot of pleasant surprises. The churchyard, first established in 1632, closed to the public a long time ago, but hidden gems are tucked away for temptation. The bird bath was built as a memorial to Burns Singer and stands proud in a plot of land reclaimed as a semi-wild garden, with rusted iron railings and crumbling gravestones that make for curious exploration. But if tombs are not to your taste, there are the secluded grounds of the Corpus site at Leckhampton (04), with sprawling



THE ITINERARY

- 01 **Byron's Pool**
Grantchester Road, CB2 9LG
- 02 **Hodson's Folly, Sheep's Green**
Fen Causeway, CB2 2AD
- 03 **Little St Mary's gardens**
Trumpington St, CB2 1QG
- 04 **Corpus Leckhampton site**
37 Grange Road, CB3 9BJ
- 05 **Sidney Sussex Ante-Chapel**
Sidney St, CB2 3HU
- 06 **The Ascension Burial Ground**
All Souls Lane, CB3 0EA
- 07 **Clare Bridge**
Trinity Lane, CB2 1TL
- 08 **Espresso Library**
210 East Rd, CB1 1BG
- 09 **Urban Larder & Tradizioni**
- 10 **9 & 18 The Broadway, Mill Road,**
CB1 3AH

wild gardens, shady trees, gorgeous flowers and even small deer. Cherry Hinton Hall park, Giant's Grave and the Lime Kiln, also East and West Pit nature reserves are other worthy tranquil picnic spots.

Eerie Cambridge

For the less faint hearted, head to Sidney Sussex's Ante-Chapel **05** for a nod to Cromwell's decapitated head, undertake some late night ghostbusting of Girton's grey lady, Corpus' Dr Butts or the hanged monk by Peterhouse's Senior Combination Room. If you still have your wits about you, head to the Ascension Parish Burial Ground **06**. The burial site boasts memorials and graves to many great scientists and scholars including three Nobel prize winners, Cambridge Apostles and members of the Darwin family. Finally, a mere short cycle away for the history enthusiast lies the UK's only World War Two American Military Cemetery in Madingley.

Quirky touches

As quirky as Cambridge students may be, the town's architecture is even more so. Look out for Clare Bridge's missing wedge **07**, wrongly rumoured to be the revenge of a builder not being paid in full, or a bet between two fellows that went too far. Another fun activity could be a hunt for the old door of 10 Downing Street, donated in the 1960s and currently in use in a similarly-named college. In any case, it is the students and professors with their eclectic passions that makes Cambridge such a special and unique place, so visits should fully exploit this. On the way to a look at the UL, college and faculty libraries are a worthy addition to the tour; try the SPS library, which is located upon the old site of the Cavendish Laboratory, where the structure of DNA was discovered in 1953, or otherwise check out the impressive wooden clad splendour of Haddon Library, located on the Downing Site.

Food for thought

All this walking requires substantial refuelling and headspace to mull over the quirks and artefacts of the tour. What better way than a wander down Mill Road, an escape from the chain cafés and restaurants that crowd the city centre. Start with a short stroll across Parker's Piece to Espresso Library **08**, for a delectable morning brunch – then come full circle and end the day there with a gin and tonic as the café transitions to bar. Further along Mill Road is Bedouin, offering a delicious range of North African cuisine. *Varsity* particularly recommends the Tagine Beldi. Also situated on the edge of the Cambridge bubble is the café Urban Larder **09**; come for the locally roasted coffee, stay for the local farm fresh delights and unpretentious atmosphere. And last, but by no means least, is the restaurant Tradizioni **10**. The best Italian food in Cambridge, and certainly worth the walk over the railway bridge •

Anna's Culinary Corner

ILLUSTRATIONS Claire Parker



As May Week: the culinary crown to my year, a Brideshead Revisited-esque haven. Bottles of champagne uncorked by the river, freshly picked strawberries covered in lashes of cream in Grantchester meadows, trays of afternoon tea enjoyed on punts; boys dressed in those Cambridge brown chinos, girls in light summer dresses swirling in the wind (Reinforcing the gender binary much?), one of us reading *Thus Spoke Zarathustra* aloud, another leisurely dipping into *Principia Mathematica*, yet others engaged in a friendly intellectual exchange about the implications of the perestroika to Putin's Russia, the whole scene set in sepia...

I lie. My May Week picnics have always been more of a case of dubious punting skills, punts being stranded on river banks (yes, this is possible), sunstrokes, rain, genetically modified giant strawberries, mini pork pies and sausage rolls provided by Sainsbury's Basics, all purchased only after a sizeable chunk of time spent arguing about suitable snacks. Like every year, though, I believe this year will be the year my picnics will prosper in true Cambridge style. For inspiration, I bring to you my favourite ideas from across the globe – and my humble self.

When I think of national picnic traditions, Japan and hanami are the first to spring to mind. These picnics draw parks full of picnickers, keen to observe the annual cherry blossoms, and baskets filled to the brim with homemade dishes. Unfortunately, the general absence of gyp room facilities for Japanese

homecooking limits the Cambridge hanami options somewhat. However, in Japan lazier picnic-goers can rely on hanami bento boxes: these delightful packs include vegetables cut into cherry blossom shapes, different types of fingerfood from familiar sushi to 'cute cherry blossom rice-ball barrels' (basically cooked rice balls with artfully arranged pickles), cakes from mochi balls to Swiss roll –type creations, and even simple snacks such as egg salad sandwiches. With a little creativity, googling, and maybe a helping hand from Itsu, a gyp room friendly bento box is sure to feature in this summer's picnic season.

In some countries, style in food is met or even exceeded by style in the setting. If you're one for classier dining experiences, look south to France and east to Turkey. Plastic cups are too often a staple of Cambridge picnics. To ensure that that bottle of Sainsbury's cava tastes its very best, opt for fine stemware like the French do: the shape of the traditional wine glass allows the wine's flavours and aromas to breathe, whereas an unsophisticated cup suffocates them. Turkey, on the other hand, goes beyond glassware and completes the picnic experience with cushions, rugs, and furniture; essentially things that you are banned from bringing into most college accommodation. By midnight, the picnics that are still going transform into full-blown parties featuring bonfires, music, dancing, and raki, a liquorice-flavoured alcohol. Sounds a lot like May Ball to me.

But sometimes the call to a potluck picnic

can come with too little warning to gather one's cushions, perfect one's umami, or whip up that Pikachu-shaped cake for your bento box. My personal picnic saviour tends to be a hit with even the pickier picnic-goers and is so simple that even the ten-year-old me managed edible results. I present my ridiculously simple spinach and feta rolls.

With the National Picnic Week kicking off on the 11th of June, it is about time I perfected my picnic skills. Anticipate many practice rounds, dubious sushi, not-so-cute mochi balls, wine glasses broken in transportation (so a bike basket might not be the safest option?), and an overload of spinach and feta: even if it's not quite Brideshead Revisited, at least it won't be Sainsbury's Basics on a sadly stranded punt either ●

Ridiculously simple spinach and feta rolls

(Makes approx. 40 bite-sized rolls)



250g frozen spinach
200g feta cheese
1 egg
white pepper
500g frozen puff pastry

Method

- 01 Melt and drain the spinach.
- 02 Crumble up the feta with a fork, and mix the spinach, feta, and egg into an even paste. Flavour to taste with white pepper.
- 03 Roll out the frozen puff pastry into thin rectangles, and spread a strip of the filling into the middle.
- 04 Roll up and cut into bite-sized pieces.
- 05 Glaze with egg and bake for about 15 minutes at 200°C – et voilà, you have the perfect, truly moreish picnic snack!





RIVERSIDE

*Just beneath the Bridge of Sighs, for only around two weeks of every year, the stoop of the Master's Garden is almost hidden by two parallel blossom trees. With an early morning start to beat the punters, the portion of the Cam usually packed with tourists was eerily empty. The quiet, the punts on the river and the sequins in the morning light all exaggerated an atmosphere reminiscent of *The Lady of Shalott* or *Hamlet's Ophelia* •*





At least I have an orange

POEM

Oliver Camessa

ILLUSTRATION

Daniel Gayne

Taken from my journal. 6th April 2016.

Edited on 8th April 2016

At least I have an orange

was the way we used to describe
the kaleidoscope of 'academic
mental masturbation'

(thank you Fourmaux, 2016)

that strips your neuronic clothes
and focus.

And because there's no

rhyme for this,

I'll insert this here:

door-hinge

(thank you Hattie, circa 2006, **I've never had the chance to do that**)

Because the volume of juice

you need to squeeze out

need not be so grand

As "insert academically nominalised
sentence with something like

_____ in it".

So long as you can feel more

And

Think less

(thank you Chaplin, ????)

You'll be fine

(thank you Andrews, 2014).

The world needs more of it

And this is outside

productivity conundrum syndrome

(thank you Andreea, 2016)

Everything could be made to look
wrong

So start,

Because you will be fine

(thank you again, Andrews, 2014)

So long as you have an orange
of course.



Key: **bold** denotes side note in journal.

VARSITY INTRODUCING Ben Brown

You have to get to
the heart of the issue
rather than just illustrate it



INTERVIEWER
Patrick Wernham
ILLUSTRATION
Ben Brown

Varsity Introducing: *How did you first get into art generally, and then drawing cartoons?*

Ben Brown: I've drawn since before I can even remember. In terms of cartoons, it's much more recent. This time last year *The Tab* sent out an email asking for contributors, and right at the bottom there was illustrator; I thought I might as well sign up to that as that'd be pretty cool. I went to the interview, and I think I was the only person to apply! I showed them some illustrations, and they said they'd take me on a fairly informal basis. For my first cartoon, which was really rubbish, the joke was one frame with students running out of exams being sprayed with champagne, and the next had them at the Union garden party being rained on. That was the really terrible joke; luckily I never really bothered finishing it!

VI: *What's the hardest part of drawing a cartoon: is it the concept or the execution?*

BB: It can vary. A lot of the time I've ended up hanging cartoons on rather lame puns, but generally the best ones come when you've actually got a decent joke. Normally a main joke or theme comes first. There was one just after George Osborne had announced his budget, and Iain Duncan Smith resigned. I didn't really come up with a single joke, but I decided to do a *Game of Thrones* theme with

them stabbing each other in the back. That wasn't really a single joke. There was one I did more recently about Malia Bouattia, the President Elect of the NUS, based around a single joke which I thought was quite interesting and edgy about anti-semitism. So there are differences in approach. I guess the difficulty comes in trying to make it work as a whole, trying to prevent it from becoming overly messy. Normally I draw them in pencil first, and ink over that. They tend to come fairly easily.

VI: *Do you think that a cartoon has a special quality, and can convey something that an article or joke on its own can't?*

BB: Probably not in an intellectual sense! I think it's more the fact that you have this image that's really powerful; it can stick in people's minds. Thinking back through history, the things that really stick in your mind are the images. With the Nazi-Soviet pact for example, or whatever situation, you'll remember the cartoons. In that way there's an appeal, and that's part of the reason one draws cartoons. An image can stick in someone's head in the way that an article might not be able to.

VI: *Do you see yourself more in the vein of a New Yorker-style, light-hearted, cartoonist or a more potent Charlie Hebdo-style one?*

BB: You wouldn't want to be a cartoonist who just takes current events and in some way tries to graft them bluntly onto an image. I think you have to try and get to the

heart of the issue, rather than just illustrate it. Newspaper cartoonists are under pressure to come up with one a day, whereas I only tend to do one every two weeks, and that probably does play its part. But ultimately I would prefer to draw a cartoon that is truly memorable rather than ones that just help to pass the day by!

VI: *How far do you agree with controversial cartoonists like Charlie Hebdo who set out to deliberately provoke?*

BB: I would be very annoyed if it just became about drawing Mohammed, as was the case with *Charlie Hebdo*, as a kind of protest in the name of free speech. I think that's being gratuitously disrespectful. But at the same time it would be very wrong to restrict cartoonists too much. A lot of the arguments are about whether other newspapers should print these cartoons after the original has caused controversy, which I found odd, because anyone who wants to can see them. I think the potency of imagery can be dangerous, and can be used not always in good ways.

VI: *Why do you think it is that people react so strongly to cartoons?*

BB: I think there's something innate about imagery; it really does stick in one's mind. You can get irony out a lot better with cartoons, and parody, for example, with works of art, through depicting certain politicians as grotesque monsters. I find it difficult to stay. Images can say something that words on paper can't •

FINAL CURTAIN CALL

As graduating students prepare to take their final bow, join Varsity Theatre as we say 'so long, farewell, auf Wiedersehen, good night' to talents from various aspects of the Cambridge theatre scene •

WORDS

Varsity Theatre

PHOTOGRAPHS

Various

So how did it all begin? Will Popplewell shares his first memories of Cambridge theatre: "I auditioned for the first Cambridge University Musical Theatre Society (CUMTS) show of the year because I was a super-keen fresher, so when it came to the Freshers' Fair I made a beeline for the theatre stalls and got the audition times. I naively turned up to my audition for *Funny Girl* with a backing track on my iPod – transposed into a nice easy key – only to find out that was not how accompaniment seems to work in Cambridge. I was lucky enough that the Musical Director had the music for my song, but in the original key."

Lian Wilkinson, self-proclaimed 'Queen of Props', was even more on the ball in getting her foot in the stage door: "One day after receiving my A-level results and getting into Cambridge, was the day I signed up to stage manage my first ADC show, *When the Rain Stops Falling*. That was perhaps the most obvious indicator of just how theatre-driven my Cambridge years would become, along with the suitcase of black clothes I brought with me that resembled the essential starter kit for the avid funeral-goer."



- 01 Rose Reade in *Oedipus and Antigone*, by Johannes Hjorth
- 02 Will Popplewell in the 2015 24 hour Musical, by Johannes Hjorth
- 03 CUPO Great Adventure by Johannes Hjorth

- 04 Cast and band of *Funny Girl* by Emily Newton
- 05 Technicians at work on *The Witches of Eastwick* by Johannes Hjorth
- 06 Rose Reade and Gabriel Cagan in *Lean*, by Johannes Hjorth



01



02

Lian goes on to explain how she well and truly caught the 'theatre bug': "I tried my hands at other 'techie' roles such as producing and lighting designing, but it wasn't until second year that my props came calling. Every theatre person has their own wacky stories to tell, with mine rooted deeply in the props department. These involve casually stowing an airport trolley in the back of a friend's car and walking along Silver Street with a coffin and some bemused actor-pallbearers. In fact, my post became a guessing game between the Downing porters and myself, working out what my directors had asked for next."

But preparing for a show is not always plain sailing. As Rose Reade recalls, "the first rehearsal I ever did was for the Freshers' play, *The Penelopiad*, and we were choreographing a fight scene. Marco Young had to pretend to hit my head on the floor, but then accidentally really hit my head on the floor. I had a bruise there for weeks."

Likewise, Technical Directors encounter their fair share of mishaps. Zach Bond recounts a particular incident from *How To Succeed In Business Without Really Trying*:



03



04



05



06



"Following the tech rehearsal, I learnt the dangers of 9V batteries when I discovered I had left one in my coat pocket, having changed microphone batteries earlier that day. It had subsequently short-circuited on a coin and, by the time I found it, was starting to smoke. Another 10 minutes and I could have gone up in flames. Not such a good idea in a lecture theatre of 300 undergraduates!"

Despite a few hiccups, everything works out alright on the night – right? Sarah Driver reminisces about her first production as part of the band at the ADC Theatre, *Mother Courage and Her Children*: "The pre-set involved the army band relaxing whilst off-duty; and in my lack-of-acting-skill-induced panic, I thought pretending to sleep would be the best course of action. Not only is it really hard to ignore the audience members coming in, but by the end of the week I was sufficiently tired that I actually fell asleep on stage. Jolted awake to play, I jumped a mile to the great amusement of the audience."

Zach equally shares some of his low-tech and makeshift solutions come show time: "of particular note was the use of a disco ball during *Joseph and the Amazing Technicolour Dreamcoat*. This required one hapless individual to run as quietly as possible along the roof space to the front of Magdalene Cripps Auditorium to physically spin the ball before running all the way back to lower it down using a, somewhat precarious, pulley system."

And what will these finalists take away

from their theatre experiences? Looking back on her time in Cambridge, Sarah sums up the impact of her 25 shows: "I'm sad to be finishing my PhD and leaving the student theatre scene behind. Not only do you get to play challenging and exciting music with a team of wonderful people, you learn so much from the overall experience. I would never have had the confidence to stand on stage had I not been involved in theatre and I've been pushed outside of my comfort zone so often that I now enjoy it."

Similarly, Will looks back with fondness on his theatre achievements: "Obviously I have so many amazing memories from performing in Cambridge, and CUMTS has been an amazing society for that, but one of the most rewarding things was directing *Godspell*. Working on the 'other side' of the show was eye opening and naturally hard work at times, but the rewards were unique. To place my trust in this cast that I had cobbled together – and even more, to have them put their trust in me – gave the production a life and purpose that I won't quickly forget."

As for the future of Cambridge theatre, Rose encourages students to continue experimenting and pushing themselves: "My favourite theatre to perform in is the Corpus Playroom; it is such an interesting and chal-

lenging space. What has been so brilliant about performing in Cambridge is getting to experiment with shows and parts that I probably would never get to play in the real world."

And Lian – any final comments? "College drama is certainly something to look out for, with shows outside the ADC continuing to demonstrate that any

space can become a venue for theatre. This year saw Shakespeare in Emmanuel Chapel and devised theatre in King's Chapel, offering the variety that Cambridge theatre is famous for.

"With May Week shows dotted across Cambridge college gardens, it'll be exciting to see where we'll find a production next: perhaps a bit of Molière in the University Library, anyone?" ●

**"WHAT HAS BEEN SO
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Hamlet

—Edinburgh Fringe Preview

Hamlet is surely one of the most daunting plays to approach, not least for performance at the Edinburgh Fringe. But this enthusiastic cast seem determined and unfazed by such a prospect—even sticking with its original verse form •

WORDS

Laura Pujos

PHOTOGRAPHS

Oscar Yang

In the year of the 400th anniversary of Shakespeare's death, the Cambridge University Shakespeare Players are taking *Hamlet* to the Edinburgh Fringe. Even more excitingly, going on the cast and crew's research thus far, it seems to be the only production of *Hamlet* that is selling the play in its own right, in the original verse. The team is currently fundraising for the run, which will take place during the week of the 22nd-27th August, in **TheSpace @ Niddry Street** - if any readers' appetites are whet then do donate and/or come and see the show in Elinore Edinburgh! This might appear a rather cheeky bit of self-promotion on the part of the author, who, surprise surprise, is in the cast, but at least the article doesn't go as far as including a link to the Go Fund Me page, or plugging the various social media accounts... After all, this is written by a thesp, argal some amount of advertising was to be expected.

On the theme of drama, *Hamlet* (Joe Sefton in this production) continues to be a

fascinating character for actors to approach, providing many opportunities to play around with the very idea of performance. Hamlet's 'antic disposition' is one of the most critically baffling and dramatically challenging aspects of the play, which centuries of actors and several actresses have taken on. The challenge for Sefton will be to assume this role (one of the most theatrically distinguished in English stage history, seen as the pinnacle of many great actor's careers) and breathe new life into it. It is no easy feat for a university student, but this aspect of youth is also something co-directors Gaia Fay Lambert and Myles O'Gorman are capitalizing on, bringing Hamlet's age down to the late teens: more in line with what we recognise as a university student nowadays.

To further expand on the co-directors' vision for the piece, the production will be quite a minimalist, naturalistic retelling of *Hamlet*, focusing on the core drama of the piece. This will be interesting in the setting of the Fringe festival, in particular, as a locus mainly of stand-up and sketch shows, with even the occasional comedy retelling of *Hamlet* - a quirky idea Gaia and Myles assure me they were not tempted by.

The 80-minute time slot would normally pose a challenge that might put people off doing *Hamlet* - a mammoth play of typically at least three hours - but Myles was undaunted. Heightening the domesticity of the play by removing much of the explicitly political subplot of Fortinbras' rebellion really hones the family focus. This element of the play has a greater modern relevance: estranged parents, adolescent anxiety, depression, and,

01 Joe Sefton as *Hamlet*

02 (left to right) Julia Xavier Stier as *Marcella*/Ensemble, Alex Strouts as *Horatio* and Matt Gurtler as *Ghost*/Gravedigger/Ensemble

03, 04 Laura Pujos as *Ophelia*

Myles also claims, 'friendly banter'; it's the Jacobean answer to the soap opera.

In all seriousness, though, the mention of anxiety and depression raise the important question of the portrayal of mental health in *Hamlet*, a lens that Gaia and Myles were keen to use, having been immediately struck by the raw pain of the play. Hamlet's madness is perhaps more illness than anything else, and certainly with Ophelia there is a tendency to portray a pervasive and damaging stereotype of flitty, zany, and, well, "crazy" madness, which both directors are keen to avoid and rethink. In the inevitable process of cutting that was necessary to get the show to its 80-minute duration, many of the characters around Ophelia's lines have been cut, allowing for a closer focus on the tragedy of Ophelia (to be played by Laura Pujos), and not just of Hamlet, despite her proportionally small



02



01



03

role in terms of lines in Shakespeare's unbridged play. The madness of Hamlet surely works best when playing against expectation; it is all the more affective and troubling when suffering becomes so deep-seated that it seems normal.

The production really invests in the idea of the chorus, too, as a disembodied choir of voices who surround Hamlet during key moments in the play. The cutting up and interlocking of scenes is also an innovative move by Gaia and Myles, which they hope will aid the exploration of mental health in the production, creating a sense of personal oppression and suggesting nuanced distinctions between 'put on' madness and real madness as Hamlet struggles with his role in external society.

A tricky character to grapple with is also King Claudius; actor Seth Kruger thinks him an interesting type of "villain", because, as in the case of Mark Anthony, we access the character mostly through hearsay. In Hamlet's mind, and in the Murder of Gonzago play, he is a Richard III-type machiavel, but in the play proper we see a more weary and guilt-ridden man. While Hamlet is plagued by doubt and indecision, Claudius can pose a refreshing alternative: a decisive character, he acts first and asks questions later - but the questions he asks himself shake him to the core. Importantly, this a group piece; it is worth considering that in away, each of the characters experiences their own tragedy. Rehearsals are already well underway for this ambitious project, and it's shaping up to be a very exciting piece, not to be missed; buzz buzz! ●



04

Edinburgh Fringe

—a Varsity guide

SWITCH A SKETCH SHOW

Switch

A sketch show from Cambridge's greatest comedic talents where every sketch will start in exactly the same position as the previous one finished.

2:55pm, Wednesday 3rd August 2016 to Monday 29th August 2016 at Underbelly Med Quad (Buttercup)

BRITNEY



"a comedy"

Britney

Sometimes laughter is the best medicine as two best friends come to terms with one being diagnosed with a brain tumour through comedy.

6:35pm, Wednesday 3rd August 2016 to Monday 29th August 2016 at Assembly George Square Studios



Five Go Off On One!

Robert Eyers' hilarious spin on childhood favourite *The Famous Five* is rejuvenated for the Fringe and audiences should expect even more frivolity and satirical genius.

3:00pm, Thursday 4th August 2016 to Sunday 28th August 2016 at The Big Cave, Just The Tonic @ The Caves



Alice

You will definitely believe in six impossible things before breakfast with this extravaganza of acrobatic and dancing talent infused with Wonderland splendour.

10:00am, Tuesday 16th August 2016 to Sunday 28th August 2016 at The Debating Hall @ Gilded Balloon



The Wives of Others

Expect foul language, bloodshed and a lot of spaghetti from this student-written dark comedy about a dinner party between Mafiosas.

8:00pm, Sunday 14th August 2016 to Monday 29th August 2016 at C Venues, C.34



I Love You Because

This light-hearted musical follows two couples and their Austen-esque struggles to find love alongside the pressures of modern romance.

3:30pm, Sunday 14th August 2016 to Monday 29th August 2016 at C Venues, C. Too



Howie the Rookie

A nightmarish dive into the darkest depths of human behaviour, this tragedy is filled with surprising comic twists, lyrical verse and blistering imagery.

10:05pm, Monday 15th August 2016 to Sunday 28th August 2016 at Paradise in The Vault, The Annexe

All details correct at time of printing

Screen Gazing

—a column

WORDS

Molly Stacey

ILLUSTRATIONS

Claire Parker

In a term which does not lend itself to social-interaction or self-indulgence, this column has been an ode to the on-screen comforts which make a life of libraries more enjoyable. Amidst the end-of-year joys, however, inevitably comes the pains of accepting that, soon, friends will be leaving and circumstances will be changing. And at some point – probably while nursing a hangover from the folds of a duvet – it might be necessary to turn to old film favourites. Cinema is a fixed medium. Whereas the mood of a play may change on any given night, film immortalises moments in time, refining the experience of a particular feeling. Films, therefore, are perfectly suited to the requirements by the mopeiest of hangovers; the artistic equivalent of comfort food. Cinemas are transportive in



their familiarity; every time I sit in the plush darkness of a film screen, I feel the same shiver of anticipation that I got waiting to watch

Disney movies in my local Picturehouse during washed-out half-term holidays. There is a faux-grown-up joy in the recognition a film has shaped you. When I re-watch *Mulan*, I smile approvingly, knowing that my Disney indoctrination amounted to a stoic belief that I, too, could fight

enormous Hun warriors, if only I put my mind to it.

Over Easter break, in a moment of self-pity, I tried to rediscover teen classic *The Perks of Being a Wallflower*, and the feeling of recognition my Year 9 self found in it. It has not aged well. In the lifespan of a teenager, four years



is a long time: enough time realise that listening to alternative '80s soundtracks doesn't make you cool, that Emma Watson is more convincing when fighting basilisks than contrived 'inner demons', and that lines such as "And in this moment, I swear we were infinite" need to be processed by a 15-year-old brain drunk on hormones in order to resemble the profound. Yet, I found the cringe oddly comforting. I had left my teen angst where it belonged: wedged against a Slush-Puppy down the back of a scratchy cinema seat somewhere in Suffolk.

There is something critically worthy about re-watching films. Often, each repeated viewing adds perspective which complicates interpretation. Though films are fixed works of art, we are unstable. I recently watched *Titanic* for the hundredth-or-so time. My thoughts turned to the young, twinkly-eyed Leo, who did not know he'd still have to wait 20 years before getting his Oscar. Inspired by cheap Sainsbury's wine and exam-free mania with friends, I probably thought something embarrassing about how nostalgia is great, but it's generally a relief to be enjoying it from a position of distance and maturity. Probably, but I shan't write it down – lest someone makes me read this back in four years time, and I vomit at my 19-year-old, Perks of Being a Pretentious Columnist ways •



Varsity Summer Guide

Varsity briefs you for the most anticipated releases of the summer. This range of previews, from rock to pop to 16th century Flemish art, will be sure to keep you busy over the impending vacation •

01



Album: The Getaway
Red Hot Chili Peppers
(Warner Bros., June 17)

Prepare for the California foursome's return on the 17th of June with their eleventh album of high octane funk rock.

02



Album: Digital Distortion
Iggy Azalea
(Def Jam, June 24)

Iggy's second album is sure to be catchy and controversial in equal measure. It arrives just in time for summer on the 24th of June.

“What the flock!”

—*The Angry Birds Movie*

WORDS

Daan Schneider

DIRECTED BY

Clay Kaytis & Fergal Reilly



Although *Angry Birds* may not be the first game to be made into a feature-length film, it is certainly the first smartphone app to hit the big screen. What a time to be alive! One would think that the film adaptation of a simple but maddeningly addictive 2D procrastination tool that involves firing off flightless birds into elaborate wooden structures made by egg-stealing pigs (who are, for some unexplained reason, green) provides a great opportunity for creative invention, for exploring some untrodden territory, and for (dare I say it?) deepening the backstories of these angriest of birds. But the makers of *The Angry Birds Movie* prove us wrong. A missed shot indeed.

Rather, what we get is a reductive tale of good versus evil littered with bland, and sometimes outright offensive, gags. We are introduced to Red, an unloveable outcast who is the only really ‘angry’ bird on the

otherwise tranquil bird island. Enter the pigs: one bearded pig-king and a legion of homogeneously silly piggie-minions, who are looked upon with great suspicion by Red, but receive a warm welcome by the bird community despite the fact that they carry with them loads of crates that say “TNT”. The inevitable happens: the pigs destroy the bird town, steal their eggs, and Red is proven right in his suspicion. After a weird speech whose main point seems to be that anger sometimes is the answer, Red leads a now unanimously angry legion of birds to an epic siege of the piggie stronghold. This may be the only mildly entertaining part of the film, but references to the gameplay of the smartphone app don’t do much to make up for the undeserved glee with which these birds take revenge on the pigs by utterly annihilating their city. The shoddy plot and the predictable progression of the film could be forgiven if it wasn’t for the endless tsunami of lame

puns and tasteless jokes. At one point Chuck, the yellow bird, takes a shit on an officer as we listen to ‘Sound of da Police’ in the background, and later, we have to endure about a minute of the Mighty Eagle pissing in the Lake of Wisdom...“what the flock!”

Kids deserve better than *The Angry Birds Movie*. Perhaps the most telling (and frightening) thing about the film is that it now seems to be appropriated by some ‘white nationalist’ and far-right bloggers who celebrate it as “a cautionary tale about #refugees-welcome”, and who recognise themselves in the unsung but eventually sung hero of Red, who is first ostracised for his suspicion of newcomers, but later heralded as a saviour. There are even photos floating around twitter of Donald Trump’s hair photoshopped onto Red’s feathery head. Could this film grow to become a cinematic anthem for extreme-right populism? Let’s just wait until the inevitable sequel • ★★★★★

03



Album: California
Blink-182
(BMG, July 1)

The iconic pop-punkers’ seventh is the band’s first without former vocalist/guitarist Tom DeLonge so there’s sure to be some surprises in store.

04



Exhibition: Bruegel and his Time
Fitzwilliam Museum
(free, May 10 – Sep 4)

Landscape drawings from the Bruce Ingram bequest, celebrating pioneering landscapes by 16th and 17th century Dutch and Flemish artists.

05



Film: Now You See Me 2
dir. Jon M. Chu
(Summit Entertainment, July 4)

Boasting the likes of Daniel Radcliffe, Jesse Eisenberg and Michael Caine amongst its star-studded cast, this thriller seems set to be a hit.

2016

—a musical retrospective

This has been a huge six months in music as 2016 has already seen the deaths of some much-loved artists, the rebirth of some old whipping boys and the confirmation of a new elite. In all, the last few months have given us hope that we might head optimistically towards the muddy shambles that is festival season ●

WORDS

Alex Mistlin

PHOTOGRAPHS

Rring Huang/JS/Rene Passet GOOD



I returned to Cambridge one January morning to the sad news of David Bowie's passing after an 18 month battle with liver cancer. This was to be the first in a series of untimely deaths; cherished figures including Maurice White (Earth, Wind and Fire), George Martin (The Beatles' producer) and Prince have all passed in the last year.

To make matters worse, the melancholic mood was not lifted by the quality of music that those dark early months offered. Pop offered no solace as formulaic, predictable and underwhelming releases from Bloc Party, Fat White Family and Future represented an inauspicious start to the year. By Valentine's day I was beginning to become deeply concerned that, with the big summer releases months away, 2016 was going to fail to hit the heady heights of the previous year.

Fortunately, the next fortnight saw the release of two diametrically opposed albums which largely put paid to my fears. The first was Kanye West's *The Life of Pablo*; ostentatiously released on Valentine's day, Kanye's seventh was a real labour of love. *Pablo* simultaneously managed to showcase the best and worst of Kanye as the skillful production was only matched by the offensiveness of certain lyrics. The second, Kendrick Lamar's *untitled unmastered* embodies a very different approach to the craft of making and releasing music. Despite effectively being a compilation of discarded demos from the sessions for *To Pimp a Butterfly*, the album plays as a political firestorm, replete with all the skillful wordplay and avant-garde influences that

make Kendrick one of the most exciting artists, in any genre, of the current generation.

By March then, the green shoots of renewal were beginning to show and keen to capitalise on this buzz were a cadre of young upstarts. Hitherto unknowns such as Zara Larsson and the Future-aping Designer grabbed the mainstream by the throat with 'Lush Life' and 'Panda' respectively. One of the most exciting prospects for the latter half of the year is whether or not these artists will be able to deliver on their early promise with more substantial offerings.

However, nowhere was the rude health of the music industry clearer than in the fact that the year saw two of the most maligned figures of years past, Justin Bieber and Zayn Malik slip into critical respectability. Both Bieber and Zayn's bids for credibility saw them embrace "laptop music" and produce edgy dance-pop. This is not the only way in which straight-ahead rock & roll continues to remain firmly unrevived. The grim regularity with which guitar bands continue to produce lacklustre, nostalgia-driven albums has really begun to grate. While it's one thing for a modern band to hark back to the glory days of CBGB or The Hacienda, Catfish and the Bottlemen (and they are by no means the only offenders) seem determined to slip into self-paro-

dy. It's 2016, not 1976, and wearing a leather jacket and not-giving-a-fuck just isn't what it used to be.

A year that started with a whimper ended with a bang as exam term saw the release of a trio of huge albums from some of music's biggest beasts. While Drake's *Views* veered into self-indulgence and was consequently met with mixed reviews, Beyoncé and Radiohead consolidated their reputations with albums of creative majesty. In my opinion, it is a huge positive that albums as aesthetical-

ly diverse as *Lemonade* and *A Moon Shaped Pool* shared a willingness to wrestle with some of the big philosophical issues of modern life. In particular, Beyoncé's exploration of the tribulations of womanhood present a blueprint for how artists can contin-

ue to be politically engaged without compromising on the quality of their music.

That Skepta sat comfortably atop the charts above such huge names was a source of great satisfaction; *Kommichiwa's* success not only reflects his own personal redemption but also the manner in which Grime has long-since transcended the risky roadz of inner london. In a year with more than its fair share of bad news, it has been a true delight to see this year's biggest names continue to innovate in the same vein as David Bowie generations ago ●

IT'S 2016, NOT 1976, AND
WEARING A LEATHER
JACKET AND NOT-
GIVING-A-FUCK JUST
ISN'T WHAT IT
USED TO BE

*Tucked away in the unassuming Classics faculty on Sidgwick Site, is a mecca of shapes and stories that makes up the cast gallery.
The red walls coupled with the commanding presence of the pale grey statues, made the perfect backdrop to celebrate
androgynous female tailoring and jutting silhouettes •*



PHOTOGRAPHER
Caitlin McCarthy
MODEL
Kate Dunbar
ARTISTIC DIRECTORS
*Meg Honigmann &
Grace Ding*



BLACK. WHITE. RED.

