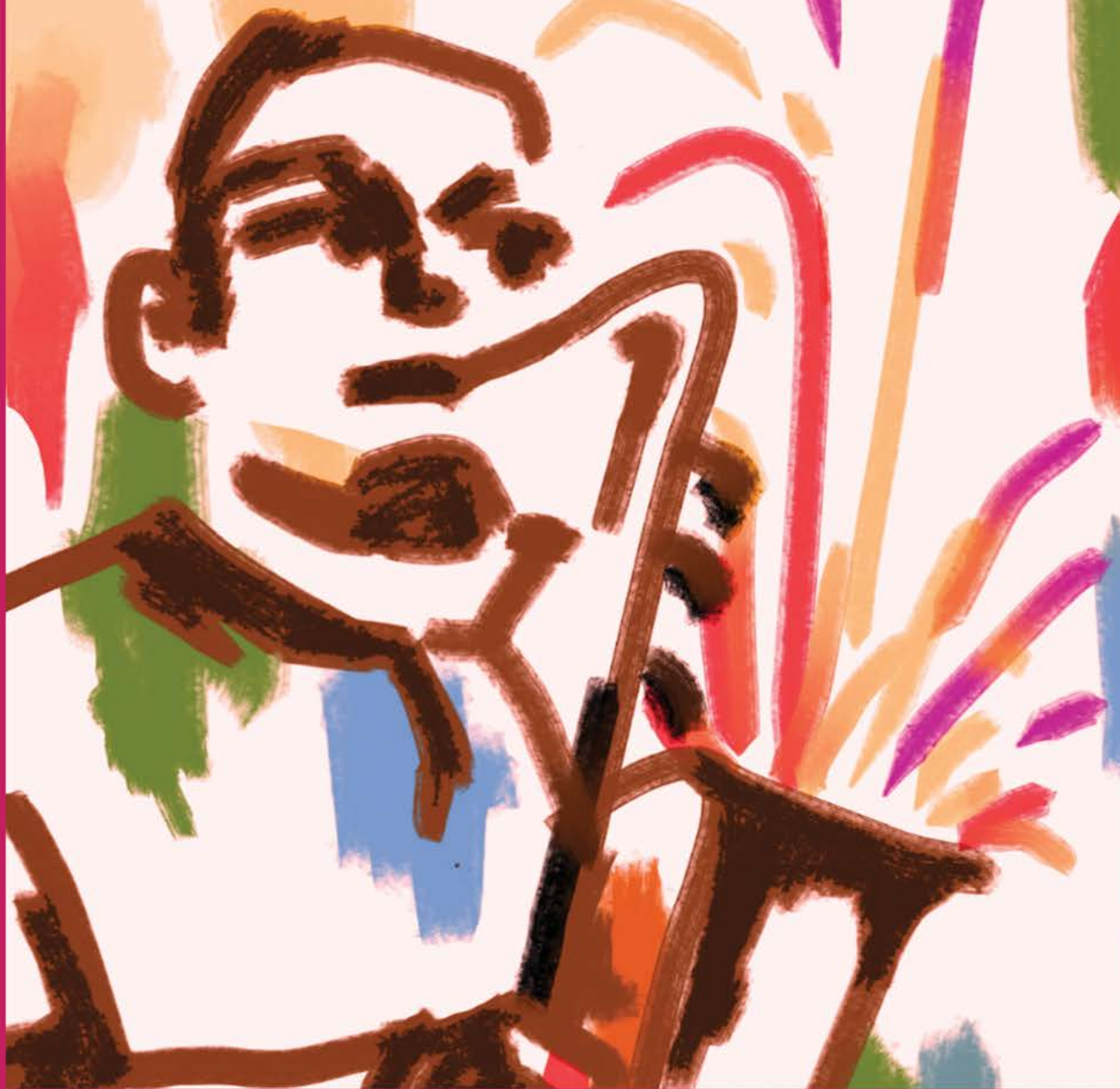


CRACCUM

AUCKLAND UNIVERSITY'S STUDENT MAGAZINE SINCE 1927

MUSIC



THE CASE FOR COMMUNAL
CAMPUS PIANOS

Judy Zhang

WILL KIWI ARTISTS
EVER BE ROYALS?

Hope Milo

NEW LOGO: UOA'S
BRANDING GETS A FACELIFT

Azzurra
Snelgrove-Douch

FANCY NEW BAND

GGTV

COMMUNITY
TREATMENT
ORDER

LIPSTICK CHERRY

LUCIEN RICE

MIDNIGHT GREEN



The Tuning Fork
Friday 9 May | From 7PM



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We need your help!

We need your help to reach
81% contribution for Issue 5!



THANK YOU!

Ka pai everyone! We smashed our goal for Issue 4!



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RIP Kyle Whorral

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EDITORIAL

FROM EDITOR IN CHIEF



HARRY SUTTON

So, you have managed to survive through the first half of the semester, found your way around the campus, and fought off fellow students to find that last seat in the general library. Well done, you. Now, the real work begins, and I wish you all the best of luck for the second half of this semester. But for a moment, let's not worry about university work and just focus on the theme of this issue: Music!

May is music month, so there are

events happening all over the city and campus too! The band *Train* is performing at Spark Arena, drum and bass icon *KmotioNZ* is back at Shed 10, two Aussie artists, *The Jungle Giants* and *Pete Dinklage* performing here too! There are so many other artists coming here this May too so grab tickets while you still can!

I believe that music is so powerful; music can make a day fun or make a day dark, music can add a whole other emotion to a scene that maybe didn't have one. Music is one of the many joys in life, and without it, the world would be a very different place. It's so ingrained into society that no matter where you go to the gym or a café, or even a supermarket, music will be playing. It won't be the same music, obviously, but it still will be there. Imagine going to a party and there is no music, it would be weird, right? Or no music when you go clubbing or to a bar? Music is everywhere, and every month it seems to be changing.

Thanks to social media and specifically TikTok, music trends, music genres and music artists can make or break your time in the music industry. Artists like *Alex Warren*, *Myles Smith* have found massive success thanks to these apps, with their songs going for a few hundred thousand listens, to millions and millions and selling out tickets across the globe. *Charli XCX* was already one of the biggest artists in the world, but she has exploded thanks to her album "Brat" she has the world in a chokehold and has become a global icon. Artists are now making music that they hope will be used in dance trends to just blow up their popularity even more, just because of how influential social media is today.

Speaking of *Charli*, at the time of this editorial, Coachella is currently going on across the world in America. This festival is insane. So, for context, Electric Avenue set a record this year for the biggest number of people at a New Zealand music festival, bringing in 70,000 people over a weekend. Coachella in 2024 sold over 250,000 tickets, which is more than three times the size of Electric Avenue! Let's look at a few more stats. Rhythm and Vines tickets, including camping, for a basic camp cost of around 520, that covers four days of camping from the 28th of December to New Year's Day. Pretty good, right? Coachella's general admission so without the camping, is 1,000 New Zealand dollars, for VIP it's 2,000 dollars! Just ten or so years ago, festivals like this were nowhere near as big as they are now.

For example, Glastonbury, the biggest music festival in England started with just 1,500 people attending in 1970, to now has 200,000 people rocking up.

Music is just evolving and evolving, and festivals are just getting bigger and bigger. However, the biggest music festival in the world isn't somewhere you'd expect. Donauinselt in Austria is the biggest in the world, with the total number of visitors this year being 2.5 million people! That is insane because that is more than the entire population of the South Island!

Again, things will only get bigger and bigger. Music will continue to get more and more diverse with drum and bass artists now making songs that sound like an alien movie, and online trends catapulting artists to the stars. The music industry and world will keep chugging and go in new directions that we never thought possible. I personally would like for Noah Kahan and Sabrina Carpenter to release more music but that's just me.

Until next time, guys and take care.

Harry



NZ MUSIC MONTH
TE MARAMA PUORO
O AOTEAROA



ACT's New Proposed Bill

WHAT DO UOA STUDENTS THINK?

IRENE PARSAEI & ANONYMOUS CONTRIBUTORS

Recently, ACT MP Dr Parmjeet Parmar proposed a bill that targets services that universities offer 'based on race'. This includes scholarships, separate study spaces, financial assistance, and 'special allowances' such as course entry pathways to competitive fields, with medicine being named as an example.

Parmar also specifically targeted the University of Auckland in regards to the compulsory first year undergraduate 'Waipapa Taumata Rau (WTR)' course.

The Pro Vice-Chancellor, Jemaima Tiatia-Siau has spoken out against the bill, warning that if passed, it could "risk limiting access to quality education." Up until the moment that this piece was submitted for publication, the University of Auckland as an organisation has not yet made an official statement on this matter.

POLITICS / EDUCATION
ACT MP launches member's bill to stop universities offering services 'based on race'

2:08 pm on 20 March 2020

Share this



Dr Parmjeet Parmar, Photo: NZD / Christian Ross

Students at the university were invited to share their thoughts on this topic:

"I feel like all the extra support given is great! Like the tuakana rooms and groups. However, offering spaces first to any group of people should not be okay. I have to apply for a Clinical Psych post grad. There's only 14 spaces and at least half of them go to Mori and Pacifica. I feel whoever has the grades, work experience and does better at the interview should get accepted. What's the point of making it so competitive then just giving 7 spaces away based on where you're from? Offering Mori and Pacifica extra support, tutoring and spaces in uni and extra opportunities to improve their studies and skills is completely fine, and in fact very important. They need that support. But that doesn't mean they give away spaces in any post grad just due to race or ethnicity. People all apply and all work really hard for each spot. The most deserving should get it. Period!"

Anonymous, Bachelor of Arts 3rd Year, Psychology and Philosophy

"There are so many hurdles in the way of Mori students already. Scholarships and programs such as tuakana help so much. Tuakana isn't some secret ring of cheating and sharing answers or being given the cheat codes, it's a place for community. It's somewhere to go to ask questions or to meet people in your classes who you can work with. Universities have such a colonial history and for so long kept Mori out that most uni spaces don't feel welcoming to them. Tuakana has never stopped other students from entering, I'd invite anyone that thought tuakana was some unfair advantage to come to a tuakana tutorial- you'll see all that happens is you are welcomed and supported by the tutors to do your own work."

Anonymous, Psychology

"I don't agree with the bill, but I do think there needs to be more discussion around spots reserved for Mori and Pacific students, especially in competitive degrees."

Layla, Engineering

"People are against specialized schemes because they think the point is to 'compensate' Mori/Pacific people for all the wrongs done to them - hence the reactionary rhetorics like 'but what about privileged rich Mori kids abusing the scheme' or 'what about this poor white/asian kid' but the point was never compensation for individual circumstances, the point is to correct statistical imbalances. Race specific schemes look into the future more than the past, it is NOT just a pity seat."

Audrey, Medicine

"ACT is too obsessed with the concept of race wars and needs to chill out. How about a bill to support all students with the cost of living?"

Lily, Law

"What the hell. Like what the actual fuck? Who keeps voting for these people to have seats, man?"

Anonymous, Computer Science

Whakarongo

Author's Note: To learn more about this bill, and see the statements made from political groups on campus, please visit Craccum's website where there is a full article on this topic.

THE CASE FOR COMMUNAL CAMPUS PIANOS

WHERE IS OUR MISSING CAI PIANO?



JUDY ZHANG

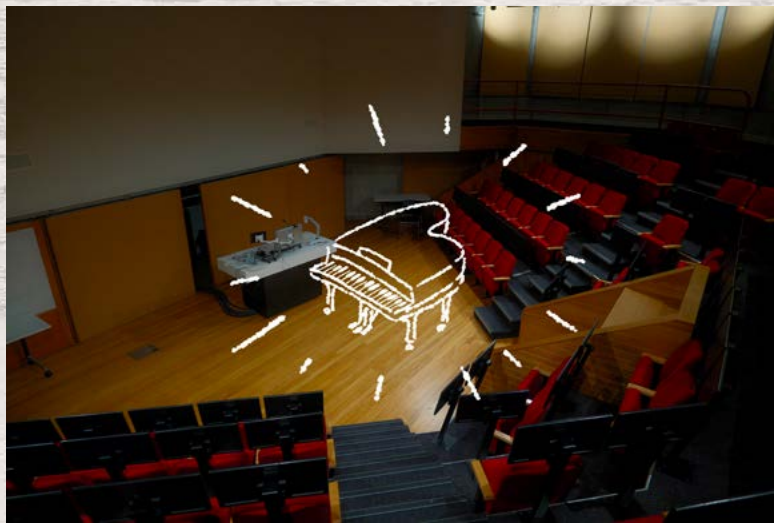
Anyone who has had class in the Conference Centre's Design Theatre will know of the large sleek black instrument sitting off to the side of the lectern. A piano. A Steinway grand. For those of you reading whose niche is not musical instruments, Steinway is the Rolls-Royce of pianos. The sparkle and clarity of glass. We're talking Rolex, Apple and Michelin star. Carnegie Hall has them, and so does the Sydney Opera House. Where else does the opportunity to play on a Steinway simply fall into your lap? But before you drop your copy of Craccum and beeline for 423-348 to see it for yourself, I regret to inform you that the Steinway has been removed from the room since the beginning of Semester One this year.

As someone who would make trips from far corners of the campus to the Theatre during "no current booking" hours solely with the intention of playing on that piano, I know that I am not alone in my grief. Over my many visits to the Conference Centre, I've overheard all kinds of genres through the wooden double doors; from anime soundtrack anthems, to Debussy, to Aretha Franklin. And on numerous occasions, as I'm leaving the theater after a cathartic jam session, I have run into students who had been waiting patiently for their turn to play. None of us belong to the Faculty of Creative Arts and Industries (CAI). There is an unofficial society of on-the-side pianists, casual jammers, and hidden musicians for whom this Steinway is a sacred creative place, a beloved haunt, one of life's unexpected luxuries.

Dare I pipe up that CAI students are not the only ones who need pianos? Many students who are not studying music at a tertiary level but are still passionate about enjoying and making music no longer have access to pianos in their lives. Some of us have moved away from the piano in our family home. Some of us have student debt, fussy neighbours, or no space to house such an instrument. We may not be able to commit enough time to music on a regular basis, but we would still jump at the chance to sit down in front of a piano and welcome back

the muscle memory – just like how one wouldn't hesitate to pull over in the town their oldest friend lives for a reunion if they're passing through.

University should mean more to us as students than simply a learning institution. It is a third space; where we form unexpected but powerful relationships, collage together into communities, and throughout it all, learn more deeply about ourselves. How many of us have fallen away from basic human vehicles of expression, human pleasures such as playing instruments, singing, dancing, and drawing because we feel that we need to 'be good at it in order to do it'? How many of us never gave it a try at all for that very reason?



"There are two means of refuge from the miseries of life: music and cats." This is a quote from Albert Schweitzer, the 1952 Nobel Peace Prize winner who dedicated over 50 years of his life to working as a medical missionary in Gabon, Western Africa. To describe his mission as "challenging" would be a massive understatement. Before Schweitzer and his wife Helene Bresslau were able to build a hospital from corrugated iron and locally available materials, the surgical operating room was a chicken coop. Swathes of patients flocked in; many had travelled for days to receive treatment. Interruptions came in the form of personal health risks and World Wars. A pedal-piano accompanied Schweitzer to his mission post in the town of Lambaréné, and playing music became his source of

strength, a vital connection to his Christian faith. Music helped him survive.

During my semester exchange at the University of Sydney last year, I scouted out at least six pianos dotted around the general campus accessible to students of all study backgrounds. Granted, some were easier to access or in more fortunate condition than others, and this was made transparent in a handy online guide to the pianos on campus, created by USyd's Piano Society. Now, this is not saying that the University of Auckland must blow cash imminently to purchase communal pianos and put them all over the place. There is good reason why the School of Music currently reserves its practice

rooms for music students only, and I can understand why the university might be concerned about students mistreating the campus facilities or taking them for granted. Our beloved Te Kāuta Student Kitchen and Lounge on Level 2 Kate Edger Information Commons first opened its doors in mid-2022, but has quickly turned from sparkling new into a room housing a collection of suspiciously stained microwaves, mostly-broken hot water units, and blocked sinks (oh hello, somebody's day-old cup noodles). Respect our campus, respect one another, be brave enough to share our luxuries, and we all get nice things.

Then what about those wanting to serenade a crush, reunite with a childhood hobby, or simply experience the joy of being a human through music? What should they do in the meantime? Of my knowledge, the only remaining pianos on campus open to all students are located in the McLaurin Chapel, though please do be aware of any other students using the space for quiet study or worship. There's a Yamaha spinet and a Yamaha upright, with sticking keys and sticky keys, respectively. It's no Steinway, but the acoustics of the chapel and the afternoon light gently filtering in through the oaks outside might make up for it.



BRANDING HAS BOOKED A FACELIFT

UOA's new blue-nified brand



AZZURRA SNELGROVE-DOUCH

The University's branding is set to undergo significant changes, as revealed through a staff interview. The university is revamping its logo, colours, fonts, and signage, marking the culmination of three years of work and development in partnership with Māori led brand Ira, a creative partner working through a Te Ao Māori lens. The aim? To create a more unified identity that resonates with the entire student body. So, what do these changes mean for us as students, and how will they affect our campus experience?

The most noticeable change will be to the University's colour scheme.

Gone are the 'corporate' blue and grey, replaced by variations of blue, inspired by a photograph of Auckland's harbour. Two new colours will be introduced: 'Waitemātā blue' (dark blue) and 'Mahina blue' (light blue), while the original UOA blue (azure) will remain as part of the three. This was reportedly influenced by a desire to establish UOA from other universities as the 'Blue University', rather than 'just another

blue university'. A key point the university's branding team focused on was the reading accessibility requirements, which is now adhered to with the introduction of the darker 'Waitemātā blue'. Other changes will also be made, such as fonts, which will be changed to an open-sourced font to allow more freedom of use for all members of the university. This aligns with the university's goal of unifying branding across the university, ensuring those who use the font will avoid copyright infringement.

One of the most debated aspects of the redesign is the decision to retire faculty-specific colours, previously used for things like merchandise and sports advertising. These will be phased out in favour of a 'unified university colour scheme'. The multiple colours reportedly didn't align with our new identity as the 'Blue University', taking away from this new, unified branding. The university's logos pre-

viously exceeded 7,500, in what was described as a 'proliferation'. This fact was considered when updating the branding, with the goal of creating a unified brand identity which all students could feel represented by to prevent this 'off shooting' of logos. It's stressed that the move doesn't intend to strip students of their identities, but rather to unify and foster pride in our main branding. Fear not, 'unofficial' colours and logos will still be permitted for club and sports branding. The move also aims to better incorporate te reo Māori into the university's branding. The branding change isn't just about aesthetics, it's about creating an identity which

vices, slowly replacing defunct signage, and other things around campus, such as campus cards. A drastic change wasn't the goal, with a heavier focus on sustainability. Sustainability was identified as a key factor in the university's decision making, specifically sustainability and cost. Staff reportedly felt that it would not be in the best interest to spend student funds on a complete rebrand, which would involve immediate changes to all signage around campus. Examples were provided of other university's expensive 'rebrands', namely Otago University, which was estimated to have cost more than \$1 million. Staff felt that a similar investment at

UoA would receive backlash, and wouldn't be in the best interest of students, hence the slow rollout. Student response was also considered as part of the decision-making process - blind test groups were shown the new logos and colour branding, and the reactions were, well, underwhelming. Reportedly, none of the groups successfully distinguished a difference between the new and old logos until they were explicitly pointed out. One must consider:

will such minor changes

make a difference on a large scale? Will this rebrand be successful in ensuring that the diversity of our university is accurately and fairly represented? The university can claim this new 'blue' identity, but will it catch on with students? Only time will tell. Ultimately, the success of this rebrand will depend on how well it resonates with the student body. Keep an eye out and see if you manage to spot the differences yourself!



Waipapa
Taumata Rau
**University
of Auckland**

better reflects the university's diversity. It meets a need to more accurately represent te reo Māori and its place at UoA, in a move towards a more "bilingual, bicultural future". It will also ensure that the university's te reo name, Waipapa Taumata Rau, gifted in 2021 by Ngāti Whātua Ōrākei, will be appropriately honoured and represented on our signage. While this could be interpreted as a political move, (as could other moves to incorporate te reo into university life, such as the introduction of the WTR100 course, and the creation of ReoSpace), it's stressed that this wasn't the ultimate goal. The move was reportedly more about accessibility rather than making 'any grand political gesture'.

In terms of this 'rebrand', expect slow, minor changes to be made; everything will be introduced through a 'slow rollout', gradually replacing the old. The university will be working with Property Ser-



HARRY'S BI-WEEKLY SPORTS RECAP!

FROM CRACCUM'S EDITOR-IN-CHIEF



Alright, so there is a lot, I mean a lot of sports to catch up on since it's been a month since the last sport recap so let's just dive right in!

MARK TELE'A AND RIEKO IOANE ARE LEAVING NEW ZEALAND, BUT PORTIA WOODMAN IS BACK!

As most rugby fans know, a lot of players who are playing for New Zealand, whether it's for the All Blacks, Black Ferns, or even playing Super Rugby, will often take their talents overseas to Japan or France to get paid more and to show off their talent to more coaches and players. Now two more Kiwis are leaving. Mark Tele'a, one of the best wingers and backs we have to offer here, has signed a deal with Japanese rugby club Toyota Verblitz, which is currently being coached by ex-All Black coach Ian Foster. The contract is stated to be for three years, too, a real blow for New Zealand rugby.

To make it worse, his partner from the Blues Rieko Iona is signing with Irish powerhouse rugby club Leinster. After putting his heart and soul into NZR, he is moving to Ireland to get paid. His contract is only six months but still a blow.

That is two key All Blacks leaving massive spots in squad. Who will step up now is going to be a real head-scratcher for the coaches for the upcoming tests against France.

Turning to the news within the Black Ferns, Portia Woodman is back on the rugby field for the women in black. Realising that retirement wasn't for her, she's decided to join the squad again in their preparation for the Rugby World Cup. She brings some serious firepower to the team, and considering her track record and the amount of tries that she brings, this team is going to be scary come Rugby World Cup time.

RORY MCILROY COMPLETES CAREER GRAND SLAM

Well, he certainly made it hard on himself, but finally, after 10 long years of trying and trying and losing and losing major after major. Rory McIlroy has completed one of golf's greatest feats. Winning a grand slam.

This means that he won the four key major golf tournaments in the same year, these include The Open Championship, The US Open, The PGA Championship and The Masters. Rory has won them all together. The last player to do this feat? Tiger Woods way back in 2000, so a long time coming.

This win was anything but easy. Rory started off the round well, with him having a two-shot lead on the first hole, which then disappeared after he double-bogeyed on the next hole. He then birdied the next two holes and also holes ten and eleven. The game went back and forth, but after 17 gruelling holes of golf, all Rory needed was get par at the last hole to win. His second shot, however, fell right into a bunker, but he managed to recover and set himself up with a six-foot putt to win. The ball rolled just past the hole and missed. Chance blown. The game is tied, and now it's a sudden-death playoff hole to win against second-place Justin Rose.

This time, the hole went Rory's way as his drive didn't go into the bunker, and he sank his final putt to finally win the exclusive green jacket and The Masters. Just to make this win even more special is that his caddie



is Harry Diamond, who is Rory's childhood best friend. Just another amazing piece of trivia from this amazing win.

THE NBA PLAYOFFS HAVE OFFICIALLY BEGUN, FINALLY!

It's the most joyous and painful time of the year for NBA fans as the regular season has finally wrapped up, and the playoffs have begun; there is so much to discuss already.

The one-seeded team, the Oklahoma City Thunder, defeated the Memphis Grizzlies by a record-breaking score of 130–80. In a game that was never really close, OKC dominated Memphis all night, and if Memphis doesn't change its tactics, it will be a very short series.

The Cleveland Cavaliers and Boston Celtics both won handily, demonstrating their preparation for the postseason.

The Golden State Warriors, meanwhile, defeated the Houston Rockets by utilising both Stephen Curry's skill and their superior defence. With an impressive three-point display, the Minnesota Timberwolves revealed the Los Angeles Lakers' lack of rim protection and also scored their most amount of threes in a playoff game ever with 21 threes. The Lakers never had a chance.

Detroit won game two of their series against the Knicks after their fourth-quarter collapse in game one; they needed to respond, and they did. Cade Cunningham led the whole

way for Detroit, and now it's a 1-1 series with game three in the Motor City.

Finally, the tone for an intense series was set by a thrilling overtime matchup between the Denver Nuggets and Los Angeles Clippers. However, a vintage game for superstar Kawhi Leonard has tied the series at one game apiece. This series is going to a blood-bath, and I cannot wait to see where it goes.

CHAMPIONS LEAGUE QUARTER-FINALS ALL DONE.

Wow, isn't it nice that Manchester City aren't in the semi-final? Anyway, the quarterfinals of the Champions League were nothing short of spectacular, with Arsenal's Declan Rice scoring not just one, but two amazing free kicks to help beat the super team that is Real Madrid. What's even more insane about those free kicks is that those are the only two free kicks that Rice has scored in his professional footballing career.

Aston Villa were down 3-1 on aggregate to PSG. Heading back to Villa Park, they needed a miracle to win, and boy were they close. Winning the second leg 3-2, but it still wasn't enough due to the first leg loss, losing overall 5-4 on aggregate, a brutal ending to their Champions League season.

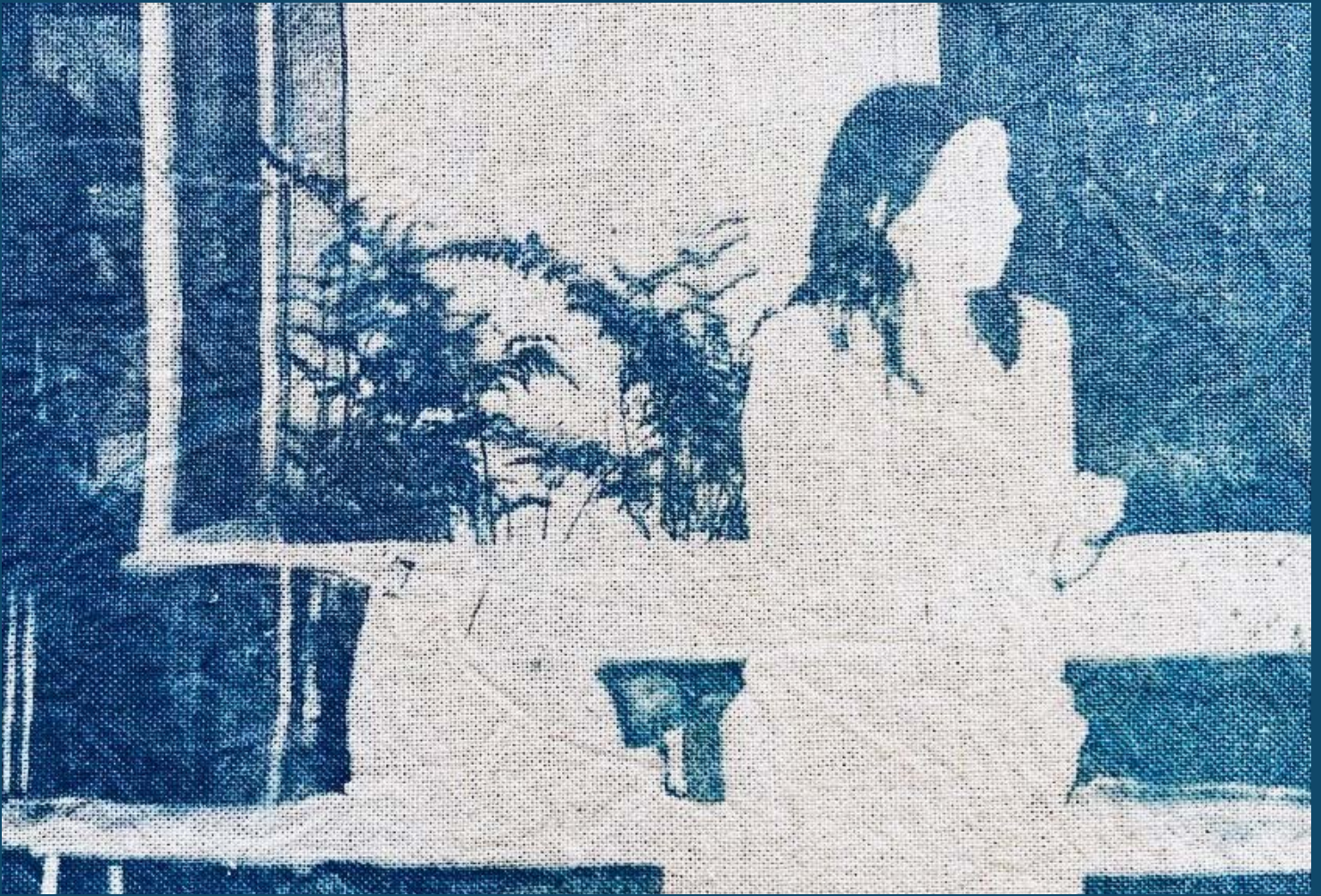
Barcelona got a little bit of a scare from Borussia Dortmund, as the men in yellow managed to win the first leg 2-1 and heading back to Germany, they looked confident in the second leg of their quarter-final, but

Barcelona managed to hold on and score 3 of their own and win by one goal overall on aggregate, sending Barcelona to play German powerhouse Bayern Munich in the semi-finals.

Bayern Munich cruised to a relatively comfortable win over Inter Milan in both of their legs, and now maybe, just maybe, Harry Kane might win his first-ever trophy.

That's all I could squeeze into this issue, but I will be back with more news soon, take care guys!





NOTHING WRITTEN DOWN, ONE TAKE, NO SHOES

UOA STUDENT & SINGER-SONGWRITER FREYA OPENS UP ABOUT THE CREATIVE, SPIRITUAL, AND TECHNICAL JOURNEY BEHIND HER NEW ALBUM 'OF WATER' — A RECD OF YEARNING AND VULNERABLE INTROSPECTION, TO BE RELEASED IN JULY 2025.



FREYA | @FREYADELARGEY

STAGE I:

**SONGWRITING TASK:
RETRIEVE A SONG FROM
THE ETHER AND DON'T
LET YOUR MIND GET IN
THE WAY**

To me, music is a precious and crucial element of human life that transcends language and time, and songwriting is a bridge between the human experience and the divine. The veil is most thin when I am alone and weary, typically late at night when I should be asleep, or at least always when I probably 'should' be doing something else. All my best songs arise when I can seize that small pocket of time, ignore disruptions, and quietly, without judgement or

constraint, tune into whatever emotion is overcoming me and allow it to pour out. I want to emphasise the importance of that absence of judgement or constraint:

I have noticed so clearly how if (and when) I attend to my songwriting with too much of a critical, logical mind, or especially a mind that worries what others might think, the spell is immediately broken

and the song vanishes from my grasp. You must not allow anyone's judgement - even your own - to impede this vulnerable, valuable process, at least not until long after the initial birth of the song. If you must capture the songwriting process, my best advice is to set up a voice memo recording at the beginning of your session and place your device away from you. I try not to constrain my early songs to the confines of pen and paper until much later. For me, recording exact lyrics or annotating specific chords is not nearly as crucial as enabling the flow. Anything that impedes your presence and takes you into a more logical state can break the spell: do not allow that. When I am asked how long it took me to write the songs on my new album, I have been answering in months. Although the initial outpouring is typically less than an hour, my process continues long-term. For months, I play my songs repeatedly until they solidify themselves. The lyrics that sit best in my mouth and in my memory are retained, and the key emotions become refined; through repetition and time, the songs become familiar, cohesive snapshots of whatever I captured in the initial songwriting process. (*Adrienne Lenker*, one of my biggest musical inspirations, shares a kindred approach to the creative flow in an interview with 'Songwriters On Process', which I highly recommend you google & read.) Perhaps this is all sounding somewhat wishy-washy to you, dear reader. It's true, though: songwriting is a highly spiritual experience for me. I would even argue that it is a spiritual practice - one of presence, patience, and deep inner reflection. However, some more grounded elements are key to a consistent song-birthing practice. It has been very interesting to me to discover the importance of structure to creativity. They seem oppositional in my mind: structure as oppressive, controlling, rigid, and creativity as untamed, impulsive, flowing. Nonetheless, I've come to realise the importance of structure as a container for creative expression: without it, these pockets of free-flowing inspiration are too easily lost in the noise of life. I believe it is crucial to utilise structure to carve out space for creativity: to create space in your schedule so that you have time to confront the boredom/stillness/chaos that enables creativity, where emotions and music and the divine are free to reveal themselves to you.

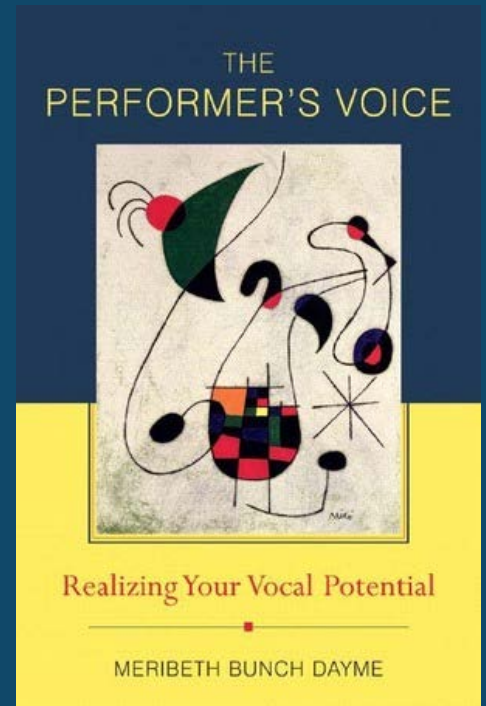
STAGE 2: RECORDING TASK: CAPTURE AN EMOTIONAL ESSENCE

After about a year of writing the songs that comprise my most recent album, I first recorded the 'bones' of the songs (as I wrote them alone - just me and my guitar). Many of the lead vocal takes in the final album are one solid take. I personally prioritise authentic, emotional performance over exact precision and vocal perfection, so my re-

cording sessions typically involve running through the song many times and later choosing the most compelling take. I am quite comfortable with recording studios; however, the necessary sterility of these spaces can sometimes present obstacles to recording vocals with genuine and convincing emotional value behind them. It can be difficult for me to suddenly jump into my song and truly tune into the deep emotions behind it, but the take only becomes something worth keeping when I can - that's where the real magic is. My best little solutions are turning off the big light, taking off my shoes, and trying to remain in a tender headspace during an entire recording session, despite their logical and technical nature. In this vein, in the pursuit of compelling vocal performance, I highly recommend the book 'The Performer's Voice' by Meribeth Bunch Dayme, which I first found in our very own General Library. I was very inspired by the holistic approach to singing explored in this book, and I utilised many of its methods while recording this album's vocals. One technique that particularly stuck with me is imagining oneself as a point inside a circle, where your voice emanates from a grounded centre and radiates out through the space all around you.

STAGE 3: PRODUCTION TASK: WORLD-BUILDING WITH BRAVERY AND HONESTY

The next phase of development began nearly a year after I recorded the 'bones' of my precious songs. It was important for me to wait for the right collaborator. The process of collaborative production requires a degree of bravery for me. To entrust another individual with developing my vulnerable songs is scary - it feels like handing over a piece of my soul. I think it requires a high degree of genuine compatibility - creatively as well as on a personal level. Luckily, I worked with the wonderful Harry Charles Leatherby to produce this latest album. From the start, I felt comfortable enough with Harry to be specific and demanding about the vision I had for the sound. Simultaneously, he was able to truly understand my brave expressions of my creative ideas and bring them into reality without judgement or mistranslation. I see production as a world-building process, building up the emotional and sonic landscape to realise the full capacity of my songs. For *Of Water*, we aimed for a sort of haunted sonic world full of ghostly textures and dreamy swells, with danger and darkness trembling beneath the delicate surface. We worked for 5 months across the summer, fleshing out the songs with many guitar layers, vocal harmonies, atmospheric electronic ambience, and driving percussion. It is so exciting to see the songs come to life - with new life breathed into them by a trusted collaborator, years after their initial creation. — Now that I have completed the music side of the album, the next three



months before release are all about the marketing side of it all, which I have far less enthusiasm for, and far less wisdom worth sharing about. Ultimately, the process of creating an album from beginning to end is vulnerable, tedious, and requires the best of your emotional, spiritual, and technical skills. But I do find it so fulfilling: it is a piece of my heart, captured and shared through the wondrous and awe-inspiringly impactful medium of Music.

My album, 'Of Water' is coming July 2025. Follow @freyaodelargey on Instagram for the rest of the journey.

freya's website:



Listen to freya's music here:



Music from the Memory

Portrait of diaspora students and their musical journey to Aotearoa New Zealand



Iffah Mohamad

Justin Foronda Agluba

Iffah gripped the handle of her luggage as she looked down at the ground. Her purple hijab drapes like petals of orchids in bloom. She inspects the soles of her sneakers, the pair she scrubbed a few days ago, probing for a smidge of enduring dirt: the vestiges of her homeland. Some traces of soil, the imprints she made from her farewell footsteps. She looked again, now focusing on the carpeted floor. The legs of her fellow travellers were moving like stilts of bamboo, one step at a time. They were in a queue. The officers were thorough. She asked herself, could she pass the conscientious biosecurity?

Minutes ago, she alighted from the boarding bridge and gazed through a portalled opening to another world. In the line's gradual march, her thoughts linger on the distant murmuring vibrations of alien but enchanting sounds emanating from the *tomokanga* (carved gateway): a birth canal, a transitional tunnel, a border's edge of the past and a beginning's promise to a future. Warbling songbirds, chirping cicadas, children's laughter, the surging waves roar from the deep Pacific Ocean's belly... they recede as she walks towards the sound rising to a crescendo... a melodious chant forthcoming, closer and closer to the entrance's exit... then...

Stamp! Stamp! She was cleared of contaminants. "Off you go", said the smiling guard. She went outside with her family. Her little brother yawns on their long flight from Kuala Lumpur. The winter's thawing breeze pranced around the midnight still. Cold and shivering, her equatorially attuned body confronts the austral chill. At last, she left the Auckland Airport. The ethereal tones she heard were from the *Karanga*, a Māori welcoming call, the music that immigrants like Iffah hear first in Aotearoa.

In our casual introspection in the library one Friday afternoon, after class, Iffah and I embarked on an odyssey of our vibrant cultures and immigrant backgrounds.



The past is the sound of music that beckons reminiscing. It quickens a memory as real and vivid as our navels' crater—the invisible umbilical cord attached to our motherland's *whenua* (placenta). How can we forget? What about the others? Can they hear the recollected pulse? Can they sense the nostalgia? What world of stories awaits us out there in the Auckland melting pot?

To examine our conjecture, we asked other diaspora students from the University of Auckland, and lo, confirmed what we had suspected.

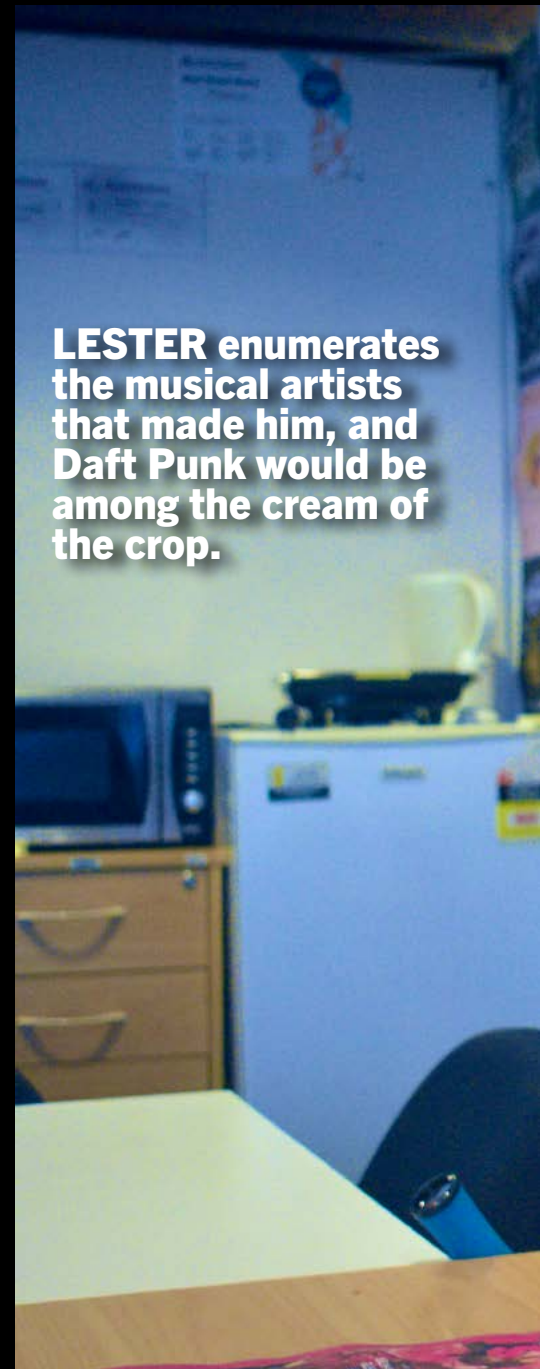
Lester's 7 Years by Lukas Graham

Lester agreed to meet us in the Quad. He was armed with a Zima blue golf umbrella while the rain shower pitter-pattered from the canopy above. I skulked among the crowd, blending in, while observing a penguin wander from the nest a good distance away. He "waddles like a penguin", so he said. But fascinated as we were to their natal philopatry, a penguin's disposition to return to their place of birth, Lester was born and raised in Northland. At the turn of the millennium, his parents made the fateful decision to venture a life on New Zealand's sunny shores, towards "better opportunities" for their children. Lester is currently finishing his BA in Psychology and Criminology at the University of Auckland but maintains an avid interest in the natural sciences.

On days like this, raindrops jolt a memory. Lester is on a manicured grass field, soaking wet. Water droplets dripped down his jaw. Lester studies his opponent, bearing a hockey stick, as he propels the ball away from their goal (striking circle). Their sticks were clashing, clapper noises heard. The sharp metal-like vibrations hurt his fingers, excruciating like needles in a pin cushion. Lester is disorientated. Water blocks his ear canal. And then, suddenly. Thud! A knock in the rib. He fell to the ground. Curling in agony. Piercing pain at the intercostal. His legs, chest and head were injured from hockey a few times before. Lester squinted at the ashen skies above. His head reels a steady ring, a tinnitus. He closed his eyes from the relentless barrage of rainwater. *Dark. Drenched. Silent.*

One song transports him back to that one summer's high noon. *Bright. Dry. Loud.* He's under the thatched roofs. Wooden pillars held the second floor of his *whānau*'s humble abode in the Guangxi countryside. It "gives me memories" he says, a tinge of nostalgia dredges his mind's innermost core.

LESTER enumerates the musical artists that made him, and Daft Punk would be among the cream of the crop.



In Aotearoa, Lester's dad would blast Mandarin and Cantonese tracks, through the stereo, on replay. Family picnics on the outskirts of Whangārei would be pelted by repetitive Maroon 5's *Payphone*. "I actually despised the song because I heard it so much... I removed it from my playlist for, like, three years", he said. That three-year interlude would reset Lester's palate, making him re-appreciate Maroon 5's *Payphone* years later.

For Lester, music is a form of expression, a translation of the ineffable struggle that people can relate to and enjoy. And less conspicuously, it is Lester's proverbial conduit to his ancestral and living memory.

We asked Lester what was the first song he fell in love with. Lester's eyes glinted jauntily, his smile roseate, his supple, cherubic cheeks flushed—as if he was reminded of a puppy love. I could see it from across the room while taking mental pictures.

This is a kidnapping, I told him half an hour ago. "We lured you to the Craccum office for ransom" unless you give our tongue-in-cheek due. He was shanghaied with us for two hours into a figmental voyage in time. Lester said his young love was EDM music, "*Bone Dry* by Tristam", from his springtime, during an Eriksonian role-identity exploration. The music of his childhood.

Lester's family enjoys a relatively placid lifestyle. They cherish the pianissimo, the restful, harmonious calm of life, which Lester has adopted in his formative years of musicophilia—from the ambient, lo-fi chill-hop lullabies played by YouTube stream-

ers. This was his introvert phase's leitmotif.

Lester's foray into Daft Punk marks his coming of age, the expansionist era of his musical conquest. He started to get "comfortable talking to more people". He got more "extroverted". Chill vibes remain close to his heart. But when his EDM-verse was populated by Daft Punk, it was an aha moment towards newer frontiers. He listed his new favourites: Cardigans, Paramore, BENEE (from Auckland), Deftones, Porter Robinson, Sade and Sewerslvt. Lester also regrets missing out on the Coldplay concert last November. He had excursions into hip-hop culture and a fringe fascination with Eastern European musicology. It gives him a glimpse of how different songs mirror different cultures, he said.

Despite his diverse musical profile, Lester described his melodic appetite as 50-50, Kiwi and



Chinese. He confessed, “It took some time to adjust [to] Chinese music”. He preserves his heritage with the music of his forebears, like a phantom limb outstretched to the past. He immerses in the doleful tenor of Jay Chou, the King of Mandopop. He poignantly said, “I’m gonna listen to them. I’m gonna make sure it retains the feeling”.

Iffah asked Lester how he felt as an Asian music lover boy sipping into the broth of the Western music sphere. He answered, “I think that’s perfectly normal. For some people they are obviously not like that; they’d like to stick to their culture. Since I was born here and I was raised here, in this environment, I think it is completely fine. I should know some of the cultures here, and I should also still retain my heritage and my ethnicity and where I’m from”. He added, “I’m Chinese... but I’m also Kiwi”. Lester’s personal identity melds both worlds in harmony.

Lately, he has listened to Chinese music less and less. He says, “Like 90% of my playlist is more European”. He is still fond of the old country sound, but he puckishly admitted that he “can’t really understand half the words they’re saying”. Lester’s Cantonese is “very shabby”. His Mandarin is no better. It was due to reduced exposure, a language attrition. He remembers his hometown; his whānau would only speak Cantonese. If you want to communicate, adapt: “do or die”.

For years, Lester hasn’t visited his parents’ place of origin. He visited Tianjin in 2016 but hasn’t returned since. He longed to be with his whānau from across the ocean, hoping for him and his parents to reconnect, learn more from his heritage, and “explore the country more”. Lester has a library of hobbies. He does online games in his spare time and endeavours in horticulture on the side. But history is on his shelf number one. A history buff. He said, “I like history because I like learning new events”, as he finds Chinese chronicles the most riveting.

Lester distinctly recalls a particular high noon with tendresse, back to the thatched roofs and the wooden pillars. He was sitting on an old Huanghuali chair: auburn and polished, a fad among the Ming aristocrats. He stares at a computer screen on the second floor. This was about a decade ago when the downstairs radio played a soulful Lukas Graham’s 7 Years in the background. It was the only English song that broke the string of “upbeat and positive” Chinese soundtracks.

Lester’s mind was in a bucolic agrarian land, a quaint and small village; he pictures it. The thoroughfares were lined with typical hovels and cottages, the roofs were browned with age, the walls were of rugged concrete, buffed earthenwares perched beside them. Some alleyways were unpaved. There was a pleasing but faint smell of burnt sandalwood from the neighbour’s window.

He would saunter in that one sleepy afternoon and witness the local shops open for a familiar pastime. Quick hands would shuffle around the blocky tiles that clink and clatter across the green square tables. Lester begged his relatives to train him, but he was deterred from the rules and strategy of mahjong. He watched the gameplay unfold behind their shoulders. The jade walls of face-down mahjong suits were like the rows of flowering rice in quadrangular paddies just beside the farming village. It was a plain and peaceful Chinese rural life near the Vietnamese border.

The chorus ends, “*Once I was seven years old*”, while the outhouse chickens were clucking to the tune. Lester impersonates the rowdy poultry, “*bak-bak-ba-bak-bak*”. He said the locals would enjoy those sinewy fowls for dinner.

Lester’s musical memories were indelibly encoded to his reeling brain, like the loops in a VHS cassette. “My music would 100% reflect who I am now... cause I change as a person... I started my playlist in 2016... if you scroll down, you’ll see how much I’ve changed, especially my music taste, which is mostly a reflection of myself”, he shares.

He described his past to the melody of *Feel It Still* by Portugal. The Man, while his present, is a jazzy earworm of *Smooth Operator* by Sade. When I was about to ask our final questions, Lester looked at me with accusing eyes; they were like those of eagles. His fulgent grin expanded from ear to ear. The luster of Lester. Where are you going with this, Justin? Sade’s *Smooth Operator* reminds him of “good memories, close friends”. We ended the interview with Lester’s song of the moment, Daft Punk’s *Digital Love*.

Sam Zhou’s 螃蟹歌 (Crab Song)

Kunming City, China: 1,892 meters above sea level. A metropolis in its primal hustle and bustle, traffic horns blare in a cacophony of rush hour percussion. The sun has sunk in the Liujia District. Industrial smoke billows like a feeding spoon-worm. The Mingtong River spills, soil and swill, to the Caohai head of the Dianchi Lake. The Western Hills of Xi Shan all but witness the city’s dominating light across the waters. Through the passing dark, mitten crabs arise from their slumber and charge to their omnivorous forage along the lakefront. Seagulls were asleep on its pebbled banks. The residential towers soar through the skyline; some rooms are lit at random, like hives of unmoving fireflies. Somewhere in this urban jungle lived Sam Zhou.

It was half past three on a clement afternoon, at the heart of the Quad, when I met a flaxen-haired Sam sporting Porter Robinson’s world tour tee. Sunny days remind him of Takapuna Beach and the long contemplative strolls by the seaside, to the salt-laden winds and the hypnotising waves lapping onto the land. “I really enjoy the sound of the ocean, when it’s quiet... that’s peaceful, and sometimes I reflect on stuff... just thinking when the sound of the ocean is in my ears... but I hate getting sand everywhere”, he said. Sam notices the rock crab burrows on the shoreline; the sea’s mesmeric noise has sieved a memory from the sand.

Upstairs, at the Craccum office, he drops his bag and fixes his wire-rimmed specs. He began to open up. “It’s actually pretty stressful when I grew up [in China] and a lot of pressure from school and stuff... I just decided not to remain there”, he glumly reveals. He perceived New Zealand as an “isolated little place” with the innocence of “untouched ground”—the virginal acreage of Tolkienian Valinor in the Years of the Trees. Sam moved to Aotearoa in 2018, leaving his family behind. “I was ready to gain a fresh chapter of my life because I was pretty fed up with my last one... I really like the more relaxed vibes here”, he said. He maintains regular contact with his family and friends.

Sam Zhou studies Linguistics and TESOL at the University of Auckland. “Growing up, I studied English at a pretty young age, and I found it pretty interesting... I just really, really love learning languages,” he shares. “I also look at a lot of movies, TV [shows], and a lot of music in English as well”, he said. Sam was reared to the Hollywood vernacular, mostly “relying on the subtitles at the time”. Sam is currently in the mood for the antihero archetypes like Matt Murdock in *Daredevil*, Walter White in *Breaking Bad*, Saul Goodman in *Better Call Saul*, and Dexter Morgan in *Dexter*—he maintains they’re crooked yet captivating. Sam was soused in the Anglosphere media early on; he assimilated in NZ like a duck to the waters.

We asked whether he felt a sense of longing for China. His porcelain face creased. His eyes sidled to a side. Sam ruminated intensely. When Sam finally answered, he said: “Yes and No... I’m very Chinese in terms of my ethnicity... I love the culture... the food. There [are] also people I care about that are still in China”. But he detests the pervasive “competing culture in schools, workplaces and stuff”. Sam objects to his former school’s draconian approach in teaching its students. The system was close to public shaming; Sam was never the com-
plaisant Asian boy.



"It's like literally in my middle school, there's two sheets with people's names: the test scores they got and the rankings [for] every single test... they covertly antagonise students that don't perform well...", he recounts. That Chinese institution was a scholastic milling factory, and Sam was just another brick to its Great Wall.

For Sam, music is "some sort of escapism... it's something that everyone needs in their life"—a runway for a take-off to reverie and a flyby from living tribulations. "It's also a way to connect to the artists who make the music. I get to feel what they are trying to write, what they experience, what they feel. And sometimes it's just plain enjoyment, a way for me to connect with others that have similar tastes", he said. Sam joined UoA BYO Music Club during his first year and currently serves as its Social Media Manager, promoting the club's activities. "Everybody just goes into class [and] runs back home. You don't get a chance to socialise, so I just joined the club... I've been in the club for a while, and I'm getting used to the other executives. I just felt like [it would be] natural if I volunteer to be a part of the management team", he shares.

The first song he heard in New Zealand was a pop song, Sigrid's *Strangers*, from a baking restaurant's wall-mounted TV. It was an anthem with 115 beats per minute but with a sombre message of what reality has to offer. He profoundly connected with a song called *Free by Broods*, after settling on his Kiwi life all those years ago. "Broods is a New Zealand duo, and the song is talking about breaking free from something, which is the sort of what I'm feeling when I migrated here", he noted.

But his immigrant life's anthem is now what Chet Porter and San Holo have vocalised in their lugubrious but reassuring *you've changed, i've changed*. "I have changed a lot since coming here... but the 'you've changed' part symbolises China and my friends, my family. I don't see them that often anymore. So, every time I go back, there's always something different... I'm surprised by the changes every time", he said.

Sam wanted to connect with the artists through their songs, like Jane Remover's *Search Party*. "The song is about being overwhelmed by the idea of the future. You think about your future, and you sort of get anxious", he said. Of late, his amour for the prevailing Chinese music had waned, "I think the sort of mainstream music gets very stale like every song sounds the same... it's been that way for 30, 40 years or so. It's kind of happening in English music as well, but not really as bad. But there's still some underground music that I would listen [to] with my friends... I've come from listening to mainstream, popular songs to pretentious stuff. It's like songs

that are not as popular as mainstream stuff but are loved", he said. In his very own *société bohème*, he and his musical comrades would dive into the free-spirited numbers of Chinese lyrical underbelly. "It's a tiny subculture" with few listeners, he said.

"I also like concept albums that tell a story... *good kid, m.A.A.d city* by Kendrick Lamar... it's about... [where] he grew up in, Compton, which is a chaotic place in terms of crimes. It's talking about him being influenced by this violence... and that eventually resulted in one of his friends dying. So, he realised what's happening, and he spiritually founded God, and he began a new life". Sam relates to Kendrick Lamar's narrative of renewal, which echoes his own rebirth, in a sense, from China to his relocation to the Land of the Long White Cloud, Aotearoa. *Look at the Sky* by Porter Robinson reminds him of

his flight from Kunming to Auckland. He said, "The song talks about [a] fresh start and being hopeful about the next chapter".

In spite of his ardour for his present Kiwi life, Sam still ideates his past with warmth and affection: the mellowed times when he didn't have to worry about grades. Back in the Yunnan Plateau, in those high-rise residential buildings that towers over the Kunming skyline, a room was lit in effervescent glow, a faint gleam of honey amber on the corner lamp-light, an upholstered armchair which sat a persona with a half-forgotten face. "I can kind of see her image, like a blur with a mouth that's singing", he recounts. It was a simulacrum of his grandmother chanting their dialect's nursery rhyme, 螃蟹歌 (*Crab Song*).



SAM ZHOU is the current Social Media Manager of UoA's BYO Music Club with a zany appetite for alternative Chinese music

Han Lee's 아시나요 (*Do You Know*) by Jo Sung-mo

Han Lee is the urbane and self-effacing Korean-Kiwi musician who hails from South Island's "Garden City" of Christchurch, playing the vocalist and impresario to an upcoming Pan-Asian Music Showcase Night on 28 June. His gracious Asian mien contrasts with his rockstar panache: suave tinted sunglasses, a sabled button-up shirt, a glossy chestnut jacket, and a smartwatch for quick voice memos wherever inspiration pops up. Han may eschew picante *jjamppong* (spicy seafood noodle soup), but his call to adventure is anything but avoidant.

Han Lee is a doctoral candidate at the University of Auckland, focusing on community psychology. He was born in the South Korean port city of Pohang, overlooking the East Sea (also called the Sea of Japan), but later moved to a small village in Gwangyang, where the touristic Jeju island looms on the horizon. In his teens, a visiting uncle convinced him to "travel to New Zealand" and "see if you like it", he recounts. He moved to Christchurch, initially staying with his relatives while his parents remained in South Korea. Han lived in a homestay thereafter.

"I think I always want to take on an adventure... even though I am introverted, I sometimes push myself going [out] to the world", he shared. I asked Han Lee about his perception of Aotearoa before he emigrated. His terse answer was, "Heaven".

"I really like the ability to see wild animals", he remarked. In fair-weathered Otago, he's in awe to spot an albatross (tōroa), "the biggest bird in the world", he says. A brisk walk on Dunedin's coastline once revealed a colony of fin-footed pinnipeds. When he heard of trills and coos behind the char-coaled boulders lying by the shore, he stepped closer and discovered where the fur seals (kekeno) gather, sunbathing. One could easily mistake them for enchanting mermen, but he kept his distance, "it's just dangerous" to touch them, he noted.

Though Han Lee completely embraced his Kiwi half, it wasn't all sunshine and flippers adorbs. He shares, "As a young person, I did experience difficulty connecting with people from my own community, Korean people. Some Koreans are a bit different here. [Westernised Koreans] are different [from] Koreans from the mainland. They are more collective; here, they are very religious. I am not particularly Christian. I mean, I'm Catholic... a lot [of Kiwi-Koreans] are [Protestant] Christians. So I found it difficult to meet [like-minded] Korean people". He also laments the small number of Korean enrollees in the Psychology department: "Many Korean people study Business or Medicine. My environment does not provide any opportunity for me to connect with Korean people... some Koreans are

welcoming, but some are not... I think everyone is just unique", he observed.

Han Lee is the quintessential man of the people. In South Korea, Han is the gregarious "*oppa*", the revered cynosure of their campus democracy. "I actually said to people, don't vote for me... and then they keep voting for me", he said, beaming. Despite being introverted, he would lead the student body for about five years.

He harks back to his ancestral land. "I really like to connect with Korea, South Korea... North Korea also", he says, with genial friends and family. "It's my happy time when I was able to connect with so many friends... I was doing well, he said. He pines for its native cuisine as well: "Seafood is really popular in Korea. Oyster. Fish. Raw fish. I really love sashimi. I can't have [enough of] it. I can have different shells, squid..." He also misses Korea's jagged terrain. The native land's memory refused to be forgotten as Han Lee imbibed the sound of music.

Han Lee often listens to music while travelling out of town or stationary at home. His auditory cells were attuned to the chordophone concertos of Antonio Vivaldi, Johann Sebastian Bach, and the virtuoso Niccolò Paganini of violinists' lore. "I like orchestra... classical music", he says. But his playlist also contains modern rock, pop and electronic genres. "At first, I have to listen to the melody, the sound, then I really pay attention to the lyrics", he shares.

"Music is like my life. If I'm unable to do it, I feel I would be suffocating... It's a way for me to overcome barriers. I'm very introverted. Sometimes I don't want to do it... I feel embarrassed putting myself in public... but the thought that I can't do music makes me feel I can't live anymore", he shares. Music alleviates his stress, mostly from the academic rigours.

Han Lee's times in Christchurch and Dunedin were resuscitated at the sound of *Fergie's Big Girls Don't Cry*. He sheepishly admitted: "Sometimes I listen to really girly songs", including the Norwegian pop duo *M2M*. We asked whether he still listens to Korean music. He says, "I haven't really listened to K-pop a lot", but his favourite K-pop band is *GFRIEND* and *ITZY*. The throwback music of *Jo*

Sung-mo instantly teleports him through time and space back to the 90s Korean peninsula.

In 2000, Han Lee sat on a window seat on a Korean Air flight bound for Aotearoa, earphones plugged into a SaeHan MP3 player. For the whole lift, Jo Sung-mo's sentimental ballad, *아시나요 (Do You Know)*, was kept on repeat against the mechanical droning noise of the jet engines. He described the music video as a soppy serenade of a diffident Korean loverboy to an elusive Vietnamese darling in the backdrop of war. "This kind of song reminds me of Korea because that's the time that my life has been interrupted [by] my migration... When I feel excluded, loneliness, I have to listen to that. It reminded me of my happy, normal life without the effect of migration. It brings me strength that I feel I'm a normal person... I miss the time that I was completely happy, never experienced the challenges as a migrant", he declared.

One day after migrating to Christchurch, Han Lee heard *Breath by Breaking Benjamin* from the shopping mall speakers. It was an "angry" song, Han Lee notes, but it was "cathartic". Indeed, Han Lee became tethered to *Linkin Park* and *My Chemical Romance* in the first decade of the 2000s. They were the signature tunes of the dawning epoch of emo and punk rock. "More recently, I'm trying to listen to more K-pop because I do like some of the materials they have... I become softer", he mentions. The tender-hearted *Memory by IZ*ONE* would verbalise his immigration life so far. "This song is about how this person [has] a dream, and they want to do it... sometimes it can be difficult, but... it's a hope for the future".

The riotous rock and pleasant pop songs were the fulcrum to Han Lee's 2021 single *White Noise* where he urged his listeners to "connect the antenna", a reference to the analogue televisions, for them to view the vast technicolour of racial diversity. Otherwise, they can only see a discordant static "white noise". It was Han Lee's artistic debut and diasporic billet-doux. At the heart of the immigrant plight is a molten core of intersecting struggles. Han, thus, combines these elements to compose his kick-off sonata.



“I think Music and Memory go together...” he noted. Speaking about his single, *White Noise*, Han Lee shares: “So when I was staying on a homestay in Christchurch, I felt very cold. I also couldn’t turn on the light at night to save some electricity. So, that’s when I got inspiration... it’s a very cold district in the lyrics, very dark, so I put my personal experience in there”. He further adds, “I think my music is who I was before... it’s a reflection of my past” and still experiencing at present.

Han’s musical contours started from a theme of victimhood, transitioning to that of victory. He’s currently producing newer jingles with Christmas vivace. He learned the piano, his main songwriting instrument, when he was in Korea. He plans to write a trilogy of conceptual albums. Han expresses, “My role is not about myself. I want to represent [the] Asian youth community... I have that responsibility to be able to represent them as [a] strong community”.

Han Lee devoted his adult life to migrants and refugees, particularly the youth of Burmese émigrés—officially consisting of 135 ethnic groups. “Refugee or Burmese communities are much better adapted... when we think about refugees... they’re traumatised in all of these things, but it’s not the case. They’re actually normal people. That’s what I noticed”, he said. Han shared the distressing hurdles that refugees undergo. “One key thing is separation from family... young people separated from their fathers went through trauma... the father [also] goes through traumatic experience”, he notes. The enforced separation tore families asunder, but they found hope for reunification in New Zealand. After the ordeal, they can heal and move on.

In his lone time, Han Lee adores the company of nature. One morning in Pohang, a young Han treks the adjacent Dongdae Mountains that gird the South Korean east coast from Ulsan. The sky is overcast; the fog barely lifted, a hint of coming winter in the wind. There were mottled, yellowish, Ginkgo leaves and flecks of umber pine cones underfoot. He inhales the dewy autumn air, cosying up in his parka. Han followed a beaten path he learned by rote, but midway, he hazards the *road less taken*.

Laboured breaths. Precarious trail. Halfway, he nearly stumbled—flat to the earth. But Han Lee is undaunted in the face of adversity. The view from Dongdae’s mountainous brow was a sight to behold. He looked to the east, a cerulean maritime grassland and scattered islands afar. He looked back to the forest below, an evergreen arboreal sea where Pohang City is at its cradle. Han Lee, still awestruck, sounded his *barbaric yawp against the roof of the world*: a triumphal roaring forte. He reclines in exhaustion, a flake of snow lands on his forehead. The journey to the summit is as rewarding as the destination. He was a kid then. But for Han Lee, the odyssey has barely begun.

During the interview, I was flanked by Iffah donning her lavender veil. We confide in sotto voce to punctuate the silent ponderings of our interviewees. Outside, on our way to Waitemātā, she told me about her personal transformation from a “dorky” Malaysian girl to a headstrong free-thinker, coming to Aotearoa. Her musical taste would range from *Sungai Lui* by the Malaysian artist Aizat Amdan, whilst finding herself “*Kiwified*” to the gossamer alt-rock of *Blue Light* by Mazzy Star.

On my first day in Aotearoa, I overheard my Indian neighbour’s loudspeaker playing Bollywood Indi-pop. I looked at my phone and clicked on Spotify. My last played song is the one on repeat since I left the Philippines, Lola Amour’s *Raining in Manila*. I pressed shuf-



HAN LEE is an aspiring musician with dreams to connect the diaspora communities through the power of music.

fle and, as if by serendipity, the ensuing song was *Poi E* by Patea Māori Club, a fitting theme song after the crossfade. I maintained playlists like journals throughout the years. I came from the 70s rock legends and found myself engrossed in Tokyo City Pop and Jazz Fusion later. Still, *Raining in Manila* are memories of red *gumamela*, verdant fields of *palay* grain, a monsoon’s downpour, smell of petrichor and *sampaguita*... Writing this piece was an experience, a journey to celebrate my own immigration.

I closed the *Word* document, giddy and euphoric. I stepped outside for a walk, rubbernecking at the colossal super-organism of the musical hive mind. The very memory of the human race is the music that surrounds us. Aotearoa is in metamorphosis, blending a medley of peoples and cultures together. Emerging from the chrysalis, whole and transformed. We are the composers of our evolution, a symphony in the works, a humbling ensemble of unified and interwoven heritage, rich and mellifluous as a psalm, grand as the motions of galaxies: like Tolkien’s *Ainulindalë*—a world sung into being. Music and culture were not etched on a marble arch that waits in changeless monotony, but an ongoing chord progression whose staves are drawn and redrawn on the homeland of our choosing.

In Memoriam: Rusiru Hettimullage | Rusiru was a Sri Lankan expat who taught and studied at the University of Auckland. He was a beloved English teacher and friend whose wisdom and warmth had left a lasting mark on his students and colleagues. He loved opera and classical compositions such as those of Beethoven, Chopin, Mozart and Tchaikovsky. He also covered Sinhalese folk songs. He was a true maestro of his craft, dedicating his life to learning and teaching even in his final days. His avuncular guidance had shaped the spirit of my writing and prose. He showed me the secret hymns of words that sing on paper. Though he is gone, his legacy lives on—in memory, in music, in us.

Iffah and I were both former students of the late Rusiru Hettimullage. He tragically passed away on 29 March 2025 at the age of 36, while currently in a teaching position at the University of Waikato College and pursuing a PhD at the University of Auckland. His remains were repatriated on 7 April and interred on 11 April in Sri Lanka, south of Colombo, his homeland. Rusiru is survived by his loving parents. He is their only child.

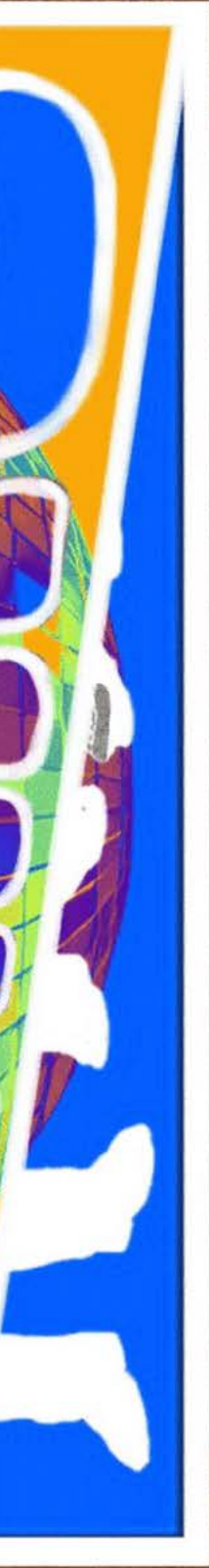
O Captain! My Captain! Our fearful trip is done.

Rest easy, Maestro, in Peace, in Nirvana.



\$35.99





HER music in HIStory

Reclaiming space for female composers in classical music



GLORIA LUO

To my fellow classical music lovers—who's your favourite composer? Is it the light-hearted charm of Mozart, or the sweeping romance of Liszt? Maybe you're drawn to Schubert's gentle melancholy, or enchanted by the mathematical precision of Bach. What if I told you my favorite composer is Clara Schumann—would that choice surprise you a bit?

Whether of new lands or outer space, like many other great discoveries, men receive the most credit for their contribution in classical music. Figures compiled by the Donne – Women in Music project and Drama Musica reveal a startling imbalance: of 3,524 musical works performed globally at 1,445 concerts between 2018 and 2019, 3,442 (97.6%) were composed by men, with only 82 (2.3%) by women. Women composer was severely marginalized. This disparity isn't abstract to me—having played piano for over ten years, I can barely recall performing a piece by a female composer myself. How did we get here? How is it that women composers are so drastically underrepresented—not just in modern concert halls, but throughout music history itself?

Who Gets to Be a Genius?

During the Classical period in Europe, noble young women were encouraged to master an instrument and private composing—but not to become too skilled, and certainly not to perform in public. Many top music institutions excluded women from advanced training. At the Paris Conservatoire, for instance, women were barred from composition and counterpoint classes—deemed too “intellectual” for them. Talented composers like Louise Farrenc had to rely on private instruction, and even after she became a professor of piano at the Conservatoire, she had to fight to receive equal pay.

Music education for women was rarely about creativity or ambition—it was a social asset. Playing the piano gracefully was considered an excellent calling card in the search for a husband. Girls were taught to be “angels of the household”: refined, obedient, and domestic. Piano, in particular, was seen as “apt” for women—heavy enough to remain at home, never requiring public movement or visibility.

Public performance, by contrast, was seen as improper, even lewd, for women. Those who dared to step into public musical spaces needed not only exceptional talent, but also financial and social support—usually from male relatives willing to defy social norms. Nannerl Mozart, the sister of Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart, received high praise during their childhood tours across Europe. But as she entered adolescence, her performing career quietly ended. She married, raised children and stepchildren, and lived to the age of 78. None of her compositions survive.

Even publishing was inaccessible. Fanny Mendelssohn, sister of Felix Mendelssohn, composed over 460 works. Many were published under Felix's name, including a song that was later praised by Queen Victoria—who believed it was his. It wasn't until 2010 that her Easter Sonata was finally recognized as hers. The world simply wasn't ready to see her talent.

Clara Schumann, too, knew what it meant to compose in the margins of her life. A piano prodigy and gifted composer, she often had no choice but to write music only after tending to her eight children, managing a busy household, and caring for a husband whom history still remembers as a true genius. It was this brilliant woman who once wrote, “A woman must not wish to compose—there never

was one able to do it.” Reading these words, I can feel her heartbreak at the music she couldn't write, and the dreams she had to quietly set aside.

So, who gets to be a genius? For centuries, the answer was simple: not her.

Make Greatness Masculine

Music, as an art form, had long been perceived as feminine—an idea most would probably agree with. Historically, feminine activities were those performed privately, unpaid, and unrecognized—while masculine activities gained prestige from public recognition, economic value, and institutional authority. In the 19th century, with the rise of public concerts and piano recitals, music quietly shifted into the masculine sphere. As in many other fields, men began to dominate the spotlight as celebrated pianists and public performers. When musical skills became professionalized, authoritative, and economically valuable, the domain of music was recoded as masculine—and it was no longer deemed suitable for women.

Music was not the only domain to undergo this transformation. Consider cooking—a field that



underwent a remarkably similar shift. Cooking was long considered the ultimate feminine labour: domestic, nurturing, and entirely private. Girls were taught from a young age that knowing how to cook was essential to becoming a “proper” woman. Yet once cooking became a paid profession, it quietly slipped out of women’s hands. According to a 2021 global survey, 98.5% of chefs working in four- or five-star hotels were men. In the U.S., as of 2023, only 23.3% of executive chefs are women. These statistics aren’t merely numbers—they reflect how deeply gendered assumptions continue to shape who gets recognition, and who doesn’t. Once a creative practice becomes institutionalized—through schools, competitions, rankings, and critiques—it begins to follow masculine-coded standards. Women are pushed out, their work reframed as “less serious,” “too emotional,” or “meant for the home.” The moment a woman’s labor becomes valuable, it’s no longer called feminine. The moment it’s recognized, it’s great—and masculine.

*The sound of What
could have been*

Behind every Mozart, every Mendelssohn, every Beethoven—there may well have been a woman just as brilliant, whose name we were never taught.

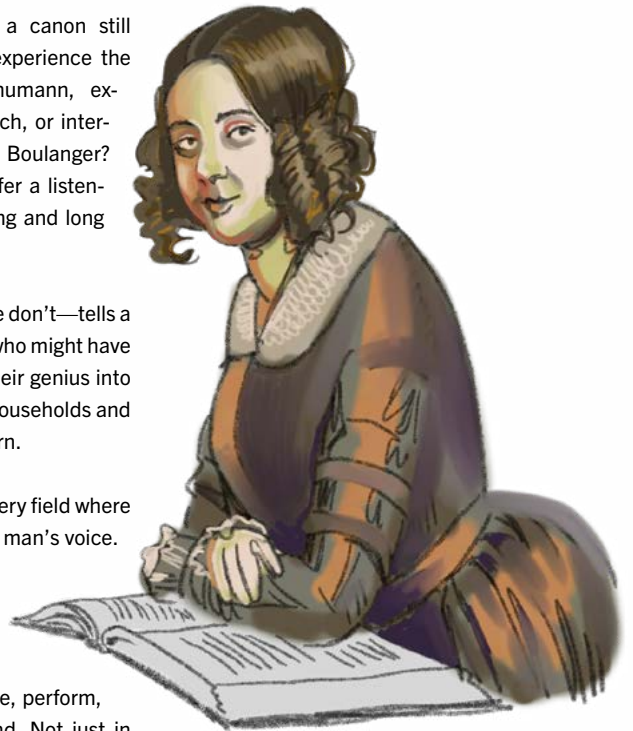
While we continue to learn from a canon still dominated by men, why not also experience the tender romanticism of Clara Schumann, explore the rich melodies of Amy Beach, or interpret the delicate poignancy of Lili Boulanger? These beautiful works might just offer a listening experience that is both refreshing and long overdue.

Because what we hear—and what we don’t—tells a deeper story. For centuries, women who might have been Mozarts or Einsteins poured their genius into sons, husbands, and silence—into households and institutions that gave nothing in return.

And not just in music—but across every field where brilliance was expected to come in a man’s voice. Their silence paved the way for ours.

In honor of the fearless women who came before us, we are the new generation—of women who compose, perform, lead, publish, question, and demand. Not just in music, but in science, politics, education, and technology—spaces once deemed “too serious,” “too intellectual,” or “not for us. And in these spaces, we shall speak—not only for ourselves, but for the women who were never allowed to.

The women in your bloodline may have sacrificed



their dreams for you to be born. Be loud. Be brilliant. Make them proud.



ART BY RICKI RIDGEMAN, @RICKS RACKET

SATIRE

WHY THE TRIANGLE PLAN IS PERFECT FOR YOU

(A MID-SEM REVIEW BY PREZ)



Hey Y'all!

Congrats on surviving the first six weeks of the semester. Here is a quick recap of what you may have missed: the best O-week since COVID, the law-commerce proposal vote is postponed indefinitely, Auckland FC is winning the league, and I don't have any children on

the way (that I know of)!

But you guys can go watch my President's Corners on Instagram if you actually care about any of this stuff. I'm here today to teach you about my Triangle Plan and how it will help the world.

THE TRIANGLE PLAN

Like Martin Luther King Jr., I also have a dream. We live in a greedy country where millionaires and billionaires don't pay their fair share. It's heartbreaking that even in the 21st century, wealth still flows to the top (more now than ever), and there is no equitable redistribution.

Enter the Triangle Plan. An idea so simple that it's hard to believe we haven't thought of it before.

The Triangle Plan is an investment program where you put \$1,000 down to join. Once you've joined, you can bring friends and family along (the more, the merrier!) to partake as well! I give you \$900 of the \$1,000 membership fee for every person you enroll. So once you've enlisted just two friends, you've made \$1,800 (or \$800 in profit). Those friends are now able to recruit.

You have at least two friends. If you don't, I'd rec-

ommend putting down this magazine and chatting to someone nearby because that's sad.

We've finally found a way to allocate resources based on friendship and community. The Triangle Plan doesn't tear people down; it builds us together. No more are the days of fighting tooth and nail to get ahead. The more people who team up, the more we succeed!

So what are you waiting for??? Join today, and you're pretty much guaranteed to make money!

I wouldn't be advertising this plan if I didn't believe 100% in it.

Ciao,

Prez (Gabriel)

DISCLAIMER: THIS IS
SATIRE AND INTENDED AS
A JOKE.



PAN-ASIAN MUSIC SHOWCASE NIGHT

CELEBRATING IDENTITY, COMMUNITY, AND BELONGING



HAN LEE (HE/HIM)

On 28 June from 6 PM, Pan-Asian Music Showcase Night will bring together a diverse lineup of musicians and artists—Glxxria, Sabreen, Iris Zhang, Han Lee, and Papercity—for an unforgettable night at The Tuning Fork (Spark Arena), one of Auckland's premier music venues. These artists, well-established in the local music scene and supported by NZ On Air, promise a night of high-quality musical performances. However, Pan-Asian Music Showcase Night is more than just a music event. It is a platform for social engagement, cultural expression, and the celebration of diversity, fostering a sense of belonging among Asian youth in New Zealand.

KAUPAPA: ADDRESSING ISOLATION THROUGH MUSIC

Asian youth in New Zealand often experience isolation and loneliness due to language barriers, cultural differences, and the pressure to adapt to local society. These challenges can contribute to depression and anxiety, limiting their connection to both their native culture and their ability to engage in community life. While New Zealand's healthcare system has developed various policies, much of the focus has been reactive, aiming to solve problems rather than prevent them. There is a growing need for preventive policies and initiatives such as Migrant Settlement Strategy that support Asian youth in maintaining social well-being and achieving their full potential.

Pan-Asian Music Showcase Night seeks to address these challenges by using music as a bridge to connect young people from diverse backgrounds. Through music performances, the event creates a relaxed and welcoming environment where au-

diences, artists, and community members can interact naturally. It also provides a space to discuss Asian music and culture, highlighting the presence of Asian artists in New Zealand's music scene—a presence often overlooked in mainstream popular culture. By amplifying Asian narratives, the event gives young people an opportunity to see themselves represented and take pride in their cultural identity. The showcase also aims to encourage intercultural exchange, inviting both Kiwi and Asian artists and music fans to foster greater understanding and collaboration. This shared cultural experience strengthens connections between communities, reinforcing the idea that diversity is a source of enrichment rather than division.

Beyond the performances, Pan-Asian Music Showcase Night is about creating a space where Asian youth can feel seen, valued, and empowered. The venue itself—The Tuning Fork—plays a crucial role in this. As part of Spark Arena, one of Auckland's most reputable concert venues, it provides a high-profile platform that elevates Asian cultural performances and showcases them with the prestige they deserve. By holding this event in a major venue, the showcase reinforces the idea that Asian music belongs in New Zealand's mainstream cultural spaces, not just in niche or community settings.

More than a one-night event, Pan-Asian Music Showcase serves as a catalyst for future collaborations. It fosters ongoing partnerships between artists, community organisations, and initiatives supporting Asian and migrant youth. With the backing of Whau Ethnic Collective, Asian Family Services, and The Asian Network Inc., this event is designed to leave a lasting impact, paving the way for long-term support and engagement for Asian communities in Aotearoa.

This project is led by an informal group of migration experts and students at the University of Auckland. Since its formation in 2022 with support from the Creating Connection Grant, the group has been actively involved in organising World Refugee Day events, supporting research students, and leading community development projects. The event is organised by Han Lee, an artist-academic, doctoral candidate in Community Psychology at the University of Auckland, and a passionate advocate for Asian communities. As a singer-songwriter, Han seeks to bridge cultural gaps through the universal language of music.

BUY TICKETS HERE:

Use the Promo Code for \$10 off: PanAsian15Pass



ARTIST OVERVIEW

Papercity: Straight out of Nelson, Papercity is a hard-edged pop band blending relatable lyrics with guitar-based aggression, emo twists, and punk energy. Known for high-octane live shows and unforgettable hooks, their music video *Sofa* draws inspiration from *The Prisoner*. The trio continues to captivate fans with their raw and infectious sound.

Sabreen: Sabreen, an Auckland-based artist and proud Bangladeshi Muslim, weaves heartfelt stories with inspiration from artists like Hozier and The Beths. Her 2023 debut EP *Room Service* showcased her talent, and her upcoming single *Countryman* sheds light on Asian New Zealand history, promising a bright future for this talented singer-songwriter.

Glxxria: Ixxria, a Chinese-Kiwi musician in her early 20s, merges indie, alt-rock, soft-rock, and pop with a flair for visual arts. Rooted in Classical and R&B influences, she crafts versatile narratives inspired by artists like Norah Jones. Glxxria's introverted creativity harmonises her diverse talents, leaving a mark on New Zealand's evolving music scene.

Iris Zhang: Iris Zhang is a New Zealand-based singer-songwriter known for emotive singles like *Lemon Tree* and *Small Ache*. Her heartfelt lyrics and captivating melodies delve into themes of love and loss. With a growing global fan base, Iris connects deeply through music, transforming raw emotions into universal and powerful stories.

Han Lee: Han Lee, the force behind *Trauma Capital*, is a New Zealand artist committed to blending artistic expression with social impact. His debut single *White Noise* fuses pop rock with electronic music. Han collaborates with minority youth, amplifying voices through powerful, evocative tracks.



Context



ROSE TAYLOR-MEADE

Context is a wonderful thing.
So is hindsight.
Especially when it sounded better in your head.

*Like when I'm laughing hysterically, off my head, for no particular reason.
It's fine. I'm just sleep deprived. I didn't sleep last night.*

No one needs to read anything else into that.

*I'm waiting for the day when someone decides to take that as an innuendo.
Some people just have a talent for making anything into something dirty.*

*"Alright. We have her consent."
This was my Rover investiture, by the way.
Or perhaps cult initiation is more accurate.*



ART BY CINDY LAMANTO

POETRY

COMMUNICATE



CAMERON BURTON

*Communicate
Even when it's scary
Even when you don't want to
Or when you don't want to have to*

*The feelings will build up inside you
Anxiety, resentment, uncertainty
All the words you've left unsaid
Repeating in your head*

*It might not go how you want
But at least you'll know now
Because they can't read your mind
Any more than you can theirs*

*It's not a sign of weakness
To show you have feelings
Be honest, be yourself
And you'll be much stronger after*

*You can't predict the fallout
And you shouldn't try too hard
The more you do, the harder it'll be
To find your way back to reality*

*If you can't talk to them now
When will you ever be able to
And years from now you'll sit and think
And wonder what could've been*

*Would you have saved that friendship?
Gotten that date?
Or that promotion?
That opportunity you'd dreamed about?*

*So go on, communicate.
I believe in you
Be clear, be sincere, be brave
We'll see what it comes to*



ART BY ELINOR COGHLAN, @ELINORCOG

oh so
quiet!

YOU'VE NEVER
BEEN SO NUTS
ABOUT A GUY
YOU WANNA
LAUGH, YOU
WANNA CRY
YOU CROSS YOUR
HEART AND
HOPE TO DIE

GEE, THIS IS
SWELL, YOU
ALMOST HAVE
A FIT
THIS GUY IS
"GORGE", AND
I GOT HIT
THERE'S NO
MISTAKE, THIS
IS IT!

SO WHATS THE USE

OF FALLING IN...

Love

drax project

at Alfred's Street Festival



LEWIS MATHESON CREED

Wellington-originating band Drax Project is one of New Zealand's most successful musical exports, with massive international 2019 hits *Woke Up Late* and *Catching Feelings* (feat. Six60), as well as dominating the charts locally in New Zealand too with tracks like *Toto*, *All This Time* and *Atmosphere*. Although, if you ask me, all their songs are classic summer bangers alike. The four mates who make up the band are Shaan Singh (Vocals and Sax), Matt Beachen (Drums), Ben O'Leary (Guitar), and Sam Thomson (Bass). They're humble about their success. Humble enough to have performed on our campus live at AUSA's sold-out Alfred's Street festival in O-Week. I took over AUSA's General Manager's office for 20 minutes to talk with the guys about their music.

For people who haven't heard of your music, how would you describe your sound with 3 words?

Drax Project: *Energetic, melodious... pop, or maybe RnB [the band enters a debate over whether RnB counts as three words or one]. We generally say that we kind of have two different energies to our music. It's a completely different energy when we're in the studio recording and it's really hard for us to have that wild energy we have live on stage, which gives our live album a different feel.*

Last album you listened to as a band? Or individually?

Drax Project: *We don't really listen to albums as a band, although we probably should though aye. We send each other songs to listen to though.*

Ben: *We do listen to Voodoo by D'Angelo all the time together though, we use it for our sound check, and we jammed it on stage in Cairns. A huge influence on us.*

Drax Project: *Also Caracal by Disclosure, we took a lot of inspiration from that record. And Justin Timberlake's Justified too. We try to make music that sounds like those albums.*

Back in the day, what was your go to student meal?

Sam & Shaan: *For us, at the Basin Noodle House in Wellington, it wasn't on the menu but you could ask them for this \$7 large fried rice. Now ask Matt what he used to eat as a student. It was DISGUSTING!*

Matt: *Canned mackerel, and sometimes add baked beans or an egg for the protein [laughs]. Just a disgusting mix of protein but great for bulking on a budget.*

Ben: *Sounds boujee but cannelloni with ricotta. [The rest of the band gawks at Ben] What? My girlfriend at the time was vegetarian!*

[The band then asked me what my student meal is, to which I replied Hubbard's Light & Right Peach cereal]

You're one of New Zealand's biggest groups, so what drew you to play at Alfred's Festival?

Drax Project: *It's cool to play uni shows! We met at Uni and our first ever gig was at an O-Week toga party. Honestly we just love playing gigs, if we're asked to play a show, we'll always try to say yes!*

What inspired your viral TikTok *Blind Beat* series?

Drax Project: *I think it's a really unique thing we do, it's unlike anything else we do or anyone else has done. It's super helpful for coming up with ideas, like: "let's just try to write like this and see what happens".*



Sometimes we have a guitar riff, or something like that which we like, but we're stuck for a melody, so everyone goes off and does their take on their own and then we piece these Frankenstein melodies together and Shaan sings over it.

Shaan: *I think for me it's helped me to create different situations for different functions. It's really unlikely we'd make a blind beat and release it as is, but it's a great way to find out how to put things together.*

Matt: *We've started making new music and a lot of what we have come from those Blind Beat sessions and we wouldn't have got into that creative space if we sat down and tried to write music. There's something magical about coming up with music like that.*

Shaan: *I also think we wouldn't continue to do it if it*

wasn't good social media content too [laughs] so it has essentially been a two birds one stone situation.

What do you feel is the secret ingredient for that "Kiwi Summer" vibe in a song?

Matt: *It's gotta be applicable to windows down driving* 🚗

Shaan: *To be honest, I don't agree, I wouldn't call our music "Kiwi Summer". It's cool that people see our music like that but I think bands like The Black Seeds, Six60 and Fat Freddy's Drop are more in that style than us.*

Drax Project: *We're not sure what the secret ingredient is, although we want Woolworths to be playing our songs [laughs].*

Any advice for Young/Student Bands trying to break out into the industry?

Shaan: *The number one thing is just get better [the rest of the band agrees]. Write heaps of music and find people to hang out with who are better at music than you are. Being the best doesn't help you get better, even if you feel cool.*

Drax Project: *Have fun! It's meant to be fun, the best stuff we've done happens when we're having fun and we don't force it but try to make the most of your opportunities. You need to find people you want to hang out with and be around them all the time! Have a crew, people that help you be consistent. Consistency helps you grow. For example, Charli xcx was honing her sound for a long time without much success but then she released brat and brat blew up and changed things for her instantly. That's the product of consistency and honing your craft.*

If you weren't at Alfred's Street festival this year, I'm sorry, but you missed out. Drax Project held nothing back, giving a high-energy show that could have been in front of a stadium, not just a crowd of about 800 first-years. They even played a new song that doesn't have a name yet. Their advice for those first years? Cs get degrees, and high school friends are cool, but Uni friends are for life. I couldn't agree more. Their performance was close to the sound and set list of their recently released live album, *Live At The Jazz Cafe, London*. I highly recommend giving it a spin. And since it's NZ Music Month, you must listen to it ;)





GIG REVIEW

A NIGHT WITH BABE RAINBOW + CAMILLE JANSEN

(AND NZ'S OWN; O AND THE MO)

HANNAH JUDD



I write this review with the official vinyl record playing in the background—leisurely, blissful, and content—while savouring the remnants of a slow Tuesday morning.

'For Melancholy Brunettes (& sad women)', despite its very literal title, couldn't be more subversive with its hauntingly atmospheric melodies and literary-esque lyricism. While Japanese Breakfast's previous studio album capitalised on its high-flying, giddy pop synths, this one takes the listener by surprise, leaning into richer guitar acoustics and velvety melodic bridges. The pop indie band's lead singer, Michelle Zauner, enthralls with her soft, delicate vocals—making each track a seamless blend of emotionally intense yet comforting storytelling.

'Little Girl' lingers in the listener's ears with its distinctive guitar plucking, sporadic lyrics interspersed between instrumental breaks, and fading synths to masterfully close the track. It feels natural to hum along and feel yourself being carried away on some hypothetical melancholic breeze—although, as autumn leaves fall and pumpkin spice lattes start brewing, perhaps the feeling is not so much hypothetical, but purely anecdotal. 'Mega Circuit' delivers a strong bass line and hypnotic percussion loops, showcasing the band's impressive instrumental range. The gradual chorus of piano chords was a perfect complement.

My personal favourite, 'Winter in LA', charms you with its wonderland-esque musical arrangements and wistful high notes tied up in crescendo-level riffs. The album experiments freely with sound, whether leaning into the luscious violin strings in 'Leda' or the impassioned electric guitar flourishes of 'Picture Window'.

When reflecting on the matured tone of the album, Zauner remarked, "As I get older, my emotions are in this place where they're not extreme... it's just a contemplative, pensive and dreamy state." And in that very floaty and dreamlike landscape do we find ourselves listening, just as Zauner herself was when writing the album.

On a crisp autumn night in Auckland, hippies, indie folk, and Australians alike gathered at K'road's venue Double Whammy to see O & The Mo, Camille Jansen, and Babe Rainbow.

Walking through the bar in the entryway filled with captivating outfits and amazing hair, we entered the venue to O & The Mo serenading the crowd with their entrancing vocals and remarkable rhythms. One half of the duo, Alvin - aka The Mo, was playing an incredible, and extremely large guitar, which I have since learned is made from Nikau palm. The Aotearoa based pair played an entrancing opening set of dreamy psychedelic folk music that would be a perfect accompaniment to lounging in a field and gazing at the clouds.

As O and The Mo closed out, French indie artist Camille Jansen took the stage and bewitched the crowd with her soulful voice and groovy rhythm. Camille was accompanied by the guitarist and drummer of Babe Rainbow, and as she performed, she was slowly joined by the bassist and finally the lead singer who announced, "Hey guys we're Babe Rainbow!" I entered the show assuming Camille was an opening artist, but she performed alongside Babe Rainbow for the whole set, with her sonorous voice

being an amazing addition to their funky psychedelic sound.

Babe Rainbow played much of their new album Slipper imp and Shakaerator with songs such as 'what is ashwagandha' being the perfect energetic groove to get the crowd moving. Throughout the show members of Babe Rainbow sported colourful sunglasses and lead singer Angus Dowling rocked pigtailed mimicking Jansens pair of braids. Babe Rainbow's psychedelic surf rock made for a night filled with dancing, accompanied by Dowling and Jansens onstage grooving. Babe Rainbow is a must listen to accompany any sunny day or simply for having a boogie while cooking dinner. Camille also performed her original entrancing song 'Je Ne Fais Que Rêver' and a melodic cover of Nirvana's 'On a Plain'.

They closed out with Babe Rainbow song Secret Enchanted Broccoli Forest interpolated with Stealers Wheel's Stuck in the Middle With You providing a lively singalong to finish a fun and funky night.



As an amateur poet myself, Zauner's thoughts on the songwriting process heavily resonated with me. "It's fun to write with such a bluntness and stark language. Sometimes I think it's actually more poetic."

Loyal followers of Japanese Breakfast will recall the star's emotionally raw and deeply moving memoir, 'Crying in H-Mart', where she navigates the turbulent aftermath of her mother's death from cancer and her rise to musical acclaim. Anyone familiar with the memoir will not be surprised at Zauner's ability to blend deeply personal stories with fictional elements, weaving prose and poetry even through the most mundane fragments of daily life. That same gift carries through in this album's lyricism—simple in phrasing, yet heavy with meaning, often poetic in its starkness.

While abstraction and verbosity certainly have their place, the simplicity of Zauner's lyrics—entirely sparse at times—is one of the album's most striking features. And when her words do grace us with their presence, they cut right through the bone and speak with unflinching brevity. 'Mega Circuit' takes a long, hard look at the state of contemporary (toxic) masculinity, singing of "incel eunuchs" and "soft hearts of young boys so pissed off and jaded." Other tracks prefer to show and not tell, with mentions of "honey water" and "port town ferris wheels" painting vast emotional landscapes in just a few words.

If you're a miserable daily commuter like me, you'll find great solace in listening to this heartfelt album while dramatically gazing out the train window. Yes, Japanese Breakfast is certified amateur music video material. I wouldn't be surprised if the album was used in the soundtrack of a quintessential coming-of-age film ('Perks of Being a Wallflower', I'm looking at you) or a youth drama episode. Nonetheless, the album transcends whatever reductive label one might draw from its tongue-in-cheek title. Truly, it's music worth hearing far beyond the ears of your typical melancholic brunette or sad girl.



ALBUM REVIEW

FOR MELANCHOLY BRUNETTES (& SAD WOMEN)

JAPANESE BREAKFAST (FOURTH
STUDIO ALBUM)

VIVIENE (SHE/HER)



In what can only be described as a measured balancing act between mellow pleasure and helpless yearning, Zauner elegantly weaves in Brontë-like literary allusions into whimsical melodies reminiscent of folklore scores. This album is well worth listening to—and just in time, too—for Japanese Breakfast's world tour arriving at the Auckland Town Hall this year.

And as the needle of the record player lifts and silence hangs in the air, I slowly pull myself out of the melancholic dream state, awake for Tuesday once more.



FILM REVIEW

METALHEAD (2013)

DIRECTED BY RAGNAR BRAGASON

A TALE ABOUT FINDING BEAUTY AND
LIBERATION IN HEAVY METAL RIFFS
AND GROWLS.

HARRIS AUGUSTIN

As a metalhead, I'm sick and tired of films' portrayal of metalheads as demented, deviant delinquents whose sole purpose in their lives is to incite chaos and unrest around them. This film, however, remains close to my heart as it stands out from the rest of the pile.

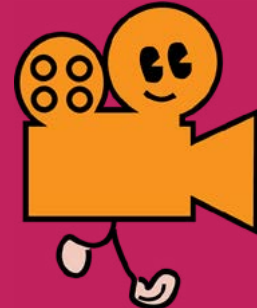
Set in rural Iceland, Hera is a young girl grieving the tragic death of her older brother, Baldur. She finds solace in her brother's music taste and later adopts his heavy metal persona.

Like Hera, we see her parents unable to cope with this tragedy and distance themselves from the community, mundanely going about their daily chores and managing their livestock. Transitioning from adolescence to young adulthood, Hera's alienation towards her family and community grows, and she rebels through heavy metal music, isolation, and aggressive outbursts. Hera only experiences moments of joy when she comes across the slightest bit of references, such as an Iron Maiden tattoo, a kid wearing a Metallica t-shirt, and a news report on the infamous Norwegian black metal band Mayhem.

Bragason (director) later brings beauty to this depressive screenplay as the family slowly recovers and the community finally accepts Hera for the metalhead

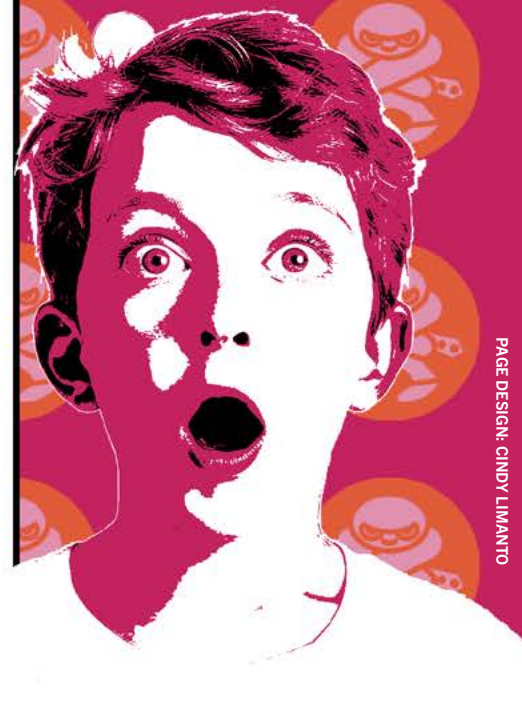
she is. It is the perfect ending as the family embraces heavy metal as a form of liberation while they dance to Symphony of Destruction by Megadeth.

Having been brought up in a strict catholic household, metal music was always seen as taboo from my parents' point of view, claiming it to be "loud and unpleasant," "satanic," or "against the faith." Eventually, forcing myself to listen through my headphones or in secret. As much as I wanted to prove to my parents that metal music was actually about corruption, war, poverty, and propaganda, I knew that a smack on the head would follow my efforts. In connection with the film, I see Hera going through a similar ordeal, which makes me relate to this film personally.



CONTRIBUTOR REVIEWS

SEEN, HEARD OR READ
SOMETHING YOU WANT TO
TELL EVERYONE ABOUT?
TELL US AT
MANAGINGEDITOR@
CRACCUM.CO.NZ TO GET
YOUR REVIEW HERE NEXT
WEEK.





MUSIC/FILM REVIEW

PINK FLOYD'S 'THE DARK SIDE OF THE MOON' 50TH ANNIVERSARY STARDOME EXPERIENCE

CHAZ TYLER CHO (HE/HIM)
@THEREALFINCH9933

The Stardome Observatory is currently showing The Dark Side of the Moon's 50th anniversary screening, which syncs Pink Floyd's classic to various space-themed visuals. As a fan of Pink Floyd, I was very excited to see how it played out. And lots of other people were too, I was surprised to find that my session was sold out.

The strongest win of this screening is the audio quality: it wraps the audience with its surround sound, and you can feel it. Although that's probably because they boosted the bass with some of their songs: the first two minutes of Time is where you can easily spot this.

Listening to the whole album from start to finish, no pauses, makes you realize how seamless every track blend into each other, and the visuals match that blend very well. But the worst sin is the screen quality. I get that there's only so much they could do with projectors, but I paid 20 dollars as a Pink Floyd fan to be immersed in this 50th anniversary screening of their breakthrough album; the screen quality takes away from it. At least the audio experience was amazing.

But let's look past the poor resolution: what about the visuals themselves?

The two-part opening of Speak to Me and Breathe (In The Air) is done masterfully. Part of it is due to how the tracks are on the albums, but the visuals matching them were incredible. The opening of Speak to Me involves heartbeats, which they show, alongside snippets of sound elements used in the later songs. It's matched perfectly with the black prism from the album cover, slowly becoming bigger, enveloping the audience in the sheer size of it.

The climax and ending of Speak to Me already blend seamlessly into Breathe (In The Air), and so does the video. That, in my opinion, was the best part of the screening, because it makes you go "wow, they thought this one out very well."

On The Run immerses you in a Stargate-like sequence accompanying the frenetic trance-almost techno beat of the track. Money was great, synchronised to the 7/4 time of the beat as you go through a space station in zero-g; great combination. And the visualization of building and launching a spaceship to the moon matches the amazing guitar solo very well, even if the low video quality made part of it a bit dizzying.

Another part I want to touch on is the astronauts: while they don't look bad, they don't look so good either. Something about them looks off, almost in the uncanny valley. Thankfully, they don't show up that much, so you're only left with like three scenes of weird-looking astronauts.

The same can't be said about the planets in the halfway point with The Great Gig In The Sky, where the celestial bodies zoom and move in and out... almost weirdly. When the amazing vocals kick in, the planets move in such a weird way that it's hard to feel immersed in them.

Overall, I highly recommend you see this if you're a Pink Floyd fan before the show finishes on May 30. But if you're not, take your 20 dollars and go watch a movie instead. There are plenty of great options, and like A Minecraft Movie, which seems to be the best theatre experience since The Substance.



ENGINEERING REVUE WANTS YOU!

LOOKING FOR WRITERS, DANCERS, MUSICIANS, ACTORS, PROPS, BACKSTAGE HELPERS AND MORE

Engineering Revue is a student society that has been bringing the diverse talents of UoA's engineering students to the Sky City Theatre stage since 2008! It's a chance for engineering students of all ages and disciplines to come together and create a fun and entertaining show for all to enjoy (even the SkyCity staff!).

There are many areas that students can get involved in, from on stage roles such as acting, vocals, and band, to behind-the-scenes responsibilities like our backstage, tech and video crews. There's a place for anyone keen on being part of the team.

Our band and vocalists are an integral part of the show and our club; without them, the magic we create on stage would not be possible. Outside their teams, our band is also involved with skits, be it on stage or video, and even the main plot. It goes without saying that their musical gifts help make Revue what it is.

Our band tries their hardest to bring the magic of live music to the audience, opting for live performances over backing tracks where possible. Every aspect of Revue gets their time to shine, and for our band it's their full band piece. Last year, the talented team brought a banger performance of Moanin', composed by Charles Mingus, to the SkyCity stage.

Every show, we do an engineering spin on an existing piece of media. Last year's show was a parody of the cartoon Phineas and Ferb for our main plot. One of our most notable musical parodies from last year was our engineering spin of Say No To This from the musical Hamilton by Lin-Manuel Miranda.

Getting involved is a great way for students to build lasting connections with fellow engineers. You'll get to enjoy social activities that are a valuable and ful-

filling complement to the grind of academic studies and develop your confidence in a friendly and inclusive atmosphere. It's a great opportunity to create lifelong memories, and if you even have the slightest interest in joining, we strongly encourage you to take that step! These are the years to make the most of every opportunity on campus.

This year's show is currently in the works, so make sure to keep your ears open and eyes peeled for announcements (especially for our auditions happening very soon in Week 9)!

If you're curious, you can find us on YouTube @Engineering Revue (where last year's show has already been uploaded), and on Instagram @engrevue.



Every year Auckland Writers Festival Waituhi o Tāmaki showcases some of the world's most celebrated storytellers and thinkers. Between 13 – 18 May, tens of thousands of people will gather just down the hill for a jam-packed programme of over 180 events across a range of venues and sites in the heart of Tāmaki Makaurau.

We've pulled together this guide to help you make the most of this huge event whether you only have time for a quick study break or can make a whole day of it



If you like your Friday nights to be unpredictable... Come to **STREETSIDE: BRITOMART**. Taking place on Friday 9 May, this free event is your pre-Festival appetiser. For one night only writers, musicians and artists take to the streets of Britomart for an extravaganza of creative shenanigans. It's surprising, hilarious, profound and a little bit fringe. There are bite-sized panels, performances and drop-in creative Kaupapa scattered across bespoke and surprising locations from 6 – 8pm. You don't need a ticket, just grab some friends (or make some new ones), turn up and enjoy the ride!

If you have some big questions about the state of the world... A host of global and local thinkers are on hand to help you make sense of a turbulent landscape. Panel themes including "Trump: The Next Four Years"; "How Tyrants Fall"; "2025: A Billionaire's Playground?" and "Making Peace in the Culture Wars". Big international speakers will be joined by brilliant local minds, including leading Māori scholar and University of Auckland academic Dr Aroha Harris, renowned physicist Professor Shaun Hendy and Professor Deidre Brown on issues closer to home, such as Te Tiriti, colonisation, New Zealand's handling of Covid-19 and the landmark *Toi Te Mana: An Indigenous History of Māori Art*.

GUIDE TO AUCKLAND WRITERS FESTIVAL WAITUHI O TAMAKI 2025



If you spend most of your time in the English lit department... You won't want to miss British-Cambodian writer and editor Kaliane Bradley, whose time-travel rom-com debut *The Ministry of Time* has been one of the biggest hits of the publishing year. Or maybe Shakespeare is more your bag so you'll want to catch Emmy Award winning actress Harriet Walter talking about what women would have said if Shakespeare had given them more airtime. You can also see 2024 Booker Prize winner Samantha Harvey, David Nicholls, who wrote the phenomenally popular *One Day*, and the author of the Japanese cult hit *Butter*, Asako Yuzuki, who will be chaired by University of Auckland Associate Professor Paula Morris. Plus hear from Ockham New Zealand Book Awards winners and finalists.



If you need a bit of sizzle in your evening after a day of study...

Try a late-night salon. On Friday the inaugural Spice Salon will see the greatest writers of some of the steamiest scenes gather for readings of their work. Funny, serious, smutty, light-hearted or poignant, it's all here. Then take a darker turn on Saturday when some of our renowned storytellers come together for a salon of unsettling tales. Guest readers include Queen of Latin American horror Mariana Enriquez and Ockham NZ Book Award winner Noelle McCarthy (reading from a Dracula-inspired work-in-progress piece).



If you're feeling broke... You're in luck! Over 25% of the Festival's events are free and unticketed. Head to Kōrero Corner for short, informal sessions that will spark inspiration and curiosity. You can join a Wikipedia edit-a-thon, participate in a world-wide book club or get the inside scoop from local publishers on the books to look out for this year. There are also lots more free sessions scattered throughout the programme, including a Pasifika poetry showcase called "Tell the Tale, Win the Crowd" a panel called "Being a NZ Writer Today" and a session called "Tangata Tiriti for Te Tiriti".

To find out about all these events head to writersfestival.co.nz

WIN!!!

WE HAVE 1 X DOUBLE PASS TO GIVEAWAY TO EACH OF THE FOLLOWING FIVE EVENTS. TO BE IN TO WIN, JUST TELL US WHICH SESSION YOU WOULD MOST LIKE TO ATTEND @CRACCUM.

**EVENT #26
INTERSECTIONS ACROSS THE MOANA**

**EVENT #71
LET THE DEAD SPEAK**

**EVENT #89
IMAGINED FUTURES**

**EVENT #106
DAVID NICHOLLS**

**EVENT #124
TORREY PETERS**



If LGBTQ+ issues matter to you... Then we have a line up for you. Catch Torrey Peters, author of *De-transition, Baby* which was hailed as "the first great trans realist novel". Listen to major British novelist Alan Hollinghurst who won the Booker Prize win for *The Line of Beauty* in 2004 and helped propel LGBTQ+ narratives into the literary mainstream. And don't miss Aotearoa New Zealand's Ngāhuia te Awekōtuku who broke new ground as trailblazer for Māori rights, and the women's and gay liberation movements.

If you want to be on the Festival stage one day... The Festival includes an incredible lineup of Masterclasses led by our smart and inspirational writers and creatives. Proudly supported by the University of Auckland, these offer an incredibly unique opportunity to hone your writing skills in a small group setting. Some spaces are still available, but these sessions do sell out fast, so if you've missed out on a class with a favourite author make sure you get in early in 2026.

Do you want to get involved with Auckland Writers Festival Auckland Writers Festival Waituhi o Tāmaki? There are still some volunteer spots available. Volunteers get an exciting behind-the-scenes opportunity to be part of this major event, plus each receives a name badge or lanyard giving access to all general and free events on the programme (as long as they are not sold out). The AWF team is looking for sociable, outgoing volunteers to help with our surveying data collection. If you're keen to know more, head to <https://www.writersfestival.co.nz/our-supporters/volunteer/>

MAYBE YOU'RE A SNOB?

A LOOK INTO ELITISM IN MUSIC



HANNAH JUDD

To some, music taste is just whatever they throw on when driving in the car; to others, it's the most important facet of their personality. Now neither of these are an inherently bad way to be, and music taste is so very personal. Music soundtracks our lives, which links it to some of our fondest memories or hardest times. However personal, music is still universally known to unite people and bring them together regardless of background, but we have all been trapped in a conversation with someone who swears that "you won't know this artist they're pretty underground". Or worse, the "I bet you can't name 5 songs" guy who quizzes you when you dare play one song from an artist, they just can't fathom you know.

I have been subject to my fair share of musical elitism working in a bar for three years that catered mainly to middle-aged men. God forbid I played anything made after 2000, or I would receive endless comments about the "rubbish" I deigned to put on. Although much of my music taste tends to be released before 2000, I was fighting an uphill battle. Even when I played music they knew or liked, I couldn't escape the "a girl your age surely doesn't know this song" comments followed by an in-depth lecture about their thoughts on the artist.

Music elitism, unfortunately, is inescapable whether it comes from a middle-aged man or one of your peers. Music is subjective, and people are passionate, and with that comes opinions, a lot of them. Elitism attached to music has been around as long as music itself, rooted in racism, classism, sexism, and the general subjugation of marginalised communities. While making music and consuming music is more accessible than ever before, it is still intrinsically linked to financial opportunity. Having access to the technology, instruments, and time to make music requires a certain level of financial privilege alone. Additionally, having the money and time to consume live music or pay for streaming services, or in the past, buy records, cassettes or other means to consume music relies on a level of financial freedom.

For many, music taste is shaped at a young age, and as such, the financial privilege to be able to access instruments or attend live performances can foster a judgement towards others who

weren't raised with the same opportunities. In the past, these financial barriers to music were evident in the labelling of classical or orchestral music as sophisticated and the view of other genres, such as folk, as simplistic.

The deep roots of classism in music coincide with an immense amount of racism that plagues the music industry. People of colour have produced a vast amount of the music that has created and revolutionised genres yet are still consistently overlooked at many major award shows, and much of the limelight is dominated by white artists. When discussing musical elitism, it is important to remember where this comes from and the classist and racist narratives that can be perpetrated through elitism.

On the day to day, much of the contemporary elitism voiced by individuals focuses on the uniqueness of the music one listens to. I will be the first to say there is something satisfying about liking an artist that is uncommon, but where does this come from? Sure, if it is less known, it's less likely to be overplayed, and many just enjoy an obscure song, but a large amount of judgment of "basic" music originates from sexism. If you were to list artists who are viewed as "basic," I'm sure

Taylor Swift, Olivia Rodrigo, or Sabrina Carpenter would be featured. The fact that most of the artists considered "basic" hold a fanbase consisting mainly of women, specifically young women, is not coincidental. Historically, it is a running theme that the interests of young women are considered unserious, uncultured, and disrespected. However, the musical interests of young men suffer far less ridicule than that of young women.

Now I'm not saying you can't have opinions. Feeling strongly about the music you like, and opposing the music you don't is only natural. However, when the desire to judge other's music tastes outweighs the desire to share your own or understand someone else, it is vital to remember where this elitist mindset may come from to ensure the perpetuation of harmful ideologies ends with you.

A GIRL YOUR AGE
SURELY DOESN'T KNOW
THIS SONG?

THAT'S 'RETHA
FRANKLIN

YOU WON'T KNOW THIS
ARTIST THEY'RE
PRETTY UNDERGROUND



TIME FOR A TWEAK

WHY NZ SHOULD LET INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS WORK 24 HOURS A WEEK



HISHAM HAQ | AUSA INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS' OFFICER

New Zealand has long marketed itself as a welcoming place to study. But for many international students, the reality on the ground is more complicated. Alongside high tuition fees and culture shock, there's a more practical struggle that rarely gets discussed: money. The current 20-hour work limit placed on international students during term time often isn't enough to stay afloat. It's time for New Zealand to consider following the lead of Canada and Australia by increasing the cap to 24 hours.

Let's start with the basics. Living in New Zealand isn't cheap. As of 2025, the average weekly rent in Auckland is over \$690. Add in food, transport, and other essentials, and even conservative budgets start looking unrealistic. The government requires international students to show they have about \$20,000 per year to cover living expenses, but universities themselves suggest budgeting closer to \$500 per week which adds up to \$26,000 per year. That's a \$6,000 gap for students to bridge.

The 20-hour limit doesn't allow them to do that effectively. At the current minimum wage, students can earn about \$460 before tax working 20 hours a week. That's barely enough to cover rent, let alone anything else. More importantly, most part-time jobs are structured around 8-hour shifts. That means two shifts a week totals 16 hours, and there's not much room for a third shift without breaking the law. The result? Students either miss out on work they need or get pushed toward under-the-table arrangements, which puts them at risk.

Canada and Australia have already addressed this. In 2024, Canada introduced a new cap of 24 hours a week after consultations and pilot programmes showed that this level struck the right balance between allowing students to support themselves and still prioritise their studies. Australia similarly increased its limit to 48 hours per fortnight (24 per week) in mid-2023.

These countries recognise a simple pattern that international students are not here to exploit the system. Most are trying to manage university, rent, and groceries all at once. A few extra hours of paid work can make the difference between staying on track and spiralling into debt or burnout. There's little evidence that 24 hours of work negatively impacts academic performance and the problems tend to start when students are working full-time.

Raising the limit is not about encouraging students to take on excessive work. It's about giving them flexibility. With three 8-hour shifts a week, students can work consistent schedules, earn just a bit more, and reduce stress. It's also a matter of staying competitive: New Zealand risks falling behind if it doesn't adjust policies in line with what our peers are offering.

Being international shouldn't mean being left behind. A small policy shift to 24 hours a week would go a long way in making New Zealand not just a place to study, but a place where international students can actually thrive.



ART BY LEWIS MATHESON CREED

WILL KIWI ARTISTS EVER BE ROYALS?

HOW DEFUNDING THE ARTS IS COSTING US MORE THAN WE REALISE



HOPE MILO (SHE/HER)



In 2024, the Government announced they were cutting \$42 million in funding from the Aotearoa arts sector.

I remember sitting in the office of a music-centred nonprofit on the day the new budget was announced. A strange feeling settled over the room as my supervisor read the document aloud.

The final few weeks of my internship saw me drowning in Microsoft Excel, putting together databases and spreadsheets of potential organisations we could partner with to fill the massive funding gap left by the Ministry for Culture and Heritage. Creative New Zealand could only hand out so many grants, and their applicant pool had just about tripled once the government pulled their financial support.

The following month, I began working at a rangatahi-focused nonprofit that provided programmes and opportunities for youth to explore careers in the creative industries.

But six months later, the same lack of funding would lose me, my manager, and our CEO our jobs, leaving an irreversible dent in our ability to support young artists pursuing their dreams.

But this cut was bigger than me. Bigger than my coworkers, politics, and even the arts industry itself.

The Government's defunding of the arts is an Aotearoa-wide problem. One that is directly affecting our rangatahi's lives and futures, yet no one seems to care.

Creativity gives people space to share stories, to connect, to be courageous enough to imagine a world in which they are not alone. When funding is cut, those spaces shrink. Programmes disappear. Voices go unheard.

Those who can afford music lessons, instruments, studio hire fees, and industry connections will still have access to the arts—it's our most vulnerable who won't be able to exercise their right to freely express themselves.

If the Government actually took the time to talk to artists, they would find that the very voices they are silencing come from the communities who need their help the most.

The Prime Minister has been quick to champion "back to basics" education, even supporting schools in cutting arts and music activities to focus on maths and literacy.

Now, Mr. Luxon, imma let you finish, but first, let me share with you a story from my time at that youth arts nonprofit last year.



In a programme that supported rangatahi Pasifika into live events careers—sound ops, lighting techs, production staff—one young person said to me, *"I never knew this was a real job for someone like me."*

He was still a high schooler. Quiet. Observant. Sharp. He wasn't talking about fame or stages or headlines. He was talking about the simple possibility that a creative life could be his reality. That he could work in music without having to be the face of it. That he could earn a living doing something that made him feel more himself.

That's what arts funding does. It unlocks futures. It gives people access not just to resources, but to belief. It says: your voice is valid, your vision is possible.

And that message matters most when it's told to someone who's never heard it before.

When the funding goes, the message goes with it.

The worst part is, we're made to feel like wanting this kind of support is selfish or unrealistic. As if music isn't a "real job." As if we should just be grateful to exist in a system that barely acknowledges us. But the reality is, our sector is full of people doing the most with the absolute least, and still making art that moves, shifts, and changes the world.

As a young creative, I've watched too many beautiful, impactful programmes shrink or shut down completely. Not because they weren't working. Not because the young people weren't showing up. But because they were running on empty—and when your funders disappear, there's only so long you can keep the lights on.

Still, we keep going. Because the mahi matters. Because the kids matter. Because even on the days where it feels like no one else is listening, we've seen the way music gives people back to themselves.

So how can you support your local, underfunded artists, or the programmes that support them?

It is NZ Music Month. Go to their gigs. Buy their merch. Purchase their music. Share their work. Tell your friends. Engage with them on social media. Amplify them when they release new projects. Donate to crowdfunders if you're able. Volunteer your time or skills if you can't. Voting is a good way to support local arts and culture too; it is a local election year so be sure to enroll or update your information.

On the 30th of May, it will be NZ Music T-Shirt Day, so instead of buying an overpriced band tee at the next Spark Arena or Eden Park concert you see, buy a shirt from a local artist that supports charity.

Much like our other democratic freedoms, artistic expression needs to be prioritised, nurtured, and protected. It's not something artists pull out of a hat. There is no clearer sign of a free country than our artists, the work they create, and the freedom all New Zealanders have to engage with it.

WHAT DOES YOUR STUDY PLAYLIST SAY ABOUT YOU?



DUSK PISSWATER

IT'S THE START OF A NEW DAY, AND IT'S TIME TO WAKE UP AGAIN. WHAT'S YOUR ALARM TONE?

- A. Taylor Swift! Her voice reminds me of my quest!
- B. Just the default one, can't be bothered changing it
- C. Something gentle, like *Morning Mood*
- D. *The Soviet March* from Red Alert 3, which no one else at the university knows :(

WHAT KIND OF MUSIC DO YOU LISTEN TO WHEN GOING TO UNI?

- A. Troye Sivan! His voice is soothing, and I want to [EXPUNGED]...
- B. Ooh, dark choral songs! Goes well with my morning cup of depresso
- C. Something happy, because life is happy, and the University makes me happy!
- D. Oh, y'know, just the entire Genshin Impact OST

WHAT DO YOU LISTEN TO IN THOSE LECTURES WHERE THE LECTURER MAKES WATCHING GRASS GROW SEEM FUN IN COMPARISON?

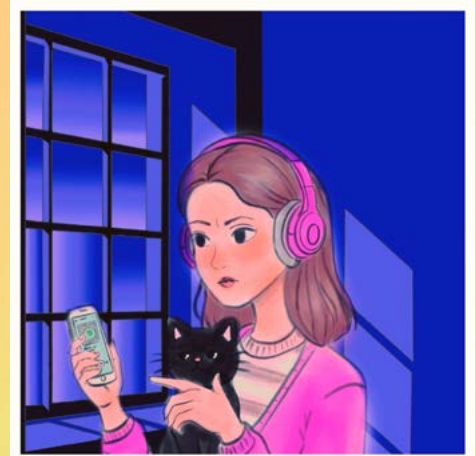
- A. The music from the Titanic movie, whose protagonists had a better time than I do! ... yes yes, up until the [EXPUNGED]...
- B. Can't afford to. I need to memorise all of it, or I'll fail the exam
- C. Hah hah! Can't relate
- D. Hey, I'm only halfway through the Genshin Impact OST

WHAT KIND OF MUSIC DO YOU HAVE IN YOUR STUDY PLAYLIST?

- A. Lots of different authors, but all about the search for a partner! Which is what university is all about!
- B. Metal, especially where the singer is angry with the world, because that's so relatable
- C. Nothing beats a spot of chill lo-fi :)
- D. Have you ever heard of Helldivers...?

YOU'VE JUST FINISHED TEST SEASON AND YOU'RE GLAD IT'S ALL OVER. WHAT DO YOU LISTEN TO CELEBRATE YOUR SUCCESS?

- A. The more romantic the better, hopefully with a background of real romance!
- B. The Sound of Silence, or rain sounds. Something sober and brooding
- C. Something celebratory! ... Something upbeat and happy to fit my mood!
- D. I don't listen. I play! Music comes with the game



ART BY ALESHA BLACKBURN

Mostly A's: You're really drawn by the allure of love. Of having that perfect someone to stay by your side forever and ever. Or until you die, whichever comes first. In that case, what are you in university for? ... oh, you need a degree to get your perfect partner? Go on then...

Mostly B's: Maybe you once picked all A's but were rejected one too many times. Or you had high hopes, but the University sent them crashing down. It's not too late to switch to Engineering, though. Lockheed Martin needs you!

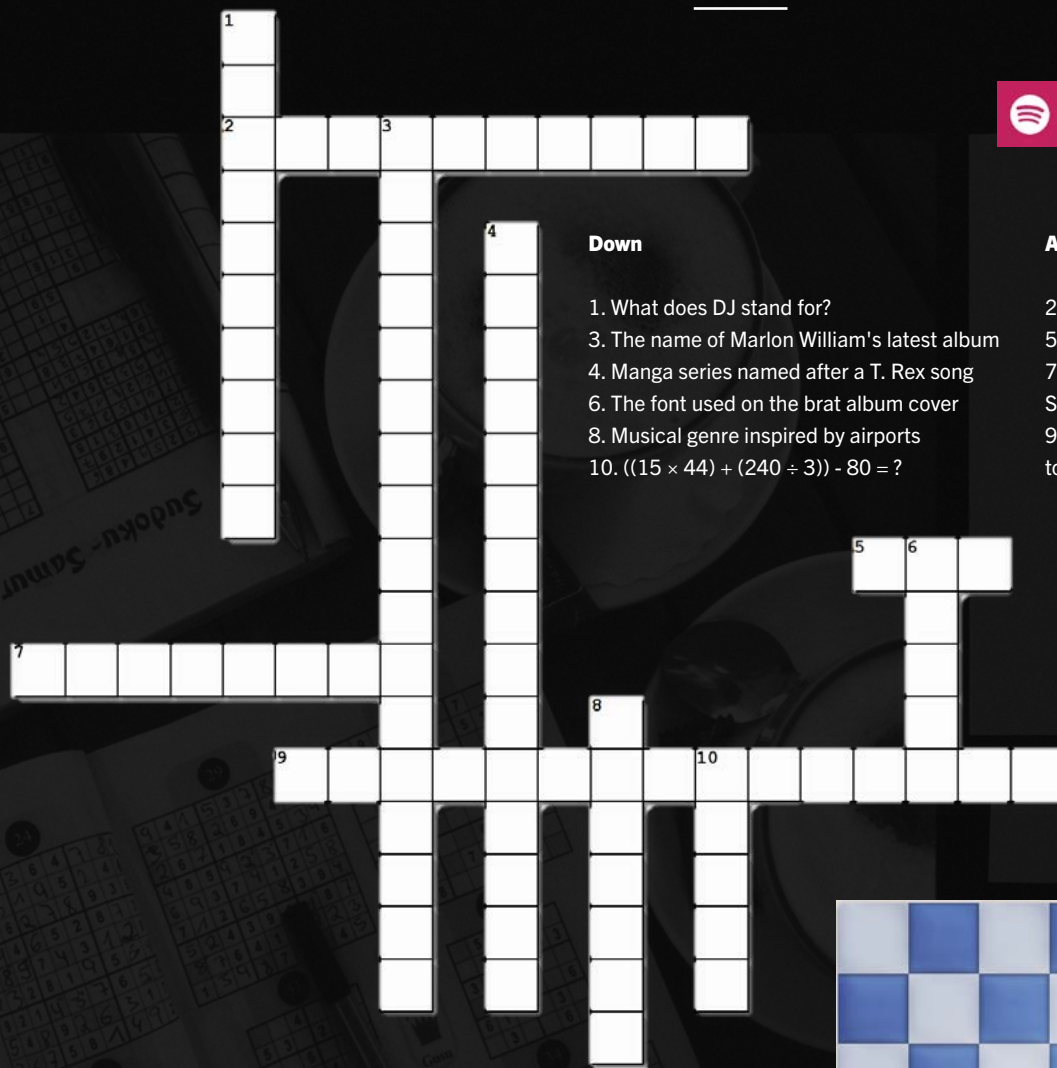
Mostly C's: Aww, your world is perfect. You're somehow keeping up, or your workload is significantly less than the rest of us. Possibly both. Either way, we're jealous.

Mostly D's: You can't get away from the game, even when you're not playing it. It permeates every essence of your being and dominates every facet of your soul. But hey, at least you have one!



ART BY INARA RAY @INARARAY_ART

PUZZLES



Down

1. What does DJ stand for?
3. The name of Marlon William's latest album
4. Manga series named after a T. Rex song
6. The font used on the brat album cover
8. Musical genre inspired by airports
10. $((15 \times 44) + (240 \div 3)) - 80 = ?$

Across

2. Record store on Symonds Street
5. What month is NZ Music Month?
7. Game where you can land 360 noscopes as Sabrina Carpenter
9. UOA club that meets every Tuesday from 5 to 8 pm in room 206-301

Chess Puzzle:

Provided by Auckland University

Chess Association

Checkmate in 3!

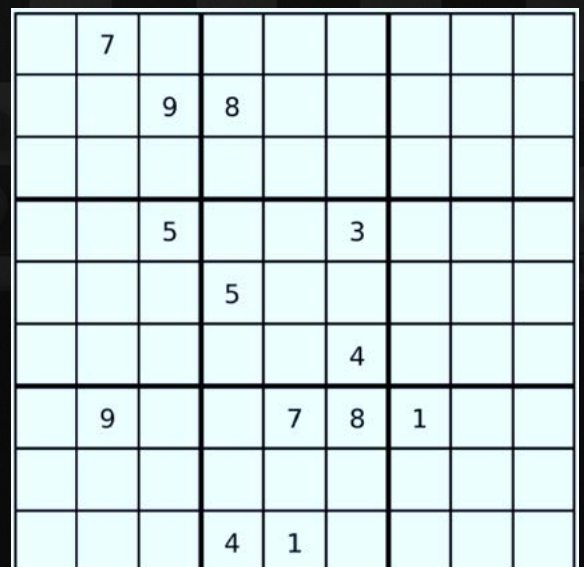
Medium: White to Move.

Hard: Black to Move.



Break the code and read the message (Part 3, btw there will be a prize for solving these):

4: (4-10, 14, 16, 18, 20, 22-28), 5: (4, 10, 12, 14, 18-20, 22, 28), 6: (4, 6-8, 10, 16, 18, 22, 24-26, 28), 7: (4, 6-8, 10, 12-14, 16-19, 22, 24-26, 28), 8: (4, 6-8, 10, 13, 17, 20, 22, 24-26, 28), 9: (4, 10, 12-13, 15-20, 22, 28), 10: (4-10, 12, 14, 16, 18, 20, 22-28), 11: (13-15, 18), 12: (4-8, 10-13, 15, 17, 19, 21, 23, 25, 27), 13: (6, 8-9, 11-12, 14, 16-17, 20-21, 23, 27), 14: (6-8, 10, 12, 14, 17-25, 27-28), 15: (5, 8, 12, 16, 19, 21, 23, 28), 16: (4, 7-8, 10-11, 13-14, 16-19, 21-24, 26-28), 17: (4-5, 9, 20-21, 23, 25, 27), 18: (4, 7, 10, 15-17, 19, 21-25, 27-28), 19: (4, 6-8, 14-15, 18, 21, 23-24, 28), 20: (4, 8, 10-11, 13, 15-24, 26), 21: (12, 16-17, 20, 24-25), 22: (4-10, 12, 16-18, 20, 22, 24, 26-28), 23: (4, 10, 13, 15-16, 18, 20, 24-25, 27-28), 24: (4, 6-8, 10, 12-15, 17, 19-24, 26), 25: (4, 6-8, 10, 12-15, 17, 20, 22, 24-28), 26: (4, 6-8, 10, 12, 14, 16-19, 25-26, 28), 27: (4, 10, 12, 14-15, 19-21, 23-25, 28), 28: (4-10, 12, 14-18, 23-28)/206-217



ARIES

(MAR 21 - APR 19)

ALBUM: *REPUTATION*

A very dramatic month awaits you and you will likely be insufferable and mysterious. All I ask is you respond to messages, leaving people on read is not the slay you think it is. Lowering your brightness when you enter your banking app is a sign and on-line shopping is still shopping. Your mother is sick of collecting packages and the mailman is tired.



TAURUS

(APR 20 - MAY 20)

ALBUM: *EVERMORE*

The wilderness calls to you, autumn is here. It's okay to stay in bed and not go to class if it's raining, no one is calling you a baby. May could bring a romantic plot twist—probably involving someone who uses too many emojis, full stops and paragraphs. Avoid the munchy mart, they are waiting for you there.



GEMINI

(MAY 21 - JUN 20)

ALBUM: *1989*

You've been busy, Easter break has been one big social event, and you aren't stopping there. Perhaps whilst you down your drink, answer that one text you opened three weeks ago and forgot. Again. Remember that every day the late penalty for that one essay increases, so get it done for the sake of everyone.



LEO

(JUL 23 - AUG 22)

ALBUM: *LOVER*

You're the lead in the play that is your life, embrace it. Think twice before you post on social media though, we don't need to know what you ate for every meal. Also, we get it. You and your partner are cute but please no more PDAs. I can't take it.



VIRGO

(AUG 23 - SEP 22)

ALBUM: *FOLKLORE*

You're deep in your introspective, silently looking out the bus window whilst listening to a musical soundtrack era. You've color-coded your life and people admire your organisation, but fear you just a little. Try relaxing and stop writing lists. Please.



LIBRA

(SEP 23 - OCT 22)

ALBUM: *RED*

Jeez your life is chaotic and yet you seem put together? I don't know how you're doing it. You're romantic, indecisive, and stylishly late to every event in May. Making a "pro/con" list for your crush isn't the love language you think it is and memorising their timetable does indeed make you a little creepy babe.



SCORPIO

(OCT 23 - NOV 21)

ALBUM: *MIDNIGHTS*

You're being moody this month and accidentally intimidating your co-workers who think you care wayyyy too much about your job now. May has you diving deep into secrets, steamy texts, and possibly a conspiracy theory or two. Is Elvis alive?? That's for you to solve Scorpio.



SAGITTARIUS

(NOV 22 - DEC 21)

ALBUM: *FEARLESS*

You're bold, spontaneous, and possibly making decisions on one hour of sleep. Maybe read the fine print before agreeing to anything. Or don't, doesn't really affect me. Also, that essay due in two weeks is worth a significant part of your grade so sit your ass down in GEN LIB and do some work because you're stressing everyone out.



CAPRICORN

(DEC 22 - JAN 19)

ALBUM: *TAYLOR SWIFT (DEBUT)*

You're in your boot-scootin', line dancing, bull riding era. You've got goals to crush and no time for nonsense. Perfectionism and procrastination aren't working in your favour and waiting to become an academic legend two days before your test aint it. Also, your tutor is not out to get you, or maybe they are?



AQUARIUS

(JAN 20 - FEB 18)

ALBUM: *THE TORTURED POETS DEPARTMENT*

You're existential, poetic, and slightly irritating. I hate to say it but pack it up Aquarius, ur tumblr mysterious vibe just isn't working anymore. Try to cool it this month and pop the wired headphones away. I've had enough. Not everything is a metaphor. Sometimes a sandwich is just a sandwich, and the time is just the time.



HOROSCOPES

(TAYLOR'S VERSION)

PISS OFF DUSK, THERE'S A NEW ASTROLOGICAL VOICE IN CRACCUM.

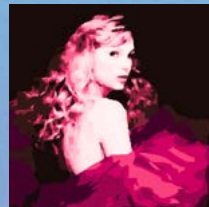
BENNIEANDTHEJETTS

PISCES

(FEB 19 - MAR 20)

ALBUM: *SPEAK NOW (TAYLOR'S VERSION)*

You're soft, psychic, and may or may not have cried over a children's cartoon this week. Expect intense dreams about random people in your classes, a potential diabolical haircut and a two-week Minecraft phase. Follow your gut instincts, just double-check it's not caffeine-induced anxiety.



A close-up photograph of a man and a woman about to kiss. The man is on the left, and the woman is on the right. In the foreground, three LifeStyles condom packets are visible: a green one on the left, an orange one in the middle, and a blue one on the right. The text "Asking for consent?" is overlaid in white.

Asking for consent?

That's
hot.



LifeStyles[®]
SINCE 1985

TEACH US
* CONSENT

ALWAYS READ THE LABEL AND FOLLOW DIRECTIONS FOR USE.