

CRACCU



Colossal Anticlimax

Jordan Margetts watches the latest kaiju film, is not blown (Anne Hath)away

Greener Pastures

Jack Adams tells us why we've got to let it berm, let it berm, gotta let it berm

In Like Gillian Flynn

Caitlin Abley attempts to reinvent herself with a daytrip and a doo-rag

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SARA LEE

TCHAIKOVSKY

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in B flat minor, Op. 23 Mvt. I*

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NEW ZEALAND

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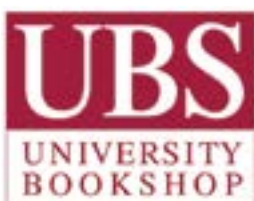
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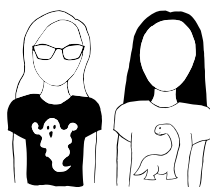
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Catriona Britton



Samantha Gianotti

Channels of Change

It's the start of New Zealand Music Month and it's got us in a nostalgic mood. Our generation once had television music channels that were cool. They didn't come with bizarre holographic ice creams and dancing cats on a sparkling background (à la MTV), or shouty bright colours and radio hosts forcing laughter every time there's an ad break (à la The Edge TV).

Remember C4 with Drew "I Desperately Want To Be Cool So Imma Move To LA With Other Expat Wannabe C-List Kiwi Celebrities And Release A Flop Of A Single" Neemia? Drew gave us classic memories such as his interview with a baby-faced 16-year-old Justin Bieber on his first visit here. After Bieber put out an advertisement for a girlfriend who is "down to earth like myself", and with his grey beanie covering his Mojo Jojo-sized brain, swollen from his ever-expanding ego, our mate Drew gave him a little quiz. And here at *Craccum*, let us tell you, we are quiz fiends. So when Drew turned to a squeaky-voiced Bieber and said, "I have a Justin Bieber quiz. I wanna know just how well you know Justin Bieber, does that make sense?" and to which Justin replied, "Kinda," our ears pricked up, we put down our after-school bowls of ice cream, and sat forward quicker than you can say "Eric Monkman".

"Bieber' is German for basketball, true or false?" Drew asked.

"Is what?" Justin replied, cleaning out the wax from inside his ear.

"Is German for basketball, true or false?" Drew repeated.

"German?" Justin hesitated.

"German. Sorry, that's the Kiwi accent going on there," Drew replied, desperately trying to make up an excuse for Justin's lack of knowledge on European languages. "German, you know?" He said, eyeballing Justin. "German," he said again, his manner calm, but the light in his eyes slowly fading to a glassy "Where Did I Go Wrong In Life For Me To Have To Sit Here Now With This Dumbfuck" dullness.

"I don't know what that means," Justin puzzled.

"Look here—German," Drew resorted to pointing at his cue card. "German, German," Drew started to short-circuit.

"Is German for—I don't know what that means," Justin said adamantly.

"Okay, don't worry," Drew waved his hand, defeated.

"We don't say that in America," Justin smiled.

And with that Drew laughed his way into New Zealand television history.

Then there was Juice TV, with DJ Sir-vere pumping out some absolute bangers whilst being intermittently interrupted by the "I'm Training To Be An Awesome Bartender" guy. Its shows catered for most music types, ranging from ones for those fans of our New Zealand music gods like Shihad and Goldenhorse ("NZOWN"), to those for our greasy, long-haired friends from West Auckland and Taranaki ("The Metal Bar"), and don't forget the ones for the burgeoning "hipster" circa 2012 ("Transmission"). It truly hurt our souls when Juice TV was replaced by Garage TV, a 24-hour channel that showed cars racing and random surfing videos. To this day, the removal of Juice TV remains one of the greatest tragedies of New Zealand television.

Juice TV's parent channel, J2—oh, how we miss you so! Apparently catering for an older target audience that "would be put off by the programming on other music channels", we here at *Craccum* remember it fondly for playing some tuuunes. Played on this channel were the likes of Dad-Rock such as Queen, Australian legends Savage Garden (none of their hits are to be found on Spotify to our utter disappointment/distress), and our ultimate family band goals, The Corrs. J2 was the channel you'd quickly flip over to if a raunchy song about sex came on Juice TV and one of your parents happened to walk into the lounge. Dad might sing along to "I Want To Break Free" while putting down the newspaper on the coffee table, or Mum might bring you a bowl of chips and sit down to ask you about your day at school whilst

sneaking cheeky glances at Mick Jagger and David Bowie wiggling their butts in "Dancing in the Street".

But what about those of us who wanted to distinguish ourselves from the rest in terms of our music taste? Who needed to nourish our inner hipster and music snob? Enter ALT TV, the music channel for the alternatives—the bFM of TV. One of us used to go around high school with a giant ALT TV sticker on their ringbinder, making a subtle public statement that she would not stoop down to her peers' sub-par mainstream music (ugh, cringey music elitism). The unpolished and unprofessional style of the presenters was charming, the darkly-lit and dingy studio was alluring, the showcasing of unsigned local bands was inspiring. They played every genre of music that was not catered for by the mainstream market. It was a sad, sad day when ALT TV was placed into liquidation. The last song they played before transmission was cut was The Doors' mammoth "The End"—so poignant, so sad.

The gap ALT TV created in the music channel market lay gaping for two years before U Live burst onto the scene in 2011. U Live seemed to strike a good balance between playing music that wasn't so obviously mainstream and having solid banter. Fronted by a few "hip" peeps, including long-forgotten *Squirt* and *Studio 2* host Matt Gibb turned cool "on-set" U Live producer then turned Telecom "Tech in a Sec" handyman once he was out of a job, the TVNZ U flagship provided a welcome alternative to FOUR Live (C4's successor). The show only lasted two and a bit years. At times it came across too "hip" as opposed to too "alternative". But it was definitely New Zealand's final great music channel.

So as we celebrate New Zealand music this month, take time to remember those music channels that have fallen to rebranding or trading losses. The days of personalised music channel viewing are fast falling to mass consumerism. This [could be] the end, beautiful friend[s]. •



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NZ NEWS JUNKIES MORE LIKELY TO BE ISLAMOPHOBIC—STUDY

BY MICHAEL CALDERWOOD

New Zealanders are more likely to hold negative and hostile attitudes towards Muslims if they are avid consumers of the news, a recent University of Otago study has found.

While researchers have long suspected that the news media fuels anti-Muslim attitudes, these ideas had never been scientifically studied until now.

“People tend to interpret the news in ways that fit with their pre-existing biases, seeking affirmation of their beliefs while discounting conflicting information,” says University of Otago Lecturer Dr John Shaver, the article’s lead author.

“New Zealand is a good test for specu-

lation about media-induced Muslim prejudice because of its overall highly tolerant people.”

“If anything, tolerant Kiwis might tend to reject intolerant stereotypes, reducing the effect of the media.”

“However, we find that the association of prejudice towards Muslims with more media exposure holds across the political spectrum, and is specific to Muslims,” says Dr Shaver.

“This indicates that it is widespread representations of Muslims in the news that are contributing to lower Muslim acceptance, rather than any partisan media bias. The

media, regardless of politics, tend to publish violent stories because violence sells.”

Islamophobia in New Zealand has been in the spotlight recently, when a video of a Huntly woman attacking two Muslim women went viral on social media.

The woman was then arrested on charges of assault and offensive language.

Professor Joseph Bulbulia of Victoria University of Wellington, also a co-author of the study, notes, “Sadly, there may be real-world consequences for Muslims in this country, people who encounter prejudice across their daily routines, at the workplace, and in their children’s schools.” ♦



“TERTIARY EDUCATION A FINANCIAL STRUGGLE FOR MANY”—NZUSA REPORT

BY ELOISE SIMS

The New Zealand Union of Students’ Association are calling for higher support payments and an increase to the living costs loan, after their recently released “Income and Expenditure Survey” report showed average rent for a room in Auckland soaring to \$250 per week this year.

Jonathan Gee, President of NZUSA, said the 28-page report highlighted the many struggles students at universities around the country are currently facing.

“Getting a tertiary education is one of the most valuable investments we can make in our lives, but for many, the journey is a struggle,” he wrote in the report’s foreword.

The report took email-based responses from over 1000 students across 11 universities and polytechnics.

Its findings indicated that the majority of students were experiencing or bordering on “significant financial distress”, despite 60.34% of all students working a part-time

job during term-time. According to the report, such financial distress and rampant competition for student housing has forced many students to stay in their family homes, with 61.95% of all students surveyed still living under their parents’ roof.

Tuition fees were also noted to have dramatically risen since 2006. While 90% of respondents to the report had a student loan, the average graduate respondent had taken 13.8 years to pay back their debt.

The National President of the Tertiary Education Union, Sandra Grey, said the report’s findings were troubling.

“People are being priced out of tertiary education, and with National deliberately trying to take public funds away from community providers, the situation risks getting much worse.”

“We’re now in the situation where the average rent for students is unaffordable.”

However, current Tertiary Education Minister, Paul Goldsmith, has defended

New Zealand’s system as one of the most generous for student support in the world.

In speaking with *Newshub*, Goldsmith claimed, “Around 28% of tertiary education spending is to support students through their studies, including nearly \$490 million on student allowances.”

Yet Gee doesn’t believe such a response is good enough—after pointing out only a third of all students in 2017 actually qualified for the weekly \$217 student allowance.

In speaking with *Craccum*, Gee said, “When a third of students say that they don’t have enough income to meet their basic needs, we can’t ignore that.”

“If the Government is serious about improving access to tertiary education, and getting more than just 10% of low decile school leavers into degree-level study, then they would take a serious look at the current state of student support.”

The report is now publicly available to read via the NZUSA website. ♦

PHARMAC REFUSES TO SUBSIDISE TAMPONS AND PADS

BY ELOISE SIMS

Pharmac, the Government-funded drug-purchasing agency, have rejected a citizen's application to cut the cost of sanitary items after claiming the application "did not provide sufficient information".

In a statement on the application, the agency concluded that menstruation was a "normal function"—and therefore, "sanitary products are not medicines or medical devices."

Legally, Pharmac is only allowed to fund medicines, medical devices, or products that provide "therapeutic benefits relating to a health need".

In speaking with *Radio New Zealand*, Pharmac's Director of Operations, Sarah Fitt, admitted the decision was not an easy one to make.

"We did spend a lot of time and there was a lot of discussion, carefully considering whether there was a therapeutic benefit and whether there was a health need."

However, Pharmac also claimed the funding application was "too broad" and "did not provide sufficient information" on what prod-

ucts to subsidise.

The move comes as the charity KidsCan recently received \$50,000 from the Ministry of Social Development to supply schools with sanitary products. Around 16,500 packs will be supplied to schools in the next year, according to Social Development Minister Anne Tolley, with the aim of reaching approximately 2000 girls in secondary education.

"This is a practical way we can support young women who come from families in need. Small initiatives like this can make a big difference, and this is a good example of how we're continuing to provide support to those in need," commented Minister for Women, Paula Bennett.

However, for grown women, as sanitary products such as tampons and pads are classified as "non-essential" goods, they are currently taxed at 5%.

Pharmac's decision comes as a blow to several organizations, such as Graduate Women New Zealand, and the Salvation Army—who have been campaigning for the products to be

subsidised.

The Salvation Army ran a successful charitable campaign with Countdown in March, subsidising a range of available sanitary products to \$4 a pack for two weeks. As a result of their savings, customers were encouraged to donate a pack to the Salvation Army either in store or online. The charity's Head of Social Services, Pam Waugh, told *Radio New Zealand* she strongly disagreed with Pharmac's ruling.

"I would challenge the belief that they don't think [sanitary products] are therapeutic or meet a health need," she said.

Waugh also said she would like to see the Government go further with its recent pledge of funding to KidsCan, but noted that this did not go toward helping "universities or families that are struggling... We still need to go a bit wider."

Pharmac have said they remain open to considering future applications—provided they targeted groups of women with specific health needs. ♦

UOA CHARGING \$570 FOR MED SCHOOL'S EMAIL ACCESS

BY LAURA KVIGSTAD

The University of Auckland is refusing to release 202 emails in regard to the proposed Waikato Medical School—unless it is paid \$570.

Otago University Law Professor, Andrew Geddis, has criticised the University's response saying, "The Official Information Act is one of the most important pieces of legislation that we have to keep those who exercise power transparent and accountable."

In March, *Stuff* lodged an Official Information Act request to receive the emails of the Head of the Medical Programme, Professor Warwick Bagg, relating to the proposed Waikato Medical School.

The Acting General Counsel for Waikato University, Melanie Johnson, estimated it would take 35 minutes to locate the 202 emails and 2 minutes and 15 seconds for the requested information to be made available. This averages to approximately 8 hours of work. The Ombudsman guidelines state that an organisation can charge \$38 per half hour of work.

Geddis says that the time it would have

taken to collate the 202 emails would be minimal and that the time spent deciding what information it will release cannot be charged for.

Stuff has also lodged an Official Information Act request towards Otago University, who requested a 10-day extension to respond.

The Waikato proposal, announced in October last year, is being discussed due to the recent shortage of New Zealand healthcare workers. The school would address the needs of disadvantaged, rural communities and specialise in the education of general practitioners.

A letter from July 26th 2016, to Health Minister Jonathan Coleman and then Tertiary Education Minister Steven Joyce, revealed Otago University and the University of Auckland campaigned against the Waikato Medical School.

John Fraser and Health Sciences Dean at the University of Otago Medical School, Peter Crampton, explained in the letter that "a 3rd programme of the type proposed is likely to destabilise or undermine the currently funded

model."

In the letter, the proposal was labeled an "ad hoc local initiative... an initiative created for an immediate issue that doesn't take into account the greater complexities of the situation."

In response to the bid, on October 18th 2016, Fraser was quoted saying, "A new programme is simply not in the national interest and tax payers will have to pay for what is an ill-considered and expensive folly. The existing programmes at Auckland and Otago are already meeting the needs for growth of doctors for New Zealand."

The University of Auckland and Otago University currently have a monopoly on medical training as the only two universities with medical faculties.

In 2015, the University of Auckland and Otago University graduated 455 new doctors. This is set to increase by 25% in 2020 to 570 graduates.

New Zealand currently imports over 1100 medical professionals a year. ♦

WORLD POLITICS WRAP UP

PATRICK NEWLAND TAKES US THROUGH WHAT YOU MIGHT HAVE MISSED IN THE PAST FEW DAYS OF WORLD NEWS

United Kingdom: While polling in the UK has been spotty at best over the last few years, Theresa May's decision to hold a snap election three years early seems like a no-brainer on paper. With her party now polling at around 46%, the UK's First-Past-The-Post (FPTP) system looks set to deliver the Conservatives a possibly record-breaking majority. Labour is now polling at a dismal 25%, a position with the blame laid solely at the feet of their largely unpopular leader, Jeremy Corbyn. While he has the support of the larger party membership, many Labour MPs have voiced their disagreement with his far-left positioning, drawing him comparisons to Bernie Sanders. The UK Independence Party (UKIP) and the Liberal Democrats make up the difference in England and Wales. UKIP are struggling for relevance, after their Brexit victory, by holding a similar position to Theresa May, who is pushing for a hard Brexit. The Lib Dems, however, were annihilated in 2015, and are now hoping that their stance as the only anti-Brexit party

will help them in the South England seats (which drew in high levels of Remain vote).

In Scotland, the Scottish National Party (SNP) holds all but five seats and is trying to reinstate a claim for a second independence referendum. In the latest polling they have lost some ground to the Tories, but are very likely to remain the dominant force.

France: After the first round of voting, neither of the two main parties have a candidate in the run-off for the first time since the current political system was introduced after the Second World War. Instead, far-right Marine Le Pen of the National Front, and centrist Emmanuel Macron, who has never held elected office, will face off head to head this weekend.

While Macron is the far-and-away favourite, in the post-Brexit and Trump world nothing can be taken for granted. Macron represents much of the same for France overall, as a former merchant banker married to his high school teacher, but La Pen is preaching

a very different vision for the country. She is pitching France's own version of Brexit, with closed borders, and the introduction of steep trade tariffs.

United States: At the end of Trump's first 100 days, it is hard to gauge how well he has fared. While it is easy to poke holes in his failures on The Hill, with the botched repeal of Obamacare, one lesson we have learned from the last year is that you can't judge Trump by the normal metrics.

The number one issue for Trump voters across the country was the Supreme Court, and he has succeeded by putting the conservative Neil Gorsuch on the bench. If there is any way to read the mood of the country, it may be in Georgia's 6th congressional district, which, in its jungle primary, had a Democrat receive 48% of the vote in a typically heavy Republican district. The real test for Georgia will be on June 20th, when the candidates will undergo a head-to-head matchup. ♦

SO, WHO VOTES FOR THESE GUYS ANYWAY?

BY JACK GRADWELL

Recently, statistician Peter Ellis undertook a study comparing demographic trends with voting behaviour. While for some parties this confirmed voter stereotypes, for others, it dispelled them completely.

National: *Old, rich and white?*

Well, you'd be correct. National voters show a positive correlation with the median income of 0.53 (meaning they earn more). Simultaneously, the correlation for being European is a 0.60 (meaning they're whiter), and for the median age, a staggering 0.81 (meaning they're older). More interestingly, the strongest negative correlation for National voters was in previously voting Labour (-0.85), dispelling the idea that National/Labour swing voters are a significant force.

The takeaway? Everything we thought about National voters was 100% right.

Labour: *Godless feminists? The working class?*

Not particularly, no. While 19 of Labour's 32 MPs may be white, the correlation between being European and voting Labour is a strong-

ly negative -0.76. Labour instead garners far more support among Polynesian (0.78) and Māori (0.42) voters.

While sometimes perceived as a party of the godless, Labour voters have a 0.50 positive correlation with having a religion (something partially explained by their strong support among religious Pacific Island individuals).

Needless to say, while National voters are old and wealthy, Labour voters are young and poor, coming in at a negative correlation with the median age of -0.85 and median income of -0.51.

The takeaway? In spite of the makeup of the Labour party caucus and campus groups, she is a largely Māori-Pasifika party, and still one of the working class.

NZ First: *Old, white and racist?*

Most certainly not. The correlation between voting NZ First and the median age is a negative one of -0.08, demonstrating that Peter's support base goes beyond just SuperGold card holders.

Likewise, the correlation for being European is a perfect 0.00, meaning the average NZ

First voter is neither more nor less likely to be white. So, where do their votes come from? The correlation between being Māori and voting for Peters is a massive 0.66, a figure reflected in their strong showings in the Māori electorates.

The takeaway? NZ First is much more a party of working-class Māori than that of everyone's racist grandad.

Green: *The party of poor students?*

Not necessarily. Interestingly, Green voters far more resemble those from National than they do those from Labour. Richer and whiter than average, Green voters have a positive correlation with the median income of 0.31 and of 0.24 with being European. While younger than average at -0.17 to the median age, this is nowhere near as young as Labour voters (at -0.85). Finally, the statistics prove both the atheist and hippy stereotypes with a 0.56 correlation with being nonreligious, and a 0.36 correlation with being a spiritualist.

The takeaway? Richer, whiter and slightly older than one might expect, the Greens are not just a party of students. ♦

PUBLIC OR PRIVATE: WHAT SHOULD PARENTS CHOOSE?

BY MARK CASSON

Sending your child to a public or private school still continues to be a difficult topic for parents in New Zealand—as experts have questioned the notion that private schools inherently mean better opportunities for kids.

The *New Zealand Herald* recently interviewed Allan Vester, Principal of Edgewater College, a state school in Pakuranga.

“Some state schools with significant fee-paying students won’t be far behind. Used well, the better facilities can help,” Vester admitted.

However, he claimed that sending your child to a private school didn’t necessarily mean they would be well educated. “It’s my view that what makes the real difference is the teacher.”

“A fantastic teacher in a classroom with a dirt floor and a point stick will still be much more effective than a poor teacher with all the technology possible.”

NZ Herald also interviewed Rachael Meyer, a mother of three who sent her son, Cameron, to a private school, but not her two daughters.

“Whatever they do [after finishing school], I don’t care,” she admitted in discussing her children.

“Cam’s gone into building. People said to me, ‘Is that not a bit of a dropout? You spent all that money on schooling.’ And it’s like, ‘No not at all—because you can take building to wherever you want it to go.’”

Criccum reached out to Courtney Skellern, a future P.E. Teacher, and student at the University of Auckland’s Education Faculty.

“Personally, I think there are more academic benefits at a private school,” Skellern concluded.

However, she admitted that such a debate was largely arbitrary.

“While struggling students might need more help—which might be one of the benefits for private school education—at the end of the day, all the content delivered is the same.”

Former private school student, Luke Burgess said, “I don’t necessarily think that there are specific benefits of private schooling over public schooling, but I feel the way we were brought up was more disciplined in terms of general behaviour and things like how we presented ourselves—with tidy uniform and ties.”

Burgess claimed, however, that deciding public or private education really depends on the child. “My older brother went to a public school for his secondary education and this worked well for him—he has developed into a very successful person.”

“I feel it comes down to making the right decisions for the particular person.” ♦



“SO BAD, EVEN INTROVERTS ARE HERE”—SCIENCE MARCHES HELD AROUND THE WORLD

BY DANIELLE MAYNARD

In light of the recent US election and President Donald Trump’s policies, which have been branded as a “war on science,” Earth Day 2017 featured the March for Science in which marches and rallies were held in over 600 cities globally.

The primary focus of the marches was to celebrate evidence-based science and remind global leaders of their responsibility to use this to protect the environment and its people by implementing science-based policies.

Two apparent causes of concern within Trump’s “war on science” are the appointments of climate change sceptics Rick Perry as Energy Secretary, and Scott Pruitt as the Administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency. Pruitt has previously denied that rising carbon dioxide levels are causing climate change, despite indisputable evidence that this

greenhouse gas is the driving force toward the global temperature increase.

Trump’s cutting of funding towards scientific research was also a major issue that the marches highlighted.

With Earth Day reaching New Zealand first, Auckland, Wellington, Christchurch, Dunedin, Queenstown and Palmerston North all hosted satellite marches that kicked off the global event. In Auckland, chants of “science, not silence” echoed from Britomart to Albert Park, with various speakers addressing the crowd at the Albert Park Rotunda. The New Zealand marches were organised by scientists affiliated with an independent organisation, the New Zealand Association of Scientists (NZAS).

Dr Craig Stevens, President of the NZAS, said to *Radio New Zealand* that the New Zea-

land marches also aimed to raise awareness of the need for increased support and funding for NZ scientists. For this to happen, according to Stevens, the public needs better education on the importance of science, and to be encouraged to vote for policies that are supportive of scientific facts.

While the marches have concluded, the organisers are still striving to keep their ideals at the forefront of people’s minds.

The official March for Science website hosted a week of action from the 22nd to the 29th April 2017, with ways the public can stay involved and make a difference—from ways to reduce your own carbon footprint to how to increase your community’s scientific awareness.

If you’d like to find out more about getting involved, visit <https://satellites.marchforscience.com/>. ♦



Thanks, but no thanks!

Claudia Russell on why we don't need another mental health awareness campaign

Recently I was scrolling through Facebook and came across an unusually long status written by a friend of mine. This is someone who I consider to be very composed and more “together” than most. In this status, however, she opened up about a struggle with depression that had spanned several years. The comments section was, thankfully, overflowing with messages of love and support. This got me thinking about how lucky we are to live in a time and place where it is increasingly acceptable to talk about mental illness on large platforms. Raising awareness of mental illness in New Zealand has motivated people to talk about their experiences, and exposed the reality of what is a critically underfunded area of the public health system. But what good is raising awareness really, if it doesn't lead to change?

There has been a sharp increase over the last couple of years in public figures freely disclosing their struggles with mental illness. Just this year alone some big names have spoken to the media about their personal experience with the subject, including: Lady Gaga, Prince William, Kid Cudi, Cara Delevingne, Selena Gomez, and Jono Pryor (of *Jono and Ben*).

When you're struggling with your own mental health, it can be powerful to hear about people who have been mentally ill and nonetheless managed to become successful. When you are diagnosed with a condition, it can be difficult to shrug off the voice that says—“now there's something officially wrong with you.” It can feel like there's always going to be this one thing limiting you from living out your idea of success. Realising that someone you look up to and even idolise has faced the same struggles can help you understand that there is hope.

This isn't information taken from inspirational Pinterest quotes. As someone who lives with a mental illness, I can honestly say that learning rap legend Kendrick Lamar has struggled with depression made me momentarily feel a lot better. At times when I worry that my brain is going to hold me back my whole life, I think about Kendrick and realise that nobody thinks he's a failure

or a wimp for having his hard times. This kind of conversation alone can help people feel less isolated. People are more likely to seek help if they feel they won't be ridiculed or turned away. For others, this kind of awareness helps to educate and build better support for people. This normalisation is fostering the increasingly common mindset that a mental health condition can be no less real than a broken leg.

We're doing pretty well so far in the Western world and in New Zealand in particular. Awareness campaigns are on the rise. This could be because raising awareness is a whole lot easier than it used to be, what with #hashtags and share buttons. Social media has given people a space to share their stories freely with others. The conversation about our system's lack of funding has crawled up from the archives of *scoop.co.nz* to reach primetime news and television. There was even an endearing mention of it on the Bachelor the other week, when heartthrob Zac Franich confessed to seeing a therapist. We're not short on mental health reports either. White papers, suicide statistics and user reports are regularly released by the Ministry of Health. The “People's Review of the Mental Health System” was released a few days ago and has already garnered a lot of media attention. It is important to acknowledge how far we have come in reducing the stigma. Just a few hundred years ago, the mentally ill were social lepers thought to be possessed by the devil. Practices such as isolation, imprisonment, beatings, public humiliation, electroconvulsive therapy and lobotomies were common in mental institutions. On a smaller scale, multiple studies confirm that attitudes towards the mentally ill have changed for the better over the last five years, with more people willing to work with, live with and remain friends with a mentally ill person.

I have no doubt that awareness is a great thing. With illnesses that are inherently hard to talk about, awareness campaigns alone do a world of good by motivating people to seek help. The point I want to make, however, is that this is only part of the equation. What comes with rais-

ing awareness is a responsibility to do something about the thing you've been made aware of. This is our Government's responsibility, not ours. It really gets me just how vehemently our Government denies this. As a country, we have come to a consensus that mental health is a widespread problem that our system is failing to respond to. The question of whether there is a problem is no longer being asked, because everybody knows the answer. And yet, no dice. Minister of Health Jonathan Coleman remains characteristically silent. When asked, he has repeatedly dismissed the need for a national inquiry, and has never acknowledged there is a problem. Advocacy groups have described the Minister as being “at best, out of touch.” The Labour Party, the Greens and the People's Review on Mental Health have referenced a funding deficit of up to \$1.7 billion. In response to this, National continues to nitpick and deflect the question, saying that well, actually funding has *increased* under their Government. This is technically true, but misses the point. These funding increases are nowhere near keeping up with the 60% rise in mental health user-ship. During this time, several inpatient units have closed and mental illness-related calls to police have risen exponentially. Their arguments follow the logic baby boomers use when complaining that millennials have it easy with a \$15.75 minimum wage because back in 1970 or so it was \$7.

Honestly, it's exhausting. It's exhausting seeing an article every other day about our climbing suicide rates and our psych professionals who are stretched thin. The public is crying out for change. This isn't some small minority limited to an online forum. This permeates primetime news and popular culture. High school students are writing speeches on it, that's how clear as day it is. I love the support system that has built up online, and I think initiatives that get people talking are important. But it's an embarrassment for our Government that taxpaying citizens have to account for what is essentially a missing limb of the healthcare system. We don't need another inquiry unless it's into exactly what is going to be done. ♦



ART BY ISOBEL GLEDHILL (@ISOBEL_G)

Introducing: Robogals

Robogals is a non-profit, student-run organisation with the aim to inspire and encourage young women to consider an engineering-related career.

In New Zealand, science achievement at primary school is equal for boys and girls. However, by secondary and tertiary education, the number of girls taking technology and engineering-related subjects drops dramatically. Girls tend to be more likely to take biology and health-related sciences, meaning they are underrepresented in technology and engineering fields.

Robogals aims to change this trend by reaching out to girls at primary and intermediate level to let them know that careers in engineering and technology fields ARE for women, not just for men. It's important for us to demonstrate that engineering is a viable career choice at that age so that they can choose the right subjects in secondary school, which will allow them to get into engineering. Often, by the time they're in secondary school, it's too late.

How Robogals fulfils these aims is by running free interactive workshops at primary and intermediate schools, as well as at events for MOTAT and public libraries. The workshops are aimed at

girls, but boys are welcome too. We use these easily programmable robots called EV3 Lego Mindstorms, and the goal for the kids is to programme the robot to complete a maze or another simple task. Along with these activities, they are also given an introduction into what engineering is and the types of specialisations that are available to choose from. It's usually a fast and focused session, but they absolutely light up when they work together to achieve the goal of their activity!

Because Robogals is student-run, we operate with a complete team of volunteers, with the majority studying a degree in Engineering or Science at the University of Auckland. Men are welcome to volunteer, however we often find that we are a completely female team. As a result of this, we manage to form a tight little network where we can support and motivate each other through our male-dominated degrees.

It's always great to meet like-minded students and if any students are interested in joining, they can contact us through our Facebook page <https://www.facebook.com/RobogalsAKL/> or by emailing us at auckland.marketing@robogals.org.

CHARITY/ORGANISATION OF THE WEEK

Dementia Auckland provides services and support to those living with dementia in the Auckland region. They also give support and provide strategies to the carers of those with dementia, including home visiting, telephone consultations, and support groups.

If you want to volunteer with, donate to, or support Dementia Auckland in some other way,

then check out their website at: <http://www.dementiaauckland.org.nz>



Upcoming Community Events

Support the Manukau Beautification Charitable Trust by attending the

Waiuku Town Centre Clean-Up!

When: Saturday 6th May, 8:30am–12pm

Where: Meeting point to be established closer to the date—keep an eye on the Facebook event below!

Price: Free!

Age restrictions: All ages

Event info: “Join us on Saturday 6 May as we clean, sweep, paint, weed, wash windows and pick up rubbish. Together we can celebrate all the hard work afterwards with a free BBQ for anyone who helps. RSVP to Barbara to volunteer at barbara.carney@mbct.org.nz or (09) 269 4080.”

Find out more at:

[HTTPS://WWW.FACEBOOK.COM/EVENTS/2231684790390048/](https://www.facebook.com/events/2231684790390048/)

Be the bee's knees and hit up “For the Love of Bees”

—a natural beekeeping school!

When: Sunday 7th May, 10am–12pm

Where: 210 Victoria Street West

Price: Free!

Age restrictions: All ages

Event info: “Our beekeeping classes are where beginner beekeepers, hobbyists, and bee enthusiasts can come and learn natural beekeeping techniques from an experienced and urban beekeeper. Classes follow an efficient layout covering the basics, general inspection method, month specific inspection tasks and any questions that come up during the session. The purpose of these classes is for beginner beekeepers to come and learn the best practices passed on through experiencing happy bees. Everything we do is for the wellbeing of the colony as the prime objective and not the maximisation of honey production.”

Find out more at:

[HTTPS://WWW.FACEBOOK.COM/EVENTS/789652254524419/](https://www.facebook.com/events/789652254524419/)

What's On

Devising Group DRAMA STUDIO, UNIVERSITY OF AUCKLAND

Stray Theatre Company's Devising Group is back for 2017. If you love storytelling and acting, this improvisational theatre group will teach you about acting and creative storytelling, whilst having fun and meeting new people. Meetings will be on Mondays at 6pm in the Drama Studio. Email straytheatreco@gmail.com to express interest, or show up for the meeting.

NZ International Comedy Festival 2017

AUCKLAND CBD

It's no joke that NZ's very own Comedy Fest is referring to itself as the "Best Comedy Show on Earth". Or maybe it is, and even their marketing is funny. Check out at least one of the shows running from April 27th–21st May. There'll be homegrown comedians, and ones they've flown in so there's plenty to choose from! You can buy tickets and find events at <https://www.comedyfestival.co.nz/>

Dance-O-Mat AOTEA SQUARE

Dance-O-Mat is an interactive outdoor dance floor that's free for everyone. It's an urban space that originated in Christchurch after the earthquake as a way to bring people together through dancing. It will be up till May 8th, so don't miss your chance to shake your tail feather down at Aotea Square.

Down to Clown BASEMENT THEATRE

A new alternative comedy show, *Down to Clown* runs every Friday night. Featuring a different line-up of fab comedians addressing a chosen theme, this show will have you laughing off your seats. Only \$5 at the door! Get there. ♦



GUIDE TO... Surviving Winter

Winter is almost here, people. *Craccum* has a few handy tips for how to get through the chilly season whilst aching your studies.

Rug Up: This might seem obvious, but in Auckland it can be warm and sunny when you leave home and freezing when you arrive at uni. Bring enough warm clothing for ALL possible temperatures. Jumpers, coats, hats—heck, even gloves are necessary sometimes! Us Jaffas are soft. A great idea is to keep a lightweight merino in your bag for when it gets super cold.

Hot Brews: As you might have guessed, we're big fans of coffee. Winter is the best excuse to really get your hot drink count up there. Daily coffees, teas, and hot chocs are the ultimate wintry indulgence. What's more comforting than a strong English Breaky on a crisp morn? Really make a thing of it and drink in—why carry your hot bev in the cold when you can enjoy it in the cosy confines of a cafe?

Be Sensible: You're at uni now; time to be sensible about some things. Surviving Winter and study simultaneously means being prepared. It's not just about dressing warm—it's dressing for the wet. Weather is inconveniently unpredictable here, so be smart and pack a raincoat and/or umbrella. Also, footwear. Avoid wearing canvas shoes if it looks like rain—one puddle and you're going to have wet feet for the rest of the day. Think leather boots or flats, running shoes with soles that won't soak through and if you're super keen, wellies.

Treat Yo'self: All this bad/cold weather coupled with the pressure of mounting assignments can really get you down. We suggest cheat days as a way to survive Winter. This means, set days where you allow yourself to have a hot, delicious lunch (food court curry, amirite?), indulge in a sneaky self-gift (new beanie?) or do a little inside activity (movies, bowling, Netflix and chill). We've got to do something to keep the spirits up. ♦

How to Make Choice Cheese Rolls

Following the upsetting news that as many as five dozen cheese rolls were stolen from a property in Clydevale a couple of weeks ago, Craccum brings you a recipe to make your very own, highly-prized cheese rolls. You too can be the envy of the city.

Ingredients (serves 18)

250g tasty cheese cut into small portions
1 small brown onion, finely chopped
1 can of unsweetened evaporated milk
1 packet of French Onion Soup mix
1 loaf of white bread, with crusts removed
Butter

Method

1. You gotta get out that muthafuckin' beast of kitchen equipment, the food processor. Hopefully you've got your shit together and have organised the ingredients accordingly. Because now you gotta get the cheese, onion, soup mix and evaporated milk and dump it into the food processor. Do this in batches, ya manus!
2. Keep mixing that shit until the consistency is thick—not sloppy or too wet, nor as dry as a farmer's goddamn farm after a goddamn drought, which is all the goddamn time for six months of the year. Empty into a big fucking

bowl when the food processor gets too full, but repeat the mixing till you've used all the ingredients.

3. If the end result is too damn thick, add a bit of milk, dummy! If it's too damn runny, chuck in some more cheese.
4. Lay out your slices of bread, son! Butter them and then spread a SMALL amount of that mixture onto $\frac{3}{4}$ of each slice, otherwise it will overflow when cooked, and that would be fucking dumb now, wouldn't it? You'd just have some crusty bread!
5. Roll those bad boys up (diagonally or as a square)! Cheese side to no-cheese side! Keep assembled ones under a damp towel until you've finished! Then put them all on a goddamn tray with the seam faced downwards!
6. Bake those great gifts from the gods at 180°C for 12–15 minutes until golden brown.
7. You now have yourselves some choice cheese rolls, homie! Don't let them out of your sight! ♦



VITALI-TEA

Rebecca Hallas gives a rundown of some tea-riffic herbal teas

I love coffee as much as the next person, but sometimes a nice cup of herbal tea is just the ticket when you're feeling a bit on edge. Herbal teas have significantly less caffeine in them than coffee and other kinds of tea (i.e. your traditional English Breakfast), so you can drink them liberally without the heart palpitations that can accompany your third or fourth cup of joe.

It's no secret that physical illnesses can cause increased levels of mental stress, and physical and mental health often interact with each other. So why not sit down with some others in your communi-tea with a cuppa, and boost your physical and mental health simultaneously?!

Without further ado, here are some of my favourite herbal teas, for every health need:

Green: The classic herbal tea. Frequently touted by Instagram fitness gurus as an indispensable weight-loss aid. While drinking large amounts of green tea can speed up your metabolism, it's more important to note that in recent years it has been praised for its potential to reduce your risk of heart disease, cancer, and Alzheimer's disease. This is supposedly due to the catechin content in green tea: an antioxidant known to fight cell damage. The taste is not for everyone though. For fussy tea-drinkers, I recommend trying Dilmah's green tea with jasmine petals. Best tasting green tea I've found yet.

Drink it if: you want to prevent ALL THE THINGS.

Chamomile: If this tea was a Tumblr aesthetic, it would be a pastel flower crown. Chamomile is a relaxing and calming tea. I recommend drinking it before bed to help you de-stress and chill.

Drink it if: you're stressed or have difficulty sleeping.

St John's Wort: This tea is often hyped as a cure for depression. In reality, St John's Wort may *at best* be capable of improving mood in those with mild depression. (If you think you are suffering from depression, please talk to a doctor, a friend, or someone you trust!) However, St John's Wort has antibacterial properties which can help fight inflammation in the body.

Drink it if: you suffer from muscle aches, joint pain, or any other conditions caused by inflammation.

Peppermint: Peppermint tea is a healthy alternative to candy canes or Starbucks peppermint mochas during Christmas time. Oh what's that? You don't care about being healthy during the silly season? Cool, cool. Peppermint tea is actually also linked to the relief of abdominal gas and bloating. Note though: it can cause acid reflux, so be careful if you frequently experience heartburn.

Drink it if: you suffer from trapped gas/bloating.

Echinacea: Echinacea is famous for its link to the prevention of the common cold. While it is uncertain whether or not echinacea can cause the common cold to disperse faster than it normally would (although studies have suggested it can reduce the average timespan of a cold by 1–2 days), it's more likely that drinking it daily can boost your immune system and prevent future illness.

Drink it if: you're sick of getting sick.

Ginger: Ginger tea is often used by those who suffer from digestive troubles or motion sickness as a natural remedy for nausea and tummy troubles. You can also add some ginger to a lemon and honey drink when you're sick to help fight germs.

Drink it if: you're travelling a long distance, your stomach is upset, or you're hungover. ♦

Top 5... Secondhand Book Shops

Jason's Books
16 O'CONNELL ST

Just a short stroll from campus is a cosy little store with a range of books. Jason's has everything from New Zealand literature to the classics. It's a great place for English students looking for Shakespeare, Austen and Brontë, so check there before buying them new.

The Book Exchange
8 GLENDALE RD, GLEN EDEN

The Book Exchange has been around since 1982 and doubles as a coffee shop and secondhand book store—dreamy. A beautifully designed and well-organised shop, it's the perfect place to spend hours reading over a good cuppa joe.

Bookmark
15 VICTORIA RD, DEVONPORT

A large, comfortable store with couches and armchairs, Bookmark has what you're looking for. With over 20,000 items, you can literally lose track of time perusing the high shelves. If you're looking for non-fiction, Bookmark has an enormous range.

Hard to Find Books
171 THE MALL, ONEHUNGA

Hard to Find Books is worth paying a visit just to look at the shop. It's huge. Books are everywhere, piled on the floor, stacked on the staircase, nestled in hidden corners. It's a booklover's dream!

Dominion Books
230 JERVOIS RD

A bit closer to our neck of the woods is Dominion Books. The store is incredibly cramped (in the best kind of way) and has that beautiful, musty secondhand book smell. There's a great array of literature and most books are in excellent used condition. Plus, they're a little cheaper than the norm. ♦

UNDER COVER: UNCOVERING THE NZSAS

Hamish Liddy questions the Government's role in Afghanistan and why Kiwis seem to be so apathetic

Hit & Run: The New Zealand SAS in Afghanistan and the meaning of honour centres on a 2010 raid led by New Zealand's elite SAS troops in Afghanistan. Hager and co-author Jon Stephenson claim that six Afghan civilians, including a 3-year-old girl, were mistakenly killed in what they describe as retaliation for an earlier Taliban attack on Kiwi soldiers. Chief of Defence Force, Lieutenant-General Tim Keating, has denied the accusations, repeating earlier statements that the operation was a success. The New Zealand Defence Force (NZDF) position, backed by an International Security Assistance Force investigation, is that only insurgents were killed and no wrongdoing occurred. Keating has also been very careful to assert that revenge was not a motivating factor.

Are Hager and Stephenson right? Are the NZSAS a rogue bunch of assassins who laid waste to an idyllic Afghan village out of misguided spite? Or are they just raving lefties, jumping at shadows and unfairly tarnishing the reputation of a highly professional force? The truth, I think, lies somewhere in between. I suspect an inquiry would be unlikely to estab-

lish any major wrongdoing; the Prime Minister agrees, so why the reluctance? While we are proud of our troops, especially the SAS, Kiwis are not particularly comfortable with the details of what they actually do. In an election year, the distinction is important.

After briefly reviewing footage of the operations, Prime Minister Bill English is confident he understands how things went down. As a former military aircraft operator, I'm a little offended he feels so qualified to make that judgement. Aerial footage can be disorienting; radio chatter takes a lot of experience to understand; the technical details of calling in air support are particularly exacting. I have reviewed tapes of missions I flew myself and had a hard time making out what happened. No doubt English is a capable man, but I place about as much stock in his ability to interpret combat footage as my ability to judge his recent shearing exploits.

Of course, the video could be made public. It's classified, but six years on it is hard to imagine many operational details remaining critical to security. People have grown increasingly desensitised to aerial footage of airstrikes, but

how would we feel listening to Kiwi accents calling in the destruction? Anyone returning from overseas knows the reassuring cringe of hearing a fellow New Zealander on the airport loudspeaker. Less comforting when it brings the reality behind *Call of Duty*-style war graphics a little too close to home. The current NZDF mantra that our soldiers "only fired two bullets" would wither under revelations that we did a lot more courtesy of United States' airpower. The danger for English is that this sparks a debate on what we were doing there in the first place.

So far though, the discussion has revolved around dull technical details. Both sides have conceded ground: the authors admit they got location details wrong; the NZDF accepts that civilian casualties may have occurred, despite earlier saying the claim was "unfounded". The nitpicking, point scoring and maps of desolate terrain have had the effect of gently rocking the public back to sleep without broaching the bigger questions, one of which is retaliation.

To the uninitiated, it must seem strange to criticise the NZ Army for going after bad guys

"The nitpicking, point scoring and maps of desolate terrain have had the effect of gently rocking the public back to sleep without broaching the bigger questions; one of which is retaliation."

who killed one of their mates. Isn't that their job? Legally, this is the central issue. Regardless of whether civilian deaths occurred, the question of war crimes rests on whether rules of engagement were followed. The rules constitute a soldier's "License to Kill"; any departure from them is illegal, even if the victims are the enemy. Accidental deaths may be excusable if they occur within the framework. Rules of engagement are designed to ensure good conduct, maintain the moral high ground and protect civilians. NZDF rules in 2010 very likely prohibited reprisals explicitly; the Geneva Convention certainly does, and for good reason.

With approximately 4,500 in the regular force, the NZ Army is a small place—about the population of Taumaranui. The emotional impact of losing Lieutenant Tim O'Donnell just 19 days before the raid is hard to comprehend. The anger is understandable, but when emotion clouds judgement, mistakes happen. The kind of mistakes that could turn the locals against you—this is what Hager says took place. If we are to believe Keating, Operation Burnham had nothing to do with O'Donnell's death. So why was it named after the home camp of 2/1 RNZIR, his parent unit? If that sounds like a coincidence, you overestimate the creativity of military code names.

And why were the NZSAS leading a raid in the first place? Officially they were in Afghanistan to mentor and train the Afghan Crisis Response Unit. A local counter-terrorism task force based in Kabul. It's a stretch of the imagination to think planning and commanding a strike on a remote village arose out of business as usual. The proximity to the main Kiwi base in Bamiyan province, and the apparent absence of the Crisis Response Unit from the operation makes a strong case that something special was going on. We also know that then Prime Minister John Key personally approved the operation; unnecessary if the soldiers had been going about their normal duties. Sure, you could still justify all of it, but should we honestly believe that revenge had no part to play?

If the NZ Army is a small town, then the SAS is their champion first XV. Their international reputation and undeniable tenacity,

guts and professionalism are a source of pride for the army and New Zealand alike. In 2008 former NZSAS trooper Willie Apiata, VC overtook Sir Edmund Hillary to become New Zealand's most trusted person. It isn't surprising, but certainly noteworthy, how many senior defence leaders rise from those relatively small ranks. Both Keating and the current Chief of Army, Major-General Peter Kelly, previously served as the commanding officer.

During the raid, future Governor-General and then Chief of Defence Force Sir Jerry Mateparae (also a former SAS soldier) was watching on from the command centre in Kabul. Keating was the Deputy Chief of Army at the time and became Mateparae's Chief of Staff the following month. Integrity or professionalism aside, the conflicts of interest abound. As Chief of Staff, Keating would have been involved with much of the initial inquiries into the matter. Due to his close association with the NZSAS, I expect he knew every Kiwi soldier on the operation by name. What's more, it doesn't surprise me that he sees no wrongdoing. As a product of the same small and highly disciplined system, he likely thinks in the same ways and would have acted just the same, given the circumstances.

Diversity is not exactly rife within the NZDF. A 2014 Ministry of Defence report identified that while over 21% of applications are made by women, they make up just 15% of uniformed personnel. Higher attrition rates mean the proportion declines further over time. In 2012 only 1.1% of uniformed personnel identified with an Asian ethnicity compared to 12% in the 2013 census. To their credit it's something the Defence Force is trying to address, but the underlying cause remains: a strictly hierarchical promotion structure values loyalty above all else and undermines diversity.

Unlike twenty-first century business models, where employees move into and out of organisations at every level, the military is stuck in the past. Getting to the top in Defence is akin to that contest where you see who can keep their hand on the car the longest. Over time, people who think differently, don't identify with role models, or just have something

better to do, self-select out and move on. The effect increases as you move up, and by the top of the pyramid the highest ranks are choosing subordinates in their own cookie-cutter image.

Why is any of this relevant? The point is you can't rely on the NZDF to self-regulate, it just isn't big enough. The Prime Minister and Minister of Defence get their advice from a single, highly interested source. The Ministry of Defence is tiny and staffed in large part by uniformed personnel on secondment, or retired senior officers. Without a big defence industry, there are no commercial interests either. The news media reveal their level of understanding by referring to every type of naval vessel as a "frigate". A lot of NZDF media releases are published verbatim without comment. Even as declared pacifists, the Green Party shies away from making defence an election issue.

Why? Because Kiwis just don't care. When National recently announced a \$503 million package for NZ Police, people wanted to know exactly where each of the new officers would be stationed. When a \$446 million package was announced to upgrade just two NZ Navy ships, no one noticed. The contract was awarded to Lockheed Martin, one of the companies KiwiSaver investors have been concerned about because of involvement with the manufacture and maintenance of nuclear weapons. Did you know New Zealand recently bought the largest helicopter-carried missiles available? If taxpayers take no notice, the NZDF can choose their own equipment and create the defence force they want, not what New Zealanders want.

Opposition leaders and Minister of Defence at the time, Wayne Mapp, have joined in calls for an independent inquiry, but will the public back them? If not, it's a signal to the Prime Minister he can do whatever he likes with NZ's forces and face no scrutiny. Recent hints suggest such plans might include following President Donald Trump's United States into Syria. What about North Korea? If you're cool with those decisions falling to a guy who went to sleep as Finance Minister and woke up with the ability to approve secret missions anywhere in the world, go ahead—leave it to the experts. ♦



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The Child Care Scholarship for student parents assists with **child care fees** for up to two semesters.

Applications **now close**
May 8th at midnight.

This child care scholarship is provided by a Giving Circle of UoA staff in conjunction with AUSA.

Find out more at
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or email welfare@ausa.org.nz.

EMAIL WELFARE@AUSA.ORG.NZ WITH ANY ISSUES OR QUESTIONS



SLASH AND BERM

Jack Adams on the importance of berms and preventing bermicide

Imagine the dream: sweat-laced hair, a white Warehouse-branded singlet, and a cool sense of your own masculinity. The intruding sound of the lawnmower lets your neighbours know that you're a busy man, a truly divine domestic male. All I need is a scantily clad female, a derogatorily suggestive narrator, and a Swannndri to complete the Speight's aesthetic. Or perhaps a Tui. Which ever is more masculine, but I digress. The dream continues—the thought of a cold, beard-inspiring beverage crosses your mind until your grandmother slithers out and asks “Have you done the berms? The neighbours always do ours.” Blast. I've faltered in my masculinity. I'm left to drag my head back to business, grooming the small patch of land. It sits about the size of the floating door in *Titanic*, but all the more burden for poor Leo. Or Bermden for me.

I tried to tell this story to a foreign mate, we'll call him Ricardo. No need for real names, he lets me use his vape every second Wednesday (who

knew vaping could be as important as a single child after a divorce?). I told him and he wasn't sure what I meant. I tried to explain: the small patch of grass that separates my property (liberal use of ownership) from the road, a kind of buffer between pedestrians and the roar of vehicles. He still hasn't a clue. I take a drag from his vape. I cough. I remember why I don't do it regularly.

The berm is an intriguing concept. No one else seems to have them. In England, and very much the rest of the United Kingdom, any kind of visible lawn is saved for the wealthy. In the countryside, grass is farmed or houses the most delicious creatures. But in New Zealand, we value the berm.

I asked Uncle Google what a “burm” was. First fun fact of the day: it's spelt “berm”. The intrigue continues. I look up “berm etymology”. It turns out that berm comes from the Dutch *berm*, which denotes a narrow space. It's not difficult to imagine how this began as a military term. A

berm was the embankment that made up moats and strategic ditches. In World War I, soldiers would rest their elbows on the berm of a trench. Today, tanks try to go around berms as they're too steep. In this modern sense, the phrase denotes soil that supports house walls from collapsing during construction or control water flow in areas susceptible to erosion. Quite interesting stuff, but it doesn't quite cover why I'm supposed to mow a seemingly useless stretch of grass, annoyingly wider than one lawnmower, but too small for two.

Auckland Transport's website shed some light on berms. Berms serve the purpose of reducing flooding during storms. An absolute necessity, apparently. We also can't plant anything on berms because they might be unsightly. Can't put concrete on it either. You can ask permission for trees, but they'll probably say no. Berms are the overbearing great aunt that lives in and criticises your taste in Evanescence and periodically asks you why you're on your phone every hour of the day.



ART BY YOUNG KIM

Overbearing. Overgrown, too, as many houses can't agree on who should mow the berm.

The argument stands, on the Council's website, that we should "take pride in [our] streets, be good community citizens and ensure the berms in front or to the side of [our] properties are mowed regularly." An interesting point. "Why should we look after council infrastructure?" comments Gabrielle from Te Kuiti, a regular on *NZ Herald's* website, typing with eyes squinted and with a single finger. In 2014, Auckland Council shifted the responsibility of berm maintenance to the adjacent house. Before this, the Council would mow them. It's almost as if we own the berm, the gloriously aesthetic space that borders suburban life. But we don't. The berms are Council-owned, but the responsibility lies on the adjacent house, still. Criticism came from ratepayers about the legitimacy of the policy, prompting litigation and political dissent. The move has saved barely anything, yet I'm still left in anguish every time I have to double down on that small area of grass, the pubic overgrowth I only look into every three months or when we have guests.

Being a "good citizen" is a curious concept. This duty of the community is something that underpins the Kiwi. The 1940s and 50s marked the time of the state house. From Seddon to Savage, this programme created a sense of the New

Zealand Golden Age. The state houses were constructed out of the compassion for those who were struggling, especially with the Great Depression. By 1950, thirty-thousand houses had been constructed. The image of the state house became principally and architecturally tied to this 1950s Kiwi character. That homogeneous design created this lawn aesthetic, along with the Kiwi resources and elbow grease used to construct those houses. A house for Kiwis, by Kiwis. One would be hard-pressed to divorce the image of these Kauri bastions from the rather dull piece of infrastructure. The image of my sweat-laced gaze into the horizon, pining for the delicate elixir of Lion Red, almost matches that of Gregory some sixty years earlier treading lightly across his lawn. His own lawn. Stubbies and manual mowers, just like beer and a failing economy of today, became the Kiwi zeitgeist. A practical attitude to life with a pride in their home, family and work, which of course includes the berm. My grandfather still regularly mows the exorbitant patch of grass that lies outside his property—a dream I'll unlikely have, nor do I really want it.

To others, however, the berm symbolises more than a tank entrenchment or something to lean on. The burden of proprietary ambiguity lends to the darker side of Kiwi ingenuity. As some enjoy the fruits of home ownership and pride, others disregard the berm as being a waste of their own

time. If you're not profiting, why should you do it? This individual attitude has become the counterculture of the Kiwi pride. A new corporal swill. Suddenly, when money isn't involved and it's just pride and satisfaction, people pull out. Call it "bermicide". This bermicide has marked the shift in our culture. Many still enjoy the fruits of Bunnings' DIY deck building, but others see it as a waste of time. It's these bastards that are ruining Kiwi culture and they must be stopped. As soon as the financial incentive disappears, everyone's an entrepreneur. Others are too busy to mow their berms (I call "bermicide apologists"), and they are even worse. Bermicide by omission lends to this destructive culture. We Kiwis take no pride any longer, and it is harming our identity. Leave no deck unbuilt, no roast uneaten, and, of course, leave no berm unmowed. (BELOW, YOU WILL FIND A HANDY GUIDE IN PREVENTING THE DESTRUCTIVE TENDENCIES OF BERMICIDE.)

The pride, then, continues. The Kiwi legacy of owning a home comes with the generic marriage, three kids, and number eight wire that has come to suppose the Kiwi identity. This pride in your home is also a pride in your lawn. The berm is an integral part of your home and thus your livelihood. An unsightly berm is cause for concern. Shit berm, no roast dinner. You'll be a drifter in no time. ♦

PREVENTING BERMICIDE

Infiltrate the culprits. Knock on doors of those neglecting their berms and demand you see their landlord or proof of retirement.

Comment on social media to let those know how passionately you feel about the destruction of our Kiwi culture and the inherent flaws of youth these days. There will be more interest if you include the *NZ Herald*, *Stuff*, or *Newshub*. Avoid legitimate sources of journalism such as Al Jazeera, the BBC, and *Playboy*. You might waste their time in reporting actual current affairs.

Avoid reading the article you're commenting on. Otherwise you may find yourself distracted from the task at hand—protect-

ing the Kiwi identity and our berms!

Write into news@craccum.co.nz and features@craccum.co.nz to pass on your impassioned ideas about berms and berm related affairs.

Send pictures of your proudly-kept berm and the most shameful ones to jackal.adams@gmail.com. Extra points for groomed berms and avant-garde designs!

Send aggressive messages indicting bermicide to 48 College Hill, Freemans Bay, Auckland, 1011.

Alternatively, call 04 817 6837 and tell them the finer points of berm maintenance. ♦





CHEAP LAUGHS

Chester Jerrat gives you a rundown on some funny bunnies you should catch at the Comedy Fest

The 2017 New Zealand International Comedy Festival powered by Flick Electric Co. (take a deep breath before saying that) started on Thursday. Here's your guide to the best bang for your buck. *Metro* publishes their iconic Cheap Eats every year; now it's time for *Craccum's* Cheap Laughs.

BEST UNDER \$15

Melanie Bracewell

Melanie got her start in comedy when she won the title of "7 Days Georgie Pie Comedy Apprentice" in 2014. Then in 2015, she won the Raw Comedy Quest. Melanie's career just kept on climbing when in 2016 she was nominated for Best Female Comedian at the 2016 NZ Comedy Guild Awards. You can catch Melanie's first solo show, *Brace Yourself*, for as low as \$14.40.

James Roque

James has been a personal favourite of mine for quite some time now. He was nominated for Best Newcomer at the 2013 NZ Comedy Guild Awards and since then he's just been getting better and better. James has a regular segment on *Jono and Ben* and has made appearances on *7 Days*, *After Hours* and *AotearoHA*. In every show I've seen James Roque in, he has never failed to be the best on the line-up.

BEST UNDER \$20

Angella Dravid

Angella Dravid has a distinctive style. With only a couple of quiet words, she's able to have an entire crowd in fits of laughter. Her delivery is unique, and her perspective is always hilarious. This year, Angela is a Billy T Award

Nominee—an honour that is richly deserved. She's a fantastic comedian and one of the most original acts at the festival.

Scott W Long

Scott W Long is my cup of tea. I don't even like tea, but if Scott W Long was a cup of tea, I would drink it. Scott was a finalist in the Raw Comedy Quest in 2015 and I can't recommend his show at the festival enough. I also had a little sit down with Scott to discuss his showing at the Comedy Festival, amongst other things.

TELL ME ABOUT YOUR SHOW.

It's called "I'm Scott W Long", because no one knows who the fuck I am. Everybody on the internet says there's only introverts and extroverts. I feel like I'm a pretty extreme introvert, but also obviously really extroverted to be doing stand-up comedy. The show is about the dichotomy and the difference between those two things. In my life there is a real difference between me in real life and me on stage. Also it's a bunch of jokes, which tends to be important to people. It's an hour-long introduction. I did a five-minute joke in my last show where I say "I'm Scott W Long", and I talk about why I use the "W". Essentially that joke is an hour long now.

WHY DID YOU START DOING STAND-UP?

I always wanted to be a stand-up comic. I spent six years telling people I was going to be a stand-up comedian. I watched every bit of comedy on the internet, even interviews and podcasts. I was travelling mostly during that time, and I would tell myself, "When I go to London, I'll start doing stand-up comedy", and then I didn't. Then I said, "When I go to Canada, I'm going to do it", and when I was in Japan

I turned 30 and I realised time doesn't go forever. I always planned on coming back to NZ and as soon as I got back here, I did a gig.

DID YOUR FIRST GIG GO WELL?

It went well enough. I wrote out my set word for word and rehearsed it for days. On my lunch break I'd just go walking around saying my set out loud. It wasn't very good, but it was fine. The next day Scott, from the Classic, emailed me with more gigs, so I took that as a good sign. The reason I was able to keep going was the New Zealand comedy scene. Everyone was helping each other out and stuff.

BEST UNDER \$25

The Fan Brigade

If you ask most people who the best musical comedy group to come out of Aotearoa is, they would undoubtedly say Flight of the Conchords. But I think they're all wrong. The Fan Brigade deserves that title. They're going to be superstars. I can feel their HBO show coming, so go watch them before they conquer the world.

Rhys Mathewson

I've easily seen hundreds of stand-up shows. During only three of these shows have I been unable to breathe from laughing so hard. Rhys Mathewson is responsible for two out of the three. Last year he won the Fred Award, recognising the Best New Zealand Show in the NZ International Comedy Festival. You can't go wrong with Rhys Mathewson (he is a past *Craccum* Editor, after all). I've already bought eight tickets to his show, and you should too! The man's a legend. He's so good, I had to in-

FEATURE

terview him just so I could try to seduce him.

HOW DID YOU GET YOUR START IN COMEDY?

I started in the Class Comedians Programme in the Comedy Festival. Well, yeah, I did a school theatre show and one of the guys who directed it had already done class comedians and he started doing an after-school comedy course for the drama kids. I did that, and off the back of it he recommended me for Class Comedians, which I did in 2006.

WHY IS YOUR SHOW CALLED *RHYS CLASSIC*?

Just because I'm a bit shit at marketing really. And I wanted to brand myself as being at the Classic during the Comedy Festival, because I feel that's the place where I most fit. There's the crew that do the Basement every year, because that's the right fit for them, and it's great. But I feel down there I get lost amongst the noise a bit.

WHAT'S *RHYS CLASSIC* ABOUT?

I'm still struggling with the topic a little bit. I think largely it's going to be about belief, and all the iterations of belief. Focusing less on religion, because I'm not the guy to take it down. Plenty of other comedians have much more experience and breadth of knowledge. It's going to be about self-belief, and just the belief versus facts scenario that we find ourselves in currently.

IS IT GOING TO BE POLITICAL?

I don't know, but I feel it kind of has to be, to a certain extent. I don't want to burn any material from the show itself, but I very much feel the old "we've all heard this ad on the radio, here's my witty take on it" kind of comedy. Everyone does that now. That's Facebook standard. So for us to get up and do that, would be weak. That's not what stand-up comedy is anymore.

THAT'S WHAT JIMI JACKSON IS.

Yeah. Well, hmmm. I don't know anything about Jimi Jackson, but I have a feeling I'm not going to like it. The people who make funny YouTube videos or Facebook videos, I know they deserve the title of comedian, but I find

it so upsetting.

YOU WON THE FRED AWARD LAST YEAR; ARE YOU HOPING FOR A REPEAT?

I'm not really looking to win it again. I think the show this year is me leaning in a different direction slightly. So, generally what happens is I have one show that's trying to deal with a thing and move in that direction. The first show is fine, but it doesn't achieve my exploration of emotion that I want it to, and then the next one really does. This one is the first in the new direction. I'm kind of taking the foot off the pedal in the expectations of it. I'm just trying to see what new ground I can discover, to then nail in the next show. I still think it's going to be a very good show. I'm still a very good stand-up [comedian], just in terms of my own artistic exploration. The jokes will be good jokes, but in terms of becoming a greater thing, I'm not sure I'll hit where I want to hit.

HOW WAS YOUR EXPERIENCE AT THE UNIVERSITY OF AUCKLAND?

I knew what I wanted to do—I wanted to be a comedian. So I was doing a degree that was interesting but I was then, and still am to a certain extent, very lazy. I just didn't do the work. I did English and Latin. Latin was fun. The problem with Latin was there were only five people in the class, and I suffer from social anxiety. If I was five minutes late to a lecture, I would get to the door of the lecture, and know that it would be full. But the idea of walking down the aisle to get to a spare seat, I couldn't handle it. I wouldn't go in, which of course is absurd, because who cares? In Latin there are only five of you, that magnified it by 1000. I missed a couple days of the course, maybe a week and a bit, because every day I had some comedy stuff on. I said to myself "Well I can never go back, the shame of facing those people is too great." I went to the exam so it wouldn't say "Did Not Sit", and I just wrote the word Malkovich over and over again. I had no fucking clue. I didn't attend half the course. I just hope that whoever marked it enjoyed it. It's not someone trying to bullshit you. It's just a funny way to be like, "Hey! Listen, man. We both know what's going

on here."

YOU'VE SPENT TIME OVERSEAS. DO YOU THINK YOU'LL STAY IN NEW ZEALAND NOW?

Maybe, probably not. New Zealand's great, but stand-up here is too small still. I would stay in New Zealand if Auckland, Wellington and Christchurch had full-time comedy clubs, and every other major city centre had some form of monthly gig. Then there would be enough work to keep me interested, but I don't want to be the person to have to start that up. I would much rather do it the Rose Matafeo route—where you have your own TV show, and then you can tour here as much as you'd like, and go to the market bigger and better.

HOW LONG DO YOU THINK IT WILL TAKE NEW ZEALAND TO GET TO THAT LEVEL?

It might not. Wellington had a comedy club and their scene didn't get behind it enough, and it fell over, which was a real shame. Here's the problem: Auckland is the only place to make comedy financially viable. They need to have quality professional acts, who live here, but to do that would be to limit your own career for the sake of growing the scene, which is a very noble thing. But I don't know anyone who would do it.

In the United Kingdom, going to a stand-up comedy club is as viable an option for a night out as going to the movies, while in New Zealand it's not. Also, partially because New Zealanders don't go to movies either.

INTERNATIONAL ACTS

Also check out some of the talented international comedians who give the festival half its name. Hal Cruttenden and Joel Creasey are great options for around \$25, or get a ticket to Aussie Becky Lucas for as low as \$14. ♦

The New Zealand International Comedy Festival runs from 27 April–21 May. You can purchase tickets from www.comedyfestival.co.nz.

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I would give my life for Baby Groot: A note to the galactic empire that will inevitably detain me in future

With Anoushka Maharaj

SPOILERS AHEAD

Of the many elements that Marvel films are comprised of, the very best of them were showcased in *Guardians of the Galaxy: Volume 2*. It was two hours of sick intergalactic fights; murderous siblings; expected but still wonderful redemption arcs; a flawless soundtrack and (hot) old men with psychopathic objectives. While *Volume 2* was laced with humour and commendable special effects, typical for a blockbuster film, my favourite thing about it was that it ended up being surprisingly sincere. *Inexorable outbursts of affection ahead! Proceed with caution!*

The opening scenes of *Volume 2* set the stage for what was to come—a creation much warmer and more jubilant than *Volume 1*—with Baby Groot treating the audience to a dance against the backdrop of “Mr Blue Sky” while the Guardians battled a giant space monster. The cuteness and ineptitude of Baby Groot, combined with Rocket’s mostly patient and undying love for him is a classic duo worth commemorating (the exchange about why Groot hates hats is possibly the greatest thing in the history of film, and I’m not exaggerating). Another highlight was the signature coolness of Yondu walking along a bridge while bodies cascade around him, thanks to that damn arrow and his overall nonchalance about kicking ass. Good luck replicating that, Captain America, you goody-good nerd.

As we know, films of all kinds attempt to hook audiences with their ultimate weaknesses—*emotion, ugh*—but many fall short of their aims and merely come across as contrived. This is not so with *Volume 2*; it was a welcome extension from getting to know the gang in *Volume 1*, to their now respective roles as lovable heroes who have become a genuine family. *Guardians* is, of course, filled with whimsical characters, but there was a sweetness to its characters’ development, to Rocket’s slow realisation that even a genetically engineered *not a raccoon!* could be

capable of feeling love, and just as importantly, capable of receiving it.

Because I am just a giant sook, everyone who has ever known me has rolled their eyes at my repeated admission that sentimentality and love (and a killer soundtrack) can be the most remarkable aspects of any film. Groot sacrificing himself for the Guardians with an utterance of, “*We are Groot*” was an incredibly powerful moment—and my theory is that it’s because great love is so often hard to show through typical grand gestures. Nothing seems big enough when you’re trying to show someone how much you care about them—so superhero films carry these absurdly giant acts of love out for us (complete with a dash of aliens and that *pew pew* sound). There is, obviously, something magical and emblematic about the Marvel universe; whether it’s the existence of the infinity stones, or the whereabouts of various villains, or the fun reminder that the universe is insanely vast—but love is the only element within these stories that’s traces and effects can’t simply be collected or measured, which is what made *Volume 2* and aspects like Yondu’s arc so special (“*I don’t fly that arrow with my head, boy... I use my heart*”).

In between fighting off heaving sobs every time Baby Groot appeared on screen, I was overwhelmed by the fact that *Volume 2* was steeped in a surprising tenderness that built to a powerful third act. One of the most significant themes in the film was this concept of “the unspoken thing”—whether it was between Gamora and Quill, or Groot’s limited vocabulary that somehow still owed itself to profanities, or between Rocket and, well, everyone. “The unspoken thing” is the immeasurable space between friends, family or lovers; it was an understanding of this that filled the theatre while watching this film, and it was Quill’s wordless answer to Ego’s probing questions all along the lines of: “*But*

what purpose for living is bigger than the universe?” “*Why would anybody offer their life for a tiny fictional tree?*” Hell, why does anybody do *anything?* (Love, in case you didn’t realise already.)

Superhero films, while brimming with action, are also enjoyable for their depth—and because they are often unfettered by romantic turmoil, they find other elements to focus on; like creating room for well-rounded characters who constantly dance with death, or forge intergalactic partnerships, or sacrifice themselves for the good of the universe. In the case of *Volume 2*, we are given characters whose relationships *literally* transcend the space and time continuum, and the evolution of friends becoming family. Whether it was the absurdities that broke up raw moments, or the perfect use of Fleetwood Mac and Cat Stevens at the height of emotional trajectories, *Volume 2* is a treasure and a beautiful addition to the Marvel universe. It uses its enormous stage to wrap its narrative not around gore, or self-aggrandisement (*cough* *Captain America* *cough*)—but around the simplest of sentiments.

I understand that people have different expectations, and might be disappointed by a plot seemingly falling back onto something as “simple” or as “unexciting” as love, but there’s a reason *why* it’s often the motivation for the sacrifice of ultimate power or even one’s own life—*because love is the biggest thing there is*. And reality is short of triumph these days, so maybe it’s not all bad that *Volume 2* was unabashed in its emphasis of friendship and unity. Let yourself be moved as the rainbow dust of a dead hero dances through the stratosphere, while “Father and Son” tears its way through your soul. Be like Quill and forget space and time and infinite power—because what use is an entire universe if you don’t get to dance to Electric Light Orchestra with the people that you love? ♦



Drowned in Moonlight, Strangled By My Own Bra: A Belated Love Letter to Carrie Fisher

By Samantha Gianotti

It is the week of May the 4th, and as every Aldeeran worth their salt knows, May the 4th is Star Wars Day (it's clever! It's a pun! You fools, don't you see!). Attaching even more significance to a day already steeped in valour (read: a day that gives folks the chance to wear their silky Han Solo pajama shorts out of the house as if they were, in fact, real pants) is the fact that 2017 marks forty years since the release of *A New Hope*. The idea of hope in the *Star Wars* universe springs forth from Princess Leia's holographic recording in *Episode IV*, her desperate plea from within the depths of the Death Star: *Help me Obi-Wan Kenobi. You're my only hope*. It is only fitting that this May 4th, we remember Carrie Fisher in all her glory—a woman who was generous with her words, and liberal with her middle finger; who simultaneously managed to not give a fuck while still really, genuinely giving a shit.

She truly, deeply wanted to be the one to kill Jabba the Hutt

During filming for *Episode VI*, after being forced into a gold metal bikini by George Lucas the aforementioned globular mobster, it was put to Carrie that her stunt double could be the one to film the scene where Leia kills her captor. It seems our heroine did not take to being a damsel in distress, whether it be in reality or fiction, firmly requesting that she be the one to end the sordid slug's life. It's important to note that Leia kills Jabba using the very chain that he had employed to enslave her, which has to be the most literal example of making lemonade out of lemons. In a baller tweet from 2015, Carrie reminded everyone that:

That chain only "enslaved" me until I could use the fabulous thing to KILL THAT DROOLING SWOLLEN SUPERTONGUED SLUG&whirl him off into infinity

Carrie Fisher is not here for your chained and bound-slave Leia sex fantasies, my friends. (Please note the varied potential future uses of the phrase "whirl him off into infinity": convincing your friend to break up with her jabroni boyfriend, sliding the shithouse essay you started three weeks too late into the assignment hand-in box, or chanting at the TV when someone is telling a really shite story on Graham Norton's Big Red Chair.)

She gave us the gift of Gary Fisher

Carrie Fisher's legacy is bound up in her free and frank discussion of mental health, specifically on the topic of her own experiences with bipolar disorder. Her work and her words were regularly dedicated to expounding the highs and lows wrought by her mental illness, and humour became the sledge hammer that she would use to strike down stigma. In 2013, Carrie Fisher came to own her eventual constant companion, Gary—a French bulldog with dappled fur and his tongue perpetually lolling out of his mouth. Gary, who became a certified therapy dog so as to be a constant source of comfort for Carrie, became a staple of *The Force Awakens* press tour, appearing on red carpets, sitting by his owner's side during televised interviews, and receiving many a smooch from Oscar Isaac. Gary even attended this year's *Star Wars* celebration day in Orlando in his owner's stead, as documented on his very own Instagram (@garyfisher).

She was one half of the most pure cinematic embrace of all time

This is not in reference to the kiss between Leia and Han in *The Empire Strikes Back*, nor their gut-punch-to-the-stomach reunion in *The Force Awakens*. No, this is about Leia pulling Rey into her arms after Rey's return from the destroyed

Starkiller Base, where she had been kidnapped, staved off Kylo Ren's mind tricks, and witnessed Han Solo's death at the hands of his and Leia's own son. Not since *The Shawshank Redemption* have we (I) been made so emotional (gasping sobs muffled by a fist to the mouth) by two characters' embrace. The effect of the hug is two-fold: we see a girl in need of an emotional heimlich met with immediate affection by a kind-hearted, strong-willed woman, but this embrace transcends its status as a super emotional moment of cinema. Instead of simply seeing two characters embracing, we see two women bound by experience, words of advice and slivers of wisdom bestowed from one badass woman to another. Daisy has noted how Carrie Fisher paved the way for women, in sci-fi and beyond, and her experience as the female lead in a new swathe of *Star Wars* films trails just a few decades behind Carrie's own experience in a very similar position. Seeing Leia and Rey comfort each other in comfortable silence, we might imagine all the words that passed between Carrie and Daisy.

Carrie Fisher's impact both on screen and off should not be undersold. She doctored many classic film scripts without credit (including, according to director Rian Johnson, some insight on the script for *The Last Jedi*). She wrote books and performed shows that were no-holds-barred when it came to exposing her personal, poignant experiences. Her unabashed, unashamed, often foul-mouthed worldview, and her overawing sense of self, was an instructional guide for young women: to realise the value of speaking out and speaking loud. Never afraid to be biting, and never shying from the chance to be vulnerable, Carrie Fisher was a force to be reckoned with, whose every fibre strayed away from demands of conformity. She once requested that her obituary describe how she was "drowned in moonlight, strangled by my own bra"—and we aren't inclined to disregard a request from royalty. ♦



Emotional Creature: The Secret Life of Girls around the World

THEATRE REVIEW BY GEORGIA HARRIS

Auckland is currently experiencing a time of plenty in terms of women-centric entertainment. Casts featuring a significantly more representative ratio of women and non-binary folk to men are on the rise within the Auckland theatre scene. One collective dedicated to increasing representations of minority groups in media, *The Others Club*, delivered a production of Eve Ensler's *Emotional Creature*—featuring an all-women cast—at Samoa House on K Road earlier this April.

Emotional Creature, which was penned by the author of *The Vagina Monologues*, is a collection of monologues, poetry and ensemble pieces inspired by girls around the world. Scenes stretch ambitiously across subject matter and seriousness. Just a few of the sketches include: an online pro-anorexia forum, a high-school girl trying to fit in with the cool kids, a teenager who misses her “funny nose” removed by plastic surgery, a girl escaping female genital mutilation, and an exploration of queer sexuality and relationship dynamics.

The humour and passion of the six diverse, extremely talented actresses (many of whom are recent acting school graduates) was undeniably on point throughout the production. Each and every one of the cast members was engaging and riveting in their own way—at some particularly intense points I almost felt I was intruding on something private. Their many talents were further showcased with the inclusion of song and dance, as well as the drastic mood changes between scenes.

In terms of scripting, I found Eve Ensler's writing a bit heavy on gender essentialism and sex negativity—perhaps even too second-wave-y to call feminist comfortably. However, I think that the core goal of *Emotional Creature*, to celebrate the secret life of girls around the world, was achieved. *Emotional Creature* covered a lot of women-related, if not feminist ground, and welcomed a whole lot of new talent to the Auckland entertainment scene too. ♦



Raw

FILM REVIEW BY SAMANTHA GIANOTTI

In a family of veterinarians and vegetarians, sixteen-year-old Justine is a reserved individual—sure of her future goals, but decidedly unsure of herself. Upon her arrival at veterinary college, beginning a new chapter in the hallowed halls where her parents once studied, and where her older sister currently resides, she finds herself subjected to frantic hazing—doused in animal blood, her belongings routinely tossed from her room, finally forced to eat a raw rabbit kidney that ignites a cannibalistic desire within her. And so the scene is set for Julie Ducournau's *Raw*, seamlessly combining elements of horror, comedy, and bildungsroman in her third directorial outing.

While cannibalism has been horror fodder for decades now, *Raw* does not rely on its consumptive subject matter solely for shock or scare value (serving to ensure that the scenes where we *do* see our heroine chow down on her fellow university chums are all the more unsettling). Rather, Justine's flesh-eating fixation serves as the vehicle for an audience to experience a timid young woman's journey, her cannibalistic desires forming in tandem with her attempts to harness her independence and understand her sexuality—casting off the ideological shackles of her upbringing in an environment totally unfamiliar and initially unwelcoming. Justine may be a newly-inspired cannibal, but she is also a fledgling teenager grappling with her sense of self worth. The combination of the two ultimately leaves us with the very real option of feeling sympathy for the type of character the horror genre would usually call us to basitardise or denounce.

Amid incredible and disquieting visuals, quippy dialogue, and a score that settles quickly beneath your skin, *Raw* is at its core the tale of a young woman discovering who she truly is when she sets out on her own. A comfortably feminist film, and a slow-burning banger, *Raw* elevates itself far above the lesser horrors of recent years, creating something magnetic amongst all the munching on manflesh. ♦



The Fate of the Furious

FILM REVIEW BY ISOBEL GLEDHILL

“Isobel, are you going to turn your back on family?”

My friends' *Fast and Furious* references flew right over my head in the group chat¹ and I mistook their smug little in-jokes for a genuine desire to see me. I caved, after a lifetime of avoiding the whole chaotically named and numbered franchise, except for an accidental glimpse of the end of *Fast 5*, which left me deeply concerned about the injured bystanders and serious damage to infrastructure that the characters wrought upon Rio de Janeiro.

The Fate of the Furious starts in Cuba, where capitalism is apparently yet to provide women with shorts that actually cover your butt. The uniformly attractive and youthful population turns out to watch Dominic Torretto (Vin Diesel) have a casual honeymoon car race in the first of many burning vehicles. The villain, Cipher (Charlize Theron) also shows up. I didn't think anything would annoy me more than her blonde ponytail of semi-dreadlocks, but the breathy villainous tone that she uses throughout the entire film quickly supersedes any borderline cultural appropriation. Cipher is supposedly a hacking genius, but all she really does is threaten Dom in her annoying voice and order her nerds and thugs around.

After Cuba, there is a funny wee interlude where Luke Hobbs (The Rock) coaches his daughter's soccer team (turns out there's no need to worry about getting your action heroes confused—The Rock compensates for having a more boring character name than Vin Diesel by being infinitely cooler and funnier, and the actors hate each other too much to be in the same scenes). To be fair, *The Fate of the Furious* had enough little jokes and a comprehensible enough plot that meant even an action-movie hater like me could get through all the wanking over flash cars. Self-driving cars and the finale taking place in Vladi-middle-of-nowhere left me reassured that there weren't too many innocent civilians harmed amidst the action. Best *Fast and Furious* movie I've ever seen; worth going to if your family pays. ♦

¹ Editor's note: 2 Fast 2 Furious for her amirite



Doctor Who: Series 10, Episode 1

TELEVISION REVIEW BY PATRICK NEWLAND

Full disclosure: overall, I did not like Matt Smith's doctor. I found that he was trying too hard to be as good as David Tennant. He wasn't helped by his writing either—in his first two seasons particularly. *Doctor Who* is meant to be a show for everyone, yet almost no one could follow it. So, head honcho Steven Moffatt simplified it a bit. He moved from long complex stories that covered a year, to smaller self-contained arcs, two episodes max. So, it is this formula that Peter Capaldi has represented through his time in the blue box. As he starts his final season in the title role, I realise that he has become my favourite doctor yet.

In the premiere of the show's 10th season (post-reboot), I think I can work out why. It's certainly not the writing, which I previously blamed. While the episode was great, that was almost entirely at the feet of Capaldi's performance. The episode showed his transformation from an eccentric university professor, who had given up his time traveling ways, back to the character that every fan loves—just an eccentric professor. Capaldi was hitting every beat. He was joined by his new 2017 companion Bill, played by Pearl Mackie. While much has been made in the press of the character being the first openly gay companion in the show's 55-year history, I like how this is not even given a second look at in the show itself.

The story just continued on as it would have regardless. The other highlight to the first show and the Christmas special back in December was Matt Lucas as the doctor's second companion/manservant Nardole. His quick wit and subtle charm have not changed since his days in *Little Britain*, and he has immense chemistry with Capaldi. So even if the story was so-so, I loved the start of Capaldi's swan song as the doctor—and whatever is in store for the rest of the year, I'm already looking forward to it.

Doctor Who is on Prime, Sundays 7:30pm. If you are looking to catch-up, all past episodes can be found on Netflix, and this year's shows are on the University library online archive. ♦



Swear I'm Good at This

Diet Cig

ALBUM REVIEW BY CHRIS WONG

The debut effort from indie/pop-punk duo Diet Cig bursts with raw energy at its seams and is short, sharp and sweet while dealing with relatable topics. Sonically, Diet Cig stay comfortably within the boundaries of the energetic indie pop they're familiar with, held together with lively guitars and frenetic drumming. Some variety by the way of synth leads are introduced to spice things up on tracks like "Maid of the Mist".

The vibrant and musically fun album is often at a contrast with its honest, intimate and vulnerable lyrics. What makes this album so relatable is its familiarity, as singer and guitarist Alex Luciano uses her personal experiences to weave through topics such as the struggles of adolescence going into adulthood, insecurities, consent, and romantic frustrations (as well as more trivial topics like star signs and wanting to have ice cream on your birthday). Luciano uses this project to challenge gender roles and stereotypes—for example, as she asserts on "Tummy Ache", "I don't need a man to hold my hand / That's just something you'll never understand", as well as commenting on the irony of conformity in the punk scene when you aren't seen as quite "powerful, cool or whatever enough", with the declaration that "it's hard to be a punk while wearing a skirt".

The album balances this with moments of wit and hilarity too, such as on opener "Sixteen", where Luciano recalls the bizarre moment of dating someone with the same name: "When I was sixteen / I dated a boy / With my own name / It was weird / In the back of his truck / Moaning my name / While trying to f***". "Link In Bio" showcases Luciano at her most unrestrained yet, packing a punch of feminist energy, with a repeated refrain telling anyone with negative vibes to "f*** off".

All in all, *Swear I'm Good at This* is definitely one of the more enjoyable punk albums of the year, and definitely worth a listen. ♦



Suck

Scared of Girls

ALBUM REVIEW BY ANOUSHKA MAHARAJ

Three years, two thousand beers, and one million shirts later, Ponsonby locals Scared of Girls have brought garage rock back to Auckland with a glorious five-track EP. The band have penned rugged (albeit self-deprecating) songs about surviving—nay, *thriving*—on a student budget, including the varying perils of youthful promiscuity, turbulent relationships and the (sometimes claustrophobic) nostalgia of small towns.

SOG cites influences ranging from 60s classics (think Beatles/Rolling Stones) to newer bands with rock/punk/alternative twists (think Wavves, FIDLAR or The Strokes)—and while *Suck* certainly emulates these influences, the band retains a signature style borne of their genuine devotion to these genres—and to each other. SOG are arguably iconoclastic ("I'm only vegan when I can afford it") and unabashed in their appreciation of local flavour—their music videos are often filmed at their flat (in between drunken renditions of "The Chain"), which often feature friends of the band.

Standout tracks include "Big Happy", a vibrant and dynamic track preceding "One and the Same", much heavier in its subject matter, but evidence of their versatility as musicians. A personal favourite is the comparably dissonant "Mulholland Drive"—made brilliant by its spooky bridge and endearing erraticism. This is followed by bonus track "Alcohol", packed into one sweet little minute as a chaotic confession that we are all-too-familiar with: "I am a real asshole when I drink alcohol".

A succinct five-track (plus bonus track) ode to garage rock, there is a little something for everyone on this EP—whether it's the overt, cutting grunginess of "Full Metal Jacket", more classically upbeat rock anthems like "Big Happy" or "Alcohol", or the fuzzy, alternative vibes of "Beach Teens"; these homegrown punks are here for your next bout of shit-talking and beer-drinking on the patio of a house you don't own.

Oh, and yeah—the album cover is a real tattoo belonging to the lead singer. Follow your dreams, kids. ♦



A Longform Review: *Colossal*

With Jordan Margetts

SPOILERS AHEAD

Some films, or books or TV shows or albums, just sort of smack you somewhere in the solar-plexus. You can't get rid of the narcissistic but a little too enjoyable feeling that the artist made this *for you, about you*. This isn't one of those films. This weird-bizarre-intellectual-corny-mess of a film is almost impossible to parse out. We left the cinema (reviewer tickets, cheers *Craccum*) a little dazed, a little amused, a little bored, and a lot bewildered.

The basic conceit is this: Anne Hathaway, in a schlubby version of her usual charming New York elite self (think *Devil Wears Prada*), is some kind of messy alcoholic. The English boyfriend dumps her for the terrible crime of being drunk too often. She goes back to her middle-American home town. Rekindles a friendship with the bar-owning Jason Sudeikis and keeps drinking too much. About this point in the film we're pretty sure we've seen this movie. The boyfriend is a jackass. The guy back home who she knew through childhood is a sweetheart. They'll fall in love. She'll stop drinking so naughtily.

...then it turns out she unwittingly controls a monster which, in mimicking her movements, is decimating Seoul and killing a bunch of Koreans. (The film is never convincingly very concerned about this.)

I have this sort of broad test when I review anything in particular. It goes something like this: (1) What is the film's interior goal, what does it actually want to do—does it succeed? (2) Do I like what it's trying to do? I suspect the first question is always the hardest, and probably the most tempting to skip—but while it's all very well me saying I hate *The Avengers* because I don't like superhero movies, it's pretty much worthless unless I get what it's doing on its own terms.

So what is *Colossal* doing? During post-film chat we came up with three basic notions: firstly, a sort of allegorical examination of white-working-class male rage. Secondly, a basically unsatisfying examination of personal failings, particularly re addiction. And thirdly, a cool meta-commentary on a certain stock rom-com type film.

This down-to-earth bar owner, as it turns out, also has a monstrous avatar, this one in the form of a gigantic transformer-looking robot. And here lies the twist: we thought the whole problem of the film was Anne Hathaway's not overly convincing binge-drinking problem. It was Sudeikis' pathological rage against an unfair world, against a wife who (presumably) left him, against his unrealised ambitions for his bar, against Anne Hathaway for going to New York and becoming a journalist and having a better life. In a period where the American establishment is in a paroxysm of confusion about Trump and his middle-American supporters, I can't help but read the third-act of *Colossal* as an elongated attempt to explore male-rage. This leads to some of the more interesting conceptual difficulties—and seems to force you to turn much of the film into a cheap metaphor. Anne Hathaway becomes a scion for a troubled elite class who ultimately needs to overcome a somewhat sympathetic but ultimately toxic rage from middle America.

Mixed in with this large-scale post-Trumpian child's nightmare about masculine rage we get a filmed version of a now clichéd notion: the idea of addicts having “monsters”. Anne Hathaway is an alcoholic. For her she's puffy and grumpy, her hair's a mess, and she seems to look tired often. Apparently that's what passes for a life-destroying addiction. If *Colossal* is

some juggling act between various highbrow concepts (exposed in a lowbrow way), then this ball is the one that gets dropped. And while it was consistent with the generally cynical tone in that there wasn't really a self-improvement narrative, the flip from a focus on Hathaway to Sudeikis, the lack of any exploration of how addiction actually functions, and the total bait-and-switch in terms of who the “bad guy” ended up being just felt cheap and unconvincing.

By far the best element of *Colossal* was the parodying of rom-com audience expectations. The film we start off with is *just so typical*—and then suddenly it isn't. What's clever is, it isn't the monster that undercuts our expectations, it's the men (perhaps these are the real monsters. Deep stuff). I went to the film with one of my editors—and we spent a good while afterwards being amazed and slightly disturbed that from moment to moment, in the final thirty or so minutes of the film, we continually bounced from thinking the douchey unsupportive emotionally manipulative condescending cunt of an Englishman, or the actually physically violent misogynist bar-owner, were going to reveal their true colours and rescue her. Realising that this would be a stupid ending, and how much Hollywood bullshit you have to absorb to even subconsciously want that, speaks to something terrible about the way the type of film *Colossal* is sending up constructs male-female relationships.

Ultimately this was a film-of-ideas. And you can get a good conversation out of it. But the conversations you get will be exactly that: about the ideas the film brings up. The text itself never really moves beyond the vapidness it's trying to parody. But, I hope more weird high concept films like this come out. I also hope they're better than this. ♦



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PRIDE WEEK!

ALANA MISSELBROOK - MEDIA OFFICER

Week eight is going to be a big week for AUSA, as AUSA's own Queer Rights Officer is launching Pride Week! Isabella Francis, the Queer Rights Officer, has a fun-filled week planned at the University.

First off on Monday from 12pm to 2pm is the Rainbow Expo in the Quad! This event includes a barbeques, music and a performance from Ngā Tauira Māori. The Rainbow Expo will also house many stalls for students to get info from, including: Ending HIV, EquAsian, the Equity Office, Trans on Campus, Hidden Perspectives, Rainbow Science, Rainbow Engineering, and Rainbow Business!

Next up: on Tuesday there's the Trans Academic Symposium from 4pm to 6pm in room 207-303. This is being run by Trans on Campus and will feature some academics talking about their research and experiences. Not to mention, there will be snacks provided for everyone who goes along, so make sure you don't miss out. It's all go on Tuesday, as straight after the Trans Academic Symposium is the UniQ games night at Cap and Gown, this is a fun social event, run by UniQ from 6pm to 9pm. This event is guaranteed to have board games, snacks and competitiveness. If that appeals to you, go to the event!

Wednesday is a big day for Pride Week. Over at the Grafton campus there is a Rainbow Afternoon Tea, this is situated outside the Student Kitchen in the Main Atrium of Grafton Campus. Be there at 2:30pm if you study at Grafton, that way you can make sure you get free food and can be a part of the celebration of our rainbow community. At 2pm in Queerspace on the City campus, there is a Global Queer Students Meeting - if you don't know where Queerspace is, it's on level three of the Quad, opposite Shadows but one flight of stairs down! Look out for the rainbow flag. The Global Students Meeting is a coffee group for queer, questioning, or interested international students to meet and chat in a casual environment. Everyone is welcome no matter their orientation or where they come from! Tea, coffee and snacks will be provided, just make sure to bring your lovely selves to the meetings. The final event on Wednesday is legend-wait for it-DARY! 6pm in Shadows Bar is the one, the only DRAG QUEEN BINGO! Bring in a can of any type of food for the AUSA Foodbank, grab your nana cardi's, some slippers and your old war stories to share, because the night of Drag Queen Bingo is the night to tap into your future elderly self. Don't miss out. It will be amazing! Our hosts are the lovely Shavorn Aboreal and Yurii Guai.

Thursday is jampacked full of events. Beginning in Epsom at 10am to 11:30am is the Epsom Morn-

ing Tea. This can be located at Student Space A201 in the main reception building. A free pride-themed morning tea for anybody based at Epsom campus! Go along to have a snack, grab a Pride Craccum, and chat to your friendly Queer Rights Officer! From 2pm to 4pm in the Old SJS Office, above the Quad and opposite the Common Room is the "Talk to a Sexpert/HIV 101" event. This free event is hosting staff and sexual health experts from the New Zealand Aids Foundation who will be discussing sex. If you have any burning questions that you have been too afraid to ask, or just want to know more, this is for you. This is a relaxed event and no judgement will be passed. All questions and contributions are encouraged. Just to sweeten the deal even more, there will be FREE ICE CREAM provided, so who wouldn't want to go to this amazing event? I know I would. Next up on the agenda for Thursday is a screening of *Carol* courtesy of Hidden Perspectives. You can find this event in Arts 1, Room 209

on City Campus. Ditch the books and recharge your batteries with this 2015 British-American romantic drama film. Set in New York City during the early 1950s, *Carol* tells the story of a forbidden affair between an aspiring photographer and an older woman going through a difficult divorce. Not only is this event hosting an amazing movie, but also popcorn and other snacks are provided. Go on, we know you want to! If movies aren't your thing, but poetry is, make your way to the "Hot Damn, It's a Queer Slam" event in the Garden Room of Shadows Bar. 6pm, free entry, and it's open mic for any poets to get and give it a shot! Any and all poetry is welcomed - even Haikus can send powerful messages. Prizes include some sweet UBS vouchers! Judges to be announced, so keep an eye on the Facebook page!

Friday has a great event called the Ass Class. Situated in the Old SJS Office, above the quad and opposite the Common Room on City Campus at 2pm to 4pm, this free event is running along with Ending HIV who is conducting a workshop aimed to help students practice healthy and pleasurable anal sex. If you're confused about Anal sex, or want to know more for future reference, this event is highly recommended for you, plus snacks are provided!

The week comes to a close on Saturday with the Mardi Gras Party at Shadows Bar. From 7pm 'til late, AUSA is wrapping up Pride Week with a MASSIVE Mardi Gras Party. Dressing up is highly encouraged, with the inclusion of spot prizes and a lot of dancing!

Make sure you turn up to the events throughout the week, and make the most of the amazing Pride Week we have scheduled for you! ♦



MONDAY 8TH MAY 12-2PM

RAINBOW EXPO

In the Quad

WEDNESDAY 10TH MAY 6PM

DRAG QUEEN BINGO

SHADOWS BAR

THURSDAY 11TH MAY 6PM

HOT DAMN IT'S A **QUEER SLAM!**

SHADOWS BAR

SATURDAY 13TH MAY 7PM

MARDI GRAS PARTY

SHADOWS BAR

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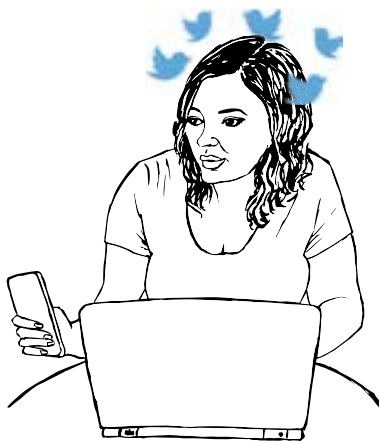


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Wired In

With
Rachel Berryman



The Fate of the Facebook

Each week Rachel, social media enthusiast and online lurker extraordinaire, keeps you in-the-know about what is topical and trending across the world wide web.

In what must have been a highly-calculated PR stunt, last week saw the coincidental release of the eighth *The Fast and the Furious* film and Facebook's annual developer conference, both more affectionately known as "F8". Though there's undoubtedly a nuanced discussion of the action-car-and-muscle-packed movie franchise to be had, this column sets its sights specifically on the "F8" of the social networking monolith, in the hopes that recounting the conference's headlining (and head-spinning) announcements will assist this overwhelmed author to process the incredible visions Mark Zuckerberg has for his platform.

At this year's F8, Mark began his keynote address by lamenting the growing dissolution of community ties and outlining the role Facebook hopes to play in bringing its users (back) together. Since the 1970s, Mark noted, participation in local groups and clubs has decreased by as much as 25%. At odds with Facebook's ethos of connectivity, this conundrum inspired Facebook's developers to start brainstorming how best to instill a "sense of purpose" in individuals who are no longer coming together to discover, express and further their passions.

Their solution? Augmented reality (AR).

"Augmented reality is going to make it so that we can create all kinds of things that, until today, have only been possible in the digital world," Mark gushed, "We're going to be able to interact with them and explore them together."

Facebook's efforts to incorporate AR into its interface are already underway. Those pesky updates to the Facebook and Messenger apps that made turning your camera on *way* too easy? That was Act I. "We're making the camera the first augmented reality platform," Mark explained, offering no reassurance to those of us with clumsy fingers for whom the newly-added

camera functionality has already caused many the heart palpitation.

Act II involves the release of Facebook's Camera Effects Platform, which contains a library of "basic effects" such as "face masks, art frames and style transfers" that users can easily apply to photos taken using Facebook. Because it's open-platform, anyone will be able to contribute to this library; in the not-so-distant future, Facebook hopes to amass (and offer) thousands of different designs and effects from creators all over the world.

Aside from the size of its library, the Camera Effects Platform's main point of difference from its most obvious competitor, Snapchat, is the incorporation of three AR "building blocks" into its image-capturing technology: precise location, 3D effects and object recognition. Precise location involves accurately gauging the depth of a photographed environment, in turn enabling the seamless integration of 3D graphics into the spaces viewed through the lens. 3D effects enable the application of 3D effects to 2D pictures, such as viewing a room from different angles or filling it with water. Object recognition identifies particular items within the frame and offers the user visual effects unique to them, such as a steam effect for a cup of coffee. Further down the line, Mark envisions this technology serving as the foundation for more complex AR experiences, such as virtual street art installations and virtual notes left for friends at specific geographic locations.

The same technology also underscores the second major offering Facebook revealed at F8: social virtual reality. If you had any doubts that Ernest Cline's *Ready Player One* is actually a work of non-fiction sent back from the future, Facebook Spaces will convince you otherwise. This new app, available now in beta for Oculus Rift, assigns you an animated avatar automati-

cally generated from your Facebook photos, and allows you to hang out with your friends in virtual locations. The "spaces" themselves are customisable, with users having the ability to choose any 360-picture to serve as their background. From inside the app, you can also browse your Facebook timeline, take pictures with a selfie stick, make video calls to friends, draw in 3D (much like Tilt Brush) and watch 360-videos.

Honestly, if you have time today, Google "Mashable Facebook Spaces" and check out Jack Morse's beta demo. I've watched it five times and still can't get my head around it.

At the moment, most of these fantastical visions are still in their infancy, with many more years of development still needed to realise their full potential. In the meantime, however, we do have a number of smaller updates to look forward to:

- Instagram will soon be accessible offline.
- Messenger 2.0 will feature discover tools to help you find new businesses and chatbots to interact with (SmarterChild, anyone?).
- Messenger will also soon be integrated with Spotify and Apple Music for easier music sharing, and will include more in-app gaming capabilities.
- Facebook will soon be releasing two new 360-cameras (with 6 and 24 lenses, respectively) that will offer the ability to capture 360-video on-the-move.

There's also the small matter of the Direct Brain Interfaces that Facebook's engineering team are working on, which will one day let you communicate using your mind and interpret through your skin, but unfortunately we don't have room for the keyboard smashing I have yet to do to process that information here. •

**By Popular
Demand**



*With
Michael Clark*

Ode to *Hamilton* Part I: How to Build Ideas Through Music

Each week Michael, long-time writer and all-round teddy bear, tries to persuade you to take pop culture seriously.

Despite my *Hamilton: An American Musical* sweatshirt, I am not true fan of *Hamilton*. Not in the way some of my friends are. Yeah, I can pick out a *Hamilton* song from a crowd, but you get me singing along with one and I'll eventually fall behind or stumble on some of the lyrics. I know that the play is a dazzling marvel of sound and movement, but I had never closely studied the intricate connections between characters through song and dance. I didn't even know The Bullet was a thing (if you don't either, seriously Google it—it's quite spectacular).

What I do love to look at is how film and television use their music. Leitmotifs—bits of music that identify characters, ideas, or themes—are fun to play around with. *Doctor Who* blares its leitmotifs unapologetically. Every character has their own piece of music which varies depending on the tone of the scene. *Game of Thrones* is just as brazen, but puts careful thought into the placement of music, often using it to hint to the audience that there are connections between characters and/or events. *Lost* not only has leitmotifs for each of its many main characters, but also leitmotifs when different situations occur like a death or hiking across the island.

Adorno, academia's buzzkill, hated the way that leitmotifs were being used like this, noting "the sole function of the leitmotif is simply to announce heroes or situations so as to help the audience to orientate itself more easily." For Adorno, creating a theme solely for the individual hinders development and change. He called it "totalising"—a nod to previous works he did about totalitarian ideology.

But this is not all necessarily true. Rather, composers who utilise leitmotifs have found a way to sidestep the issue. Leitmotifs can de-

velop and signify a character's journey. Video essayist Javed Sterritt observes that "Hedwig's Theme" (the playful main theme of the *Harry Potter* series) gets sparser as the movies go on, signifying the loss of Harry's innocence and the general loss of hope as the series go on. The last time we hear the melody is during Harry's death scene where it never completes itself, signaling the end of hope. Meanwhile, *The Lord of the Rings* theme "The Fellowship" constantly changes depending on the dynamic of the eponymous group. As more members are added to the group more instruments are added to the orchestra. Similarly, if there is a rupture in the group, the theme will start playing a corrupted version of itself.

In fact, the complete lack of leitmotifs can be damaging to the emotional bond the audience share with a character. The Marvel Cinematic Universe is infamous for its unmemorable, bland soundtrack and I'm willing to bet that it has to do with its lack of leitmotifs identifying or tying characters together. Other than "The Avengers", the song that plays when the Avengers assemble or do something triumphant, there are really no other recurring melodies to signify themes or character progression so the music becomes bland and emotional investment in the character development wanes.

So when my friend, who is co-writing the second part of this piece and knows a lot more about *Hamilton* than I do, started talking about the leitmotifs of *Hamilton*, I was all ears. I started appreciating the intricate placement of recurring rhythms and phases in each song. I wasn't looking at a mishmash of songs put together to tell the story of a founding father and the man who shot him, rather a carefully constructed chaos telling the story of two tragic conflicting heroes.

Hamilton's music is naturally used as a vehicle for characterisation. The increasingly repeated line of "Alexander Hamilton" and/or its accompanying riff whenever Hamilton sings marks the character's growing self-importance. Burr's constant use of the line "waiting" accompanied by melodies from "Wait For It" serve as a reminder of his disposition for indecision. Music is used to foreshadow the fate of each character, the most obvious being Hamilton's.

Hamilton's death is a relentless part of the music serving as the main driver for the duel motif. The music counts up to nine, but never quite makes it to the tenth beat since the tenth pace in a duel is the point where the combatants turn around. The music always lingers, teasing us that the tenth pace is yet to come. Meanwhile, the chorus watches tragically from the sidelines as Hamilton steers toward his fate; their music, unheard by the characters, pleads for Hamilton. They repeat phrases, emphasise words, and contort melodies to mean different things to convey a warning that only the audience hears. Even though the fates of the characters are told during the introductory song, these rhythms constantly remind us throughout the show where everything is leading.

Leitmotifs are important; they link characters, situations, ideas, and themes, allowing us to create arcs easily within a piece of work. They create emotional connections with the audience, and signify shifts in narrative and character development. *Hamilton* uses the leitmotif to its extremes, but that's not the only way the play structures its music to create narrative, character, and thematic significance. We also have to look at the context of *Hamilton's* music—next time in "Ode to *Hamilton* Part II: Why *Hamilton* Wouldn't Exist Without Rap".♦

Amateur Hour



With
Jordan Margetts

A Man Says a Thing About Feminism

Each week Jordan, disgraced former-editor-in-chief, tries to impart political wisdom but mainly just cries in the shower.

The title is a lie, but I wanted attention quite badly. This isn't actually about feminism, it's about a book called *Why I'm Not a Feminist* by Jessica Crispin. This book is causing quite a stir. *The Guardian* wrote a positive (but duly critical) review. Here's the summary they give:

"What she disdains, then, is what she deems lifestyle feminism: a bland, ultra-inclusive marketing exercise that demands absolutely nothing from those who buy into it save for to ask that they use the word 'feminist' as frequently as possible, preferably while looking utterly adorable."

I don't really think I'm in any kind of position to comment on how women should behave who want to be feminists. Beyond thinking Taylor Swift and Beyoncé are pretty-bloody-far from inspirations, I think being an ally basically means, in this situation, I should shut up and let people who aren't, ya know, massively-overly-continually-patriarchally privileged do the substantive debating. But there's an important side issue—social good versus legitimate critique.

As *The Guardian* article notes, Jessica Crispin's book, while clever and (they're at pains to point out) *actually very feminist* (but in an out-of-fashion second-wave kind of way), fails to provide any helpful normative solutions. It's all diagnostics and no medicine. And, while this is a failure in a book that wants to convince you to give up a particular label/ideology, it isn't generally a fatal flaw. There are plenty of social problems, or problems with movements, that absolutely should be raised, even if we have no clue how to solve them.

But the problem with calling your book *Why I Am Not A Feminist*, and using it as a shotgun attack on a consumerist modern form of popular feminism, isn't the lack of the solu-

tions, it's the bad signalling. The central complaint actually seems to be about opportunistic marketing—e.g. in the wake of Bernie and then Trump we see heaps of critique on pop-up rally stores in the US. But a title like *I Am A Feminist But Think There May Be More To It Than Tee Shirts And Instagram* doesn't sell books. Which is part of the irony here: a book that's basically critiquing the pernicious effects of neoliberal consumerism dilutes its own message in order to get extra media attention and purchases.

Aside from hypocrisy though, I think there's a bigger problem. This book is being talked about on the internet. And one of the features of the fractured-democratised-informational-superstructure that haunts all of us from the minute we wake up and check Facebook to the minute we fall asleep bathed in blue-light is that fuckwits get to see stuff too. Which is a slightly elitist point I know. But imagine the total dicks who are going to find out a female intellectual has written a book that (thinks it) exposes the ultimate shallowness of modern feminism. And while Rachel Cooke of *The Guardian* might be able to craft a measured response, the reddit trolls and the *Spiked!* readers will not. At last a certain type of gross chauvinist can laud the failures of feminism.

Quite obviously that was never Crispin's intention. This is an argument from within. It's part of an evolving feminist movement having an internal dialogue. But books at some level are written to be sold. And a provocative title means sales. Many of which will be to people who don't want to improve or support feminism, but who want something to justify their fundamental discomfort with it.

And this raises an interesting problem. Like I say, I think there's lots of room to challenge problematic elements of a movement. And Crispin being an educated, feminist woman is in a prime place to do so. But these critiques

will damage feminism, at least to some small degree. And here's my bait-and-switch moment. Because we (assuming "we") are basically uncomfortable with what Crispin is doing, or at the very least the way she's packaged it, we (I) am fine with critiquing it for non-intellectual problems. By which I mean: what practical effect does this attempt at contributing to the discourse actually have? But we're a lot less comfortable doing this when people are on the right side. How many *Everyday Feminism* articles have there been decrying the essential bigotry of people who respond to being "called out" with "well, that won't convince anyone". We're told that oppressed groups don't have to think about efficacy.

For the most part I think I buy this logic: (a) being nice hasn't worked in the past; shocking people at least gets your issues out there, and (b) fuck up, it isn't my job to educate you. But reading this book, to which I essentially apply the "well, this does more harm than good" critique, I wonder. Maybe in these tense, socially aggravated times we need to think a little harder about how people from other, well, tribes will take our words. I'm not sure really. But I'm concerned.

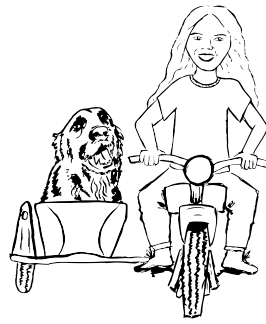
Craccum loves letters to the editor. I love letters to me. Please email editor@craccum.co.nz with your thoughts. Do we need a change in tone? Does it matter if people are convinced? Have I missed an obvious point? (yes). If you email me with something interesting I will devote a whole column to replying. ♦

RECOMMENDATIONS:

"How a Fractious Women's Movement Came to Lead the Left," Amanda Hess, New York Times.

"Jessa Crispin: 'Today's feminists are bland, shallow and lazy,'" Rachel Cooke, The Guardian.

Quarter-Life Crisis



*With
Caitlin Abley*

Gone Girl

Each week Caitlin, disgraced former-editor-in-chief, tackles an item from her list of Twenty Things To Do In Your Twenties and tries to pass it off as journalism.

Like most normal 23-year-olds, I have spent my mid-semester break trapped in a cycle of eating stale crackers, watching the first 50 minutes of Will Smith movies on Netflix, experiencing crippling anxiety over my university workload, refusing to do anything to ameliorate said workload, and going back to the stale crackers. I continued my treasured tradition, three years strong, of vowing to write *at least* four columns in the break, only for my deadline to arrive with—you guessed it—precisely zero words written. Although pressed for time, I decided that the break presented an opportunity to cross something more hefty off my list of Twenty Things To Do In Your Twenties. The 21-hour-long M. Night Shyamalan marathon seemed the obvious choice, but my watching buddy had to bail at the last minute, inexplicably not having 21 hours to devote to twelve works of staggering cinematic genius. I chose instead to tackle:

*Go to a city where no one knows your name.
Reinvent yourself.*

Now, I'm assuming the author of this particular challenge really meant to suggest *moving* to a new city and starting afresh. As much as I would love to drop out of uni (for the second time) I'd say that even by my standards uprooting my life and shifting to another city might be *just a bit much* for a column. Besides, where the fuck would I move? Financial restrictions would confine me to New Zealand. Wellington's full of wanks, Christchurch is full of whites and Tauranga is full of people waiting to die. This country offers seriously slim pickings in terms of attractive cities. So I'd have to settle for visiting a new place and reinventing myself for a temporary period of time.

The perfect opportunity presented itself when I overheard a conversation between two family friends, who were discussing who would sober drive to a wedding just outside of Whangarei. I'm always scoping for a #sidehustle, so like the little charlatan I am, I offered to sober drive them for cash. This eventually wound up with me sitting

in a Subaru in Whangarei with nine hours to kill while I waited for them to finish up at their wedding. What better time to reinvent oneself than when one is stuck in a city with a population of 53,000 and an alarming number of annual stabblings? Also, what else is there to do in Whangarei other than develop an alter-ego and impress it upon the unwitting locals?

Now that I'd determined my location, I had to decide *who* I wanted to be for the day. This in itself was a fun, if not convincingly productive exercise, and I'd recommend it as a piece of procrastinatory bullshit. Ask yourself: if you were to model the ideal trajectory of your life, what would it look like? What person would you be? My Ideal Self has a couple of possible manifestations. Ideal Self Number One is called something like Celeste or Lilah or maybe Lilah Celeste and she lives on a farm out in Bethells Beach in a dodecahedron house with eight dogs and thirty-two chickens. Lilah Celeste makes organic jams that she sells at local markets and her period is synced with the moon. Lilah Celeste is essentially Zoe Kravitz's character in *Big Little Lies* (and equally hot). Ideal Self Number Two is probably called Hazel or Sienna and she's a public intellectual. Hazel writes for the *New Yorker*. Hazel gets invited to speak at literary panels and runs a weekly podcast. She interviews other public intellectuals (especially hot ones) and eventually runs a late night talk show. Hazel is essentially female Stephen Colbert (and equally hot).

I thought Whangarei wouldn't respond well to Hazel—bless her, but she's way too bougie for the place. Lilah Celeste would be a better fit—surely there's a coven of ageing bohemians squelching around in Whangarei, making hand creams and selling artisanal balsamic vinaigrette on Sundays—so I decided I'd take her with me when I was stranded in the Paris of the Upper North Island for the day.

I dropped the old mates off at the wedding and set about my process of reinvention. I was creating myself anew, like Amy Dunne in *Gone Girl*, but

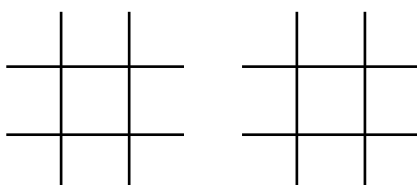
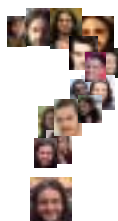
instead of dying my hair mouse-brown and wearing a doo-rag (which David Fincher deemed was enough to make the devastatingly beautiful Rosamund Pike ugly as FUCK), I piled on a bunch of amethyst necklaces and turquoise rings—*very* Lilah Celeste. Like Amy Dunne in *Gone Girl*, I also ate my body weight in Kit Kats—it helped her get into character, right? And then I waited for chances to reveal my new self to the people of Whangarei. Clean slate.

I sat on the beach for a few hours, trying to project with my posture alone that I owned a lifestyle block and had a very holistic outlook on life. I tried to show off my forearms in the hope that someone would notice that they were well-developed, from such regular jam-making. No dice. I went to McDonalds, and said, charmingly, to the girl at the counter, "The name's Lilah, for the order." "Um," she replied, "we just give you a number, you're 254." I smiled at her like I was the kind of woman who had a giant vat in her backyard wherein she squashed homegrown raspberries with her bare feet (for jam-making purposes). I don't think she got it. This wasn't going well. I stopped at the petrol station, and tried to ask the bored teen at the pump whether there was a market in town (for jam-selling purposes). He grunted back, "Yep there's a Pak 'n Save up the road." I laughed like the kind of lady who owned an enormous loom on which to spin the wool from her pet sheep, which she then hammered into a paper-like substance (for jam-labelling purposes). He didn't get it either. The final nail in Lilah Celeste's coffin came when someone recognised me as I was leaving the petrol station. Turns out it's hard to reinvent yourself in a country when you know someone in every fucking town.

Reinventing yourself in one day is precisely as dumb as it sounds. Maybe it would be worthwhile to attempt over a longer period of time, and probably somewhere other than Whangarei—but maybe just try to like your current self first. Or maybe try a doo-rag, it worked for Amy. ♦

BABY'S BOTTOM SUDOKU

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KISSES AND QUIZZES

EASY (ONE POINT)

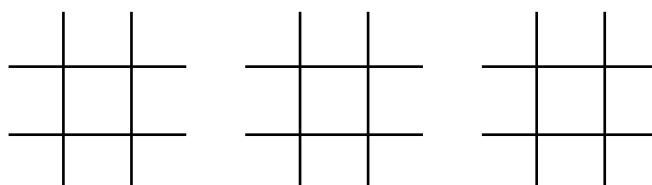
1. Nelson Mandela died in which year?
2. If a material is described as "ferrous", what metal is most likely present?
3. George Gershwin wrote a rhapsody in which colour?

MEDIUM (TWO POINTS)

4. *Game of Thrones* season seven is set to premiere in which month?
5. *Exit Through the Gift Shop* was directed by which artist?
6. Robbie Deans served as coach of which Super Rugby franchise?
7. In which country would you find the Spanish Steps?

HARD (THREE POINTS)

8. Eric Monkman has become a cult celebrity due to his erratic appearances on which long-running quiz show?
9. How old was the oldest competitor in the recent World Masters Games?
10. Who were the three original hosts of Seven Sharp?



ROCK SOLID SUDOKU

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	1			2			7	
					5	9		
					9	4	2	3

HERALD'S HEROES

Every week we'll trawl the comments section of the NZ Herald Facebook page to find the hilarious, the repulsive, and the outright absurd.



Jo
I was there for Easter, so who ever it is they will have a truly magnificent time, Arrowtown in Autumn, Queenstown in Autumn is like a beautiful fairy tale, hope they enjoy themselves!~
3 hours ago · Like · 4 · Reply

While the country was getting all flustered about the high-profile VIPs arriving in Queenstown, and whether we should even allow that Five-Eyed Hillary-Hater James "Inappropriately Timed Federal Investigation" Comey into the country, Jo had her mind on other things because JO IS TOO GODDAMN PURE FOR THIS WORLD.

the people to blame.

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SHADOWS "CONTRIBUTOR OF THE WEEK"

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