

Welcome!



You are welcome to the fourth edition of our college newsletter, the DCFE Tribune, which brings

you some highlights of the college year 2022-2023.

Primarily, I want to thank our graduating class of 2023 for their great contribution to the college academically, culturally, socially and in terms of sports and extracurricular. I particularly want to mention the Student Union, the Green Campus Committee and all the students who helped with or took part in extracurricular activity and community outreach activities this year. I also want to thank our students for their contribution to so many companies and concerns through our work experience programmes.

Our main highlight this year is that funding has been set aside to purchase the site of our new college campus. It is a green field site near the train station and Dunboyne centre where we have grown over the last 20 years. Our new college will be a FET College of the Future design and will be the first of its kind in the country. We are

delighted by this announcement giving us state of the art, purpose-built facilities for PLC courses, traineeships, apprenticeships, skills to advance programs, community outreach courses and night classes. This investment is a testament to our staff, students, and the schools and communities we serve, who have put their trust in us for so many years to help us grow to nearly 1100 students and become a centre of excellence for teaching and learning in this region.

We thank Louth and Meath Education and Training Board (LMETB) staff, in particular Chief Executive Martin O'Brien, Director of Further Education and Training Sadie Ward McDermott and Land and Buildings Officer Sinead Murphy for their constant support on this journey.

Dunboyne College is a college with a family atmosphere which gives students a wealth of learning, enabling, communicating, collaborating, and inspiring each day.

DCFE is a comfortable and supportive place to learn. We provide over 60 accredited courses at QQI levels 5 and 6 as well as HND and apprenticeship offerings. Whether you want to be a nurse, teacher, scientist, sports coach, web designer, accountant, film maker, teacher, beautician, artist etc. we have a course that will start you on your way. We offer practical training, giving you up to date adaptable and transferable skills.

We are proud of our staff, our students, and their achievements. Dunboyne College, since 2003, has seen over 9000 thousand students pass through, gaining qualifications in a diverse range of areas, and progressing either to further studies at higher level, or going directly into the world of work. For the third year running our student population has numbered over 1000 and so many of last June's graduates received offers to third level or are in places of secure employment.

This past year has seen record numbers progressing from our college to third level courses and directly to industry. Four hundred and sixteen (416) students received honours degree, Level 8 offers and two hundred and forty-eight (273) received a Level 7, ordinary degree offer. These figures do not include the many mature students who received early offers and those who took up offers in the UK for Nursing, Law or Sports degrees. In addition to these students, the majority of students who studied on the vocational skills courses obtained employment, this is particularly relevant in the service and leisure courses. Well over 90% of the students who finish with us each June are either in a third level course or employment the following September.

Thank you for taking the time to read our newsletter and share in the many activities and events of recent weeks. Please keep an eye on our website, www.dunboynecollege.ie, and our Instagram, Facebook and Twitter pages, which will keep you informed of events as they happen. We will be taking applications right through the year until next September, and we hope many students will continue to join in the experiences of Dunboyne College, some of which you will find recorded here.

If you are thinking of coming to us next year, feel free to call in at any stage for more information on our courses and activities.

You can always phone us on, 01-8026577 or email; dunboynecollege@lmetb.ie or look up our website on dunboynecollege.ie

We are always delighted to hear from you.

Denis Leonard
Principal

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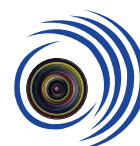
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Poetry, Short Stories, Film Reviews & Travel

Check out related podcasts and video where you see



College News & Events

Scholarships Programme - Students Win Scholarships in Fourth Year of Scholarships Programme

Local businesses have been involved in the fourth year of the scholarships programme in Dunboyne College. Students competed to win scholarships, designed to help retention, and to help promote education and local businesses.

The scholarships programme matches up a current Dunboyne College student with a company or organisation as that student's sponsor. The sponsor commits to, usually, reimbursing the college fees to the student upon successful completion of the academic year.

Seventeen DCFE students are the happy recipients of scholarships and are looking forward to being ambassadors for those companies and the college.

Twelve companies are taking part in the programme this year offering nineteen scholarships for which students have been competing to win. The successful students so far are: Daisylin Yambao, Monica Aoko, Sophie Keogan, Maria Worth, Aoise Lennon, Sean Panganiban, Paulin Check, Brian Walsh, Josh Meagher, Cormac Cullen Doyle, Hannah McNamara, Michelle Power, Emma Harper, James Duff, Eadaoin Lord, Ciara Dunne, Maryam Owoyomi.

The twelve companies involved are Alltec Ireland, Dunboyne; Lyons Financial Services, Dunboyne; Bluebird Care; Navan; Marymount Care Centre, Lucan; Joseph Hickey and Sons Ltd., Dunboyne; EMR, Dunboyne; Kelly O'Reilly Accounting, Enfield; Synoptix, Celbridge; Sidewalk Café, Dunboyne; Horse Racing Ireland; Sooner Than Later, Dublin; Meath Chronicle, Navan.

Horse Racing Ireland has committed to a €3,000 bursary for two students in the Equine area and this will be awarded at the end of the year.

The programme offers so many advantages to students like the opportunity to have their fees reimbursed for the academic year; the opportunity to form a relationship with a company or organisation in their vocational area and this may also translate into an opportunity for work experience or an internship and/or a reference for their CV.

For companies it is an opportunity to give a chance at education to a deserving student; to build relationships with perspective employees; to raise the profile of their business; and to become part of a community project with Dunboyne College.

Growing links with Universities for DCFE

The growing links between Dunboyne College and third level universities has been to the fore with visits from Maynooth University, TU Dublin, DCU and DKIT to the college during 2022/2023 academic year.

Welcoming the developing links Denis Leonard, DCFE Principal, says DCFE has worked consistently with our colleagues in higher education to open up new pathways to Higher Education for our students.

"Each year an increasing number of DCFE students are accessing degrees programme from Dunboyne instead of relying on their Leaving Certificate. In 2022 over 90 per cent of eligible students who applied via the CAO in 2022 received an offer based on their QQI results and not their Leaving Certificate points. This meant that 416 DCFE graduates were offered places on Level 8 honours degrees with 273 receiving Level 7 offers."

"The majority of DCFE graduates apply to and accept offers from universities and colleges in the Dunboyne catchment area," according to Mr Leonard. "The degree to which the universities value DCFE graduates has been recognised by the visits of their presidents to the college."

"Universities are increasing the number of places for QQI graduates and our experience demonstrates that it is very possible to progress from Level 5 to a Level 8 degree. We have been working closely

with Irish universities including Maynooth and TU Dublin to open up opportunities for our students to get to where they want to go. TU Dublin made 270 offers to our students across Level 8 and Level 7 courses in 2022 while Maynooth University offered 87 places."

The close relationship with Maynooth was reinforced during the visit of its President Professor Eeva Leinonen who was joined by Dr John Mc Ginnity, Assistant Registrar & Admissions Officer. The visit was followed by a meeting in Dunboyne with Professor Aidan Mulkeen, Vice-President Academic, Registrar & Deputy President, Professor Ronan Farrell, Dean of the Faculty of Science and Engineering and Dr John Mc Ginnity which focused on the development of closer links with DCFE. Currently DCFE students enrolled on the Pre-Teach course attend classes in Maynooth University one day a week.

Links between TU Dublin and DCFE were further strengthened with the visit of Dr Mary Meaney, Registrar and Deputy President TUD and Mairead Murphy, Head of Recruitment, Admissions & Participation TUD. Plans are underway for further meetings with TU Dublin to develop new links. "TU Dublin were the first higher education college to take students from DCFE" according to Denis Leonard. "We are working closely with TU Dublin to develop further links and projects."

Newly appointed President of DKIT Dr Diarmuid O Callaghan visited Dunboyne in April. Dr O'Callaghan has close links with DCFE from his time in IT Blanchardstown.

The growing number of DCFE students opting to progress to degrees in DCU was the topic of discussion during the visit of Dr Daire Keogh, President DCU and Dr Ann Looney, Executive Dean of the Institute of Education. 58 DCFE graduates progressed to DCU in 2022. During their visit they met with Pre-Nursing students who have applied to progress to DCU.

For further information on progression routes from DCFE to universities please contact Meabh Nimmo or Derek Ball in the guidance office at mnimmo.dbc@lmetb.ie or dball.dbc@lmetb.ie



Denis Leonard, Principal and Dr Daire Keogh, President DCU, pictured at a recent visit by DCU to Dunboyne College

College Connect



Pictured at the launch of the College Connect report on progression pathways to higher education for FE students are Denis Leonard, Principal, DCFE, Meabh Nimmo, DCFE Career Guidance, Derek Ball, DCFE Career Guidance and Aoife O'Dwyer, Course Coordinator Pre-Teaching DCFE

Dr Daire Keogh, President, DCU and Anne Looney, Executive Dean of the Institute of Education DCU talking to Pre-Nursing students in Dunboyne College of Further Education



DCFE Principal Denis Leonard and the DCFE Career Guidance team of Derek Ball and Maebh Nimmo and Pre-Teach Coordinator Aoife O'Dwyer attended the launch of a report focusing on progression from Further Education to Higher Education.

The report 'A Community Needs Analysis with Further Education Students – Thoughts Around Progression from Further Education and Training to Higher Education' was launched by Minister Simon Harris, Minister for Further and Higher Education, Research, Innovation and Science (DFHERIS).



Pictured left to right during the visit of Dublin City University (DCU) to Dunboyne College are Derek Ball, Career Guidance DCFE, Emer Cloak, Deputy Principal DCFE, Irene Togher, Deputy Principal DCFE, Anne Looney, Executive Dean of the Institute of Education DCU, Denis Leonard, Principal, Dr Daire Keogh, President DCU, Meabh Nimmo, Career Guidance DCFE, Catherine Fox, Deputy Principal DCFE.



Pictured during the visit of Dr. Diarmuid O'Callaghan, President DKIT to DCFE are Derek Ball, Career Guidance DCFE, Catherine Fox, Deputy Principal DCFE, Meabh Nimmo, Career Guidance DCFE, Dr. Diarmuid O'Callaghan, President DKIT, Irene Togher, Deputy Principal DCFE and Denis Leonard, Principal DCFE



Visit by TUD to DCFE – Irene Togher, Deputy Principal DCFE, Derek Ball, Career Guidance DCFE, Dr Mary Meaney, Registrar and Deputy President TUD, Denis Leonard, Principal DCFE, Mairead Murphy, Head of Recruitment, Admissions & Participation TUD, Meabh Nimmo, Career Guidance DCFE, Emer Cloak, Deputy Principal DCFE, Catherine Fox, Deputy Principal DCFE



Top 9 Offering Universities & Colleges	offers
1 TU Dublin	270
2 Maynooth University	87
3 Dublin City University (DCU)	58
4 University College Dublin (UCD)	54
5 Atlantic Technological University	34
6 South East Technical University	32
7 Dundalk IT	29
8 Technical Institute of the Shannon	29
9 Trinity College Dublin	21

Campus Events Week

Photo Competition



Green Week 2023

Green Week 2023 involved a host of varied events involving staff and students working together towards making Dunboyne College a more biodiverse as well as eco-friendly campus. From a cookery demo to litter pick, Instagram photo competition, Beewise workshop and clothes swap, our focus was on practical activity and raising awareness as well as fundraising for the Irish Wildlife Trust. A huge thanks to all committee members as well as Animal Care students for their hard work!



Clodagh Gaddren



Samantha O'Hara



Siobhan Melia

Beewise Workshop



Litter Pick



Bike to Work Scheme

Record number of trees planted by Dunboyne College in 2023

Dunboyne College Green Campus Committee is delighted to work with national schools, secondary schools, community groups, scouts, men's sheds and tidy town committees across Meath, Dublin, Kildare, Wicklow and Westmeath planting trees in 2023. Working with Easy Treesie supported by Coillte, 2,000 trees were delivered and distributed from Dunboyne College campus. We aim to plant chiefly native saplings in our locality and be part of Easy Treesie's nationwide campaign to plant 1 million trees across Ireland by 2024. The brainchild of Orla Farrell who set up this project has had far reaching effects in terms of planting native species all across Ireland. Her passion is clearly evident "I love children's enthusiasm to care for nature, so many adults also want to take environmental action. I go around putting the elements together to enable this to happen. Most people are just doing their best. Virtual life has left us feeling out of touch with nature, tree planting is a simple and easy activity that has long term benefits with a cascade of positive results".

Dunboyne College Green Campus aims to increase the number of trees planted every year, not only raising awareness of the benefits to our environment of planting trees but also taking positive action to make this a reality. It is a truly rewarding experience to see members of local communities coming together to change the world around us for the better.



For more information see www.easytreesie.com for planting advice and more.





Clothes Swap Shop



International Women's Day at Dunboyne College

By Hannah McNamara

March 8th is the global day for celebration of the cultural, historical and political achievements of women. This year Dunboyne College of Further Education took significant action in celebrating this occasion to represent women's rights and gender equality.

Dunboyne College along with Drogheda Institute of Further Education and Ó'Fiaich Institute of Further Education, organised a 'purple-tie' event to mark this event. They were involved in the showcasing of the one-woman drama, 'Truth, Love or Promise' written and performed by internationally acclaimed-writer and actress Nuala McKeever. This monumental production was directed by Dan Gordon and explores the themes of love, identity and friendship.



The comic drama took place at The Barbican, St. Peter's Parish Centre, Drogheda, Co. Louth. The students and teachers of the colleges contributed to the event by designing an inspiring montage of poetry, prose and artwork which was all unveiled on the night. Guest speaker Dr Anita Byrne gave a short talk on the issue of Trauma Informed Care.



Cookery Demo



PLAY LMFM Interview



Dr. Anita Byrne

The night was a great success. Johanna Dawe, English Literature Teacher at Dunboyne College and chair of the organising committee believes that:

'A new narrative around old taboo's was offered in Nuala's poignant play Truth, Love, or Promise. When three women meet at a creative writing class, writing is not the only thing they learn. They also learn the pain and ultimate freedom in truth, the acceptance of love and the promise of friendship. Life under the lens takes on new meaning, and when voices are clearly heard, lives change forever'.

Dunboyne College's involvement in this celebration did not stop here. Two psychology students, Sophie Norton and Aoife Leonard represented the "Too Into You" movement created by Women's Aid. It is a National Public Awareness Campaign which raises awareness of relationship abuse against young women.



Pied wagtail nesting in Dunboyne College



International Women's Week Truth, Love or Promise

On the eve of International Women's day, The Barbican Centre Drogheda hosted the world premiere of a specially commissioned play by LMETB Further Education colleges. Nuala McKeever's Truth, Love or Promise was a resounding success and showcased Irish acting talent at its very best. A huge thank you to all involved in the production with special thanks going to students, and teachers who produced poetry, and artwork which was showcased on the night.



Nuala McKeever

Allsortsofphotography



Sophie and Aoife set up a table by the canteen and shared information and advice to all students about this campaign. They expressed their concern for sharing this information in college environments. 'It's so common, it's 1 in 5 women that go through this at a young age. It's not talked about enough.' They provided several flyers about this campaign and the Women's Aid organisation which you can approach if you need further advice or guidance. These remarkable students believe that it is important 'In this day and age to know that you don't deserve to be treated in such a manner.'

Health Week

DCFE hosted its annual Wellbeing Week from March 13-16th. The week was filled with activities ranging from health checks, exercises classes and cookery demos to manicures, haircuts, and massages. We were also lucky enough to have some inspiring talks from former European Champion boxer, Eric Donovan. A really enjoyable week for both staff and students alike.



Learning in Action

Guest Speaker RTE Crime Correspondent Paul Reynolds

On Monday 27th March Paul Reynolds, RTE Crime Correspondent gave a presentation to Journalism, Criminology and Psychology students on Crime in Ireland. Paul discussed the media portrayal of crime, organised crime in Ireland, and the occurrence of fake news. Paul then opened the floor to a Q&A session where he spent over an hour responding to students' questions about crime and the role and expectations of journalism and the occupation of a journalist. Students thoroughly enjoyed the experience.



NUIM guest speaker

Ruth Daly, school liaison officer for St Patrick's College Maynooth who attends schools and FE colleges visited DCFE to speak about progression to the courses offered by St Patrick's College.



Winner in the Young Reporter for the Environment Competition 2023

Huge congratulations to Journalism student Finn Mahon who placed third in this year's Young Reporter for the Environment competition for his article on Climate Change and Motorsport. Check it out by following the link <https://yreibreland.exposure.co/climate-change-and-motorsport>



Emergency Department Care skills module

EMR students completed their "Log Roll" for their Emergency Department Care Skills module.



DCFE MU Think About Teaching Partnership

Pre-Teaching students were celebrated for their excellent contribution to and participation on the Maynooth University Turn to Teaching and Dunboyne College of Further Education Think About Teaching programme 2022 – 2023. The student-led ceremony acknowledged the hard work, commitment and achievements of the students throughout the year. Highlights of the year for the students included College Awareness workshop facilitation in St. Peter's College, Dunboyne, Storytelling facilitation with Junior and Senior Infants pupils in Dunboyne Junior Primary School, development and delivery of workshops to peers and Maynooth University Students and a contribution of student voice to a book called 'Critical Perspectives in Further Education and Training' by Dr Camilla Fitzsimons and Dr Jerry O'Neil on their perspective of Further Education and Training.

The ceremony marked the end of the first academic year of this cross-tertiary partnership between Dunboyne College and Maynooth University. See our video here <https://dunboynecollege.ie/dcfe-mu-think-about-teaching-partnership/>



Student Paramedic Guest Speaker

Isabelle About, a graduate of the 2021-22 Pre-Paramedic Fire and Ambulance course, visited the college to talk to current students on the process of applying for the HSE National Ambulance Service. Isabelle is now a Student Paramedic with the HSE National Ambulance Service.

In her presentation she outlined the different stages, preparation and hints and tips that could assist them in successfully achieving their goal of becoming Student Paramedics.



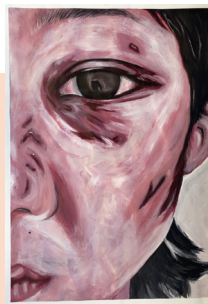
It was great to chat with Isabelle again and to see how well she is doing. She was very complimentary of DCFE and particularly of the Pre-Paramedic Fire and Ambulance course. Isabelle has promised to come back to visit us next year when she will be well into her 1st year of her Paramedic Degree.



Robert Ballagh Art and Photography competition

Art Portfolio student Rathchanon Chansungnoen who won a Merit award at the LMETB Robert Ballagh Art and Photography competition held in Droichead Arts Centre, Drogheda on March 15th.

Esteemed artist Robert Ballagh presented the award and here is an image of our student with the winning entry entitled: 'Portrait'.



Art Portfolio Group

End of year 'Wearable sculpture' pieces designed and created by the Art Portfolio Group.



Class Trips

National Ambulance Service College

The Pre-Paramedic Fire and Ambulance students were invited to the HSE National Ambulance Service College (NASC) and National Emergency Operations Centre (NEOC).

The students were able to see a working Emergency Control Centre. They were delighted to be given a full breakdown of operations and procedures. The Control Centre takes over 1000 Emergency Ambulance calls a day and has to dispatch Ambulances to these calls given priority based on the level of need. It was a great experience and opportunity for the students to get an insight into the Ambulance Service. The students had many pertinent questions which the Control Centre staff were delighted to answer.

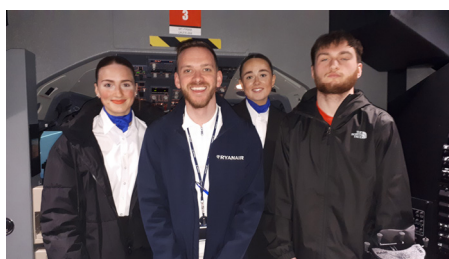


The students also visited the NASC which is one of 3 HSE National Ambulance Service Colleges in Ireland (soon to expand to 5). There they were given a breakdown of the service including the history and developments in the pipeline. The students were able to see exactly how a career in the HSE National Ambulance Service would begin.

The staff of both HSE NASC and NEOC were very generous with their time and attention. They were very happy to answer all the questions asked by the students. This was a wonderful experience for the students.

Airline students ready for take-off at Waterford Airport

Airline students enjoyed a recent trip to Waterford Airport and the International Academy of Travel with their tutor Siobhán Leavy and Deputy Principal, Irene Togher. The trip was part of their studies for the Diploma in International Travel Industry Studies. Students carried out safety demonstrations and pre-departure inspection checks on a mock aircraft and worked on the check-in desks. In March the Airline and Tourism students visited the Ryanair Flight Academy as part of their course. Colm Judge, Operations Recruitment Manager, Ryanair outlined the career opportunities with Ryanair before showing the students and accompanying staff around the flight academy. Students got the opportunity to visit the flight simulation pods used to train pilots.



Criminal Courts – Journalism students

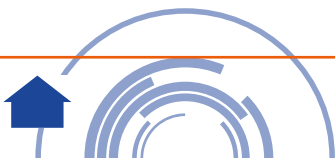
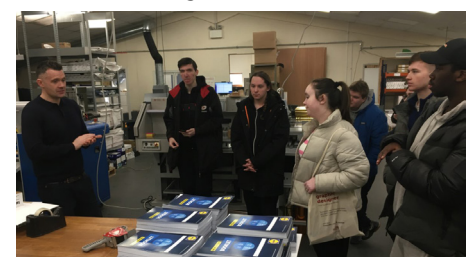
As part of their core Module Writing Skills for Journalism, students visited Dublin Criminal Courts to write up court reports on ongoing criminal cases.



Sooner than Later

Graphic Design trip to Sooner than Later, a print company based in Dun Laoghaire.

It was a great opportunity to see how the print industry works and also get an insight into the role designers play.



Newgrange

Graphic Design and CDM groups making a promotional video of the Boyne Valley visiting Newgrange as part of their research.



IBM

Software Development & Computer Systems & Networks' students enjoyed a day out of the college at IBM Business Campus in Mulhuddart this term. There were several guest speakers at the half day event discussing topics from new technologies to careers for prospective students.

There was also a 'Hackathon' - a social coding event that brings computer programmers and other interested people together to improve upon or build a new software program. For this part, students were arranged into groups of four and had to work on problem solving and teamwork. A much-needed coffee and tea break saw us through to the end of the event and it was well worth a visit!



Nature Reserve Field Trip

Wildacres is a nature reserve on a mission to encourage and inspire people throughout Ireland to protect our native wildlife and our environment. The animal science level 6 students visited the nature reserve, honey farm and biodiversity education centre in East County Wicklow on the beautiful Redcross river to learn about re-wilding and protecting Ireland's native biodiversity. It was a beautiful sunny day for the trip and a well needed break away from the classroom for the students.



Student Voice

Are Film Directors Being SUPER-critical of Superhero Films in the Current State of Our Industry?

By Sean Kearney

Are we as moviegoers being too hypercritical about superhero films in the industry?

If we think of superhero films from the mind of someone such as Martin Scorsese or Quentin Tarantino, these films can be seen as damaging to the industry. A quote from Scorsese about this matter outlines that "It isn't the cinema of human beings trying to convey emotional, psychological experiences to another human being." When we look at superhero films from a general retrospective, they are just fun blockbuster watches. However, looking deeper into this genre, and by the end of this discussion, you will know why these prestigious directors are partially incorrect in their statements and thoughts of these films. So, let us dive into exactly what superhero films have provided for the industry and why they are not pointless in the overall generation of the ever-expanding state of Hollywood.

A quote from Jodie Foster outlines that "Going to the movies has become like a theme park." If we look at superhero films that have been released in the previous decade, whether you like this genre or not, they have undoubtedly provided an exceeding amount of money towards the worldwide box office. Viewing the box office charts, out of the ten highest-grossing films of all time, four of these films are superhero films. If you think about it, that is almost half of the top ten worldwide grossing films. Furthermore, the superhero film that has produced the highest amount of money for the box office is 'Avengers: Endgame' with a striking total of 2.8 billion dollars (2.5 billion euro). This makes it the second highest grossing film of all time just behind James Cameron's 'Avatar' which is a huge achievement. So, when we gravitate back to these director's thoughts about superhero films ruining the industry. While they are correct that there is an oversaturation of these films currently, there is simply no denying that these films have proved to be successful for the box office. Not only is this good for the industry but it also means that the audience like you and me clearly get some enjoyment from these films.



With these statistics and facts about the genre, and the views from respected directors, it could come across as a sense of jealousy from them due to these films being so successful at the box office. Directors such as Quentin Tarantino have made some critical but valid points on the situation. In a discussion with the Los Angeles Times, Tarantino outlined that he "can't wait for the day superhero movies aren't popular anymore." This recent talk with the Los Angeles Times wasn't the first time Tarantino has made his opinion on these films. In 2020, which was the beginning of a massive influx in superhero projects, Tarantino stated to Deadline that he was "fighting a war for movies" against these huge franchises such as Marvel and DC. He also added to that, saying "cinema doesn't fall into that blockbuster IP proof status" conveying that superhero films don't fall under cinema. Whether this is truly the case or not, we can clearly see that these films are having an impact on directors and how they view the film industry now. Another interesting quote, this time from well-known director Ridley Scott who suggests that the superhero film "scripts are not any f***ing good." Which brings us on to our next section.

What in our eyes as moviegoers makes a well-crafted film? Well, we want to see fleshed out characters and great storytelling, right?

According to director Roland Emmerich, the superhero film genre is not of this standard to him. When talking with Insider, Emmerich outlined that he uses superhero films to fall asleep. He then adds that he is "not a fan of these movies because they feel very formulaic."

Taking Emmerich's stance onboard, these superhero films could be seen as formulaic for definite. However, it should not detract from how good or bad the story and characters are. But it is important we factor that this superhero formula can come across as overdone and unoriginal to the point where it could get to a stage of uninterest and decline in both the audience and the industry.

Overall, I believe that film directors have valid points and views on the superhero film industry. It is a subjective topic whether superhero films are starting to tire audiences and if they could even be considered films by some people. Regardless, the superhero genre has been providing for the film industry and is loved by many.



Nicole Maines: Her story being a trans hero on and off the screenBy **Andy Ward****Did you know Nicole Maines is more than just Supergirl's friend?**

Nicole Maines is a 25-year-old American actress and trans-rights activist grew up in Portland, Maine and was raised in an environment of acceptance and support. As early as age four, Nicole knew she was different and that she was a girl. She found comfort in the support of her parents, who worked tirelessly to find resources and medical treatment to help their daughter transition.

Most famously known for her role in the DC show 'Supergirl'. Nicole was first publicly heard in 2014 when she was an anonymous plaintiff in a Maine Supreme Judicial Court case where she argued her school district could not deny her access to the female bathrooms for being trans. Following the verdict, the court ruled that barring transgender students from the school bathroom consistent with their gender identity is unlawful, which was the first such ruling by a state court.

Since then, Nicole has been a vocal advocate for the trans community. She has spoken out about the discrimination and violence that the trans community faces and has used her platform to raise awareness about trans issues. She has appeared on television and in films, including the hit show Supergirl, where she plays the first transgender superhero.

Nicole plays Dreamer in 'Supergirl' who is also a trans woman. Dreamer being a part of 'Supergirl' is a great achievement in the film industry as she is the first trans superhero on screen and the fact that a trans actress plays the character just makes her impact that much bigger. Nicole herself can be called a super girl for all the work she has done for trans people of all ages all over the world.

When asked in an interview by Adonis Gonzales "is there anything that you hope fans will take away from her journey, as well as your own developing the character?", Nicole responded with

"I hope people watching her take away that there is nothing that defines you. Our identity is made up of a bunch of different characteristics and traits and we are not defined by any one of those things. We're an amalgamation of everything that makes us who we are and we have a right to be proud of that. And we should not have to hide who we are from anybody."

Nicole is also a passionate philanthropist and has worked with numerous organizations to support trans rights. She is a role model for the trans community and a source of hope for those who feel marginalized and voiceless.

Nicole's work has been an inspiration to many, and her fight for trans rights is an example of how a single individual can make a real difference in the world. Nicole has been a powerful force in the fight for transgender rights, and her efforts have made a lasting impact on the trans community. Her message of acceptance and hope will continue to resonate with people for years to come.

In a recent speech, Nicole emphasized the need to continue fighting for trans rights and shared her hope for the future. She spoke passionately about the need to create a world where the trans community can live authentically, free from discrimination and violence.

Nicole's speech reminded us that the fight for equality is far from over and that there is still much work to be done. Her inspiring words of courage and hope will continue to inspire others to stand up for what is right.

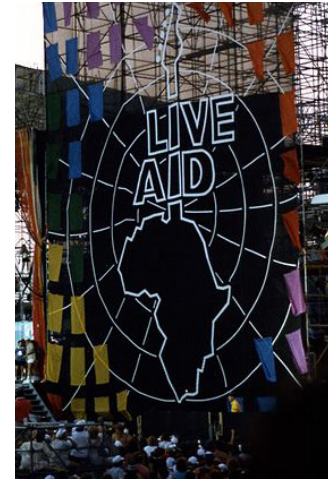
Nicole explained that the fight for trans rights is about more than just policy. It's about creating an environment where people can be their true selves without fear of discrimination or violence. She highlighted the need for education and awareness and emphasized the importance of standing together in solidarity.

The speech was a powerful reminder of the importance of advocating for trans rights. Nicole made it clear that all people, regardless of gender identity, should be respected and treated with dignity. She highlighted the need for us to continue to fight for a more equal and just world, one in which everyone can live authentically and without fear.

Nicole's speech was a reminder that the fight for trans rights is ongoing and that we all have a role to play. As she said, "We all have a duty to create a world where everyone can live and love authentically." Nicole's inspiring words will continue to motivate us all to keep fighting for a better, more equal future.

The Cultural and historical significance of Live Aid 1985By **Scott O'Brien**

Almost 38 years ago, 1.9 billion people from over 150 countries tuned in to witness one of the most iconic and momentous events to ever take place within the music industry. This was of course the Live Aid concert of July 13th, 1985.



Live Aid can be considered one of the rarest events to ever take place within the music industry, as many of the most popular and influential artists in the world of music

took active interest in the world's political and economic inequalities and stepped up to lead relief efforts by performing at Live Aid. Although Live Aid 1985 is often regarded as the most influential charity concert ever, it was also faced with serious controversy as questions were raised about Western aid.

Live Aid was organised by Bob Geldof, a well-known Irish artist who fronted The Boomtown Rats. Geldof organised two epoch-making concerts which were held in Wembley stadium (London) and the Philadelphia Stadium (Philadelphia). The common goal of the participating artists was to support the country of Ethiopia by bringing in enough revenue to give relief to the people there, who were faced with a famine.

'Live Aid set the template for future fundraising concerts by raising approximately £150 million for famine relief', according to Geldof's website, as each ticket for the concert was priced at £5 with an extra £20 charity donation added on.

In the United States, the Philadelphia Stadium brought in a crowd of 90,000 people and presented them with a once in a lifetime line-up featuring names like Madonna, Duran Duran, and The Beach Boys. Phil Collins also flew to the US show from London after wrapping up his set in Wembley. One of the most iconic performances of the day turned out to be Tina Turner's incredible show with Mick Jagger. The US concert ended with a group

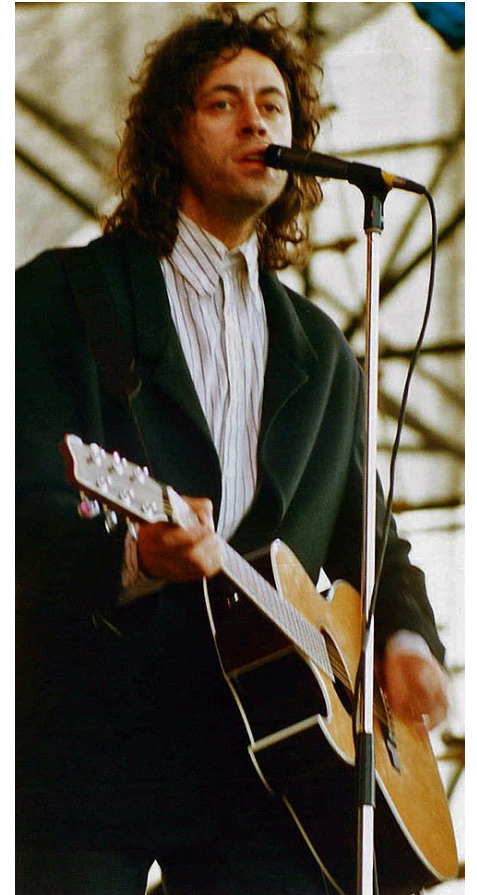
performance of 'We Are the World', while in London, the artists were joined by the crowd in singing 'Do They Know It's Christmas' (In the heat of July).

Another important reason Live Aid is considered one of the most historic events in music history is due to Queen's explosive performance, where lead singer Freddie Mercury put both the crowd and the world that watched in awe. The band had just wrapped up a world tour to promote their newest album at the time, *The Works* and were expected to be more subdued at the Live Aid concert. However, their performance at Live Aid proved any doubts about the band to be invalid, as peak viewership of the event was recorded during Queen's flawless set.

aid Ethiopian famine instead fell into the pockets of the elite minority in Ethiopia. However, Geldof publicly shut down these controversies.

Live Aid quickly became one of the biggest and most significant cultural events in history, even though Geldof and the other organisers behind it never planned for it to be one. Geldof had imagined Live Aid as a 'political lobby' that world leaders notice and respond to, because poverty, in Geldof's opinion, was the 'vicious nexus plaguing in the African continent.'

Despite Geldof's thoughts and claims, the impact of Live Aid has been debated for years since its occurrence. Several reports choose to put light on the other side of Western aid, which equips National Governing Organisations to take part in exploitative government-controlled exercises such as resettlement, even if they intend to lessen the effects of such crimes. This



points towards the need to have a deeper understanding of aid. For Geldof, the definition of aid has taken on a more social justice-adjacent approach than just 'charity', which is perhaps the lens that Live Aid's efforts should be looked at with.

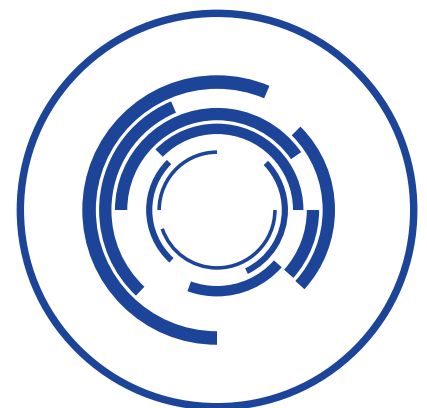
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'Queen were absolutely the best band of the day,' Geldof said in an interview with Hot Press. 'They played the best, had the best sound, used their time to the full. They understood the idea exactly, that it was a global jukebox. They just went and smashed one hit after another. It was the perfect stage for Freddie - the whole world.'

Despite becoming the largest international satellite event ever broadcast on international television, controversy and rumours on the concert's success and those who had performed began to surface. One such controversy led people to believe that 20% of the proceeds that were to

While recounting the significance of Live Aid in 2019, Geldof said that 'while it worked in terms of money, and raising £150 million, which we're still spending, it really worked in terms of the lobby, 'cause the G8 was invented the next year and it was never off that (agenda) then because the lobby kept insisting that this would be a global agenda. So, from there until Live 8 was the long road taking people from this thing they'd done, up to the political reality of it.'



The true pleasures of sea swimming

By **Abigail Brady**

Have you tried endless ways to beat stress? Are you always left back where you started?

In recent years, sea swimming has spiralled into a national sensation. The numerous benefits that come with a cold dip in the natural sea have finally become acknowledged.

The ancient routine has been around for hundreds of years providing its countless benefits. Just from a 1-minute plunge into the chilling water can release stress, relax muscles, help deepen sleep and cleanse your spirit. Sea swimming provides enticing benefits for both mental and physical wellbeing. The life-changing activity should be recognized by everyone to help more people overcome the initial fear and understand the beautiful benefits. From basic physical health advantages to dealing with mental anguish, sea swimming is a healthy outlet for anyone to participate in no matter the age.



The instant shock of cold ignites a powerful hit of pure stillness and utter bliss. When immersed in the water, one becomes completely present within life. Nothing else matters but the piercing cold against your skin and the deep breaths through your lungs. Sea swimming ensues a connection to oneself and the stillness of nature. The act of sea swimming is intimate allowing us to reconnect with ourselves through the shock of the water, we become completely aware and conscious of the stillness of the present moment. Through a quick plunge in the water, we are jolted out of our anxious minds that hold us back and instantly brought to the present time. The swim forces you to focus simply on your breath and the intense temperature of the water. After about 2 minutes in the sea, the freezing water is practically numb to the body and an overpowering feeling of liberation succumbs. The mind is clear, and the body has been shocked back to life. The beauty surrounding the sea only increases the momentous moment of clarity and hope. Sea swimming leaves you with a feeling of gratitude for the simplicity of life, nature, and the present moment. The pleasurable hobby has a ripple effect, leaving you with that special feeling to relish in for the rest of the day.

Many significant physical health benefits come with the experience of a quick dip in the cold sea. For one, our immune system is extensively boosted. Studies show the cold water boosts the white blood count as the body is forced to react to the dramatic alter in conditions. Another reason to overcome the fear of the cold and take a deep plunge in the Irish sea is the natural high that is received every single time. Without fail, our bodies naturally release endorphins with every dive into the freezing water. This chemical is essentially what the brain produces to make us feel happy during activities. The brain produces endorphins when sea swimming as the chemical is released when we are in pain, to help us cope with it. A third aspect to sea swimming that proves to be a remarkable advantage is that is a great form of exercise that burns calories. The heart must pump fast in the cold water and the body must work harder in order to stay warm resulting in an effective form of exercise.

Although there are numerous benefits to our physical health, it also empowers our strength to overcome mental health struggles. Irish Pilates instructor “Gigi Tynan” experienced the transformative abilities of the sea and says sea swimming helped her take back control over her life.

By implementing sea swimming into her routine, each swim provided a “deep sense of achievement and a “post sea glow”. As our bodies feel the euphoric experience of a cold swim, it naturally leaves us with an upbeat and positive mind frame. Another aspect of sea swimming is the sense of community and connection. Socializing plays an immense part to the activity and helps people connect with others in a sincere and genuine way. Swimming with others allows you share a beautiful and positive experience with others that cannot be achieved elsewhere. Also is a great way to meet new people and enrich your quality of life! Socializing is key to maintaining our mental health and staying positive within our lives. Finally, sea swimming heavily reduces anxiety and stress. Studies have proven that repeated exposure to cold waters increase physical and mental resilience. As the utter shock of the cold water stimulates the body and impacts the brain. Allowing us to build the strength to face battles of daily life.

To summarise, we all have our own struggles throughout our lives and sea swimming is something so simple yet so impactful to the human mind and body. Although it may seem like a tough activity, especially in typical Irish sea, a quick dip can tremendously impact our physical and mental wellbeing. Through the nature of the salty waters, open sky, and the beating sun on our face, we feel beyond alive. Or can merely turn a bad day into a good one.

Creative Corner



Haiku

By Rianna Dolan

a world set on fire
but our hearts will never burn
they are made stronger



The setting sun and misty waterfall

By Jerrin Olanorin

Gazing at the napalm sky,
The setting sun and the misty waterfall.
Far in the distance, I hear a call.
It's been said, "the end is nigh".
Staring at the tallies of battles etched on my skin,
The deep intersections hurt the most.
But in my heart and in my soul within,
There was not a single thing for me to boast.
Now, to be standing tall upon the mountaintop.
I trekked through a path where the tree roots lay bare.
There was peace in the natural songs of this heavenly lair,
Like the sound of ocean waves crashing.

No control

By Clodagh Murray

My foot starts tapping
And I think,
here we go.
The voices become muffled
As the drums begin to pound in my ears.
Breathe.
I look around the room
Checking for the new source of heat.
The heat that makes me feel like
The fiery rays of the sun are targeting me
Breathe.
I feel as though I'm on a merry go round
And I have butterflies in my stomach.
Except, it's not a fun feeling.
It won't stop until the operator hits the button
And the butterflies are now punching my stomach,
Trying to escape.
Breathe.
"Stop shaking your leg" they say
"You're fine" they say
"Why do you get like this all the time? It's silly" they say.
Breathe
Breathe
Breathe.
And when I open my eyes
I am as light as a feather.
I sit waiting for the next time.
But what can I do?
Nothing.
I have no control.

Song – Jesus died screaming

By Grace Joyce

they lied when they gave you the wine,
jesus died screaming and with a heart full
of brine,
torn wrists on display, a bleeding holy
object.
he cried to his mother and no other,
'for you I'll be perfect,
i swear to him and to you I'll be perfect,'
he came back drunk on lies and wine,
and his mother saw in his eyes no
recognition,
but from suicide scars poured a religion,
and he cried 'eat me, eat me, eat me.'

Colours

By Diarmuid Nugent

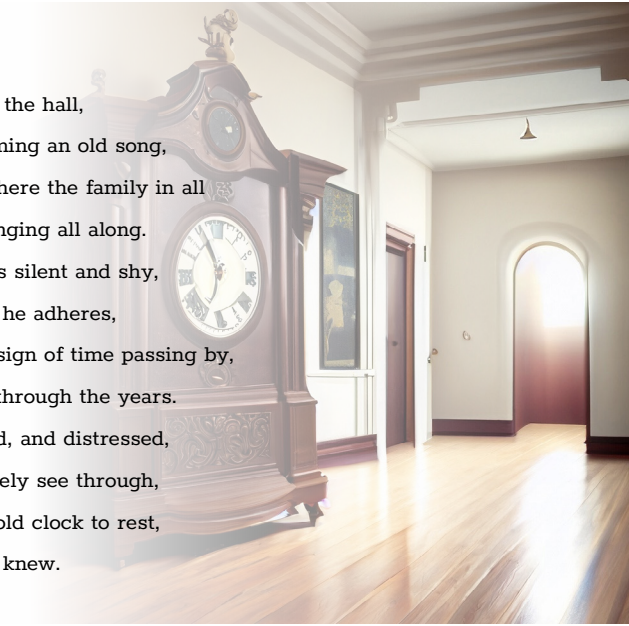
Waking up in the blue,
Wondered how well they knew,
How easily I could get through to you.
Times can sometimes feel black,
Letting people know how easily you crack,
But giving up, not fighting back,
Would show how effortlessly you slack.
Growing up can be red,
Knowing the things we feel in our head,
I walk and walk but still feel dead.
Things can change from a simple hello,
Or get left behind leaving just an echo.
The days of being green have passed,
And left some others leaving fast,
Making up for the love at last,
Holding a line we cannot cast.



The Grandfather Clock

by Michaela Gough

The grandfather clock that sits in the hall,
Both tall and antique, quietly chiming an old song,
Unheard from the sitting room, where the family in all
Sits unaware of the clock song singing all along.
Unable to communicate, he stands silent and shy,
With no legs to move, to his spot he adheres,
His face stares forward, hands a sign of time passing by,
A storyteller of memories, down through the years.
His face now discoloured, cracked, and distressed,
His eyes though none, he can barely see through,
The time has now come, for this old clock to rest,
The life he has lived, if only they knew.



Short Stories

Short Story - Audrey's Law

By Tara Walsh

Murphy's Law is a familiar belief to Ms Audrey Murphy-Fitzsimmons, who is regarded as the unluckiest woman in the world. This unfortunate life of mishaps and mistakes began from the moment she entered the maternity ward, twenty-three years ago.

It began with little bumps and falls, to mistakenly missing school, until the most memorable mishap, her parent's divorce. Little-Miss Audrey began to move from house to house every Monday after school. Now, after almost twenty years separated, she brings her parents together again for a monumental steppingstone in her life.

Stepping into a puddle while entering the familiar and sentimental street doesn't help relieve the stress that this day brings. Unfortunate events or not, breaking the news to your parents that their little girl is getting married to a man neither of them like, will bring anxiety to anyone.

Her father, Michael Fitzsimmons calls him a "A bugger of a waste of space" while his ex-wife, Lilly Murphy, thinks he isn't in love with her. Her parents haven't shown the "Happy about you being happy" attitude towards Audrey, but that fact is something Audrey has accepted quite some time ago. Still, her newly wet shoe brings back memories of the many times that Murphy's Law has found a place in her life.

The air smelled fresh with the new rain as the sun splits the stones of the early-autumn afternoon. Silence paired with the stillness of St. Patrick's Road sweeps the stress off her shoulders. She was standing straight backed and holding her head high in the porch of her mother's home. Knocking not once, but twice on the oak door. The doorbell hung loose on its wires, which were long overdue for a repair. The window in which the bell hung over was cracked as a result from the impact of the sliotar from twelve years ago. An incident resulting from her well-known misfortunes. The door creaked in its hinges as the face of her mother peaked though.

"Well," she stared, high pitched and smiling, "You got here in one piece." Audrey huffed slightly at the condescending tone but then smiled, stepping into the warm corridor, escaping from the newly falling rain.

As the two headed into the kitchen, through the short hall of the semi-detached house, Lily began her usual speal, openly confessing to the strong distaste she feels by letting her "asshole ex" back into her home.

A Poem by Aisosa Osayi Iyamu

Pre-University Nursing

You change country because you want to search for new opportunities

You change country because you don't see a future ahead

You change country because you feel lonely

You change country because you feel different

You change country because you are escaping

You arrive in the new country, and you realize that a future must be built to let it shine

You arrive in the new country, and you feel like a stranger, who doesn't fit anywhere

You arrive in the new country, and you don't know how to socialize with others, to raise your voice, you blame a different language, but the problem is you,

You look around yourself and realize that you have achieved what you planned but not what you wanted

You want to grow up, but you always find excuse to stay in the cradle

You want new opportunities, but you don't have the courage to seek,

You want to love someone, but you don't know what it means to love yourself

You want to fly towards your dreams, but

you are living in a reality where you are not allowed to dream,

You have a lot of ambitions, but you need to be careful if you are not stable enough to reach one

I feel this is my generation

A generation that wants the change but doesn't know how to use their hands to improve the world

A generation of young people who doesn't understand who they are

A generation that wants to become rich but doesn't have the patience to build their own wealth

A generation that hides behind social to escape the judgement from the real world because they are

scared of becoming aware of who they are.

This is my generation

A scary generation

I'm one of them

And I'm scared



"Tea, Mam?" Audrey slipped in as her mother took a break from speaking to breathe. "I'd love a cup, pet. He can't even show up on time, can he? Jesus, Mary, and Joseph! The spoiled, inconsiderate..." The noise of the kettle boiling muffled Lilly's rant. Audrey pulled two mugs down from the cabinet and placed a tea bag in each.

Half an hour and three cups of tea later, one



of the tea bags broke in the first attempt, Audrey decided to give her dad a call. Anxiety was welling in her stomach during the wait. It was common for her father to casually be late to events, including his own wedding. She excused herself and took a seat on the bottom step of the staircase.

She used to sit here often. Something felt safe on the stairs. It was the one area in the house where an incident has not occurred. She knocked on the wooden banisters to keep it that way. The view from the stairs was of the front door and the door to the living room. The stairs creaked with age. Knowing this factored into the comforting nature of the step. No one could approach without her noticing. Murphy couldn't reach her on the stairs.

She rang her father's number. And then she rang again. And on the third try the panic seeped in. Her father, much like her mother, was not all that experienced with phones, but they both knew the importance of keeping them on, charged, and with them. Yet here she was sitting on the soothing staircase, the lucky staircase, contemplating ringing the police.

"He's a no show then?" Lilly voiced from



the sitting room doorway. Audrey removed her hand from her hair, in which she was pulling on. "He's not answering his phone, Mam. I'm worried." Audrey redialled the number in a desperate effort of hope to reach her dad.

"You're always worried, pet." Her mother placed a hand on her hair, giving her a small smile. "He's fine."

Images of past years flashed through her mind relentlessly. Not too long ago, her father had suffered from a heart attack. As small as it was, it was severe enough to send him to hospital. Even though he had recovered well from the initial attack, the memory of the distressing phone call she received still lived fresh in her memory. Her heart sped up, drumming a familiar tune of worry into her ears. Her brain ran in pace with her heart, sending frantic and desperate thoughts through her mind.

He's gotten into a crash, hasn't he? They told her. He's probably lying face-down on the side of the road somewhere.

She shook her head to break the tracks this train of thought was riding on.

Just then, while she held the phone to her ear, aching for the dial tone to be received, a silhouette approached the front door, disrupted by the frosted glass. Audrey leaped from the step and pulled the door open before the silhouette had a chance to knock. Like magic, or perhaps pity from Murphy himself, Audrey opened the door to the wrinkled yet pudgy face of her father. She inhaled the comfort as they embraced tightly. His chequered shirt smelt like roasted cedar wood that reminded her so much of Halloween, of the tacky decorations and the pumpkin sitting outside, of the brambrack her mother made and costumes she wore as a child. He reminded her of the bitter ice in the air that rested over Oiche Shamhna as she searched her neighbours for the crackling rappers of sweets, and how the bitterness of the night would fade when she returned home with her treasures. When they broke, she finally examined her father.

"Where were you? Why didn't you answer your phone? I've been ringing!"

A small smile spread across his rosy cheeks. He took a step into the hall, nodding in greeting to his former wife.

"How are ya, Lils?"

"Not too bad, Mike, yourself?"

"Grand, yeah, thanks. Bitter weather we're having."

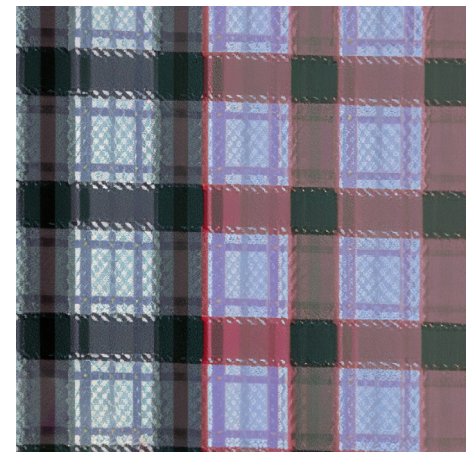
Audrey stood in astonishment as her parents continued their rare conversation

into the kitchen, where Lilly Murphy would offer Michael Fitzsimmons a cup of tea for the first time since the divorce papers were signed. When Audrey reached the kitchen door, she stood slack jawed as the scene played out ahead of her. The shock of this new-found and frankly, unsettling relationship her parents found shook her. Shook her, and then pulled at her heart. She couldn't help remembering the Halloweens they spent together, as a family.

"So, Dad, where were you?" Audrey moved to sit at the kitchen table with them. Michael took a sip of his tea and set the cup down on the glass-topped table. He sat across from Lilly, and briefly exchanged a look. A look only adults can share, or maybe only parents. Or maybe still, only Michael and Lilly.

"I got a visit from your fella." He stared, looking into the cup, consisting of two sugars and more milk than tea. "He wanted to ask me something. The poor bugger was scared shitless."

Lilly huffed a laugh. "As he should be."



"As he should, is right."

He took a sip, and so did she, and Audrey looked as they shared the all-knowing glance again. Audrey felt the lump of air in her throat and the opening well in her chest.

"He asked me if he could marry you, chicken."



DIM

by Ben Horgan

Small towns often carry the same shape, look and DNA. You'll often have their titles end with a Dale or a Ville but it makes no difference. You get the same bunch populating the place.

Such can include the lonely, the isolated elders retiring around to finish their fine or mediocre lives on a somewhat peaceful note as well as the gossipers and adult figures who think of themselves as God's children. Edmond Hargrove had found himself moved out to one of these towns with his mother. A town called Strangeville, though you couldn't point out anything peculiar or strange about the place. Strangeville was just your average American suburbia and small town out where the forest trees grew high, and the mountains acted as a wall. Nothing could be strange about Strangeville. Not yet anyhow.

The events that would begin to unfold upon this little town began with the arrival of the Hargroves. Edmond and his mother had managed to take home in a small house just outside of town, up on a hill that had a pitch perfect view of the shithole excuse of a town that was down below. Indeed, you could catch all the town's barely functioning lights of the homes, stores and streetlamps below but that wasn't where Edmond found his gaze. No, Edmond often found himself looking up. Far up towards the stars. There wasn't much in his new bedroom since they arrived, though he had brought with him his old telescope. Safe to say it had seen better days but none the less it served its use in Edmond's hobby. The first night they arrived, Edmond quickly made familiar with his new bedroom by stargazing at what he'd find would be an empty and dark sky. The second night, nothing else either. A week or so would pass and he'd find himself slowly making establishment within Strangeville, but his eyes could not keep away from the dark and bland sky.

Stars fascinated him, he just wanted one to be shining up above this ghost town.

Then, on one fateful night, Edmond got what he wanted.

A single star finally shun dimly over the town of Strangeville. Another week or so would pass, nothing more than just that same single star. Though with each night he'd find himself observing it, Edmond often was bewildered by the flickering that would

soon ensue. He began to be left awake some nights with questions over such behaviour for stars. An internet search or two immediately laid his concerns and worries to rest. Normality, both dull and fitful would be his life now for the next while. He'd walk the same roads and journey to school and back every day since he arrived.

Edmond didn't carry in him the need to go hangout after class or fill his cravings at the rusted and deteriorating café outlets the town could only use as highlights for reasons to visit Strangeville. That little home up on the hill he and his mother found themselves now permanently stuck within was his sanctuary. You couldn't get more normal than Strangeville. Except one day, on one very normal day, Edmond noticed something a little off. He had often, on his same route, passed an old Ice Cream store owned by an owner who was fallen apart just like the store itself. Every day he'd see her at that counter, hunched over and almost carrying the same imagery of a dog needing to be put down. On this day, Edmond would find himself utterly surprised as he made way to school that morning. He had passed the store but before he could get around the corner, he immediately heard the pasting footsteps of the owner herself. She insisted he try some new flavoured scoops, on the house, but he kindly refused the offer. He'd watch as she sprinted back to her store, bewildered over how a withering woman of her age could move like she was a contestant for the Olympics.

Another event occurred with Edmond's teacher, Mr Jones. Jones was Edmond's P.E. teacher though many questioned his employment and position as he carried on him far more wrinkles than he did any muscle. For weeks since Edmond's arrival all his teacher did was blow into a whistle, not being able to yell to grab his student's attention. Suddenly, a day after the incident with the shop owner, he found Mr Jones displaying similar "athletic" behaviour.

The day seemed like hell as Jones made them do laps around the school, of which he ended up joining in beating every single one of his students. 10 laps and the man seemed to have no shortness in breath by time they finished. It was odd to say the least. Overall, the weeks that followed shortly after were nothing short of strange. Elderly residents became more spry for their age. School pupils were called into the nurse's office for a vaccine shot for a supposed flu that began to manifest out of nowhere. Then many went missing not long after. It was safe to say that Strangeville became the epicentre

for all things strange and odd. A repetition Edmond kept finding himself describing this little town slowly becoming. A mid-term break in the midst of the growing events would help him feel secure at home as he began to grow a twinge of resentment as well as fear of the town and its inhabitants. Stargazing would continue though as he found himself constantly drawn back to his telescope night after night. Only now there was more to be had with what lied up in the night sky over Strangeville. Where there was once no stars to their being one dim and flickering little light soon turned to at least a grouping of stars.

There were five maybe six he counted all grouped together, not spread out nor were there anymore around. Perhaps what was so peculiar about the grouped stars was the fact that they all flickered simultaneously. Edmond's paranoia began to grow more and more with these little oddities happening in his new home of a town. Some internet searching here and some bickering questioning with his mother, he couldn't find a moment's ease nor relief with what was happening. Though the young lad couldn't be prepared for what followed. With his mother out working one night, Edmond sat at home. Not listening to loud music, not snacking on whatever junk there was lying about in the cabinets of his kitchen, nothing any kid his age would do. Instead, he found himself adjusting to his thoughts in the corner of his dimly lit room. Thoughts of constant dread of living in a place such as this. A place that could do with some livelihood no doubt but not to the extent of what had unfolded. So, what exactly made Strangeville stay true to its name?

The stars would be the answers as Edmond found out, scoping them as per when he wasn't sat in a corner alone with his thoughts. He would find the black night sky to now be filled with a trio of stars, a trinity, a tribunal. A trio of stars that all flickered simultaneously. His eyes had never widened with so much fear, so much concern. It was as mentioned, a dimly lit bedroom, though it was clear just how white struck his body became when catching a glimpse of what was happening overhead of Strangeville. That feeling worsened as the stars grew brighter, the dark sky faded slowly into a white abyss and the town soon with it. Edmond was blinded. When his vision repaired and returned, he'd look out to see three peculiar spacecrafts hover above the town. A fascination he once held for the stars quickly turned to one of horror.

THE END

A Street Artist like No Other

By Darragh Wilders

Engines revved, the construction sites roared. He heard these sounds every single day in the city but it would not interrupt his focus. Every distraction facing him, yet he still kept drawing. His fingers stained with chalk, all variants of blue, green and white, as his onlooker stared in awe at his creation.

"There. You asked for the ocean, I hope I delivered" said Sol enthusiastically. "Well, I must say that is very life-like. I can almost smell the sea from here." The businessman had seen his work during his break and was quickly intrigued.

"You really reminded me of my holiday last year to Bondi." He placed \$20 inside of the hat that lay empty by the artist's side. "Thank you Mr...?" "Houghton, Sol Houghton" lied Sol. As the man returned to his standard commute, phone in hand, Sol gathered up the remnants of his chalk. A dust of colour flew underfoot when one sight caught his gaze. A young girl, dawning an elegant white and yellow dress, her hair all in curls, in front of a stocky "boy in blue", desperate to halt her tears. "I need to find my mommy and daddy, where are they?" the small child murmured between sobs.

"It's ok, little girl, I'll help you." Officer Henrys, a close friend of Sol's dad, out on his rounds. As he approached the pair, the girl's tears were more noticeable. Trails of silver sparkles along her cheeks. "Good evening, Officer. Need any help here?" "Phelps? What are you doing here?" The surprise on his face was highly noticeable. After the initial shock, Officer Henrys looked defeated.

"Ok, I guess I could use some help. This little girl got separated from her parents, but she won't tell me her name or anything..." He was interrupted by a pulling on his belt. "Officer, this guy is a stranger, right?" The young girl glanced at Sol and retreated back to Henrys. "It's ok, little one. Solanico is a friend of mine. He'll help keep you safe."

The young girl looked back at Sol and started crying again. In the reflection of his sunglasses, she saw her own red, swollen eyes. "Not again. Phelps, any ideas?" Sol sank to his knees and extended his arm. "Hey, it's ok, it's ok. Umm..., Oh. Do you want to see something magical?" She looked at him, unsure. "You can't do magic, only fairies can." Of course, she wouldn't believe him. But that was the magic in itself. "Watch this." Sol looked at the pavement below and started what he does best. He took out his chalk and started drawing. "What are you doing here Nico? I thought you were working across town." The officer

questioned.

"Company went bust after a week of me joining. And for the millionth time Henrys, don't call me Nico. You've known me my whole life." Officer Henrys began to feel slightly guilty. "Right, sorry Sol, I just forgot because of, you know, your dad..." Sol raised his hand to shush the officer. He didn't expect it to work, but it did. The young girl was busy darting her eyes between Henrys, Sol's drawing and the passing foot traffic.



As Sol was drawing, he asked her some questions.

Her name is Maisie, she's 8 ½, and she has a pet bunny named Boing. "Maisie, do you like princesses?" "Yes, I was just at a princess party." Henrys joined in the newfound joyful atmosphere. "Well, you certainly look like one." He chimed. For the first time, Sol had seen Maisie smile at him. "You definitely look like a princess, but no princess is complete... without one of these."

Sol beamed, as he stood and revealed his latest piece. A tiara, of all kinds of colours, white, blue, and Maisie's favourite, violet. "Wow, it's so beautiful. Too bad it's not real." "Wait just a minute, ok Maisie?" Sol



asked. He promised her magic, and Sol always delivers his promises. His outstretched hand circled the tiara, three times, and then, the chalk on the pavement was gone. "You ruined it? Why?"

The streams about to start again. "Phelps?" Henrys began, but before he could argue, he noticed a sheen from Sol's hand. Solanico extended his hand to reveal a tiara, a white frame, blue crystals, and in the centre, a violet diamond.

Exactly like the chalk drawing. Maisie stood in shock, staring at the tiara. Officer Henrys

took the tiara and placed it on her head. She turned her attention back to Sol. "How did you do that? That is so cool. You are magic." Sol turned towards her and put a finger over his lips, shushing her gently. "A magician never reveals their secrets." He said with a wink. "Maisie!" A new voice echoed. "Mommy!" Maisie responded.

Sol looked over to Henrys, who seemed relieved that someone found Maisie before too long. "Thank you, officer, for finding my daughter." The mother said with gratitude. "Don't thank me, thank Mr Phelps here. Without him, Maisie probably would have run off on me." Maisie's mother turned to Sol and gave him a curious once-over. "Phelps? As in Isaiah Phelps, the world famous magician?" "A magician? So that's how you made this tiara from chalk." Maisie piped up, almost shoving her new tiara in her mother's face. Sol got nervous at the mention of Isaiah, but he gave a quick and polite answer. "No ma'am. No relation. I just do some street magic here and there."

He turned his attention back to Maisie. "Goodbye Maisie. Try not to get lost again." Maisie and her mother left the scene. Sol was about to follow, but he was caught in the policeman's iron grip. "Let's go Solanico. I at least owe you a coffee for helping me out." No matter how much he would try, Sol couldn't escape the clutches of his dad's friend. Reluctantly, he went with the officer.

Nobody's here

By Ciaran Costello

Quez drifted towards the brightest light left in the dark universe. Their travel took years between when they spotted a light but eventually, they arrived. It was beginning to die. The hydrogen was fading. But that did not matter. Quez only needed the box.

Gliding across the surface towards the citadel, a mass of green fire jutting out of the planet. Quez felt disturbed. This had once been people's home. Indeed, as they entered across the moat surrounding the citadel and entered, they saw corpses in the open room. Lovers holding each other in death. Younglings, desperately hiding behind an obelisk to avoid whatever killed them. Their shattered corpses bloated filling up the room, a failed attempted of a grand merger, meaning Quez had to find a new path up.



Then they saw a crack in the flamed walls. Exiting to the outside of the citadel, Quez gliding up the outside. The cold of space at this part is nauseating but worth it for the plan. Atop the citadel on an altar, a small white glass orb. The atmosphere was heavy disorientating Quez. It would have been fatal for the ship. Hidden here for fear of destruction now Quez came to retrieve it for their own ambitions. They carefully remove the orb from the shrine and return down the path they used to enter. Walking over the cooling surface, gases escaping in quick bursts, Quez returns to their craft. Holding the controls in one tendril and the orb in another. The heavy weight of the horror it sealed scared them. But Quez knew what had to be done. Manipulating the with their tendril the ship spreads its wings flying away. As Quez left the star they turned and saw its light fade away. It would still haunt the black pitch but only for a couple light years. Just like the rest.

Stretching in all directions was a perpetual black. That was really the only thing consistent. Few lights existed that were alive, just old lights visible from a distance. Some old radio transmissions or ancient satellites following their final commands or drifting looking for some solar radiation to fuel themselves and transmit to long dead civilisation in non-existent star-systems. Some other objects still haunted this lonely nightmare. Planets, ships, and monuments to civilisations. Sometimes Quez would see a digital civilization-one that downloaded the collective conscious and knowledge of a planet-and wish so desperately that they could join them. Alas, for Quez's physiology would prevent that from working. Sometimes they would see a corpse from some ancient creature and Quez would wonder how similar they were.

Would they have been friends? It also reminded them of their time. How long had they left? Quez has part of one of the final creatures born under a waning star as everything collapsed. They had seen bleakness all around instead of shining light of a bright future. Their colony loved them



and their siblings shielding them with their branches to keep the sky, with the hateful star, from view. It tried to save all spinning them new ships to glide them away in hopes of finding somewhere else to live from its root world. Few of them escaped as the star consumed their home.

Quez only knew of four others who survived the flame, scattering in different directions. Three were never heard afterwards.

Spending the next couple of millennia alone Quez had gone through sanity, insanity, delusions, and every form of loneliness.

No living creature for millions of light years, even simple bacteria was difficult to find. The only form of "people", Quez could talk to were old broadcasts from children's shows of forgotten races. Even none of their siblings had contacted them. Only one stayed in contact with them infrequently over centuries. That one, Torlez had slowly amassed knowledge of the universe from old rocks, broadcasts millions of lightyears past their origin and speaking to other creatures that survived. They had contacted Quez through pheromones to retrieve something for them so Quez could stay with Torlez on their travel. The orb starting to make a low vibration.

Feeling it travel up their tendril, they shifted it around. It felt strange as they had been travelling for centuries in one direction. It felt like something was moving under the shell. Almost alive. But they ignored it as their destination was in sight. The wings folded as the ship landed. The ship opened the front like a child emerging from their room after a bad dream, Quez glided out with the orb into a massive room. Piled all around in all directions were relics of old civilizations. Quez recognised what these piles were: toys, hardware of personal machines, books, chairs, pens, and others sorted into piles all around the room stretching on forever. Sensing smoke in the distance Quez moved across the valleys, between the canyon of ancient crap and over everything covering the ground.

Torlez was in the middle of a ring of green fire in a pit. Their head was bloated, its faces warped with the tendrils dug into

ground. Their voice, rough with a nasally sound spoke. "You brought it, yes?" "I have. It is strange." "Is it cold?" "No, it's getting hot..." "Give it!" shrieked Torlez. They extended their tendril, this massive metallic tendril reaches out, not like the bark of Quez tendril. "It almost activated early." Quez tried to keep the orb in their grip, but Torlez was too strong. Taking it into the tendril Torlez retracted it into their torso, the muscular wrapping it and devouring the orb. "Thank you for your contribution." "What are you doing?" "Leaving. Ascending or descending depending on your point of view, to another place." The fire started to swell. "Where to?" "Somewhere else. Somewhere from this hellish place. Somewhere with people. Not empty shells like us who will never seeing a sky, a sunset, stars but actual people!" "Why can't you take me? Why can't I be with you. You promised we'd stay together."

"I need more people to talk to then you and your questions."

The fire puffed down for a moment before swelling up and engulfing Torlez, leaving an outline. The Orb melted away into the fire like colouring to food. "You'd only hold me back. You must not follow." It consumed them in a lick of green fire before disappearing in a flash of white. An inky black stain marked the floor that was quickly covered by collapsing piles of ancient crap. Quez lingered for a moment, saddened, hoping Torlez would take them or return. That did not happen. Then they turned and went to their ship. The structure was disappearing exposing the bleak void outside. Gliding back on the ship they opened the wings and set the ship to leave as Torlez home and impact on the universe faded. Quez did not want to look at ancient relics or old sounds of dead people. Continuing out into the black, Quez wanted a connection. They did not want to be alone.



Film Reviews

The Menu

Film Review by Alex Walsh

“You’ll eat less than you desire and more than you deserve” — Elsa.

Upon watching the trailer of *The Menu*, I was very intrigued to see what this movie had to offer with its star-billing cast, and interesting and original plot, boy I was very impressed. It also became one of my top favourite movies of 2022. The commentary on socioeconomic class (working and higher) and the satirical and dark comedy throughout the entire movie worked so well accompanying each other. Overall, Peter Deming’s cinematography was stunning, and Ethan Tobman and Gretchen Gattuso’s production and sets looked stunning and incredibly contemporary. The editing by Christopher Tellefsen and the score composed by Colin Stetson, just further engages the audience in the story. The cast in this film was amazing, especially the main leads from Anya Taylor-Joy, Ralph Fiennes, Nicholas Holt and Hong Chau.

I got a lot of pleasure watching the exchanges between Anya’s Margot and Ralph’s Chef Slowik because I loved the protagonist-antagonist dynamic between the two characters. You start to feel sorry for Margot and possibly Chef Slowik once you learn about their background and genuine motivations. Tyler, played by Nicholas Holt, had some humorous lines, while Elsa, played by Hong Chau, was fun to watch as she interacted with the other diners in tense situations. It was entertaining to see Janet McTeer, Judith Light, John Leguizamo, and Aimee Carrero portray their roles as the other patrons at the restaurant, among Anya and Nicholas’ characters. The way that director Mark Mylod allowed each actor to improvise in addition to their scripted dialogue really made the ensemble dynamic between all the characters appear rather natural. “[The director] Mark [Mylod] wanted us to stay, I’m going to say, ‘on stage,’

and in character all the time, because the camera was just moving around, so we were constantly improvising,” Anya Taylor-Joy said during an interview with IndieWire. She adds to that by saying, “Usually if there’s a close-up on somebody else, you’ll go and rest or I’d read, just something that will replenish your energy.

But on this one, we all just stayed. Everyone just stayed and enjoyed having front-row seats to brilliant performances. Each table is its own little microcosm and world.” Famous French chef Dominique Crenn, the only female chef in the United States to receive three Michelin stars for her restaurant Atelier Crenn in San Francisco, created the elaborate “food” arrangements. You felt hungry and undoubtedly craved to sample each meal after seeing the title cards for them in the movie. Especially one specific meal that Margot received towards the end of the movie. Overall, I thought it was a masterfully crafted film that kept my attention, had me rooting for some characters—especially Margot Mills—and left me feeling hungry for more (no pun intended!) This movie is amazing in my opinion and well worth seeing. P.S. don’t watch this film on an empty stomach, you will get hungry!

Searching (2018)

Film Review by Azan Bari

Searching is mind-bending and heart-wrenching thriller film that takes a unique approach to visual storytelling.

John Cho’s impeccable performance as the father David Kim, embarks on a dark, mysterious search to find his missing daughter Margot (played by Michelle La). *Searching* goes through a series of twists and turns where the unexpected will catch your thoughts off-guard. The film constantly finds new creative ways to manipulate you into thinking that you’ve figured it out, making you feel like a true Detective that overlooks all the details present on screens, only to be stunned by foreshadowing details that completely fly over us without even noticing it.

The film opens with an introduction with a series of videos that are put together showing the life of the Kim family. We get a glimpse into their life and how it was with Kim and her parents. As the montage goes on, we learn that Margot had lost her Mother due to cancer. The family bond they once had, shattered and it’s no longer there. This montage demonstrates that Kim and Margot aren’t so disconnected from each other but rather we learn David has a hard time rebuilding his connection with his own Daughter.

David Kim is a widower, a father who doesn’t understand his Daughter and struggles to build a connection with her.

David is like most parents who think they know their own Kid well enough and they’re able to keep track on what their kids do. As he frantically searches for clues, gets into a deep state of mind when he slowly starts to realise he may not know his Daughter as well as he thought he did. Throughout the film, we see David going through his Daughter’s laptop, recovering her messages, calls, her last known whereabouts. Any hint that could allow give David a lead as to where he can look.

Searching is unlike most films, shot from the perspective of Technology. Everything that we the audience see, is through screens. Laptops, cameras, videos, photos etc. We can see every single detail. This allows us to follow along with David and his search for his daughter. We get to see how he plans everything out, what are the right places to be looking at, the reactions to different information being thrown at him. This creates the immersion that we’re apart of this investigation, seeing how everything unfolds and learning about the characters and their lives have changed over time.

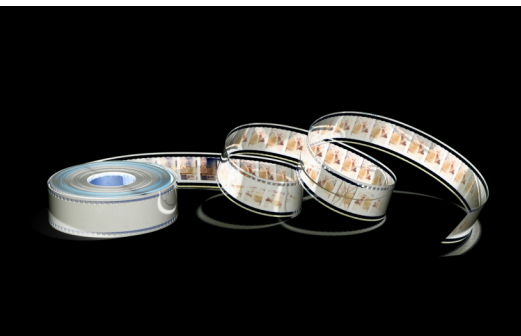
What I personally enjoy about this film, is the characters and their intelligence. Most films under the thriller/horror genre tend to make their character extremely confused, lost, out of touch with reality and have them make horrible decisions that seem illegitimate to most. If you heard a noise down a hallway in the middle of night, our initial instinct isn’t to follow the noise and find out what it was. When you’re in a state of shock, you freeze, tense up and you can’t think. *Searching* takes a different approach to decision making. It’s more authentic and realistic. When Kim’s case goes public and everyone knows about, he isn’t portrayed as a caring and concerned Father who’s doing his best to find out what happened to his Daughter. In the media, he is seen as a failed parent, a parent that should be held accountable and is the main reason as to why his Daughter is missing in the first place. This makes sense in reality, in our society we never get to see the perspective of the parents and initial assumption is bad parenting for when a tragic incident like this takes place.

What makes *Searching* such a unique film is the plot twists and how well they’re laid out. Though we are presented with every single detail on screen, the narrative takes a complete turn and pivots perfectly throughout the story line. Each



twist is unique, it can be foreshadowed and completely unexpected. When the unthinkable happens, you are left shocked as you reflect on what you've analysed before, the mystery starts to make sense and it all comes so well together to build up to bizarre and jaw-dropping ending that most would've never saw coming. These twists are well thought out and it adds so much more emotional impact to us as the audience as we endure David's journey, seeing him get closer to solving the mystery and making rational decisions that allow his character to come off as extremely smart and likeable.

Overall, the Searching is an amazing, must-see thriller. The film utilises technology to tell a immersive and emotional story of a Father who's worried about losing his daughter. The plot twists are outstanding and will leave you shocked. The acting is phenomenal as John Cho plays a very emotionally conflicted and misunderstood character, led by Michelle La's stunning performance as Margot, playing as a teen who is seen as an outcast, perfectly visually representing many conflicting emotions and actions.



'Fallout'

Film Review by Ella Brady

This 2021 American drama film written and directed by Megan Park is her feature film directorial debut. The film has a total of ninety-two running minutes. It is rated R due to language, teen drug and alcohol use and violence. I would give this film a four-star rating for its phenomenal acting, beautiful cinematography and I felt it was very well written. Megan Mark has shown a lot of her talent here. She has mentioned she used her skills from when she used to act as a teenager to shape the perspective of this coming-of-age movie. Her goal was to make this film "a mission to really do content that's super authentic for young people" as when she was acting on a lot of projects as a teenager, she felt like "it wasn't the most natural way young people would talk or communicate". We can vividly see her mission being carried out very successfully in the 'Fallout'.

This film is truly a masterpiece. It is a roller coaster of emotions that presents a world of real authenticity.

The main character, Vada, is a high school student that experiences a traumatic event that will change how she views her life and the people around her forever. The movie focuses little to none on the school shooting and focuses solely on how the event effects a group of students. The reason the film is so successful is how raw and real the emotions are conveyed throughout the film.

Jenna Ortega who played the role of Vada deserves many awards for her performance. The film is definitely a turning point in her career as her acting is utterly phenomenal in every scene. Maddie Ziegler also executed an astounding act as she represented such a realistic and respectful portrayal of a decline in mental health. The chemistry between the two actresses also shows how stunning their performance was.

The relationship between Vada and Mila is both beautiful and genuine. It begins as they bond through the traumatic event together. The film can capture such raw and vulnerable emotion. It illustrates a dark, dramatic, and shocking event but focuses on the resilience that springs from it. It nearly made me cry as such strong emotions seem so honest from a screen.

I liked the LGBTQ representation in the film as it was subtle and not made out to be a big deal. The LGBTQ community was represented in a way that was accepting and 'normal'. We can see clearly as Vada deals with trauma through experimenting with drugs and alcohol. The film did a good job with not romanticising or glorifying the misuse of drugs and instead is shown as of sign of confusion and struggle. Again, the movie was filmed with real and honest intent, showing how a young teen girl deals with processing her emotions after such a horrific event. Even the language and euphemisms are extremely accurate coming from someone who is from gen z. From the Tik Tok dances to her use of slang and body language- it's like watching real life.

Family is also a key theme in the film. The perspective of her parents and sister are shown in subtle ways. They are all sympathetic but completely unsure of how to deal with Vada's trauma. I appreciated this aspect in the film as it quite wholesome and admiring. Similarly, I enjoyed the comedic aspect to it as it is not always a dark and gloomy film. It is also funny and conveys all sides to Vada's personality.

The ending is quite powerful, recognising that healing is not linear.

I will of course not spoil it, but it gave me something to think about as the movie finished. It gives you that feeling when you walk out of the cinema and feel like a new person. This sends a message to viewers that trauma is not easily dealt with, people will deal with the effects for the rest of their lives.



Both the nature and the ending of the film is an empowering representation of the issues going on in today's world. School shootings are very much real and unfortunately happen frequently in America. Many young people will be able to relate to the film and may find it helpful to have that representation. I like that they do not show a lot of the actual shooting as it may trigger some viewers.

I admire the films videography and cinematography that expresses the coming-of-age aspect in the film. Especially a scene where both main characters are dancing in the street. The colours are radiant and the energy coming from the screen is magical. The film does a very amazing job with presenting teenage hood and those feelings of escapism that come with it. I would highly recommend this film to mature teenagers and adults.

Travel

Liverpool, what a city!

By Ava Murphy

Liverpool is the most interesting city in England, a perfect place for a weekend getaway. The city is packed with fun things to do, whether you are visiting with your friends or even with your family. I recently visited Liverpool with my friends for a weekend getaway. Liverpool is the perfect destination for a quick holiday, our flight took off at 7.45 am and by half 8 in the morning we had arrived in Liverpool's John Lennon airport, from there we got a taxi to the hotel we were staying, we stayed in the Novotel Liverpool Paddington Village Hotel. The hotel was perfectly located as it is in the centre of Liverpool, the hotel room was clean and spacious, and the breakfast provided by the hotel was delicious and we had a vast selection to choose from each morning. The staff in the hotel were also very polite and helpful, they even recommended places that we should visit during our stay in the city. We all agreed that we wanted to grab a bite to eat before exploring the city, there was a variety of different delicious cuisines all throughout the city to choose from. We decided to go to Rudy's Pizzeria on the Albert Dock for our lunch, there was an excellent selection to choose from and the pizzas were delicious. After we enjoyed our food, we decided to go

to the Liverpool One shopping centre, which is only a few minutes away from the Albert Dock. Throughout the trip, we appreciated how near all the places we wanted to visit were to each other. In Liverpool one shopping centre there was a variety of different stores to shop in and I would certainly recommend it if you wanted a city break that included a shopping spree, we spent a few hours browsing the shops. Later in the day we decided to go on a sightseeing river cruise on the Mersey River, it was very scenic and interesting as we learnt about the history of the city throughout the journey. From the river you can appreciate how architecturally beautiful Liverpool is.

That night we decided to head back into the city centre, the city was buzzing with so many bars and nightclubs to choose from, we were certainly spoiled for choice. We decided to spend our night in the Soho Bar, the drinks were nice, and the bar was filled with a great atmosphere and good music. I would recommend Liverpool if you were looking for a city with a buzzing atmosphere and nightlife. The following we went to the Brunch and Cocktail club on Duke Street, the food and drinks were delicious and the restaurant itself had good vibes. Later that day, we decided we wanted to learn more about the city's connection with the music industry.

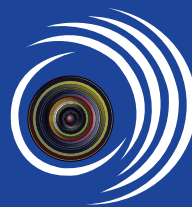
The city of Liverpool is renowned for producing incredible music artists such as The Beatles. Firstly, we got on the hop on hop off bus tour which educated us on both the history of the city and on The Beatles, we found this incredibly insightful and would recommend it to anyone planning on visiting Liverpool.

We then visited The Beatles museum which we all found fascinating. We finished our tour day with the World Museum, it was incredibly interesting and insightful.

On our final day we done a tour of Anfield Stadium, the tour was phenomenal, and I would recommend it to anyone who supports Liverpool or for anyone who is interested in football in general, the tour guide was extremely charismatic and informative about the history of the club. We were able to go into the players' changing rooms and take photos with their jerseys, as a Liverpool supporter this experience filled me with joy. After the tour we went to the merchandise store where we all bought Liverpool jerseys. Before we headed to the airport, we went to the famous Cavern Club on Matthew Street. I have to say visiting the Cavern Club is a must do when you visit Liverpool. The music was great, and the ambience was brilliant, the club is filled with The Beatles memorabilia. The place was filled with excitement, and you could just tell that everyone was delighted to be there, spending their time singing, dancing, and drinking. Liverpool is my favourite city I have travelled to for a weekend break from home, I was sad to leave and wish that I could have stayed there for longer, I will certainly be visiting again soon. If you are looking for a city break in the U.K. you need to go to Liverpool!

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