

# the EXCELSIOR

## “This is Your Home and You Should Have Been Safe Here”



Maira Tahir holds a painting and a sign that says “This is your home and you should have been safe here.” PHOTO/ Brooklyn College

BY ZAINAB IQBAL

The New Zealand Massacre brought pain and death, but at Brooklyn College and around the world, it also brought love and peace. About 80 students, along with professors and President Michelle Anderson gathered at the new Leonard & Claire Tow Center for the Performing Arts to grieve the 50 lives that were lost and to show solidarity.

Corrinne Greene, President of the BC Chapter of the Young Progressives of America (YPA) noted that the lobby of the Center was normally filled with so much light. On this particular day though, it was a bit dark, as it was raining heavily outside.

“The light will return,” she said.

Rabbi Reuven Boshnack led a Jewish prayer and Imam Ahmed Ali recited the Fatiha, the first chapter of the Quran. Brooklyn College Anthropology Professor Rhea Rahman spoke about the dangers of white supremacy.

“All forms of oppression are interconnected and... none of us are free until all of us are free,” she said.

Professor of Judaic Studies David Brodsky iterated the fact that a three-year-old kid was murdered. “What have we become as a society?” he asked.

“Islamophobia, like racism, anti-Semitism, xenophobia, homophobia, feeds on our inability to see the humanity in others. Our inability to relate to someone

who looks or talks or worships God differently than ourselves,” he said. “It is the inability to accept others as they are, for who they are. How deep must that fear and prejudice run in order to not be able to recognize the innocent humanity of a three-year-old child?”

In a passionate speech, president of the Islamic Society Bilal Khan told the room a story of the Prophet Muhammad who once compared good and bad companionship to a perfume seller and a blacksmith.

“The Prophet Muhammad said good companionship is like you’re with a perfume seller. Either he will give you some of the good smell, some of the perfume, or at the very least,

the good smell with emanate on to you,” Khan said. “Bad companionship is like being around a blacksmith. Either you will burn your clothes or the bad smell with emanate on your body.”

“We have to ask ourselves, who are we? Are we the perfume seller or are we a blacksmith? Are we emanating good morals and good character... or are we spreading hate and Islamophobia?” he said. “Are we teaching love and peace or we teaching hate and blindness?”

Anderson spoke about the rise in hate crimes throughout the world. She mentioned the deadly attack in the Tree of Life Synagogue in Pittsburgh.

“These horrific acts of hate are the acts of white suprem-

acists and anti-Semites and Islamophobes who feel emboldened by the political climate around the world that far too often facilitates hate,” she said. “We at Brooklyn College stand against hate.”

“We must come together to learn from one another across our differences of race, religion, ethnicity, gender, and sexual orientation,” she said. “These are people, the same as us. They have good hearts and good souls and are good people.”

She took a verse from the Quran that states, “If He had so willed, He would have made you a single people, but His plan is to test you in what

**SEE “THIS IS YOUR HOME AND YOU SHOULD HAVE BEEN SAFE HERE,” 3**

### INSIDE THIS EDITION

News/Features, 3-4	Opinions, 5	Arts, 6-7	Sports, 7-8
CUNY Students Fight for Congestion Pricing <b>+ more</b>	The Mustang	Review & Response: “Hey Critics! Be More Chill...” <b>+ more</b>	Dirk Nowitzki Moves to Sixth Place in NBA All-Time Scoring <b>+ more</b>

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Stop by the Excelsior's office, 117 Roosevelt Hall, every Tuesday during club hours for meetings.

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THE EXCELSIOR

BULLSPIT!

*Bullspit! is a weekly satirical column by Brooklyn College comedian Ryan Gleason.*

I Swear I Saw a Ghost

BY RYAN GLEASON

Okay everyone, listen up, I'm not messing around. I saw a ghost this week. I know, I know... some people don't believe the jive of the supernatural but let me tell you, I SAW A DAMN GHOST. Where? Library. When? Common Hours. What? A FREAKING GHOST! Let me explain. I was in the stacks looking for a book, using the BC resources, as many students do. I turned the corner and right there, wearing a sweater and a pair of slacks and nurse shoes, was this decrepit and dusty ghost. He was wearing reading glasses, holding a book on James Madison, and reading the contents out loud. I shouted "AH A GHOST!" and proceeded to run down the aisle, back towards the population. I heard him mutter something as I ran away. I couldn't quite hear but I believe he said, "I'm not a ghost. I'm a tenured professor here!" in a grumpy tone. A ghost lie. Ghosts are notoriously famous for lying.



A freaking ghost! PHOTO/ Flickr Creative Commons

I returned to the library moments later with a few classmates and some ghost hunting equipment (Thermal imaging app on my iPhone and a vacuum I took from a custodial closet). We snuck up on the ghoul and leaped out but guess what? HE WAS GONE. Like ghosts do! Do you think he just walked away? Nah son, this ghost straight up moved through the walls. I saw it again IN THE BATHROOM. The spirit was turning the sink on and off, almost as if it was washing its transparent pale hands. I screamed and locked the door, throwing toilet paper at the ghost, to make him easier to track. I then slipped and fell in a puddle of what I hope was ordinary yellow water and when I woke up, the apparition was gone. Please keep an eye out for this haunting... haunt...er... EDIT: I have been informed the ghost I witnessed was actually, in fact, without a doubt... an alive person. My most sincere apologies to Professor Wallace from the Classics department for my accusations and manhunt.

EVENTS LISTING

MONDAY, MARCH 18 - SATURDAY, AUGUST 31

**We Stand Against Hate - History of Free Speech: The Vanguard Years at Brooklyn College**  
Exhibit in presidential cases at 2129 Boylan Hall.

THURSDAY, MARCH 28

**Workshop with Artist Maximo Rafael Colon**  
**2:15 PM - 4:30 PM**  
**Woody Tanger Auditorium Brooklyn College Library**  
A workshop with artist Maximo Rafael Colon and Professor Laura Bravo Lopez (University of Puerto Rico, Rio Piedras) on the connections between photography and social justice.

Trans Day of Visibility

**6:30 PM - 9:00 PM**  
**Second Floor - Student Center**  
Showing Death and Life of Martha P. Johnson and other short queer movies in advance of Victoria Cruz's appearance as the keynote speaker for the Leadership luncheon.

**Master Class: Neil Semer; voice pedagogue**  
**7:00 PM - 8:00 PM**  
**Topfer Recital Hall, Room 250 Leonard & Claire Tow Center for the Performing Arts**  
**Cost: Free**

FRIDAY, MARCH 29

**Conservatory of Orchestra II**  
**7:30 PM - 8:30 PM**  
**Don Buchwald Theater**  
**Leonard & Claire Tow Center for the Performing Arts**  
**Cost: \$5**  
Featuring the 2019 Conservatory Concerto Competition winner, Joshua Butcher, with Mozart's Bassoon Concerto in B-flat major; Mozart, Symphony No. 35 in D major; Faure, Masques and Bergermasques.

SATURDAY, MARCH 30

**Leonard & Claire Tow Tribute Concert**  
**7:30 PM - 8:30 PM**  
**Don Buchwald Theater**  
**Leonard & Claire Tow Center for the Performing Arts**

**Screening of Paris To Pittsburgh**  
**6:00 PM - 8:00 PM**  
**241 - Brooklyn College Library**  
**Cost: Free**  
Paris to Pittsburgh focuses on the incredible action individuals, communities, businesses and local governments in the U.S. have undertaken to combat the threat of climate change from America's heartland to the nation's coastlines and the island of Puerto Rico.

TUESDAY, APRIL 2

**Advanced Certificate Program in Autism Spectrum Disorders info session**  
**6:00 PM - 8:00 PM**  
**242 - Brooklyn College Library**  
With the prevalence of autism increasing in recent years from 1 in 1000 to 1 in 58, learning to work with children with autism spectrum disorders has become important to professionals in many fields. Students in our Advanced Certificate Program in Autism Spectrum Disorders will develop more advanced knowledge and skills within a specialty area.

**Speech Language Pathology Info session**  
**6:00 PM - 8:00 PM**  
**Woody Tanger Auditorium Brooklyn College Library**  
Info session for the speech language pathology masters program.

TUESDAY, APRIL 2 - THURSDAY, APRIL 4

**40th Biannual International Electroacoustic Music Festival**  
**Topfer Recital Hall, Room 250 Leonard & Claire Tow Center for the Performing Arts**  
The festival continues with a cornucopia of cutting-edge works by masters and emerging talents.



**CONT'D FROM "THIS IS YOUR HOME AND YOU SHOULD HAVE BEEN SAFE HERE," 1**

He has given you: so strive as in a race in all virtues." "The passage tells us to embrace our differences," Anderson said. "We

are being tested now in our good deeds to do good for and to one another." Khan spoke about another important verse from the Quran that states, "Whoever kills a person, it is as though he has killed all mankind. And whoever saves a per-

son, it is as though he has saved all mankind." "We have to break down the walls... and come together as a community on the basis of humanity," Khan said. "On the basis that each and every one of us has the same blood run-

ning through our veins.' At the end, everyone was asked to hug the person sitting next to them. The solemn room then filled with chuckles. People got up and hugged one another and told them they mattered. "I want you to know

that you are welcomed here," Greene said. "I'm glad you are here and that you matter. I'm grateful for your presence. You belong in this community."

# CUNY Students Fight for Congestion Pricing

BY MARCUS AYALA

Time is running out for the new state budget. Brooklyn College students and members of the NYPIRG Straphangers Campaign kicked off a student-led call-in drive. Their goal is to ultimately get state legislators to support and pass congestion pricing in this year's budget. Students were given the opportunity by NYPIRG to call their state legislators and express their feelings at Brooklyn College about their troubles with the MTA. Many spoke about their lateness and mixed exams and presentations due to the poor subways and buses.

NYPIRG believes congestion pricing would help lower congestion on its busiest streets. It would also add funding that the transit system desperately needs with its outdated overall system. The MTA could use it to modernize and repair the trains and buses and help the average New Yorker succeed. Congestion pricing is projected to raise over a billion dollars a year for transit. Jaqi Cohen of the Strap-



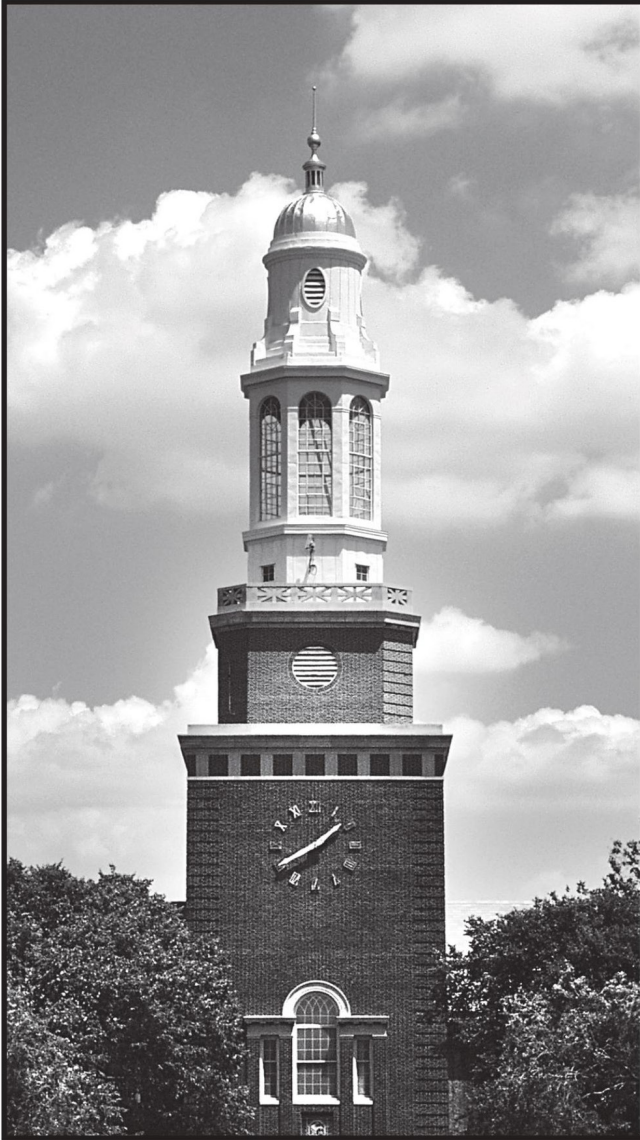
CUNY students, at a student-led call-in drive, pressed state legislators to support and pass congestion pricing in this year's budget. PHOTO/ **Marcus Ayala**

hangers Campaign said, "We can't expect student to succeed if our transit system is holding them back." Students travel from all of the five boroughs to get to Brooklyn College and have to rely on transferring to the 2,5, B or Q trains, being the nearest to Brooklyn College. Students expressed how unreliable those trains can be. Cohen believes that the

fate of New Yorkers rests on Governor Andrew Cuomo and legislators in Albany. It all could come down to the way congestion is addressed. Smitha Varghese of the Straphangers Campaign is also a CUNY student attending Queens College. She likes in Eastern Queens and calls it the "transit desert." She can't walk to the nearest subway

with it being miles away. Varghese comes from a family of drivers and doesn't believe congestion prices will negatively affect drivers. She believes low income and middle class New Yorkers don't drive because it's too expensive, especially with parking. The people who take the bridges and drive into the city are the ones who can afford it and average CUNY stu-

dents like herself, can't. Varghese has to drive to Astoria when commuting to the city and then get on the subway. According to Varghese, "How come people who can afford it, get into city for free. It is not a regressive tax and poor people will not suffer from this tax. Politicians like to say that but I'm living proof that we do not drive into the city." Congestion pricing wouldn't hurt the average driver. "Our subways are falling apart and the subway is the lifeline of the city. We can't let this happen and congestion pricing is a solution," Varghese said. "The delays are impacting us; we're coming late to class. We're going late to our shifts at work and we're being held accountable," said Varghese. She then raises the question, why aren't the elected officials? We're being held accountable and the elected officials are getting off without any repercussions. "Pass congestion pricing," Varghese says.



## Brooklyn College STUDENT TOWN HALLS

**Wednesday, March 27 • 6 p.m.**  
**Wednesday, April 17 • 6 p.m.**  
**Tuesday, May 14 • 12:30 p.m.**

Jefferson Lounge, Fourth Floor, Student Center

**Share your concerns about campus  
affairs in an informal town hall setting.**



# Dream Team for Undocumented Students & Allies: Through Stress and Strives

BY M.A. RAHMAN

Brooklyn College’s Dream Team organizes a “De-Stress” workshop intended to assist students better contend with academic anxiety in light of midterms.

“I just figured now’s midterms, so now’s the time students like our members are having to deal with it [frequently] at school,” said Jasmyne Sosayas, president of the Dream Team and lead presenter of the event.

The Dream Team, which has a stated goal to be a safe space for students and allies, advocates for their rights in addition to spreading awareness of their struggles.

For Sosayas, a BC junior, as well as a double major in Political Science and Puerto-Rican and Latino Studies, coping with the strains of life as a Latina involved in contemporary American politics is not an unfamiliar point of concern to her and the Dream Team.



Jasmyne Sosayas (center), president of the BC Dream Team, interacts with club members and showcases bubble blowing as an effective way to relieve stress. PHOTO/ M.A. Rahman

In addition to being a socially driven club, the Dream Team maintains a strong activist focus geared towards confronting the problems and persons that have attempted to reduce the accomplishments of undocumented students or students of Hispanic background.

Such sentiments have been demonstrated by Dream

Team with rallies arranged in condemnation of the xenophobic rhetoric espoused by the now infamous BC Computer Science Professor Rohit Parikh, advocacy for greater resources be afforded to undocumented students, and panels to raise the plight of undocumented students.

Students at the “De-Stress” event, noted how they

found the occasion to be not only pleasant but also educational, both in respect to dealing with the stress they feel like students, but also that of undocumented students.

“I didn’t come because I felt stressed, I came because I knew it would give me a chance to meet new people and I did,” said Mary Zakharova, an international

student studying journalism.

“It was very nice,” Zakharova after acquainting herself with fellow peers tasked to construct stress balls in an apparent exercise to help student socialize and learn a means to relieve stress.

“You can’t discount either the active or social aspect of the club, they’re just as dependent on the other,” said Jonathan Cabral, a junior, TVRA major, stressing the importance of both functions of the club to gauge the interest of students.

Satisfied by the event’s turnout and interest among students, Sosayas reiterated the group’s core focus to students. “We’re more than just a club that organizes around activist goals, we’re also always looking to make our events just open social occasions for our members.”

# Japanese Language and Culture Society

BY MARCUS AYALA

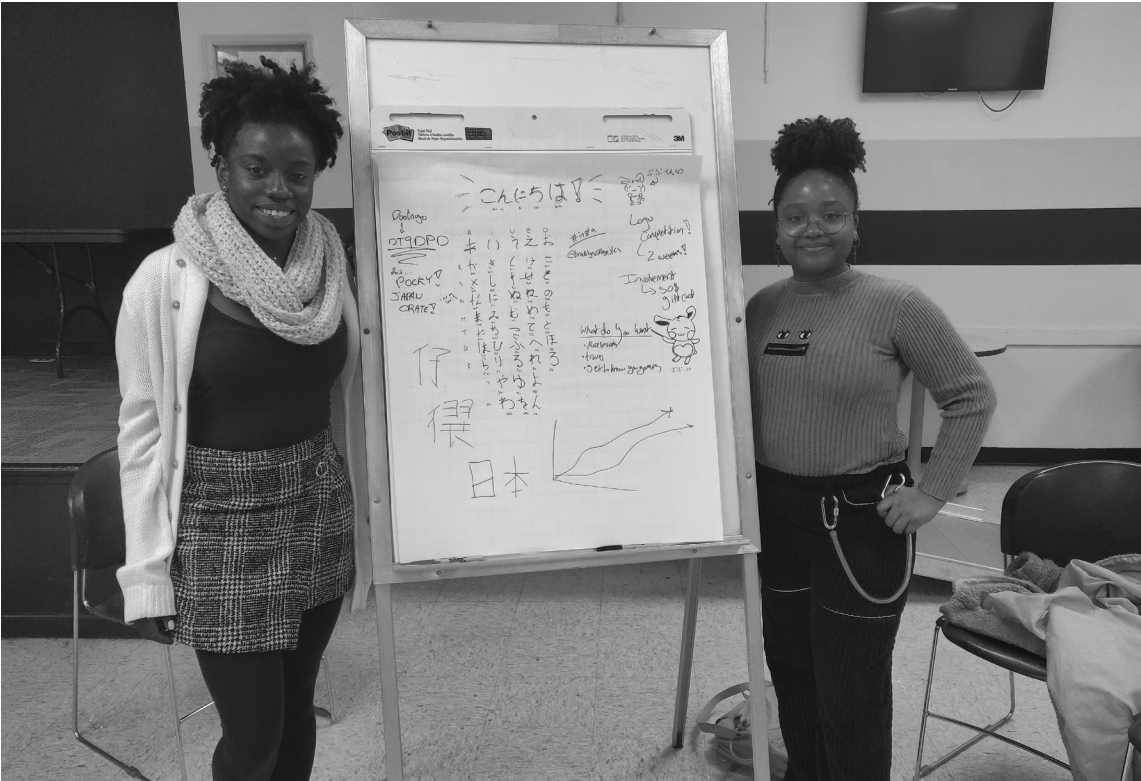
The brand new Japanese Language and Culture Society ran their first meeting in like club room of the lower level SUBO. The club was officially formed on the first day of the spring 2019 semester.

A premium and unique game from the event was, “What would you shoot out of your belly button?” The answer, ranging from traditional Japanese items to peanut butter.

Traditional Japanese food and the alphabet were starting points in the first lesson of the language society. Then they went on to traditional Japanese greetings, formal and informal.

As the semester goes on, there’s going to be giveaways with special prizes. The biggest prize is going to be awarded at the end of the semester, with their app involvement.

Two of the people that are the reason the club exists are LaClaire Robinson and Danny Lowe. Robinson is the president and founder of the club and Lowe is the Treasurer. They both got their inspiration from the Japanese classes at Brooklyn Col-



President LaClaire Robinson (left) and Treasurer Danny Lowe (right) pose at the Japanese Language and Culture Society’s first meeting. PHOTO/ Marcus Ayala

lege and didn’t feel satisfied with only two being offered.

They want to show that there’s an interest in Japanese in hopes that it will be recognized and there will be more classes offered in the future. Robinson believes, “A lot of people are interested on campus.”

According to Robinson, “Limit to how far you can go with Japanese.” With the school only offering those two classes. One of which

was Japanese 1020 where Robinson and Lowe had Japanese. Lowe said “We wanted to continue with studies in a friendly environment.”

They also just don’t want to just help people learn their language and culture. They want to bring the gap between America and Japan. An eventual goal for both is to get people to study abroad in Japan.

One thing that can make this all possible is their

pending partnership with the Japanese Society outside of campus. They offer inexpensive lessons in Japanese and reduced prices.

Unlike most clubs on campus their club will have a lot of meeting off campus. On Apr.28th they plan on going to the Botanical Gardens and on May.15th they plan on going to a tea ceremony. With them planning to continue events off campus once a month, there

will be many more events to choose from in the future.

Also what could be in your future is studying abroad in Japan. With Brooklyn Colleges vast study abroad programs there is none to Japan. Still with CUNY campuses collaboration with one another, there are three options” Hunter College, Queens College and the College of Staten Island (CSI).

The there offer courses in Japanese language, culture, business and internship and research. With CUNY the credits are also transferable and cheaper than other study abroad outside of CUNY.

Queens is where you want to go if you want language and research study, with it being the most extensive of the three CUNY schools. Staten Island has course in culture, with Hunter College having the course in Business.

If any be too late this semester, still you could start planning for next semester. Financial aid helps to cover study abroad and anything left over can be covered with scholarships. It is advised to apply for as much as possible.



The opinions expressed in the Opinions Section do not necessarily reflect the views of The Excelsior.

# The Mustang

BY MICHAEL CASTANEDA

There might be a new genre in film cropping up—movies made about the American West by directors who are not American. Last year, there was one of the best films of that year *The Rider* directed by Chloe Zhao, a Chinese director. It was absolutely brilliant! This year we have *The Mustang*, directed by Laure de Clemont-Tonnerre who is a French female director.

Much like her countryman Alexis de Tocqueville of two hundred years ago, Clemont-Tonnerre gives us a lens into America which may be more American than an American director would have.

In case you have forgotten, Alexis de De Tocqueville wrote *De La Democratie en Amerique*, which are his observations of American Democracy made in the 1830s. It is still taught today in American schools.

The movie focus' on two segments of America, the wild Mustang population that averages to about 100 thousand and the American prison population, which is 2,298,300 according to the U.S. Bureau of Justice Statistics. There exists an intersection of these two populations. It's a Wild Horse Program where prisoners



“The Mustang” focuses on two segments of America, the wild Mustang population and the American prison population. PHOTO/ IMDb

in medium security prisons with no experience tame wild Mustangs that will go for auction. Prisoners who have gone through this program are less likely to re-offend.

Better known examples of these sorts of programs are vetDogs for veterans with PTSD coming to puppy breaks during college finals like at Columbia University's Butler library. There is even a Dog therapist who visits Goldwater hospital on Roosevelt Island every month.

The movie itself is not easy to watch. It is about 90 minutes but feels much longer. That doesn't mean the movie is unsatisfy-

ing, but it can be tedious.

We start with Roman who is a prisoner with a few stints in solitary confinement. He seems stunted emotionally. He is in no hurry to get out of prison. Prison life albeit difficult is something that he has learned to survive in.

His prison day job is to move horse feces from one place to another. One day he passes by a horse in solitary confinement. See the connection?

By showing an interest in the horse, he is given an opportunity to train the horse. The problem is that to train a wild horse, he needs to communicate with his emo-

tions and show restraint. Roman isn't good at that.

We see Roman punching a horse after he is affronted by the horse. It was a weird image to watch. It took a second to realize what I was watching. Then, both Roman and the horse are subdued. It a nice piece of film making. There is symmetry in the shot. Both characters are equals. Both look at each other as equals. Both go back to solitary confinement until during an episode of extreme weather Roman helps save the horse by getting the horse to safety during the storm. The movie has no dearth of metaphor.

Roman earned another chance to train this horse. Both the horse and the man realize they were given a second chance. Each breaks each other down. When Roman is able to connect with the horse, Roman starts to connect with his own feelings albeit as slowly as it is taking him to learn his horse.

The film gets interesting. It's refreshing to see a movie that is not about rich people. It's refreshing to watch a redemption story without feeling it is a vehicle to persuade the audience. Nevertheless, I think this can trouble people because there is no simple moral at the end of the story.

Those who grew up with pets can relate to the powerful connection you have with your pet. Those who like horses will see lots of pretty horses and nothing bad happens to a horse. Don't worry!

This movie reminds me that America, despite being raw, is an idea. There are four characters in the movie, Roman, the horse, the landscape and the prison, each is raw and powerful. Like early American naturalist art to photography of Ansel Adams, you get the feeling that there is something vast and powerful out there and you must make of it as you imagine it.

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# Review & Response: “Hey Critics! Be More Chill...”

BY JOHN SCHILLING

One of the most hyped, unprecedented musicals of all time, *Be More Chill*, opened at the Lyceum Theatre on Sunday, March 10. The curtain rises to a teen boy muttering to himself: “C-c-c c’mon, c-c-c- c’mon go, go.” These words are not just the opening line of the show, but they are also what many eager theatergoers have been muttering for almost the past four years, awaiting the show’s arrival.

Unlike any other show, *Be More Chill* started in 2015 as a small, four-week production at the Two River Theatre in Red Bank, New Jersey, where it seemingly died. After producing a cast recording of the show and streaming it on Spotify, the power of social media kicked in and *Be More Chill* was resurrected in the summer of 2018 at Pershing Square by popular demand. But it doesn’t stop there! The Off-Broadway run not only sold out immediately, but it also made one message very clear: Broadway was ready for an UPGRADE!

*Be More Chill* tells the story of Jeremy Heere (Will Roland), a seemingly insignificant high school junior who is sick of being a “loser geek whatever” and wants to be noticed by his crush, Christine Canigula (Stephanie Hsu). With the help of his friend Michael Mell (George Salazar), a school bully named Rich (Gerard Canonico), and his failing relationship with his father (Jason “Sweettooth” Williams), Jeremy decides to “be more chill” and enlists the help of a supercomputer pill, known as the SQUIP (Jason Tam). The plot of the show revolves around how this decision goes all wrong and reinforces the theme of embracing who you are.

While the musical is seemingly beloved, the public opinion of *Be More Chill* is far from clear cut. The show is often praised for its coming of age, tone, and unique approach, but also criticized for just about everything you could think of, including sexism and homophobia. In addition, the show is compared to already established staples on Broadway, such as *Dear Evan Hansen* or other highly regarded new arrivals like *The Prom*. This could be



“Be More Chill” is a fun time at the theater filled with exciting, original songs and a story that everyone can relate to in some way, despite its unorthodox plot. PHOTO/ **Maria Baranova**

considered flattering if it was for the purpose of promoting *Be More Chill*, but these comparisons are often drawn to show how inferior it is to these shows. Having seen the show myself, I can say that *Be More Chill* is imperfect, but not the abomination that critics have made it out to be.

One of the highest praises I can offer to *Be More Chill* is the casting. The cast, which was significantly white in 2015, is now made up of different races and is a prime example of the diversity that theater lacks nowadays. Aside from being diverse, the cast is also immensely talented. The show is led by *Dear Evan Hansen* original cast member, Will Roland, who shines as Jeremy. Roland is tasked with making the audience feel sorry for a character who seemingly makes bad decisions and brings the resulting consequences upon himself. This is challenging and should not be overlooked. Roland has also improved his vocals significantly, since starting the role in July 2018. From what I can see, Roland has transformed from playing a character to becoming the character, and this makes his performance more authentic. George Salazar makes it “a two-player game” as Jeremy’s stoner best friend, Michael Mell. Salazar truly steals the show and grabs the audience’s attention whenever he is on stage. This is seen especially in Act 2 when Salazar delivers an emotional, gut-wrenching ballad called “Michael in the Bathroom.” His performance of that song alone should warrant him a TONY nomination for Best Featured Actor in a Musical. Salazar brings the heart and humor the show

could not survive without.

In addition to the cast, *Be More Chill* offers a refreshing, unique perspective of what some might consider an overdone story. The idea of a character wanting to “fit in” is often met with criticism because it has been done so many times before, but this should not discredit *Be More Chill*. In fact, I think it is praiseworthy that the show takes on this story, but of course, adds a unique twist of a supercomputer pill telling you what to do. While watching the show, I never thought for a second I was watching something that I had seen before. *Be More Chill* creates an interesting dynamic in that it feels very real, but is very much based on fantasy. Not to mention, the show is extremely funny and true to what it is portraying: teenagers in high school. This is where the criticism often comes in, and I think this form of it is unjustified.

*Be More Chill* is often criticized for promoting stereotypes, homophobia, and sexism. The problem is that this criticism is often formulated by critics, who are looking through the lens of conservatism. Admittedly, the stereotypes were profound in the show’s 2015 production with one-dimensional female characters who were simply meant to serve as “the mean girls.” However, the show we see on stage now has been drastically reworked to give these characters personality. They still are “the mean girls,” but the show now explains why they are the way they are, and this gives them unique identities in the story that audiences can relate to.

As for homophobia and sexism, these criticisms are often mentioned because of

scenes and/or lines in the show that portray characters in certain ways with feelings of prejudice or objectification. Again, this is a musical about teenagers and irrational, immoral behaviors are necessary to make the show seem real. Not to mention, it is important to distinguish between the characters and the show as a whole. Just because something is said by a character, it does not indicate the show’s narrative or qualify as promoting it. By that logic, we could criticize Harper Lee’s *To Kill a Mockingbird* for being a racist book/play, but these racist words were necessary to make the story seem real and true to the time period.

Lastly, the critics exemplify further hypocrisy by calling the songs of the show “repetitive” and “poorly written.” Ben Brantley of *The New York Times* referred to the song structure by saying, “The rhymes in Mr. (Joe) Iconis’ lyrics feel like they might have been improvised on the spot by class-cutting stoners behind the gym,” while mentioning “fake pee” being rhymed with “awkwardly” as an example. I really struggle to see why this is criticized and I question what Brantley’s expectations were towards this show. The show is clearly about teenage social structure taken to a whole new level, and he is concerned with how the songs rhyme? Granted, the songs may not be the cleanest forms of poetry, but this is because most of the songs are written to be sung by teenage characters in the way teenagers typically talk! It would not make sense for Jeremy Heere to sound like the dramatic, ex-convict Jean Valjean from *Les Miser-*

*ables*, which is another show with “repetitive” songs; unlike *Be More Chill*, it is free from this criticism somehow.

To be clear, I am not saying this show is free of error, but rather suggesting that it be criticized appropriately. From my experience, I found the pacing to be a bit of an issue with various low points where the show slowed down, and I found the conclusion to Act One to be underwhelming. Usually, the end of Act One is used to tease something big coming in Act Two, and this really is not the case. However, I think both of these things are due to the show being “stretched out” to fill time. The show is two hours and 30 minutes long, but could probably be told in less than two hours. In one respect, I appreciate the “stretching out” of the story and can overlook it not only to give me my money’s worth but to expand on these characters and give them depth. My only wish, in this instance, is that it was not so apparent.

Overall, *Be More Chill* will continue to do “more than survive” these undeservingly negative reviews, as tickets have now been made available through October 2019 by popular demand. The show is not like anything that has been on Broadway before and should be taken as a new phenomenon. It is evident from these harsh reviews that the critics may need SQUIPs for themselves to “be more chill” and criticize the show appropriately. It is only fair to hold *Be More Chill* to the same standard at which other musicals are reviewed, a courtesy that has not been granted. I hope *Be More Chill* gives the other musicals hell at the TONY Awards in June, and I will laugh when these critics jump on the bandwagon like they did when *Dear Evan Hansen* beat *Natasha, Pierre & The Great Comet of 1812* in 2017 for Best Musical. When taken exactly for what it is, *Be More Chill* is a fun time at the theater filled with exciting, original songs and a story that everyone can relate to in some way, despite its unorthodox plot. I give *Be More Chill* four out of five stars.



# You Need to Watch “Us” Now

BY CARMEN SAFFIOTI

Jordan Peele’s second feature film reveals new layers of the director’s artistic direction. *Us* is unlike most other horror films— deeply strange with an ambiguous meaning. Audience members were visibly puzzled and were left wondering what the true meaning of the film was.

If you are looking to be scared, you will be disappointed. Although Peele explicitly stated that *Us* is a horror film, audience members often erupted into laughter. However, that laughter was not so much out of humor, but rather out of nervous tension. The film is horror— psychological horror which is a characteristic of Peele’s style so far. There were multiple allusions to Kubrick’s *The Shining*, a classic psychological horror— showing Peele’s possible inspiration. Currently, I am unsure of what I thought of the film. *Us* is a film that will resonate differently for each viewer— it’s a film that will reflect back



“Us” is a deeply strange horror film with an ambiguous meaning. PHOTO/ Claudette Barius - Universal

the energy you put into it.

Peele’s last film, *Get Out*, focuses on the psychological anatomy of its central character. In *Us*, we get to the deepest thoughts and fears of the main character— Adelaide. As a child, Adelaide was traumatized by a vision of a “mirror girl.” As an adult, she returns

to where she grew up as a child, where fear is amplified as she believes the mirror girl is still following her.

The choice to focus in on one character works very well in Peele’s films, as audience members get attached to Adelaide and even being to see themselves in her. Lupita Nyong’o does an excellent job

of portraying an emotionally conflicted character, it is clear that this part was not an easy one due to the ambiguous nature of her character’s trauma. Despite the odd and intriguing circumstances of the plot, the film is truly a focus of this character.

The soundtrack of this film is truly unique, songs

like *Fuck tha Police* and *I Got 5 on It* are just two examples of the odd, yet strangely fitting songs, that seem to be an ambiguous take on race relations. Just like with *Get Out*, Peele uses the music not just to add some sort of noise to the film, but to add another layer of meaning. The score of the film is striking as well, it is minimalistic and memorable yet incredibly eerie. The trailer’s music is a perfect example of how Peele manipulates popular songs into something more sinister.

*Us* is a movie that I would recommend seeing twice in order to truly absorb its message. Fans are still trying to dissect all of the hidden messages, symbolism, and themes. It is a film that is so rich in meaning and so ambiguous that years later people will still be deciphering and discussing Peele’s intentions. Although *The Shining* was one of the main inspirations for *Us*, I honestly believe that the two films are comparable in artistic value.

## Dirk Nowitzki Moves to Sixth Place in NBA All-Time Scoring

BY CONRAD HOYT

On March 19, 2019, Dirk Nowitzki passed Wilt Chamberlain for sixth place on the NBA all-time scoring list. With his patented high-arching jump shot, he etched his name further into the NBA history books.

Nowitzki is generally recognized as the greatest European basketball player of all time. Now in his 21st NBA season, all for the same team in the Dallas Mavericks, Nowitzki is expected to retire after this season. He hasn’t officially announced his retirement, but the way the league and other teams have treated him, points to the conclusion that this will most likely be the final season for #41.

When asked about retirement, his response was that he wants to be there for the young guys next year, but will see how he feels at the end of the season in terms of health. However, I think it is fair to say, watching Nowitzki run up and down the court is painful enough for the viewer, so the betting money would be that he hangs it up.



Dirk Nowitzki passed Wilt Chamberlain for sixth on the all-time NBA scoring list. PHOTO/ USA Today

Nowitzki has averaged 22.5 points, 8.1 rebounds, and 2.6 assists over his career, with a three-point percentage over 38 percent. He was named the NBA’s Most Valuable Player in the 2006/2007 season and won a championship in 2011 along with the Finals MVP.

Nowitzki will not just be remembered for his numbers and accomplishments; his impact and style of play is perhaps most consequential. There were several players in the history of the NBA who changed the entire complexion of the league. Chamberlain, who

Nowitzki just passed on the scoring list, changed several NBA rules because he was too strong, forceful and dominant. Stephen Curry has led the three-point revolution, where the court is much wider and any shot from any distance can be considered a good shot, depending on who is taking it. When thinking about game changers, one player is often left out: Nowitzki himself.

Before Nowitzki, there was no seven-footer who could shoot the three well. The height at which he shoots the basketball makes it virtually un-guardable,

not to mention, his nimble footwork and patented fade-away all adding up to a unique and exceptional arsenal. Nowitzki has never been a great defender, so the power forward spot was perfect for him. For the Mavericks, it worked perfectly, and other teams took note.

Nowitzki’s ability to shoot the long ball meant the opposing player would have to be locked onto him all night, thereby, clearing the lane for the center or guards or wings to drive. Without Nowitzki, are we sure we would have the same Kevin Durant, a Kristaps Porzingis, a Kevin Love?

Though it is clear he is playing the mentor role this season more than anything else, Nowitzki still knows how to stroke the three. Chamberlain is widely regarded as the most dominant NBA player of all time (the only comparison is Shaquille O’Neal), and for Nowitzki to pass him is a tremendous accomplishment.

This season, the Dallas Mavericks made a trade with the New York Knicks

to acquire Kristaps Porzingis, a player that has been compared to Nowitzki since he was drafted. It will be fun to see how Porzingis’ game is affected by his close proximity and mentorship from Nowitzki, especially if he decides to come back for one more year.

The impact of Nowitzki on the NBA cannot be overstated. His unique skill set helped revolutionize the NBA game and started to lead into the analytics-driven, three-point-centric brand of basketball we are accustomed to today.

Nowitzki, already a jovial person, will surely look at his career with proud eyes. The icing on the cake of a tremendously successful year was passing the great Chamberlain for sixth on the NBA scoring list, and who knows, maybe Nowitzki isn’t even done yet. Whether or not he comes back for one more year, I say to Dirk, from NBA fans everywhere, thank you for the memories.



# Mike Trout Signs Record Breaking Contract to Remain with LA Angels

BY IVAN MORROBEL

2019 appears to be the year of contract extensions in Major League Baseball (MLB) as various players continue to sign remunerative deals in order to stay with their respective ball clubs, yet it was center fielder Mike Trout who agreed to a record-breaking 12-year, \$426.5 million deal to remain with the Los Angeles Angels in the long run.

Trout, who won two American League MVP award in 2014 and 2016, is better known as the best player in baseball today. The 27-year-old was eligible to become a free agent after the 2020 season and was rumored to be interested in the Philadelphia Phillies but after agreeing to the largest contract in professional sports history, Trout is well-off with the Angels. After all, the deal doesn't include an opt-out clause, which can ultimately make him a member of the Angels for rest of his career.

The seven-time All-



Mike Trout is better known as the best player in baseball today. PHOTO/ Getty Images

Star's contract obliterates the 13-year, \$330 million deal that Bryce Harper received from the Phillies and Manny Machado's ten-year, \$300 million contract that he signed with the San Diego Padres.

The center fielder is no

stranger to success as he has won numerous awards throughout his astonishing career. Trout won the AL Rookie of the Year award in his first full season in 2012, has also won six AL Silver Slugger and two All-Star game MVP awards. However,

Trout's presence hasn't led to anything significant for the Angels. While a team's dream is to have a player such as Trout on their roster, the ultimate goal is to eventually win the World Series. Since the Angels decided to call-up Trout in

2011, they've only made the playoffs once, which happened in 2014 where they got swept by the Kansas City Royals in the ALDS.

Regardless of Trout and the Angels failing to have much success as a whole, the 12-year deal gives the Halos time to focus on who they should surround Trout with. In 2017, the Angels signed the Japanese two-way player Shohei Ohtani to play alongside Trout, but that was cut-back as Ohtani battled injuries last season, though they'll be looking to make several attempts at making Trout's tenure with the Angels as pleasurable as they can.

Now that Trout knows where the rest of his career will be spent, barring a trade, he can carry on with the rest of his Hall of Fame-bound line of work. Trout, who's entering his eighth season as a major-leaguer, has a total of 1,187 hits, 240 home runs, and 793 runs scored to go along with a slash line of .307/.416/.573 for his career.

## Taylor George Wins CUNYAC Scholar-Athlete of the Month

BY NICHOLAS WILLIAMS

Brooklyn College Women's Basketball sophomore guard, Taylor George, won the CUNYAC/Hospital for Special Surgery Scholar-Athlete of the Month for the month of February 2019.

"Winning this award means a lot," George said. "I have worked extremely hard in the classroom to get to where I want to be, so winning this award shows that my hard work is paying off and I feel very honored."

The award is given to student-athletes who have been exceptional in their respective sport as well as in the classroom. George played a key role for the Bulldogs this season, helping with the scoring load and leading the team to a 20-9 record and going as far as the ECAC tournament. Outside of basketball, George is a Speech Pathology major and is currently holding a 3.67 GPA.

In 29 games for the Bulldogs, she averaged 14.0



Taylor George was named CUNYAC Scholar-Athlete of the Month for February. PHOTO/ Damion Reid

points on 42.1 percent from the field, 34.2 percent from three-point range, and 75.8 percent from the free throw line. She also dished out 87 assists and grabbed 89 rebounds in total for the season.

George has had a number of great performances, reaching double-digit points in 22 games, logging in five 20 point performances and

racking up 88 steals in total this season. She put on a valiant defensive performance on February 11th, 2019 in a win against the John Jay Bloodhounds, having a double-double game of 16 points and an unbelievable ten steals.

In a game against the Grove City Wolverines on March 1st, the Bulldogs sea-

son came to an end as they were not able to pull out a victory but George was still able to put up 20 points and dish out three assists.

George believes that this season was successful despite the loss and remained optimistic about the outcome of the season, "I would say this season was successful," she said. "We didn't get the exact

outcome we wanted to, however, we came very far and accomplished many things that we should all be proud of."

George transferred into Brooklyn College from Temple University in 2017 and immediately made a name for herself, helping to win the CUNYAC Championship in her first season as a Bulldog. She also won awards such as the CUNYAC Rookie of the year and ECAC Rookie of the year for the 2017-2018 season. Recently, she was selected to the CUNYAC All-Star second team.

George looks to her coaches, teammates, and family as positive influences for her. She hopes to build on her success and the next mission for George, for the 2019-2020 season, is to improve on her game and bring another CUNYAC Championship to Brooklyn College.