

felix ...

THE STUDENT NEWSPAPER OF IMPERIAL COLLEGE LONDON



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Fuck me it's Eurovision

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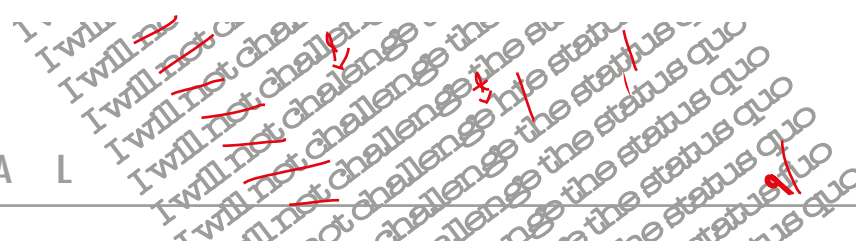
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Divest this



Is Imperial morally bankrupt? I first asked myself this question in 2011 when I started my Biology undergraduate. My department had just sacked most, if not all of its plant scientists. There was no money in the field. Have I come close to an answer since? Maybe. Sometimes I've looked at Imperial and higher education in the UK in general and I've felt disgusted by it. The way research is determined by corporate giants, whether that's Big Oil or Pharma, or whether it's weapons, or it's banks. The way academics are pressured to publish, to bring in the money, to ignore things that in any other workplace would be uncompromisable. The way students are seen as cash cows, cheap labour, endless in supply, desperate.

Other times I look around me and I can't help but be in awe. Of the people I'm surrounded by; some of my generation's brightest minds. Of the ideas that are constantly being exchanged, lighting up the eyes of students and staff. Of the tenacity with which some people can hunt for ideals, knowledge, dreams.

The struggle to divest lies at the border between the dark and the light sides of science. We know fossil fuel use is unsustainable. Every step of the production line in the fossil fuel industry ravages the environment and detriments our health. Yet our civilization relies on it still.

I understand the energy crisis humanity is facing at the moment is a challenging one. But unfortunately it's one we have to overcome, there is no alternative. We change or we go down with the ship.

And here is where it gets complicated. As much as I might badmouth it (and I do a lot), I don't believe Imperial to be morally bankrupt. But I do think that as a science institution we get trapped in the numbers and facts and logistics and practicalities and complexities of the situation. And maybe it's time to take a step back from the science and think about the ethics of our actions, our investments.

It's time to make a decision based on our heart and invest in our dreams instead.

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Address | felix, Beit Quad, Prince Consort Road, London, SW7 2BB || Telephone | 02075948072 || Printed by | Mortons Media Group Ltd Media Centre, Morton Way, Horncastle, Lincolnshire, LN9 6JR || Registered Newspaper | ISSN 1040-0711 || Copyright © felix 2016



Letters to the editor

In response to *Are millennials too entitled or do we just deserve better?* which appeared in issue 1662

Dear Lef,

She's ok isn't she? I enjoyed Tessa's article on millennials and entitlement in the May 5 edition. As a lecturer who was an undergraduate at Imperial in the early 90s I've seen the issue from both sides I guess. Teaching always seemed low on the priority list in my days in EE yet when the teaching was good it was brilliant. Eric Yeatman, Chris Toumazou and others I'm looking at you.

Seriously tho you look so young, how do you do it?

Just rubbing it in now

You're the bomb dot com Gareth. Thanks for finding time to write to us and find us jobs <3

But what about the wider question of whether today's young people are entitled or obliged? Back in my day, the gov paid for my first degree and there was even some drinking money left over in my grant cheque. Contrast that with today's tuition fees, with a generation expected to top up national pensions to which they themselves are unlikely to be entitled, with little hope of owning their own property unless their parents happen to be rich, who therefore suffer a transfer of wealth from themselves to older wealthier landlords enjoying rising property values and cheap mortgages. Millennials will retire at an older age than people like me and will inherit from their predecessors the uncertainties of climate change, the resulting refugee disaster, the decision to leave Europe and a volatile geopolitical scene. Dear fee-paying student, the least I can do in return is give you decent feedback on your coursework.

Gareth Mitchell

Lecturer MSc Science Communication and Science Media Production

In response to us being great, apparently

Dear felix,

I just wanted to say that I really love some of the articles you guys put together, especially the Editor's note on the 2nd page. I love how you guys are so truthful about your feelings and opinions. I wish I could express myself as freely and eloquently. I don't know how many student readers actually write to felix and congratulate for your hard work. I just hope that this email will serve as a tiny encouragement! Sadly, I am graduating soon and won't be getting felix free copies anymore, but I hope that you guys, and I am confident you will, continue to write more and entertain or educate students here! :)

From Chloe Lee

Union reels in £34,000 from Postgrad Graduation Day

Remember last week's postgrad graduation day? It made the Union of ton of dough. The largest graduation ceremony to date which saw a record of 9,400 guests attend, brought Union shops and outlets a total of £34,715. That's about 13 grand more than last year and eight grand more than the record year of 2015.

Postgrad Graduation Day saw over 3,284 graduates receiving their diplomas. That means that proud families spent a tenner on average on their graduates. That's on top of the £51-58 that gown hire costs and a hat purchase (you can't hire them) which will set you back another £30. Proud parents are another extra that will cost you £35 a pop. If

you think it's worth it, to watch Boyce Avenue at the Royal Albert Hall in November, booking a ticket now wouldn't cost you less than £30. And these are just the essentials.

We're not even going to talk about pictures, wax figurines and engraved rings.

From ticket sales to the graduates' family and friends, College is estimated to have made about £328,000.

When asked about profits a College spokesperson said that Imperial "endeavours to keep the cost of Graduation day as low as possible and we do not charge students for their attendance [Aw how sweet]. The income received from guest tickets only covers part of the cost to the College - no surplus funds whatsoever are received from Graduation. I guess thanks are in order.

Bioengineering lecturer accidentally shares exam paper with students

Last week a lecturer accidentally shared an upcoming exam paper with their first-year bioengineering students.

The unfortunate gaffe occurred during a revision lecture for Molecules, Cells and Processes.

During the lecture, a student had a question that was not covered in the section of the revision session.

In order to locate the relevant material, the lecturer opened up the exam on the desktop after having taken out the HDMI connecting the computer to the projector.

Unfortunately the lecture was recorded via Panopto, a College ICT service that allows the recording of a computer screen as well as visual and audio content. The system has been part of IC's

teaching arsenal for years now allowing staff to record live lectures, special events, tutorials and more.

When students got back home, they found out that the entire exam they'd be taking the following week was online.

"Yeah naturally we realised pretty quickly what her mistake was," said a student that prefers to remain anonymous.

Following the realisation of the mistake by the Bioengineering department, the Panopto recording of the revision session was taken down and an email was sent out apologising for the fuck-up.

"Several students had viewed the recording by the time we found out, and so the paper and its questions can therefore not be used as this year's exam and so another paper will be written," read

the email.

The Panopto recording of the revision session will be made available again shortly. In response to enquiries Martyn Boutelle, Director of Courses for Bioengineering said that "a replacement exam paper was fairly straightforward to write as we did not need to devise new problem-based questions that need a lot of testing. The questions were then reviewed internally and by an External Examiner, following our normal procedures. The whole process followed in response to this issue was also approved by an External Examiner."

Boutelle added that on Wednesday's revision class "all seemed well" and that students seemed satisfied following their exam on Thursday.

Palestinian Ambassador gives talk

In response to the Israeli Ambassador's visit

Matt Johnston

Imperial College was host last week to Manuel Hassassian, the Palestinian Authority's diplomatic representative to the UK, following reactions to a talk with the Israeli ambassador Mark Regev back in January (Dr. Hassassian does not have the rank of ambassador as the UK does not presently recognize Palestine as a sovereign state). The talk was well attended by members of the student body and provoked discussion on both sides of the conflict.

The talk was hosted by Dr Matthew Wraith, who was pleased that his call to action at the end of the event with the Israeli ambassador for the other side of the debate to be showcased had been answered. Unlike the Israeli ambassador's talk which was shrouded in secrecy, Hassassian's visit was advertised well in advance.

The format of the event was essentially the same to Regev's visit, with Hassassian giving a half hour opening talk before initiating a discussion and taking questions from the floor.

In his opening monologue, Hassassian spoke about the current state of the conflict, how he felt that there was currently

process and the resolutions that they have passed, to criticisms of the United States' handling of their role as the "broker of peace".

Hassassian also touched on President Trump's meeting earlier last week with Palestinian Authority President Mahmoud Abbas, referring to it as merely "lip service", and questioned if Trump even knew "the difference between a two-state and one-state solution". He further accused Trump's delegation of being biased against Palestine and called them partisan (referring to the US Special Representative for International Negotiations, Jason Greenblatt, and Trump's son-in-law, Jared Kushner).

The ambassador also chastised Trump's inflammatory comments in which he reduced the complexity of the situation. Last week the US President referred to the Israel/Palestine conflict as "something that I think is, frankly, maybe not as difficult as people have thought over the years". Hassassian pointed out that the situation wasn't quite like "buying real estate in Las Vegas".

Trump didn't take home the award of Hassassian's "Most Failed President in US History" though, that honour was awarded to Barack Obama, who the ambassador felt had accomplished next to nothing in the conflict.

Despite criticisms, Hassassian seemed to be a firm believer that peace negotiations via international bodies (UN, US Government etc.) were the only way forward and that "Palestinians cannot liberate Palestine by firearms". This faith in external mediation was contrasted by his frustration towards international bodies which he feels have done very little to

\\ Unlike the Israeli Ambassador's talk which was shrouded in secrecy, Hassassian's visit was advertised well in advance \\

"no light at the end of the tunnel", and how negotiations were essentially non-existent. His talk covered everything from the involvement of the United Nations in the peace

NO PHOTOGRAPHY ALLOWED FOR SOME DUMB REASON

end the conflict. "[Palestine and Israel today are] stuck between the historically inevitable and the politically impossible," Hassassian said, and later added his doubts about the prospect of a two-state solution.

Following Hassassian's opening speech, the questions section produced heated and emotional discussion from the audience and Hassassian alike, and the topics of the Palestinian Authority Martyrs Fund, the UN, and the effectiveness of the PLO (Palestinian Liberation Organisation) were discussed amongst other things.

\\ Trump didn't take home the award of Hassassian's "Most Failed President in US History" though, that honour was awarded to Barack Obama \\

\\ Wraith is confident that these talks are a testament to a change in the culture of political apathy Imperial has been known for \\

to a change in the culture of political apathy Imperial has been known for: "I don't think scientists have the option of being apolitical now, if they ever did. And judging by the rate at which this event sold out, I don't think anyone wants to be". This event takes place just weeks after 10,000 scientists and allies participated in the London 'March for Science'. Trump's recent attack on climate change and science in general, as well as the potential fallout that Brexit might cause to research funding, have highlighted the relevance of politics to the scientific community. "Already I've got yet more emails from students, just like Farri last time" added Wraith, "saying 'why don't we do another event on India-Pakistan in Kashmir? Why don't we get other ambassadors along?' There are plans underway. Watch this space."

Gaba himself has plans to make this a regular occurrence on campus: "I hope to keep this momentum in student interest and appetite going into next year, with similar high profile guests. I hope to extend the scope of the topics discussed to different areas of global politics and economics... Europe, America and the Asia-Pacific. I will hopefully be doing this from within a club soon to be established as 'The Speakers Club'". Watch this space indeed.

The event was realised thanks to efforts by Farri Gaba, an aeronautics undergraduate, who was pleased to see students from a range of backgrounds participating in the conversation. "I took inspiration from the previous Israeli ambassador's talk about the Palestinian-Israeli conflict to invite his direct counterpart to discuss the same conflict from the opposing view" says Gaba. "I did this to offer interested students a breadth of perspective and understanding."

Dr Wraith, the chair of both events, was similarly pleased with outcome of the talk: "This time there was a very good turnout of critical voices from the audience which I welcomed. I contacted the Israeli Society and the Jewish society beforehand, just as I contacted the Palestinian society last time, saying 'come along, get involved, confront him with what you think and what you know'. They responded and got involved."

Wraith is confident that these talks are a testament

Imperial Divestment Campaign resurrected

Or is this the final nail in its coffin?

Lef Apostolakis

The divestment campaigners at Imperial are on the move again. This week saw them taking to campus with various events and actions. On Wednesday students dropped a banner off the main union building in Beit Quad. The banner which wrote out in large black and orange letters "IMPERIAL DIVEST NOW!" was taken down within hours. The Union has come out in support of student-led campaigns but it remains unclear whether Union Staff were involved in the taking down of the banner.

On Thursday, a chalk mural sprang up on the paved floor in front of Queen's Tower. Again, security acted fast and put a halt to the protest, but not before the realisation of a large four by two metre wide drawing. In response, security personnel tried taking down participants' College ID numbers. When asked what the problem was one member of security said it had nothing to do with the content but rather the fact that someone would have to be called in to wash the mural away.

Ironically, in 2014 Imperial asked students to create a massive chalk mural along Imperial College Road for Imperial Festival. Content or removal didn't seem to be a major concern at the time. In

fact, the mural fell victim to the unpredictably wet summer weather and was washed away halfway through the festival.

Campaigners think Imperial's investments don't reflect its aims as an institution, namely the use of science to solve global challenges. "The fossil fuel industry's continued exploration is incompatible with our future and undermines the research done here on low carbon technologies and climate change," says Naomi Pratt, one of the campaigners.

Though both actions were quickly suppressed and it's unclear how many students noticed them, those who did felt divestment was an important issue to discuss. "I'm fairly on board with it", said Laurence Copson, a Climate Change, Management and Finance student who happened to be at the Union with his cohort during the banner drop. "I'd just do it from a financial perspective. I'd just make an economic argument for why you'd choose energy efficiency and alternative energy over oil and gas".

For the first time in 2015, green energy accounted for more than half of new electricity capacity with the IEA predicting a 42% growth of renewable energy capacity by 2021. Then, last year, green energy development overtook the fossil fuel sector.



In the US alone 22GW worth of green energy capacity or an equivalent of eleven large hydroelectric dams were added to the energy infrastructure.

So does that mean Imperial's money-making instincts might lead it to divest from Big Oil? James Kennedy, another Climate Change student, doesn't seem convinced. "When you think about Imperial and how much money the chemical engineering department for example must take from big oil companies and how that provides huge funds for research at our university, this is probably going to be difficult."

"It's going to be the last nut to crack in term of universities. It's got to be the most oil-and-gas-focused university in the country" says Charlie Cook, another member of the cohort.

Would divesting even matter though? According to a 2016 Freedom of Information request Imperial has £220 million in its endowment fund. This includes shares in oil giants such as Exxon (£0.52 million), Cairn Energy (£0.1 million), Shell (£0.86 million) and

people for, say clean energy rather than oil and gas," says Cook.

In fact divesting from fossil fuels while continuing to funnel so much talent into the industry would be hollow at best if not outright hypocrisy. But soon it might be the only option if we want to remain cutting edge and market our employability. In Europe coal is rapidly being phased out, with companies such as Drax Group Plc, Steag GmbH to Uniper SE closing and converting generators all over the continent. In the US too, solar alone currently employs more people than coal, oil and gas combined, despite Trump's apparent love for the black stuff.

How long will it make sense for Imperial to keep pushing its students into a field that might not exist for much longer?

"We recognise that fossil fuels contribute to greenhouse gas emissions and we work to mitigate their impact while seeking viable alternative sources of energy," said an Imperial spokesperson in response to the campaign. "We steward our endowment gifts carefully and believe that we can have the greatest impact on climate change by optimising these resources to invest in research and education."

Probably indefinitely.



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C O M M E N T ... felix

What is so bad about fossil fuel companies, anyway?



Rhidian Thomas and Max Moynan
discuss the things that the oil companies
don't want us to know

\\ All parties seem to be
able to agree on one thing:
they'd much rather we didn't
look too closely at their
murky past \\

Divest Imperial are calling on College to remove its investments from fossil fuel companies, but what exactly is so bad about fossil fuel companies, anyway? Most attention is given to their impact on the climate through their carbon emissions, but fossil fuel companies often make headlines (or conspicuously don't) for altogether more sinister reasons. Many have a track record of human rights abuses and environmental lapses that would embarrass even the most hardened dictator.

Take, for example, Royal Dutch Shell (better known simply as Shell). For many years, Shell has conducted drilling operations in the Niger River delta region in Nigeria. Since around 15BC, the Ogoni people have lived and worked on this land; the arrival of Shell in the 1950s, however, turned the old order upside down. Their predominantly agricultural lifestyle became ever harder to maintain in the face of oil spills totalling millions of barrels (or approximately 40% of all of Shell's oil spills between 1976 and 1991).

Understandably, residents began to question why Shell were being allowed to conduct operations in the area. After all, 85% of Nigeria's oil wealth has benefited the top 1% of the population, with 70% of the country living on less than a dollar a day.

\\ The company focusses solely on itself and profits ahead of environmental or criminal issues \\

The money, just like the oil, was flowing straight out of Nigeria. In response to the Ogoni peoples' protests, Shell were ruthless, hiring members of the Nigerian military as a private defence force. Raids on villages in the area saw residents tortured, raped, and executed in brutal fashion, in an effort to discourage resistance to Shell's expansion. All the while, Shell continued to employ the military, and as recently as 2010 was found to have paid an armed militia \$159,000 to protect its oil infrastructure.

Unfortunately, Shell's record is far from unusual in the sector. ExxonMobil, until recently under the leadership of US Secretary of State Rex Tillerson, offers another depressingly similar example. The parallels are uncanny; substitute Ogoniland in Nigeria for Aceh in Indonesia, and the story is pretty much unchanged. Members of the Indonesian military acting on behalf of Mobil (pre-merger) are alleged to have committed abuses of nightmarish sadism: shooting protesters in their kneecaps, administering electric shocks to their genitals, and even threatening them

with pits of human heads.

As if that weren't enough, ExxonMobil's story has another dark chapter. Recent investigations have revealed that Exxon scientists were among the first to realise the implications of rising carbon dioxide levels, with some reports suggesting that their research indicated a warming planet as early as the 1950s. To their credit, the scientists insisted on the publication of their findings and Exxon acquiesced; by the mid-80s however, with the oil price falling, Exxon's management performed a breathtaking U-turn. Over the next decades, Exxon became one of the most prolific funders of climate-sceptics, in a desperate attempt to undermine the research of their own scientists. Had it not been for their intellectual dishonesty and anti-scientific cowardice, who knows how much closer we'd be to addressing climate change.

Imperial also has investments in a company which employs over 100,000 people, has revenue of around \$50 billion each year and is worth more than McDonalds. It has consistently kept a low profile, due to it not owning any oilfields, excluding it from the Guardians divestment list, from the 'Keep it in the ground' campaign. Yet this company works with every major oil company to extract the oil from the ground. The company is Schlumberger and is far from a moral one.

In 2015 it was found that

Schlumberger had employed staff working in the US and other US citizens to work on contracts in Sudan and Iran, something not allowed by US law. To prevent authorities uncovering this, the countries were referred to as "Southern Egypt" (Sudan) and the "Northern Gulf" (Iran). This was eventually uncovered and the company were dealt a \$233 million criminal fine, the largest in US history for sanctions violations. The company had been dealt a light blow in comparison to the size of the company, and on receipt of the fine its shares



rose 2%.

Schlumberger still operates today in some of the most challenging areas such as Burma, Libya and Turkmenistan. Simultaneously being self-aware of the issues, a recent company memo claimed that corruption in Turkmenistan is not as bad as in Kazakhstan or Azerbaijan – not exactly reassuring. Clearly the company focusses solely on itself and profits ahead of environmental or criminal issues.

Alternatively, one may look at our own President's appointment to the board of directors of Chevron. The

company is the second largest oil company in America behind ExxonMobil, and in recent years has been involved in a bitter environmental dispute in Ecuador, at one point lobbying the US government to impose trade restrictions on the country so that the lawsuit would be dropped. The case began in 1993 and continues to this day, overshadowing other controversies including an oil spill in 2011 off the coast of Brazil in which over 400,000 litres were spilt, and an oil rig explosion in 2012 in which two workers were killed.

Hypocritically, the company then launched a 'Real Issues' campaign designed to aid discussion of the important issues in the energy industry. They did this through a 'Will you join us?' forum – a clear attempt at greenwashing, as their CEO recently stated that he doesn't agree with the policies intended to be implemented by the Paris Climate Accord. Presumably the company wants to retain a high level of output of oil and gas into the future as the world attempts to turn to renewables.

Collectively, shares in Shell, ExxonMobil and Schlumberger comprise nearly half of Imperial's total fossil fuel investments, while Imperial's chummy relationship with Chevron is embodied in our very own President. All parties seem to be able to agree on one thing: they'd much rather we didn't look too closely at their murky past.



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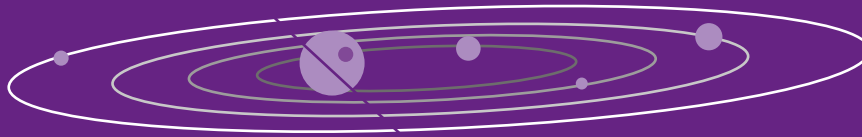
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Forests have been hiding in plain sight

Andrada Balmez explains how we've only just discovered 467 million hectares of forest

Scientists have been missing the forest for the trees; literally, it turns out. A team of international scientists have found that dryland forest cover could be 40% to 47% higher than previously estimated. This corresponds to 467 million hectares (Mha) of forest that have never been reported before (and this is approximately 250 times the size of Wales or seven times the surface of France). The report increases the current estimates of global forest by at least 9%, the team reported.

Dryland biomes cover 40% of the Earth's surface and from the Mediterranean Sea to central India, from South America to the Russian Federation, they contain some of the most threatened ecosystems, including seven out of

the 25 biodiversity hotspots.

Previous estimates of dryland forests have been incongruous due to inconsistency in methods and reliance on national cover statistics. For example different studies would use satellite images varying in resolution, different mapping approaches and even different definition of what constitutes a forest, now defined as "land spanning an area of more than 0.5ha with a tree cover over 10% that is not predominantly used for agriculture or urban land use, as well as land on which tree cover is temporarily under 10%, but is expected to recover". Moreover, the study also considered non-tropical dry forests which hadn't been mapped using satellite imagery before. This latest estimate used global satellite data from Google Earth, with high spatial resolution imagery. Even

so, distinguishing trees from shrubs, disentangling reflectance and shadows proved

\\ This is approximately 250 times the size of Wales \\

to be difficult sometimes, the researchers warn.

This estimation also solves a field conundrum: the dissonance between land use and land cover. Land use is employed to describe areas that are used by man (urban, agricultural, industrial) whereas land cover describes natural ecosystems. In the past, estimates of land use and land cover didn't quite add up to our global land surface. But this work has managed to bridge the

disparity.

In the future we could get a much clearer idea of how much carbon is stored in forests. At the moment our estimates are not as accurate as they could be due to the discrepancies in the forest coverage, but if we want to construct better models

in order to know what we should expect from climate change, we ought to improve those estimates. Currently, the rate of deforestation predicts that rainforests might disappear in the next 100 years, possibly replaced by dryland forests as the dryland biomes will extend.



A Coolabah forest in the Pilbara region of Western Australia \\ TERN Ausplots

How we'll meet-our our maker

Lizzie Riach discusses the subtleties of a meteor apocalypse

New computer simulations have found that if an asteroid impacted Earth, humans would be more likely to die from the blast itself, and not the subsequent effects it would have on the planet. A comforting thought. The shock waves, extreme winds and falling bits of space rock would probably deal the surrounding humanity its final blow. That is, according to recent computer simulations conducted by planetary scientists lead by Clemens Rumpf.

One of the simulations targeted London specifically, simulating a 200-metre-wide space rock hurtling at a speed of 20 kilometres per second. The results indicated that around two thirds of all suggested fatalities would be a result of shock waves and extreme winds carrying debris.

The range of damage seen in simulations was, as you'd expect, very broad, with some impacts killing over 117 million people, and others posing no threat at all, with smaller space rocks exploding in the atmosphere before reaching the ground.

Tsunamis became the main danger for asteroids landing in water (accounting for around 70-80% of the total deaths from each of these impacts). Despite this, the simulations showed land impacts to be much more catastrophic for life than those landing in the oceans, due to the likely proximity of dense human populations.

But you can rest easy. In reality, fatal asteroids are very rare. Meteors that slip through, like the 20 metre wide rock that shook the Russian city of Chelyabinsk in 2013 are predicted to only frequent Earth every

century. Impacts like the one suspected of driving the dinosaurs to extinction 66 million years ago are believed to only occur once every 100 million years.

But, as is the nature of most natural phenomena, meteors can't be predicted. Astronomers are constantly scouting the skies for potential dangers. Others ask the question: so what if we were in the line of fire? How would we divert this space rock? Proposals include countering the asteroid with a high speed spacecraft to throw it off course, or initiating nuclear explosion to propel it away

(the "Asteroid impact avoidance" wiki page highlights multiple strategies in detail!)

The simulations are not without criticism. Gareth Collins, a planetary scientist working here at Imperial, suggests the published findings could be misleading. With a 60-metre-wide rock, very few impacts could kill millions, with the majority killing none. The average is therefore greatly inflated by a few exceptional circumstances – it all depends on where it lands, Collins maintains: "you have to put it in perspective."

Imperial College London



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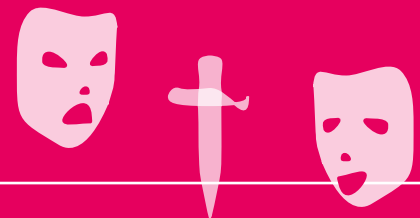
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Modern Classics of Cinema | *Super 8*



J.J. Abram's love letter to the films of his childhood centres around a group of early-teens making home movies and investigating mysteries
\\ Paramount Pictures

Hafiz Zainal

More than just an homage to early Spielberg films, J.J. Abram's 2011 sci-fi adventure film *Super 8* explores the relationships between families, and the tricky navigation teenagers must face as they start to leave childhood behind

J.J. Abrams' sci-fi adventure *Super 8* is a poetic tribute to early Spielberg films, taking us down the avenue of their childhood memories: shooting action films with neighbourhood friends on an 8mm format camera – known as the Super 8, it was first marketed in the 60's as a user-friendly sound-recording camera. The film's beautiful visuals are hard to ignore and coupled with an emotionally-stirring storyline, *Super 8* succeeds in becoming more than a mere homage to Spielberg.

(A fair bit of warning to readers, like myself, inexperienced in 70's filmmaking

\\ The film's beautiful visuals are hard to ignore – coupled with an emotionally-stirring storyline, *Super 8* is much more than a mere homage to Spielberg \\

– the title may evoke a picture of eight kids with superpowers teaming up to destroy a common threat – which is something I wish I could say had never crossed my mind prior to watching – damn those superhero movies! If it does, promptly pull it out of your brain and head to the nearest bin for disposal.)

Set in 1979, in the rural town of Lillian, Ohio, *Super 8* centers around a group of 14-year-old kids who share a love for filmmaking. Joe (Joel Courtney), having recently lost his mother in a local mill accident, copes by escaping into his hobbies: painting plastic train models and making zombie films. His friend, Charles (Riley Griffiths), the amateur director of the apocalyptic film they're making, is opportunistic and has an eye for things that have "production value!", which brings the group along to a deserted

train station one night to shoot a scene. Trouble looms as they find themselves in the middle of a massive train derailment, marking the start of the emerging terror that besets the town: people in Lillian go missing, along with their dogs and electrical appliances, compelling an electronics saleswoman to proclaim, "this feels like a Russian invasion!" – an allusion to the rising tension with the Soviet Union as the Cold War was entering new heights.

The kids form a search-and-rescue mission in secret as they attempt to locate a missing group member. The shroud of mystery surrounding the town's growing threat is lifted when the kids stumble upon their school teacher's belongings in his 'dungeon'. A series of events following their discovery, alternating between disaster and serendipity, culminates in its conclusion – a spectacular show of affection between the kids and their parents, whose accompanying orchestral music by Michael Giacchino (who won an Oscar for his score in *Up*) manages to impose a quiet weeping session on this particular reviewer.

Through the course of their adventure, the nature of Joe and Charles' relationship changes as Joe, in the style of Todd Anderson in *Dead Poets Society*, breaks his cocoon of shyness and subservience and morphs into a more assertive and gritty persona. The movie's intimate and human facet slowly unfolds as Joe and Alice (Elle Fanning), a school friend playing the detective's wife in the zombie thriller they're filming, discover they have more in common than just tender feelings for each other – they both suffer from lack of love and emotional understanding from their single fathers. Joe, like Alice, endures constant arguments with his dad, a deputy sheriff who copes with the loss of his wife by throwing himself into his job. In one particularly heartbreaking scene Joe and his dad have an emotional row at home, and his dad's seemingly apathetic

demeanour reaffirms the notion that he's unfit for the role of a father. Scratch the veneer of the town's mysterious goings-on, and the worried lives of a few Lillian residents becomes perceptible, with many touching scenes setting the tone for a film that deals with themes of forgiveness and letting go.

Super 8 is filled with cultural remnants from the 1970's, like the Walkman cassette player and Blondie's 'Heart of Glass', just in case the viewer wasn't watching the film keenly enough to notice the characters dressed in unmistakably 70's-fashioned clothes and driving 70's-period cars, not to mention the liberal culture around recreational substances at the time ("You wanna buy some pot?").

\\ *Super 8* is filled with cultural remnants from the 1970's \\

a storekeeper asks Charles at one point). It feels like J.J. Abrams is paying tribute to a lot more than just old Spielberg movies, but rather sentimentally to the 1970's as a whole.

Emotionally driven at its heart, *Super 8* – like Spielberg's *E.T.* and *A.I. Artificial Intelligence* – manages to convince viewers to exert sympathy on the characters and to care about what happens to them. Joe and Alice's parental loss and familial conflicts are narrated in such a way that you wish you were there to tell them everything's going to be alright – although the lack of a rule dictating someone's life will get better in the long run means this is poor consolation. Boiled down to its melancholic essence, *Super 8* whispers a faint message about letting go of a loved one and feelings of resentment – a whisper loud enough for you to hear and take home the message.

The pop and the politics

EUROVISION

SONG CONTEST

KYIV 2017

* More than you ever needed to know about the Eurovision Song Contest

I once had the **misfortune** of watching Eurovision with only an Argentinian, a Mexican, and a Lebanese for company. If you're not European (or Australian, apparently), Eurovision seems to be very confusing and completely un-understandable. For us **Europeans**, either on the mainland or stuck on little islands, it's the defining feature that we all have in common. How is it possible to not feel affectionately towards the **brutal** political performing, voting and shunning, the **drunken** television **hosts**, and dodgy Euro-fashion, and the camp performances with the potential to bankrupt the hosting nation? **Responsible for this mental breakdown is Tessa Davey // All images eurovision.tv**

A potted guide to Eurovision history

There's a common misconception that Eurovision began solely as a way to reunite the bruised and battered Europe after the Second World War. This may be the reason that it was so successful, and to this day is the largest entertainment show on Earth, but the true sentiment behind its conception is rather more geeky.

The first Eurovision Song Contest took place in 1956 at the suggestion of Sergio Pugliese from an Italian television station, who wanted to take the Italian Sanremo Music Festival and expand it to test the limits of live broadcast television. The first contest was in Switzerland, with seven countries taking part, and the challenge was to have seven different television networks in seven countries simultaneously broadcasting the same program. Of course, the European Broadcasting Union used the excuse of bringing a war-torn Europe together as an excuse for their experiment.

To compete, a national television network must be an active member of the European Broadcasting Union, located in the range of broadcast of the EBU, or being a member state of the Council of

Europe, and jump through several hoops such as ensuring that it will be broadcast to 98% of their country, they broadcast the previous year's show, and of course, that they paid the fee. The television stations each have different ways of determining their entry, although by now most

\\ Eurovision is about way more than the music, it's about using your vote to express friendship and political approval (or disapproval) \\

countries host X-Factor style shows to decide their contestant (probably as a way of wringing more money out of viewers in votes).

The numbers of participating countries grew gradually each year. After the Second World War, a contest that unified Europe and had themes of love and peace was popular and it became wildly successful. Following the Soviet dissolution and the end of the Cold War in 1991, there was a sharp increase in the number of participating

countries to 43 countries participating in 2008 and 2011, and similar numbers taking part in the subsequent years. The only European countries that have never participated in Eurovision are Liechtenstein, Vatican City and Kosovo, although all countries but Germany have failed to participate at least once since 1956, for reasons ranging between a form of political protest to simply not being able to afford it. The winning nation must be able to host the contest the following year, on top of their participation fees, the possibility of which has ruled out entries by many nations at different points in time.

To celebrate the sixtieth anniversary of Eurovision, Australia were invited to take part in Eurovision 2015 as a one-off, as a nod to the popularity of the Song Contest down under. They were given an automatic spot in the final and came fifth overall, with Guy Sebastian's *Tonight Again*, a clear nod to Euro-pop with its composition and staging. Australia were so popular that it was decided that they would be allowed to return in the subsequent year, but would not be given an automatic place in the final. In 2016, Dani Im's *The Sound Of Silence* propelled them into second place, and Europe's love for their Oceanic cousins does not seem to be waning. Even if Australia were to win the Eurovision Song Contest, it wouldn't be hosted

outside Europe. One special condition of Australia's participation is that they agree to co-host the contest in Europe if they are to win - if they win this year, they will probably co-host with Germany for 2018. The novelty of Australia still seems to be strong even among the most traditional

in the final. \\ Eurovision is about way more than the music, it's about using your vote to express friendship and political approval (or disapproval) x2 \\

Eurovision fans, and Australia's don't seem to be on trend to be any less successful this year.

2017 was set to be the first year to reach 44 participants, but with Russia having pulled out of this year's competition as their performer was not granted permission to travel to Ukraine for the competitions, and Bosnia and Herzegovina being forced to withdraw due to the financial state of their national television station, only 42 countries were eligible to hold a place

in the final.

Of these, all but the Big Five (France, Germany, Italy, Spain, and the United Kingdom, who are the biggest financial contributors to the European Broadcasting Union, and thus are automatically given a place in the final) and the host nation had to battle it out for a place in the final at the two semi-finals/elaborate excuses for a tech rehearsal that took place on Tuesday and Thursday.

The winners are decided by votes from all the other countries, with one to twelve points being awarded. With this in mind, it pays to be good friends with your neighbours. Eurovision is about way more than the music, it's about using your vote to express friendship and political approval (or disapproval). Scandinavia and the Balkan bloc are very good at awarding their douze points to their own, but the UK doesn't tend to do so well. Ireland and Malta are usually our friends, but thanks to our sometimes questionable political decisions and tenuous relationship with Europe, our scores suffer. Two months after the invasion of Iraq, the UK was awarded a grand total of null points across the whole competition, a feat that occurs only very rarely.

2017

so scandalous so scandalous so scandalous so scandalous

United Kingdom's chances

This year, with Brexit looming, many European countries are anything but our best friends. Even Theresa May has been reported as joking that she doesn't think that we will get many points this year. It seems that as well as ruining our country, she wants to ruin our chances at Eurovision too. But you never know, we're fairly obviously in dire straights with a snap election being called, so maybe we'll get some pity points and do slightly better than usually. We can't really do any worse.

Russia

Let's address the huge elephant in the room in this year's Eurovision: Russia's absence from the contest held in Kiev, Ukraine. The Russian entry, Yulia Samoylova, was banned from entering Ukraine after touring Crimea in 2015. Each participant is organised by the respective television stations in each country, and Russia's channel One turned down

suggestions that they have her perform remotely, or God forbid, that they pick another representative that would be granted entry to Ukraine. Instead, they chose to withdraw from the contest entirely, saying that she will instead represent Russia in next year's competition. Instead, on the day of one of the semi-finals, she performed in Crimea in an act of defiance.

The winning 2016 entry from Ukraine's Jamala about the deportation of the Crimean Tatars by the Soviet Union was undoubtedly fantastic, but we can't deny that the fact it won the Eurovision Song Contest was anything but a political statement. Indeed, Russia took it personally, and threatened to boycott the next year's contest in protest. With all of Europe choosing this entry as the winners, I can't imagine they felt very welcome.

Eurovision tends to be a contest of openness, shown



no better than when drag queen Conchita Wurst rose like a phoenix to win the 2014 competition. Russia's anti-gay stance tends to bring protests from crowds at the Eurovision

finals, who feel like this kind of discrimination goes against the spirit of Eurovision. This year Russia has had a huge media storm regarding its anti-gay laws, with reports coming in the last month of gay men being detained and executed systematically in Chechnya. Maybe, in the spirit of Eurovision, they really are better sitting this one out.

general trend being all countries moving towards English performances - even France who have faced protests in the past when their entrant has sung in any other language. Only Portugal, Hungary, and Belarus have entries that are not at least partially in English.

France

But why are France singing in English? Well, it's actually not entirely out of choice. France nearly faced disqualification this year when it emerged that their song *Requiem* was performed as far back as December 2015, long before it was submitted as their Eurovision entry. This breaks the rules, but France have got around it by using a bilingual version of the same song with an English chorus. This difference is enough to keep them safe, although is it worth the cost to their gallic pride?

Language

In the early days of Eurovision, songs were required to be performed in their national language. Since 1999, there has been no restriction on the language that songs can be performed in, which has led to large numbers of songs being sung in English or French, which tends to increase the score due to their lyrics being understood by a larger number of viewers. However, Eurovision purists, and some countries, still prefer performances in their national language. But the numbers are dropping off, with the



THE FINAL | first half

Armenia: Artsvik - Fly With Me



Artsvik was a contestant on the Russian version of The Voice in 2013, but was not particularly successful. Based on their music video, Armenia could have been one of the most visually interesting performances, but sadly they didn't reach their full potential in the live show. Honestly, the most notable parts are a memorable hairstyle, and a sound effect that sounds suspiciously like a technical glitch, but yet is intentional. Without Russia being present to exchange douze points with, Armenia's score in the final may be dented.



Austria: Nathan Trent - Running On Air



Following a shameful performance that earned them nul point two years ago, and a strange performance where they sang in French last year, Austria have played it more safe this year with the incredibly clean-cut looking Nathan Trent. He's a sneaky one though, because he also reached some of the final stages of the Eurovision selection process for Germany. I guess the boy knows what he wants. Dressed all in white (a Eurovision classic) his staging imagines him in the clouds, where he sings from the moon. Your mum would like him, maybe the rest of Europe will too.



Azerbaijan: Dihaj - Skeletons



Despite being relatively new to the Eurovision Song Contest (first performing in 2008), Azerbaijan have a consistent record of strong Europop hits, although their scores have dropped off in the last three years. Dihaj were unsuccessful in their attempt to represent Azerbaijan in 2011, missing out to overall winners Ell & Nikki. One of the edgier performances in 2017, you can expect words to be scrawled on a blackboard, and a horse astride a stepladder, the exact meaning of which is unclear without explanation. The horse represents the bad guy in a relationships, and the ladder the emotional distance from the singer; the collapse of the box is a metaphor for the breakdown of a destructive relationship. It's an unusual theme that breaks from the tradition of happy-clappy songs about love or peace, or strong political statements, and the imagery might be too strong to make this a Eurovision winner. Still, expect some points to be given for the use of a man in a horse mask.



Belarus: Naviband - Story Of My Life



Belarus are another of only three performers to sing in their national language. Historyja majho žyccia, or in English, Story Of My Life is the first ever Belarusian song to be performed at the Eurovision Song Contest, and the duo Naviband have a charming performance that justifiably earned them their place in the final. They make strong use of props and costumes, but their performance feels inexperienced. Belarus have only qualified for the final four times before, so maybe this is the year that they'll actually do well.



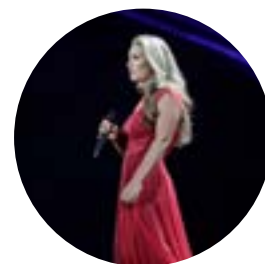
Croatia: Jacques Houdek - My Friend



Jacques Houdek is already an insanely successful artist, with silver, gold, platinum and diamond albums to his name, who performs a variety of genres from opera to pop. In his impressive entry, he moves effortlessly between these genres at almost each line, demonstrating huge skill. From the deliberate camera work, you'd be forgiven for thinking that there were two identical performers, each singing the different parts. But there's not, it's just Jacques. My Friend is not only incredibly skillful, but it is also glorious to watch and to listen to. I would be surprised if the rest of Europe doesn't recognise it as such.



Denmark: Anja - Where I Am



Anja Nissen is well known from having won Season 3 of Australia's The Voice. In fact, she was born and raised in Australia, but is of Danish descent. In the semi-final, she gave a passionate solo performance about letting go, falling to her knees as sparks rained around her. This song could be one of dozens of others over the years, but why break away from a formula that works? If you can tell the difference between all the female soloists singing about love and loss in this competition, you're doing better than me.



Hungary: Joci Pápai - Origo

Hungary are one of few performers to sing entirely in their national language. Those who stick to their language are usually afforded a place in the final by virtue of making the purists happy. Very few countries this year went down the obscure instrument and national dress route, but Hungary has done us proud. They might be trying to score points with traditionalists, but Origo is catchy and somehow manages to feel contemporary while clearly being an homage Hungarian history. This might manage to avoid pleasing either the young or the old Eurovision crowd, or it could do both. Either way, I'm a fan.



Israel: IMRI - I Feel Alive



The artists and songs that represent Israel are always unpredictable, calling on a variety of genres and styles over the years. I Feel Alive is a fairly generic Europop song that will doubtlessly be heard in clubs across Europe in the coming months, but it doesn't really bring anything special to the Eurovision table. This song could do so as well as several other similar entries, and the dancers dressed in black and white are not enough to visually separate it from the pack. While I'll be happy to dance to this in trashy Euroclubs this summer, it's not going to win.



Italy: Francesco Gabbani - Occidentali's Karma



After being on hiatus from Eurovision for fourteen years before 2011, Italy have come back strong, doing fairly well the last few years. This year's entry, which went straight into the final as one of the Big Five, has the veritable honour of being simultaneously the most unsettling performance (is it cultural appropriation if it's about cultural appropriation though?) and the favourite to win. It's a great song, bringing quirk and being camp in spades, but they're running the risk that the message will be lost on those who don't speak Italian, meaning that their main selling point is a cheeky Italian man who dances on stage with a gorilla for reasons unclear. If people get it, this could deservedly win, but they're definitely not playing it safe.



Moldova: Sunstroke Project - Hey Mamma



Sunstroke Project have performed at Eurovision before, coming 22nd in the 2010 final with their song with Olia Tira. Now, they are bringing back the widely acclaimed epic sax man in a slightly more mature performance, although there's still something of a Guy Fieri look about them. They make the most of only being allowed six performers on stage by cloning themselves over and over on the back splash. They get points for the use of impressive mid performance costume changes and use of the running man, but although the song sounds great prerecorded, they didn't pull it off so well live in the semi-final. Treading the line between a novelty act and generic Europop, Moldova are going to have to up their game if they want to do well in the final.



Netherlands: O'G3NE - Lights And Shadows



The Netherlands are a Eurovision old hat, having only ever missed four contests since 1956, and having won four times. The group of three sisters have previously represented the Netherlands in the Junior Eurovision Song Contest back in 2007. Their performance is clear and glamorous, their obvious experience working to their advantage. Lights and Shadows treads the line between cheesy and uplifting, with strong use of Europop and near-a capella singing that highlights their vocal skills. In the semi-final, they fluffed a couple of notes, but with a flawless final performance, O'G3NE could score very well.



Poland: Kasia Moś - Flashlight



Kasia Moś is one of many performers to have been in a reality music show (not affiliated with Eurovision) before being selected. She came third in the British, Must Be The Music, and well as The Pussycat Dolls Burlesque Revue. This might give her international recognition that may prove helpful when it comes to the scores. One of the only performers to have co-written their song, Moś's performance takes the Eurovision tropes of a man sawing away at a violin, swelling orchestral backing, and even a dole of doves, and delivers it in a way that showcases her genuine talent. It's not a particularly original entry, but it ticks all the boxes to score well.



Portugal: Salvador Sobral - Amar Pelos Dois



Portugal's entry of a slightly unsettling jazzy love song performed in Portuguese by a somewhat strange man is reminiscent of French entries of old. This is one for the purists. Its melancholy and undeniable sadness comes across even without understanding the words - the Eurovision holy grail. The performance is simple, with no backing performers or distracting background. Expect Salvador Sobral to be charismatically uncharismatic as he clutches his arms to his chest and makes you believe that he is truly searching for his long lost love. This song has done extremely well in previews, and looks likely to be Portugal's most successful entry yet, having never come higher than sixth place in a final.



Divest



THE FINAL | second half

Australia: Isaiah - Don't Come Easy



Europe's cousins from a slightly different part of the world seem to have been honorarily adopted into the Eurobubble, and it looks like they're here to stay. They came second last year and fifth in 2015, and it seems like we love the novelty. Australia's entry is 17 year old Isaiah Firebrace, who like the Danish entry, rose to fame by winning an Australian reality music show. He performs alone on stage while continually walking without going anywhere on a rotating platform. They're one of the only countries to be bold enough to use giant moving pictures of the performer as the background splash; closeups of the singer's puppy dog eyes creating an intensity and passion that is reflected in his intense eyebrows. It's a strong Eurovision ballad, and should propel Australia to a high score.



Belgium: Blanche - City Lights



Belgium also put forward a 17 year old singer, Ellie Delvaux, who was previously a contestant on the Belgian version of The Voice. Sadly was eliminated early on in the contest, but that didn't stop her being chosen to compete in Eurovision. Alone on stage, she combines a maturity beyond her years with an obvious naivety and innocence that makes her performance endearing. However, there isn't to this song beyond generic indie-pop. She visibly relaxed into her performance during the semi-final, so there may be more to come from Blanche in the final.



Bulgaria: Kristian Kostov - Beautiful Mess



Bulgaria debuted in the Eurovision Song Contest in Kiev in 2005, but have only qualified for the final twice in the years since then. Last year, they came fourth, and now they're joining the many other countries to enter an adorable 17 year old singer who was a finalist in The Voice Kids Russia, and was a runner up in X Factor Bulgaria. He makes good use of visual effects and is edgy beyond his years – probably the most interesting of the 17 year olds. His performance in the semi-final was sleek and mature, and his breathy thanks to Europe as he finished unbelievable endearing. I wouldn't be surprised if he scores well.



Cyprus: Hovig - Gravity



Cyprus have been relatively unsuccessful over the last fifteen years of Eurovision, but not might be time for them to shine. Their song was penned by Thomas G:son, a Swedish writer well-known in Eurovision circles who has written winning songs in the past. Hovig, who came seventh in the 2009 season of Greece's X-factor, has previously attempted to represent Cyprus at Eurovision in 2010 and 2015. With the opening having elements that are suspiciously similar to Rag'n'Bone Man's Human, it uses familiarity with a similar song to replace the recognition of a song that has already been successful across Europe to generate votes. The hints of EDM give this song a modern twist on what is a classic Europop performance, but it's still way too generic. There's nothing to write home about either in the song, or the staging.



France: Alma - Requiem



France have been one of the most consistent countries in the Eurovision Song Contest, missing only two years, and winning five times. This year, Alma's Requiem has been the subject of a scandal where it was discovered that it was performed prior to the submission deadline. As such, they've adjusted their classic formula of beautiful French girl sings about love by adding an English chorus, which I'm sure is to the chagrin of the French public who are normally sticklers for purity. The performance is dull, relying on Paris' romanticism to do a lot of the work as she performs in front of a swirling Parisienne aerial view. There's nothing special about the French entry, but there's nothing objectionable either, so it could go either way.



Germany: Levina - Perfect Life



Germany are the only country to compete in every single Eurovision since its inception, but have won only twice. Like Poland, they're playing the familiarity game with Perfect Life. There's definitely more than a hint of David Guetta's Titanium in this, but the performance is absolutely classic Eurovision, down to the coiffure and shoulder pads. Although the recording of this song feels modern by Eurovision standards, the live performance is reminiscent of Eurovision of old, this could appeal to older voters who may not make up enough of the demographic to make a difference.



Greece: Demy - This Is Love

On first listen, this is another generic Europop song about love from a country that wants to compete, but ultimately does not want to win for fear of struggling to afford to host the competition. But this song grows on you, and this is sure to be a summer club hit in Europe. Greece use a tried and tested Eurovision formula of a beautiful woman surrounded by buff men. During the chorus, Demy rises out of the stage on a podium as two men wearing only what appears to be breeches splash in a pool at her feet, possibly also singing the backing vocals. The meaning of these men is unclear, but this is a catchy club song that you'll be hearing more of over the coming months, even if Europe somehow decides not to vote for a Eurovision formula that has done well in the past.



Norway: JOWST - Grab The Moment



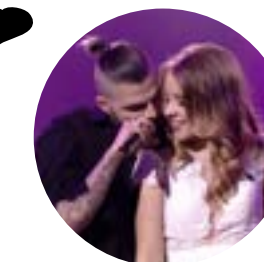
Norway have been the subject of some scandal this year. Joakim With Steen performs with some vocals on the backing track from Norwegian singer Aleksander Walmann. Eurovision rules state that all vocals must be performed live, but Norway have managed to escape penalty by passing them off as entirely sound effects, and not crediting the vocals. The aesthetic and sounds are incredible modern for Eurovision, and while their vision is clear, it's probably not going to work for the majority of the millions of Europeans watching.



Romania: Ilinca and Alex Florea - Yodel It!



Romania are sporting a strong two contrasting performers: one with a strong 90s RnB meets Justin from the Darkness vibe, combined with a weird yodelling situation. I didn't realise that Romania had a strong history of yodelling, and it turns out that I was right not to. As a reaction to Switzerland putting forward a Romania band as their entry, Romania decided to "send a yodeller in return." Sadly, the outfits that made me so happy in their music video didn't make it to the staged performance, but the quirk is definitely not lost, what with the puppets on the back splash and the unexplained cannons on stage. This is definitely one of those "only at Eurovision" ones – maybe it could win.



Spain: Manel Navarro - Do It For Your Lover



The selection of Manel Navarro was extremely controversial, with even Spanish politicians weighing in on the selection process. Navarro co-wrote his own song, which automatically gets a place in the final as Spain is one of the Big Five – who knows if he would make it otherwise. Obnoxiously laid back, he seems to have forgotten that Eurovision is a contest in which people usually perform in formalwear, because he's forgotten to do up his shirt. With a performance that lies somewhere between Jack Johnson and One Direction, I can't see it being particularly successful.



Sweden: Robin Bengtsson - I Can't Go On



Robin Bengtsson, controversially, was not the Swedish public's first choice for their Eurovision contestant. However, thanks to the novel Swedish selection technique of using an international panel representing the Eurovision community to give added points, Bengtsson was bumped into the winning slot. From the music video released on Eurovision.tv ahead of the semi-finals, Bengtsson's performance, while clean and well rehearsed, feels sterile. The performance in the semi-finals was almost identical, from the opening camera shots to the four hipsters in turtle necks performing a dance reminiscent of OK Go on neon-edged treadmills. Will Bengtsson's attempts to seduce with sultry eyebrow movements pay off in the finals? Sweden are tipped to do well, but to me, the Swedish entry lacks the authentic passion that makes a Eurovision winner.



United Kingdom: Lucie Jones - Never Give Up On You



It's no secret that the UK tends to be a little unpopular when it comes to Eurovision votes. Although you wonder whether we even take our choice of artist seriously – think back to when we genuinely entered Scooch with a weird air hostess themed song – it's pretty clear from the political voting that we wouldn't win either way. This year, we seem to have a somewhat legitimate entry, with the Welsh Lucie Jones from 2009's X-Factor performing a song written by Emmelie de Forest, who wrote and performed Denmark's winning entry in 2013. When Jones sings, "I will never give up on you, I don't care what I've got to lose" we can ask whether she's reaching out to Europe, and laying down a stance on Brexit. It's a strong ballad, but when even Theresa May admits that we're not going to get any points this year, is there any point?



Ukraine: O.Torvald - Time



After winning last year with a very political performance, Ukraine don't seem to be able to stick to the tried and trusted Eurovision themes of peace and love. In their music video, O.Torvald stand astride stylised mountains of rubbish, with digital clocks counting down on their chests, urging us to take time to look around and find a world without violence. Unfortunately, this didn't make it to the final, but you can expect a strong visual performance nonetheless. Ukraine have a strong Eurovision pedigree, winning twice since they first took part in 2003, and usually making it to the top ten. I don't expect this year to be any different.



Honorable mentions from 2017

Best use of leather Slavko Kalezić (Montenegro)

In his music video, Montenegro's Slavko Kalezić undulates in leather trousers with a single braid flowing from his head. He gave a wonderful performance in the semi-final in the almost as good sequins and mesh, but sadly did not make it to the final. Maybe his song was good, or maybe he just reminds me of our esteemed editor-in-chief, but this was my favourite music video of 2017.



Best use of cultural appropriation

Check out the music video for Italy's Occidentali's Karma without any understanding of Italian or subtitles, I dare you. If it does make you feel a little bit uncomfortable, you maybe need to do a bit of reading up on cultural appropriation.

Eurovision is not a strange to cultural appropriation, but in recent years the acts have become more politically correct to reflect the growing social awareness of the audience. Despite this, Francesco Gabbani appears in a variety of costumes from kimono-style jackets to saffron robes, posing like a Hindu god and dancing with a man in a gorilla costume. The song is actually a mocking take on the way that Westerners take Eastern ideas and Westernise them, piggybacking on ideas of spirituality and treating them as novelties that make them interesting and sexy. The lyrics are somewhat sophisticated and reference science, art, and literature to make his point, but I feel that the point is somewhat lost. Even if you know that the Western habit of appropriating cultures as our own is problematic, using these cultures in a form of mockery is still parodying them, and it is still disrespectful. It's hypocritical for Gabbani to imitate things that are meaningful to serve his point.

The live performance is a lot safer, with minimal obvious cultural appropriation beyond the use of language. Given that the majority of the audience will not speak Italian, the meaning of his lyrics is very likely to be lost, and a lot of people will enjoy it for its faux-spirituality. By using this medium to make his point about the Westerner's karma, Gabbani is serving only to do the same.



Naviband (Belarus)



Best use of props

Performing astride a rotating boat, with dry ice and wind machines galore, Naviband sing, dance, and have the right level of interpersonal tension. I have no idea what they're singing about, but the combination of the costumes, the props, and the musical performance are working its Eurovision magic on me.

Francesco Gabbani (Italy)

Hall of fame

Lordi - Hard Rock Hallelujah (Finland, 2006)



In 2006, Europe was ready for something different. Enter Lordi, a heavy metal band dressed as terrifying monsters (with the lead singer, Mr Lordi, wearing a festive Finnish flag hat) who performed surrounded by huge amounts of pyrotechnics. It was critically acclaimed as good for the Eurovision song contest, paving the way for entries that broke away from the generic cheesy Europop. Although it may not have been to everyone's tastes, they lead the votes all the way through the contest, scoring what was at the time, the highest ever score (beaten only by Alexander Rybak in 2009).

Conchita Wurst - Rise Like A Phoenix (Austria, 2014)



Conchita Wurst winning Eurovision in 2014 showed us that the kitsch craziness that happens at Eurovision extends beyond just the show. With a performance as powerful as her voice, Wurst raised the stakes of standard for powerful female soloists that followed. To have a bearded drag queen perform the beautiful Rise Like A Phoenix flawlessly and win as she so deserved demonstrated that the Eurovision community was supportive of diversity beyond the camp costumes and dances that Eurovision usually brings.

Alexander Rybak - Fairytale (Norway, 2009)



Alexander Rybak won Eurovision with Fairytale by an absolute landslide in 2009, scoring 387 points and becoming the highest scoring song of all time. Having written the song and recorded the backing fiddle track himself, the violin on stage was disappointingly just for show. Rybak's son is about a beautiful creature from Scandinavian folklore who lures young men to her, and curses them for all time. It came at a time when the world was head over heels with the romanticism of Taylor Swift's Love Story and Rybak's earnest innocence drove his popularity. Following the contest, the song topped the charts all over the world.

ABBA - Waterloo (Sweden, 1974)



It wouldn't be a guide to Eurovision without a moment dwelling on the ultimate classic hit. The Swedes are the uncontested kings and queens of Eurovision; if the winner isn't performed by a Swede, it was probably written by one. The 2016 Eurovision Song Contest in Stockholm showed us that the Swedes are not to be beaten, bringing out Alexander Rybak and Lordi to perform musical skits mocking the contest itself, and even roping in Justin Timberlake to perform during the interval. Sweden's 1974 winning Waterloo went on to be one of the best-selling singles of all time, and is the quintessential Eurovision track, defining the genre of Eurovision Europop.

Games

BINGO

If you don't know how to play Bingo what are you even doing here
There's an empty row for Bingo enthusiasts who like to add a personalised twist to the game

Mid-song rap	Dramatic solo balad	Heavy metal	Accordion	Outfit change	Dry ice	The word peace	Topless men	Crying with joy
Wink at camera	The word love	Traditional instrument	Moustache	Disco vibes	Flag waving at camera	Mean Graham Norton	Jedward reference	Sexual inuendos
Oiled up dancers	The word Russia	Folk music	The word Brexit	Election reference	The word Trump	Men in drag	Bearded ladies	Act without dancers
Booing	Anyone thanks Europe	Sequined outfit	Racist joke	The word Grexit	Air guitar solo	Out of tune singing	Breakdancing	Stage fire

DRINKING GAMES

You know how it goes, every time thing on list happens, thing reading list drinks

AT ALL TIMES

Take a drink if

- On-stage presenters try unbearably hard to be funny...and fail
- One or more on-stage presenters change their outfits
- On-stage presenters have a time-wasting conversation that no-one can follow, understand or care less about
- A male presenter flirts with a female presenter and fails miserably
- The BBC Presenter mentions Terry Wogan
- The BBC Presenter mentions that he/she needs or is drinking alcohol
- The BBC Presenter moans about political voting

DURING PERFORMANCES

Take a drink if

- Singers wave their arms around whilst singing
- Singers put excessive emotion into their singing
- Entries have nonsensical song titles (shoo-be-doo-wop etc)
- Singers try to join in with musicians during instrumentals
- Singers have an exceptionally bad haircut
- You see visible/prominent nipples/genitalia.
- The French performer sings in French
- Singers resemble, or appear to be hugely influenced by Shakira
- The singer tries to interact with the audience ("c'mon!", "altogether!" etc)
- The act involves dancing that surpasses belief and credibility
- The singer flirts with the camera after song has finished
- There is use of atmospheric panpipes, drums, fiddles and/or traditional dancing
- Lyrics are overly suggestive
- There are any unnecessary props, or instruments that aren't being played
- The act uses a wind or smoke machine
- The singer switches to a higher key near to the end

DURING JUDGING

Take a drink if

- Presenters talk over each other due to bad time delays during video links
- Reference is made to the UK's null point years
- Cyprus gives Greece 12 points
- Norway gives Sweden any points but not vice-versa
- Malta gives the UK 12 points
- There is any sucking up to the host nation
- France gives United Kingdom null point
- An ex-soviet country gives 12 points to another ex-soviet country
- Acts are on their mobile phones during voting

SPECIAL RULES

Drink twice if the performer clenches a fist to express emotional angst \\ Down your drink if you see an air guitar

Drink twice if the performer clenches 2 fists ("Two Handed Fisting Special Move") \\ Drink twice and look disappointed if a ballad is exceptionally boring or euro-techno rears its ugly head



Xavier Dolan | In praise of popular art

Xavier Dolan, the critically-acclaimed enfant terrible of French-Canadian cinema, is set to release his sixth feature film later this year, but isn't even in his thirties. Léo Diaz lifts the lid on his oeuvre, and finds out what makes his films tick



Xavier Dolan's *Mommy*, a festival hit, finds the director flexing his directorial muscles, expanding his technique \\ Allstar

Xavier Dolan is not your average director. What first sets him apart is that he is extremely young: 28 at the time of writing, he's already released six full-length features. He directed his first, *I Killed My Mother*, when he was just 20, and his 2014 *Mommy* received the Jury Prize at Cannes, along with legendary director Jean-Luc Godard's *Goodbye to Language*. However, while his youth and remarkable maturity must play a role, I believe they cannot account for the profoundly polarising reactions his films elicit: when watching a Dolan movie, people either cry, or resent that Dolan tells them to cry.

This is just me exaggerating since at least two of his movies – *I Killed My Mother* and *Tom at the Farm* – do not truly feature overly tear-jerking sequences like *Mommy* does, for instance, but the idea remains. Dolan obviously wants people to feel something when they

watch his movies, but the very meaning of tear-jerking hints at why some people instinctively hate this: sentimentality. I've noticed that critiques thrown at his movies often use the same words – artificial, gratuitous, easy; all in negative terms – and I believe this is because of sentimentality. I will come back to that later, but given a seventh feature scheduled for release later

**\\ When watching a Xavier Dolan film, people either cry, or resent that Dolan is telling them to cry **

this year, (*The Life and Death of John F. Donovan*) I wanted to understand what his films – despite at the surface being about very different topics – have in common; what justifies the repeated use of the same adjectives in critiques. Essentially, I wish to ask the question: what makes a Dolan

movie?

The most obvious theme that runs through all six features, at least partly, is the way a son is seen by a mother, whether the mother is his own – most notably in *I Killed my Mother* and *Mommy*, depicted through everyday relationships – or of a friend's (all the others). Funnily enough, the recurrent figure of the mother is played by the same actresses: Anne Dorval in three movies, and Nathalie Baye in two others. What other themes? Homosexuality, obviously: it's explicitly present in his first two movies, *I Killed My Mother* and *Heartbeats*, and in *Tom at the Farm* where he himself plays one of the main characters; but it's also a thin backdrop in *It's Only the End of the World*, although it is not explicit in the Jean-Luc Lagarce text from which the movie is adapted. However, I do not believe these themes explain why his movies are polarising.

Instead, what I think is responsible for such reactions

is another feature his movies have in common: they are meant to touch people, to change them, make them feel emotions. No surprise from a director whose favourite movie is *Titanic*. He even says it explicitly: "Au

**\\ Dolan wants us to identify to his characters so much that they become archetypes, emptied of personality so that we can fill in the void with our own emotions **

cinéma, j'ai besoin d'être ému" ("In cinema, I need to be moved"). But, more importantly, I believe this goes back to his young age and early acclaim: within his personality and his movies there is an urgency to touch, to say what he has to say and

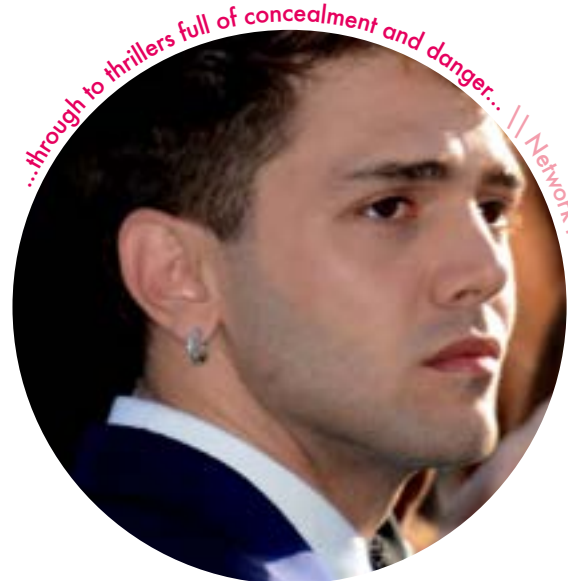
make people remember him, in a constant race against the clock. This urgency means emotions are not expressed in the subtlest of ways, and I think that is where the accusations of sentimentality originate. But where does this sentimentality come from?

The first part of the answer is that he conveys emotions through stories. As such, the stories he tells must be general – or to use another, blurrier, word: popular – enough for everyone to identify with, or at least be immersed; that is why his movies are dramas, even spilling over into melodrama. *Mommy* is the perfect example, depicting the tumultuous relation between Steve and his mother, one that we know doomed since the very first shots of the movie: indeed, what is more popular than (family) relations?

This leads to the second part: emotions are achieved through characters. In a similar manner to the stories before, Dolan's characters are people you might see on



Dolan's work spans dramas of young romance and heartbreak... \\ JFC Films



...through to thrillers full of concealment and danger... \\ Network Films



...and inevitably revolving around themes of family, conflict, and emotions... \\ Curzon Films

the street, who you might talk to everyday. For instance, it is Dolan in *I Killed My Mother*, playing a teen looking for himself; or it is Dolan in *Heartbeats*, chasing his crush; and it is also Dolan in *Tom at the Farm*, who recently lost his lover. I think the trouble with his movies so much that they become archetypes, emptied of personality so that we can fill in the void with our own emotions. The way Dolan builds his characters is symptomatic of this: he collects pictures of clothes, atmospheres, haircuts, and together they define a character's personality. It is at this point that people start to call his work easy, cliché...

The third part is that emotions are achieved through music. My absolute favourite feature of his films, music is the main reason I am fascinated by his work. Like in many other movies, music choice is used to signify emotions, but Dolan pushes this to an extreme: he is known to have written some scripts literally from music that has inspired him. More than any other director I know, the tunes literally tell you how to feel; everything is focused on the music, which is sometimes extremely loud compared to the rest of the soundtrack. An obvious example of this is the dream sequence featured in

Mommy – as soon as it starts, the tone is set by violins: we need to be sad, right now. But what I love most is that he has the most amazing music choices, which have been described as “shameless”: O-Zone's *Dragostea Din Tei*, Oasis' *Wonderwall*, Eiffel 65's *Blue (Da Ba Dee)*, along with lesser-known acts such as *The Knife* or *Moderat*. If, when reading one of these titles, you thought they were cliché or had been heard a million times, you are perfectly right; but when you watch it, they sound great, building insane climaxes, and makes the scene memorable in the best way.

This result is in part made possible by the final element of Dolan's technique: emotions are achieved through the use of specific effects serving aesthetic choices. And this gets to the core of what annoys many people: Dolan use of technique to get results can hardly be described as subtle. He uses these techniques many times in his work, and even within the same movie, to the point they become gimmicks through repetition; he even pushes that use further by layering them on top of one another: too much is never enough.

His most divisive choice – but also the most beautiful I think – is in *Mommy*. At one

point in the movie, the characters suddenly feel a fresh air of hope, contrasting from the heavy atmosphere they (and we) felt before. To signify this, Dolan slowly opens the screen ratio from the oppressing 1:1 we had since the beginning to a wider 1.85:1, bringing some welcome relief. But that is not all: the widening is signified within the movie by Steve, the protagonist, opening wide his arms in front of the camera as a sign of freedom, the ratio of the movie following Steve's hands as they move (or, rather, Steve effectively opening the ratio with his hands). On top of that, all this happens in slow-motion with *Wonderwall* playing. As I said, too much is never



With this sixth film coming out later this year, there is no stopping Dolan's output \\ Georges Biard/Creative Commons

enough. In the end, I think these four elements (and combinations thereof) are what makes a Dolan movie. The popular quality of these stories and characters, together with music associated with specific effects create climaxes and memorable scenes. But can't we describe pretty much any movie with this? Probably, but it is the way Dolan uses them that makes his movies stand out: he magnifies and exaggerates them, and it is this accumulation of effects, and his gimmicky use of them, that is truly the essence of his movies. His favourite combination of effects is slow motion and music, with sometimes the picture being blurred: this combination is literally always present in his movies. I think it is this accumulation people do not like: too cliché, too easy, too gratuitous. In fact, too constructed and yet, too simple to be real. Artificial emotions.

Is that really what it is? While I felt this way the first time I watched one of his movies, *Mommy*, I slowly came to realise it is in fact the opposite. Dolan is young and has many things to say, so much that he must say them before it is too late. And this accumulation of effects is, I think, the

way he chooses to do this: he saturates the picture with effects in order to saturate it with emotions; with his repetitive use of slow motion, he literally slows down the time; there is always this urgency to say the most in the least amount of time, to move us, to make us remember. To do so, he uses popular themes to touch as many people as possible, to make us as close as possible to what is happening on the screen. He says it himself: all his characters “have the same identity problems. They're looking for themselves, for a place in society. They're misfits trying to fit in. They often love someone who doesn't love them back.”

Some people think Dolan is trying too hard at this, with everything so thoroughly constructed to move us that the result is we do not wish to be moved anymore. But what if we chose to let him move us? And to me, this is what popular art is about: to reference Dolan's favourite movie, *Titanic*, what would it be without Céline Dion's (in) famous song 'My Heart Will Go On'? Would it have the same fame? Probably not, and I think this is what makes it beautiful. This is what Dolan is trying to achieve with his extremely popular art, and I think he succeeds. The truth is, Xavier Dolan's movies are to cinema what pop is to music. And that is amazing.



Lady Macbeth



William Oldroyd's *Lady Macbeth* is an exploration of Victorian social codes, and their claustrophobic effects \\ Allstar



How far would you be willing to go to assert your freedom? Who and what would you risk to pursue your own desires? Facing these questions is Katherine, the protagonist of *Lady Macbeth*, who, having been 'bought' to be the wife of a wealthy old man, finds passion through an affair with a stable boy named Sebastian. Adapted from Nikolai Leskov's 1865 novel *Lady Macbeth of the Mtsensk*, writer Alice Birch and director William Oldroyd transpose the setting to Victorian Yorkshire, trapping their characters in a bleak and unrelenting world, determined to impose itself on those contained within its grasp.

Florence Pugh, as Katherine, is fantastically controlled yet expressive. *Lady Macbeth* is at its funniest and best when she displays her myriad of querulous and defiant faces, hinting none too subtly to the men that bought, control, and patronise her where they can

stick it. Yet Pugh's acting is much more complete, as she shows not only Katherine's determination to get what she wants, namely Cosmo Jarvis's Sebastian, but also the fear and anger that drives her to commit ever more drastic acts to keep him. Pugh allows Katherine's subversive nature to pierce through the 19th century decorum, bringing energy whenever she's on the screen, and sparks whenever she's spoiling for a fight.

Sebastian embodies the trope that the best way to get laid in Victorian England was to be a handsome and hulking farm hand. By this metric, Jarvis is eminently suitable for the role, though he does have some acting chops too. He conveys well the line Sebastian walks between raffish and dangerous, and his later descent into emotional conflict. Yet, for all this, Sebastian never feels worth the lengths and effort Katherine goes to to keep him. More convincing reasons arrive in the form of her new husband (Paul Hilton) and her father-in-law (Christopher

Fairbank). The first feeble and the second menacing, they from a controlling pair whose attempted vice-like grip on Katherine gives her ample opportunity to fight back, as she throws off their insistence she “sit inside with her prayer book”. Many of the other characters are caught in the entailing crossfire, most notably the maid Anna (Naomi Ackie) and young Teddy (Anton Palmer).

Ari Wegner's arresting cinematography provides a rich and alluring texture, in the process proving that brown, with its many and various hues and shades, need not be a dull colour. Here it exacerbates the claustrophobic effect of the walls, locking Katherine in, and highlighting how society restricts her. *Lady Macbeth* uses this to show the relationships between choice and power, as well as control and resistance, and explore a much larger scope, examining the line between asserting your own freedoms and abusing those of others.

By Lawrence Good

A young Korean woman arrives at a vast mansion, taking up position as handmaiden to the niece of a wealthy aristocrat. So begins this erotic, psychological thriller, a taut and captivating exploration of deceit, power, and sexuality in Japanese-ruled Korea. The latest film from director Park Chan-Wook, who brought us the uber-violent neo-noir *Oldboy*, he smashes the ball out of the park once again.

Loosely adapted from Sarah Waters' novel *Fingersmith*, the film plunges us into a world brimming with lies, love, and betrayal; we are forced to second-guess the motives of each and every character. In many ways this is a heist movie, the target nominally a vast fortune, but in reality the control of the game, as the characters lead each other (as well as the audience) on a merry dance of hoodwinking and power plays. Each character has their own desires, strengths, and shortcomings, but Park never quite lets

us fully grasp what these truly are. The resulting uncertainty kept me hooked; as my entire understanding of the power dynamics was liable to invert at a moment's notice, I found myself unable to look away, or for my mind to wander. What's more remarkable was how at each moment the reality I was being presented with seemed inevitable and incontrovertible, only to be dashed and reshaped scene after scene, a remarkable feat of storytelling.

This control over story progression is matched by the absolute precision of the camerawork. It allows the film to convey not only the ominous feel of unfolding events and apparent calamities, but to enhance and elevate this overarching inevitability. The set design is similarly immaculate, often seeming to reflect the status of characters occupying them – sometimes small and strapping, at others expansive and powerful. The overall visual effect is wonderful, a powerful evocation of mood, drawing out reactions in a visceral fashion.

Sex scenes are notoriously

difficult to pull off, usually either lacking frisson or descending into self-parody. This is prevalent even in films centred around sexuality, notably in Abdellatif Kechiche's 2013 *Blue is the Warmest Colour*, a sex-based bildungsroman which presented itself as an exploration and evocation of desire, but ended up as an excuse for the director to conjure up a 3-hour reel of his lesbian fantasies – that it takes itself so seriously gives a film an inadvertently funny spin, and not in a good way. For *The Handmaiden* however, Park Chan-Wook overwhelmingly gets the balance right, with only a few moments held on for too long, or burning too bright.

The Handmaiden is a rare beast – thrilling, yet thoughtful. It has lingered in my mind long since I saw it, and is a film very much worth watching. Brought to life by a combination of taut writing, precise directing and nuanced acting, it breathes a cinematic life that is at once charismatic yet subtle, entrancing yet restrained.

By Lawrence Good

The Handmaiden



A tale of deceit and desire \\ Allstar/ Amazon Studios





Angels in America



Denise Gough as Harper and Andrew Garfield as Prior in *Angels in America*: Perestroika \\ Helen Maybanks



Indira Mallik

Angels in America is on at the National Theatre. Normal tickets are sold out but hundred of £20 tickets are being released by ballot. NT Live will begin streaming performances from the 20th of July.

A gay fantasia on national themes" is the label Tony Kushner gave his play *Angels in America*, which is being staged at the National theatre for the first time since the 90s; and what a fantasia it is. Grounded in 1980s New York, the action sprawls across reality and delusion, from Salt Lake City to Washington DC, from Antarctica to Heaven, dancing on the edge of utter madness but never stumbling. Tony Kushner's writing is bold, profound, and urgent, with frequent bright sparks of comedic brilliance. Even on the occasions the script spirals into dense segments of overarching philosophising, this cast and crew make it soar.

Director Marianne Elliot, who in 2011 won a Tony Award for *War Horse*, has created a theatrical spectacle to be marvelled over. Columns of fire erupt inches from the audience, hospital rooms rise from the bowels of the stage, neon shining ladders are thrown down from Heaven, New York

**\\ The action sprawls across reality and delusion, from Salt Lake City to Washington DC, from Antarctica to Heaven, dancing on the edge of utter madness but never stumbling **

apartments transfigure themselves into the snow drifts of Antarctica and back again all under a deconstructed space-age cathedral dome. Special mention go to production designers Finn Caldwell and Nick Barnes who have fashioned The Angel's "steel grey wings" from huge feathered contraptions that are operated by balletic puppeteers.

As magnificent as the staging is, it never overshadows

the acting. Nathan Lane is incandescent as Roy Cohn, a real-life lawyer who desperately tries to deny his homosexuality even as he slowly dies from Aids. His energy never wanes, even across hours of turning purple in the face from bellowing Malcolm Tucker-esque profanity at anyone who will listen. In any other production, perhaps Lane could've stolen the show but here he is given a run for his money from his castmates, which seem to be giving the performance of their lives.

Denise Gough playing Harper Pitt, a woman who is verging constantly on the edge of psychosis, is funny, heart-breaking and ultimately uplifting. Nathan Stewart-Jarrett, familiar from Channel 4's *Misfits* lights up the stage as the witty, warm and wise Belize, often the sole voice of reason amongst a group of characters where each is more neurotic than the last. Amanda Lawrence as The Angel is truly magnificent, filled with the manifest dignity that Kushner demands of the role in the stage notes to the play.

As for Andrew Garfield, who plays Prior Walter, a drag queen who finds his life irrevocably changed when he finds a Karposi's Sarcoma lesion on his arm, this is surely a career-defining performance. He is impossible to look away from even when his character slips out of the spotlight. It's a tender, camp, humorous performance which matures over the course of the play. There are moments early on where the characterization drifts ever so slightly into the realm of stereotype, but perhaps this too, is intended – after all, *Angels in America* is just as much about types of people as it is about living, breathing humans.

At its core, Kushner's polemic is a searing account of the Aids crisis, a modern plague, and the destruction it wreaked over the lives of young gay men who found themselves as patients with terminal diagnoses or the carers of dying friends and lovers in their 20s and 30s. Recent healthcare reforms in

America have fuelled fears anew that the new administration will mark a return of government inaction as epidemics rage on. Much of the political art created in the shadow of Reagan and Thatcherite politics seems all too relevant now. One need not delve too deep to look for parallels; the morally bankrupt, corrupt, Roy Cohn was Donald Trump's legal advisor.

Angels in America rages against the hard-line religious

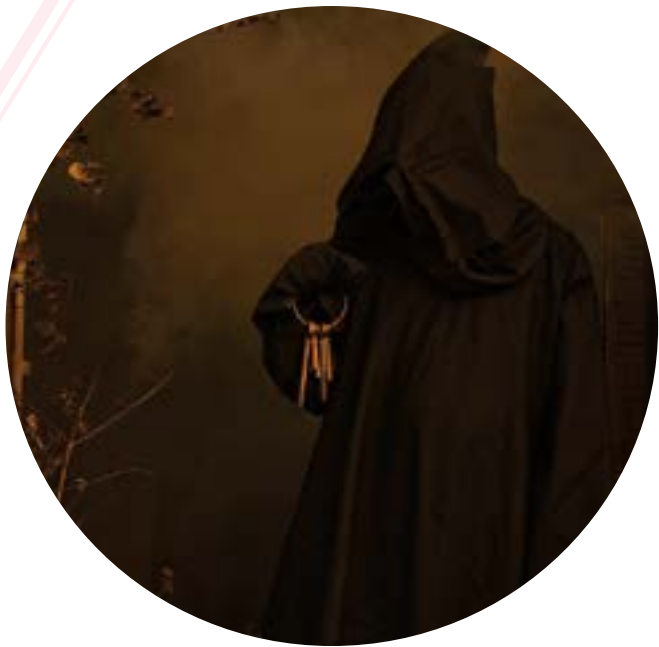
**\\ For Andrew Garfield, who plays Prior Walter, drag queen who finds his life irrevocably changed when he finds a Karposi's Sarcoma lesion on his arm, this is surely a career-defining performance **

conservative movement that sees 'progress' as a dirty word. Yet, whilst its nearest literary relative, Larry Kramer's *The Normal Heart*, also about the Aids crisis in New York, is sustained on a steady stream of righteous anger, Kushner's *Angels* ultimately takes a more hopeful stance. It is an ode, as the Thomas Lux poem goes, to the unbroken world that is coming.

On press night, the end of the second part, *Perestroika*, received a thunderous standing ovation. It was in no small part a reaction to the final scene which Andrew Garfield makes magical in a way that is difficult to convey. Speaking to the *Hollywood Reporter* at the Oscar Actors Roundtable earlier in the year, Garfield spoke eloquently of the importance of creating art that speaks to marginalised communities who are desperately looking for media that represents them, that recognises them: *Angels in America* is one of those rare gems. Go and see it.



Forever Restless by Brutality Will Prevail



Plagued by member changes and after releasing a couple of pretty disappointing albums at the end of 2014, Brutality Will Prevail's stock had taken

**\\ BWP have really pulled it out of the bag with this sludge influenced hardcore album **

a real hit. As one of UK Hardcore's leading lights in the early 2000's they built up a following alongside other alumni such as Hang the Dastard, Last Witness and Dead Swans. After

their disappointing album *Scatter The Ashes* I was pretty cautious to ensure that I didn't get my hopes up too much when listening to their new album *In Dark Places*.

My caution was completely unnecessary as BWP have really pulled it out of the bag with this sludge influenced hardcore album. Gone are the distracting clean vocals of *Suspension of Consciousness* and big riffs are in. The album has some great moments and even a Cure influenced closer but all this pales in comparison to their first single of this album *Forever Restless*.

Opening with a lone clean soloing guitar playing a catchy haunting melody over light, *Forever Restless* immediately draws comparisons to new-school bands like

Harms Way and their older influences like Bolt Thrower. The guitar weaves for 30 seconds before being joined by a sludgy second guitar, a

**\\ Forever Restless immediately draws comparisons to new school bands like Harms Way and their older influences like Bolt Thrower **

distorted bass and a cymbal heavy drums part, layering the reverb-heavy intro riff on top. The intro shows real restraint, rather than throwing an aggressive riff in from the start. BWP build tension with a slow grinding but also catchy opener. The solo line descends into squealing feedback and an aggressive drum roll.

The cloud of tension splits with an effortless tempo change led by a brilliant, crunchy, and so, so catchy riff. Using a beautifully over-driven Marshall sound, the stop-start riff is soon joined by the throaty vocals joining the rhythm of the lead guitar. The commanding complement with the riff beautifully until a

**\\ The choruses are directed to the sky as if the Gauthier is shouting at god above **

brief pause at 2:00.

Briefly the tempo slows and the guitars switch to block chords to bring the vocals to centre stage. Here the vocalist, Louis Gauthier, shows his true flexibility changing the inflection of the lyrics to make them sound huge. While the verses are accusatory, in your face, with Gauthier's finger pointing at you and his spittle spraying your face, the choruses are directed to the sky as if the Gauthier is shouting at god above.

Quickly after this moment

of self-indulgence the kick-ass riff re-emerges with the vocals reverting back from questioning, to declaring in a commanding sneer that will get bodies moving live. The song gifts us another verse and bridge in the same fashion, with the vocals continuing to bounce along with the fun, flighty main riff. A key detail of the second verse is that a single line of the lead vocalist's lyrics is answered by furious gang-vocals adding a dangerous live feel to the accomplished song. The introduction of gang vocals is like going to surround sound after using a regular speaker set, it's immersive and visceral.

If you were thinking "where is the breakdown"

**\\ The introduction of gang vocals is like going to surround sound after using a regular speaker set **

just hold your breath for the last quarter. This is where the first real mosh riff hits in. Initially, the song teases what is to come with a brief interruption as we return to our original theme accompanied by a single line of more

questioning hoarse vocals: "God rest my soul! But leave my body COLD." It is melodramatic and heavy all at the

**\\ We then move to a slower sludgy dirty breakdown riff with occasional melodic reprieves to keep it clever and exciting **

same time.

We then move to a slower sludgy dirty breakdown riff with occasional melodic reprieves to keep it clever and exciting. This song deserves to end in a breakdown with the work done in tempo and thematic changes throughout building tension and the aggression throughout the song.

The song then suddenly cuts out. That's your lot. There are so many good songs on this new album with various mixes of slow sludgy riffing, accusatory lyrics and faster old school riffs, but *Forever Restless* is the king of them all.

By Rob Garside



Monks in a forest are so metal \\ Brutality Will Prevail



Worthy of Worship | American Gods



Surreal is the new real. \\ Starz



Anurag Deshpande



After a tumultuous five years in development hell, Neil Gaiman's post-modern blend of Americana and folklore has finally found its way to TV courtesy of Starz and Amazon. *American Gods*, an adaptation of Gaiman's 2001 novel by the same name, is at its heart an examination of faith and the ever-changing nature of the altars at which we worship.

Being familiar with Gaiman's *Sandman* mythos but never having read *American Gods* myself, I approached the series not quite knowing what to expect. What I've experienced in the first two episodes, however, has me keen to see more.

American Gods follows Shadow Moon, a convict released early upon news of his wife's death, as he is recruited by the enigmatic Mr.

\\ Particularly praiseworthy is the introduction of the West African trickster god Anansi \\

Wednesday as a bodyguard. Wednesday, at first glance a simple con-man, quickly reveals himself to be one of the old Gods inclined on starting a war with the new ones; science, technology, and the like. The episodes themselves open with a vignette; each chronicling the arrival of a people and their god to America, and simultaneously exploring what Gaiman believes to be one of the core facets of the American bedrock.

These openings are excellently crafted, with tight pacing that is echoed throughout the main bodies of the episodes. A switch to a more 'cinematic' aspect ratio, coupled with a voice-over helps differentiate these from the rest of the show. Unfortunately, the narration can be a bit verbose and self-important, but this is always one of the slight risks with, and charms of, Gaiman's works. Particularly praiseworthy is the introduction of the West African trickster god Anansi, a powerfully performed scene that excellently sets up the episode's running theme. Specifically, how one makes the decision between submitting to oppression or fighting it, even at the cost of one's life. The smash cut ending to this vignette is used well to this effect. In fact, the show really seems to revel in

using smash cuts. While this might normally feel jarring and off-putting, here it serves to accentuate the surrealist imagery embraced by the series.

Wild colour palettes, and thematically in-tune scoring help to further set the scene. In particular, the soundtrack in the first quarter of the first episode creates a pervasive sense of unease in the viewer that matches well the sense of unease in the protagonist's mind. The visuals, for their part, are simply sublime. Clearly, ludicrous amounts of money have been thrown at the production. This is a welcome necessity, as otherwise the series would have lost much of its dramatic gravitas, given how much it relies on abstract imagery. The confluence of these elements does an excellent job of realising the Gods, and boy are they terrifying.

Further amplifying the presence of the Gods are, of course, the performances themselves. By now we expect nothing short of excellence from Ian McShane, and still he manages to surprise. McShane's versatility is on display here, as he fills out the variety that might be expected from a con man. Orlando Jones also deserves special mention for his turn as Anansi. He manages to leave a lasting impression with only a brief appearance so far. In addition, Ricky Whittle proves a more than capable lead; reacting pretty much how you'd expect



You're never too old for a road trip. \\ Starz

a sane man discovering the insanity of the world to react.

These first two episodes do an excellent job of pulling in viewers and keeping their interest. At points, they can be a bit schizophrenic, throwing a lot of disparate concepts at the viewer with no clear indication that they will be explained later. However, this is more forgivable in the age of binge watching than it would have been in the past. Television shows,

\\ Clearly, ludicrous amounts of money have been thrown at the production. \\

specifically long form dramas have become increasingly serialized. For its part, *American Gods* keeps a measured pace, and as a consequence, doesn't frustrate or confound the viewer with too much information. With the exception of the vignettes, it also manages to avoid relying on exposition dumps, to its credit. Explanations are not provided on a platter, but there are more than enough clues for astute viewers to put things together for themselves. As Wednesday says at one point, he's "easing [us] into it".

If there's one thing that really bothers me about the series, it's the title sequence. It's loud, garish, and an assault on the senses in all the wrong ways. I can, at least, appreciate the intent behind it; the evocation of traditional tribal and religious chants. Minor gripe aside, the series is definitely worth watching, and it's fair to say that *American Gods* has definitely made a believer out of me.

Your Union events

Friday 12 May



COMMON PEOPLE

A NIGHT OF 90S AND 00S
INDIE, ROCK AND BRIT
POP FLOORFILLERS!

Free entry to the first 25
people who post their song
choice on the wall!

FRIDAY 12 MAY
20:00 - 02:00
METRIC & FIVESIXEIGHT

£1.00 On the Facebook Guestlist
£2.00 On the door

imperialcollegeunion.org/whats-on



Pub Quiz

Test your minds and enter the h-bar Pub Quiz! It's free to enter, and you and your team could win a £50 bar tab. Second prize is a bottle of house wine. New every Thursday!

Every Thursday
19:30 - 23:00 / h-bar

imperialcollegeunion.org/whats-on



BATTLE OF THE BANDS THE FINAL

You decide who wins!
Garden Party, Two More Years and +65
are finalists of Battle of the Bands 2017!

Join us at the Reynolds Bar on
Friday 26 May from 19:30.

£2.00 entry There's £500 up for grabs for the
winner, plus the chance to play at the
Union's Summer Ball.

imperialcollegeunion.org/battleofthebands



Coming up in our bars



Super Quiz

Every Tuesday
20:00-22:00

Cocktail Night

Every Tuesday
18:00-23:00

CSP Wednesday

Every Wednesday
19:00-01:00

BPM

Next Friday
20:00-02:00



Pub Quiz

Every Thursday
19:30-23:00

PGI Friday

Every Friday
19:00-00:00

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Quiz Night

Every Monday
18:00-23:00

Board Games & Film Night

Every Tuesday
18:00-23:00

Sports Night

Every Wednesday
18:00 onwards

Pizza Night

Every Thursday
18:00-2:00

Battle of the Bands | Finals

Friday 26 May
19:30 onwards



Quiz Night

Every Thursday
19:30-22:00

Sunday Roasts

Every Sunday
All day

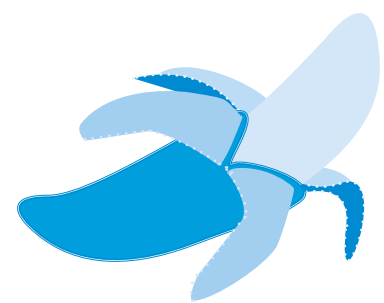
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SEX

My friend, a fresher, got pregnant

I'd never had to think about my views on reproductive rights before

Andrada Balmez

This is a story about a friend (yes, it is actually about a friend). Just like any good story, it starts with a nice (by British standards anyway) spring day with my best friend telling me that she's pregnant.

"So what?" you ask. "People get pregnant all the time!" While that may be true, she is not a 30 year-old married woman. She's not even in a stable relationship. In fact she is just like me, a fresher. I don't know about you but I just didn't see it coming, despite her having been in a happy relationship with her boyfriend for quite a while.

How can you fall so hard for someone that safety goes out the window? How does a smart girl get talked into not using condoms? How can anyone even be with a prick who "doesn't like condoms"? And then when the shit eventually hits the fan, how can someone be so unprepared to deal with the aftermath?

I don't have the answer to these questions. Heck, I hadn't even considered them in the first place, which is why I was probably even more surprised at finding out than she was. Or maybe because she had already had a day or two to process all that information – yes, she did tell her boyfriend before she told me. And yes, if you're wondering, the fucking bastard

immediately ran away. He eventually reappeared, but a bit too late to be of any help. Alas, I digress. Back to my friend.

\\ How can you fall so hard for someone that safety goes out the window? How does a smart girl get talked into not using condoms? \\

She is a bit broken, but with a sense of fatalism she's come to accept it. No, she didn't keep it – that was never really a choice for her. That's not to say it was an easy decision to make. The stress alone that came with keeping it from her parents, or from anyone for that matter, having to find a clinic to get the abortion before going back home, and even dealing with exams was crippling.

It's shit and I do feel bad for her, really. But at the same time I'm upset with her because I still can't fathom how she could've have been so naive. I hate badmouthing my friends, but the only thing I know about heterosexual relationships is that pulling out never works. If I know that, how can someone who

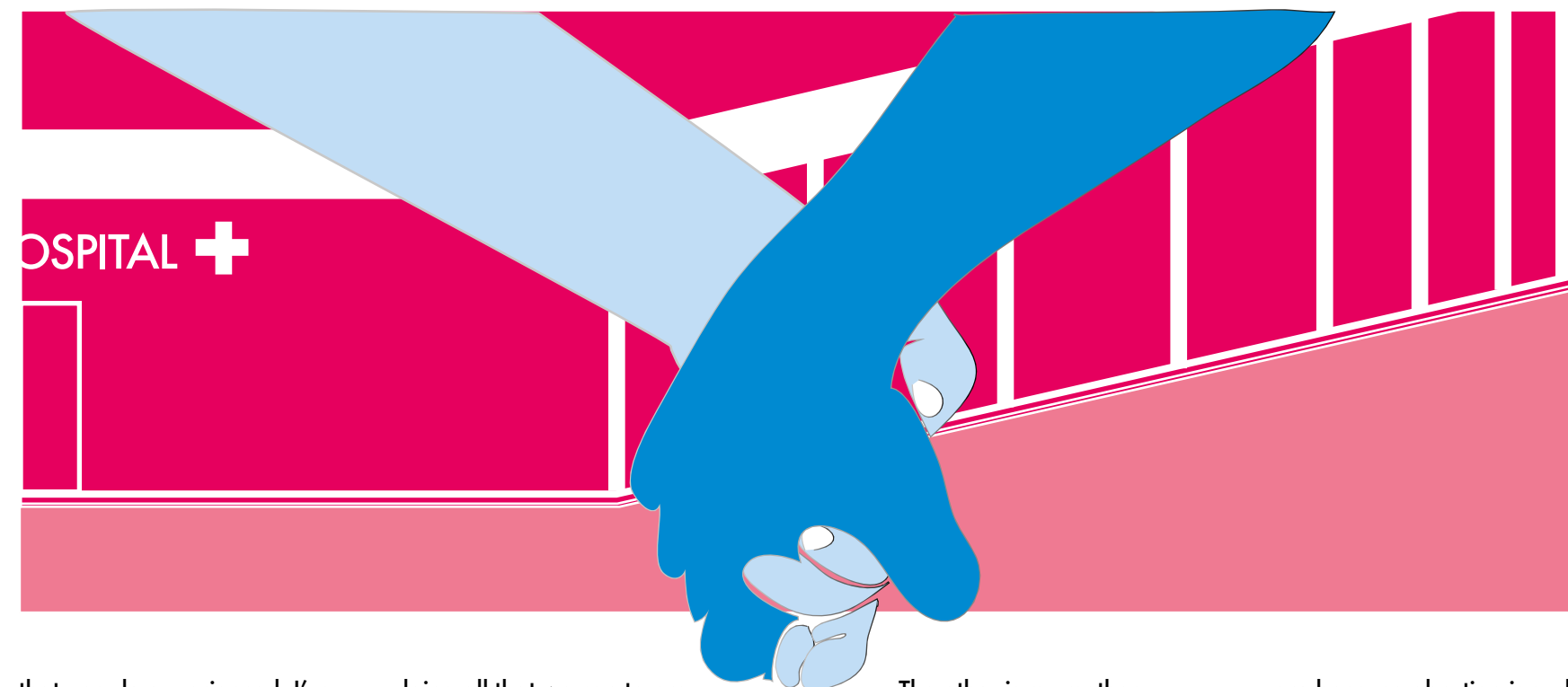
actually sleeps with men not apply this in their life?

Throughout this ordeal, I've had no right to express anything but empathy for her and I've tried to be on her side and help her in any way I can. Yet, I've had such mixed feelings about the knock-up. I've never been in danger of getting pregnant myself, so I've never thought too much about my feelings on abortion and contraception, but this single event has made me think more than I thought I was capable of.

And this is the point when this becomes about me. I know that I shouldn't make it all about my feelings when she obviously felt so much more – and was certainly more entitled to do so – but fuck it, we need to talk about

\\ It's shit and I do feel bad for her, but at the same time I'm upset because I cannot fathom how she could have been so naive \\

this. This three-week-long drama made me think a lot more about my opinions on reproductive rights. Although I knew that this was an issue



that people experienced, I've always seen both sides of the argument for and against abortion, without ever forming an opinion because I've simply never had to.

Through my friend's unwanted pregnancy I made unexpected discoveries about myself. Now, when I feel the urge to blame people for their mistakes, I know it's really just pointless. Who knows how many times they had sex with or without a condom; it doesn't really matter either way. It could have been an isolated incident or it could have been a regular occurrence. The end result ultimately is the same.

Mistakes happen, but we should be responsible for

doing all that we can to prevent them.

I don't think she'll compromise her safety again. Probably. Hopefully. And no one should (you know who you are). Seriously, consider me a slightly less creepy version of the weird PE teacher who's tasked with doing sex ed. It's your business if you want a child and you are capable of raising it alongside your studies, or if you want to drop uni to be a parent, but still play safe. There are more dramatic things besides an unwanted pregnancy. Did you know that you can lose your nose because of syphilis? Google it, and you will stack condoms in your house forever.



Why do we stigmatise abortion?

One in three women will have an abortion. So where are they?

Tessa Davey

I haven't had an abortion. In fact, I only know two people who have and they personally told me of it. One was a girl I went to school with, who had an abortion aged 15, and lost a lot of friends who had never realised they were pro-life until that moment.

of contraception perfectly. People miss days, get sick, or break condoms. Accidents happen and people get pregnant, and maybe they don't want to raise a child right now, thank you. Nonetheless these women exist. But where are they?

We don't know who they

are because abortion is such a stigmatised issue that no one talks about, often not even to their closest friends. Yes, even at Imperial – where we're all smart and already making huge sacrifices for our education and we're going to take precautions

\\ One in three women in the UK will have an abortion during their lifetime \\

It shouldn't be a big deal. 95% of women who have abortions in Britain don't regret them. They're mostly non-events: early abortions are barely any different from taking the morning-after pill, beyond the inconvenience of having to make doctor's appointments. Without touching on moral dilemmas, an unwanted pregnancy is a problem that needs dealing with. Even in a country where abortion has been legal for over fifty years, it's not considered proper to talk about it. People want you to brush it away and hush it up, to deal with it quietly to avoid the sting of breaking the taboo. Or, because even if they are pro-choice, they are judging you for getting yourself into this situation.

We all take risks when it comes to having sex, whether it's the risk of getting an STI or getting pregnant. Why can't we think of an unexpected pregnancy the same as getting chlamydia (which is also unfairly stigmatised, but less so)? You can deal with it by taking a few pills, so why is it any different, even for

those who don't see a moral problem with terminating a pregnancy? Is it traumatic because there is inherent moral questioning, or is it traumatic because the stigma that surrounds abortion is so powerful that you're almost forced to keep it a secret, disabling your support network and inducing feelings of shame.

I don't know. My only experience with abortion amongst my peers, in what I thought was a very reasonable and sensible situation, resulted in a lot of gossip, broken friendships, and hurt feelings. I've never come into contact with any positive experiences of abortion, never met anyone who needed to terminate a pregnancy and did what they had to do with no negative consequences or regrets, and this is wildly unacceptable when it's a thing that around a third of women will go through in their lifetime.

\\ Is it a traumatic because there is inherent moral questioning in an abortion, or is it because the stigma that surrounds abortion is so powerful? \\

It doesn't have to be this way. We don't have to make abortions these huge secrets that we don't talk about. It's frustrating and it makes me angry that the only time that abortion comes up in conversation is in a sex-negative context that puts

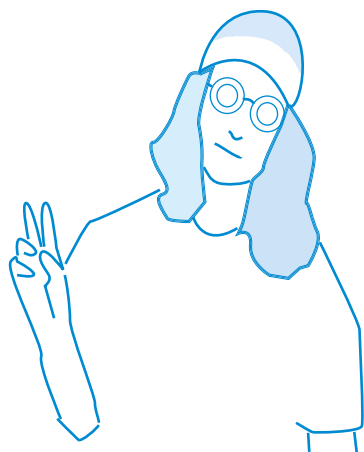
women down. Women who unexpectedly get pregnant are not any less deserving of respect, they are not stupid, they are not murderers and they are not evil. They are just women, like you and I, who happen to have undergone a standard medical procedure. The decisions that we make concerning our bodies and reproduction should be only ours to make, and no one

\\ It makes me angry that the only time abortion comes up in conversation is in a sex-negative context that puts women down \\

else's to judge.

At a time when the right to have full agency over our reproduction is not something that women can take for granted; when in Ireland, abortion is still illegal, and in the United States access to abortion and even contraception has been fought against, silence is unacceptable. Only if we talk about it can we maybe address educating people – teaching girls to be assertive about their right to safe sex while teaching everyone to respect their partners and be considerate of the subtleties of consent.

The more we talk about abortion and stop sweeping it under the rug, the more we normalise it as something that is ultimately a normal part of life. And yeah, maybe we can stop being a dick to people who are brave enough to admit they've had an abortion. That might be nice.

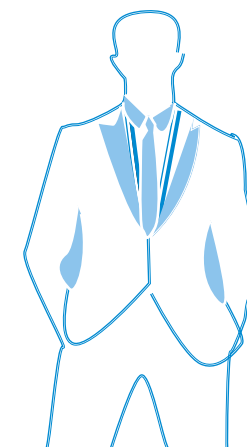


My interest is politics will go up in flames with Corbyn but look out for my podcast

Jonathan Masters is looking for new ventures and unemployment opportunities.

Fuck off France

Monathan Jasters is disappointed that the French are failing to pull their weight



If I am ever in doubt about what to write in this column, all I have to do is read either *The Canary* or my friend's art history Facebook page, and then I find an issue that is the pettiest waste of time, and then dedicate 400 words to this issue, with full knowledge that each issue of *felix* is sent to the British Library and this nonsense will be archived for all of human history.

I just recently realised, unfortunately, that I will be out of the country for the general election owing to the fact there are too many Gambian children who need my white saviour soul to help build their schools. Also I've noticed how I've not been receiving as many super likes on my Tinder account with my current photo of me taking ayahuasca in Colombia. This suggests that I probably need a pic of me with some African children worshipping me above my caption of "Spreading peace and love and thighs".

So it looks as though Jeremy will once again provide all the answers to the numerous problems this country has by spending money on – literally everything that people want – without any plan for where this money will come from. Perhaps David Cameron dropped a couple of billions down the sofa when he was in 10 Downing Street and just forgot about it. It's possible that they can tax all the rich people in the country and all they'll have to do is get the approval of the hundreds of rich people in the House of Commons and the House of Lords. Frankly if Corbyn's ascent to power isn't the second coming of Christ or the rebirth of true communism I think myself and the vegan consortium of Britain will be

extremely disappointed. We will feel as though we have pumped all our hopes and dreams into a fantastical idealist. I mean if this fails, I'll just move to Vermont and wait until 2020 for Bernie to rise from the ashes. I mean yeah he didn't win, but there's no way an old white socialist could beat a woman – it's just the natural order of white liberal priorities. If he's against a Hispanic candidate then I think Bernie will probably just have to retire that dream forever and get ready to die.

I think after this election, I will decide to move my focus away from politics, and instead put my time and energy into trying to carve out a career as a successful podcaster. Unfortunately all the good child murder cases have been investigated to death, but I'm playing around with developing a hummus review show. It will almost definitely be sponsored by Squarespace. Please support my Patreon. I don't want to work.

So Trump's sister didn't win in the French elections and I can't quite explain what happened. Perhaps those spineless cheese-eating surrender monkeys weren't drinking enough Kool-Aid, or for some reason they managed not to be manipulated by racial rhetoric. This is just one of the many reasons that France is so much weaker than the English-speaking world – why couldn't they just follow right-wing populism like the rest of us? Why couldn't they just listen to their biased media and bask in the mutual hatred of Muslims and ethnic minorities? It's almost as if they don't want to see the destruction of the European Union and the Western economy and want unity in their country instead. Which is weird considering their motto is *égalité, fraternité, and racismé*.

I can only assume that the large body of water between Great Britain and lesser France must have kept the 'take our country back' vibes subdued which is very much their loss. To be quite honest I am still waiting to take my country back. I honestly thought that a vote for Brexit would be a vote for a strong and stable Britain, but it's almost as if everything that we voted for takes time. You know what though? If I have to wait to have everyone that wasn't born in this country deported, then by Jove I'll wait – I already have a stringent check-list for when we start purging the country. Basically we ask each person where they're from if they have dubiously tinted skin, and then when they give the answer that's on their birth certificate, we ask "but where are you really from?" and then put them on

the next ferry to Macron-land.

In other news I'm currently looking for a job and it seems that there may be an opening with the Trump administration. I am of course talking about the FBI position which may possibly stay vacant for a couple of months to a couple of years depending on how long he can avoid being investigated. It would probably be easier if he could just grab the genitals of an entire organisation but that would be pretty gay. I think, if anything, I am overqualified for the position: I take commands very well and never question anything that Breitbart publishes; I'm as straight as they come (despite having that secret with my uncle Ted); and I'm fluent in Russian.

* Sponsored by The New Federal Bureau of Investigation



CRISIS

Chris

Dear Chris,

I've been invited to a few Eurovision parties this Saturday and I'm not entirely sure what to do. For starters I'm not the biggest fan of the Europop extravaganza. I mean I'm all for the oiled-up semi-clad men but ideally I'd be watching the whole thing on mute and I don't think that's likely to happen at a Eurovision party.

If I was to go, I'd probably do a Eurovision-party crawl. At one of the parties there's this cute guy that may or may not be into me. But everyone else there is a bit of a douche. What do I do?

Best,

Prof Alex Johnson

Dear Alex,

First of all I would like to say what an honour it is to have a professor write to our column, albeit a bit inappropriate perhaps? Like do you pick up the paper? You realise there's naked students in it every week right? Line crossed maybe?

Thankfully, I'm all for crossing lines. And lucky for you I'm all for crossing people too. This is really what you need to do. You can't make everyone happy, so you might as well embrace your dark side and fuck. Shit. Up.

So let's put your needs first. What do you really want? I'd say your first priority is clearly getting some (you thirsty academic you). First stop: cute-guy party. Go in early. Come on strongly. If he's indifferent fuck off and proceed to the next party. If he reciprocates, you

shove him into the first room/closet/storage area/surface you find and sex him (obviously consensually). Ten minutes later you exit, loosened up, smiling and waving goodbye to those ass-hats you didn't like anyway and move on to the next party. Make sure on exit to say loud and clear something along the lines of: "This party blows. I'm going somewhere fun. Later."

Second stop: the most proximal party. Enter unapologetically. You were a 'Maybe' on the Facebook event page so having you is a privilege. Test the waters, see if you're having fun. If not rinse, lather, repeat.

Treat this as a general going out guide.

Big luv,
Chris xxxx

HOROSCOPES



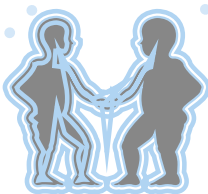
ARIES

This week you're Russia. No one likes you.



TAURUS

This week you're thrilled to see felix finally covering the things that matter. #Eurovision



GEMINI

This week you re-do your Tinder profile and add watersports to your interests. You immediately realise it was a mistake. Or was it?



CANCER

This week you're France. Yes. That's the joke.



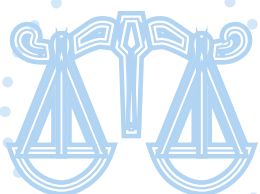
LEO

This week you're Macron but you desperately want to be a Macaron.



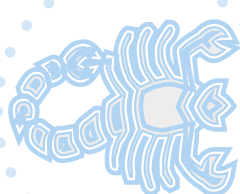
VIRGO

This week you're Queen's Tower. Someone used you to whack open a melon the other day. That's the most human contact you've had in years.



LIBRA

This week you're a Bioeng lecturer who likes flashing their students. Flashing exam answers that is.



SCORPIO

This week you're Tessa Davey and you insisted on a ten page Eurovision spread. You've given the editor-in-chief angina. Well done.



SAGITTARIUS

This week you divest from revising. Imperial will surely bow down to your demands.



CAPRICORN

This week you walk into the felix office drunk and proceed to record inappropriate comments about donuts. Some things are not meant to be on record.



AQUARIUS

This week you're the UK. No one likes you either.



PISCES

This week you realise you share the same future as fossil fuels. It's pretty bleak mate. Maybe you should divest.



49th Course Croisière Edhec | Arzon France

Between the 31st of March and 8th of April, Imperial College Yacht Club (ICYC) took part in the largest, student-led competition in France: the 49th Course Croisière EDHEC (CCE). Gathering more than 3000 students, this year the CCE was held in Arzon in the south of French Brittany. ICYC attended with a team of seven students: three French, two English and two Chinese sailors.

We left London for ten days, starting the adventure with a rather long and tiring twenty-hour bus journey to cross from England to the French Far West. After a night in the bus we set foot in Arzon, a fine coastal city at the heart of French sailing, the bay of Quiberon. We chose to compete in the Grand Surprise Class, a one-design class where every team races on identical boats. The first day was dedicated to training and

getting acquainted with the boat as most of us had never stepped foot on a Grand Surprise. Though we had trained in the Solent before the race, we quickly realised how steep the learning curve was and how fierce the competition would be, as most boats were crewed by well-trained teams or even had professional skippers.

The competition started in very light wind and bright sunshine, where the battle for speed and boat trimming were key. Unfortunately, we lost too much on the upwind legs to allow us to compete for the first spots. With some good manoeuvres and superior downwind speed, we gained some ground back on the fleet to finish 16th, 19th, and 20th. Not the ideal start as we came back exhausted and sunburnt, but hoping that as we improved as a team and on the boat, we might climb up the rankings over the rest of the week.

The wind picked up on the

second day for the coastal races, for which we had to tour the Bay of Quiberon. With wind speed increasing and strong tidal currents, strategy and tactics had added complexity. The first race was marked with fun competition from the Spanish of FNB which we overtook under spinnaker after 45 minutes of match-racing. On the second race, we had a very good start and turned in the top ten at the first mark. Unfortunately, a boat refused our right of way after the mark forcing us into a crash gybe and left us on a collision course with a fishing boat ploughing through the fleet. After another gybe to give the trawler a comfortable safety margin, we had lost too much to put in a high placing. Sometimes, racing is not just about you and you learn hard lessons about sportsmanship – or the lack thereof.

The wind dropped drastically on the 3rd and 4th days



accompanied by challenging wind shifts and sudden gusts. We witnessed incredible situations where the whole fleet, moving at less than 0.5kt, would converge at a mark, with boats gently crashing onto each other and crews resorting to eating, drinking and playing music whilst still competing. It was the opportunity to befriend and chat with other sailors, while some went for a swim or climbed up the mast. They eventually cancelled racing on the 5th day due to a lack of wind. Unfortunately, we did not qualify for the finals on the last day which were won for the second time in a row by KPMG. Overall, ICYC finished 14th in the student general ranking, the first and only British crew against the French Armada.

However, CCE is not just about sailing for the week. Only a third of students attending compete through sailing, the rest battling in trail-running, canoeing or beach sports competitions. The event is organized around a whole village created just for the occasion which we had time to tour, enjoying the sponsors' goodies and the massive parties

thrown under the big tent each evening. We have to thank the wonderful organization team for the overall event and the EDHEC international team for the very welcoming atmosphere and delicious food parties presented by each country. Our bungalow was in the middle of the international village, leading us to meet sailors from Turkey, Croatia and many other European nations. Some of them even invited us to race in their home country and we all came back with twice as many friends. We are looking forward to repeating this experience next year for the 50th CCE, to be held in Brest, France.

Imperial College Yacht Club (ICYC) is the only student-led yacht club in London, focusing on yacht racing and cruising. The club is actively seeking for sailors from all experience levels. To find out more, please follow the yacht club's facebook page @ICYachtClub, or get in touch through email: yacht@ic.ac.uk

Martin Rey & Ian Emerson



ICXC light up the Netherlands

At 7:30am on Friday the 28th of April, Imperial's finest runners assembled outside SAF ready to embark on what was to be one of the greatest weekends of their lives. They hit the road at 8am, with Eurotrash blazing out of the notorious Union minibus speakers through the streets of London with the destination set for Nijmegen in the Netherlands (not Holland) for the world's largest relay race: the 45th Batavierenrace. The Batavierenrace is an around-the-clock, 25-stage relay which takes more than 8500 runners across 175 km of Dutch countryside to the finish at the University of Twente just outside Enschede.

The journey itself was fairly eventful, with several traffic jams, multiple dabs and plenty of team-bonding. Club snake, Greg Jones, was set to run the first leg, and the unexpected delays left him just half an hour to warm up, apply the face paint and get in the zone for the start at 10:30pm. Back at race HQ, the remainder of the team were preparing for the main race which would begin at 1am. The late arrival meant there was a scramble to find somewhere still open to get food. Thankfully, MacDonald's came to the rescue to provide the widely recognised pre-race nutrition choice of Big Macs and fries.

The first leg was a standalone event and there was a short break before the main night shift kicked off at 1am, with last-minute stand-in Alex Baldwin masterfully handling the challenge of surprise hills and a competitive field. Each runner during the race was accompanied by a cyclist for support and encouragement. Zhen Wang-Koh kicked off the first bike leg with Alex.

At this point the team split up to conserve energy. The



night team sped off in the minibus to chase Alex and Zhen into the night, while the remaining athletes attempted to sleep on the floor of the sports hall. Over the next few hours the brave Imperial athletes raced against the cold and dark under the Dutch night sky, awestruck by not only the stars but the trail of bike lights accompanying the runners through the dark fields. Charlotte Barratt notably completed two legs; at 2 and 4am! The route

briefly crossed into Germany before coming to an end around 5am, at which point the exhausted night-shifters passed out in the bus, having successfully completed the first third of the race. Meanwhile the remainder of the team had their alarms set for 4:40am to drive to the start of the morning shift in the town of Ulft. After an early-morning rave to Gay Bar and a feast of peanut-butter and jam sandwiches the morning team were ready

to go for the 07:15 restart, with a borderline-hypothermic Zhen forgoing sleep to join the morning crew to run for a second time (she still managed to beat both of her predicted times!). After multiple storming runs, some carefully executed changeovers and leg-winning runs by both Liam Smith and Fergus Johnson, the team reunited in Barchem at noon for the start of the afternoon shift before the grand finale.

The miles and final few legs

flew by for the afternoon team, despite many running for a second time. Rob Salawa managed a 10km PB on his 10.7km leg and Charlotte brought the team into Enschede – running for the third time, having stepped in to cover for injuries. The stage was then set for Jenny Lea and trip organiser/club legend Matt Douthwaite to complete the final two legs of the race and bring the sweaty vest to the finish line and allow the party to begin.

Overall, the team finished 17th out of 320 teams, although this included three dubious 15-minute penalties for removing the vest/baton too early. Without these penalties, the team finished in a total time of 12:17:01 – placing in an even more impressive 4th!

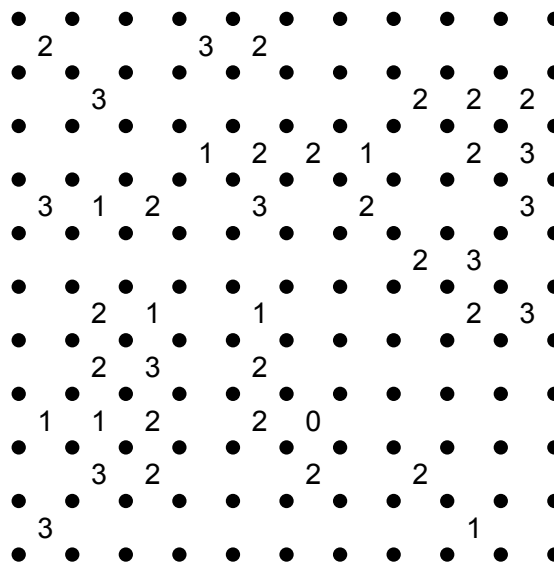
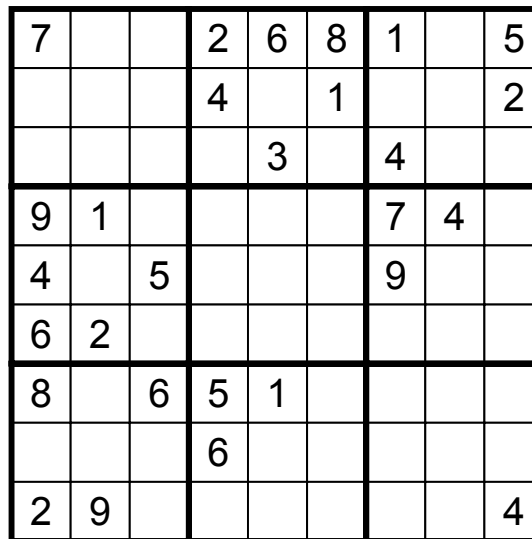
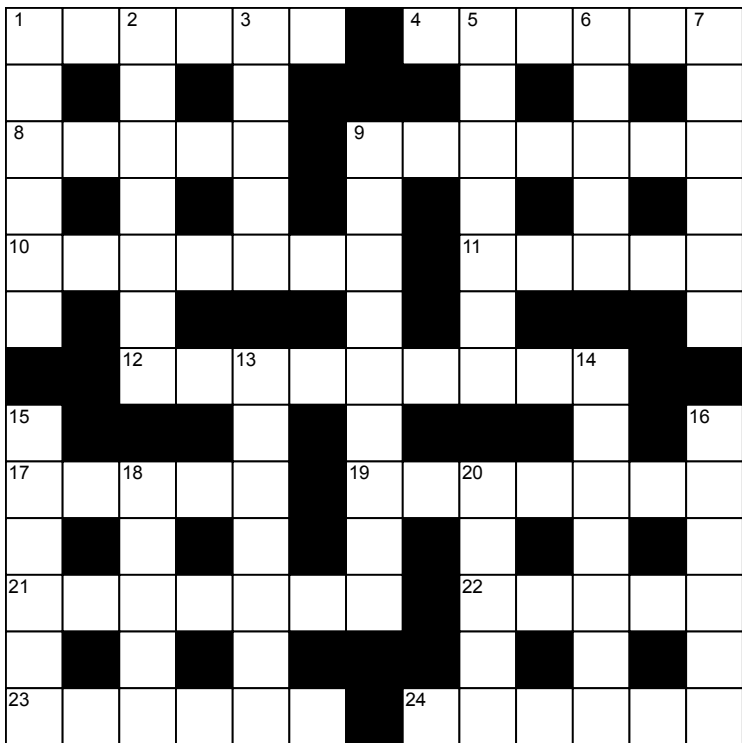
The sleep-deprived team then set about applying the most outrageous neon clothing and paint, along with squad headbands and finger lights, allowing the team to perfectly blend in with the Dutch locals who did not dress up at all. The team raved hard and for as long as they could before returning to sleep in another very hard-floored Dutch sports hall.

Anyone who thought that everyone would be too tired for any banter on the journey back was seriously mistaken. Bridges were applauded, breath was held for passing through tunnels, Rubik's cubes were solved, thumbs up were enthusiastically waved at locals accompanied with cries of "YAAAAAAS", and tunes were once again booming through the speakers in the queue for the Channel Tunnel. The trip was a big success and Imperial Cross Country and Athletics looks forward to returning to the Netherlands again next year.



Fergus Johnson & Matt Douthwaite

felix ... PUZZLES



FUCWIT

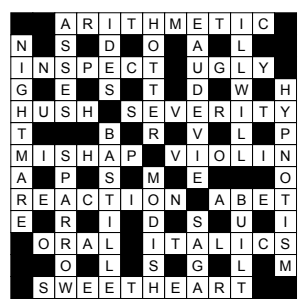
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Anonymous	409
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Mr Dick Tingler	6
The Erudites	6
Too gay 2 f(x)	6
Wadeelighful	6
Crosswordy McCrosswordface	5
Singed Potato	4
TP-LINK_M5_B057AD	4
Karet Slat	3
Fanny Schmeller	2
Points Available	16
Crossword	6
Sudoku	3
Slitherlink	3
Nonogram	4

- Across**
- 1. Divide (6)
 - 4. Silence (4,2)
 - 8. Benefit or use (5)
 - 9. Tiling (7)
 - 10. Solvent (7)
 - 11. Down-producing duck (5)
 - 12. Eris or Iris for example (9)
 - 17. Good point (5)
 - 19. Disentangle (7)
 - 21. Joyous (7)
 - 22. Perky (5)
 - 23. Easy (6)
 - 24. Radler, Panaché, Diesel... (6)

- Down**
- 1. Gusts (6)
 - 2. Drenched (7)
 - 3. Central American currency (5)
 - 5. Without head covering (7)
 - 6. Correlation (5)
 - 7. Extreme poverty (6)
 - 9. Everlasting (9)
 - 13. Obedient (7)
 - 14. Blessed (5,2)
 - 15. Friends in Spain (6)
 - 16. Soldier on watch (6)
 - 18. Watery discharge (5)
 - 20. If you can't do (5)

Solutions

Send in your solutions to fsudoku@imperial.ac.uk before midday Wednesday to get your score added to our leaderboard. Make sure you include the name/team name that you'd like us to use!



3 3 1 1 1

3 2 1 2 2 2 2 4 4 4 3 2 2 2 1 1 1 2 1 1 1 1 2 1 2

2 3 2 3 1 2 2 2 5 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 2 4 2 2 4 3 4 3 1 1 2 2 3 3 2

4 2 2 7 1 2 1 1 1 1 6 2 3 3 3 3 2 2 2 2 2 3 1 1 2 2 1 1 1 1 2 2 1 2

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

3 5 4 2 2 2 1 1 1 4 3 3 1 1 1 1 1 3 3 1 1 2 2 5 1 1 3 1 1 1 1 1 1 6 5

18 10

18 5 3

6 5 1 3

2 7 1 6

5 2 4 2

2 2 2

3 3 4

2 1 2 3

2 2 1

2 2 2

2 2 2 3

4 8 4 7

7 5 1

4 1

1 1 1

2 2 1

1 2 3

1 4 1

1 7 1

1 3 7 1 2

1 3 6 4

2 4 3 4

2 5 1 5

1 6 2 1 1

2 2 3 5 2 2 1 8

1 2 2 6 1 1 1 7

3 3 3 2 1 5

2 4 1 3 2 4

4 3 4 1 1 2

3 11 3 6

