

# MUSE.

05.03.2013

## Brick by Brick

Nathan Sawaya proves that Lego construction is no child's play.

### Arts.

Lucie Parker looks into the way art is bringing emotion to the electric chair.

### Music.

We talk to 18-year-old **Jake Bugg** about his rapid rise to fame and his dislike of One Direction.

### The Mormon Myth

York's Elders tell us why the Book of Mormon will change your life

### Freedom through Faith

We discover lift beyond the headlines of post-war Sri Lanka





**M12.** The Muse Shoot brings Spring to life with our Easter themed bunnies and other scrumptuous creations.



**M14.** Artist **Nathan Sawaya** talks about leaving his life as a lawyer to pursue lego art.



**M22.** The Mormon Myth. York's local Elders reveal how the Book of Mormon will change your life, and why they get bad press.

## Arts.

**M6.** Food for thought. **Julie Green** humanises US death-row inmates with her paintings of their final meals.

**M8.** The mess of the body. We are given an insight into Artaud's **Cruelty Theatre** movement.

## LFW Supplement.

The fashion team take you through the trends, the shows and the highlights of **London Fashion Week '13**.

## Music.

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## Image Credits.

Cover: Courtesy of Nathan Sawaya  
M3: Courtesy of Rob Grant  
Cartoons (M2 & M24) : Brandon Seager

## Muzzy's Musings...

### Cardboard City

Campus: a captive to badly drawn chalk captions.  
Walk where worn cardboard performs talk of actions  
And the poor warring factions stalk for the smallest fractions  
Of support, so court us all more and more to implore for reactions

We confess - "yes I'll wear your badge I guess,  
Pinned on a best dressed chest for the photo in revs"

Cut out cereal materials, the cold carcasses of Costcutter  
Kellogg's boxes rot with the constant onset of grey rain  
Campaign trails trail flailing banners sailing pale  
The litter of peeled sticker reels congeals to become pigeon-meals

Overfed with twitter feeds and scarlet notifications  
Event invites to coax motivation to vote with no hesitation  
For the sake of a mate of a mate's poll locations

By the last bout, the tiredness will cast doubt  
On campaigners who are passed out, like pamphlets  
Spent like loose change and still vow to produce change

Sinking energy drinks, the pro-plus process is so relentless  
And yes the efforts are quite magnificent,  
But in this musical chair chase for seats....  
Like the geese who patrol their concrete beats – I remain indifferent.



## Rob Grant

Comedy writer, TV producer and creator of Red Dwarf.



The inspiration behind *Red Dwarf*, well that's a long story, usually. Short version: we developed it from a series of sketches we wrote for our radio show *Son of Cliché*, which featured Dave Hollins – Space Cadet.

The elements behind *Red Dwarf's* success are quite complex. Partly, though, it's because we deliberately made it as timeless as possible: no contemporary references. And it's science fiction, which does seem to last in its appeal better than most genres. Of course, first and foremost, it has to be quite good.

I don't consider my university studies to have aided my work as a television producer at all. Not even a little bit. University experiences, however, played a massive part.

The choice to tackle dieting and obesity in *Fat* with satire? I'd done a lot of research, in an effort to address my own weight problem, and I discovered some fascinating stuff. I wanted to write about the whole area, and I'm a comedy writer, so satire was the only way in for me. I don't really think of it as satire: I just try to write funny.

My future plans include some interesting

projects bubbling under: TV series, a new novel. I'm about to sit down and write my first stage play. I like exploring new frontiers.

Writing is the natural thing for me. It's what I love. I only got into producing to stop people screwing up the writing.

“I got into producing to stop people screwing up the writing”

The biggest kick that I get out of my career has always been hearing people laugh at my writing. There's no feeling quite like it.

To give advice to students and post-grads regarding employability... realise these are tough times. Get the best results you possibly can, and if you get a sniff of a job, grab it.

Interview by Fliss Turner

## The Lonely Smoker

Rose Troup Buchanan

Apathy has hit the University like a great bloodied piece of horsemeat. Frankly, it's week nine, no-one can really be bothered any more, and I've genuinely forgotten what it feels like to smoke somewhere other than outside the library.

Fortunately, last week I was roused from my dissertation-induced coma by the thrusting cardboard banners of wannabe YUSU candidates. I therefore spent most of the week cowering, trying desperately to avoid the attention of the feckless multitude running for that holy grail of all Facebook-related jobs. In the few weeks when it looks as if the characters from *Sesame Street* (having taken a shit-load of acid) have decorated our usually drab concrete walls, it is open season on any poor bastard unintentionally loitering on campus.

Luckily, I was able to fall back on an old coping method I developed back in first-year. At the risk of social ostracism I will confess to being a huge, profound, and (probably) life-long fan of Taylor Swift's music. (I write this full in the knowledge that friends who write for *Circulation* probably will have to stop talking to me for fear of damaging their reputation at nights in Fibbers.) Blaring 'We Are Never, Ever Getting Back Together' into my ears throughout a long day in the computer room was therapy on a whole new level.

Although Swift's music has invited comparisons from cats screeching in the night to mindlessly saccharine generic pop, I have to stand and fight her corner. Not only does she not sound like cats screeching in the night – my mother has such a creature and it hasn't got \$165 million sitting in the bank (I would have bumped it off years ago for the inheritance if so) – her pop is definitely not saccharine gooey goodness. Instead what Swift unleashes onto her audiences is nothing less than an Olympian exercise in passive aggression. Having only been alive for 22 years, she's managed to write (apparently) over 73 tracks – all available on YouTube in one handy playlist, in case you're interested – and I would say the vast majority are incredibly personal attacks on previous boyfriends.

'Stay stay stay' features a line which goes: "Before you I only dated self-indulgent takers / who took all their problems out on me", and the song 'We Are Never Ever Getting Back Together' is just waiting for a reversed '80s interpre-

tation blared out of Eric Milner. Screw passive aggressive, with that latter vignette you know some poor bloke is probably experiencing a sensation akin to having someone kick him in the balls, film it, and then play it back over YouTube to billions of viewers. Clearly, Swift, whilst having mastered the art of verbal retaliation, is a still little shaky on the meaning of words such as "privacy" or phrases such as "too much information".

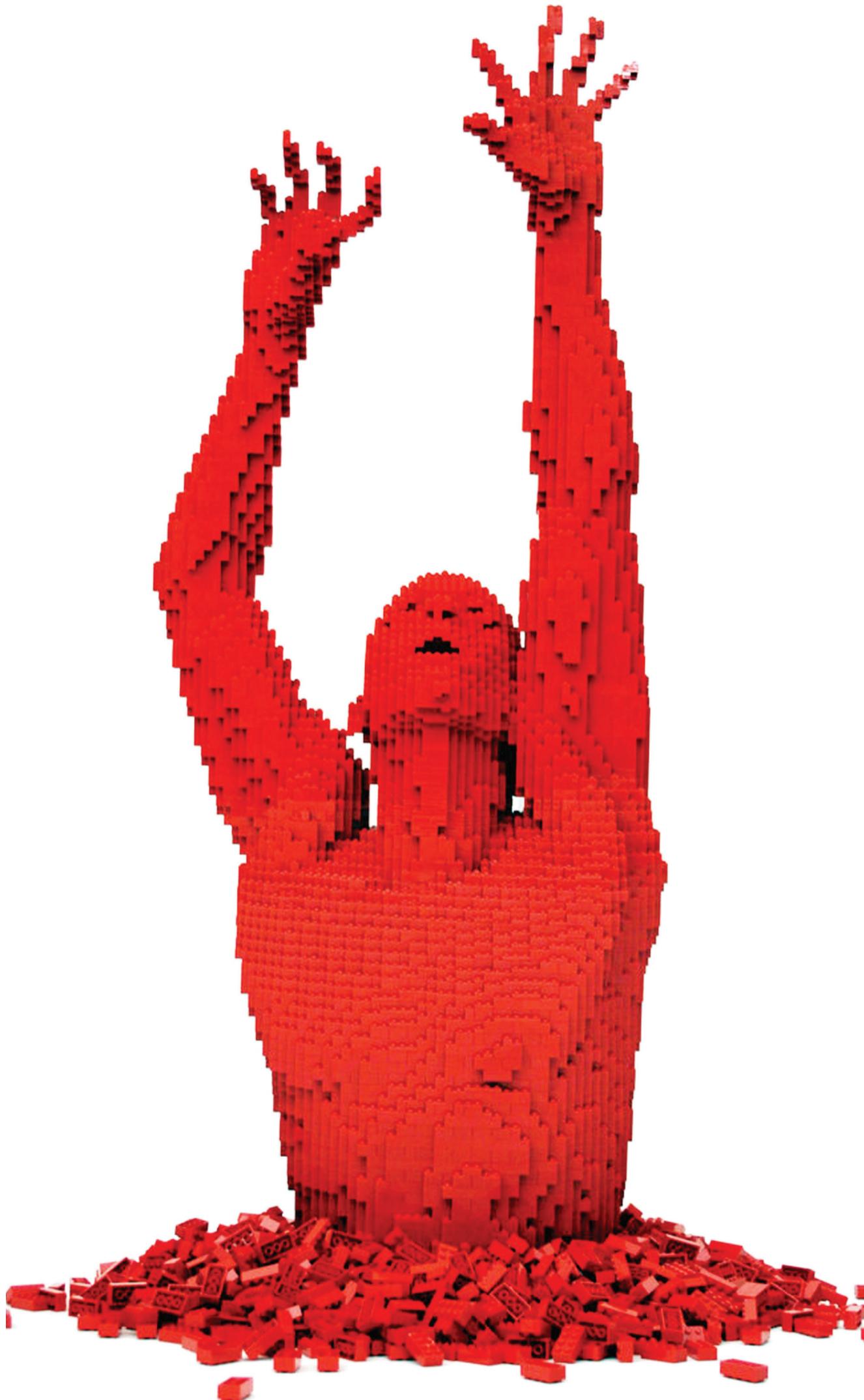
Just like the couples who overshare – nope, we didn't need a photo of you two in bed together but thanks anyway – or couples find it acceptable to get off in the library, who are you? Ironically, most of the people who display the most 'Taylor Swift' characteristics are those who would rather be photographed wearing Jack Wills than admit to ever having listened to her. The attendees of every night in Fibbers should probably all listen to the opening line of '22', which goes: "It feels like a perfect night to dress up like hipsters", so they remember not to wear anything from Urban Outfitters. The saddest thing about it all is that they'll probably appropriate Taylor Swift soon – listening to her in an ironic non-ironic post-pretentious way. Christ help us.

So whilst my friends can keep their nights involving something to do with 'Deep House' (Dress code: strictly paisley shirts and alternative tops, exposure of back/stomach suggested. Smiling when dancing frowned upon, please bring your own drugs), I'll be the one jumping up and down and actually enjoying my Taylor Swift.

Not that I ever go out anyway.



# Brick By Brick



Lawyer-turned Lego artist **Nathan Sawaya** talks to Fiona Parker about living in Wonderland and why Lego is no child's play

It is thought that there are 62 Lego bricks for every one person living in the world today. Nathan Sawaya, a lawyer turned artist, currently based in New York, is an obvious outlier. Nathan has approximately 2.5 million coloured bricks collectively, in his New York and Los Angeles art studios.

Does he really need that many? His emphatic reply of “yes, mother!” is put into context when you think that just one of Nathan’s numerous life-size human sculptures asks for between 15,000 and 25,000 bricks. For Nathan, Lego makes up the architectural foundation of his everyday life. It is therefore just as well that he has absolute confidence in his unconventional medium. “I truly believe that I can build anything out of Lego. I think that it has limitless potential.”

When Nathan graduated from New York University with a law degree and went straight into a firm in the City, he believed that he was leaving his childhood behind him in pursuit of a more “viable career”. “It was really about the societal pressure to have a professional career, to go out and get a job where I would have a secure amount of income.”

While he was growing up, Nathan’s parents embraced and nurtured his creative talent. This was not just about turning a blind eye to paint stains on the carpet - he maintains that his parents taught him how to get what he wanted out of life by artistic means. “They empowered me with all sorts of creative outlets, be it Lego bricks or be it model clay, paint, pencils and whatever I needed to create. In fact when I was about ten years old I wanted to get a dog, but my mum and dad said I couldn’t have one. I ended up building myself my very own life size dog out of Lego.”

As Nathan’s career progressed, he began to turn back to art to deal with the stress of working life. “I would come home from the law firm and I would create different types of art, sometimes drawing, painting, sculpting; it was a real therapeutic release. Some people go to the gym at the end of the day. For me, I needed to be creative and have this outlet with my art. It was at this point that I started to make some sculptures out of Lego bricks. It was nice to just use this toy as a path back to my childhood.”

Nathan was encouraged by friends and family to showcase his work through a website. In 2003, brickartist.com was born and the lawyer was forced to recognise the scale of interest which his work was drawing in. “When that website crashed from too many hits I realised, “Wow there’s really something to this!” So I decided to make that transition from being a lawyer to being a full time independent artist.”

As soon as he had handed in his resignation to the law firm, Nathan began to build, anything and everything which caught his interest, out of little coloured bricks. His flat began to resemble an incomplete Alice in Wonderland set. One half of an apple, the size of a basketball, lay on a wooden workbench, while the threatening figure of an eight foot tall HB pencil towered over the artist at work.

Eventually, Nathan set himself the challenge of creating his first life-size human sculpture. He made the brave decision of choosing his own body as his first subject. This early project tested not only Nathan’s engineering and artistic skills but also his self-image. “I used a lot of photos of myself and a lot of graph paper to actually figure out how to do it. You do notice things I suppose, you have to emphasise certain things, for instance on me the size of my nose, and other things like that and you really have to pay close attention to your own personal details, so there is a lot of self-examination involved in the process.”

But it is not only Nathan who interacts with his art. The artist encourages those who visit his exhibitions to stand aside the brick structured and to build spatial relationships with the Lego figures. “What I’ve found is that people definitely want to feel like they have a role with the art. This is a very tangible medium and although we discourage it people still want to touch the art because they feel like, “look, I’ve played with this before”. We actually try and give that person this world - give them a chance to enter this world in every exhibition. We actually will end the exhibition with a place where every-



body can sit and touch something and maybe build something themselves.”

Although Nathan has built a number of larger-than-life everyday objects, some of his best work is symbolic and emotionally representative. These pieces, when viewed, remind him of particular periods of his life, when he made the decision to manifest his feelings in Lego form.

“If you look at the sculpture “Gray”, which is a figure coming out of a grey box, I mean, it really was just feeding off of where I was. I was coming out of some very dark places – so that really sparks a lot of those types of thoughts. I was pretty down, it’s depression – there’s no other word for it. I was just very, very depressed and that piece is kind of representative of me coming out of that depression, of breaking through that certain point. At the time I didn’t realise what was happening – I was creating the art – I just wanted to create this image – I mean this sculpture was on my mind and I just wanted to create it. It was pushing me through that time.”

Although the act of focusing on particular pieces of work has aided Nathan in “pushing through” darker periods in his life, sometimes the act of building can itself initiate emotional discomfort. Nathan doesn’t only build at freewill, often being commissioned by individuals, companies and bodies to sculpt particular structures. In 2006, Nathan was asked create in the light of natural disaster, a task which he found, understandably, challenging.

“I did a piece for New Orleans after that devastating hurricane. Just from an emotional standpoint, I was asked to make

“Of course, I kind of see the world in pixels.”



something which was celebratory after so much devastation. I struggled with it for a bit, but the saving grace was getting all these illustrations from children who were drawing pictures of what was important to them for the rebirth of new Orleans. There were all these, you know, brightly coloured drawings. So when you look at it, there are all these buildings and the buildings are kind of crooked. Their windows don’t line up and there are all these bright colours. That was my literal interpretation of these children’s drawings.”

“I think my fear is when people talk about or think about Lego art they think, “Oh, like you see at the toy store, oh, it’s a bunch of toys and trucks.” I really want to change that perception. You know, it’s art first and the fact that it’s built out of Lego – that’s just the medium I chose.”

But how does Nathan hope to change that perception and why does he believe, so passionately, in the depth of emotion that his work can evoke? “Bricks can portray vulnerability. The viewer and artist alike can start to see how easily a whole structure can crumble into smaller pieces. Bricks remind us that we can all be reduced to smaller things. There’s this specific sculpture called “Hands” that really plays to that theme. The figure’s hands are falling apart – so yes, I do think that bricks are perfect for that kind of theme.”

Of course, building organic shapes out of straight-edged rectangular bricks can be challenging. But as we view so much of the modern world through the medium of pixelated images, Nathan sees his work as something of a physical tribute to the visuals of the virtual sphere. “I enjoy that there is an angular structure – that there are distinct lines and sharp corners because I think that brings some of the magic when you have the short corners up close and then you back away and all those corners kind of blend into curves – that is the amazing part of the sculpture. Of course I kind of see the world in pixels.”

For Nathan, the medium’s most important attribute is its ability to bring the viewer back to familiar memories and experiences. His work is accessible, both intellectually and tangibly. He believes this is why we should look beyond the toy store. “So many people can relate to it because it’s such a familiar toy – people can practice it because they’ve played with it themselves or their kids have played with it. I’ve said this before – people can’t go and look at a marble sculpture and they appreciate it but when people see my art work they connect with it on a different level because they can go home that night and play with Lego bricks, whereas very few people can go home that night and start chipping away at a slab of marble.”

As Nathan prepares for an upcoming exhibition in New York, he is more confident than ever in what he is doing. His only fear is contracting another case of “writer’s block.” Well, I guess you should never take yourself too seriously... **M**

ARTS.

# The Last Supper

**Julie Green** talks to **Lucie Parker** about painting death row inmates' dying wish

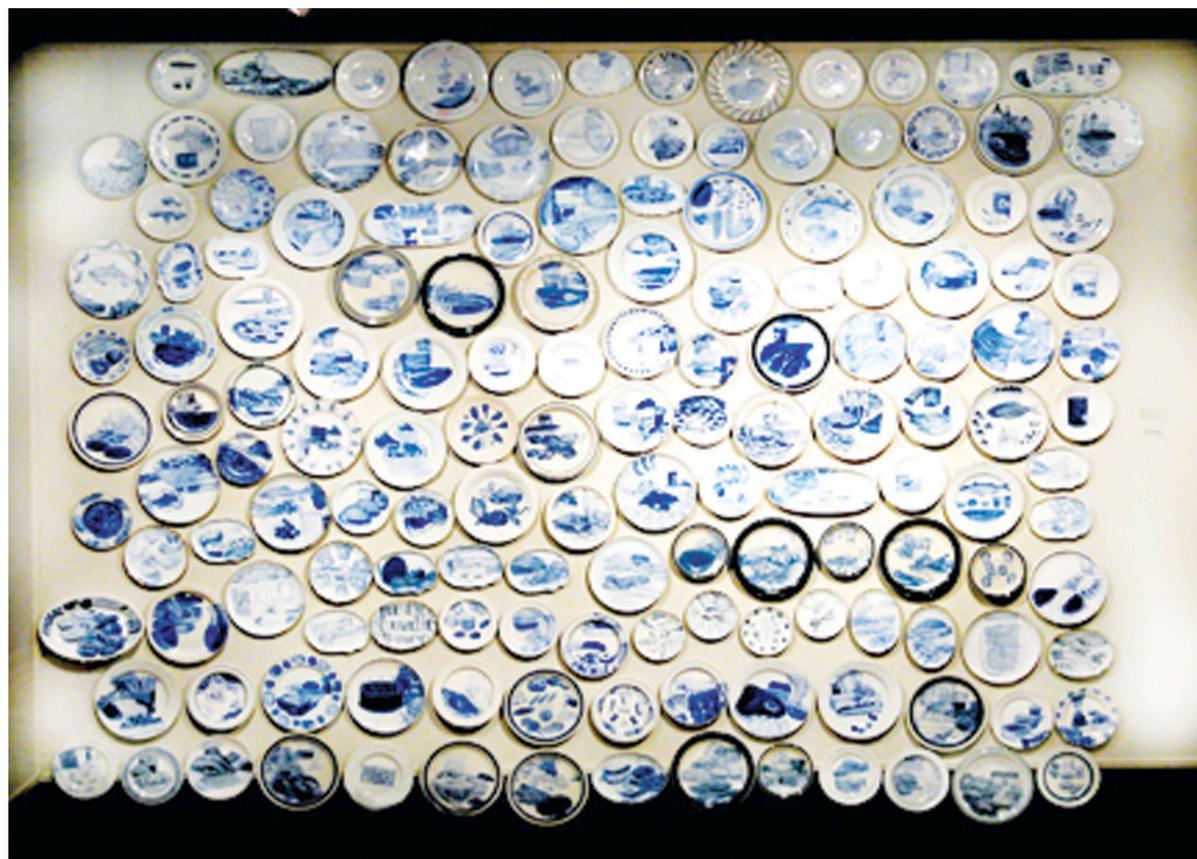
For us in Britain today, the death penalty is a thing of the past, having been abolished in 1965. A phenomenon that has deeply rooted connotations with medieval public executions, capital punishment is an alien concept to those working within our justice system to rehabilitate the lives that have strayed from the moral path of British law. But cross the Atlantic, to a land that shares many of the same liberal democratic principles and you will discover an entirely new world of justice. America still retains the death penalty in thirty-three of its fifty states.

With a total of 1320 U.S state executions carried out since 1976, the capital punishment debate remains a hugely controversial thorn in the side of the American system of justice. The intricate and difficult nature of this debate is reflected in the fact that there are no trends in the rate of states that abolish this law: Wisconsin rid themselves of it in 1853, whereas Connecticut voted for its abolishment only last year. This disparity darkens the clarity needed for such a divisive issue, preventing the development needed in our newly emerging globalized world that enshrines human rights within its doctrines to understand and solve this issue.

Those in fierce favour of protecting this traditional law argue for the effectiveness of its deterrent-like nature, claiming that the harsh character of the punishment is enough to prevent the callous crimes that fit it. Those fighting to protect the lives of every citizen in U.S society, regardless of their crime, purport the simple fact that it costs more for the taxpayer to keep an inmate on death row and execute them than it does to give them a life sentence without parole. The question that also darts in and out of the mind of anyone considering the execution of someone to death is that of their potential innocence. What if the state got it wrong?

Opponents of the death penalty express their principles through a smorgasbord of mediums, from a global Amnesty International perspective to local demonstrations. A current trend pulsing through this human rights-centric world is using artwork as a form of protest against capital punishment. Using visual stimulation to stir anti-execution feelings is certainly an effective technique, with artists using a variety of hard-cutting ideas to drive home the brutality of something that has become so enshrined in U.S law that it turns death into a systematic process, not something to be mourned.

The most prominent of these ideas is *The Last Supper*. The general practice in each state that carries the death penalty is that every inmate is allowed to choose what they want for their final meal before their execution. This meal is modest in most states, as many selections are limited to what can be made in the prison kitchen. Other states provide a meal from local restaurants, with California allowing a fifty dollar budget on take



out food, and Oklahoma providing a budget of fifteen dollars for inmates to select from venues such as Pizza Hut. Other states are less generous, with Texas banning its highly publicised final meal in 2012 after one large meal wasn't eaten, and Maryland remaining the only death penalty state to serve the standard prison meal with a ban on alcohol and cigarettes.

This is a phenomenon that has remained highly publicised in every state that carries out executions, one that has subsequently been taken further by these artists who want to encapsulate the humanity that executions destroy. Celia Shapiro uses photographs in loud colours to represent the juxtaposition between the bright sustenance of the food that was eaten by the life that has now been extinguished, and Jonathon Kambouris places food items on top of a blown-up mug shot of an inmate and photographs it from directly above, looking down. Henry Hargreaves also produced a photography exhibition that re-created last meals alongside the name, age and conviction of the murdered individual, to construct perhaps the starkest reminder of the human life taken by the state.

The artist in this genre that has most recently risen to prominence however is Julie Green, a professor at Oregon State University, who has spent the past twelve years painting the final meal of death row inmates on second-hand ceramic plates for her ongoing series, *The Last Supper*. The plates, currently numbering 500, are a tragic accumulation of lives lived and lost to the American state, and each food object is painted in the tradition of blue-and-white china, a hue that is simultaneously absurd and significant, drawing from

one of the most recognized traditions in ceramics. Her goal? "To continue painting until the death penalty is abolished". This is a powerful provocation of the nature of justice in America, and an unapologetically political statement that represents her simple "observations of contemporary society", as she is "driven to the studio to make some sense of our world. Art is meditation, it is a way to reflect and think about something".

Her journey into this politically charged

## "This was what humanised death row for me"

yet artistically brilliant legacy began with reading of these final meals in her local state newspaper of Oklahoma, on occasions, there being more than one a day. "When first seeing final meal requests in the newspaper, I called the prison warden and the Oklahoma paper, and asked "why is this information in the paper?" Both replied with identical language, stating that "the public wants to know." This was the catalyst for the explosion of morbid curiosity that led Green to delve deeper into the debate surrounding final meals.

This was what "humanised death row for me. It hit home that these meals were so personal and so specific". When reflecting on how often she cooked with her family, the re-

alisation that these inmates were human and had once been part of family food rituals too was what gave them an identity for her. The underlying and compelling theme of the final meal is choice, what do people who have spent many years in prison with no choice at all do with this last one? "Their final requests provide many clues on region, race and economic background". Some reach back for childhood comforts; one inmate "asked that his mother be allowed into the prison kitchen to make the chicken dumplings he loved". Others take this opportunity to try something they've never eaten before, with one inmate ordering lobster and steak. The sad reality of some of the underprivileged people who end up on death row is also portrayed as a bleak reminder through the simplicity of food: "he told us he never had a birthday cake so we ordered a birthday cake for him".

This choice attempts to bring a humane factor to an extremely inhumane process, striking an ironic chord in allowing those sentenced to death one choice of the most primitive thing one needs to survive. Why allow this choice at all? "Some years back I contacted every state with capital punishment, and asked about the ritual. Answers vary, but all basically say it's a tradition, something we've always done it. It is my belief that the final meal is something positive for prison staff to tend to on execution day."

With 50 plates a year being painted, it appears that Green still has a long way to go in achieving her goal. However her highly publicised exhibition has successfully carved a plate-paved pathway towards the awareness of what she deems as the inhumanity of death row. "Andy Warhol said the artist of the future will simply point. I paint to point". **M**

## Putting graffiti in context

Ben Cross

At home in London, I often catch a train from my south-eastern suburb into the busy boiling central. The ascension to the platform prepares me for the sky-line train ride. I pass by the verdant green expanse of Brockwell Park on my left, semi-circled as far as viewable by seemingly pell-mell scattered shops and enter the heat of Brixton, with beautiful people packed chaotically amongst the halal meat stores. Through to the open air, the mammoth beast of Battersea Power Station squats on the right, a fallen monarch from the industrial era, surrounded by random roads and anonymous buildings, like London's people, all shapes, sizes, colours, and creeds, and over the river to Victoria Train station.

All of this foregrounds the ubiquitous territorial scribbles in not-so-indelible permanent marker of tags and the vivid artwork of sprayed graffiti. The distinction between the two is important. I'm going to dismiss the former unattractive and boring sores, and discuss solely the latter. These omnipresent imprints beautifully and brutally impose political and whimsical ideas, keeping that trusty train interesting.

Recently, in the graffiti art world there have been two interesting events: the "theft" of a Banksy mural, *Slave Labour*, from a North London borough Haringey and its subsequent listing for sale in a Miami art auction house - which was thankfully, albeit slowly and gracefully cancelled - and the painting of the main dome in a church near Barcelona by two graffiti artists, House and Rudi.

Should either of these events have occurred? Is graffiti anaesthetised when removed from the street? I want to demonstrate why the two events are distinct.

Graffiti is intrinsically of the city, often tailored to a specific city or nation, if not ideologically, then linguistically or in subject. This is generally true of Banksy and is exemplified by *Slave Labour*. Importantly, this piece - depicting, in black and white, a child kneeling over a sewing machine producing coloured British bunting - is stencilled onto the wall of a Poundland. As Marc Schiller, street art website owner who claims to be Banksy's friend, said to the *Guardian* of Banksy's "work out of context", "it's not his work any more, it's no longer a Banksy... it's worthless". Whether or not Marc speaks for Banksy is almost arbitrary as his words ring true. The auction house claims the anonymous donor is legitimate and the sale legal. They fail to mention whether it is moral or appropriate. Arrested from the street and imprisoned in the establishment, *Slave Labour* has been ruined as art. The sole positive emerging from this is the international recognition that graffiti is valuable as art and not just vandalism, so valuable that it is stolen and shipped abroad.

In painting a church, the Spanish graffiti artists House and Rudi, have contributed positively. They have not sold out, abandoned their roots or been appropriated for establishment gains. With art they have created a mutually beneficial dialogue with the Church in Spain, a particularly religious country for Europe. They have adapted their style to fit with that of the Neo-Romanesque church and the commissioning priests wants yet have kept their integrity. In this sense graffiti is recognised what it truly is, an art form that is of the street but can transcend the restrictions of the street as canvas.

## Get Your Fix

### Show and Tell

#### Campus location TBA

Art and anthology of students' sexual experiences

Launch Party - 11th March



### Inter-University Drama Festival

#### Drama Barn

Universities gather in York to showcase their finest

Week 10



Poppy Bullard



### The Aesthetica Art Prize

#### York St Mary's - Coppergate

International Contemporary Art Prize

Exhibition 8 March - 28 April



### TakeOver Festival

#### York Theatre Royal

Students take over YTR and all its productions

19th - 24th march



# The Theatre of Cruelty

Poppy Bullard reviews **Antonin Artaud's** resounding legacy in contemporary theatre.

**A**ntonin Artaud is the father of cruelty – the gut-wrenching, spine-squirming discomfort that only a direct confrontation with physical reality can produce. His ideas about the Theatre of Cruelty redefined the limits to which an audience could be pushed, and the horrors to which they could be subjected. This sinister genre has had a varied performance history, ranging from pieces such as *The Cenci*, written by Artaud, which features the death and execution of an entire family, to far more contemporary subjects who use the theory to create an alternative take on existing texts.

The Theatre of Cruelty is not bent on fostering public sadism or masochism, instead the cruel aspect of the theatrical discipline concentrates on dissolving the image of theatre as synonymous with fiction. Artaud's own brand of surrealism attempts to shatter the illusion of theatrical falseness, and focus on creating reality within the theatre. But this is not reality as we know it. Artaud's reality is one that comes from within; the inescapable inner-workings of the human mind and relationships that are usually hidden and suppressed by outer appearances. The confrontational style aims to shock, unsettle and disturb the audience by juxtaposing jarring images of fiction and reality, often using distorted or warped human figures.

The Theatre of Cruelty's advantage as a stylistic genre is that it allows pre-existing existing plays to be considered in a new, and often more challenging, context, none more so than the sell-out production of *The Changeling* at the Young Vic theatre in 2012. This Jacobean tragedy is known as an exam-

ple of the struggle against the patriarchal domination of the seventeenth century, but its latest performance – brain child of Joe Hill-Gibbins, the Deputy Artistic Director of the Young Vic – takes on a much more Artaudian persona, allowing the production to become the centre of a bone-chilling exposé of mental illness and life in an asylum. This emphasis on the subplot about “madmen and fools” is almost too close to Artaud, who spent most of his later life in asylums, suffering from undiagnosed schizophrenia.

The confrontational components of his Theatre of Cruelty are projected onto the audience throughout the creative vision of the piece. As Hill-Gibbins told *Exeunt Magazine*, people “pay money to look at mad people because they find them funny, or because they find something profound or intriguing about watching mad people”. His blunt, yet uncannily accurate, reasoning is a stark contrast to his theatrical prowess. For Hill-Gibbins, the asylum's inhabitant is presented as a wheelchair-bound, dribbling, sufferer of physical and mental disabilities. This is such a far flung image from the original text by Middleton and Rowley, that, combined with the ethereally clinical hospital-green lighting of the mental asylum, the patient becomes a representation of every audience member's internal, yet unspoken, captivation and morbid fascination with the mentally and physically ill. Artaud's belief that the realities within every person can confront them in a physical form allows the seventeenth-century opus to become more contemporarily and culturally relevant.

It does not stop there. In keeping with Artaud's fascination with human nature, another element of cruelty is sex and sexuality. *The Changeling*, as with much of Artaud's work, is about “the mess of being a human being, the mess of the body. Maybe that's what all really good plays are about; no matter how much you try to control your body and you have all these ideas about how the world should be and how you should be, the problem of being a human being is that you can't live outside your body. Its needs, for power or sex or food, will always be there”. This metaphorical mess of internal emotions and ideas is translated into a very physical performance, where food and drink become a substitute for bodily fluids and bodily desires. The creation of the internal mess of adultery on stage, is performed through the mutual smearing and massaging of red, oozing liquid upon each other and the blanched marriage bed. The highly sexualised rubbing, slaving and massaging is not only a highly disturbing image, but also a physical representation of the complex nature of adultery itself. It maintains Artaud's belief that staging the internal externally shatters the false reality of the stage.

The Theatre of Cruelty attempts to penetrate far deeper than naturalistic theatre. The exposure of such physical translations of raw emotion leaves more naturalistic pieces of theatre appearing to be emotionally stunted and filled with false pretences. The most repulsive aspects of human nature are translated into captivating art, where, by some strange paradox, the only thing that would seem out of place is reality.



## Portrait of an Artist: Antony Dunn

The local poet talks to Fiona Parker about his formative years, translating poetry and life as a poetical subject

Antony Dunn is an award-winning Leeds-based poet and is author of a number of books including *Pilots and Navigators*, *Flying Fish* and *Bugs*.

The first piece of poetry Antony remembers composing was at primary school. "I remember I wrote a very long poem about winter when I was at primary school and I was quite pleased with it and it went up on the board outside the Headmaster's office." It was not until Antony was a teenager, however, that his literary flair began to manifest itself in the form of lyrics, which he wrote for a band he had with school friends at St. Peter's School in York.

"I was in a pop group when I first went to grown up school. I wrote hundreds of lyrics for this pop group and we recorded bits and pieces and some of these song lyrics got into the hands of one of the teachers at the school, Dave Hughes." Hughes went on to give Antony feedback on his work and started telling him how he could improve the lyrics. Eventually Antony made the transition from writing lyrics to writing poetry. By the time Antony was sixteen, he was in his words "obsessed with poetry".

After school, Antony worked at a theatre in York for a year and throughout the placement, he lived with his then girlfriend's family. Her father was the proud owner of an extensive collection of books and before long, Antony's girlfriend was forced to compete with the library for Antony's free time. "I used to read them all, all the time. This was before the internet was a daily part of anybody's life, so the only access to poetry you had was books. It's quite hard to get accidental access to books of poetry, so to suddenly find yourself in a house which was heaving with the stuff was wonderful."

Antony went on to read English at St. Catherine's College, Oxford and since graduating in 1993, he has received both the Newdigate Prize (1995) and an Eric Gregory Award (2000).

He has a keen interest in translation but is aware of the potential damage a careless translator can cause. He was unable to publish one Chinese poem in particular, which discussed the Tiananmen Square massacre. He was unable to carry across the impenetrability of a "very complex metaphor" in the original poem. "In conversation with some of my colleagues, it became clear that I could not publish my translated version because it would just land him in trouble... We can't get ourselves into that kind of trouble here. It's sobering to be reminded that other people do have to be careful."

Antony is now a married man with a son, who was the product of years of heart-breaking IVF cycles. He has documented several hardships in his life through the medium of poetry. However, he maintains it is not a "way out" of negative feeling. "You'll always get somebody who will comfort you by saying: 'Oh well there is probably going to be a poem in it for you, isn't there.'" At which point I generally want to smash their face in because poetry is not a way of salving yourself out of pain and any suggestion that that is why we do it makes me really cross."

Antony's life has been far from black and white. However, when it comes to imaginative composition, forget high and flighty writing, he believes wholeheartedly in the power of plain and honest verse. "If there are too many adjectives and adverbs, I get the feeling that somebody is trying to manipulate my sensations and I resent that and then I resist it. If somebody is just telling me the truth, I find it utterly compelling."

## Review: A Monster Calls

Author: Patrick Ness  
Review: Thomas Cox

Ronald Dahl. Enid Blyton. Beatrix Potter. Literary names shrouded in milky childhood mist echo dimly in your memory, harking back to the golden days when 'Once upon a time...' wasn't a cliché, and stories were a flight of midnight-oil-burning hedonism. This memory is now reduced to yellowed images with the curling edges of hedgehogs and ginger ale. The delight of opening a book for the sheer pleasure of it, without the falsetto piping imp that is cynicism grating its fingernails down the back of your skull, are days long gone.

Picasso famously pondered how 'it took me four years to paint like Raphael, but a lifetime to paint like a child'. Sadly the same is true of reading. The art of reading like a child is all but dead to page-weary students. Childhood innocence has long since fallen, replaced now by a sorry-looking, but undoubtedly far more intelligent, head.

Lamenting this, it is a delight to pick up *When A Monster Calls*, Patrick Ness' novel originally designed for children. It has been making a commotion in the literary world as adults reading to their children realise they're enjoying the novel more than they probably should.

Making children's media palatable for adults is not a new phenomenon - think Pixar films and *Harry Potter*. London-based Ness is already a successful children's author, and has produced two other children's novels. *When a Monster Calls* is the only novel to have received both the Carnegie and Greenway Medals, for writing and illustration respectively.

The novel follows the tale of 13-year-old Conor's dealing with the impending death of his mother. The story opens to Conor lying tucked up in bed one night, having just awoken from a nightmare he can barely face the memory of. At 7 minutes past midnight, a colossal tree-monster lunges in through the window, and swallows Conor whole. And then he wakes up 'and it was all a dream'. Except it wasn't.

The monster continues to reappear, and tells Conor three stories, in return for Conor's own story. Each time he reappears the consequences escalate, from fighting to vandalising, the narrative running parallel with Conor's mother's deteriorating health. His mother leaves home, his friends

keep their distance, and teachers treat him like a ticking bomb. Cracks spread about his increasingly fragile and unpredictable character, and the nightmares worsen.

An assistant in Waterstones told me that reading *A Monster Calls* 'is the closest a book has got me to crying'. It is a harrowing tale concerning something we all have to face sometime, loss and isolation.

The plain language is what lends the tale its power. There are no effete elaborate emotional depictions, being sketched in simple pencil rather than watercolours, leaving the bones of a story to be filled by the imagination. The beauty is in simplicity, transcending the normal reading experience to one not dissimilar to the pleasure of youthful literary impression.

The uncomplicated phrases are what strike such a poignant chord, with memorable nuggets of wisdom phrased lyrically. Indeed, in such a way that any reader will steal away with them when the book is long finished, for example "your mind will believe comforting lies while also knowing the painful truths that make those lies necessary. And your mind will punish you for believing both."

Ness flips the clichés of young people's fiction to shatter the expected and grasp the notoriously slippery subjects of plaguing inner demons. It is not simply a story that would help to ease the pain of battling situations such as the loss of a loved one, but is important for its wider implications of how one, inexperienced and lonely, should face up to real monsters and nightmares.

Conor's story is charged with real suffering - as we are informed at the beginning Ness has completed the story that fellow children's author Siobhan Dowd left planned but unwritten when she died of cancer several years ago, aged forty-seven.

The glossy pages are energised further by dark spangled illustrations that sprawl about Ness' prose. Award-winning Jim Kay's drawings provide a harrowing depth to the novel, making it into a silent film, decorating the imagination further.

The book leaves you with the impression that you've been part of something deeply personal, affirming the monster's claim that: "Stories are the wildest things of all... Stories chase and bite and hunt."





# Freedom through Faith

The war in Sri Lanka may be over, but government injustice towards minority groups continues. **Ruki Fernando** talks to Fliss Turner about life beyond the headlines.

September 2008, the UN fled Sri Lanka and its violence, terrorism and unequivocal pain. Beyond its preliminary fences civilians, young and old, scurried and desperately plea for them to remain, to allow them the last vestiges protection. As grubby hands reach through bars framing the UN building, eyes wide with fear and despondency peer through, trying to grasp the fraying seams of safety for the Tamil community; it is apparent that these are the people trapped by an unmerciful government. The UN has however already made its decision. In convoy they leave. In the falling dust stands a country in desolation, awaiting the government's inevitable blow.

At the height of Sri Lanka's civil war, neither news reporter nor headline could convey the pain felt by the small country off the coast of India. It is through talking to Ruki Fernando, human rights and social justice activist and current fellow at the University's Centre for Applied Human Rights (CAHR) that

I begin to look beyond the articles I've read, the documentaries I have seen and begin to distinguish the brutal anguish felt not by the country defined by fatality statistics, but its very people, the children, the families. Here I discovered the torment felt by Sri Lanka's people, generalised by the term "civilian" and diminished by the civil war's atrocities.

Ruki was at the heart of the violence and it is with unprecedented clarity that he tells of the horrors of Sri Lanka's civil war: "Hundreds and perhaps even thousands of people were being killed, injured almost every day. Most of it was by government military."

"They actively prevented people from leaving the war zone, even shooting at those trying to escape. They forcibly recruited adults and children, and tolerated no criticism."

Beyond Sri Lanka's beautiful landscape and fabulous cultural facade, scars had begun to show, no matter how much the government tried to conceal its actions to the public eye. Travel became restricted, roads were

closed and embargo was imposed upon food and medical supplies. Those, whose spirit had not been shattered attempted escape, fled the black cloud of violent suppression that had come to define their everyday lives.

Ruki speaks of these people and of the impossible situation they face in their quest for freedom with concise honesty: "any people who managed to escape the war zone were detained illegally behind barbed wire, in inhumane conditions by the government." It was, however the Tamil community which faced the inevitable violent, moral and physical disparagement, "The community lived in fear - there were frequent round ups and any Tamil could be arrested and detained at whim and fancy of police and military, sometimes for many years. Almost everyone detained would be tortured. There were also widespread abductions and political killings."

Amongst the civilians subjected to violence and torture are lawyers, Catholic priests and human rights activists. Absolutely no

one with a heart and mind could be safe from abduction, murder, torture or attack and absolutely "no one has been prosecuted or convicted for these crimes." As the government moved in on the community, families fell to the cloying mud of dug trenches offering minimal protection, crawling through the dirt as children sobbed and parents prayed "Please God, save all these children."

Many would not be saved. Despite Ruki speaking with slight optimism of the country today - "now there is no shelling, bombing, suicide bombers" - sanity has not been restored. "Although less in number, arrests and detention of Tamils, abductions killings still happen. Government critiques still live in fear."

Despite the war officially coming to a close in May 2009 hope has since been no more than a notion of hypocrisy "There are also new forms of repression and domination of the minority Tamil community. The government is banning commemorations, religious events and grieving for those dead and

disappeared, the whole of the north is heavily militarized with military playing the dominant role over civilian administration, and getting involved in education, running shops, restaurants and resorts”.

Families of the dead, the tortured, and the persecuted cannot grieve. The cemeteries of those who stood to protect their children, families, friends and communities have been bulldozed, flattened into the soil which holds the blood of innocent lives. In their place stands “monuments glorifying the military, responsible for killing, injuring, disappearance, torture of tens of thousands of local people.” Despite international law stating hospitals to be areas of protection, the injured and maimed could not seek solitude. Government-backed military attacked, disregarding the red crosses atop makeshift infirmaries whose roofs bore the final fragment of protection to a desperately vulnerable community. Along rifting torrent of mud and rubble ran the blood of victims who had clung to the hope of safety below the red crosses. Limbs scattered the vicinity, faces blown into distortion.

How is it then that Ruki could have faced all of this, never fleeing the atrocity and pain? As is the disposition of war, religion does not cover in the corner behind enemy lines. Ruki’s Christian faith has given him the “motivation to support

“My difficulty has been to talk to good Christians and Buddhists who don’t believe in equal rights and dignity.”

victims and their families, helping protect those in danger, writing and talking about the stories of those subjected to injustice”.

With this faith comes an absolution of bravery in the face of danger: “I guess I always knew I was taking risks and putting myself in danger in the work I was doing. There have been occasions where I have been followed, subjected to long interrogation and many times intelligence agencies have been asking about me.”

Surprisingly, it has been those of religious dispositions who have been the stubborn anchors in his fleet of freedom. Many without religious alignment have shown courage and conviction alongside Ruki. However, Ruki’s “difficulties have been to talk with good Christians and Buddhists who don’t believe in equal rights and dignity. They believe it is okay to kill, abduct, and torture civilians in order to deal with terrorism”

There is, it seems, blind compliancy from religious leaders, assuaging action despite the ongoing dangers the minority communities have succumbed to. The “complicity of religious leaders in grave violations of human rights and their deafening silence has also been challenging” pegging the lives of civilians to an existence of fear and unrelenting dread.

Sunk into a reverie of despair which did not come from turning to the BBC for information over four years ago as the UN departed Sri Lanka in a cloud of panic. I have to ask, what can be done? “We need to officially and publicly acknowledge past abuses and have a process towards accountability that can consider options like prosecutions, convictions, amnesty. Truth seeking is a fundamental in this process.” And in truth, one can hope, optimism must be found. Whilst considering the anguish of the tortured and abused we can but hope that veracity will eventually allow for a relinquishment to the subjugation the minority communities of Sri Lanka have faced. Lives need to be rebuilt, vivacity revived and most importantly grievances atoned.

Ruki’s broad smile and optimism raised me from my gloom brought about by the horrors of this interview. Despite it all he bares the stance which dares the government to “Catch me if you want!” **M**



ALL PHOTOS COURTESY OF RUKI FERNANDO

# Easter Treats

Cometh the Easter hour, cometh the Easter Bunny. This year, he's really brought home the bacon. Or rather, the cake. Savour some simnel cake, pop an Angry Bird (aka Easter chick) in your mouth, and crack open a batch of cake eggs. A veritable treat for all this Easter-tide.



"Once upon  
names





CREATIVE CHICK DIRECTOR: HELENA PARKER. DECORATOR-IN-CHIEF AND MANAGING BUNNY CONSULTANT: POPPY BULLARD.  
BUNNY CONFLICT CONTROLLER: MEGAN THOMSON. WORK EXPERIENCE ADD-ON: TOM WITHEROW. PHOTOGRAPHER: HOAGY DAVIS-DIGGES.

*in a time there were four little rabbits, and their  
names were Flopsy, Mopsy, Cotton-tail and Peter..."*



# One man and his guitar

There's no denying **Jake Bugg's** meteoric rise to fame, nor his distaste for One Direction. Hatti Linnell speaks to the Brit- and NME-nominated 18-year-old about fame, fortune and the future.

To say that Brit-nominee Jake Bugg's rise to fame has been rapid would be the understatement of this century. Scouted by the prestigious Mercury Records in summer 2011 after appearing on the BBC Introducing Stage at Glastonbury, his career has since been an unstoppable force.

Considering this, I was apprehensive about meeting Jake: he's certainly among the five or six artists each year who appear to be the next big thing. These artists are often seriously over-hyped to the point that they can only be severely disappointing and disappear into oblivion or become well-loved and make a career out of selling critically-acclaimed records, or, at least, a critically-acclaimed debut album. In fact, the only new artists recently to have received his level media attention are Lana Del Rey and Emeli Sandé, both of whom have gone on to play sell-out arena tours, as Jake is currently in the process of doing. Judging from this, he'll soon belong to the latter.

Jake's date in Leeds is the third of a month-long tour. "It's a good laugh, I guess. There are those little moments that keep you going and it's wicked", he says excitedly when I ask him about his feelings regarding the forthcoming dates. He seems quite at ease, making me a cup of tea and having a quick cigarette before we sit on the sofas in his tour bus. In person, he didn't seem to be the arrogant reborn version of Liam Gallagher - an image many journalists have portrayed him as in their work. This would've been easy for him to do, considering the high level of media coverage both he and his music have had in such a short period of time, but I find him modest and quiet-mannered, yet apparently unfazed by his newfound fame: "It's been brilliant, it's all I know and all that I want to do. As long as I can play music and live a happy life then that makes me happy. I don't really pay attention to it or read press or anything like that, so I just hope I can write my songs and that people will enjoy listening to them."

Born in Nottingham in 1994, Jake grew up on a council estate in Clifton, and the influence of his childhood is evident in a few of his songs: 'Trouble Town', 'Seen It All' and 'Two Fingers' to name a few. Acknowledging this, Jake tells me that "a lot of the songs are about my experiences", before digressing further: "I think it's good to draw on those experiences and the things you've seen or maybe heard". Having begun to realise his musical potential at the age of 12 when his uncle showed him his first guitar chords, Jake's passion for the instrument was instantly evident. "It's still a hobby, it's what I love doing and it's fun. My hobby is my job but with that in mind it's a fine line. For half of it you've got to think it's what you love doing and what you enjoy but the other half is that it's your job and you've got to take it seriously and have fun at the same time."

One of the main things that's misplaced about the nature of media attention on Jake is that it is predominantly directed towards making comparisons with his influences; it's almost impossible to find an article about him which doesn't mention Bob Dylan or Noel Gallagher. In fact, many have described Jake's sound as merely a rehashed combination of the two. This view has support up to a point: the chorus of 'Two Fingers', the lyrics of 'Lightning Bolt' and the majority of 'Taste It' have points where comparisons with Oasis could be made.



Having said that, it's difficult to understand the Bob Dylan comparisons – their writing styles differ, and vocally there are very few similarities. Ultimately, though, his music possesses a lot of original sound and definitely sets itself apart from a lot of music around today. When I mention this to him, Jake replies: "I think a lot of people would say the opposite" with regards to his sound being original. Perhaps soon people will stop defining Jake by his influences, and allow him the freedom to become his own artist.

When asked about such various achievements as his number one album, Jake seems nostalgic, describing the success of the eponymous 2012 release as "a miracle", but appears less excited regarding his unsuccessful Brit nomination which he didn't go on to take. "I think it's brilliant—obviously to be nominated you need to be in the top forty, so that's down to my fans and I can't thank them enough for that. But at the same time, awards don't do all that for me," with the classic nonchalance and implied understanding that he is more concerned with the quality of his music as opposed to public recognition. A respectable, yet grounded, stance.

But stories like his recent claims that One Direction are "terrible" and his involvement with a member of the ever-growing Harry Styles ex-club, Cara Delevingne, speak other-

wise. Niall Horan of the X-Factor group responded with the expected intelligent wit (and understanding of basic English grammar) via Twitter: "Really buggs me that artists we're fans of, flip on us in the press!", causing all the twelve-year-old girls' keyboards across the land to go into overdrive. One Direction aren't the only victims: he also, controversially, recently lashed out at Mumford & Sons—a risky move considering he shares a

Michael Kiwanuka", going on to state how "I do listen to a lot of contemporary music, or I try to. A lot of it, I don't think, personally, is very good." Not that it's particularly revolutionary to dislike One Direction, but it goes to show that, usually, when an opinion is asked for, an honest one is provided.

Of course, no interview would be complete without pressing for details of what the future holds. "Well I have this tour

coming up, then a European tour, then I'll probably go to America, then a load of festivals." One of Jake's final comments gave insight into just why he finds himself disillusioned with a lot of modern music: "I love song writing, it's my favourite bit of what I do."

He's only 18 years old, but Jake's already wary of maintain a certain quality to his material. "I don't want to rush it, but at the same time, I don't want to keep people waiting. Better get writing some tunes... I would like to get a second record out." No doubt, he's had quite an impact and is continuing to leave his

own individual stamp on the British music scene. Jake's next major challenge is to break America, a milestone that Mumford and One Direction have both passed. Certainly, his explosion onto the scene and platinum-selling debut album are good indicators for the name Jake Bugg to only become bigger and bigger. **M**

“Our audiences are generally just fucking awesome and wanna jump around a lot.”

large extent of his fanbase with the “posh farmers with banjos”. Funny as these stories are, though, the question of what's trying to be achieved here has to be asked. However, these contentious statements have been rare, and are often taken out of context and greatly exaggerated. When I ask him about other musicians he's a fan of, Jake's response is that he “really likes

## In The Spotlight: York House Concerts

Francesca Donovan finds out just what happens when a gig takes place in your front room...

No one would dream of walking into a stranger's house, perusing their vinyl collection and settling down to relax with some music. One evening in York, however, I found myself in a taxi heading into the surrounding countryside to do exactly that.

The history of house concerts – the modern love child of Renaissance and Baroque chamber music – began in 20th century Harlem, New York, held to disguise illicit sex houses. Yet, once urban genres adopted the concept, house concerts became about sharing the practice of live music. Perhaps they're still somewhat unheard of simply because 21st century live music is more available to the public; ticket prices remain relatively cheap and arena shows become increasingly impressive exhibitions. However, the revival of the house concert is buoyed by the musical purists' want for raw and unrestricted performances and, with media interest from BBC Radio and national newspapers, York House Concerts (YHC) are building quite a reputation. Tickets for Benjamin Francis Leftwich sold out online in one hour and, despite a “tough couple of first years”, recent gigs have been at full capacity.

Admittedly, I was dubious as I stood in a crowd outside Tony and Nicki's waiting to be ushered into their home. On stepping over the threshold, though, I was ashamed to have felt this way. Tony and Nicki have been hosting these intimate events for six years and fondly describe them as “a hobby - rather than business - gone mad”. The pair certainly know how to make their guests feel welcome – their living room was arranged strictly for comfort with cushions, throws, soft red lighting and images of previous guest artists. The environment encouraged chatter, and home-brought wine was consumed by the bottle from plastic cups as we eagerly awaited JP Cooper: a relaxing yet electric atmosphere.

JP emerged through the crowd to perform what would be one of my most intense musical experiences to date. After a stint recording with Eskimo Cowboy, JP's now pursuing his solo career – and thank god for it. Immediately stunning the audience into si-

lence with ‘O Brother’, all the intricacies of the dreadlocked acoustic artist's soulfully expressive tone and vocal flights could be heard. When bringing this first song to a close he remarked that he “felt amongst friends – last night I was in a warehouse in Birmingham.” He kept the crowd enthralled with anecdotes between sublimely beautiful song after song, occasionally musing aloud to himself: “what shall I play next?”. A truly organic gig. JP continued to play and – avoiding all clichés – the audience was unanimously moved. He's an artist who should be flaunting his mellow talent without the distraction of synthetic sounds, York House Concerts being the perfect platform to do so.

Keeping up with JP, it's said that music legend, the ‘whispering’ Bob Harris can recognise an exquisite talent when he hears one. This is the case regarding Cooper's fellow Mancunian and dead-ringer for Noel Fielding, T.G. Elias, who was top of the bill; no hierarchy, just amicable organisation that exemplifies what York House Concerts embodies. T.G.'s a certified storyteller: lyrics of a calibre you seldom hear in today's music. He sings unplugged, alighting to the beauty and humour in the rawness of his songs. We could hear the tap of his brogues on the wooden floor, echoing his fidgety timekeeping. Songs like ‘The Ballad of Lenny Crow’ were interspersed with tales of drunkenness, including a particularly amusing story concluding in him wandering homeless round Headingley in the small hours of the morning having been kicked out by his girlfriend.

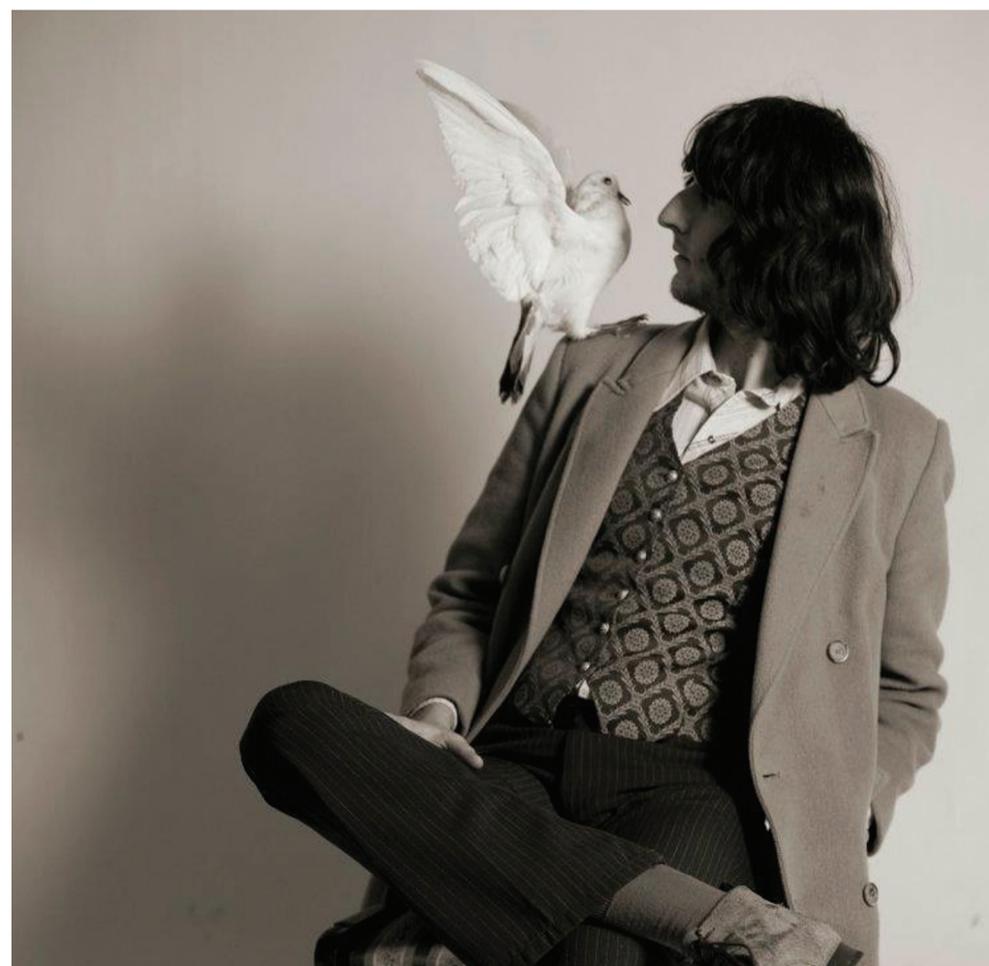
This intimacy is rare in the era of festival and arena shows and, for that reason, is all the more important. After he left the ‘stage’, I cornered T.G. Elias for a few words: “I try to play unplugged as much as I can because it immediately breaks down the barrier of stage and audience to create a more intimate feel. It's something I'm passionate about as it helps them hear what the artist wants to say more clearly when you strip all the bullshit away - providing they want to listen!”

Tony even remarked that some artists have bunked with them for a week to get a

taste of long-forgotten home comforts, free laundry and fresh food, away from the hazards of touring.

They are designed to shun the bureaucratic commercialism of the music industry and are run purely on donations to the artist. Most importantly, York House Concerts are made possible by the hosts extensive efforts. But even now, Tony feels the pressure to put on a good show as “you are only as good as your last gig”, he admits. As a consequence of that sometimes harsh reality, I've since donat-

ed in exchange for admittance to the next two listed events: Sam Brookes and Hot Feet, as well as Benjamin Francis Leftwich; I'm awaiting the gigs with justified, excited anticipation. These are musical experiences that are difficult to articulate, but I'll urge you to see for yourself. It may be a quaint and obscure concept for those of us well acquainted with lurid live music, but there is one thing that can be said for certain: house concerts provide an unrivalled musical spectacle that separates the boys from the artistically talented men. **M**



# YO1 Festival Preview

Nouse Music brings you a taste of what's to come at York's upcoming YO1 Festival, and find out the biggest music event in town is bring the University's music scene ever closer to town



## Interview: YO1

### Organiser, John Drysdale

As our last few spotlights have shown, York and music are being brought closer together by the day. And although it's easy to take such progression for granted, for some people it's been a work in progress for much longer than our three year stints up north. John Drysdale has been promoting and putting on parties for longer than most of us have been alive, and has been serving York and Leeds with a zeal that slightly outstrips sitting on Vanbrugh stalls for a few days.

Born from "a lack of venues in York and a massive desire to get together and have a good time" Drysdale went from running free parties and club nights to weekend festivals such as the ongoing Beacons, a medium-sized summer festival situated just outside of Leeds and "one of the leading festivals pushing new music". However to keep us happy before the sun starts shining, he is once again serving up "something I feel York has needed for quite some time". And that something is YO1.

For those who didn't experience it last year, YO1 is a one-day festival aimed at providing great music whilst still offering something for everyone close to home. Situated on the Knavesmire; a large bit of land near the racecourse, YO1 will play host to locally curated selection of food vendors, a micro-ale festival and four stages of music ranging from big names such as Rudimental and AlunaGeorge to our very own Marzec Group, amongst many others.

One big change from last year has been the extent to which the student-run music scene is having a role to play. With "the dance scene being the healthiest I have seen for many years", it's no surprise that Bangers and Mash, Milli Vanilli, Vanderground and Breakz will all be present, as well as *Circulation Magazine* having their own stage once again.

"I think festivals are going through a time of change, people have less money right now. I feel people will support an event that's easy to get to, supports its local music scene and brings great acts to the city and all for the bargain price of £20. Why travel miles and go to the expense of a far away event when there is one on your doorstep." We agree John, and I'm sure a few others do too.

### Get involved

Tickets can be bought for £20, with a £2 admin fee online, or £17.50 from on-campus student reps.

More details can be found at [www.yo1events.co.uk](http://www.yo1events.co.uk).

## RUDIMENTAL

It's been quite a year for Rudimental. The Hackney-based quarter (half of whom, it may interest you to know, attended Leeds Met—big up to proximity) have enjoyed a sudden and global success; their first single, 'Feel the Love', spent 30 weeks in the charts (16 of which it spent luxuriating amidst the Top 10), accumulated 18.6 million views on YouTube and was certified 'Double Platinum' in Australia. Being responsible for the 16th biggest selling track in 2012 isn't necessarily an indicator of quality (for context, Minaj placed 5th), but there's something about the bizarre combination of horns, drums and John Newman that just...works. So much so that they managed to re-implement the formula with 'Not Giving In'. If it ain't broke, and all that.

It's a real boon to YO1 that they've managed to secure such a massive name, particularly given that Rudimental are currently at the zenith of their commercial success. We highly recommend turning out, if only for these guys; Kuda enjoys it, and so do we.



## ALUNAGEORGE

Opposite Rudimental as headliners stand Aluna Francis and George Reid - AlunaGeorge. Breaking through last year with 'Your Drums, Your Love', and reaching Number 2 in the UK Top 40 with 'White Noise', a collaboration with Disclosure, it's little wonder AlunaGeorge have been chosen to headline a weekend that will finally put York on the live music map. Soon to drop is 'Attracting Flies', the lead single from an approaching debut album and a track debuted by Zane Lowe on his show a week ago today. If you haven't heard already, expect noise that blends the finer elements of garage with steady bass and some post-dubstep sounds. Atop this sits Aluna's high-pitched vocals, described before as "almost child-like". With a strong back-catalogue and an ever-growing fanbase, it's clear the signing of AlunaGeorge on YO1's dotted line is a move sure to go down a storm.

## GREYMATTER

Self-described as blending a mixture of "house/techno/electronic/disco/beatdown/..." (of which, naturally, the enigmatic ellipsis is the most intriguing), this Brighton-based DJ is certainly one to watch. He'll be performing on the Circulation stage, and is famed for putting on a great show with a great deal of visual incorporation throughout his set. Having had several artistic collaborations, there's no predicting what the setlist might contain. Whatever happens, you can be guaranteed a great show: Greymatter's collaboration with the animator, John Malcolm-Moore, has resulted in an impressively immersive, altogether memorable experience.



## THE DUB LOUNGE

Playing at YO1 are a number of York's biggest specialist club nights - Milli Vanilli, Bangers & Mash and Irie Vibes to name a few. In anticipation of May's event, YUSU's Derwent venue, The Courtyard, are hosting The Dub Lounge this Saturday from 9pm til 3am. With three rooms and showcases from the biggest names in York's local club and live music scene, it's a steal at £2 for an advanced ticket.

## REVERB.

Justin Bieber on *Practical Ethics*

"I really don't believe in abortion...  
it's, like, killing a baby."

# Reviews.



**AMOK**  
Atoms for Peace  
Alex Donaldson

There are two ways of approaching this album: firstly we take it as Atoms for Peace's debut album, a new band coincidentally comprised of several megastars. If we forget their individual back-catalogues, the album is cohesive; the 2013 Nigel Godrich produced dance album of the year you'll never get to actually dance to. The better angle sees Atoms for Peace as Thom Yorke's solo project, accompanied by some of the greatest session musicians ever. Opener, "Before Your Very Eyes..." lures you in with funky guitar, only to dive head first into a whirlpool of bassy synth. The production and effort gone into creating this album is beyond anything most recording artists achieve.

The issue is that Yorke's vocals vary so little, the occasional falsetto rise only slightly changing the tone, that the genius is lost under his unrelenting eeriness.

Lead single, 'Default' may as well be a track on any Radiohead album. It's a wonderfully intelligent track. The contrast between the glitching intro and the dubbed-out keyboard is a joy. By the halfway point, however, you find yourself praying for intervention, a kick in tempo or vocal style. It seems like Yorke found a sound which worked and stuck with it for 45 minutes. A four song EP would have achieved the same thing, and we would've been more appreciative of that rare diamond. He's essentially hyper in-

flated his own musical economy.

The stand out moment is album closer and title track, "Amok". Flea leads with a simplistic riff, into the catchiest chorus of the record. "To run amok" wailed repeatedly by Yorke over effortless piano chords, reminiscent of a moody Moby.

I'd be amazed if anyone who didn't already know who made up this super group could actually tell upon listening to this record, it's just another Thom Yorke side project in his quest to conquer every genre known to man. Yorke exclaims "I don't want to stop" at one point, and despite this too-good-for-its-own-good yet ultimately average record, we really hope he doesn't.

Cosmo Jarvis wanders on to the stage looking ever so slightly bewildered, as if he's just woken up from a long, startlingly-interrupted nap. It wouldn't be out of character, it would seem: he exudes an air of friendly insanity which, when you're writing songs as diverse in their subject matter as 'Love This', about God, and 'Lacie' (properly styled 'LaCie'), about an external hard drive, is nothing if not helpful.

He opens his set with 'Sure As Hell Not Jesus', a brilliantly catchy song with a video well worth looking up. By the end of the performance, the audience are firmly on Cosmo's side: whilst he doesn't chat much with the

crowd, appearing shy throughout the gig, it turns out that he doesn't really have to. Although the dedicated sect of 16-year-old girls lining the front row (who, we can suppose, are regulars at Jarvis's gigs) were already won over, his semi-awkward charms and undeniable talent easily make up for the lack of crowd interaction. He really is very good.

The show progresses with everything I (as a relatively new initiative into the world of Cosmo Jarvis) had wanted to hear. 'Love This', a song about the meta-physical implications of God, deftly balancing brilliant lyricism ("If I believe in Heaven I deny myself a death / Dying keeps me conscious of the way I waste

my breath") with a pop-beat is re-worked with '60s-esque harmonies layered over the chorus. Jarvis knows what the audience wants, but refuses to give it to them on their own terms, consistently providing new and interesting additions to his best-known songs. He scatters new and comparatively less known songs throughout the set, inviting the audience to find a new favourite which, as it happens, I did.

His live performance of 'Sunshine', from his latest album, was really rather brilliant, providing me with my new favourite CJ lyric in a song about the benefits of hardship: "In the rain I knew where I stood / 'cause a wet man knows he's owed some good".



**COSMO JARVIS**  
The Duchess, 16th February  
Isaac BD



**KODALINE**  
Fibbers, 7th February  
Francesca Donovan

The charismatic quartet open with the ethereal 'Lose Your Mind', accumulating in Kodaline's signature crashing chorus line — an intriguing introduction to the set. They continue in a predictable but inescapable manner for a band with a relatively small repertoire, playing a selection of songs from their upcoming album *In a Perfect World*. Of course, including the justly famous 'All I Want' their debut single that shot to fame and has been heard by millions (knowingly or not) thanks to Google's 'Zeitgeist 2012' television advert. A haunting and moving performance

of a very good song. Much in the same vein, Kodaline's other songs are beautifully crafted pieces of music, simple, memorable melodies being the template for all; a formula sure to generate popular appeal.

The performance is polished and nearly without fault. There's always a danger when dense rock invades smaller venues; sometimes the melodies are lost to the heavy drumming and bass, resulting in headaches rather than gratification, and the result can be clunky rather than chunky. Kodaline avoid this pitfall entirely. Steve, Mark, Vinny and Jason's

instruments blend easily together to create one loud and powerful sound: a true band, not simply four individuals contributing their own disconnected musical components. Throughout the set, we were treated to persistently solid timekeeping from drummer, Vinny, and faultless fretwork from all three guitarists. The harmonies were tightly executed, and Steve's unwavering vocal was impressive throughout alluding to his range and expert falsetto control, as in closing song 'The Answer', met with a crowd of girls who sang the entire lyric word-perfect back to the stage.

Every year during the chilling post-X-Factor months, indie critics everywhere scramble to proclaim a new saviour of music. This year, Lambeth four-piece Palma Violets have had the dubious honour bestowed on them. The release of their debut album *180* is no small achievement for a band barely two years in the making, especially when it has been so highly anticipated.

Yet, *180* is a perfectly-crafted album in its own right, spinning a yarn of various '60s influences. The sparkling, nostalgic melodies and buoyant choruses are not limited to the first two singles, 'Best of Friends' and 'Step Up for

the Cool Cats'. 'Rattlesnake Highway' and 'We Found Love' are standout tracks, the latter being a contender for the band's next single. The comparison with The Vaccines is justified, given the two groups' shared penchant not so much for a wall of sound as for a mire of reverb. Hints of Phil Spector-esque production, Farfisa keyboards and half-jangly, half-grungy guitars are all drawn together with the album's lo-fi sound.

On a closer listen, the album feels disjointed. Tracks like the unfortunately titled 'Chicken Dippers', an otherwise atmospheric and harmonious song, are marred by whooping that would embarrass The Libertines at their rowdiest. No

doubt this is a result of trying to capture the energy of Palma Violets live, evidenced at a recent BBC session at Maida Vale. Sadly, it seems to have not paid off on the record. It's not just whoops and woos that present a problem. Lyrically the album is unchallenging, but the un-failing irony of some of the lyrics makes this an annoyance. Self-referential lines, like 'I've got a brand new song / It's gonna be a number one' featured on '14', quickly wear thin.

Shortcomings aside, the album's rough feel is still uplifting and catchy. Palma Violets' *180* might still be far from the saving grace of indie, but who needs heroes anyway?



**180**  
Palma Violets  
Callum Reilly

## The 2013 class of a new soulful Rhythm and Blues

Fathma Khalid

"Yeah, I love Flo Rida" was not the response I expected when asking a friend whether he enjoys listening to R&B. Today, more and more R&B artists feel obliged to make club-bangers in a bid to stay ahead in the charts. But I'm not sure I feel comfortable placing these songs in the R&B genre; there is little soul to be found in chart-

toppers.

However, the recent rise of artists like Frank Ocean and The Weeknd has signalled a turning point for modern R&B. The honesty and raw emotion of their music is much more in line with the traditional perception of the genre, and it's started to garner acclaim from the mainstream. These artists have not made music to get into the charts: there is more the feel of making good music for its own sake - something much more relatable to the majority of listeners. As Frank Ocean says, it's "Not Just Money" that's important. It's refreshing to see artists on the R&B scene who value soul over 'swag'. 'Real' R&B is on the rise and seems to have acquired somewhat of a cult following - Frank Ocean lyrics seem to now be the go-to source for dramatic Facebook statuses and

Instagram hashtags.

The Weeknd gained prominence after releasing a trilogy of mixtapes in 2011. At the time, many were confused by this action, and eagerly anticipated his next move. He's proved to be very elusive in his selective choice of interviews and, although his tracks often sound like sultry slow jams at first, they soon become tales of pain and insecurity.

Following his mixtape, the release of Frank Ocean's first album *Channel Orange* was what really brought the Odd Future star into the public conscience. With a variety of musical influences, Frank sees himself as confined to no particular genre. The beautifully unembellished 'Pink Matter' brings you into a world of soft-stringed instruments and fluffy clouds of cotton candy. Minimalist songs re-

ally allow for his powerful voice to shine through the music - something that's avoided by many modern R&B artists.

Although understated, both have made appearances on the albums of big hip-hop names: The Weeknd featured on Drake's *Take Care*, and Frank on the monumental *Watch The Throne* by hip-hop heavyweights Jay Z and Kanye West. This kind of move is what'll gain these artists' initial exposure (in fact, their contributions to these albums were where I had first heard of them and, on further investigation, it turns out I'd stumbled upon a goldmine of soulful R&B). They've made it acceptable - even required - to wear your heart on your sleeve; they've brought the genre back to its roots. 2013 is the year you'll watch this new school R&B gain momentum.

FILM.

# The changing state of film censorship

James Tyas talks to James Blatch, BBFC film examiner, about the art of film rating

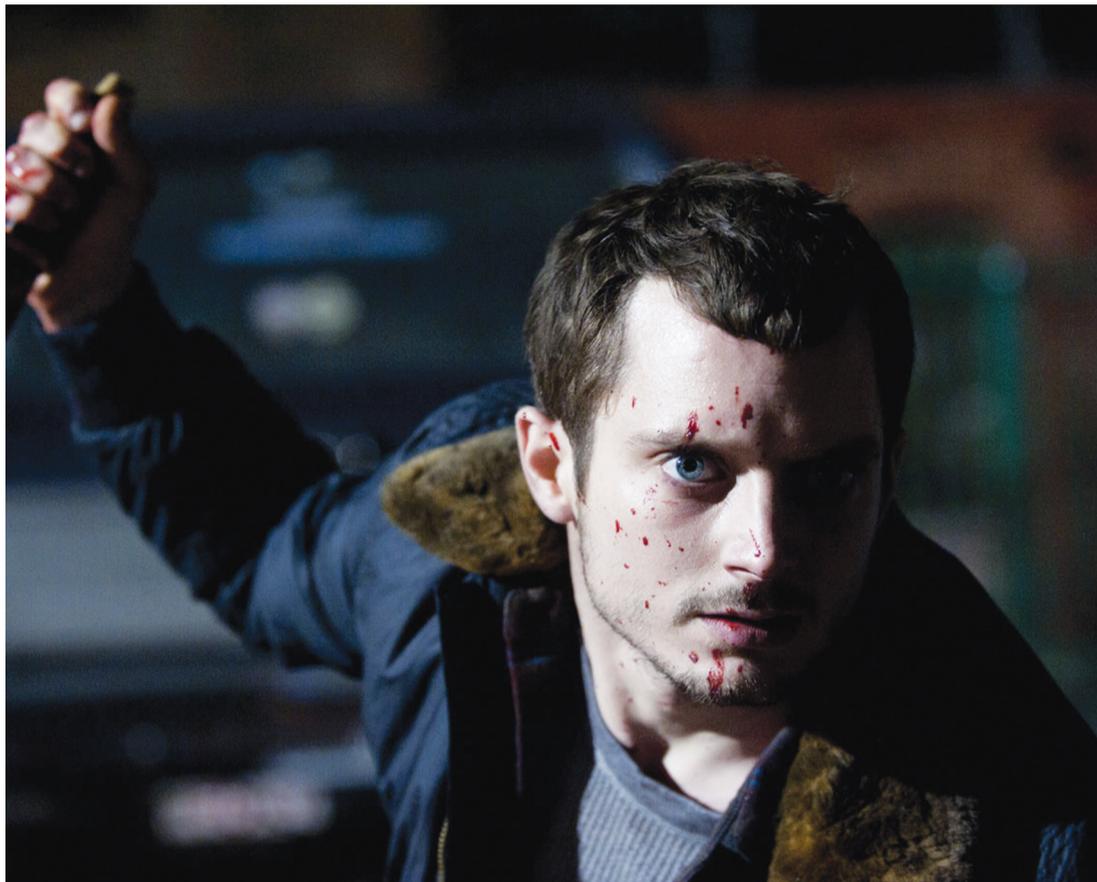
The British Board of Film Classification (BBFC) is an independent, non-governmental body which has classified cinema films since it was set up in 1912, and videos and DVDs since the Video Recordings Act in 1984. Formerly known as the British Board of Film Censorship, the organisation has undergone significant change in the past 30 years. Becoming less draconian in their practices, the BBFC allow adult audiences to watch whatever they see fit with only two caveats: as long as it is within the bounds of the law and doesn't pose a harm risk. For anti-censorship libertarians the issue of harm remains frustratingly vague and despite years of research the role that depictions of violence in films in influencing attitudes and behaviour of adults remains somewhat dubious.

Critics have argued that the role of the BBFC is damaging to artistic freedom, with studios cutting films for a lower age bracket in order to increase box office potential. While James Blatch, film examiner and presenter of the BBFC's podcast, concedes that "there is clearly a risk that films would be pre-cut more than is actually necessary in the absence of expert advice," he states that "BBFC advice aims to suggest the minimum cuts necessary for the desired age rating and we aim to ensure the cuts advised are specific, targeted and interfere as little as possible with the narrative of the film." It's easy to assume that with films such as *Dial M for Murder* and *Cape Fear*, that were once either cut or banned entirely now being passed uncut, the influence of the BBFC will diminish further as audiences become more difficult to shock. Blatch argues that this isn't necessarily the case. "Public attitudes do change over time, but it's not possible to predict what might be a key classification issue in the future. What we do know is that since the BBFC was established in 1912, issues like strong language, nudity, sex and violence have always been a concern for audiences."

Against expectation, it isn't the headline-grabbing, controversial films such as *The Human Centipede* and *Maniac* that prove most difficult to classify but those at the other end of the spectrum. "The difference between a U and PG can be challenging. The U category

doesn't have to be 'squeaky clean' because even very young children enjoy some thrills and very mild manners-type humour, such as burping! So judging the point at which it's no longer suitable for a 4 year old but ok for children aged 8 or above is often a fine line." Blatch recalls that, in his experience, one of the most difficult films to examine was Joe Dante's *The Hole*. "It was an interesting film for me. It's a horror film with many spooky moments and brief gore, but the story is written for adolescents and there is clearly an exciting film in store for 12 to 14 year year-olds. It was typical of Dante to present us with this problem, his 1984 film *Gremlins* received a PG in the States but a 15 in the UK."

A notable instance when the BBFC has come under criticism was when *This Is England* was given an 18 certificate, to the dismay of director Shane Meadows, with film critic Mark Kermode also calling for it to be deemed a 15 due to its relevance to that age group. "The overall context of the film is important, especially when a film sits on the border between 15 and 18," explains Blatch. "The question of whether the film could be contained at the 15 category was carefully considered, given the potential appeal and relevance to a younger audience." Blatch tells me that "arguably the strongest scene was towards the end of the film when a vulnerable character, Milky, is subjected to a brutal and realistic racist attack. If each individual component of the scene was considered in isolation it is possible to mount an argument for rating them 15 because of the lack of bloody detail and the lack of dwelling on pain or injury. However, the BBFC guidelines make it clear that the viewing context and effect of a work on a viewer must be taken into account. The scene, taken as a whole, has a strong, visceral impact on the viewer, and is likely to confound public and parental expectations at 15."



Elucidating what the examination process involves, Blatch says that "examiners view all new film releases in pairs and their classification recommendation and report is sent to senior examiners to be considered and approved. Because the BBFC works to published Guidelines classification decisions are often straightforward. However, if a film raises difficult issues, the director and in some cases the president will also view the film or DVD." The BBFC are also extremely diligent in their recruitment of examiners: "Because some of the content viewed by examiners can be chal-

lenging, very harrowing and potentially harmful, the BBFC looks to recruit as examiners people with a certain degree of maturity life experience. This means that examiners are often individuals on their second career. Previous careers of present examiners include the law, teaching, the police, civil service, television compliance, journalism, film-making, and video games design."

While you may not personally agree with every decision the BBFC make, it is evident that they don't make them lightly and the detail they give for making such decisions is admirable. A comprehensive report for every film published on their website. Indeed, Blatch highlights the impetus placed on accountability when he talks about the aims of the podcast. "Last year we decided we would try a regular programme, aimed at a wider audience. It's important that we constantly communicate our role to the public and to be as transparent in

"It was typical of Dante to present us with this problem, his 1984 film *Gremlins* received a PG in the States, but a 15 in the UK"



Alfred Hitchcock's *Dial M for Murder* was censored upon release in 1954



Shane Meadows's *This is England* was controversially given an 18 certificate rather than a 15

# The Debate: Are films getting too long?

Was there a great ninety-minute film in there somewhere? **Steven Roberts** and **James Tyas** talk Kubrick and Cameron in a bid to find out.

**Steven Roberts:** The most obvious issue that makers of lengthy films need to attend to is the physical discomfort of their audience. An article recently published in *The New Zealand Medical Journal* added the term SIT (seated immobility thromboembolism) to our medical vocabulary, following an investigation into the occurrence of deep-vein thrombosis in test subjects who had sedentary job roles. Richard Beasley et al. concluded that this painful condition can be associated too with our recreational lives, 'including seating in cramped conditions such as the theatre'. I'm yet to find a published real-life story to substantiate this, but for Beasley, repeatedly sitting down and going three hours without a break is worthy of our further examination.

If watching this year's longest and coincidentally biggest films, it is most likely you'll encounter the cramp and numbness which theatre-goers do not have to put up with. This

is paired with an ungraceful exit which disturbs other audience members and force you to miss what you paid for. The great Alfred Hitchcock, whose 1950's films had a then conventional runtime of 90 minutes, once said "the length of a film should be directly related to the endurance of the human bladder."

Some serious editing needs to be done. *Ben-Hur*, *Titanic* and *LoTR: The Return of The King* jointly hold the all-time record for the most Oscar-wins, and are all over three

hours long. For this reason I am tolerant of, have even become sentimental about, the stretching and struggling required to avoid a numb rear while watching a wonderful epic. But more recently, weaker films have tried to uphold a long runtime, and their word-of-mouth momentum has suffered. Social media analysis reveals that complaints about the runtime of *Cloud Atlas* only increased when the film was released for public consumption (and by 20%), despite a previous announcement. By the final thirty minutes, the most indulgent films have compounded viewing displeasure with physical discomfort. "The first Deep Vein Thrombosis-related lawsuit against a major film studio can surely be only a matter

of months away' sneers Ali Catterall (MSN Entertainment, The Guardian) in reference to Peter Jackson's baggy Oscar runner-up, *The Hobbit*.

When adapting a musical directly to film means the

more stunning moments of *Les Misérables* (158 mins) must be searched for amidst a swamp of lengthy close ups, one cannot help but yearn for the half-way break or intermission enjoyed by spectators of the stage version (170 mins), which remains superior. Films nowadays go on for too long, or at least too long without an interval. An intermission would help the audience digest the experience and, if you quite rightly believe works of art should be engaging, encourage directors to

"Hitchcock once said "the length of a film should be directly related to the endurance of the human bladder."



find new ways of holding onto their audience over a prolonged period of time. This used to be common in film, where spectacles such as *Lawrence of Arabia* (1962) and Kubrick's *2001: A Space Odyssey* (1968) benefited from a two part structure on theatrical release.

The cinema's interval may have disappeared with good reason. Thirty years ago, it was becoming hard to monitor film goers during the break due to the emergence of multiplex theatres, where patrons could easily sneak into whichever film they chose without a ticket. Cinemas were losing money. But times have changed. The National Association of Theatre Owners, representing 26,000 cinemas in the US, has recently commissioned a report on due to the losses incurred by having to screen long films only four times a day, where once it was six. The continued financing of longer films just doesn't add up.

**James Tyas:** Judd Apatow's recent feature *This Is 40* opened itself up to the jibe of "this is 40 minutes too long" but people have misidentified the issue as being one of quantity, when, in actual fact, it is one of quality. My main gripe with *This is 40* is that the characters are insufferable, constantly whinging about their non-existent 'problems'.

Any time spent in their presence feels cruelly excessive. It also just isn't funny as Apatow's previous films such as *Knocked Up*. Whether it would be funny enough if it was cut down from 134 minutes to 90 minutes still seems unlikely. The idea of brevity in film-making as being a great virtue is something of a myth anyway. Indeed, of *Sight and Sound's* top 20 greatest films of all time, few come in at around the 90 minute mark. There aren't many people who would argue that *The Godfather* or *Vertigo* would benefit from a little extra editing. It has almost become a cliché, when speaking about Tarantino's films, to say that "there is a really great 90 minute film in there," but whether this is truly the case is disputable. Tarantino's best works *Pulp Fiction* and *Jackie Brown* both clock in at 154 minutes, only slightly shorter than *Django Unchained* so claiming that he has become increasingly self-indulgent is wrong; he's always been that way. The problem lies in the fact that it just isn't as good; the characters and dialogue are less engaging.

But when a film is truly great, concerns about run time disappear. *Zero Dark Thirty* (157 mins), for my money the best film of the year so far, felt brisk. *Lincoln* (150 mins), on the other hand, feels like it's still playing.

## Song for Marion

Director: Paul Andrew Williams  
Review: Joseph Harrison



The rather basic plot of *Song for Marion* is undeniably contrived and from the opening scene it is immediately evident how the story will progress. Marion (Vanessa Redgrave), who is suffering from cancer, is a member of a local choir for the elderly, known as the OAPz, which is organised by a young teacher, Elizabeth (Gemma Arterton). Marion's husband, Arthur (Terrence Stamp), dislikes the choir and resists Elizabeth's attempts to get him involved, attributing its participation in a competition to the gradual decline in his wife's health. *Song for Marion* is the latest in a long line of films that purposely adhere to a formulaic structure for their plots, so that the emotional desires of the audience are adequately satisfied. This example of lazy story telling is predominantly associated with children's films, and consequently it is a bit patronising to see it utilised so blatantly in a production tailored for the elderly.

*Song for Marion* is hampered by cheap and cynical ploys, which is frustrating to see in a film that also manages to contain some of the most poignant and well-realised moments in cinema this year. Vanessa Redgrave's performance is beautifully un-



derstated, expressing a vulnerable, passionate and courageous individual effortlessly, while Stamp's portrayal of an emotionally reserved man desperately struggling to contain his emotion as he sees his wife gradually dying before him is exquisitely realised. However, where these actors really excel is the delivery of their songs, which very nearly flooded the cinema by the outpouring of tears they inspired in the audience.

The film is consequently rather unbalanced. It is marred by unoriginality and poor jokes but it is bolstered by great British actors' performances. However, regardless of its more irritating moments it is always commendable of a film if it manages to make you cry through its raw emotional power, and in this regard, *Song for Marion* is a commendable film, even if it's not a great one.

## Cloud Atlas

Director: Tom Tykwer  
Review: Alfie Packham



If David Mitchell's "unfilmable" novel adaptation *Cloud Atlas* does nothing else, it shows that people should probably stop calling novels "unfilmable" - at three hours long, it certainly is a film. But with the ludicrously ambitious concept it has, it does of course do more than this. First and foremost, the film raises many questions, ranging from "What does it mean to be free? How much of life is predetermined?" to "Why is Hugh Grant playing a Hawaiian cannibal?"

The movie is really six interwoven films, each with their own setting, genre and moment in history, yet all united by a (gimmicky) spiritual force. We follow a young man in the 1800s rescued by a fugitive slave, a composer in the 1930s, a journalist in 1973 and a present day publisher on the run from gangsters. We go on into the future, joining a rebellious clone in Seoul and a post-apocalyptic tribe in 2321. Thanks to nimble editing, a move from a slave ship to a space ship becomes normality over the film's course. But some stories fail to gel thematically, as a comedic section featuring Hugo Weaving in drag sits very uneasily next to sci-fi scenes of tragic



human extermination. At such moments, *The Full Monty* is blended with *Bladerunner*, which, despite the movie's theme of destiny, was never meant to happen. Moving performances from Ben Whishaw and Doona Bae are undermined by creepy race changes, as slightly disturbing make-up brings us a white Halle Berry and an Asian James D'arcy. Rather than casting new actors, prosthetics are overused on famous faces to distracting effect. Whilst they are intended to create a figurative link between the characters in different periods, it really becomes a game of "guess Tom Hanks' next nose".

Physically draining just to watch, *Cloud Atlas* is an inconsistent epic. It is both intentionally and unintentionally funny, at times poignant and at others dull, with some exceptional moments of genius alongside scenes of irretrievable absurdity.

# Campus Capuccino?

Whether pre-lash cocktails or post-lash debrief, the *Muse* Food and Drink team can show you all the University has to offer.

**Library Cafe:** The library is literally such a hub, that I don't think even the customers can handle it. There are plenty of comfy chairs and little corners to work, you are offered the full range of Costa coffees, pastries and cakes, there are even gluten free options. My order of pasta and meatballs was delicious and perfectly sized – all in all, delightful.

**Vanbrugh Food Court:** If you're a grumpy hungover student, or simply in need of some pick me up comfort food, go to the Vanbrugh Food Court. Although none of the food is cooked to perfection, and isn't very suitable for the more health conscious, as a good student grubby meal, it's just right before a long day in the library.

**VBar:** As a pre-drink base, a social space where many a tense society meeting has been held, or as a music venue for various campus events, VBar is a great social space. The separation of seating areas works to great effect, providing comfy seats for a post-lash debrief, and large tables for congregations of serious-looking societies. It serves good coffee, and has the added bonus of a discounted sweet treat every day.

**Courtyard:** One of the most popular food joints on campus, offering an all-day menu and live sports screenings. It is nearly always packed, but with comfortable sofas and a pool table, this is hardly surprising. The menu caters to a student budget yet offers foods that might not feature on your weekly shop, although there is often a long queue for ordering. They serve well-presented hot food, with paninis and burgers being particularly nom-able, but desserts are not their forte and definitely not worth the money.

**Wentworth Edge:** The haunt of the postgrad, Edge conjures images of pallid school dinners and mystery meat in gloopy sauce, but I was pleasantly surprised with the buzz of a coffee shop. The staff were friendly, helpful and prompt, the portions of food would certainly keep you going through a long day of studying, and I'll definitely be getting coffee from there again.



**Cafe Barista:** Welcomed by the hum of the fridge cabinets lining the walls, Café Barista is a coffee shop which lacks atmosphere but is frequently used. It has friendly staff and serves decent coffee; it is a shame that the place closes at 3. The space, tables and sofas are still, however, very much in use after opening hours.

**B Henry's:** Alcuin's college bar might be named after a legendary porter, but with short opening hours from 10 to 3, it is more of a cafe than a bar. It is popular with the post-grads and University staff, offering a variety of hot foods at lunchtime including homemade soups, jacket potatoes, burgers, nachos and pizzas. There are also sandwiches, wraps and salad bowls that are convenient for takeaways.

**D Bar:** If it is fair to say that Derwent College is the social heart of campus life (this reviewer may or may not be in Derwent), then D bar must be considered the aorta. Historic host of much hyped festival Big D, messy mini Club Ds, pub quizzes and open mic nights, it holds place for Derwenters as much more than just a glorified Costa. Infamous niggles - such as the lack of cash-back - do not taint the decent student prices, healthy lunchtime portions, and weekend wedges for big screen sports viewing.

GRAPHICS BY BRANDON SEAGERS



**The Lounge:** Known to ye olde thirde yeares as McQ's, it is a surprising experience. As a cocktail bar it is a great success, despite its proximity to the distinctly banal James dining area. Two cocktails for £5 despite their slightly silly college-related names, is nevertheless a good deal, and the bar staff are friendly and efficient. A great stop-off before heading into town, the Lounge provides a chilled out atmosphere for a couple of drinks or a good gossip.

**Glasshouse:** The drinks options and menu in this small bar are almost identical to that at Courtyard. We enjoyed a happily traditional and hearty pub-style dinner, although the atmosphere was somewhat lacking (even for Hes East it was notably quiet). On the other hand, the clean and cosy range of seating and pool tables made us think that maybe it's more of an evening sort of a place.

## Best Atmosphere: DBar

This may be the winner purely because Derwenters who frequent the bar, however, it does certainly take the biscuit for atmosphere. Despite the sterile eating area next door, DBar pulls off a sports bar feel which draws the rugby boys without fail come Six Nations. It's busy year-round though, with a variety of events held there and a popular bar full of hung-over Freshers, unable to stagger further than down the stairs to grab a pint. Hair of the dog and all that.

## Best Value: Library Cafe

With at least a pint of tea for £1.40 pretty much on tap during exam week, and piles of confectionary for a uniform 60p, plus vending machines for those depressing days when you forget it's a weekend and the cafe is closed, the library cafe lends itself to a student's needs in every economical way. Why would you not want a bacon, brie and mango chutney panini when you've been stuck in the Harry Fairhurst breathing other peoples' farts for the past 12 hours?

## Best Cocktail: The Lounge

Despite the aforementioned silly names of cocktails, The Lounge has some original and tasty drinks. It may not be the most potent Long Island Iced Tea, and a Wenti Wallbanger or a Goodfather may not immediately catch your eye. Others, though, like the Medusa; an electric mix of white rum, peach schnapps, blue curacao, Southern Comfort and lemonade, recommended by the barman and made with loving care and a twinkle in the eye, are excellent.

## Best Meal: Courtyard

The decided favourite when you just really need some good chunky chips, it is an eternal go-to for a quick fix. Whether you fancy a coffee with the morning paper in the sunshine, or a big lunch around one of the garden tables, it has what you want. The favourite for a light snack is hummus with garlic flatbread for £2, and for a proper meal you can pick between a whopping bowl of spaghetti bolognese or a beef burger with two toppings for a casual £5 a pop.

Compiled  
by Fe Morizet,  
Helena Parker,  
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Laura Hughes

## Paris in the springtime: French cuisine student style

PHOTO CREDIT TRUDEL



France! Ask almost anyone about the cuisine of this great country, and they will recount with a fearful reverence the complexity and intricacy of French cooking. Many a budding cook would rather take a palette knife to themselves than attempt to master the unassailable classics. But never fear, mon ami, I hope to pull away the cloche from the secrets of cooking à la française. Let me try and persuade you that there really is nothing hard about preparing the favourite grub of our arty, garlic loving neighbours across La Manche.

If you're thinking you may need to apply for a new overdraft to afford the ingredients then think again. As a wise friend once said to me, isn't a quality piece of meat and a bottle of red pretty much the same price as a takeaway? Surely one good meal is better than one dodgy take away, whose sole purpose is to help you replaster your bathroom the next morning?

The real key to decent French food is quality of ingredients; you're more likely to find a seat in the library the day before exams than concoct a masterpiece out of a supermarket's discount range chicken scraps. It may be a bit pricier, but you really can't create excellent food from inferior ingredients. That's the whole philosophy behind exceptional food: once you realise that then you'll be well on your way to

becoming the next Michel Roux.

Remember: it's all about the prep. Stepping up to the oven with bowls of prepared ingredients will be much more relaxing than cutting off a finger whilst manically chopping the carrots you have neglected in your haste. When you have everything in place, cooking can genuinely become a relaxing and rewarding experience. So, at risk of sounding like an overzealous seminar leader, preparation really is everything.

With that in mind, hopefully a Coq au Vin, the grand-daddy of French classics, won't seem too frightening. Grab your friends, get chopping, and hopefully you can transport the pleasures of rural France to the flood plains of York (just steer well clear of the garden snails and frogs legs):

### Coq Au Vin (serves 4)

8 pieces of chicken  
½ bottle of red wine  
1 pint chicken stock  
1 diced onion  
2 diced carrot  
3 Cloves of garlic, sliced  
200g bacon, cut up  
200g diced mushrooms

1 large onion, thickly sliced  
1 tbsp butter  
1 tbsp Flour + extra for dusting  
1 Tsp thyme  
1 Tsp parsley

Marinate the chicken in the liquids with the onion, carrots and garlic for at least an hour. Remove the chicken pieces and pat dry before coating evenly with flour.

Fry the chicken pieces until golden and remove from the pan. Strain the liquid to remove the veg and fry with the bacon until tender, all in the same pan.

Return the chicken and add the marinade to cover the chicken. Cook, covered, for about an hour over a low heat, until the chicken is tender.

Remove the chicken from the pot and set aside. You should have a thin sauce. To thicken, beat together the flour and butter to a paste. Whisk in the paste and cook until the sauce has thickened.

Cook this out for at least 5 minutes. Fry the mushrooms and onions together till golden and cooked and add back into the sauce along with the chicken.

Serve with mashed potato or pasta, and enjoy with much wine. *Ryan Bentley*



PHOTO COURTESY OF DEMIJOHN

Let's face it; we're all looking to add something fresh to our usual, boring alcohol routine of stale spirits mixed with cheap value squash. So I set out to find something new and exciting that could put the thrill back into drinks.

Enter Demijohn, an intriguing 'liquid deli' located on Museum Street and founded in Scotland, it focuses upon the concept of buying a glass bottle and filling it with anything you find.

If strength, taste and mix ability are high on your drink requirements then demijohn fits the bill - with alcohols up to 58% in strength, and a variety of flavours from traditional sloe gin to the more acquired cucumber flavoured vodka, this shop has it all.

Walking in was like walking into a chemistry lab, and the walls lined with distillation apparatus and numerous glass bottles gave a nostalgic pang for GCSE science.

The staff are knowledgeable and passionate about their products, and keen to share this with anyone who steps in. I was shown round by Zak, an enthusiastic student who told me they were all taught to high standards and joked that "I had to taste most of the alcohol during my training and so by the end of it I was pretty sloshed." I'd certainly like a job here...

The first thing I was introduced to was the ginger wine, and at £2.10 per 100ml it was one of the cheaper products. But cheaper doesn't mean mediocre, and this wine was fabulous.

Upon tasting, I was immediately hit with the sharpness and tang that you get from fresh ginger, followed by the warmth brought by alcohol, far smoother to drink than most wines. The strength too was a bonus for eager percentage hunting students as at 14% it's not to be sniffed at.

I then tried the raspberry vodka and Seville orange gin, which were slightly pricier but it's worth paying for these drinks. The strong, fresh fruitiness comes through first then you get the kick from alcohol. Zak agreed and noted 'they all have a thick almost marmaladey texture'. He adds that 'all our produce comes from independent British producers'. Ethical and delicious, what more you could you want.

Whether it's to make exotic cocktails for a big party or to just treat yourself after a long, hard day at uni, you won't be disappointed with this off-the-beaten-track shop.

## The Naked Baker: Chocolate Orange Cake

Helena Parker

I am going to make a Bold Claim. This cake is potentially the best cake in the history of all cake. In my humble opinion it is the mother of all chocolate indulgence, the godfather of tangy orange ecstasy, the brother, sister, incestuous cousin and grandfather of all that is good about cake.

On the other hand, I do have a fair number of people to back me up on this Bold Claim, namely almost everyone I have baked it for, be it birthday cake, I-want-some-comfort-food cake, or girls-just-want-to-eat-chocolate-cake cake. So my Bold Claim is not totally unfounded.

I originally got the recipe from my grandmother (because this is where all the best recipes come from) who I believe sourced it in her infinite baking wisdom from Delia. So you know it must be good, because Delia is always right.

It splurges the goeiness of a rich chocolate cake together with the zing of orange zest in a glorious outclassing of Terry's chocolate orange and arrives on your plate with a look as if butter wouldn't melt. Which, incidentally, it definitely would.

Like most cakes, it makes no pretence at being healthy. In fact, it positively revels in being not so. On the other hand, it tastes so great that I honestly couldn't care less. Next slice please.



### The Recipe

60z Butter  
60z soft light brown sugar  
4 eggs  
30z self-raising flour  
80z hot chocolate powder  
Juice and rind of 1 orange  
40z butter  
40z icing sugar  
Rind of 1 orange  
20z butter  
20z granulated sugar  
Juice of 1 orange  
10z cocoa powder  
60z icing sugar

Mix together the sugar, butter and butter until creamy. Add eggs, alternating with chocolate powder and flour, and add orange zest and juice.

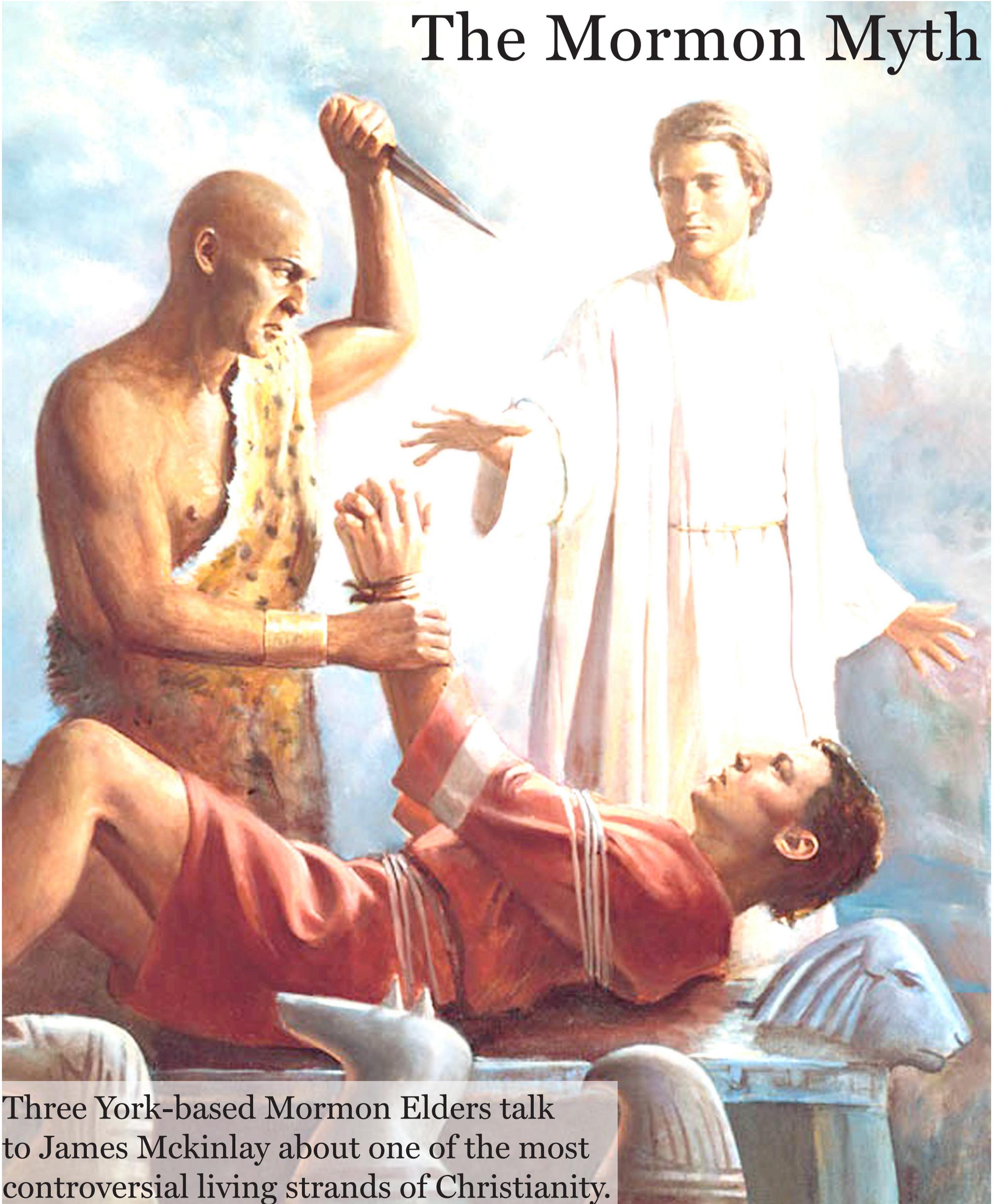
Pour into 2 baking tins and bake at 180C for 25-30 mins.

Cool in tins then turn out onto wire racks. Once cool begin on the butter icing.

Beat together butter and icing sugar, and add rind only of the second orange. Sandwich the two halves together.

Put butter, granulated sugar and orange juice in a pan until melted and simmering. Pour into the cocoa and icing sugar, and spread over cake. Voila.

# The Mormon Myth



Three York-based Mormon Elders talk to James Mckinlay about one of the most controversial living strands of Christianity.

I'm slipping tentatively into the back of a packed Mormon chapel, feeling distinctly out of place amongst the plethora of Sunday suits and ties, apologising with my eyes for my scruffy overcoat and ruffled appearance, conspicuous voice recorder in hand. A young woman saunters up to the lectern and begins her sermon, "What if Cinderella decided not to go to the ball? What if Aladdin never met the Genie?" Though her talk is actually about facing unplanned situations, I suspect I may ironically be the only person in the chapel who finds her citations to fairy tales more appropriate than they seem.

I've always considered religion to be an exalted fairy tale, a superstitious myth that comes from a time when we didn't have any explanations. As for Mormonism, everyone can name a controversy or issue associated with it; charges of institutionalised racism, polygamy, and fraud immediately come to mind. That said, it's rare that one gets an opportunity to properly investigate these things; if you want to find out about Mormonism it stands to reason that you should talk to Mormons. After being accosted by Mormon missionaries at University, I agreed to speak to them, with an open, if somewhat sceptical mind. Despite their reservations, they also decided to allow me to interview their 'elders', a term comparable to 'missionaries' in the Mormon faith.

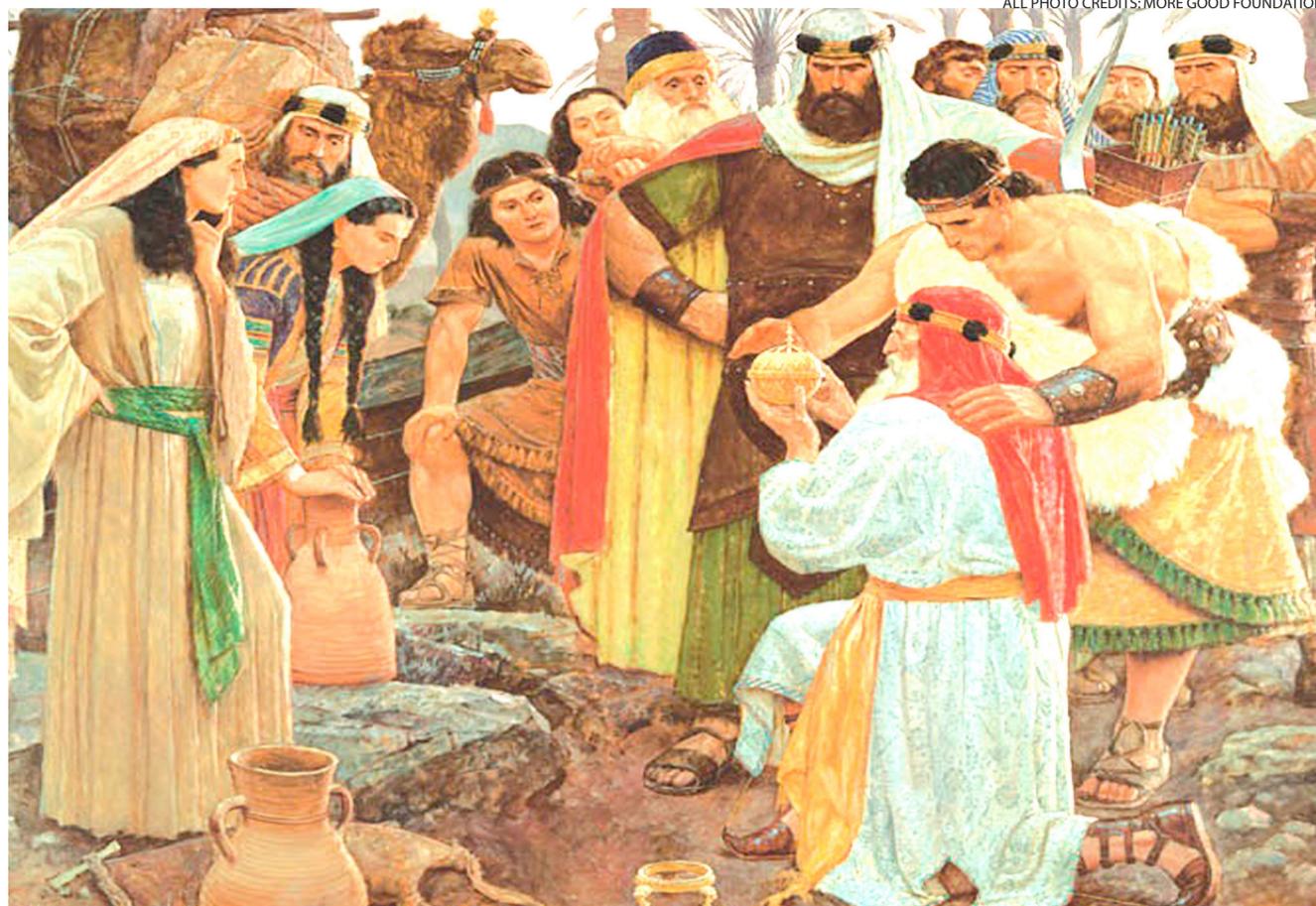
A fortnight later, I arrived at York's Church of Jesus of the Latter Day Saints and was met by three Elders who, as far as I could tell, were barely even older than me: Elder Pineda from El Salvador, Elder Burt from America, and Brother Mark Cosens from the UK. An eclectic and international mix then, which neatly flag-poled my first question: What does it mean to be a Mormon in Britain today and how does that relate to the fixation with America the church seems to have? Mark, perhaps superfluously, pointed out that "Jesus Christ wasn't American" but added that "Mormonism in this country is cosmopolitan; you see Mormons from every culture. It's an international church." Elder Burt was quick to add that the church is only really seen as American because of its origin.

Tolstoy said that the Church of Jesus of the Latter Day Saints was "the quintessential American Church" - Mormons believe that the Garden of Eden was located in Missouri and that Jesus ministered there after his resurrection. I asked the Elders what they thought about this label, given that much of their belief system does seem to be geographically oriented in Northern America. "The Book of Mormon is all about Jesus Christ's ministry to people who left the Middle East and travelled to the Americas following his resurrection," Cosens argues, "that's geographically what happened." After suggesting the belief that the Native Americans were the direct descendants of a lost tribe of Israel is not supported by an overwhelming consensus in historical studies, I was told, "that's not really the basis of our faith; we're not looking for a wide consensus." It's difficult to argue with such a frank admission.

"It's about coming to a real experience," said Cosens, "an answer to prayer. But my specific question: is the Book of Mormon true? Is it authentic scripture?" "You can ask that in prayer. The answer would come as some kind of inner clarity. Sometimes there are very distinct impressions that come through the Holy Spirit to the sincere seeker of truth." The word 'truth' appeared several times during the interview in reference to an undefined personal, inner experience. I suggested that the claims of Mormonism, like any other religion, are indeed truth claims and as such require verifiable evidence: "You can find your own objective evidence on the level that you're seeking it if you genuinely want to know. There are some things that are of some value to you, some that have more value and some that are of eternal value; there are degrees of truth." Regardless of what value something has to you, surely something is either true or it's not. Not according to Cosens: "There are plenty of truths with lots of degrees. The existence of God is a central truth that we claim, that we can help others to know if they are willing to find out for themselves." So it would appear there's a wealth of evidence to be gleaned if only the nonbeliever would show some effort.

As for more tangible evidence, one of the more interesting things about the Latter Day Saints church is that, unlike the Judaeo-Christian tradition, its origin and formation can be more accurately traced historically. We may know next to nothing about the gospel writers, but there's a host of information on Mormonism's founder and supposed prophet, Joseph Smith. The very mention of his name created a palpable tension in the room as the Elders leaned in closer, ready to correct me at the slightest sniff of what Cosens would later, and rather predictably, refer to as "false information". The false information: verified arrest and conviction records of Joseph Smith in the New York area, dated between 1826 and 1830, on four charges of fraud and disorderly behaviour.

I posited that Smith was a known con-man and charlatan. "If you believe the false accusations," Cosens retorted. The records, however, were discovered by Wesley Walters in 1971 in a Jailhouse Basement in New York and are easily available for scrutiny. Cosens argued that "Joseph Smith was persecuted by corrupt officials many times and politicians who were threat-



ALL PHOTO CREDITS: MORE GOOD FOUNDATION

"The Book of Mormon will more than entertain you. It will change you."

ened by the Restoration gospel." What's crucial to note though, is that Smith's arrests and convictions were made before the publication of the Book of Mormon in 1830. To ascribe the political motivations that Cosens does would be anachronistic. Between talking to angels and transcribing supposed scripture, it appears Smith was ripping off farmers with a con game.

Perhaps this information throws into serious doubt the validity of their church and its claims; the Elders didn't see the connection. Cosens countered, "What I would recommend if you want to take that tact is to read the Book of Mormon and ask God if it's true and if Joseph Smith was really a prophet."

From one contentious issue to another, we moved swiftly onto the church's shady history of institutionalised racism. Until 1978 black members of the LDS church were denied ordinances to the priesthood and even the lowly position of deacon. Nor were they permitted the sacred rights of the temple. What's the church's position now and does it look back on that period with any shame? "There's a lot of assumption that there's no racism involved at all," said Cosens, before revealing that Smith ordained black ministers and was pro-Abolition. This is true, though it has also been noted, in History of the Church, that in 1838, Smith said of black people, "They came into the world slaves mentally and physically. Change their situation with the whites, and they would be like them." It seems Smith was difficult to pin down on the subject of race.

Elder Burt gave the timeless excuse that the church should not be judged by individual members: "The church organization, set up by Jesus Christ is perfect. If there are perfect people in there it will work every time."

In the Book of Mormon, 2 Nephi 5:21 describes a curse that befalls the people who have turned away from God, the Lamanites: "wherefore, as they were white and exceedingly fair and delightsome, that they might not be enticing unto my people Lord God did cause a skin of blackness to come upon them." Verse 22 continues, "And thus saith the Lord: I will cause that they shall be loathsome unto thy people, save they

shall repent of their iniquities."

Elder Burt has accused me of taking the quote out of context while Cosens responded that the curse was not the black skin, but the separation between the two peoples. I was the only one in the room who found the words "cursing", "skin of blackness" and "loathsome", provocative and alarming. It seems God makes it far too easy for people to 'misinterpret' his words.

Given the failure of Romney to get to the White House, I asked the Elders if they'd like to see more Mormons in office. Cosens said he personally would, explaining, "they're people of principle, men of character," though the church itself does not endorse any political party or politician; "it's 100% apolitical," Cosens said. Yet, the church did campaign in 2008 against proposition 8, the proposal to legalise gay marriage in California. "That's a political issue that the church became involved with. The church doesn't back a political party or campaign in elections but that was an issue where the church took a stand."

The Church's stance on homosexuality is typically vague: "all are children of God. The message advocates kindness, love and to respect an individual's personal challenges," Cosens explains. So homosexuality is just a "personal challenge" that can be overcome: love the sinner not the sin, one can assume. Cosens also explained why he was against the bill to legalise gay marriage in the UK, "I think it's flattery of gay people; civil partnerships offer them civil rights."

The LDS Church remains a constant source of attention for its perceived evasions and historical distortion. There's even a new musical about it, entitled *The Book of Mormon*, which opened in the West End last week. I asked the Elders if they'd be attending: "I won't personally," said Brother Mark Cosens and neither will Elder Burt: "I haven't thought about it, to be honest." The official statement of the church is that *The Book of Mormon* the musical may entertain you for an evening but the Book of Mormon itself will more than entertain you; it will change you. That's for sure. **M**

# CABBIES' CORNER

DRIVING ALONG WITH DONNY ON A SUNDAY NIGHT AND ON THE TOPIC OF SACRIFICES...



**“No. I’m not giving anything up for Lent, I’m going to Turkey to drink with my friends”**

*Donny  
Driving cabs for 10 years*

## Tea and Troubles.

Dear Sophie,

***I’m embarrassed about having my breasts touched romantically because they are oddly shaped. How can I get over this?***

Develop a foot fetish. Many people find that having their feet touched can be incredibly arousing. As long as you haven’t got a problem with your feet, this should be a good substitute for having your breasts caressed. Your lover may be a little disappointed to encounter toes instead of nipples, but they’ll soon enjoy the experience. Many people like having melted chocolate or whipped cream sucked off their digits, but that’s a little passé now - I’d recommend dipping toes in marmite or hummus for extra sensual enjoyment.

***One of my housemates eats his food out of saucepans and leaves them everywhere. How can I get him to eat out of bowls?***

Video his behaviour, and upload it to Youtube. Every time he cooks something in a pan and fails to transfer the contents to a bowl, whip out a camcorder and record the act forever more. Simply justify your actions by commenting that you find his behaviour “truly fascinating, and that you hadn’t come across this particular form of laziness before so you thought it best to document it and show it to the world.” Hopefully the prospect of getting ‘hits for humiliation’ will get him to re-consider the wondrous possibilities of



crochery. Failing that, inform his mother.

***I’m applying for a Masters to a top university and I want to make my application stand out. What can you recommend?***

Get a reference from a Willow bouncer. There is often a lot of onus on applicants to get a reference from their academic supervisors but I feel this is uninspired. It is likely that your greatest achievements at university started in a drinking establishment and ended in Willow so it would be a shame to let those accomplishments go unaccounted for. There is much to be proud of that dancefloor and I think a commitment to prawn crackers is testament to real strength of character, which is exactly what post-graduate admissions are looking for. Just remember to seal that reference with none other than a Willow stamp and you should be in for a chance.

## THE STUDENT NOTEBOOK

MIRANDA LARBI

On the rare occasion that the sun comes out in York, the concrete concourse outside JB Morrell takes on the appearance of a rehab clinic, with pallid creatures stumbling out from the darkness to bask like little animals in the warming rays. Add in the plethora of campaign posters and flyers drawn up by those in-patients who cannot bare the thought of their fast approaching freedom, Daniel Whitmore’s trumpet performances from the parapets, and it really did look as though the patients were trying to take over the asylum. Alas there was no offer to my entry into the library in the form of medieval fanfare and thus these brass talents fell on deaf ears. This was all heightened by the presence of the cult-like institution known as Teach First, who tried to ply every vulnerable soul with heart-shaped lollypops and persuade them to sign the next two years of their free lives away to teacher training. All I can say is that if by third year you are contemplating going back into the classroom, something has seriously gone wrong and I suggest you either do more work or get out more.

Talking of campus-in-the-sun reminds one of the recent Sun-on-campus debacle. For me, it’s a bit dark for a ‘liberal’ institution to contemplate getting rid of one the country’s biggest newspapers and thus, censoring student’s access to media. Now I can’t imagine that there’s a huge Sun readership on campus but if red tops like the Sun are banned - what

could come next? All tabloids (in which case bye bye *Vision*)? Then perhaps right wing titles? It’s funny because the library hold some titles that would make a nun weep. I, for example, rented Spike Lee’s *Jungle Fever* (purely for dissertation research purposes you’ll understand) and I don’t think my relationship with my old housemate has ever been the same since. There are some things you cannot un-see and some things that one really should be alone for. This little DVD lies undisturbed, revelling in all its saucy glory, in JB Morrell - whilst the Sun, with its far less raunchy or controversial material (and witty headlines), is under attack. Truth be known, I think even if the Sun did stop page three, I think people

would still look to get rid of it.

It’s taken me about a year to workout how to hashtag on my computer which is probably why I’ve never really got into Twitter. Until now. I didn’t want to - I mean anything that I’m bursting to share can usually be heard a few streets away (I blame stage school for my vocal projection problems), or is posted on Facebook (a catalogue of embarrassing incidents, which has temporarily been hijacked by Matt Kilcoyne’s campaigning). My phone, hosted by 3G - ‘the network built for the internet’, can barely manage text, let alone a second social media app. But whatever, as London Fashion Week approached, I decided



to join the 21st century, envisioning myself at some fabulous show, avidly tweeting about tassels, which no doubt would be re-tweeted by the likes of Simon Chilvers and Alexandra Shulman. The reality was somewhat different. By the Sunday I could barely write, let alone tweet as breakfast was served in the form of Babycham and Jack Daniels - most of which went on my shoes rather than down my gullet (it’s not easy being surrounded by giants when you’re a lackluster 5’5). The other days I simply had nothing to report other than the fact that the subzero temperature had permanently frozen my nipples and that we had all developed an addiction to skinny popcorn (sounds dire but trust me, I’m sure there’s some sort of crack sprinkled on it). Unbelievably, these glimmers of #fashioninsidknowledge did win me two followers; sure, one of them has a tag line of ‘Couple A B C’s, bad bitch double D’s, poppin’ E, I don’t give a F, told you I’m a G’ - but beggars can’t be choosers. It’s nice to know he’s got such a good grip of the alphabet. My old housemate is an avid tweeter, primarily because he can’t keep his trap shut and loves to espouse on the virtues of Toryism and not being Welsh. He has arguments on Twitter with Polly Toynbee. He also refused to start following me until I wrote something ‘relevant’, and not fashion or Arsenal related. Yesterday I retweeted Patrick Wintour’s comment on the Pope’s resignation; today I have thirteen followers - clearly Matthew approves of my baby step into current events.