



Imperial alumnus and Purity brewery co-founder sadly passed away last year - Purity have released a new bitter 'Jimbo' in his name. Find it at the Union bar



IN ARTS: AN INTERVIEW WITH THE CEO OF THE ENGLISH NATIONAL OPERA - P10

# Students support strike as picketing commences



Sam Lovatt Editor-in-Chief

Imperial College's student body has voted overwhelmingly to support the University and College Union (UCU) strike over changes to the University Superannuation Scheme (USS) pension policy.

73.4% of students who voted were in favour of the strike action, which will involve Imperial College employees (who are also members of UCU) not carrying out their roles within the College from Wednesday 1st to Friday 3rd December.

The total votes cast reached 2502, 105 votes over the 10% threshold of 2397 needed for votes to reach quorum. 1791 voted in favour of supporting the strike, 648 against and 63 abstained from voting.

Continued on page 4

## Imperial College awarded Queen's Anniversary Prize for pandemic response

Credit: The Queen's Anniversary Awards



Sam Lovatt Editor-in-Chief

Imperial College has been awarded a Queen's Anniversary Prize for its response to the COVID 19 pandemic.

The prize is the highest honour possible in the further education sector. Only one has been awarded to a further 20 universities.

The Queen's Anniversary Prizes are part of the UK honours cycle, and awards are bestowed by the royal family at Buckingham Palace, expected February 2022.

Continued on page 4

# EDITORIAL

## Omicronic

This issue was produced thanks to the work of

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And our numerous contributors



At the time of writing, the morning of Monday 29th, there are nine confirmed cases of the new Omicron variant of SARS-CoV-2 in the UK. That's up from three when I woke up this morning. By the time you're reading this, there will probably be hundreds.

The FT published a graph last week showing the proportion of new Covid cases caused by each variant of concern in the days after it was initially sequenced. The Delta variant, famously the most transmissible up to now, was not even close to the levels of proliferation seen with Omicron.

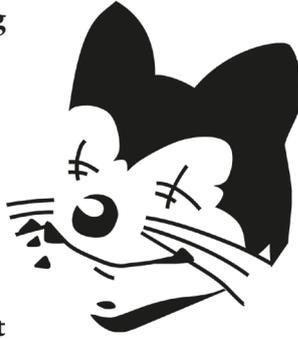
Even the Pfizer and AstraZeneca jabs are not 100% effective, let alone the more shadily developed SinoVac and Sputnik V, of which the former has had efficacy rates reported as low as 50%. Further to this, immunity appears to wane significantly after six months, leading to the UK's substantial booster jab roll-out. LICs currently stand with only 5.8% of their populations having received a single dose of vaccine, with populous countries such as Ethiopia at just 3%. Targets for vaccination in LICs span years, the fact that waning immunity makes the target wholly unreachable is apparently irrelevant. Without permanently locking our borders, we'll always be exposed to these places in which new variants can breed.

New Zealand, the world's bastion of zero-covid policy, recently abandoned this approach after almost two years of locked borders and has accepted that it will need to live with the virus.

There seems to be genuinely nothing we can do. Real herd immunity occurs at around 94% of a population with antibodies, a figure we couldn't reach even with mandatory jabs for all citizens due to instances of vaccines not working properly.

I'm finalising this piece on Thursday afternoon, following announcements that 114 million extra booster jabs have been bought by the Department of Health and Pfizer is now working on an updated jab for the Omicron variant, which may be ready in as few as 100 days.

Omicron will be one of many variants to emerge over the coming years, that much seems certain. Vaccines will be improved and modified to suit new variants in time and the UK will remain at relatively high levels of immunity through both exposure to the virus and continued boosters. This is just how it is now. Unless Omicron turns out to be ten times more deadly, it's just more Covid in the UK. We had best get on with dealing with the Covid catastrophe in the third world and addressing problems we can actually influence back home, because things just won't get better than this on the Covid front.



## Statement of Intent

At Felix we believe that it is always in the interest of the students to know. Transparency in the workings of the College and the work of your student representatives is key. Therefore I, the Felix Editor, on behalf of the team promise that:

We will, to the best of our ability, tell you the whole truth and nothing but the truth.

We will keep your confidence and will only publish something you say to us if you have explicitly said that we can.

We will work to expose unfairness and discrimination in all forms that it takes at the College.

We will treat fairly any article sent to us, regardless of point of view, and do our best to work with you to prepare it for publication.

Signed by Sam Lovatt  
Editor-in Chief

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# Letters to the Editor

Please address any letters to Felix@ic.ac.uk

## A letter to our leaders on Covid restrictions

Dear Professors,

I must say that I was disappointed to learn that all of our lectures would be pre-recorded this year. This is not because I underestimate the threat of COVID. I have experienced it myself (albeit to a lesser degree than an older person might have) as I am designated 'clinically extremely vulnerable' due to a chronic health condition that requires me to take immunosuppressants.

Mask mandates make sense and should have been introduced again as soon as deaths began to climb in July.

Despite this, I cannot see an argument for universities having a higher level of restriction than the rest of society. A university is filled mainly with young people who clearly are at much less threat from COVID than the average member of society. Furthermore, unlike at school, where this population of young people are living with their elderly relatives, university students are generally living and socialising with other young people and are much less likely to act as a hotbed of the illness which will then spread to other sections of the population. If our secondary schools can remain fully open without masks, surely our universities can return to normal with them. If I can go clubbing in a poorly-ventilated underground hotbox, why can't I attend a large lecture theatre while wearing a mask?

I do, however, understand that lecturers are generally more at risk from the virus than students. And therefore, I would propose it is reasonable and right for any lecturers who feel particularly vulnerable from the illness to conduct their courses entirely online without any pressure to do otherwise. But I think the norm should most certainly be that lectures are conducted in person.

From value for money to mental health provisions I believe it is irresponsible for this university to conduct so much of its teaching online. If Imperial is to maintain its reputation as one of the top universities in the country, it should look at what the others are doing. For example, Cambridge has been delivering lectures in person where possible since March, and my friends at Oxford report the same situation.

I hope my comments are received in the constructive way they are meant.

Regards,

Cameron Stibbard Hawkes *First Year Biochemistry*

● Letters have been edited

## COMIC



## NEWS

Continued from page 1

## Strike action

Imperial College is one of only four universities in the UK striking solely over changes to the USS pension scheme, having not conducted a ballot on the issue of pay and working conditions. This is because Imperial College takes part in 'local bargaining' rather than 'national bargaining', meaning staff representatives negotiate pay with the College alone, rather than as a national effort. Due to this structure, Imperial College are not eligible to take part in a national strike over the issue.

The referendum comes after a vote within the UCU on November 4th resulted in a majority of Imperial College UCU members voting in favour of strike action of changes to the USS pension scheme. 71.7% of voters voted in favour of strike action, with 86.3% voting in favour of action short of a strike. The turnout for both ballots was 55.9% of eligible voters, coming in above the necessary 50% to reach quorum.

748 members of staff at Imperial are members of the UCU and were eligible to vote, equating to around 8.8% of the College's 8500 total staff.

The strike is over changes to the USS pension scheme that lead to cuts in guaranteed retirement benefit for recipients. The size of this cut is disputed by the UCU and Universities UK (UUK), which represents universities in this conflict. UUK have stated that the cuts will result in a loss of 10% in pension value upon retirement, whereas UCU have produced figures of

35% and 41% cuts. These figures were calculated by a third party company.

A number of other student unions across the country, including the NUS, have also come out in support of the strikes.

Provost Ian Wamsley sent communications to all staff and students explaining that those taking part in the strike will not be paid for the days they strike. The money saved by the College from withholding pay will be used "to support activities that benefit education and/or student experience during 2021-22", according to Vice-Provost (Education and Student Experience) Emma McCoy.

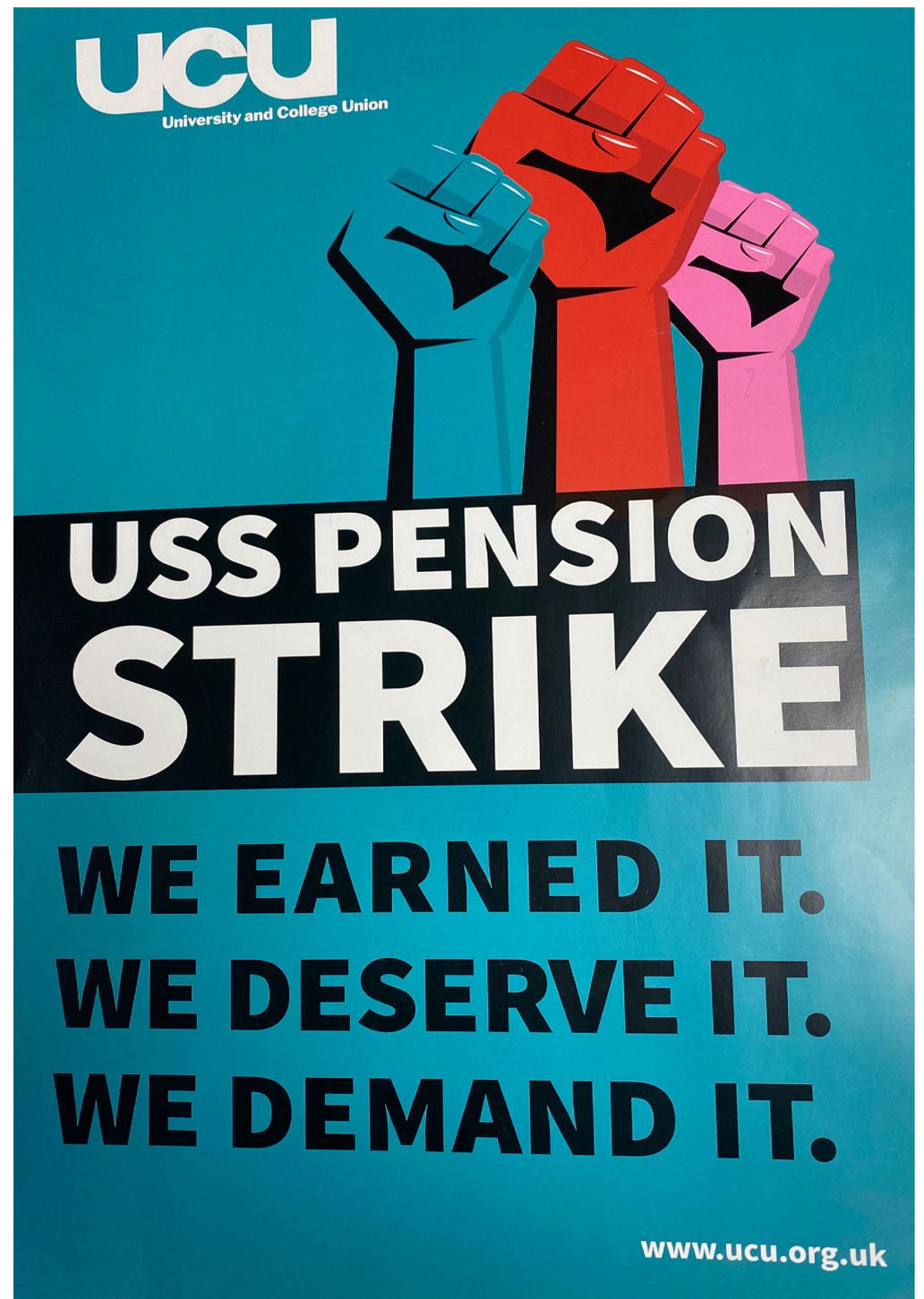
Some critics say that a strike only damages students, at a time where we emerge from many months of teaching damaged by remote learning. Others note that whilst lecturing duties typically cease, work on personal projects and research rarely takes a hit during strike periods.

UUK claim they have tried to reach a settlement but the UCU's negotiators have sabotaged chances of a deal being struck. UUK described the negotiators as "members of the influential UCU Left faction" and that they're affiliated with the Socialist Workers party. They added "With such divisions in UCU's decision-making bodies, it is difficult to see how a negotiated settlement over USS could ever be possible".

students and alumni have been on the front lines at every stage of the pandemic and continue to be. At the same time, we pivoted fast to develop new hybrid-learning initiatives that would continue to deliver the world-class education our students deserve during national lockdowns. I am proud to accept this honour, which is a fitting testament to the hard work of our entire community".

References to the switch to hybrid learning allude to Imperial College winning the Sunday Times University of the Year 2022 title in September.

The prize website states that "further information on each entry will be available in due course" and does not elaborate



Continued from page 1

## Queen's Anniversary Prize

On Imperial College, the charity said "World-class expertise in data modelling and real-time analysis, supporting a holistic response to Covid-19 in UK and internationally" [sic].

President Alice Gast said of the award "The resilience, ingenuity and unwavering dedication of our community in response to the pandemic has been astonishing. From modelling disease spread to building PPE for healthcare workers, our brilliant colleagues,

on the above. The Imperial College News site, however, had a good crack at guessing why the prize was awarded.

The COVID 19 Response Team was founded at the College in January 2020, shortly after the emergence of SARS-CoV-2 as a novel coronavirus. The Team greatly influenced government decision making and led to the unfortunate conception of the nickname "Professor Lockdown" for our own Professor Neil Ferguson.

Professors Wendy Barclay, Charles Bangham and Neil Ferguson all remain in the Scientific Advisory Group for Emergencies (SAGE) according to the government website.

The College has also carried out 15 major clinical trials into COVID 19 treatments, as well as leading the REACT study which looked at the virus's spread across the population.

They add that the College set its own testing facilities which allowed 5,000 daily tests for Imperial staff and students. Regular sampling on public transport in the areas around the College was also carried out to check prevalence of the virus in the immediate area.

# London Tube strikes hit commuters

Shrey Bohra Staff Writer

Ongoing strike action on Tube lines will cause further disruption for Londoners, local businesses, and Transport for London finances in the run-up to Christmas.

Rail, Maritime and Transport (RMT) union members voted to implement a programme of strikes over the return of the Night Tube.

The RMT strongly rejected plans by Transport for London (TfL) to ask Tube drivers to work a few nights a year, leading to a ballot of members on support of strike action. In a press release announcing the strike action, RMT stated that the plan constitutes “the ripping up of existing agreements [...] with complete disregard for the staff”. The General Secretary of the RMT, Mike Lynch, claims that this has been done “in order to cut staffing numbers and costs”.

TfL has refuted these claims strongly. In a press release, TfL stated that “No Tube driver has or will lose their job as a result of these changes, nor has any driver been forced to switch to part- or full-time work if they do not want to”.

Transport for London (TfL) introduced the overnight service to selected sections of the Underground in 2016, with expansion being halted at the start of the pandemic. With restrictions lifted and demand rising, the decision was made to restart the Night Tube from the last weekend of November (26th and 27th).

When the Night Tube was first launched, it was staffed by employees assigned exclusively to work on the overnight services. With the suspension of the Night Tube due to the coronavirus pandemic, these workers were folded into the larger pool in order to provide enough staff for the operation of regular services. With the resumption of the Night Tube, TfL plans to keep this singular pool of drivers, asking each to work a few nights each year.

Both parties were unable to come to an agreement despite moderation by the arbitration service, ACAS. As a result, the first round of walkouts occurred on Friday 26th November, with the majority of drivers on the Piccadilly, Victoria, Northern, Central, Waterloo & City



Photo credit: Envato Elements

and Jubilee lines walking out at the start of service at 04:30. The Waterloo & City line was shut completely throughout the day, along with the majority of the Central and Piccadilly lines. The other three lines were operational with severely reduced service, causing overcrowding on the few trains that were running, along with other methods of transportation that had to deal with the overflow. This strike was followed by another, more targeted one, with workers on the Victoria and Central lines clocking off after 20:30 on Saturday 27th November.

The strikes resulted in approximately 600,000 fewer journeys being taken. With the action taking place on one of the busiest retail weekends of the year, the impact on Central London businesses was felt strongly, with chief economist at the London based investment bank Panmure Gordon estimating a loss in sales in excess of £10 million.

The public has not been very supportive of strike action in the past, with an LBC poll conducted in 2015 finding only 16% of Londoners were in support of the strikes taking place at that time. This round of industrial action is unlikely to find any wider support, drawing widespread condemnation from around the political spectrum – the Mayor of London Sadiq Khan, Transport Secretary Grant Shapps, and business advocacy groups have all

spoken out strongly against the decision by the RMT. In the current climate, particular attention has been drawn to the benefits the Night Tube brings to Women’s safety in providing a safe and reliable transportation method at night. Professor Tony Travers, Chair of the British Government at LSE research group, said “The unions’ position has never been weaker.”

Planned strike action threatens to cripple London’s transport network into

the future unless an agreement is reached. Central and Victoria line drivers plan to strike on Friday and Saturday nights until the 17th of December, with severely reduced service from 20:30 onwards. A large scale walkout is planned on the 18th, with drivers from the Central, Jubilee, Northern, Piccadilly and Victoria lines planning on striking all day on the Saturday before Christmas.

## Imperial College proposes 1325 non-student flats in West London

Imperial College has submitted a proposal for up to 1,325 residential flats to be built in Old Oak, North Acton.

The proposal is solely for residential properties and does not include any accommodation or amenities for students.

The proposal includes a 56 storey skyscraper that will house a large minority of the flats. The proposal suggests eight buildings in total and is intended to form a new “town centre” near the planned Old

Oak station for the HS2 train line.

Building will occur on the One Portal Way site, which the College’s endowment fund acquired in 2016.

The project will also bring shops and green space to the area.

The Vice Provost (Academic Planning) gave a presentation to Union Council on Tuesday regarding the Estates strategy for improving a number of satisfaction metrics for students. Endowment fund uses, such as residential housing developments, did not crop up in this presentation.

# SCIENCE

Edited by: ISABELLE ZHANG  
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## Pandemic preparedness: UK government ignored exercise action points

Allanah Hibbert Science Writer

COVID-19 has plagued our lives for almost two years now, however, varying CoV strains have been around for much longer. In 2015, South Korea saw an outbreak of MERS-CoV, and the UK came worryingly close to its own outbreak when three people presented with flu-like symptoms ten days after travelling to an undisclosed location. They were admitted to hospital and within a week were lab-confirmed cases of MERS-CoV. After initiating contact tracing, it was discovered that two of these individuals had attended a large gathering shortly before falling ill; fast-forward a few weeks and the UK had 50 confirmed cases and 650 contacts. The NHS was under pressure, par-

ticularly due to the usual flu cases, and the media took a keen interest in the potential of a widespread outbreak.

Thankfully, the MERS-CoV outbreak was contained. However, in response, the then Chief Medical Officer (Dame Sally Davies) requested an exercise (Exercise Alice) involving NHS England, Public Health England, and the Department of Health. Observers were also invited from GO-Science and the Cabinet Office. The tabletop exercise, lasting one day, involved a discussion and investigation into the nation's preparedness for a potential pandemic. The four themes to be investigated were PPE, Use of Quarantine, Community Sampling, and Communication.

The Clinical Advisory Group concluded that the Government and NHS



Grooveland Designs/Unsplash

### The Clinical Advisory Group's 12 action points

1. Develop a MERS-CoV-specific instructional video on PPE level and use.
2. Develop a protocol to enable the arrangement and conduct of timely clinical trials for new or experimental treatments.
3. Develop a set of guidelines to prioritise treatments when there are limited stocks/doses available.
4. Develop a MERS-CoV serology assay (testing using bodily fluids – e.g. swab tests) procedure to include also a plan for a process to scale up capacity.
5. Produce a briefing paper on the South Korean outbreak with details on the cases and response and consider the direct application to the UK including Port of Entry screening.
6. Produce an extensive summary of the Ebola Virus Disease lessons identified with a section on applicability to MERS-CoV.
7. Produce an options plan using extant evidence and cost benefits for quarantine versus self-isolation for a range of contact types including symptomatic, asymptomatic, and high risk.
8. Develop a plan for the process of community sampling in a MERS-CoV outbreak.
9. Develop a live tool or system to collect data from MERS-CoV contacts.
10. Research, review and identify good practice for definitions for close/high risk contacts and recommend a definition for MERS-CoV.
11. Prepare a FAQ for MERS-CoV close/high risk contacts.
12. Produce a briefing paper that considers a range of communication options to interface with NHS staff to gain engagement.

were ill-prepared for a pandemic and identified 12 action points that were considered essential to being able to handle any outbreaks. These 12 action points, listed on the right, highlight with alarming precision most of what we failed to do well enough (or rapidly enough) during the pandemic. Significantly, this report was published 4 years before COVID-19 appeared on the scene – yet it was not acted upon and was kept undisclosed to the public for five years. Sections of the Government were possibly unaware of this report with Matt Hancock being quoted saying, “Famously, all the preparations and the plans that were in place were for a flu pandemic.” Was he knowingly covering up an exercise looking at the need of a plan for a CoV pandemic, or was the report so tightly confined to those directly involved, that not even our former Health Secretary was aware of it? Regardless, the action points identified by the Clinical Advisory Group were not acted upon, a plan was not devised, and so when SARS COVID-19 hit we were caught off-guard and unprepared.

A few months into the pandemic in April 2020, a clinical consultant, Dr Moosa Qureshi, led a campaign for transparency into NHS preparedness for a pandemic, demanding the release of a report on a three-day simulation exercise from 2016, entitled “Exercise Cyg-

nus”. After initial hesitations, the report was released, but was considered unsatisfactory in addressing these concerns. Subsequently, after more than a year of campaigning, “Exercise Alice”, along with 6 other reports, were released. All these reports highlighted the need of the government to prepare for any potential pandemics. Yet what was their response? The government and NHS have yet to present evidence or record of them addressing these action points prior to the COVID-19 outbreak.

The question on Dr Qureshi and everyone else's minds is why? Why the lack of action? Why the failure to disclose? Where is the Government's transparency? There is also the question of who in the Government was aware of this? The Health Secretary (Jeremy Hunt at the time) is known to have overseen Exercise Alice, but who else was aware? Who bears responsibility for the apparent negligence, and what will be done to prevent such a situation occurring in the future?

The Government have launched their own inquiry into their handling of the COVID-19 pandemic, however, it is not due to open until spring 2022, so for now it remains a continued campaign for transparency and a patient wait for the inquiry and its results.

# What does the first animal look like?

## Involution and the Ctenophora problem

► *The appearance of the first animal continues to be one of the most controversial discussions in evolutionary biology.*

Wang Guo Science Writer

It is believed that the first animal appeared on Earth around 800 million years ago according to DNA evidence, but we could not see a great flourish of different animal species until around 530 million years ago with the Cambrian explosion. This period left us unique fossil records of enigmatic animals like trilobites. After hundreds of years of evolution with massive extinction events, four grand animal groups remain the basal taxa and three superphyla. The basal taxa have this name because these are the first animals to dwell on the Earth. In the basal taxa, four phyla are included in Porifera (sponges), Cnidarian (jellyfish and anemones), Placozoa (small and flat ciliated marine animals) and Ctenophora (comb jellies). On the other hand, regarding the three superphyla, Deuterostomia are characterized by the formation of the anus before the mouth during embryonic development and some of their sea stars and humans belong to this group. Ecdysozoa include nematodes, insects and crabs, which moult their exoskeleton. Finally, Lophotrochozoa reference annelids and molluscs, so most of their components have got a softbody. The key difference be-

Photo credits: Wikimedia - Bruno C. Vellutini



Mnemiopsis leidyi (a species of Ctenophora)

tween the basal taxa and three superphyla is that the superphyla possess bilateral symmetry, a milestone in the history of evolution because since then all the new animals will possess this feature. Consequently, the three superphyla can also be clustered under the name Bilateria.

The issue here is that the order of apparition of the phyla of the basal taxa is obscure. They all possess primitive characteristics such as the absence of real muscles or the use of simple diffusion to transport substances around the body. In addition, all of them live in the ocean, where life has emerged certainly for the first time. However, traditionally, most scientists believed that sponges were the first animals due to their simplicity. They lack germ layers, which are the first coats of cells formed during embryonic development, which begin cell specialization. There are three types of germ layers: endoderm, mesoderm and ectoderm, which form the gut, the muscles and the nervous system, respectively. Hence, sponges have got neither specialized tissues nor organs. Sponges are sessile during most of their life cycle, which means they cannot move. Therefore, sponges were believed to be plants, but we currently know they are animals because they are filterers, catching nutritive particles from the water using flagellated cells called choanocytes. Sponges also have calcium carbonate skeletons which allowed the formation of very old fossils. Indeed, a 580-million-year-old fossil of a sponge's skeleton was found in the Doushantuo Formation in Guizhou, China. Arguably, this could be the oldest animal fossil in the world.

Therefore, the idea that sponges were the first animals seems logical and widely accepted until the 21st century with the disruption of new techniques such as genome sequencing or advanced computational programmes. Research comparing the genome of different species of comb jellies across the globe (including

Antarctica) and the rest of animal taxa has shown disturbing results: Ctenophora came before Porifera and Placozoa. In fact, all the dataset supports this hypothesis. The probability that Ctenophora were the first animals is around 56.8 – 75.4%, while the contrary case, that Porifera were the first animals, has got likelihood between 37.2 – 43.2%. The genomic comparison results seem illogic, far-fetched, so this was called the Ctenophora problem. How can a sponge, asymmetrical and sessile, be more advanced than ctenophores? Backing sponges, we currently know that they share more common genes with Bilaterians than ctenophores. The reason why sponges are, by far, so different to the Bilaterians is that many of their complex genes are inhibited, not being able to express their codified traits. External appearances are treacherous in the field of evolutionary biology.

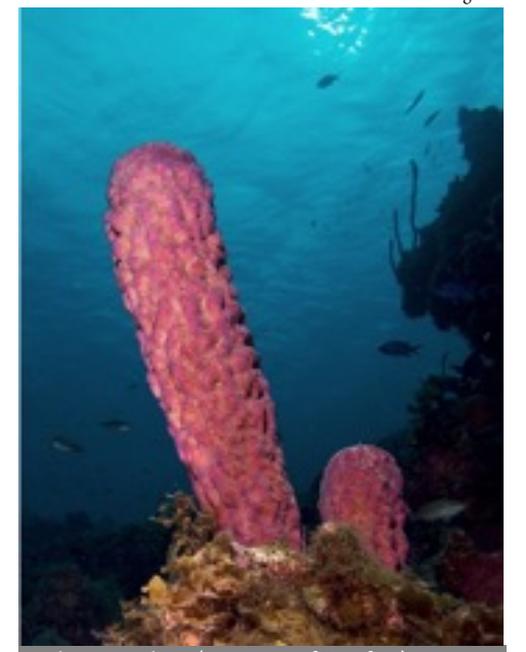
But what are ctenophores? They look like transparent tiny sacs with bright multicolour bands. Opposite to sponges, these jellyfish-like animals possess germ layers, so they have a nervous system, gut and muscles. Despite their harmless appearance, comb jellies are carnivorous, capturing their prey with sticky cells called colloblasts.

There are two main schools of thought to explain the lack of specialized systems and in particular the nervous system, in Porifera and Placozoa. On the one hand, Bilateria and Cnidaria share a similar nervous system that comes from a common ancestor- Ctenophores developed their own nervous system, independently from the bilaterian-cnidarian one. Porifera and Placozoa never had a nervous system. This model is the logical one: complex traits like the nervous system appeared in more modern and complex organisms in a linear and gradual way. On the other hand, the disruptive model declares that the first animal already had a nervous system that evolved;

resulting in the current nervous systems Cnidaria, Placozoa and Bilateria have. Porifera and Placozoa lost their nervous and many other animal traits in a moment of time. This is more supported with the mentioned evidence that Porifera have many of their genes inhibited.

The loss of animal features in Porifera and Placozoa are an example of adaptive involution, which is the simplification of the organism to adapt to a new environment or lifestyle. In a moment when most organisms were increasing their mobility and lethality, sponges, instead of entering the mainstream competition, they saw a niche available with less competition and decided to become filterers. In this new niche, sponges do not need to move or react quickly to hunt prey, they just filter whatever oceanic currents were carrying on. Therefore, why should they spend energy and nutrients in sensorial organs and nervous systems they do not need? Is it not against natural selection and evolution maintaining useless traits? Sometimes, less is more.

Photo credits: Wikimedia Commons - Nick Hobgood



Aplysina archeri (a species of Porifera)

# This week in Science...

## FROM IMPERIAL...

### Imperial develops tool to assess threat of COVID-19 variants in real-time

Imperial's COVID-19 Response Team, together with researchers from the University of Sussex, have designed MV-EpiEstim (MV: multivariate). The tool estimates the transmission advantage of a new variant, compared to a reference, and the authors suggest that it can be used as a first step to quantify the threat of new variants. It was validated via simulation study and can combine information across multiple locations over time. Using data from England, they found that the Alpha variant, first detected in the UK in November 2020, was 1.46 times more transmissible than the wild type. This is consistent with existing estimates. What makes the tool more practical is that it only requires routinely collected disease surveillance data. The code is open source, and available at <https://github.com/mrc-ide/EpiEstim/>. Scan the QR code for Report 47, which documents the work.



### Five Imperial academics given Institute of Physics awards

**Professor Jerome Gauntlett:** John William Strutt, Lord Rayleigh Medal and Prize for “distinguished contributions to our understanding of string theory and its application to quantum field theory, black holes, condensed matter physics and geometry”.

**Sara Motaghian:** Jocelyn Bell Burnell Medal and Prize. Recognizes exceptional very-early-career contributions to physics by a female physicist. Awarded for “developing spectral mission software for ExoMars to expedite analysis and maximise scientific mission return, and her equity work leading Roving with Rosalind, inspiring thousands of children with ExoMars”.

**Dr Bucker Dangor:** Michael Faraday Medal and Prize. Awarded for experimental physics, for “outstanding contributions to experimental plasma physics, and in particular for his role in the development of the field of laser – plasma acceleration”.

**Paul Brown:** Honorary Fellowship. Awarded for “outstanding service to physics, leadership and innovation in the establishment of the mechanical instrumentation facility in Physics at Imperial College London, which has underpinned diverse and internationally leading physics research programmes”.

**Professor Jenny Nelson:** Honorary Fellowship. Awarded for: driving the science and development of fundamental physical models, simulation tools and experiments to discover and exploit relationships between the performance of solar cell devices and the physical and chemical properties of their constituent materials.”

## AROUND THE WORLD..

### Underground fungi to be mapped for the first time

Fungal networks in the soil are expected to span trillions of miles around the world. They provide a huge carbon sink, soil stability, decomposition, and essential nutrients to plants. They are currently in danger from habitat destruction, agricultural practices and climate change. In an attempt to protect them, the Society for the Protection of Underground Networks (SPUN) will collect 10,000 samples from around the world in 18 months, beginning in Patagonia, from hotspots identified through artificial intelligence. Once ecosystems facing the greatest threats are identified, scientists are hoping to create “conservation corridors” for these networks and ecosystems.

# The Metaverse: Should we be worried?

Rayan Kamal Tech Editor

On October 28th, Facebook changed their name to Meta. This is apparently due to the new vision that Mark Zuckerberg has for Facebook and his entire company. Facebook now controls 78 companies through direct acquisition, though of this, only 28 have been made public, the most notable of which are WhatsApp and Instagram. The total value of the 28 which were acquired publicly, amounts to a sizeable 23 billion US dollars. So where does the Metaverse fit into this? Well through these acquisitions, Facebook has accumulated a rather large number of companies in the virtual reality sector. For example, one of these companies is developing an emotion detector, while another has created facial recognition software. Another of the companies, Oculus, is one of the leaders in virtual and augmented reality.

The Metaverse is essentially an immersive, next-generation version of the internet that relies very heavily on virtual reality, giving you the sensation of being physically present in a virtual world while interacting with those around the globe. The idea is that people will be able to see and receive different sensory inputs to those around them if they choose. Everything can be fine-tuned to one's own preferences. The current concept for the Metaverse revolves around people each wearing Facebook's AI glasses and seeing different things. This could be problematic; the internet is already something of an echo chamber when it comes to tailored content, and the Metaverse only furthers this. Consider this in context: if someone were a liberal, and did not believe in the sale of guns, then gun shops would be hidden from them and perhaps replaced by an advertising board for something more to their liking. In a recent interview, the CEO of Epic Games, Tim Sweeney, said, “This Metaverse is going to be far more pervasive and powerful than anything else, if one central company gains control of this, they will become more powerful than any government and be a god on earth”. This may be a slight exaggeration, but it stands to reason that many people see the Metaverse the future of

the internet. So, should we be worried?

The Metaverse could unlock an entire world of possibilities. It could allow disabled people to travel virtually to places that may not have ever been possible before, such as the Himalayas. Facebook claims that we will be able to speak virtually with family as if they were in the same room. However, we have to remember that with increased immersion, there will be an increased danger when accessing this virtual world. Furthermore, a virtual world means whoever has control of the code decides what goes into it. Clearly, the Metaverse will make money from advertising, particularly in targeted advertisements, which raises questions of privacy. The idea of the Metaverse is very similar to the plot of the film *Ready Player One*, where the entire planet is engrossed by a virtual reality game. The game takes precedent over life in the real world; people prioritise it over eating.

Finally, if someone raised a weapon against you virtually, whilst it may not injure you in real life, the terror that you felt would be real and therefore the physiological responses would also be real. This could cause a lot of harm and mental scarring, particularly for children.

So, what's next?

A lot of waiting, as the technology doesn't seem to be quite at the level required for immediate implementation. However, it seems that the richest people on the planet have their own idea of where humanity will be in the near future. With Elon trying to build a colony on Mars and attempting to put chips into people's brains, Mark Zuckerberg with the Metaverse and Jeff Bezos developing his very own space program, the future is anyone's guess.

## ARTS

THE SUN IS SHINING IN RICHMOND  
 BY SHIVANI GANGADIA  
 ARTS WRITER SHIVANI GANGADIA EX-  
 TOLLS WHILE THE SUN SHINES page 11

Edited by:  
 ALEX JACKSON  
 AMELIA LUAN

## Opera

# Call me a Wagnerite!

## The Valkyrie

★★★★

**Where?** English National Opera

**When?** Until 10th December 2021

**How much?** From £10 (plus under-35s discounts)

Reviewed by **Nandi Schoots** Arts Writer

*Die Walküre* (*The Valkyrie*) is the second drama from the four chronological texts that complete Wagner's *Ring of the Nibelung*. It is, in a nutshell, an 1850s musical version of the *Lord of the Rings*. With a mission to be different, the English National Opera is currently housing a modern interpretation of the text that puts the spotlight firmly on the narrative and remarkable characterisation whilst remaining authentic and true to the source material. For those of you not familiar with opera—or even daunted by the prospect—*The Valkyrie* is an accessible and captivating first performance to get out and go see!

Since the events of *Das Rheingold* (the first text in the *Ring* cycle), Wotan (Matthew Rose), the chief of gods, has fathered many bastard children to the chagrin of his wife Fricka (Susan Bickley). Of his children, the nine daughters are the Valkyries. Wotan himself is dressed as a lumberjack and emits the air of of a man weighed down by his own shortcomings and circumstances. His clear hubris is greed and, as this entangles him in many troubles, he directs his illegitimate brood to help him clean up the mess of his own making. To this end, he bestows upon them many talents, before ultimately taking them away to his own bitter sorrow.

After his son Siegmund (Nicky Spence) falls in love with his twin sister, Fricka takes offense and demands

Credits: Photo/Tristram Kenton



Nicky Spence in *The Valkyrie*.



Matthew Rose and dancers in *The Valkyrie*.

that they must be punished. In great agony, Wotan commands Bruennhilde (Rachel Nicholls), his Valkyrie daughter, to kill the incestuous son. Bruennhilde is decked out as a fashionable, neon, rebel, tomboy princess — fit to kill. However, despite being instructed to let her half-brother die, his pure bravery ultimately wins the warrior over to his side. As punishment for her betrayal of trust, Wotan strips from Bruennhilde her status as a Valkyrie and curses her to marry whichever man finds her first — the brave warrior will have to submit to a husband. Even worse, marry an inferior weakling.

Embodying an untainted heroic angel, Nicholls as Bruennhilde was the clear standout of the evening. There was a clarity and power behind her voice that synergised with the orchestra in a wonderful way. Once every so often, the voices of the cast are overpowered by the orchestra but all is forgiven when the sweet spot is reached. The four harps, placed on equal footing with the stage, at times seem to extend the human voice.

Initially the use of modern clothing rather than a replica of the traditional costumes came as a disappointment; however, it then dawned on me that contemporary outfits do not draw any attention, which created space for a focus on the personalities and emotions of the characters and, crucially, the story. Likewise, the decor was contemporary, yet expertly supported the

performance. Befitting of a Wagner, no effort is spared on providing a suitable décor — Wagner himself built a custom theatre to perform the *Ring* cycle.

The Coliseum is packed with very enthusiastic opera-goers. During intervals one hears the merry chatter of people who have missed this kind of entertainment with kindred spirits. During the second interval, an American voice behind me remarks, “This is actually enjoyable(!)”. And I’m inclined to agree with her: the duration may be daunting, but the opera is very accessible. It is entertaining like any other saga such as *Star Wars* or *Lord of the Rings*. Like Wagner intended: it is enjoyable without any refined taste or clever critiques.

Call me a Wagnerite!

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## Interview

# Alexander Cohen chats to Stuart Murphy, CEO of the English National Opera

Interview by **Alexander Cohen** Arts Writer

If you have not heard of Stuart Murphy, you will be familiar with his work. If not for him, we would not have the tour de force of culture that is BBC Three, and all of the iconic shows it produced since its inception in 2003. Stuart also brought the best of US entertainment over the pond by helping the creation of Sky Atlantic, the home of HBO in the UK. Today, he is the CEO of the English National Opera where he is spearheading a campaign to make opera accessible for everyone. Stuart has introduced a number of schemes targeted at introducing younger audiences to opera. The ENO offer discounted tickets for under-35s, free tickets for under-21s, and ENO Response, a mentoring scheme for young opera critics.

We began chronologically with Stuart's time at BBC Three. In its heyday, BBC Three was the angsty younger sibling to the rest of the BBC channels.

**“It stood up to the establishment. It had a very liberal outlook.”**

Stuart gave young creatives free reign to explore themes that reflected their experience and interests. This resulted in everything from bleak satires like *15 Stories High* and *Money Dust* to beloved sitcom classics like *Gavin and Stacy*, all of which were able to tap into the cultural zeitgeist. *Monkey Dust* is probably the darkest show the BBC has ever produced, regularly featuring sketches about paedophiles, terrorists, and everything in between.

But did BBC Three go too far? What happens when we look back at “edgy” comedy and deem it offensive? *Little Britain* has been the subject of controversy surrounding its use of blackface and transphobic elements. Episodes containing offensive content have been removed from streaming services, as have all traces of *Monkey Dust*. Today only clips of it survive on YouTube.

**“Context is key – so long as audiences are warned. Framing. Prepped for it... Someone told me that I crossed the line. But who put the line there? You did.”**

BBC Three was a space for people to explore risqué comedy. Audiences watched *Little Britain* expecting NSFW comedy; it is that context that is often left out the conversation when discussing offensive content of the past. But the boundary-pushing comedy that became part of BBC Three's identity allowed it to push other boundaries. There is a reason why BBC Three is the home of *RuPaul's Drag Race*, a show that would have been unlikely to have been aired on any mainstream channels fifteen years ago.

**“But there is a difference when things are live. It can sting harder.”**

We move to discussing opera. Many classic operas are being re-evaluated through the lens of contemporary morality: *Madam Butterfly* has raised discussions about Orientalism and cultural appropriation. The

ethical status of Wagner's operas has been frequently discussed in relation to the composer's virulent Anti-Semitism. There are many others examples to choose from.

**“It is only now that we are having these conversations. Until three years ago, opera had been a sealed art form.”**

Stuart credits the #MeToo movement and the death of George Floyd for kickstarting conversations about power and hegemony within opera. He also spoke about the importance of gatekeepers, arbiters of the art who had been responsible for keeping opera an exclusive space, inaccessible for many.

**“Women are usually murdered and raped. It is usually the straight white men who win. I don't want that.”**

This is why Stuart is keen to push opera to younger and more demographics. Diversifying who gets to engage in and speak in these cultural conversations is crucial in ensuring that opera remains relevant as an art form. Opera must be able to speak to and for everyone, not just for purists. The ENO appointed Annilese Miskimmon as its first female artistic director in 2020. More recently they premiered their “TikTokopera” to coincide with the release of *Tiger King Season 2* via TikTok.

**“It has 15 million views worldwide. Probably more than any production ever.”**

The future of opera is an exciting one now that we are redefining what opera means and asking for who is opera for. Before the “TikTokopera” came “Drive & Live”, a COVID-19 compliant drive through performance of *La Bohème* and the “Virtual Opera Project” which premiered a digital performance of Ravel's *L'Enfant et les Sortilèges* on YouTube. The production has recently been nominated for the 2021 Royal Philharmonic Society Award in the Opera and Music Theatre category.

So what can opera offer young people today?

**“Opera can offer audiences a different kind of experience: Something that is not an immediate hit, If you commit to it, it will get under your skin and leave you with a legacy that will stay with you for years.”**

You can follow Alexander Cohen on twitter at @CohenCritic.

Credits: Photo/ Tristram Kenton



On the set of *The Valkyrie*, the English National Opera's latest production.

## ARTS

## Theatre

# The sun is shining in Richmond for Rattigan's Revival

## While the Sun Shines



**Where?** *Orange Tree Theatre*  
**When?** *Until 8th January 2022*  
**How much?** £15

Reviewed by **Shivani Gangadia** Arts Writer

*While the Sun Shines's* triumphant run back in 2019 was so well-received that it returns to the Orange Tree Theatre once again. Back in 2019, it was the first major London revival of playwright Terrence Rattigan's comedic hit. Playing over 1000 performances in the West End when it premiered at the Globe in 1943, it was Rattigan's biggest commercial success, but seldom seen on such a scale since.

The plot revolves around the young Earl of Harpenden, or Bobby to his friends, and his impending marriage to the naïve but sweet Lady Elisabeth. On the eve of his wedding, chaotic circumstances bring several unforeseen visitors into his apartment – notably, a brash American bombardier and French lieutenant. Hilarity ensues as identities get confused and both guests accidentally set their sights on Bobby's fiancé. To complicate matters further, his butler consistently flits in and out, and Bobby's ex-flame Mabel Crum, as well as his future father-in-law turn up to the apartment, creating a middle act brimming with laughter, life, and silliness.

It is wonderfully played, with seven flawless cast members, great chemistry, and no weak links. Philip Labey plays a charming version of Bobby, countered by the brashness of Conor Glean as the American and Jordan Mifsúd's explosive Frenchman. For me, a special mention goes to Sophie Khan Levy playing the brilliant Mabel Crum, who really brings the writing



Sabrina Bartlett and Julian Moore-Cook in *While the Sun Shines*.

of her character to life. Mabel Crum feels ahead of her time – a self-proclaimed “trollop”, she says, “I do it for the men, not the money”, owning her existence as a smart, independent woman who revels in her freedom and doesn't feel the pressure to be married to a man.

Director Paul Miller masters the circular staging, with the actors' mid-speech movements feeling natural without any audience member ever having to look at the back of an actor's head for too long. Simon Daw's set design creates the right sense of grandeur for an

Earl's London apartment, without making the space feel cluttered, and works wonderfully in tandem with Elizabeth Purcell's sound design, weaving in with light classical music of the time.

I found myself unexpectedly enjoying the witty banter and entertaining back and forth between characters, despite the fact it isn't my usual sort of humour. If you fancy a light-hearted night out in the lovely setting of Richmond's Orange Tree Theatre, I recommend giving this one a go.

## Theatre

# Yes So I Said Yes: Tasteless black comedy

## Yes So I Said Yes



**Where?** *Finborough Theatre*  
**When?** *Until 18th December 2021*  
**How much?** £23

Reviewed by **Laura Casas** and **Aya Hayakawa** Arts Writers

On the 100th anniversary year of the opening of the Northern Ireland Parliament and the partition of Ireland, *Yes So I Said Yes* explores what life in post-conflict Northern Ireland was like from the viewpoint of a former paramilitary, Alan “Snuffy” Black

(Daragh O'Malley). This black comedy is written by the multi-award-winning playwright David Ireland and was first performed as part of the Belfast Festival in 2011 before touring around Northern Ireland. The English premiere was here, at the Finborough Theatre, in 2017.

It starts with Alan, an Ulster-loyalist, who is suffering from insomnia due to the barking of his neighbour's (Owen O'Neill) dog. When he raises this issue with his doctor he is diagnosed with depression, which triggers his loss of sense of reality. From this moment onwards the play transitions into the illustration of the modern Northern Irish society through



Kevin Trainor and Daragh O'Malley in *Yes So I Said Yes*.

Credits: Photo/Lidia Crisafulli

abrupt scenes of sexual violence, bestiality and irrational and emotional manipulation between the characters.

Later on, new characters appear, such as a comical duo formed by two Unionist paramilitaries who contribute to the sense of conspiracy around Alan, and a therapist who offers a barbarous solution to his problem. The acting of all the main cast was outstanding and somehow managed to bring a nonsensical and unimaginable story to life.

Even though the play started strong: with effective

jokes and a potentially interesting plot line, as it developed, we witnessed very unpleasant scenes. The tastelessness exceeded the limits of what is reasonable, even for a black comedy, resulting in an awkward and uncomfortable show.

Overall, despite having many clever comical moments and excellent performances, the play was not an enjoyable experience for us. The attempted addition of humour and satire, in our opinion, did not add to the telling of Alan's story. While the interactions be-

tween Alan and the other characters were important in understanding and experiencing the feeling of having one's identity erased; the metaphor was outrageous and seemed unnecessary in telling the essence of the message. Moreover, the play may have conveyed his frustration and loneliness effectively enough without such explicit scenes of violence.

All in all, the cast gave as good as they got, but this was an uncomfortable and, at times, tasteless window into life after the Troubles.

## Theatre

# The mystifying poet is under the spotlight in Rumi: The Musical

## Rumi: The Musical



**Where?** *The Coliseum*

**When?** 23-24 November 2021

**How much?** From £10

Reviewed by **Ozbi Dumenci** Arts Writer

Rumi, better known to me and to other Turkish-speaking individuals as Mevlana, is a 13th century poet known for his teachings relating to the concept of love, namely the love one has for God. Claimed as the national poet of three countries (Iran, Turkey and Afghanistan), his influence can be felt strongly in the entire region.

Although I was raised with the awareness of Rumi's existence, I would be lying if I claimed I was always familiar with his work. I only became more interested in him recently after reading *Forty Rules of Love*, a fictionalised account of a portion of Rumi's life by the prolific Turkish author Elif Shafak.

Interestingly, *Rumi: The Musical* and *Forty Rules of Love* cover a strikingly similar portion of Rumi's life. Namely, they cover his relationship with Shams Tabrizi, the Persian poet who is thought to have acted as Rumi's spiritual instructor, sometimes going as far as calling him Rumi's soulmate or muse.

Naturally, the exact nature of Rumi and Shams's relationship has been widely speculated on over the years. The show treads these waters carefully. Ultimately, regardless of the exact nature of the relationship, for *Rumi: The Musical* to work, the chemistry between the show's namesake (played by co-writer Nadim Naaman) and Shams Tabrizi (played by the Olivier and Tony nominated Ramin Karimloo of *Phantom* fame) would have had to be on point. Well, it was... fine. At no point did the lack of chemistry take me out of the story. However, I was also never quite taken aback by it as the rest of the characters in the play were.

Written by Nadim Naaman and Dana Al Fardan, the music is gorgeous, blending Middle Eastern cadences

with Western elements. It works best when the show leans into the Middle Eastern elements and does not go full on traditional classical musical theatre. The choreography is admittedly bizarre at times with a similar Eastern-Western synthesis, but oddly, it works.

One thing that is most commonly associated with Rumi regardless of one's familiarity with his work is undoubtedly the Whirling Dervishes, as was the case for me too. Whirling Dervishes are men in long white gowns whirling as a means of meditation, in the meantime creating a striking visual of their skirts expanding as they whirl.

The musical shows commendable restraint when it comes to whirling, which only makes an appearance near the end of the first act, and not again until almost the very end (although there are abstract suggestions of it here and there throughout). Every time the whirling

is in full force on stage, it succeeds in serving a moving, extremely impactful visual, which may not have been the case had it been overutilised.

Billed as a semi-staged concert, the staging is simple. Thanks to gorgeous lighting, the few set pieces come to life and help fill the large Coliseum stage.

Overall, the company clearly understand the assignment and deliver thoughtful, multi-dimensional performances. Karimloo soars as Shams, delivering a pitch perfect performance. Playing the titular Rumi, co-writer Naaman also more than holds his own.

On the whole, *Rumi: The Musical* is a significant triumph, not just for shining light on one of the most prominent Middle Eastern poets for British audiences, but also doing it delicately and without losing touch of what makes Rumi such an important figure in this region.



Credits: Photo/Jane Hobson

Rumi: The Musical hits all the right notes in this moving and thoughtful production.

# ENVIRONMENT

## Green Jobs Barometer finds disparity in sustainability jobs

Marie Mori Sustainability Writer

A report published by consulting company PwC has found that reaching the UK government's goal of two million green jobs by 2030 will require more efforts than are currently being put in. The report observed that in July of 2021, only 1.2% of the total advertised jobs, which account for 124,600 new roles, were considered green.

The Green Jobs Barometer, according to PwC, measures how well particular regions and sectors in the UK are performing in terms of boosting the green economy. PwC defines a green job as one that contributes to the reversal of climate change—this can be direct, such as engineering roles in developing climate change technologies, or indirect, like education on sustainability.

The Green Jobs Barometer also found that there is already a growing disparity between regions of the UK—as expected, Scotland and London performed

best, with regions such as Yorkshire & the Humber, Northern Ireland and Wales lagging. To put this into perspective, on an overall index measuring multiple factors including green job creation, carbon intensity of employment, and green workspaces, London scores 60 out of 100, with Wales scoring the lowest at 31 and Northern Ireland at 34 points. Kevin Ellis, Chairman and Senior Partner at PwC, says, “left unchecked, green employment will grow in the most fertile spots, but not necessarily where they're needed most.”

Sunset jobs must also be taken into account when measuring the success in increasing green roles. These are jobs that will be redundant following the transition to a green economy—they are most common in industries that rely on carbon-intensive fuels, such as the electricity sector. By 2030, 15.6% of jobs in London are expected to be lost to the green transition, whereas this figure is lower in areas such as Northern Ireland

(2.1%) due to a larger workforce in low carbon-intensive roles such as human health. PwC also reviewed the worker mentality through a survey and found out of 2,085 employees, 5.3% expected their jobs to be

made redundant following the transition to a green economy. However, PwC's analysis is more optimistic, suggesting that many of these jobs will be readjusted to accommodate greener roles, creating a net job gain.

The creation of one green job causes a knock-on effect and generates more jobs elsewhere in the economy—this is due to the local supply chain, which creates demand for goods and services from other sectors. The Barometer

found that this effect is greatest in London and Scotland, where for one green job, an additional three are created elsewhere. This figure is lowest in Northern Ireland, where only two additional jobs are created.

A statement from Carl Sizer, Head of Regions and ESG at PwC, concludes these concerns well: “the focus shouldn't just be on the number of jobs at risk, but where they are concentrated, both in terms of industries and communities.”

Measures must be put in place, sooner rather than later, to ensure that certain communities in the UK are not left behind, creating further imbalances in the economy.

“  
REACHING THE UK GOVERNMENT'S GOAL OF TWO MILLION GREEN JOBS BY 2030 WILL REQUIRE MORE EFFORTS THAN ARE CURRENTLY BEING PUT IN

## Bromine in volcanic rocks destroys the ozone layer

Hairong Sustainability Writer

The ozone layer protects the Earth. However, it is well known that man-made chemicals destroy the ozone layer. Now scientists have discovered another major threat to the ozone layer – gases released by massive volcanic eruptions.

A new study shows that the Niagara volcanic rock contains bromine. Bromine is known to accelerate the hole in the ozone layer in the upper atmosphere. Scientists point out that when magma erupts from volcanic rocks, it releases a lot of bromine, which can

cause damage to an extensive area of the ozone layer in the following years.

“We have to be aware of this problem,” says atmospheric scientist Kristin Kruger of the Institute for Marine Research in Germany. “Large tropical volcanic eruptions could deplete ozone over large areas”. Kruger carried out the work, which was published on August 12, 2012, led by Volcanologist Stephen Kutroff of the Helmholtz Marine Research Centre.

Scientists studied volcanic rocks produced by 13 major volcanic eruptions in Central America over the past 70,000 years. The appropriate latitude allows volcanoes in the region to eject material into the stratosphere, which is about 16km above in a straight line. When chemical elements like chlorine and bromine rise to such heights, they can react with each other and break down the ozone molecules. Kruger noted that the new study is the first to define in detail the role of bromine in ozone depletion, which is

60 times more potent than chlorine.

Kutroff and his colleagues analysed bromine levels in thousands of volcanic rocks, some from land and some from the ocean. They concluded that a single volcanic eruption could release 4000 to 600,000 tons of bromine.

Kruger pointed that enough bromine rising into the stratosphere would

be at least twice as damaging to the ozone layer, and the highest concentrations of bromine ever found in the current era were already “sufficient”. Furthermore, it takes 3 to 6 years for these chemicals to break down after they reach high altitudes, and only then the ozone layer can begin to recover.



# Your Union



## Union President: Supporting the strike

The student voice was clear – with 2503 students voting, 1791 said that the Union should support the College's staff who are striking in defence of their pensions. This is a binding result, and the Union now formally supports the strike action.

But, what exactly does that support entail? In previous years when the Union has supported the strike, we have taken a number of actions including:

- The Union President wrote to the Provost encouraging the College to support the UCU's position and to exert pressure nationally in favour of their position.
- Elected representatives were mandated to support the UCU position in meetings with the College if and when the issue is raised.
- Union officers and staff were encouraged to disseminate materials publicising the strike and the UCU's position in the dispute.
- Elected officers were encouraged to visibly support the UCU where possible, including attending events and writing in Felix.
- Union representatives were mandated to call on their respective faculties / departments to ensure that disruption to major coursework and exams taking place during the strike period is minimised.

Besides these formal resolutions, the Union informally supported the UCU strike action previously by providing space in the Union building for striking staff to meet and hold events during the strike period, and for storing materials.

We plan to continue to support the UCU this year through these means. If you are a student who is keen help support the UCU action but wants to know more, you can read about why staff are striking in Felix and find more information on our FAQs page: [imperialcollegeunion.org/news/referendum-faqs](https://imperialcollegeunion.org/news/referendum-faqs)

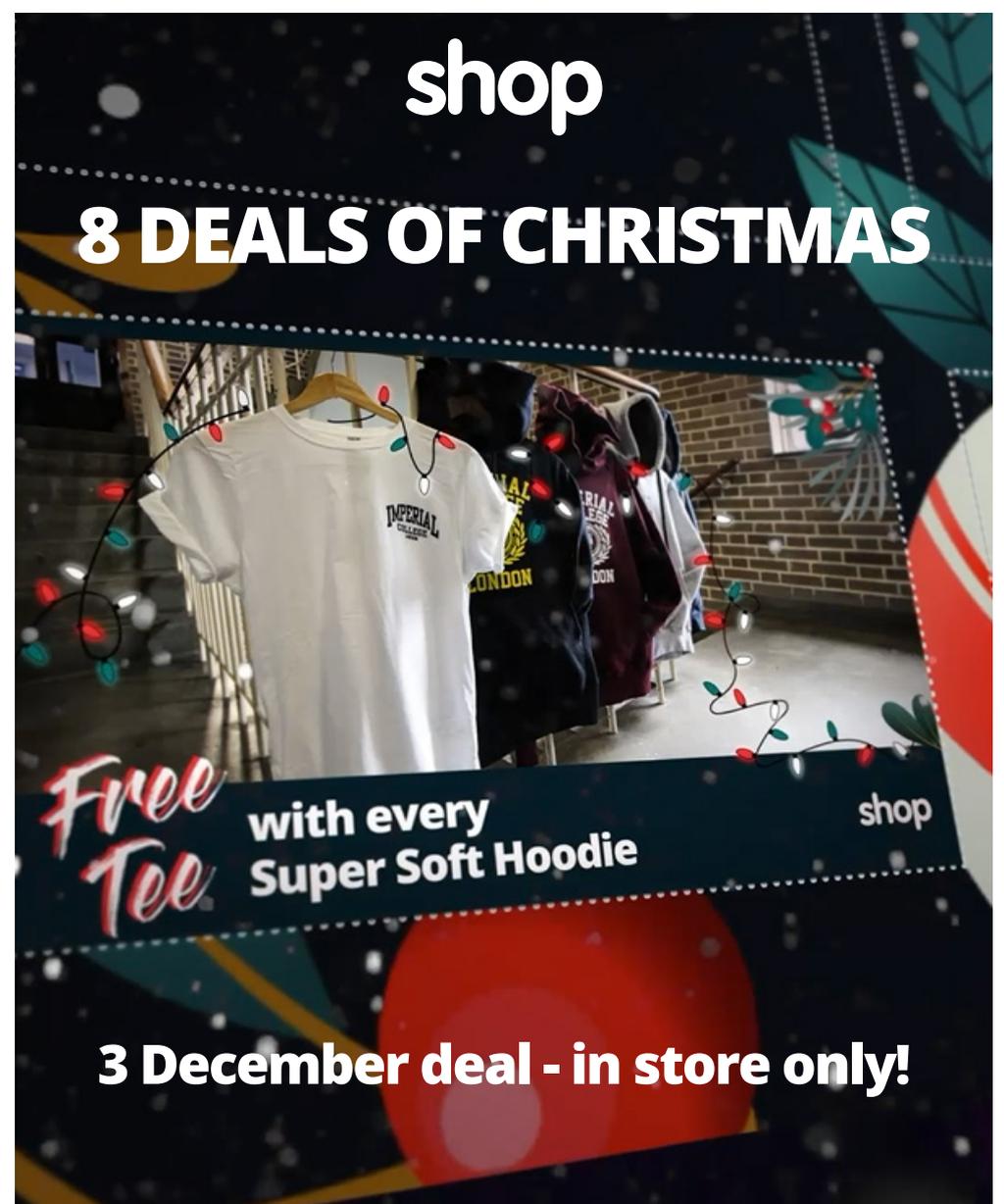


## Join our Buddy Scheme!

The scheme aims to match students from various departments and years of study and allow you to interact remotely or in-person as a group during the Christmas holidays. We'll match you with people who share the same interests and hobbies, what your preferred group activities are and location. We'll also provide guidelines with information about the upcoming COVID safety and some group activity suggestions.

If you're interested keep an eye out for our newsletter - we'll be sending it soon (or you might have received it already). The sign-up form will most likely close around 9 December, and you will be matched with another five people between 9 and 13 December.

Stay tuned to our social media channels and website, and join the scheme!



Your Union

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**PUZZLES**

**CRYPTIC Crossword Grid**

1		2				3		4		5		6		7
	■		■	■	■		■		■		■		■	
8				9						10				
	■		■		■		■		■		■		■	
11										12				
	■		■		■		■		■		■		■	
		13						14						
	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
16		17		18				19		20		21		
	■		■		■		■		■		■		■	
22						23								
	■		■		■		■		■		■		■	
24						25								
	■		■		■		■		■		■		■	
26														

**CRYPTIC Crossword Clues**

**Across**

- 1) Rock at the top of the hill is a flopped London tourist attraction! [6 4 5]
- 8) Identify the passer as late with a badge. [9]
- 10) Some pennies strewn about on the Downs. [5]
- 11) Answers to questions like “which aqueous chemical should I use?” [9]
- 12) Doing the same fastening. [5]
- 13) First, stuff unagi somewhat heartily into this! [5]
- 14) Rushed encounter among Quakers beginning to sound disgusting. [7]
- 15) Arabic name component, seen in part of Kabul? [3]
- 16) Stay later than you should and get swarmed. [7]
- 19) Greek loft. [5]
- 22) Esteem turnover almost satisfies demands. [5]
- 23) Almost completely cure with strange Curial education programs. [9]
- 24) Some adage titillates you; you understand the joke. [3 2]
- 25) Vegetable on one’s pizza, or meat? [9]
- 26) Taboo noble mixed up in conch-shaped confectionary. [9 6]

**Down**

- 1) Fudge department, to Rowling? [8 2 5]
- 2) Susses them out by the noises they’re making? [7]
- 3) Tall and strong, in the rainforest. [9]
- 4) Teams Terry is part of? [5]
- 5) Merits a congregation of great conductors. [7]
- 6) Suck tin foil to peel it off. [7]
- 7) Estimating anode constructed to undergo removal of a force field. [15]
- 9) Puts model in who gently strokes. [5]
- 14) Get by two-by-two. [9]
- 17) Shocking dance music? [7]
- 18) Cook it up with roots for a lovely Italian dish. [7]
- 20) I see wet storms more than once. [5]
- 21) Charge wrongly that cool bum. [7]
- 23) One o’ tea? [5]

**REGULAR Crossword Clues**

**Across**

- 1) English dish consisting of fried potatoes and cabbage. [6 3 6]
- 8) Make redder (of haemoglobin). [9]
- 10) Cover story. [5]
- 11) One-piece baggy clothing article. [9]
- 12) “Gretchen, stop trying to make ‘\_\_\_\_\_’ happen” – Mean Girls quote. [5]
- 13) Name, heading. [5]
- 14) Keeps going, esp. through pain. [7]
- 15) Italian boy’s name, or Spanish salt. [3]
- 16) Cartographers. [7]
- 19) Helping hand. [3-2]
- 22) Jerk in alarm. [5]
- 23) Makes known. [9]
- 24) Greek island. [5]
- 25) Secrecy of identity. [9]
- 26) Drawer of ‘The Vitruvian Man’. [8 2 5]

**Down**

- 1) ‘Hamilton’ for one. [8 7]
- 2) Blade affixed to gun. [7]
- 3) Ability to notice. [9]
- 4) You’d do this for the occasion. [5]
- 5) Drank, of an alcoholic beverage. [7]
- 6) Something that gives things off. [7]
- 7) In ‘Monty Python and the Holy Grail’, bizarre shrubbery-demanding band. [7 3 3 2]
- 9) Precise to the highest degree. [5]
- 14) In the shape of a squashed circle. [9]
- 17) Sugar pill, maybe, exploiting psychosomatic effects. [7]
- 18) Maximum or minimum values. [7]
- 20) Nerdy. [5]
- 21) Great enthusiasm. [7]
- 23) Large antelope species. [5]

**REGULAR Crossword Grid**

1		2				3		4		5		6		7
	■		■	■	■		■		■		■		■	
8				9						10				
	■		■		■		■		■		■		■	
11										12				
	■		■		■		■		■		■		■	
		13						14						
	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
16		17		18				19		20		21		
	■		■		■		■		■		■		■	
22						23								
	■		■		■		■		■		■		■	
24						25								
	■		■		■		■		■		■		■	
26														

**Puzzles Notices**

We thank our contributors:

Freya Morris for the sudokus  
 Stanley Scott for the crosswords  
 Mihaly Ormay for the nonogram  
 Raluca -Anamaria Constantinescu for the leaderboard and  
 Lito Chatzidavari for laying out these pages.

Hello puzzle solvers! Hope you enjoy our not-so-easy crosswords for this week (as well as the rest of our lovely puzzles).

As always, feel free to send us your suggestions for new puzzles. We look forward to hearing from you!

**Points**

Easy, Normal, Difficult sudokus	2, 3, 4 pts each
Cryptic Crossword	7 pts
Regular Crossword	5 pts
Nonogram	3 pts

Easy Sudoku

7			1				9	
			7			6	2	
				2	4			
					3	9	4	
		2	5		8	3		
	5	9	6					
			4	3				
	9	6			7			
	4				6			7

Normal Sudoku

	2	5			7	6		
8		1					5	
	7			6				
	4					2		7
				8				
7		9					4	
				2			9	
	3					4		2
		6	8			5	7	

FUCWIT

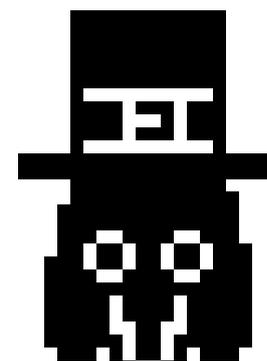


Last-minute  
leaderboard  
emergency - view the  
up to date one here

Difficult Sudoku

		5						
	9	2			3			
		8			5		4	7
			5			8	2	
			6	4	8			
	6	9			1			
5	3		8			1		
			3			7	5	
						2		

Nonogram



CRYPTIC Crossword

T	H	R	A	S	H	E	D	C	O	P	P	E	R
R	O	G	A	S	M	I	C	P	E	A	N	U	T
U	U	H	S		R	E	C						
P	R	E	T	E	N	C	E	C	L	U	T	C	H
E	S	S	E	A	E	R	I						
				C	R	U	S	T	A	C	E	A	N
I	A	C	A	C	F	E	G						
D	I	S	M	A	N	T	L	E	D				
O	N	K	E	R	S	F	R						
L	O	O	P	E	D	E	T	H	Y	L	E	N	E
A	R	H		A	M	R	S						
T	O	M	B	O	Y	A	I	R	B	O	R	N	E
R	A	L		N	O	E	E						
Y	E	L	L	E	D	I	S	O	L	A	T	E	D

REGULAR Crossword

H	O	R	N	P	I	P	E	E	V	E	N	E	D
E	O	R	I	E				E	O				
A	L	T	R	I	S	T		U	N	T	R	U	E
L	A	N	T					G	S				P
E	X	T	R	E	M	I	S	S	E	V	E	R	N
R	E	D	C	V	F	M	E						
				B	I	N	O	C	U	L	A	R	S
F	S	R	D	L	N	S							
E	X	T	R	A	N	E	O	U	S				
L	O	L	I	V	E	S	M	E	T	H	I	N	K
O	L	I	V	E	S	M	E	T	H	I	N	K	S
N	C	N						T	E	I	C		
I	N	K	P	O	T			P	R	O	R	O	G
E	E	U						I	U	M			
S	A	N	E	S	T			S	C	A	B	B	A

Easy Sudoku

2	6	9	8	7	5	3	4	1
3	4	5	2	6	1	9	8	7
1	7	8	9	4	3	5	2	6
4	8	1	5	9	2	7	6	3
9	2	3	6	1	7	8	5	4
7	5	6	4	3	8	1	9	2
8	9	7	3	2	4	6	1	5
5	3	2	1	8	6	4	7	9
6	1	4	7	5	9	2	3	8

Normal Sudoku

9	7	4	3	5	1	8	2	6
8	2	6	7	9	4	3	5	1
5	1	3	2	8	6	9	4	7
4	6	7	5	3	8	2	1	9
2	3	9	4	1	7	6	8	5
1	5	8	9	6	2	4	7	3
7	9	2	1	4	3	5	6	8
3	8	1	6	2	5	7	9	4
6	4	5	8	7	9	1	3	2

Difficult Sudoku

8	9	6	2	1	4	3	5	7
4	1	5	6	3	7	2	8	9
7	3	2	9	8	5	6	4	1
2	6	3	8	5	1	7	9	4
9	4	8	7	2	6	1	3	5
1	5	7	4	9	3	8	6	2
3	2	1	5	4	8	9	7	6
6	8	4	1	7	9	5	2	3
5	7	9	3	6	2	4	1	8



## CLASSIFIED ADS

### MEMBERS WANTED - JOIN CumSoc TODAY

The Christians for Untimely Mingling Society was a simple project set up to let us Christians who have a busy schedule still find time to hang out with like-minded folk.

I have to be honest, unconditional forgiveness and all that, but some of the stuff we've received in the post since is just foul.

Not to mention some very hopeful young men, turning up with stockings as hard as granite and inevitably being turned away.

Please, if you're a Christian and feel you spend a little too much time on problem sheets then come to one of our meetings. But NO ONE ELSE! We're fed up.

### The Thphstraw 30% OFF!!!

#### EXTRA WIDE STRAW FOR SLURPING UP THOSE THICKER FLUIDS

Ever find yourself in a rush, about to leave the house and then realise you forgot to eat? Then the Thphstraw is perfect for you. Strawpedo a can of Campbells like it's a VK and get on the road, you trooper!

### FOR HIRE - GENTLE OLD MAN WHO WILL PRETEND HE NEEDS HELP CROSSING THE ROAD.

Perfect for when a date is starting to realise what an egotistical dickhead you really are

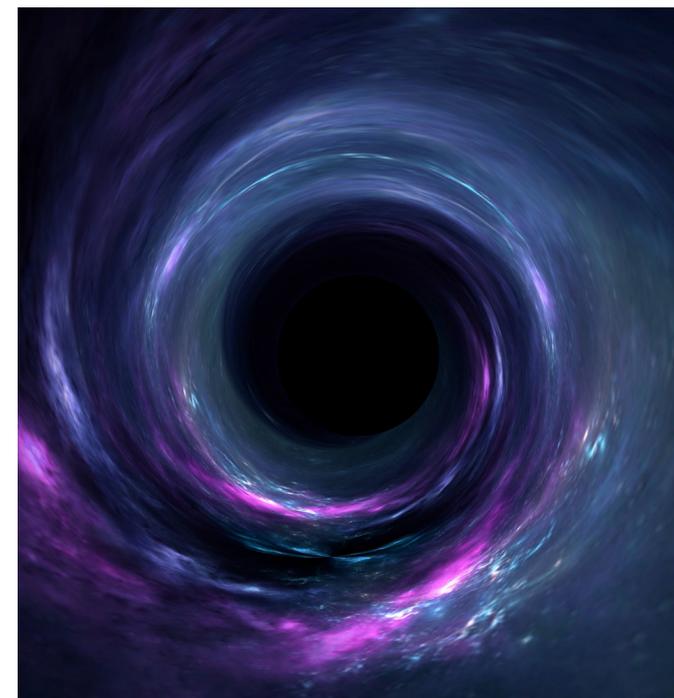
## INFORMATION SINGULARITY TRIGGERED IN ONE STUDENT'S IPAD

A black hole which killed 143 people spawned in the Central Library of Imperial College this Tuesday, originating from the memory drive of an iPad on the third floor. It is believed that the iPad was storing so many unread emails that its attempts to channel electricity from the mains it was plugged into for charging caused an infinitely dense accumulation of energy a black hole was produced. The owner of the tablet, who had left the building momentarily, admits he probably should have kept his inbox more organised. "Yeah it all started with the third department newsletter," explained Richard Inakunt, 3rd year Aeroengineer. "And then all the best deal emails from Amazon. And from every other website, I always click yes on whether I want to receive publicity emails. And then from all the societies I joined; I just signed up to all of them during fresher's fair, figured I'd eliminate the ones I didn't like but I never got round to it. Oh and then all the Microsoft teams notifications. I also forget my password every time I

log into Facebook, so I keep requesting password reset emails. The college careers department sends a lot of emails, I never open them."

He continued listing emails for another half an hour. In the attempt to determine how many unopened emails he actually had, faculty opened logged into his email address on a college computer, triggering a second black hole which took the lives of 53 more people. Statisticians then estimated how many he had from his description but they overestimated, and the act of thinking about a number that large triggered a series of further black holes in their brains, claiming 27 more lives. Eager to stop the senseless death, Apple stepped in to confirm that an iPad can store exactly 449,302,820,303 unread emails before a black hole is created. Design engineer Seth Andsethability told us: "To be honest, we knew about this glitch but figured no one would ever top that limit. How does someone even receive that many emails?" The college faculty, who themselves send out 449,302,820,211

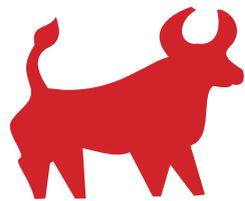
emails a month to each student, declined to comment, but sent out 7 emails expressing their condolences to the families of all the victims and announcing a day of mourning, which itself required 2 emails to set up a mentimeter for logging attendance and dietary requirements.



CATNIP

**ARIES**

This week the hat stand is a glove away from best dressed at the office

**TAURUS**

This week you're more worried about the new variant of trauma dream you've been having

**GEMINI**

This week a small misunderstanding outside a supermarket will lead to several larger misunderstandings under a bridge

**CANCER**

This week you learn that a hair on the head is worth very little in a Greek salad

**LEO**

This week your stage whisper gets you in trouble

**VIRGO**

This week will go a lot smoother if you stop trying to do an Australian accent

**LIBRA**

This week your airline share-heavy portfolio will be revealed to you mum

**SCORPIO**

This week you take a dental health day

**SAGITTARIUS**

This week you realise The Purge would let you say the c-word and there's nothing mummy could do about it >:) >:) >:)

**CAPRICORN**

This week it starts raining cats and dogs, which seems pretty bad till it starts snowing cum.

**AQUARIUS**

This week the US government accidentally launches a missile at a trampoline in Syria, causing it to bounce right back to them with an amusing cartoon sound effect.

**PISCES**

That week took my love away, oh he'll regret it some day, but this week wants you back agaaaaaaaaaaaaain.

## THE HEADLINES THIS WEEK

### Scared of Omicron? Wait until you hear about his big brother, Megatron

**School bullies to face up to 3 years in jail under law approved by French MPs...\***

*Your Spotify Wrapped reveals that the music you listen to is in fact really underground and other people wouldn't get it*

**\*REAL!**

**Many homeowners mistake letter informing them of new gas price cap for new phone number**

**Party time! Fellow student's headphones leak so much sound you want to kill them**

**Swathes of university students spend hours a day watching 15 year olds on TikTok and don't think that's weird at all**

FRIDAY 3RD DECEMBER 2021

# FILM

Edited by: EVA BORRAS

## Film Review

# The Electrical Life of Louis Wain

Directed by: *Will Sharpe*Starring: *Benedict Cumberbatch, Claire Foy, Andrea Riseborough, Toby Jones* ★★★★★

Eva Borrás Film Editor

This 2021 feature coming to cinemas on New Years day tells the story of British artist Louis Wain, a successful yet eccentric illustrator born in the 19th century mostly known for his peculiar style in drawing cats. Played by Benedict Cumberbatch, the film follows Wain's personal adult life in parallel to his public figure presence after his dad dies and he is left to provide for his mother and sisters.

The feature begins by introducing Louis doing what he later on becomes famous for, drawing. The audience follows his career from the beginning and slowly gets to know the main characters of the film: his sister's governess Emily Richardson (Claire Foy), his sister Caroline (Andrea Riseborough) and Sir William Ingram (Toby Jones), the editor of the Illustrated London News who happens to offer him a job as an illustrator.

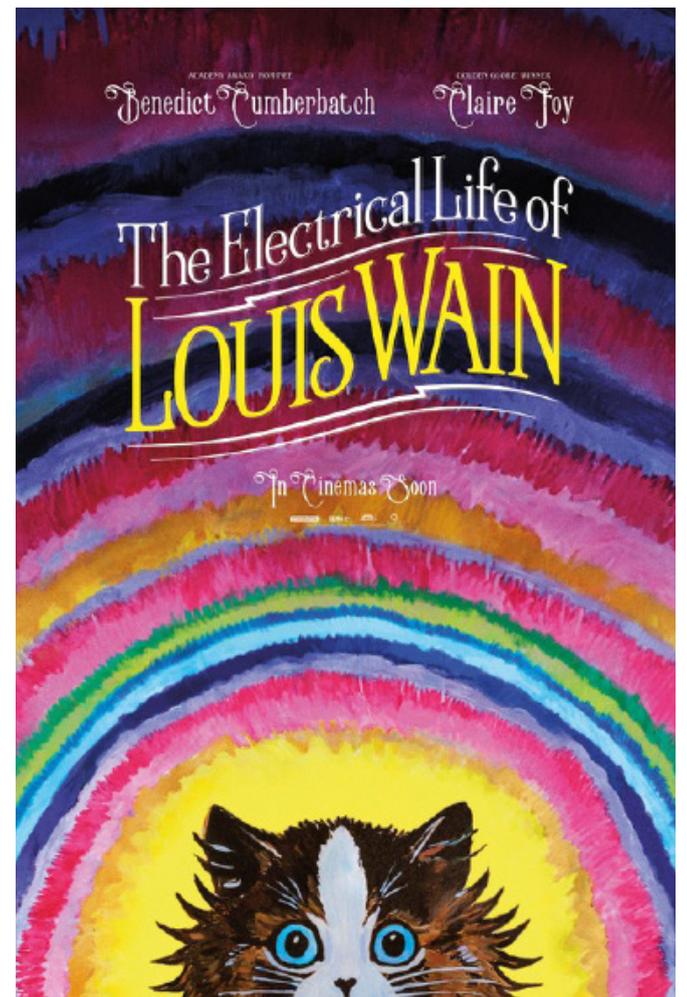
From my point of view, the film could be divided into two different parts as the focus of the story changes slightly somewhere in the middle. At first the plot is completely based on the growing love story between Louis and Emily, with no focus on his career as an artist. At times it felt like the movie would be based only on their romance, however it is true that there is a turning point when Wain's illustrations start to get recognition from the public and the film starts to deviate into highlighting his uniqueness as an artist

for drawing psychedelic-like cats. Personally, I think the link between the start of his obsession with cats is well explained; the director carefully portrays how the adoption of a cat in his personal life completely influences his focus of work in his professional life.

Similarly, it would be unfair to not mention the amazing casting for the film, it was great to see how everyone completely disguised themselves in their characters, especially Cumberbatch. Although the themes of the film vary throughout and the end left me feeling bittersweet, the main message is clear: there is always a reason to hold on and keep being motivated to enjoy life. As Richardson tells Wain: "the world is full of beauty. And it's up to you to capture it, Louis".

In terms of cinematography, *The Electrical Life of Louis Wain* stands out by the chosen 4:3 frame ratio and colourful vibrant colours during specific scenes – as well as a couple of shots which recreate a painting-like aesthetic to ensure that the viewer gets a fixed image in their head of the important parts of the film.

Overall, Sharpe's feature is an entertaining biopic that doesn't go into detail about the mental health issues faced in the artist's adult life – but rather how he used his paintings to express the different ways he saw the world. Thank you so much to StudioCanal for the opportunity to attend a screening before the premiere!



## Film Review

# The Boy and the World (O menino e o Mundo)

Directed by: *Alê Abreu*

Year: 2013

Aurélia Bordes Film Writer

*The Boy and the world* is a wonderful hidden gem in the world of animated movies.

A young boy lives happily in the countryside with his parents but one day his father disappears after hopping on a train to look for a job. The little boy is very sad and goes on a journey to bring his family back together again. Throughout his quest, he is confronted with many issues: poverty in the favelas, inequalities, environmental catastrophes, loneliness... But he also meets kind people and he is shown compassion. The atmosphere fluctuates between wonders and nostalgia.

It is completely free from dialogue so you don't have to worry about not understanding Brazilian and/or

looking for a version with subtitles. Sometimes, you can hear the characters speaking gibberish but you don't need to understand them to follow the movie. It is an immersive experience that relies on fantastic visuals and an endearing Brazilian soundtrack.

Now, the visuals are probably the most enticing element of *The Boy and the World*. The style evokes naive drawings of children and as such everything looks handmade – it was created using a mix of drawing/painting and digital animation. The colours are bright and vivid and make the visuals really stand out. Almost all of the frames could be framed and hung on a wall.

Kids and adults can watch this incredible film be-

cause it has multiple layers of understanding and there is no graphic content that could shock a child. However, a lot of mature themes are tackled and it is definitely richer to watch this movie as an adult.

It is the second film of Alê Abreu and it won the Best Feature Film at the Annecy International Animated Film Festival and the Best Animated Feature-Independent at the Annie Awards. Despite its critical success, the movie is not that well-known which is a shame.

Next time you want to watch a good animation other than a Ghibli or a Disney/Pixar production, think of « *The Boy and the world*

## FILM

## French Film Reviews

## FFF: French Film Festival

The UK French Film Festival took place in the first weeks of November, screening 17 features in the London Ciné Lumière venue.

The Felix Film team had the opportunity to watch *Une histoire d'amour et de désir* (*A Tale of Love and Desire*) and *Vous ne désirez que moi* (*I Want to Talk About Duras*), two films directed by women which you can find reviews of in this page.

Thank you so much to the organisers for this chance!

# Vous ne désirez que moi

**Directed by:** *Claire Simon*

**Starring:** *Swann Arlaud, Emmanuelle Devos*

**Bogdana-Gabriela Nica** Film Writer

In 1982, journalist Michèle Manceaux interviewed Yann Andréa, the lover of French novelist and screenwriter Marguerite Duras. Duras was almost 70, while Andréa was 38 years her junior at the time, but despite their age difference the two of them had been living together for almost 2 years, entertaining a very intense relationship fuelled by mutual infatuation.

*I Want to Talk About Duras* (*Vous ne désirez que moi*) brings to the screen an interview diving deep into Duras and Andréa's affair and personal lives. In the beginning, Andréa is only a fervent admirer of Duras' work, but soon enough, once she begins to return his affections, that fascination develops into him casting aside his entire life to be with her.

The connection between them is a complicated and toxic one. On one side, we have this ardent attraction - a sexually charged passion for one another, which is supported by Andréa's statement that he feels he had never made love before his encounter with Duras.

On the other side, we have Duras' need to completely control her lover. Their relationship involves his absolute

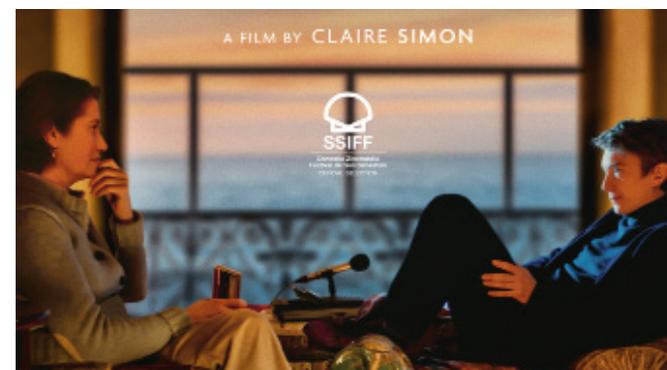
submission to her and everything that surrounds her existence, to the point where she addresses him using feminine pronouns to assert her dominance.

Everything that he suggests is never good enough, reading or watching something other than her books or movies is a betrayal, having other friends is inconceivable. She desperately tries to make him fit her own image of what their love should be, but Andréa always disappoints. He is aware of this and that evokes some sort of violence as part of their intimacy, which the director depicts through watercolor portraits of the two throughout the movie. Violence in bed is the only way for him to rebel and the only one allowed.

Yann Andréa was Duras' to deconstruct and rebuild according to her own standards. She included him in her writing and her films and through that she made sure that he would eternally be a part of her. In her work "The Malady of Death", she associates homosexuality with death in a desperate attempt to suppress his identity and "homosexual tendencies". It was obvious that what she was transmitting was that he should only desire her and nothing more. It could be said that her jealousy had turned her towards homophobia.

In conclusion, *I Want To Talk About Duras* is a highly intellectualized view on a toxic relationship. The twists

and turns of this dark human interaction are powerful enough to maintain this feature. A feature that basically presents two people talking about a subject considered taboo at the time and maybe even today. What is important to recognise, in my opinion, is that the dialogue was portrayed exactly as it was recorded in 1982 and it can easily be seen how differently issues regarding mental health and sexuality were approached back then. It is wonderful to realise that we have since evolved into a world that recognises that sexuality can be fluid and that "love" should not revolve around a singular individual and it should not be all-consuming, but mutual, uplifting, and kind.



# Une histoire d'amour et de désir

**Directed by:** *Leyla Bouzid*

**Starring:** *Sami Outalbali, Zbeida Belhajamor, Diong-Kéba Tacu, Aurélia Petit, Mahia Zrouki*

**Eva Borrás** Film Editor



*A Tale of Love and Desire* (*Une histoire d'amour et de désir*) follows the friendship and love story of two students in college: Ahmed and Farah - both taking part of the comparative literature class where they meet and where the movie sets off. From very different cultures and backgrounds, this delicate feature by Leyla Bouzid seduces the audience to feel the love and passion between the characters.

Ahmed is a French-Algerian boy who is struggling with his self identity - does he feel more French or more Algerian? This internal conflict is carefully and very convincingly expressed by the actor Outalbali. On the other hand we have Farah, a Tunisian girl who has just arrived in France and is adapting to living in a new city

on her own, she is beautifully played by Zbeida.

What surprised me the most was how successful the director is at telling such a passion driven story, especially with the chosen underlying sensual tone and intimacy between the two youngsters. Most of the special scenes were shot with voiceovers to highlight the intimacy of the moment - which the audience definitely gets emotionally invested in. Bouzid manages to create an outstanding and raw piece with a clear focus on the build up of tension between two people as they figure out their feelings.

Overall, this French movie will not disappoint you if you are looking for a slow visual description of how sensitive lust and desire can be.

## New Film Release

# Last Night in Soho

*The latest entry of Edgar Wright tells the haunting tales of London.*

Yasmine Chan Film Writer

A young fashion design student from Cornwall, Eloise (Thomasin McKenzie), moves to the city of her dreams – London. She is mysteriously able to travel back to the 1960s and she connects with a wannabe singer, Sandie (Anya Taylor-Joy). Eloise soon discovers London is not what she expected and she becomes engulfed by the horror of it.

In the beginning, we see Eloise exploring the city and struggling to stay afloat amongst people of different backgrounds. As an international student who has only moved to London for university, this feels all too familiar. We are unable to fit in and are alone in a city away from home. Eloise copes with this feeling by getting in touch with the past and following Sandie on her journey. The film transitions into a traditional horror as Eloise begins to be haunted by images from the past. It features overused jump scares, which feels rather cheap and disappointing coming from a filmmaker who is known for his creativeness.

The cinematography, however, is quite refreshing to see. The Director of Photography, Chung Chung-hoon, as some avid Korean cinema watchers may recognise, is a frequent collaborator of Park Chan-wook. In one of the scenes, Eloise covers herself with a blanket and the camera pulls out. Normally, when a camera pulls out, it is to reveal more of the surroundings, but in that scene, it shows a seemingly endless blanket. It is such

an unconventionally fitting choice as we follow Eloise into the past.

The sequences in Café de Paris alone prove the importance of choreographing alongside the camera crew. Choreographer, Jennifer White, collaborated with Camera Operator, Chris Bain during the mirror and dance sequences, and the end product shows how the choreography and camerawork complement each other.

Thomasin McKenzie successfully portrays a character that slowly descends into madness, but Anya Taylor-Joy is surprisingly underused in the film. Additionally, the main characters are not fully developed and lack dimensions. It appears to me that the only purpose of Eloise's backstory is to explain her ability to connect with the past since it does not reveal much about her personality.

*Last Night in Soho* is nightmarish in its portrayal of London, but the true horror, however, is the way women are treated in the city. Eloise is harassed and stalked by strangers. Similarly, Sandie is forced into entertaining men by doing stuff she is not comfortable doing. Soho has not changed at all over the past 60 years and to me, this is much more terrifying than the story unravelled in the second half. Rather than collapsing into a basic horror film, *Last Night in Soho* could have been much more if it committed to the sexual harassment angle.



## New Film Release

# Petite Maman

Directed by: Céline Sciamma

Starring: Joséphine Sanz, Gabrielle Sanz, Stéphane Varupenne, Nina Meurisse, Margo Abascal

Jonah Hewett Film Writer

Céline Sciamma's *Petite Maman* is a charming, compact exploration of childhood and, by extension, parenthood. 'Petite Maman' follows Nelly, an 8-year-old girl helping her parents empty her late grandmother's home, and Marion, another girl of the same age whom Nelly meets whilst exploring the surrounding forest. Shot primarily in Sciamma's hometown, the film embodies nostalgia from the outset, with Director of Photography (DoP) Claire Mathon's almost dream-like cinematography perfectly forming the timeless background of the story. The story, however, almost takes a backseat here, with the film's most charming moments being when the two girls are just, well, hanging out and being kids. Joséphine and Gabrielle Sanz, real-life twins who play

the two lead characters, are the clear stars of the show (being two of the five total characters in the story) – their obvious chemistry allows them both to deliver incredibly convincing performances that carry the film to its conclusion. The actual plot sits secondary to this slice-of-life vignette, but the film manages to not overstay its welcome with its notably short runtime of 72 minutes – any longer, and it might have felt a little drawn out.

In fact, this slightly directionless quality lends itself quite well to the timeless nature of the film – Sciamma herself described it as a sort of 'matriarchal mythology', and the general feeling is very serene and introspective. Sciamma's trademark stripped-back dialogue, is at home here in this 'childlike' story, and

gives the audience plenty of time for thought. It reminds us of our own childhood, and makes us think about the childhood of our own parents; the questions we should have asked, or those we wish we could have. The film focuses specifically on the mother-daughter relationship - of which, having never been either, my experience is admittedly limited – in a very interesting way.

Overall, *Petite Maman* isn't of the same Oscar calibre as *Portrait of a Lady on Fire* – but I think it does, as it intends; it characterises the unchanging nature of childhood. Our parents, just like us, were disappointed when they found out: the biscuit tin has always just contained sewing supplies.

## FILM

## Film Interview

# A Conversation with: Elena Andreicheva

We got the chance to interview the Oscar and BAFTA-winning documentarian on studying at Imperial and her breakthrough into filmmaking.

Calum Wincott Film Writer

For some Imperial students, there was only one course they ever seriously considered. Their passion aligned with the subject they had a particular talent for – it was a done deal. Others, torn between interests, found the decision less obvious. Elena Andreicheva was drawn to a range of disciplines: art, science and maths, history and philosophy. She chose to study Physics because it was, in her words, “the one thing I probably can’t do in my spare time, so I’ll just go and do a degree in that.”

I talked to Elena (via a video call generously squeezed in between childcare responsibilities) about her time at university and how it led to the life she has now: acclaimed producer and director of hard-hitting documentaries. She’s worked with the BBC, the Discovery Channel and National Geographic to name a few. Released in 2019, she produced *Learning to Skateboard in a Warzone (if you’re a girl)*, which won the BAFTA for Best British Short and the Academy Award for Best Documentary Short. It’s not an obvious career path. In fact, many people found it (somewhat patronisingly) hard to believe at first.

“I mean, it’s meant in a very nice way, but when people used to find out I’d studied Physics when I was starting out on TV, and even now, they’re like: Oh, is that right?! I even got a letter from some university in Kiev - which is where I was born and grew up – from some professor querying that I had. [Physics] is seen as such its own thing, impenetrable for others, and I think that’s a shame.”

Though Elena has an evident, lasting affection for science, she didn’t find studying it easy. “I was not the world’s best physics student. Everybody who comes to Imperial thinks they’re the bee’s knees... as I recall. They’re coming as the best out of school, if not like ‘I’m so bored at school, it’s so easy’. It was pretty overwhelming.” The struggle to get “university-good” fast enough made the first year difficult.

An assignment in second year rearranged her view of things. Students had to write a semi-technical,

semi-entertaining piece on a topic within physics that interested them. “What was weird is that writing actually reawakened my interest in physics itself, and I did much better in my second year.”

The fact that writing and science didn’t have to exist separately appealed to her. “I really enjoyed it, and did quite well with it, and thought OK well, actually, I should really consider this.” Although Elena didn’t know of it as a discipline at the time, it was Elena’s first foray into science communication. Later in the degree, when someone mentioned Imperial’s Science Communication masters to her, she thought: “Well this sounds literally perfect.”

She gives a lot of credit to the people who ran the masters programme. “Their connections are so good in the industry. People coming out of the course are very likely to get hooked up with an assisting job, which can lead to better jobs. Starting out on TV is a bit thankless really. My first job in TV, thanks to the Imperial connection, was way better than it would have been had I been coming into it raw.”

Elena went on to achieve what many aspire to: the marriage of her personal and professional interests. Sort of. “I was always a big film buff, but I’d never really thought: Oh, documentary filmmaker, that sounds like a great career! Because if I had, that probably would have been quite useful. Nonetheless, there was no-one in my life who presented this role model. So I was like OK, journalism, yeah yeah, I’m good at writing, I really like it. OK. My career [started with] work experience with someone who was also a

film producer, so that showed me what a film that’s kind of journalistic could be. Which was kind of always my hope, something I was always interested in. Then I got a year-long contract with a production company working on a big series. The thing that hooked me wasn’t ooh the joys of the minutiae of film production, because at that level, you’re not really doing lots of filming yourself, or seeing things happen, or editing it - you’re running



around and doing small things. But I liked that it was all part of something that had a social conscience. That was always a bit of a driving thing for me, to work on films that I felt were exploring interesting themes, were tapping into important geopolitical issues.”

These wide-reaching interests had been developed in the reading she did alongside her undergraduate degree - reading that absorbed more and more time as the degree went on. Which isn’t to say that she couldn’t handle the course, or enjoy it. “I love maths. I like the neatness of maths.” She also cites labs as a highlight, although she appreciates how constrained it is as an undergraduate. “They’re designed to get you to achieve vaguely the answer they think you’re going to achieve. You’re not going to discover something extraordinary in labs in your first three years of Physics at Imperial – or are you? I mean, I don’t know. I wasn’t.

## Film Interview

# A Conversation with: Elena Andreicheva

A lot of it is actually troubleshooting your equipment and stuff. What I liked was that you could link this very cerebral, maths-driven way of writing things down to the things that are happening around you. I liked fiddling about with that quite a lot. It helped me to understand what was going on.”

This attraction to hands-on work in service of a larger, abstract concept stayed with her. “There is something very satisfying about film production that’s quite technical, and quite creative, and that actually felt like the right fit in the end. I like the variety of the production experience...”

“If you’re working in documentary – I mean a lot of the time, no – but for me, what I like is filming people observationally, which is: somebody’s actually doing something at this actual time, and they’re having a reaction about something in this moment, right? And if you’re there, it’s incredible, it’s really exciting – you’re like oh, what’s going to happen? You could argue, kind of similarly, that if you’re doing an experiment, you’re in that process, you’re observing in that way.”

Despite being a science-educated, technical-minded

filmmaker, Elena doesn’t make analytical, fact-driven documentaries. “I worked on a few things that were a little bit engineering-based, I worked on a thing about the Nobel prize. But honestly, I found it really

unsatisfying, and it’s not my bag. I don’t find those kinds of dry, factual things, for me – I love that someone has the enthusiasm and the wherewithal to make them, because I do think they’re really important. You know, I have kids. One day, I’d like for them to watch some really great science programming – that I didn’t make.”

Even if she did make a scientific documentary, it would be focused more on the humans surrounding the science than the science itself. She references

Werner Herzog’s 2016 documentary *Into the Inferno*: “It’s absolutely nuts. It’s about volcanoes, when they erupt, and why they fascinate humans. So yes, there are interviews with volcanologists and this and that and blah blah blah. But it’s really more about how we relate to that experience in our world – it’s all a bit mystical. I’m drawn to that naturally, whether I like it or not.”

Although she’s not about to make a miniseries explaining physics to the masses, Elena believes in the

importance of science communication. The public, especially since the pandemic, are more literate in some pockets of science than ever before.

“There have been loads more scientists, and science pieces, in mainstream media. It’s medical science, sure, but it touched a lot on scientific methods. People are relatively well educated on certain swathes of science now, which is awesome. But also, the humans that represent that knowledge and are involved in that, maybe they’ve changed a bit. You might, in the past, expect some sort of quack to come on and say: Yes, OK, everybody, we’re doing this lockdown because x y and z – thanks, see you never. But these people are characters in our media now. The Deputy Chief Scientific Officer is making jokes about football. The scientists are allowed to be something other than just oh, I deliver this hard data.”

“I think, and I hope, that means that people feel not quite so constrained by choosing science and that being it, you know, it’s like going to a nunnery... That it’s not seen as this, are you coming in or are you staying out kind of a place.”

Elena is evidence that you are not confined by your degree. She clearly doesn’t buy into the idea of being pigeonholed by a subject you chose as a teenager. “It is early. People are living to quite a late age these days. I’ve been making films for, what is it, can I say fifteen years? Which is not that long really. And I have much longer to go in my career.”

“

**THERE IS  
SOMETHING VERY  
SATISFYING ABOUT  
FILM PRODUCTION  
THAT’S QUITE  
TECHNICAL, AND  
QUITE CREATIVE**



## FILM

## Documentary Review

## Dear Future Children

Directed by: *Franz Böhm**Aurélia Bordes* Film Writer

A film about the next generation made by the next generation. That is the slogan of *Dear Future Children* and it fits this documentary about the life of three young female activists - all in their early 20s.

In Chile, Rayen is protesting against socioeconomic inequalities and government corruption. While Chile is quite stable economically as a country, it does not benefit all the population as it has one of the worst rates of inequality in Latin America. In 2019, students let their anger explode when the government of Sebastián Piñera increased the subway fares. The police responded with brutality and since then the country has been at war with its own citizens. Chileans now march for fewer inequalities, better justice, education, healthcare and a lot of them want Sebastián Piñera to resign. We follow Rayen speaking about her reasons for fighting and see the reality of living amidst this chaos.

In Uganda, Hilda is fighting to raise awareness about climate change. She had her village completely drowned, causing many casualties and forcing families to move and lose their crops. Indeed, climate change has impacted the rainfall patterns of Uganda resulting in massive floods in some parts of the country. After losing her village, Hilda realized caring for the environment was important since it had direct effects on her, and how little her country was committed to teach this. She decided to take the matter into her

own hands and we can see her cleaning rivers of plastic bottles. She is an activist at the local Fridays for Future protests and actions for climate justice and got invited to a climate summit in Denmark to talk about the situation in Uganda.

In Hong Kong, Pepper is fighting for the « Five demands, not one less » among the pro-democracy protests. These 5 demands are : 1) The withdrawal of the China's Extradition Bill, 2) the retraction of the protests as "riots", 3) an independent investigation into use of force by police, 4) the unconditional release of everyone arrested in the context of protests, 5) political reform to ensure genuine universal suffrage – the ability to choose Hong Kong's leaders themselves – as set under the city's mini-Constitution, the Basic Law. At the end of the documentary, we learn that Pepper has fled Hong Kong and is now a political refugee.

In the ending credits, the only team that was not explicitly credited was the Hong Kong one because they could be put under arrest for participating in the movie.

Overall, the documentary focuses on activism itself rather than its results. Indeed, Pepper and Rayen's stories are just a small screenshot of the situation in their respective countries without any noticeable changes between the beginning and the end of the movie. The system they are fighting against is not even

aware of who they are. It is clear that the purpose of these two narratives are to raise awareness about the situation in these two countries and to persuade more people to join the fight. As for Hilda, it is a little bit different since you can see that her actions have some direct impact in her community in Uganda. She does not fight a « system » like the two other activists, she fights against bad habits and for environmental education. While she obviously faces a lot of hardships, her narrative is still the one that gives the most hope.

It is important to note that it is not a documentary on the ins and outs of the political situation of the three countries. Actually, it only briefly grazes the socio-economic-political of each country.

I got the chance to be invited - thank you - to the screening of *Dear Future Children* at the Finsbury Park Picturehouse in London where the director and part of his crew was present. At the end of the screening, they talked a bit about the project and it is clear that it is very important to them. It was mainly financed through crowdfunding campaign and practically all of the crew is in their 20s. It is the feature film debut of the director, Franz Böhm, and it has already received multiple awards.

Next time you want to hear about what young people are fighting for across the world, remember *Dear Future Children!*

## ICU Cinema: Winter All-Nighter 21/22

Rebecca Vickery ICU Cinema Chair

It has returned! After a two year break, Imperial Cinema's legendary All-Nighter is back with bang! Six films, back-to-back, from 6pm in the evening to 8.30am the next day. You may wonder, "How does one survive such a test of stamina?"

Well, it just so happens that I have the tried and tested top tips for you. Coffee is your best friend, and in order to achieve comfortable seating you're more than welcome to bring your own pillows and blankets.

To celebrate the return of the All-Nighter, we thought we would give you one of our best line-ups to date...

**No Time To Die (18:00)**

With the release of the latest film in the James Bond franchise being postponed from November 2019, it's one that is definitely worth the wait. Daniel Craig once again playing the title character with a great cast including Rami Malek, Lashana Lynch, and Ana de Armas. The classic is certainly far from monotonous.

**Dune (21:30)**

For those of you searching for your next slice of Sci-Fi, look no further than *Dune*. It tells the story of a dangerous conflict over a planet's most precious resources, with a brilliant young man (Timothée Chalamet), born to lead a cause he doesn't fully believe in.

**Venom: Let There be Carnage (00:00)**

Tom Hardy is back as Eddie Brock, the young man struggling to coexist with his shape-shifting extra-terrestrial body cohabitant, *Venom*. This is not your average Marvel superhero film but instead follows a more DC, dark approach to the genre.

**Last night in Soho (02:00)**

Anya Taylor-Joy, my favourite international Chess champion, takes on a very different role in *Last Night in Soho*. Edgar Wright directing this psychological thriller has truly created a mind-twisting masterpiece with this one.

**Spencer (04:30)**

*Spencer* is the film that I am most excited about. While some of you may take this film to catch some

quick shut-eye, that would be a mistake. Kristen Stewart (satisfying all my fantasies) is taking on the role of Princess Diana in this biopic looking at the HRH's exit from the Royal Family in the 90s. It has the nostalgic wardrobe, the stunning cast also including Jack Farthing, Timothy Spall, and just is a truly stunning feature.

**The French Dispatch (06:30)**

Our final film for the night is "a love letter to journalists" directed by Wes Anderson who also brought us *The Grand Budapest Hotel*, *Fantastic Mr. Fox*, and many more. The entire cast is made up of A-Listers including Tilda Swinton, Bill Murray, Owen Wilson, the list goes on...

Enjoy the sound of these? Then make sure to book your tickets for the All-Nighter which is on Tuesday 14th December in the Union Concert Hall. Tickets can be bought online for the whole event (£12) or on the door for individual films (subject to capacity), and let's not forget the all-you-can-eat hot food and drinks for just an extra £5.

FRIDAY 3RD DECEMBER 2021

# MUSIC

Edited by: ROSIE MILLNS &  
TARA PAL CHAUDHURI

## DON'T MISS THE GIG - HOPSCOTCH @ LAFAYETTE, 3RD DEC

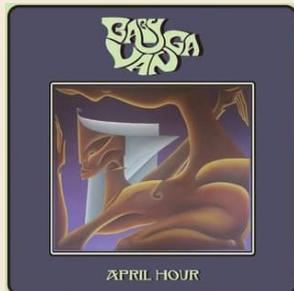
JACK SAUNDERS' HOPSCOTCH CLUB NIGHT MAY BE THE PARTY OF THE YEAR, FEATURING PERFORMANCES BY THE MYSTERINES, BUT MORE EXCITINGLY BY AVANT-GARDE POP SENSATION LYNKS. WITH LYRICS LIKE "EVERYONE'S A REPTILE / AND I'M AN AMPHIBIAN", LYNKS IS ALWAYS FUN LIVE. TICKETS ARE £16.50 ON DICE - DON'T MISS THIS ONE!



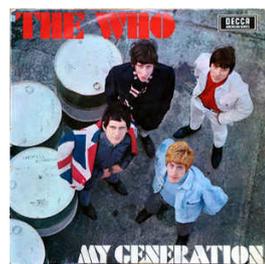
## Single of the Week

### April Hour by Baby Vanga

I never thought there would be a band that sounds like they were lifted straight from the Australian psychedelic scene hailing from my hometown. You could tell me Baby Vanga's "April Hour" was a Babe Rainbow song and I would believe you. The six-minute long woozy number sounds like elevator music on acid, opening with a minute-and-a-half-long flute solo before going into laidback croons of "April Hour". Having seen their live shows, and followed all their releases so far, I can confidently say Baby Vanga are a group to keep a close eye on in 2022.



## TODAY IN MUSIC HISTORY



IN 1948, BLACK SABBATH LEAD SINGER OZZY OSBOURNE WAS BORN.

IN 1965, THE BEATLES SET OUT ON WHAT WOULD BE THEIR LAST

EVER UK TOUR, AS THE WHO RELEASED THEIR DEBUT ALBUM, "MY GENERATION".

IN 1984, BOB GELDOF'S "DO THEY KNOW IT'S CHRISTMAS" WAS RELEASED.



## Gig Review

# Live Music Society's Open Mic Night

Written by **Tara Pal Chaudhuri** Music Editor

*The idiosyncratic highlights of the night of relaxing acoustics*

Photo Credits: Aleksander Ziolkowski

Live Music Night's "Open Mic Night" was actually the acoustic black-box-like showcase that my friend signed us up for as a source of comedic relief (she's talented, I'm far from). Before I launch into my critique of the night, I'd like to say I'm happy this opportunity didn't materialise – most performances here would have given me some sort of complex. I already have my degree for that.

I was tempted to write this article from the perspective of the new Gig Manager for Live Music Society, but I know I'll get yelled at once this makes it to the paper. Suffice to say, my arrival was greeted with his anxious face peering through a cheerful crowd within the Union Bar, because guess what: we're over capacity by 15 people.

A guitarist on a stool is serenading the audience with his husky, yet slightly off-tune voice. Behind the window that separates the mini-foyer and the mini-stage, I am making my second case to this security guard – I'm reporting for the newspaper, I have to be here. My first case was that I am, indeed, a student at Imperial despite having forgotten to carry my student ID. Please look at my "Imperial College London on Yammer" emails. I have plenty.

After these negotiations, I make it to the inside of the bar where I see my friend from across the room. He's the biggest fan of the performer currently on stage: a pop singer whose rendition of Jay Chou's Mandopop (a portmanteau for Mandarin pop) piece, 'Fearless' is so far from acoustic that it confuses the audience – and they absolutely love it. Not only does he come with



a cinematic backing track, he brings with him a fan who makes a snappy appearance every time he slips into operatic falsetto. Later, he accidentally leaves this fan behind and *his* biggest fan holds it like it's a glass slipper.

“  
**THE NIGHT BOILS  
DOWN TO A FEW  
PERFORMERS  
AND PEOPLE WHO  
JUST STAY FOR  
THE MUSIC**

Whilst the new Gig Manager waddles around looking worried and my friend puts his weight on the bar table – “wait, what was that sound?” – the stage opens to some magnificent and some mediocre guitar and vocal acts. I remember looking at my guilty-faced friend and telling him that this girl's skilled breath control reminded me of Dolores O'Riordan's yodel-like singing (that's the lead singer of the

Cranberries, for the uncultured). A subsequent cover of "Zombie" reminded me that O'Riordan's singing is held in such high regard for a reason – it's very hard to replicate.

As more people begin to leave than enter, we watch an original song dedicated to a member of the audience as a birthday present. It is actually quite heartwarming to watch, even if the music isn't to my taste. As the innocently-worded song about never giving up progresses, the singer's voice gets surer and her smile wider. At some point, she even removes the hand mic from the stand. There is something appreciably teenage-Disney about that.

Some notable vocalists include the singer from a pair performing Rihanna's "Stay". I should focus on her phenomenal depth and voice modulation, but I'm too



photo: Aleksander Ziolkowski

## MUSIC

busy watching the pianist's ironically silent battle with sound distortion. A small group that plays "Valerie" has a strong vocalist (and a really funky bass player sitting on the stage) that does the Amy Winehouse song justice. Although most songs are your average mainstream pop, you hear the odd heartfelt rendition of a song with lyrics as confusing as the 1975's "Jesus Christ 2005 God Bless America".

While this is all well and good, for those of you who actually obeyed the security guards and left early, you missed a truly magical performance. One Tom Norton, significantly drunker than when he performed The

Photo Credits: Aleksander Ziolkowski



Hunna's "Bonfire" earlier, comes on stage with a small band now and announces that he's really drunk but he wants to play a few songs for us. Will we help him? Of course, we will. New Gig Manager is eyeing the clock with consternation elsewhere – but never mind him, we're here to partake in some healthy community-building blues.

The highly-animated Tom Norton's audiovisual approach to Elmore James' "Shake Your Money Maker" comes free with many enthusiastic demonstrations of what the song is asking us to do. This performance makes up for any lack of energy tonight – we're already fans. He even introduces a section of Muddy Waters' "Got My Mojo Working" as a way to involve us fans in singing the chorus back to him. He's delighted that we comply.

One thing I appreciate about Live Music Soc nights is the way they unravel towards the end. The planning goes awry, most of the audience have gone, and the night boils down to a few performers and people who just stay for the music. Even the genre of the music that we were promised slowly makes exceptions to Norton's blues and Xanshi's heavy metal. But I wouldn't have it any other way.

Photo Credits: Aleksander Ziolkowski



## Opinion

## The 64th GRAMMY Nominations are Worse than your Ex's Spotify Wrapped

Written by [Rosie Millns](#) Music Editor

*The Grammys offers us, as expected, more of the same*

Awards shows are notoriously modern affairs, and the Grammys are no exception, celebrating the freshest and most exciting music of 2021 in the 64th ceremony such as... Foo Fighters and Coldplay.

Maybe I am being too harsh on the Grammys. I really enjoyed a lot of the music nominated from the release period of September 1st 2020 to September 30th 2021. The nominations mirror the top-streamed artists, albums, and songs of 2021, and so appear to be representative of global listening trends, and logical.

Take Olivia Rodrigo, for example. The 18-year-old artist has seven Grammy nominations this year, including in all four major categories, which is logical: she blew up on TikTok, had three Top-10 singles, and a five week run at No. 1. Lil Nas X, Billie Eilish, Taylor Swift and Doja Cat, all who dominated music in 2021, similarly have an impressive number of nominations.

Inequalities within the Grammys have also shown improvement this year. The gender imbalance within nominees has increased from only 9% female in 2018,

to being gender-equal, if not dominated by women, across all major categories in the nominations for the 2022 awards. So why am I being so critical?

With exciting new music being released every day, and innovative new artists springing up across the world all the time, it is disheartening to watch the

awards show industry continue to celebrate the same artists year after year. Even the new artist categories celebrate acts who have been around for years - Glass Animals, who are nominated for Best New Artist, have been around for 11 years and have 3 studio albums under their belt, one of which was nominated for a Mercury Award. That isn't how I would define a musical underdog. Other categories leave a stale taste in my mouth with

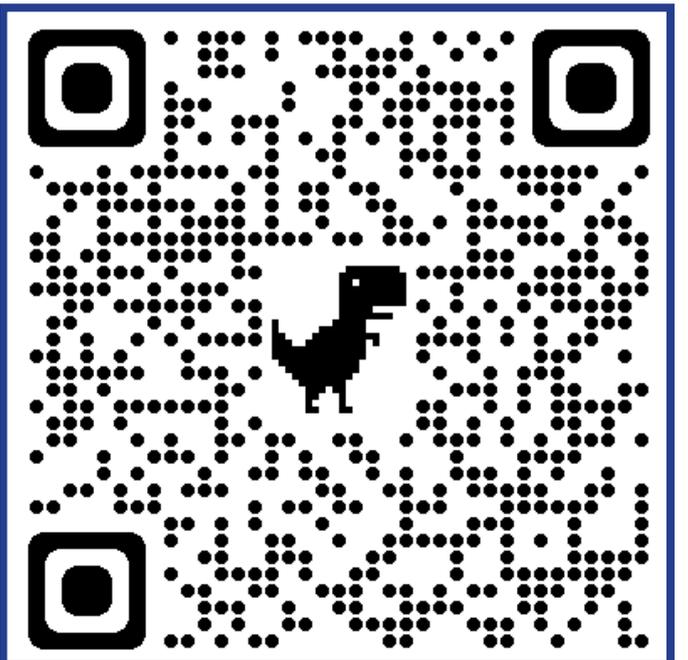
the lack of fresh artists, with Justin Bieber, Ed Sheeran, ACDC, Foo Fighters, and Coldplay all nominated.

Maybe I'm just a pretentious music editor. But as Olivia Rodrigo would say, the Grammys give me déjà vu.

“  
**AS OLIVIA  
RODRIGO  
WOULD SAY, THE  
GRAMMYS GIVE  
ME DÉJÀ VU**

### Imperial Wrapped!

It's the most wonderful time of the year - no, not Christmas, but the time when Spotify reminds you that you listened to Taylor Swift's 'All Too Well' a few too many times. Here at Felix our answers are too embarrassing to publish, so we are asking to embarrass you inseed. Scan the QR code to flex your most obscure artists and tell us your most impressive statistics!



# More of the UK, less of the outlay

As the nation's Number 1 we take  
you to more places than anyone else.



**national express**

This is the direction of travel

## INVESTMENT

## Event Listing Volume 7 – It's looking to be an eventful Christmas period...



Sean Yu (our Cryptocurrency lead) getting the masterclass underway last week!

## Cryptocurrency Lecture 3

Wednesday 8<sup>th</sup> December 2021 HUXLEY 308 18:00 – 19:00**Another cryptocurrency masterclass done, and we've certainly been enjoying it!**

Our Crypto analysts Adam Snelling, Adam Hulse and Aryan Bhasin have done a phenomenal job explaining NFTs and the Metaverse to all our members and attendees who showed up! Certainly, the free beer and pizza courtesy of BlockDojo were well-enjoyed by all and we look forward to continue organising more lectures for all our members!

Our next lecture concerns how you should value a cryptocurrency to make sure that you can find the best deal out there in the crypto landscape, whatever the coin of interest!

We encourage you to sign up to our mailing list through the society's Student Union's A-Z listing (QR code on the right). Log in using your Imperial credentials and click on the big "Join" button underneath the heading 'Join Investment' (see above).



## Weekly Stock Pitches

Every Tuesday  
18:00 – 19:00  
HUXLEY 308

While some of you have certainly been enjoying our events, we also have other ways that you can learn about Investment... mainly through our stock pitches!

For those of you who are unaware, our analysts from our own student-led portfolio QT Capital pitch investment proposals every week to you guys for you to cast a vote on!

**Come join us for our last week of pitches this term to learn more and meet people who share similar interests!**

Investment Soc, FinSoc  
and Consulting Soc Social  
Date TBC  
Time TBC  
**FIVESIXEIGHT**

Yes, you read that right. The three musketeer societies are organising a social for all our members to celebrate the end of term at the Union Bar.

It's been a long term and we certainly know that coursework and exams have drained a lot of the energy we had since the start of term, but with free drink tokens on offer, we're inviting our members to join us for the evening (date to be confirmed) and bring the vibes!

**Join us for an evening at the Union!**

We'd like to also say that we've certainly been amazed at the feedback of the society's events this term, ranging from the Impact Investing Challenge to the SEC, QT Capital and the Cryptocurrency Masterclass.

It's been a long and busy journey, but we have so much in store next term with our Systematic Trading workshops and some exciting panels coming soon!

In the meantime, we'd like to wish all our members a Merry Christmas and wish them well with any exams and coursework that is due for the upcoming term ahead.

We'll be back in January with more events lined up, so sign up to our mailing list to keep an eye on them!

Events at Imperial this week

Compiled by Ehan (Qizhe) Cui (Head of Diversity &amp; Inclusivity, qc420@ic.ac.uk) and George Spencer (Head of Sell-Side Corporate Relations, gws19@ic.ac.uk)

FRIDAY 3RD DECEMBER 2021

# FOOD

Edited by: ZAHRA ABIOLA  
BENCAN YALCIN

## Restaurant Review

# Berenjak - modern and colourful Perisan food right at your door step



Price range: £££

Signature dishes: Hummus & Jujeh Kabab

Style: Casual

Reviewed by **Bencan Yalcin** Food Editor

Before we begin with this week's restaurant, I want to tell you a brief history behind the word 'Kebab' as I think you get to appreciate the food much more when you know a bit more about it. The word 'Kebab' came into the English language in the late 17th century from the Arabic word 'kabāb' which means 'to roast' and it first appears in Turkish texts as early as the 14th century, in *Kyssa-i Yusuf* (the story of Joseph). The dish itself is quite self explanatory and could be said that it is something we have been eating since man first discovered fire, as kebab in its simplest form is meat on skewers. The oldest found evidence of kebabs being eaten is from ancient Greek settlements where they found stone support for skewers used before the 17th century BC.

Named after the 'handfuls of brightly coloured, toasted rice eaten at funfairs in Persia', Berenjak is located in the heart of Soho (a short half hour journey from Imperial), serving traditional Persian dishes. Their dishes range from different mazes, sofreh dishes, kababs (which are all meant for sharing between 2 people) and drinks, making it a great way to get into middle eastern cuisine.

To start us off we began with the mazes, which are a selection of hot and cold appetisers eaten in and around the Middle East. We ordered 'Hummus', 'Mast O Musir' and 'Mirza Ghasemi'. Which was paired with two types of bread, 'Taftoon' and 'Sangak'. The hummus served at Berenjak is made from black chickpeas and generous amounts of tahini which you wouldn't find in your typical hummus, making it more smoother in texture. In terms of flavour the hummus was delicious and savory due to the black chickpeas giving more complexity to the dish and it made my friend say it was the best hummus he had ever had which hopefully tells you how good it was. Personally I'm not the biggest fan of hummus, but I really did enjoy the hummus here, which was something the waiters recommended we should have.

The Mast O Musir is a traditional yoghurt dish that includes goat curds, Persian shallots and cold pressed rapeseed oil. The dish is there to compliment the

Photo credits: Bencan Yalcin



Fresh mazes - the two in the middle are the hummus, the yogurt dip is the one furthest away and the aubergine based dip is the one closest to the image

kebabs you get, but it alone can be eaten in one go with the toasted yet soft breads (Taftoon and Sangak) we ordered. The yoghurt was very creamy and delightfully smooth, with a slight sweet note due to the goat curds and had a mouth watering garlicky taste caused by the

shallots. Personally I found this to be the best side dish on the table and really couldn't stop myself from having it.

Finally, the last maze was Mirza Ghasemi which is distinct to Northern Iran and the Caspian Sea region, consisting of mashed coal aubergines, tomato, garlic and egg, Mirza Ghasemi is known as a dip dish, making it perfect to eat with the breads we ordered. The dish itself was nicely seasoned and easy to chew, it had a paste-like texture and although not the favourite maze out of the three we ordered, it was still very nice to eat. I felt like the Mirza Ghasemi was too charred for my liking, which personally I found to have overpowered the other flavours in the dip.

Now onto the main meal, for a table of four we ordered three different kebabs that came in one gigantic plate, with grilled tomatoes, peppers and raw onions on the side. The kebabs were nicely plated over soft flatbread which soaked up all the delicious fats and flavours from the kebabs. One thing to note is that each kebab you order comes in one skewer, so I would advise you to order two or three kebabs depending on your appetite or the number of people you're with. In our case, we ordered 'Jujeh Kabab', 'Koobideh Kabab' and

Photo credits: Bencan Yalcin



Sizzling Kababs served with charcoaled tomatoes and peppers and raw onions, tucked above a flat bread that's soaking up all the wonderful flavours of the meats

## FOOD

'Jigar' and a generous side of saffron rice paired with pickled chillies from the sofreh dish section.

Let's talk about the Jujeh Kabab first - this could have been one of the best chicken shish kebabs I had ever had, it was very juicy, tender and plump on the inside almost like I was cutting into a peach, while having a crispy and smoked exterior on the outside, as the kebab is cooked over the heat and smoke of the coal. The flavours of the kebab are what you'd expect but so much more refined and better in my opinion. Marinated in a yogurt based sauce that includes lemon juice, minced onion, saffron and tomatoes, it was a flavour bomb. Typically I find that chicken breast can sometimes come out quite dry, due to the nature of the meat and people not knowing how to cook it correctly for that reason. However, in my case the chicken was cooked just right and was sizzling when served. Finally, when wrapped in warm bread and lightly coated by the mazahehs that we had ordered, the whole experience changed and was so enjoyable and fun to eat. For anyone who wants to visit, this is a must get.

The Koobideh Kabab is a skewer of minced lamb shoulders, mixed in with rendered onions and black peppers. The lamb shoulder cooked wonderfully, maintaining a juicy yet succulent interior which was much more tender than the Jujeh Kabab. The lamb was equally as enjoyable, and was paired wonderfully with the fluffy yet crunchy saffron infused rice. The juices from the minced lamb provided extra flavour for the rice, which was washed down with a generous glass of still water.

Finally, I didn't try the Jigar Kebab as its liver based which I don't like. However I did ask for my friend's

opinion on them, to which he described it as nice good quality liver with the taste being smokey. He also mentioned that the Jigar didn't have gristle on it which he also appreciated.

Berenjak only has one dessert available which is the Darlish Baklava ice cream sandwich, and it sure doesn't disappoint. Along with some bitter Persian tea, the baklava was a joy to eat and was devilicious sweet and delectable, also the filo pastry was super flaky and crunchy as expected. After a meal you'll find yourself quite full - so sharing one baklava between two people is more than enough to satisfy your sweet tooth. We definitely recommend you to get it along with some tea, as it washes away the extreme sweetness from the syrup of the baklava and the ice cream, cleansing your palate before you have another bite.

Upon arrival, we noticed that the restaurant was very busy, granted it was a Friday night. The interior is based on the hole-in-the-wall kebab houses of Tehran so it had a rustic, yet very homely feel to it. As you walk through the front door you are greeted by an open kitchen to your left, giving a full view of the chefs preparing your food which is a great way to see how the food is prepared. The dim lights and the warm atmosphere compliment the nice Persian music playing in the background putting you in the mood to sit back, relax and eat with your friends. In terms of price I'd say that Berenjak is more of an expensive restaurant, however for the really warm and friendly customer service and the delicious food we were served, this price was definitely worth it. So, if you're looking for a nice middle eastern restaurant to visit with family or friends in central London, I would definitely recommend Berenjak!

Photo credits: Bencan Yalcin



Our colourful and wonderful table painted with Kababs and Mahzchs

Photo credits: Bencan Yalcin



Our deviliciously sweet Darlish Baklava served with Persian tea

## *WRITE FOR FOOD!*

If the article has got you interested in writing about delicious restaurants or your own recipes at home, please email us at:

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## Restaurant Review

# Comptoir V: Brunch spot in Fulham that is vegan to the plant-based bone



Price range: ££

Deals: 10% off any day with a student card

Signature dishes: All Out Breakfast

Style: Casual

Reviewed by **Zahra Abiola** Food Editor

Originally situated in Northwest London, Comptoir V seemed a bit out of the way to review for Imperial students. Thankfully, this Moroccan restaurant has set up their second brick and mortar in Fulham, just a stone throw away from campus. This means that you can save yourself the commute while still being able to see just what this restaurant has to offer. I went to their first branch to get a preview of what was to come. Firstly, this store was slightly different to what has come to Imperial's home away from home. They will be serving their brunch menu every day in Fulham which is usually reserved for Sundays in their branch up north so I gave that a look when invited over to weigh up just how good a vegan brunch could be.

Let's start with the elephant shaped vegetable patch in the room. I am not by any means a vegan. I feared I may have been too harsh on the meals by comparing them to the meat-based equivalents. They welcomed that! They have found the hack to get their food loved by vegans and non-vegans alike – flavour. The North African flavours as ingredients help get the same richness and depth no matter the source. They also make some of their meat substitutes in house to ensure they get it to the right standard for the meal side by side with the more classic vegan substitutes.

I first tried their Berry Go Round. Pancakes are a classic brunch meal and would probably be the easiest to veganise, so it made for a good stepping stone before I went off the meat-free deep end. This was a stack of three pancakes with a lovely anglaise between each layer and wonderfully decorated. Each pancake was light and fluffy though a bit small but that is brunch portions for you. It also was not overly sweet and didn't make you feel heavy afterwards.

Then there was the All Out Breakfast. Let's face it, sweet is easy. Put enough sugar and we all forget our troubles. But, consisting of vegan sausage, bacon and fried 'egg' as well as others, this was the dish I was the most hesitant about for fear of my meat loving ways clouding my judgement. I had to tip my hat to them for hitting it right out of the park by how good the meal was. What got me was just how flavourful this was. Each element had its own unique taste that worked well on its own but also got a new dimension. Not a single aspect of the meal was not given the proper



French toast (top left), Berry Go Round (top right) and All Out Breakfast (bottom)

attention to make this the most well-rounded meal on their menu – from the mushrooms and spinach to their harissa baked beans. If there was to be a standout it would be their homemade sausages which gave a such a sharp flavour without being overpowering. The Moroccan flavours at times reminded me of the meals I would have back in Nigeria. As with most vegan food, it was hard to get a similar texture as the meaty equivalent but if you aren't going in looking for that, you won't even notice. The multiple elements coming together made this my favourite of the brunch

Last but not least, there was their gluten free French toast. Like everyone else during lockdown, I spent a lot of time baking. This meant that I know how much gluten does to give that fluffy texture we adore so this was a good final test to see whether they would be able to achieve that without gluten's helping hand. I am happy to say that they delivered. Covered in fresh fruits as well, the presentation is also on point.

I've not been converted to the vegan lifestyle but this is definitely a spot I can take anyone regardless

of their food preferences. Its great for after uni or just a day where you know you don't have to go in. As a small business they are very excited to join the Fulham community and are showing that by offering 10% off anytime you eat with them when you show your student ID. Be sure to look out for their DJ sets during the weekends for the full experience of just what Comptoir V has to offer.

Photo credits: Zahra Abiola

## COMMENT

» HAVE AN ARTICLE IN MIND?

EMAIL YOUR IDEA OR PIECE TO:

COMMENT.FELIX@IMPERIAL.AC.UK

Edited by: KHAMA GUNDE

# There are no pensions on a dead planet

► *Research Postgraduate Peter Knapp reasons that we cannot plan for a future that is not guaranteed.*

**Peter Knapp**  
Comment Contributor



This week, pensions are big news. A strike from the University and College Union (UCU) aims to defend the university pension fund (USS) from savage cuts, and argues that staff shouldn't have to pay more contributions towards a smaller pension in return. The National Unions of Students (NUS) is backing the strike to protect the future work of students in academia and because our learning depends on staff being valued by their institutions. I support the strike for fairer pensions that value academics, but we cannot ignore the elephant in the room: are pensions even going to exist as the climate and ecological systems break down?

Pensions are worth protecting, as they help to provide a more comfortable and secure future. But the climate and ecological emergency threatens our comfortable and secure future and needs to be a focus in the pensions argument. A 2020 case study from the Institute and Faculty of Actuaries, which focuses on pensions, stated 'the potential influence and risk of climate change on economies and our financial system is no longer in doubt'. They refer to tipping points such as climate change-related migration and conflicts, and the potential for food or other resource shortages causing 'a drag on investment returns'. The fight for a secure pension clearly takes a back seat to mass migrations, food shortages, and wars, but this shows how interconnected the issues are.

Not only that, but current pensions are invested in fossil fuels, which directly threaten our futures through climate

and ecological collapse. We must demand sustainable investments in pensions, otherwise people under 45 may well never see it. Nobody wants a pension that is at the expense of a habitable planet. The Divest USS campaign is worth looking into for more details on how current pensions have signed a pact with destructive industries, at: [divestuss.org](http://divestuss.org).

I also welcome the collaboration between the students and the staff, as cooperation between groups and unions is key before taking on larger battles, such as tackling fossil fuel investments by Imperial College. Working together

is important for creating change, and at a greater societal level, greater injustices can be challenged.

In 40 years, when I retire, many things will have happened. Almost certainly another pandemic, but we still have our hands on the wheel to decide how other things go. I would like to live in a world where Black Friday has been replaced with Payback Friday, where we celebrate fair reparations to countries who have suffered centuries of colonialism and climate change. Where Christmas is a festival of love for community rather than love for consumption. Where we tell stories about the day when no new fossil

fuel extraction was globally announced. I'd like to live in a world where we don't need private pensions, because a state pension provides enough for a dignified retirement. But to get there, we need to start forcing that change now, through collaborations that are focussed on providing a safe and secure future for everyone. Rather than wait for the next international catastrophe, let's be proactive about it and join activist groups who fight for the changes we need.

Let's act now. Our civilisation depends upon it.

Photo credits: Markus Spiske on Pexels



FRIDAY 3RD DECEMBER 2021

## SPORT

» IMMORTALS VS BURNERS  
BY MARCIN OLESINSKI

page 40

Edited by: AMANDA BARDEN  
KONRAD HOHENDORF

# Archers aim high on the SEAL leaderboard

**Toby Lam** Imperial Archery

On Sunday the 21st of November, the Imperial Archery Club hosted the first competition of this academic year. Held at the Ethos Sports Centre, this competition was the first leg in a series of five of the South East University Archery League (SEAL). For this first match, eight of our Imperial archers – four experienced and four novice – went up against eight rival archers from the University of Southampton. The sixteen archers – all of whom were recurve archers – competed in a Portsmouth round to shoot for pride, glory and, perhaps from a more utilitarian point of view, a higher score

on the leaderboard. In a Portsmouth round, our archers had to shoot at a 60 cm wide target 20 yards away. What may already sound daunting to some is compounded by the fact that they had to shoot 20 ends of three arrows, totalling 60 arrows, in just two hours. Still, both teams of well-prepared athletes took on the challenge unfazed and performed with flying colours. The archers all arrived by 4:30 pm to set up their equipment and prepare themselves mentally

for the match ahead. After two ends of sighters – a crucial period for the archers to make final adjustments – the competition officially started at 5:45 pm. After the line, the judge sounded the whistle, the archers stepped onto the shooting line, nocked their arrows, raised their bows, drew, anchored and aimed. Then, one by one, the archers let lose their arrows and the sound of arrows piercing their target echoed through the hall. Our Imperial archers went off with a great start, with arrow after arrow landing in the gold. The archers from Southampton did not falter either, giving Imperial archers a fierce competition. However, there were multiple ends still to go, and anything

could have happened considering the mental and physical exhaustion the archers would inevitably experience. Yet, the skilled Imperial archers, perhaps spurred on by the competitors' impressive showing, or perhaps acting in defiance of their fatigue, only seemed to improve, with senior archer Tristan Lim even hitting three 10s in a single end – a perfect score! This is not to say the non-stop shooting was not physically taxing, however. Vice Captain Harrison Moss had to change

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**BOTH TEAMS OF WELL-PREPARED ATHLETES TOOK ON THE CHALLENGE UNFAZED AND PERFORMED WITH FLYING COLOURS**

“

**PLACING IMPERIAL SOLIDLY IN 2ND PLACE OF THE SENIOR LEAGUE**



Archers setting up their equipment

the limbs of his bow in the middle of the competition since his arms were getting fatigued. His foresight in bringing two sets of limbs allowed him to maintain his performance, which ultimately netted him the third highest score that day. Still, the archers soldiered on, and after two hours, twenty ends and five dozen arrows, the competition finally drew to a close. While the archers finally had a moment for a

breather, the judges continued to work tirelessly to check, confirm and calculate each archer's score. After a night of hard work, the results of the first leg of SEAL were finally out. Our Imperial archers delivered a remarkable performance. The four senior archers achieved a total score of 1983 points, placing Imperial solidly in second place of the senior league, behind East Anglia, while the athletes from Southampton placed eighth in the senior league, ahead of Essex. Imperial's novice archers made a similarly impressive achievement. The top three novice archers of Imperial scored a combined total of 1050, landing the team at third

place in the novice league, just ahead of our competitors, Southampton, who got fourth with 1015 points. This competition not only served to help the senior archers acclimatise after a several-month gap between competitions, but it also provided an invaluable opportunity for the novice archers to experience the atmosphere and tension of an archery competition. With our archers now more experienced than ever, we have great

confidence that they will continue to triumph in future competitions, which loom ever closer. Two more matches will be held on the first weeks of December. This time, the Archery Team's compound, barebow and longbow archers will also get their opportunity to shine. We wish the Imperial archers all the best in the competitions to come. Be sure to follow the Imperial College Archery Club's social media to keep up with the club's latest developments.



Imperial athletes going up against their Southampton counterparts in a Portsmouth round

Credits: Muhammed Furqaan Valera

Credits: Muhammed Furqaan Valera

## SPORT

# Immortals extinguish the Burners

**Marcin Olesinski Imperial Immortals**

On Sunday 14th of November, the Immortals travelled not far away from their home field to face the Brunel Burners, who made quite a splash the week prior by scoring 50 points against Queen Mary which led to claims of “offensive masterclass” being thrown around online. This did not intimidate the defense who came out strong out of the gate, starting with a four and out and not letting go till the final whistle. The offence did not stay far behind and led by a dominant performance by the offensive line made way for Nathan “Man of Slug” Boachie to put up yards carry after carry. These efforts paid off and lead to a touchdown on a fourth and goal by a familiar face to the vets: Jonas “Dreadnought Slim” Eschenfelder. Unfortunately, the offence was not able to put more points up on the scoreboard, fighting not only the Burners’ defence but also penalties (some of which came out of nowhere). This put pressure on the defensive unit to keep playing their best and they did. Against a dominant defensive line performance, which limited inside runs and pressured the opposition’s quarterback, the Burners had limited options and despite repeatedly trying to run the ball outside they did not manage to put points on the scoreboard. During their final drive, they repeatedly tried to score by throwing deep shots but these efforts were cut short by Jon “Poker Face” Brunton who made the game-seal-

ing interception, his second of the game. The last seconds were still a thrill ride for the sideline, with a very long and messy series of kneel-downs but in the end, no coach ended up with a heart attack and the Immortals came out victorious. Two weeks after that win, both teams met again, this time at Imperial’s Sports Grounds which tried to scare all players by possibly freezing overnight. Fortunately, the weather did not pull an upset and the game was going on. The Burners, who have regained confidence in their offensive mastery after a 58-0 win against ARU the previous week, were again met with an unmovable object that is the Immortals’ defense, strengthened by the return of Jack “Bulldozer” Benham. The offence also came out swinging with major pushes by the offensive line where a standout performance was delivered by Abdullah “Quiet Assassin” Erinjogunola. This led to a rushing touchdown by Nathan, who enjoys playing significantly more since learning to run through gaps, giving Immortals the lead. The Burners returned the favour on a broken run, leading to the score being tied 6-6 at halftime. In the third quarter, both teams seemed to be stuck in a standstill but the Immortals’ offence was starting to heat up again with an excellent play by Dola “Rubber Duck Lover” Rabiui being the highlight that ultimately led to another touchdown in the fourth quarter putting the pressure on Brunel to score. The defence stood strong until the end, forcing their last turnover on downs and



Imperial Immortals’ Team Picture after their second win against the Brunel Burners

an opportunity to run the clock down, all executed perfectly this time with Max “Don’t poke me” Raso snapping the ball confidently as the center. The Immortals are now standing firmly on top of Division 1 South-East with a 3-1 record and are looking to improve their record once more with their last game of the term against ARU on the 12th of December. If you want to follow the team’s journey or become a part of it for the latter half of the season, follow us on Facebook: Imperial Immortals AFC and Instagram: @immortalsafc.

**14TH NOVEMBER:  
IMPERIAL IMMORTALS**

**8 - 0**

**BRUNEL BURNERS**

**28TH NOVEMBER:  
IMPERIAL IMMORTALS**

**12 - 6**

**BRUNEL BURNERS**



Imperial Immortals shaking hands with the slain foe