



# THE MONITOR

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MARYMOUNT MANHATTAN COLLEGE'S STUDENT NEWSPAPER

DECEMBER 10, 2018

## DIVERSITY TAKES THE STAGE



Photo courtesy of Ethan Haug

By Gwen Attridge  
Guest Writer

You've never seen the Great Hall this pimped out. A room that by day is filled with piano music and ballerinas was transformed into something just short of a nightclub. On Friday, November 30th, Marymount's one and only dance team Infamous Unit took over the school's largest dance room for the first ever Diversity Function at Marymount Manhattan. Balloons covered the floor and gold accents dripped from every corner of the room as colorful beams flashed throughout the room. It couldn't have been any more fit for the Infamous Unit brand.

Preceding the event was a "pre-game mixer" hosted by the Black and Latino Student Association in the Regina Peruggi Room, which provided attendees with information about HBCU culture, the style Infamous Unit embodies in their dancing. It set the atmosphere and defined the purpose of the event, which was to emphasize diversity here at Marymount. Complete with chips and salsa, and even some pre-game dancing, the guests were ready to head down to the Great Hall for the main event.

A playlist curated by the Unit themselves boomed through the Great Hall with mixing courtesy of DJ Panda, being a Marymount student himself and adding to the spirit of the event. Doors were opened and an opening dance party burst out instantly, building up to the long-awaited entrance of Infamous Unit. Little did they know, the team was downstairs in the basement studio receiving a pre-show pep talk from club president Emani Mack. Decked out in camo pants and their signature shirts, displaying the slogan "Respect the Throne" and a crown, they

crowded around to hear what wise words he had to say to instill the most confidence in his Unit. "No matter how much rehearsals get intense, it's all love, it's all dedication. When we perform tonight, we are letting them know who we are. We are our own Unit. Understand that ya'll are a part of something much bigger than yourselves," says Mack, with enthusiastic reactions from the rest of the team. A huddle was made, "Unit!" was called in response to Mack's call of "Infamous!", and they were off.

In an opening skit, Mack poses the questions that he promises will be answered by the end of the night: "Who is Infamous Unit and why do they walk around with a crown on their shirt?" With that, the team enters in calling the words "IU!" as the first dance style, the stroll, starts.

The crowd stares in amazement as the normally "lit" group of performers enters with such discipline. A skit plays out, stating the Infamous Unit standards, the environment in which they intend to create, and their ultimate purpose and goal as a club here at Marymount: allowing members of the Unit to explore HBCU (Historically Black College and University) styles, devote themselves to promoting diversity, and "express themselves freely in dance," as Captain Elijah Castro stated in the piece. After establishing themselves as a force to be reckoned with, the words "Respect the Throne" echoed through the hall in synchronized melody as the Unit finishes the stroll, oozing in finesse.

Things take an even more shocking turn as the echoing voices turned into echoing stomps, as the Unit moved into the step portion of their piece. Led by Captains Gabe Hernandez and Elijah Castro, the team proved their versatility even more by showing an even more hard-hitting style of dance. The last step rung out with the word "Unit" prompting their last

step, and with that, the first half of the night was over.

After a quick change into look number two, all black and mesh, the Unit returned just in time to join guests on the dance floor and interact with their supporters. As host Micah Sandford signaled the crowd to form a circle, it was time for the next event of the night: the dance contest. Eight contestants volunteered themselves to compete for cash prizes (yes, cash prizes) and showed the judges, being Mack, Castro, and Hernandez, their best moves. After plenty of hype from the crowd and three rounds of elimination, the winner chosen was freshman Nadia Estrella, who stunned the crowd with her backflips, which obviously won over the judges. This soon enough led to the Unit's exit to prepare for the second and final performance of the night.

Lights were dimmed as Infamous Unit returned not only with themselves, but with chairs. Everyone knew, based on the history of the group, that something good was in store. Soon enough, the Unit fell into formation, legs crossed and proper, and ready to shock the crowd. The first notes of "Grind with Me" by Pretty Ricky played as every member fell into poses, and audience jaws dropped in shock. What followed was a sultry line-up of the team's classic j-sette choreography, but done with the accompaniment of the chairs. Like always, it was something new the Unit has brought to the table, for they are never ones to stay in their comfort zones. And as team followed Mack in the ending j-sette, the dancers turned to their classic pose from the beginning, and Infamous Unit was out for the night... or so they thought.

Guests trickled out, but there was no rest for Infamous Unit, for in the final minutes of the event, a stand battle broke out as the New Era of Infamous Unit showed the crowd the hard work they've put in

to become a part of this team. It displayed the strength of every member, the growth of the group as a whole, and summed of the evening in perfect Infamous Unit fashion.

As for closing remarks of the successful event, Captain Gabe Hernandez said, "I believe Diversity Function was a step in the right direction, regarding Marymount Manhattan's position as a PWI (Predominantly White Institution). As much as the school wants to bolster diversity, no changes will come to the student body without the help of the student body itself. With an event such as Diversity Function, we are taking matters into our own hands. Infamous Unit and BLSA are two clubs that are rewriting history and becoming the change that so many individuals want to see in Marymount Manhattan. In the near future, our school will no longer be a PWI, and it will be because of the hard work and dedication of students like us, who actually made a difference during our time here."

And last but not least, the closing words from none other than President himself, Emani Mack: "I would define Diversity Function as iconic and long overdue! As president of Infamous Unit, I wanted to bring this event to MMC to redefine our campus atmosphere... Infamous Unit wanted to give MMC a chance to step into our Diverse Universe by partying with Unit. Seeing people from all over country, various ethnicities, all dancing in one space in a judgement free zone meant the world to me! I can't wait to do it again next year."

And with that, Infamous Unit will continue to immerse their classmates and staff in their Diverse Universe as they tirelessly fight for their founding cause.

## THE GOALS OF THE SGA IN 2018

By Catherine Pool  
Guest Writer

Student Government Association has been hard at work all semester to ensure that the students at Marymount Manhattan College are represented and that their concerns are heard. This semester each current member has shown their devotion to making MMC a place that all students can gain something from. The executive board accomplished five of its ten goals for the year with others in progress. Those accomplished goals are significant and are a reflection of what student government at MMC is. First, is the sponsoring of Voter Registration Drives on several days prior

to the midterm elections that helped dozens of students receive important information about how and where to vote. Second, the creation of the First Year Council. This is a group of first year students who are non-voting members of SGA that are being taught the various leadership positions within the organization and help advance the SGA mission. The third accomplished goal was hosting a successful town hall that allowed students to express concerns that SGA plans to address. Fourth, major revisions to the constitution, with the hopes of making more in the future. The fifth and final goal is ongoing, it is the improvement of relationships with administration, faculty, and staff. This semester has shown positive progress with (re)building those relationships, but there is always room to continue improving. The senators each have personal

goals and many have seen success in working with different offices and registered student organizations. A monthly Campus Safety Advisory Committee is held, and works towards increasing safety at MMC which includes a new IT program for digitizing MMC ID cards. Advancements in the 4th floor café have occurred such as Meatless Mondays and separate pans and knives for allergens, with more to come next semester. A self-defense seminar was also planned. There are going to be several exciting events and collaborations in the spring as well, such as a safe sex week, a second town hall, bringing back the Vagina Monologues, and the creation of a Leadership Network Team. There have been and will be many more positive ideas that turn into goals that transform into accomplishments through collaboration and communication.

# GLOSSIER FLAGSHIP STORE



Image courtesy of Forbes

## GLOSSIER'S NEW STORE OPENS IN NYC

By Gwen Attridge  
Guest Writer

You could see the pink haze illuminating from the window all the way from the subway station across the street. You draw your eyes up, and it gets even brighter. It looks like heaven could be behind those doors, and for most young women of this generation, it is.

Since 2016, 123 Lafayette Street in Soho has been hailed as the modern beauty capital of the country, and even of the world, being the headquarters and showroom for the new and booming Glossier makeup brand. Founded by former fashion editor Emily Weiss, the brand made its online debut in 2014, and has since sky-rocketed to an ultimate cult must-have in every girl's makeup collection. Due to its increased online presence, the opening of the Glossier showroom in 2016 at the exact location in New York where it was created was prompted by a \$24 million investment in a Series B round of funding.

However, fast forward two more years to 2018, where the brand is now worshipped by celebrities, beauty gurus, and women of all ethnicities and ages, and the brand has yet another thing up their sleeve to make their brand even bigger. The new Glossier Flagship store opened its doors on November 8th, and gave consumers what is said to be "the ultimate physical expression of the brand," and "the industry's first looking glass into the future," according to Forbes magazine.

It starts before you even open the door, as a frosted window displaying the brand's name in simplistic Helvetica font invites you to enter through the door, completely with a pink quartz handle. It's already obvious the attention to detail that was put into this project and the careful planning it took to give the customers a 360 experience of Glossier as not only a brand, but a lifestyle.

Above the entrance towers swirling, plaster walls, in signature Glossier pink of course, that meet at an oculus that could be mistaken as a rose-colored sun above a red quartz staircase. Immediately felt is a sense of awe, for it is rare for such minimalist

architecture to be impactful and purposeful. The steps usher you up to the floor with the main attractions: the products themselves. Though the gray cement floors, towering light pink columns, and luxuriously curved red couch would seem like they would command the room, it is the little tubes and bottles that lovers of the brand and newcomers to the world of Glossier are immediately drawn to. They lay on ridged pink plastic cylinders, each sitting in their own groove and ready to be tested. On adjacent walls are two installations that highlight the brand's aesthetic even more: A smooth Roman bust surrounded by wild flora, and simple mirror wall, displaying a company mantra; "You Look Good."

As you round the corner, two hallways run parallel to what the brand calls "The Wet Room" which includes two sinks and shelves with sculptures of the product packaging that emulates the comfort of a customer's own bathroom. This allows customers to interact with products and employees directly in a more personable way. Outside of the room lay two other Glossier artifacts. To one side, the signature Glossier utility jumpsuit, worn by every employee, lays flat in a glowing frame. To the other, a Glossier moodboard, which shows pictures of models with dewey skin, product packaging, color samples, and even a bit of the brand's signature pink bubble wrap packaging, shows the authenticity and the overall vision of every product and Glossier as a whole.

All of this leads to the back room, which replaces the pink-hued light with a fluorescent white glow, imitating that of a makeup mirror. Which is ironic, because every wall is lined from top to bottom with mirrors. These details take a small roll in comparison to the main attraction of the room: huge, life size models of the brand's best selling product, their Boy Brow Gel. Since the opening of the flagship, the room has generated even more social media attention than their previous exhibits, revealing one of the main intentions of the company's expansion to such an elaborate space.

The mastermind behind the design of the space was Gachot Studios, a New York based design company responsible for many high-end commercial designs including

Shinola, Betteridge Jewelers, and Dualoy Leathers. Gachot has designed some of New York's finest residences, including penthouses and lofts in Noho, Soho, West Village, and the Flatiron Building itself. Looking at these designs, their mission statement sums up their goal perfectly: "Melding timeless craft with modern technology, we aim to create work with a refined aesthetic and radical sense of place. Simplicity, elegance and acute attention to detail are the guiding values." They could not be any more of an appropriate candidate for the job to achieve Emily Weiss's upgraded vision of the Glossier experience.

With its museum-like atmosphere and lines of consumers just waiting to get a glimpse of the brand's new setup, one can't help but stumble along the questions of: How did makeup turn into a completely interactive experience? And what about Glossier has made its floor have more sales revenue per square foot than the average Apple store? It comes down to two elements, Glossier's unique marketing techniques and the new standard of beauty for women in 2018.

As for marketing, Glossier sets itself apart by basing its branding and marketing around the community that has gotten it to where it is today. Instead of working from the elites and down, they respond to the wants and needs of their customers first. This is reflected greatly in the design of the flagship especially, for it will allow attendees to "to interact with Glossier's Offline Editors, create content while in the space, and make friends with fellow flagship goers," according to Forbes. Basing everything on community makes the brand more personable, which is rare in an industry where so many brands are looking for just revenue. CEO Emily Weiss responds to this, saying, "As I interviewed hundreds of women, I became more and more aware of how flawed the traditional beauty paradigm is. It has historically been an industry based on experts telling you, the customer, what you should or shouldn't be using on your face." This is a standard Weiss went out to change, and it prompted the start of her blog Into the Gloss, which gave women a platform to express their personal preferences and

methods of their beauty routine. And from that same platform, Weiss found the goal of her brand that is evident in even the luxurious two story flagship opened just a month ago: "a people-powered beauty ecosystem," as the site itself reads.

Along with Glossier's community-based marketing is their attention to detail when it comes to branding. The simplistic aesthetic of the brand's packaging is echoed throughout every limb of the company. From its social media presence, the purpose of their makeup and skincare as an extension of natural beauty, and even the design of their retail spaces, it's clear that Glossier understands consistency in an aura of company. Weiss herself says, "Brand is really, really important. It's kind of everything." Business Insider sums it up perfectly, explaining how every aspect of the company captures "a cheeky, millennial-facing voice."

Both of these aspects combine to form a new standard of beauty women everywhere have been waiting for for years. The brand encourages women to liberated from societal pressures, the website even displaying the words "democratize beauty." It serves as an echo to other changes in various aspects of society for women. As the #MeToo Movement in 2017 called for women to be heard, the idea of a new-found freedom from the idea of women as sexualized objects of men's fantasy is slowly being diminished. Victoria's Secret sales are the lowest they've ever been. Less women are caking on makeup as a mask, and instead using it to enhance their natural look, the goal of Glossier's products. Women of all ethnicities are being accepted into our corrupt political system. And just as Glossier wants to hear women and their wants and needs, the world is starting to hear them too. It's time to celebrate women for their individuality and differences rather than pressure them to be something that is unattainable. That's the idea Emily Weiss founded her company on, after all, and as she puts it, "I hope that takes off, because that will mean something bigger than Glossier."

# A NEW HAMLET



Image courtesy of variety.com

## HAMLET OPENS AT THE AMERICAN AIRLINES THEATRE

By Christina Bae  
Guest Writer

"Bernhardt/Hamlet, directed with wit and verve by Moritz von Stuelpnagel, is a deep-inside love letter to the theater as a kind of laboratory in which experiments in both art and equality are possible," as Jesse Green from *The New York Times* states. Shakespeare's play, *Hamlet*, tells the story of young Hamlet and how his desire for vengeance eventually drives him mad, leading to his own demise. Writer Theresa Rebeck turns the tables on this classic tale in her play, *Bernhardt/Hamlet*, in which she tells the story of a woman who has decided to take on the role of Hamlet. Sarah Bernhardt is one of the most renowned actresses of her time. However, when she decides to cast herself as Hamlet, her audience and her peers begin to doubt her and fear this decision will ruin her reputation as an actress. Rebeck's play follows Sarah Bernhardt through her journey to prove all those people wrong, setting out to rewrite *Hamlet* and fight for gender equality. Hamlet is the Prince of Denmark, who seeks to avenge his father's death by killing the man who murdered him – his brother, Claudius. After poisoning his own brother, Claudius marries the Queen Gertrude, snatching the crown and the title of King. When the ghost

of his father appears before him, Hamlet schemes to murder the new King and gain justice for his father. Shakespeare's play dramatizes the theme of revenge and demonstrates how a thirst for vengeance can lead to mental instability.

Theresa Rebeck is an American playwright and director from Cincinnati. According to her self-named website, "Rebeck is the most Broadway-produced female playwright of our time." Her website also states that she holds two degrees from Brandeis University – an MFA in playwriting and a Ph.D. in Victorian Melodrama. *Bernhardt/Hamlet* is her fourth Broadway play, which made its debut at American Airlines Theatre on September 25, 2018, according to Roundabout Theatre Company.

Sarah Bernhardt was a real actress who played the role of Hamlet in 1899 and, according to the Folger Shakespeare Library, was the first woman to ever play Hamlet in a movie. Bernhardt sought to rewrite *Hamlet* and remove its

**Rebeck encompassed the overall philosophy of Bernhardt and drew attention to the complex nature of Shakespeare and the role of women in the theater.**

iambic pentameter, which is a sort of poetic rhythm between verses where one short syllable is followed by one long syllable. As Rebeck states in an interview with PRI radio, "[Bernhardt] was somebody who was really known to be a sort of electrifying, active presence on stage, and she wanted to play *Hamlet* that way. She felt like the classical stance of the poetry stood in the way of the action which in fact, it does." Bernhardt wanted *Hamlet* written to be more of a dialogue; she felt its themes and its storyline would be conveyed better that way. Rebeck agreed

with Bernhardt's views and created a play that was both romantic and comical with an underlying focus on how women are often undermined in the theater industry.

Janet McTeer, the actress who plays Sarah Bernhardt in Rebeck's play, also agrees with the Bernhardt's opinions. McTeer feels that Bernhardt's opinions remain

relevant today. In an interview with Variety, McTeer states, "I think the conversation hasn't changed that much...if I said I'm going to play *Hamlet*, people would always go 'that's wonderful, but why?' and you'd have to have a really good reason, instead of saying 'well, because it's a great part and I want to play it, why shouldn't I play it?' You'd have to justify it, rather than being able to say 'because it's a great part and I want to give it a go.'" However, McTeer also feels that, compared to the struggles Bernhardt faced to prove herself worthy and attain a more honorable reputation for women, women today hold a much better position and receive better treatment in the theater industry. McTeer states, "It's all getting better, it's definitely getting better. Refusing to let it get you down, that's the thing. Just keep creating more opportunities, keep living it, keep doing it."

*Bernhardt/Hamlet* highlighted the marvelous Sarah Bernhardt, giving her the credit she deserves. Rebeck encompassed the overall philosophy of Bernhardt and drew attention to the complex nature of Shakespeare and the role of women in the theater. This play was truly one of a kind -- just like Sarah Bernhardt.



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# LETTER *from the* EDITOR

Dear Readers,

Thank you so much for picking up another copy of The Monitor. This happens to be our last issue of the semester, so we're very grateful that we are able to bring you this many issues each school year. In this issue, we provide an inside look at the Diversity festival and it's many talented performers, how to survive finals season, the new Bohemian Rhapsody movie, and more. This issue, brilliantly put together by our wonderful Layout and Design Editor Kayla Pacenka, completes 2018's publishings of The Monitor and invites you all to continue reading into the new year.

A New Year's resolution that I intend to keep is attempting to better myself within my relationships, professional life, responsibilities, and more. In order to help you all out with your new endeavours, The Monitor, with the help of a few dedicated staff members, will be hosting a writers workshop to better your understanding of journalistic writing and the ins and outs of professional publications. Don't have time to join staff but still interested in a journalism career? Stop by. Not interested in a journalism career but still interested in how to write an article? Stop by. We are welcoming any and all students, faculty, and staff to join us as we illustrate the importance of journalism, freedom of speech, and amplifying your voice in this digital age. More information regarding time and place will be released soon.

We are still accepting submissions for our student submissions page, and we invite you to share your art with the student body. The Monitor is a publication made for the students by the students, and we yearn to fully represent the opinions, voices, and creations of all students at Marymount Manhattan College.

If you have any questions, comments, or concerns about this publication, please send me an email at [marnold@mmm.edu](mailto:marnold@mmm.edu). I look forward to hearing your thoughts.

Have a wonderful holiday season and I wish you luck during this finals season as well.

With love,

*Megan Arnold*  
Editor-in-Chief



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# BROOKLYN'S NEW COMMUTE



Image Courtesy of amNY

## THE IMPACT OF THE L TRAIN SHUTDOWN

By Skylar Woodhouse  
Guest Writer

Only four more months until a New York nightmare becomes a reality. The L train subway service will shut down and stop service, starting April 19th, 2019. The L train serves as one of the main MTA lines that gets Brooklynites and Manhattanites in and out of either borough. The L Train construction will take fifteen months, and those who rely on the L train to get from work or even to school, will have to find an alternate way to get into Manhattan or Brooklyn, making the commute longer and more of a hassle for daily riders.

Here at Marymount, there are a lot of students, professors, staff and faculty who will face the repercussions of this closure. Those who take the L into Manhattan typically transfer at 14th Street Union Square before they make their way to the Upper East Side. Once the closure begins, commuters will have to draw up a new plan for their daily routine.

Why is the L train so important, and what is its history anyways? The L train line was brought to service during the 1980's

and underwent renovations and expansion in the early 2000s. Manhattan residents began to move outside of the city into Brooklyn as rent in Manhattan became too expensive. Popular eateries and nightlife grew to prominence in the now gentrified neighborhood of Williamsburg, making Brooklyn a hip and cool place to live and hang out.

The expansion of Brooklyn created a need for more trains, so people could make it into Manhattan faster in a more streamlined fashion. The reason for the decision to completely shut down service into Manhattan is tied to Hurricane Sandy, when the heavy winds, rain, and flooding impacted the Canarsie Tunnel. In order to do a full repair on the tunnel city officials had to risk messing with New Yorkers and their transportation or the work would never be done and could take even longer.

If you are someone who needs to take the L while in Brooklyn, it will run on normal service within the borough itself. Any stops after Bedford Avenue into Manhattan will require taking alternate forms of transportation. The city drafted

a busway that will run up and down 14th Streets, making stops along Grand Street, offering a similar route of the L. This closure gives the city an opportunity to create more bike lanes with hopes that New Yorkers will bike to their destination during the time of the closing.

For those who love spending time in the Williamsburg neighborhood or were considering living there but never wanted to pay the price to do so, now is your chance as apartment fees have begun to lower due to the unpopularity of the shutdown. If you are willing to deal with having a difficult time getting into Manhattan for 15 months, this would be the perfect time to grab a place in Brooklyn.

New York City has an overcrowding problem when it comes to public transportation; buses fill up and train cars have very little room for people to sit or stand. The New York City Department of Transportation projects that there are around 400,000 daily riders of the L train, and half of them will be hit hard when service stops running. Riders are now going to have to turn to lines J, M, Z, and G, which

will send the normal overcrowding of these lines during rush hour times to be even more populated. Meaning more trains will have to run to compensate for the L train riders who have found a new line.

Construction in a city with millions of people is never easy, especially when public transportation is of great importance to those living there. As New York City continues to grow with people, buildings, and businesses, public transportation becomes an even bigger need. The MTA subway lines require constant maintenance due to both their age and frequent use. Senior Alec Martin who takes the L twice a week as he goes to his internship in Brooklyn, will have to find a new commute, come April. When asked if he agrees with the decision to shut down the L and what line we will have to start taking, he states "I agree with it in that we need to do it, but it for sure is annoying, I wish they could fix it without shutting it down, and probably the M." The L train shutdown will show New Yorkers and City officials what NYC can really handle when major city renovations become top priority.

# THE JUUL SHUTDOWN

## FDA TRIES TO ELIMINATE TEENAGE VAPING

By Mary Durocher  
Guest Writer

In the beginning, JUUL was created for those who wished to quit smoking. The e-cigarettes, based in San Francisco, were designed as a smoking alternative that eliminated carcinogens and tar. JUUL's mission statement claims to, "envision a world where fewer people use cigarettes and where people who smoke cigarettes have the tools to reduce or eliminate their consumption entirely". Despite JUUL's original intentions, a majority of their consumers are middle and high school students. Whether intentional or not, the company

is receiving backlash for their appeal to young adults.

What's the allure of JUUL?

The design is sleek and similar to a flash drive, it can fit in the back of your pocket.

The simplicity of the product is also intriguing, it's an odorless vapor easy to puff anywhere. With the flavors and design, JUUL has become common among teens. As one Marymount student put it, "I started to JUUL in November of my senior year of high school. It was just common for all my friends to do it. It became the norm for everyone. In our heads it wasn't smoking cigarettes, it was

vaping flavored nicotine. It was fun. But then it became addictive and expensive. Now, it's a habit I can't and don't want to get rid of. I'm just always fiending for that head rush".

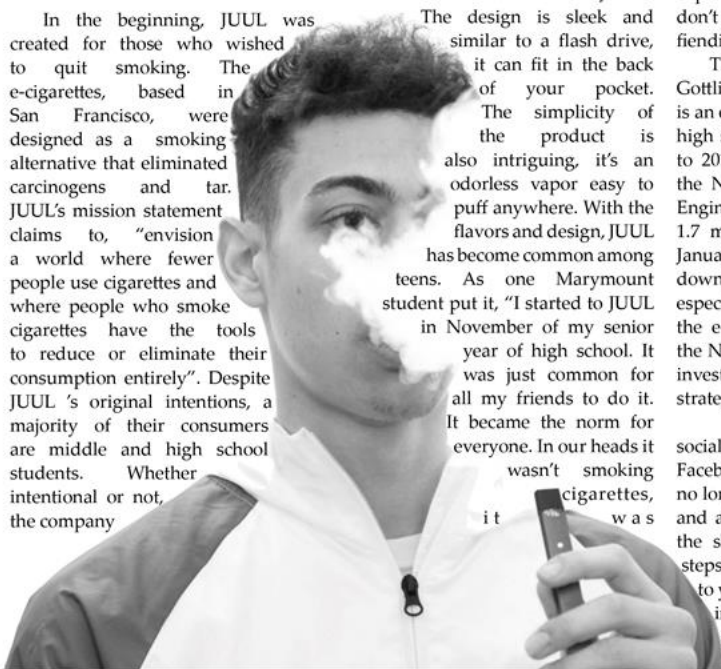
The FDA's Commissioner, Stephen Gottlieb, declared that teenage vaping is an epidemic. The FDA reported that high school e-cigarette use from 2017 to 2018 rose by 75%. Research from the National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine found that 1.7 million high schoolers vaped in January alone. The FDA has cracked down on e-cigarette companies, especially JUUL, who owns 75% of the e-cigarette market. According to the New York Times, the FDA is even investigating if JUUL's marketing strategies were aimed at teens.

First to go was JUUL's social media image. The company's Facebook and Instagram account are no longer active as of November 13th, and all content was deleted. Prior to the shutdown, JUUL began to take steps to reduce marketing exposure to young people. New policies were introduced such as, replacing the models in their ads with ex-

smokers and removing accounts aimed towards teens. These policies were too late to backtrack the influence of JUUL's marketing though. According to the Tobacco Control Journal, JUUL's approach to advertising through social media coordinates with their skyrocketing sales. This raises the question of the effectiveness JUUL's social media shutdown will have this far into the cultural phenomenon.

Next, JUUL decided to discontinue flavored pods. Although flavors like mint, tobacco, and menthol will stay mango, fruit, creme, and cucumber will be eliminated. The choice to discontinue JUUL pod flavors come amidst criticism that fun flavors are a marketing tool to attract teens. Flavored JUUL pods might stray teens from the fact that one pod has as much nicotine as a pack of cigarettes. The shutdown of JUUL's social media and the elimination of flavored pods reveal the company and FDA's commitment to reducing teen users. Will JUUL's actions benefit the company's image and young adults health? Only time will tell.

Imagine Courtesy of www.sjuhawnews.com



# THE PLAYWRIGHTS

MARYMOUNT MANHATTAN'S ADVANCED PLAYWRIGHT STUDENTS



ANNE SCHULTZ



MICHAELA WILLIAMS



KACIE REILLY



ERIC BERKELEY



CRAIG LONG

By Halle Roberts  
Guest Writer

Photos Courtesy of Ethan Haug

Behind every great piece of theatre is a great playwright. At MMC, we are lucky enough to have an entire matriculating class of them — so many, in fact, that this year the theatre department had to divide their biannual playwriting projects into triannual to include all our resident, advanced playwrights. The first group of projects, written by Eric Berkeley, Craig Long, Kacie Reilly, Michaela Williams, and Anne Schultz, went up on December 1st. We reached out to the play writes to find out what it was like to have their work produced and all that goes into getting that work done in the first place.

## How did you get into playwriting?

**Kacie Reilly:** A bit ass-backwards, to be honest. I've been writing fiction since I could read, and I loved to see shows on Broadway once a year as a kid. But it took until high school, when I started doing community theater, for me to realize that I could combine those interests and write my own theater. I wrote my first play my senior year of high school, and I've fallen in love with, and learned a lot about, the form in the time I've been at Marymount.

**Craig Long:** I've been writing for longer than I've been acting, ironically, so it seemed a natural progression once I fell in love with acting. I've just always been obsessed with plays. I read *Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf* at like 10 for some godforsaken reason and I've been hooked ever since.

**Eric Berkeley:** I was in high school, and I was very passionate about the arts. I dabbled in acting for a little while but never really stuck with it. Then I just started writing this play and I just felt like this is what I'm supposed to do, and I wanted to keep doing it.

## Three words to describe your play?

**Reilly:** Memory, fear, hope.

**Long:** Oh God. Theatrical. Weird. Meta. Do those sound pretentious?

**Berkeley:** Honest, fun, unexpected.

## A big part of the Advanced Playwriting Class is reading and critiquing each others work. What advice might you have for other artists on giving and receiving constructive criticism?

**Reilly:** Firstly, it's crucial to have a group of writers you're comfortable with, who you respect and trust. It's difficult to be productive in a workshop without those things, and unfortunately, sometimes that's just the luck of the draw rather than anything you can control. I think when giving feedback, it's important to keep in mind the voice of the writer you're discussing. You can point out issues if you see them, but when you cross over into suggestions on how to fix those things, you will likely be giving advice on how you would fix it, and your solution may not be authentic to the voice of that writer or the world they're trying to create. Our class has a really interesting and varied set of voices, and I always try to give feedback that feels true to their writing rather than feedback that mirrors my own. And as for receiving constructive criticism, I think that at first, a lot of writers don't realize that everything you write needs more than one draft. I used to put a ton of pressure on myself for the first draft to be perfect, and would get upset when it wasn't. Getting critiqued on a first draft is inevitable, and it's not a judgment on the quality of the idea. You really don't know the characters' voices, or what you're trying to say, until you get that first draft down. And also, don't take yourself too seriously. Being able to laugh at yourself makes everything in life a lot easier.

**Long:** Oh God. I think that the most important thing about constructive criticism is to keep it about the work. Don't take it personally, but also don't go after someone personally. I truly think there's always something to love in any script, and it's important to be encouraging with your fellow artists, as being rude for the sake of being "real" doesn't help anyone. But also, a hard lesson to learn is not to be precious about your work. Sometimes the hardest criticism to hear is the one you need the most.

**Berkeley:** LISTEN TO YOUR PEERS. Their feedback may inspire you to see what more you can do for your piece.

## What has the process of having your play produced been like?

**Reilly:** Stressful and magical. Our rehearsal period was the shortest I've personally experienced, so that was nerve-racking for me. This is also the first time I've ever had my work staged, so I'm still just sort of in awe that people were saying words that I wrote and inhabiting characters I created. All the good and the not-so-good of theatre is that it's collaborative. Having actors and a director come in and bring the words to life, transforming them in the process, is the heart of the art. As a playwright, that's the fun, really, and why it's so different than writing fiction. When you write a story, you can micromanage down to the finest detail, and the whole of it begins and ends on the page. But with a play, the script is just the launching pad. If you do your job right, it grows legs and walks (or runs) away from you pretty fast; the thrill of the process is letting it do that and seeing where it ends up. There's something alchemical about the whole endeavor—it didn't feel as much like molding a piece of clay as throwing explosive materials into a white-hot cauldron and stirring. It's been exciting in every sense of the word, and I'm eager for my next opportunity to do it all over again.

**Long:** It has been an incredibly wonderful experience. It was very surreal during the auditions to hear actors come in and perform my stuff in front of me. It was very emotional, and I still feel emotional when I hear my amazing actors do stuff with my script that I didn't even think was possible. My script is in many ways very personal, and to hear and see others perform it means the world to me. Working with my director and my whole team has just been a dream. It also has taught me lessons about trusting yourself as an artist and also trusting the artists around you. I was able to be pretty hands off through a lot of this process because I felt like my whole team could read my mind. It also taught me to have confidence in my work, and that it's strong enough to exist without me right behind the script at all times trying to explain something.

**Berkeley:** It truly is a very collaborative experience. Working with all of these actors and Sicre has been absolutely incredible. If you ever have the chance to do anything like this, you are very, very lucky.



Image via Instagram

# MIDTOWN DINER REVIEW



Image courtesy of menuism

By Ethan Haug  
Guest Writer

I sit at a corner table in the back of Midtown Diner. I had heard of this restaurant, recalling my first day as a student at MMC, some peer leader or MMC staff member said to me "your dining dollars not only work at our dining hall, the MMC Starbucks, and the 55th Street Residence C-Store but also a number of restaurants around the city including Midtown Diner... just try to avoid their chicken." Considering that I have only been a freshman at MMC for four months, I still haven't actually eaten at Midtown Diner nor have I heard anything from my peers that would make me want to eat here (I am also now out of dining dollars so that doesn't help). One rumor floated around that someone found Styrofoam in their waffles. Another rumor surfaced that people have seen mice and cockroaches scurrying around, or that the service was terrible. As I sit here now, I think it's safe to say that none of those rumors have proven true to me yet.

A very nice waitress with dark hair and a Grecian accent has already asked me multiple times if I would like anything, and although not busy, someone behind the counter across from me is wiping at something unseen. I enjoy the atmosphere of this place. It's as if I stepped straight out of the modern streets of New York City and into some retro 60's diner poster. I feel like I should be able

to look out the window and see men and women in bell bottoms and flower crowns in their hair walking by. It's quaint to say the least. It's also nice that this diner is only a block away from the 55th Street Residence halls AND it takes our MMC dining dollars. I look at the menu now: breakfast? Lunch? Dinner? Each served all day every day. They even have seafood, if you're into that. I think I am going to get the Californian Chicken Wrap with fries because I want to test the quality of the chicken. I signal the waitress over and she takes my order, a simple and easy interaction followed by a friendly chat. I asked to hold onto my menu for the moment.

Looking at the prices, the menu items are alarmingly expensive. Why is it \$12.45 for a salad? I worked in a deli for a year that sold expensive fancy cheese and sandwiches, and nothing was ever that expensive. The only way I would actually pay for food here is with my dining dollars because it's otherwise ridiculous to spend money on food that I could easily make for myself, and it would be cheaper. I also know that a lot of people living at 55th Street order the food to the dorms and it's amazing to me that they don't just leave the dorm to go pick up the food, which would probably save them \$5. I do another quick sweep of the restaurant with my eyes and notice that I am the only one in here at 1pm on a Monday. It's very slow.

Probably because I am the only one in the diner at the moment, the wait for my food clocked

in at 10 minutes. The Grecian waitress sets my food in front of me and encourages me to "enjoy." The wrap is well composed – the lettuce, avocado, tomatoes, and chicken are all nicely layered, and the wrap is cut perfectly in half. It smells wonderful and it's warm. The fries on the other hand look slightly soggy, like they had just reheated them in a microwave from a very frozen state. There's also no salt on these fries but it's alright, the restaurant provides some in a container on the table. I'm excited to eat this wrap, it looks good and I'm hungry.

I pick up the wrap and take a bite. The flavors explode in my mouth and I get sent back to my job at the fancy deli. It reminds me of a sandwich I used to make. Who knew Midtown Diner would stir all of these feelings of nostalgia? I take another bite of the wrap, and another, and another. No complaints, it's great and almost reminiscent of comfort food. I think I can understand why people continue to go to Midtown Diner, even after the many negative rumors and the high prices that seem to deteriorate its reputation (Taylor Swift is that you?). The flavors all work well together, and even though the fries are disappointing and soggy (I called it), the main meal is what steals the show. Overall, I think that once my dining dollars are refilled, I will come back and eat at Midtown Diner, and I'll bring my friends who are also unsure of the quality of its food!

## VISIONS OF THE UNSEEN

HILMA AF KLINT: PAINTINGS FOR THE FUTUTRE

By Cross Nelson  
Staff Writer

A visionary artist and an innovative thinker—the artwork of Hilma af Klint is as intriguing and thought provoking as the artist herself. Swedish artist, Hilma af Klint was an artist and a spiritual mystic, whose beliefs and artistic creations proved to be very ahead of her time. Born in 1862 in Stockholm, Sweden, af Klint had an early talent for art, and she began studying at Stockholm's Royal Academy of Fine Arts at the age of twenty. During her time at the Academy, af Klint's younger sister died, and with the emergence of spiritualist groups across Europe and America, af Klint was inspired to use spiritualism as a mode of communicating with her departed sister through a spirit world. After failed attempts at making contact with the dead, af Klint decided to use her spiritualism to channel spiritual guides who could show her insights into higher spiritual realities. Eventually, she began holding seances (meetings in which people communicate with spirits) with four other women and together they called themselves "The Five." The Five met regularly, and being that the other women were artists as well, they began practicing automatic drawing, a practice in which a medium contacts a spirit and allows them to guide the creation of their artwork. This organic and uncontrolled creation of art is what introduced af Klint to abstraction, and as she continued her spiritualist practices, her artwork became more and more abstract. At this time, abstraction was a new territory to be explored in art, and af Klint was producing countless abstract works years before the rise of abstract, modernist artists such as Vasily Kandinsky or Piet Mondrian. Her abstraction reached its pinnacle when in 1904, af Klint was spiritually guided to begin work on a temple that would

host a collection of spiritual works, known as The Paintings for the Temple. In 1906, after two years of grappling with whether or not she should take on this imposing project, af Klint decided to begin work on what she called "the great commission." Working over a span of nine years, and completing a total of 193 paintings and drawings, af Klint successfully completed her works for The Paintings for the Temple. Unfortunately, despite having designed a temple to house said works, no such temple was ever constructed, and it wasn't until eighty years later in 1986 that The Paintings for the Temple were first publicly displayed. Af Klint believed that people would not understand the abstract ambiguity of her art, so when she died in 1944, she instructed in her will that the pieces would not be displayed until twenty years after her death. Now, the Guggenheim's thoughtfully curated exhibition is allowing viewers to experience af Klint's powerful work in a structure that almost perfectly resembles the temple she hoped to one day create. It's ironic because af Klint envisioned the temple as a four story spiraling structure that displayed the works on each floor; seemingly similar to that of the Guggenheim. Keeping with the integrity of af Klint's original visions, the exhibition follows a chronological path of the creation of The Paintings for the Temple, and as you walk up the spiraling gallery you can sense the spiritual journey that she embarked on as she created these evocative works. Even today, her art remains as visionary as it was in 1915, and while it is widely appreciated, the world will never be able to fully comprehend the futuristic or otherworldly nuances that her work employs. The exhibition is showing through April 23, so there is plenty of time to experience this captivating show for yourself, in the manner that af Klint intended.



Photos courtesy of Author



# Griffy's

# DECLASSIFIED

# Finals

BY CATHERINE

Finals are fast approaching and that means papers, exams, and a lot of stress. Finals can mean stress, frustration, or sadness. Finals are often the last few weeks of the semester with a lot of studying and a lot of pressure.

## NUMBER #1

### GET PLENTY OF REST

It may seem unnecessary, but the body performs better when it's well-rested. Sleep is not only restorative, it is a helpful tool to retain information as well. In addition to getting a good night's rest, it can be helpful to take breaks throughout the day, so as not to become overwhelmed.

## NUMBER #2

### MAKE SMART FOOD CHOICES

Filling the body with junk and snack food will not increase productivity, but eating full meals and choosing healthy snacks will. Berries, green tea, avocados, nuts, dark chocolate: all those foods can help maintain productivity. Taking half an hour or more to sit and have a healthy meal will provide a break, help keep stress to a minimum, and fuel the body.

## NUMBER #3

### MAKE A TO-DO LIST

Having a list of items that can be checked off is an effective way of prioritizing and remembering tasks. It can also be satisfying to cross a task or assignment off it puts into perspective just how much actually needs to be done.

## NUMBER #4

### FLASHCARDS WORK

Making flashcards is a simple way to learn terminology for tests, especially when using them to learn vocabulary and dates. They may not work for everyone, but they may prove to be beneficial.

## NUMBER #5

### DO NOT CRAM THE NIGHT BEFORE

Cramming places stress on the brain and is ineffective because it does not help with the retaining of information. Instead of cramming, take 30 minutes a day to study the exam information.

# Is Survival Guide

## INE POOL

ms, and performances. However, it does not have overwhelming but with these ten tips, the last few will be manageable.

### NUMBER #6

#### GO TO CAST

The Center for Academic Support and Tutoring is a service offered by Marymount located in Nugent Hall 451. It is a useful service for looking over final papers, or getting that extra assistance with a difficult subject.

### NUMBER #7

#### FIND A GROUP TO STUDY WITH

Having a group of peers meeting at a set time will minimize the ability to procrastinate. It is also an effective way to learn information because everyone will end up on the same page. Group members can aid in teaching difficult concepts or theories that they understand well to the others in the group. It could be a useful way to come together and learn from one another or just refresh old topics for the exam.

### NUMBER #8

#### TAKE A BREAK FROM SOCIAL MEDIA AND VIDEO GAMES

As much fun as it is to watch random videos on social media and play video games, they will serve to distract from studying and sleeping. It does not mean that everyone needs to go off the grid for the last few weeks of the semester, but it may prove beneficial to lessen the amount of time spent scrolling through social media or playing a video game, and use that time to prep for exams and papers.

### NUMBER #9

#### FINISH FINAL PAPERS IN ADVANCE

Write a few pages a day and in a few days a full paper will have been written, that way there is time for editing. It will reduce stress and potentially result in a better grade.

### NUMBER #10

#### DO NOT FORGET TO DO THINGS THAT MAKE YOU HAPPY

Finals week(s) can be stress filled and hectic but as important as they are, it is necessary to take time for yourself. Go for a walk, pet a dog, go on a date, or go see a movie. Make the time to do the things that fill you with joy and comfort so that you are your best self for exams.

# GRIMES RELEASES NEW MUSIC



Image courtesy of The Verge

By Hayden Ergenbriht  
Guest Writer

In 2018, Canadian singer-songwriter-produce Grimes has been no stranger to controversy, gaining social media attention for dating SpaceX CEO Elon Musk, causing a slew of "Elon Musk and his goth girlfriend" memes to pop up on Twitter. This was followed by a series of criticism from fans of the artist, due to her previous stances on capitalism and her previously perceived socialist ideals. Nonetheless, their relationship persisted with Grimes defending Musk and going so far as to tell her fans on Twitter that she tried to instigate a union vote in a SpaceX manufacturing plant after criticism on Musk's anti-union statement. According to Grimes, SpaceX employees choose not to unionize because they're treated so well, which was an interesting take to say the least. Then, of course, the entire saga came to a bizarre conclusion all-but confirming that we live in the most bizarre version of reality. Azealia Banks, a rapper known as much for her controversy as her music, released a series of searing tweets about Grimes and Musk detailing an otherworldly trip to Musk's home involving a bad acid trip on Musk's behalf, followed by Banks being left completely alone in the home for a length of time. Fans of both parties went wild, and the entire thing is better read than explained, so if you

are unfamiliar with the situation, I can promise that Googling it is worth the effort. This entire debacle seemed like it had to have been fabricated, but ultimately marked the end of the Musk-Grimes saga (and the Azealia Banks/Grimes collaboration).

In all of this mess, most media had less to say about possible music from Grimes and more to say about her newly married image. That being said, she was not at all quiet about the label problems she was having. She switched labels, referring to her previous label as a "shit label" publicly before being forced to apologize. In the process of switching labels she was unable to release anything for an indeterminate amount of time and pushed back music releases from early this year until now with her new song "We Appreciate Power". For those of us following the few music appearances she has made in recent memory it seemed like she had a clear direction. From her feature on Janelle Monae's Pynk to her blink and you'll miss it appearance in the K-Pop song love4eva by LOONA yxyx, as well as the theme song she created for the show Hilda, it seemed like the inevitable next step, was an ethereal pop single akin to "Flesh Without Blood" or "California". In true Grimes fashion, however, we got nothing of the sort.

"We Appreciate Power" starts off in an almost "Kill v Maim" guitar sound as well as screaming sounds from frequent Grimes collaborator HANA, so it would be a safe assumption that this song is

reminiscent of her previous album Art Angels, and while it shares some of its edge, this song features one of Grimes most straightly delivered vocal performances and a drive that sets it apart from past releases. Most of the song is pushed forward with a simple drum beat in 4/4 time, pushing the song towards a marching, anthemic quality while Grimes repeats the ever-so-catchy hook "We Appreciate Power" over distorted guitars. The song features far less synths than one might expect based on recent releases, but the middle 8 slows the song down into an almost grunge-like melody underscored by a more synthetic sound than the rest of the song features with ethereal plucky descending arpeggios adding to an almost mystical feeling. This is all before driving the listener right back into the harsh, rock inspired hook. Grimes has stated that the song was written "from the perspective of a Pro-A.I. Girl Group Propaganda machine who use song, dance, sex and fashion to spread goodwill towards Artificial Intelligence (its coming whether you want it or not)," so it's just as odd conceptually as her usual music, though an even weirder perspective after the whole Musk debacle. Overall, it's a catchy song that I see myself walking to school (or crushing the patriarchy) to, and while it's not Grimes's most gutsy or memorable release to date, I think it's nice to see her back in the spotlight for what people really care about her for, music.

## ARIANA SAYS THANK U, NEXT.



Image courtesy of vevo

### ARIANA GRANDE'S NEW MUSIC VIDEO

By Christina Bae  
Guest Writer

"I learned from the pain, now I'm so amazing," is one of the many powerful lines from Ariana Grande's newest single, "thank u, next," which, according to Billboard, is her first #1 song on the Billboard Hot 100. Grande has finally dropped the long-awaited music video, directed by Hannah Lux Davis, for the track, after almost two weeks of releasing behind-the-scenes photos and four days after the initial release of the video's teaser trailer. "thank u, next," quickly became Youtube's #1 trending video, accumulating over 33 million views in just 12 hours and, according to VEVO, breaking Youtube's record for most views within the first 24 hours upon release. Considering "thank u, next," was released only weeks after Grande announced her split from Saturday Night Live star, Pete Davidson, many may have assumed it would be just another post-breakup

heartbreak song. However, it was the complete opposite. "thank u, next" is a song about self-empowerment and accepting that your past experiences are lessons to learn from. Grande even name-drops all her exes in the opening verse of the song -- Big Sean, Ricky Alvarez, Pete Davidson, and Mac Miller. Grande's exes all taught her little things about herself and she is thankful to them for being a part of her life. Her relationship with each of them just wasn't meant to be. Grande looks back on these relationships as lessons to better herself. As Grande states, "...this one gon' last, 'cause her name is Ari, and I'm so good with that." The song, though also a tribute to her exes, is a song Grande wrote for herself, because after all, self-love is the most important kind of love a person can have. To connect to the theme of self-empowerment, Grande resurrects some of the most iconic female characters from popular 2000s movies -- Regina George from Mean Girls, Torrance Shipman from Bring it On, Jenna Rink from 13

Going on 30, and Elle Woods from Legally Blonde. Grande embodies these characters and even calls upon some of her closest friends to accompany her in the role to truly pay tribute to these classic films. Her video featured celebrity cameos from former Victorious co-stars Liz Gillies, Matt Bennett, and Daniella Monet, backup dancer and friend Scott Nicholson, along with Kris Jenner, Troye Sivan, Jennifer Coolidge, original Mean Girls stars Jonathan Bennett and Stefanie Drummond, and of course, her precious pup Toulouse. The video opens up with a re-enactment of the iconic "Who is Regina George" scene from Mean Girls, where Regina's classmates tell of encounters they've had with her and their opinions of her. Instead of Regina George, Grande's video opens up with her guest stars telling anecdotes about her based on quotes from the original movie. Grande also confirmed on Twitter that the song playing in the background of the video's intro is a new song of hers, titled "7 rings," from her upcoming album.

Grande states that the video took three days to film and that there is a lot of footage we still haven't even seen, which hints at a future director's cut or bloopers reel. The video's release sparked tons of conversation. All over the internet, fans, friends, and peers of Grande were talking about it, even stars from the original featured movies, such as 13 Going on 30's Mark Ruffalo and the original Elle Woods - Reese Witherspoon. Grande has showed her love and appreciation for the support she's received all over her social media, tweeting out numerous hearts and "thank u's" to her fans. Grande even dropped hints for her potential next single, titled "imagine".

"thank u, next" has broken multiple records for Grande and left her fans craving more. Both the song and the video have received loads of positive feedback, and her fans around the world are patiently waiting for what the future holds, excited to see what else Grande has in store.

# HITTING ALL THE RIGHT NOTES



Image courtesy of [ultimateclassicrock.com](http://ultimateclassicrock.com)

## BOHEMIAN RHAPSODY MAKES A HIT IN THE BOX OFFICE

By Billie Sangha  
Staff Editor

Two and a half hours isn't nearly enough time to capture the vivacious life and times of both Freddie Mercury and the legendary rock band Queen. But *Bohemian Rhapsody*, a biographical film chronicling the years leading up to Queen's famous performance at the 1985 Live Aid performance, somehow manages to tell a story that is both heartwarming and electrifying.

In the biographical feature that was released November 2nd, Rami Malek plays frontman Freddie Mercury and his portrayal is already earning him some Oscar nomination buzz. And the plot itself is one that is sure to sit with audiences well after they leave the theater. *Bohemian Rhapsody* tells the origin story of the British band, whose members include Freddie Mercury as lead vocals and on piano, Brian May as lead guitar player and vocals, Roger Taylor on drums and vocals, and John Deacon as bass guitar. The film is also co-produced by the band's former manager Jim Beach. Audiences learn how the members of Queen met, where they butt heads during their journey to superstardom, and why they stuck together, the characters referring to themselves throughout the film as what the four men were in real life: a family.

As the making of Queen's biggest hits are sprinkled throughout the film through both the soundtrack and major performance scenes, viewers also discover where the songs

came from, who they were about, and how difficult it was for the band's unconventional ideas to take flight in a commercial music industry that initially doubted it would become anything.

A surprise to the record labels who wanted to stick to a safe and predictable creative formula for songwriting and record producing seems clear to music fans all over the world then and now: Queen deserves its recognition as one of the greatest bands the world has ever known. Being risktakers clearly paid off.

One of the most emotionally riveting and captivating scenes is one that leaves audiences in the theater with the closest type of awe experienced by the audience members who saw Queen perform at Wembley at Live Aid. Rami Malek even insisted that this part of the film resemble reality as much as possible, so the 22-minute set was all shot in a single take. Malek told *Cinema Blend*, "We brought in three cranes with cameras... it was the best take we ever did. You're running on pure adrenaline. My heart

is pounding just thinking about it [the experience]. You realize how much adrenaline was coursing through his veins before 75,000 people."

But we can't forget to acknowledge the "in-between moments" of the film, where we learn about the stereotypes and struggles that Freddie Mercury fought his entire life against. A line in the film from Mercury explains that his happiest moments were the ones in between everything that is dark and difficult, and his on-stage persona was when he felt he was exactly where he always wanted to be.

It is important to note that Freddie Mercury's birth name is Farrokh Bulsara, and he was of Parsi descent, growing up in what is now called Tanzania and then India before moving to England with his family in his late teens. And as if escaping religious persecution was not enough to recover from at a young age, his life didn't get any easier. Mercury endured racism (the term "Paki" is used throughout as a

derogatory reference to someone of Pakistani or Indian descent), exile and judgment from his conservative family headed by an emotionally unavailable father, as well as the challenges of being a queer man in the public eye. Shamed for his lifestyle, sexuality, and even keeping the fact that he had unfortunately contracted AIDS a secret, Freddie Mercury refused to be marginalized, rejected, destroyed or placed into a box as an artist or a person.

For this, he was a legend for more than just his flamboyance and vocal range. He was a revolutionary for artists of colour, queer kids, bisexual men, immigrants, industry nobodies - groups that are still struggling to find their voice and share it in spaces that could hurt or reject them. And the film itself didn't too bad either, as the highest-grossing music biopic ever, raking in \$539 million worldwide as of December 5th.

At December 8th's MMC Film Fest hosted and curated by The Cinemaniacs film production organization at Marymount, the leadership team made an effort to pay homage to both the late great Freddie Mercury who passed away November 24th, 1991 and the fight against AIDS, as World AIDS Day was December 1st. The playlist for the evening's event celebrating stories that give voice to underrepresented identities in terms of race and sexuality featured some of Queen's biggest hits, such as "Somebody to Love" and of course, "We Will Rock You" followed by its sister song, "We Are The Champions".

He was a revolutionary for artists of colour, queer kids, bisexual men, immigrants, industry nobodies - groups that are still struggling to find their voice and share it in spaces that could hurt or reject them.



Image courtesy of [londersound](http://londersound)