

CAMPUS BANDS: DOWN THE HALL AND ALMOST FAMOUS
A TONY KUSHNER OBSESSION • RESTAURANT HOPPING

the eye

COLUMBIA ON THE STREET

VOL 1, ISSUE 5, 10.05-11.06



GO BACK TO HIGH SCHOOL

WHY BUSINESS SCHOOL COP-OUTS
CHOOSE TEACH FOR AMERICA



the eye

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Ariel Bibby, Adam Brickman,

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"We're number one! We're number one! Take that, space coyote!"

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On the Cover

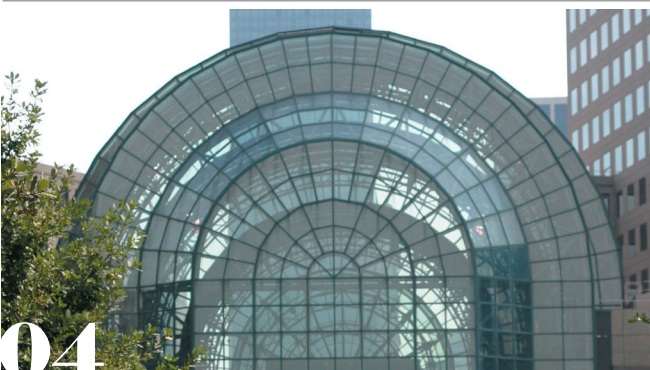


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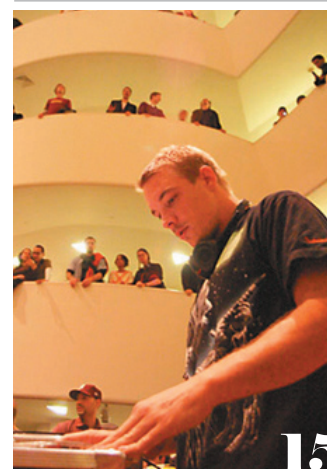


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From the Editor...

September of my senior year has just ended, and I still have no idea what job I want to have this time next year, other than chief candy inspector for the entire world. In technical terms, this means that if my childish candy dreams don't come true—and I'm still hoping they will—I'm screwed.

Most of my friends, fortunately for them, are decidedly unscrewed. They know that after graduation they will be safely ensconced within the walls of [insert name of prominent Wall Street firm, medical school, law school, or any organization providing health insurance here]. Some even have internships at respected companies and are busy furiously networking. Meanwhile, I hang around campus writing obnoxiously self-involved essays and vainly struggling to figure out how to use "networking" correctly in a sentence.

If I were smart, I would have gone to last Friday's career fair. There, I could have met representatives from companies like Forex Capital, Inductis LLC, and ZS Associates. Given their names, these firms must do something really cool, or at least cartoonishly evil. Both are fine with me. (By the way, one of the institutions at the fair was Teach for America. If you've read one of my letters before, you know where this is going. Liz Brown's article, page seven. Read it.) I could even have joined the line of kids waiting to talk with the CIA representative. For some reason, all of them were particularly interested in the agency's policy on hiring people who may have used drugs in the past. Just out of curiosity, of course.

But I'm not smart, so I spent Friday reading for my classes like a sucker. While walking

to the library, I did see someone I recognized going to the fair. Before that day, the last time I saw this person, he was groin-grabbingly stoned and had just finished smearing poop over my first-year floor's women's bathroom. He looked different now. His suit was nice and surprisingly free of poop, although he did still look pretty stoned. My guess is he went straight to the CIA booth.

On Friday, we were told about the glories of the world beyond Columbia. The next day was homecoming, and we were greeted by alums who have entered that world. They seemed eager to escape from it, at least for a weekend. And by "escape from it," I mean get drunk and try to hook up with undergrads. It's amazing how quickly they adapted to our customs.

For all their drunken lechery and early onset senility, I was glad to see the alums. They reminded me that it's okay that I'm not sure what I want to do with my life. Judging by their need to return to Columbia's football-game-losing, money-hungry womb, the alums never decided what they wanted from life either. I don't want to become like them. I'd prefer that my alcoholism be quiet and housebound, for one. But for now, I have something the alums don't: time to figure out what I want to do with my life. I mean, graduation isn't for at least eight months.

I'm screwed.

Tim

LISTINGS

FILM



MUSIC



THEATER



DANCE



STYLE



MUSEUMS

FILM

44TH NEW YORK FILM FESTIVAL

Six Asian Films to premiere this week.

Offside

Fri., Oct. 6, 9 p.m., Sun., Oct. 8, 5:45 p.m.

Paprika

Sat., Oct. 7, 12:30 p.m.

Syndromes and a Century

Sat., Oct. 7, 6:15 p.m.

The Host

Sat., Oct. 7, 12 a.m., Mon., Oct. 9, 3:30 p.m.

Triad Election

Tues., Oct. 10, 6 p.m., Wed., Oct. 11, 9 p.m.

Alice Tully Hall, 1941 Broadway, (212-875-5788), Cost: \$16-\$40.

MUSIC

NEW YORK PHILOMUSCA CHAMBER ENSEMBLE

Pre-concert meet-the-artists talk and post-concert reception.

Thurs., Oct. 5, 7:30 p.m.

Broadway Presbyterian Church, 114th Street and Broadway, (212-580-9933), Cost: \$35, \$30 seniors, \$17.50 students. nyphilomusica.org.

PETER BROTZMANN AND HAN BENNINK DUO

First NYC Appearance since 1975.

Fri., Oct. 6, 7:30 p.m. and 9 p.m.

At Clemente Soto Velez SEA Theater, 107 Suffolk Street, between Delancey Street and Rivington Street, (212-529-1948), Cost: \$20 per set, \$10 student.

visionfestival.org.

MARSHALL ALLEN, WILLAM PARKER, COOPER MOORE, AND ROY CAMPBELL

A musical extravaganza.

Sat., Oct. 7, 7:30 p.m. and 9 p.m.

At Clemente Soto Velez SEA Theater, 107 Suffolk Street, between Delancey Street and Rivington Street, (212-529-1948), Cost: \$20, \$10 student.

visionfestival.org.

MUSIC MEMORABILIA SHOW

LPs, 45rpm, 78rpm, sheet music, photos, posters, books, and more.

Sat., Oct. 7, Nov. 4, and Dec. 2, 10 a.m.-2 p.m.

Tip Top Shoe Building, 155 W. 72nd St., (4th Floor), (212-579-0689), Cost: Free.

info@musiccollecting.com

SOL VILLAGE

Part of Sounds of Brazil's Urban Concert Series.

Sun., Oct. 8, doors at 7 p.m.

204 Varick St. at Houston Street, (212-243-4940), Cost: \$10.

THEATER

THE FAKE FRIENDS TOUR

Two solo shows join forces to become the greatest night of comedy EVER.

Sun., Oct. 8 and Mon., Oct. 9, 8 p.m.

The Red Room Theatre, 85 E. Fourth St. between Second and Third avenues, (3rd floor, above KGB Bar), (212-868-4444), Cost: \$10.

smarttix.com.

DANCE

FOUR WORLD PREMIERES BY WOMEN CHOREOGRAPHERS

Barnard Dance Department and Williamsburg Art Nexus join forces.

Tues., Oct. 10, 8 p.m.

Peter Norton Symphony Space, 2537 Broadway at 95th Street, (212-864-5400), Cost: \$20.

ART

EXHIBITION

Postcrypt's second show of the semester will explore and critique the acts of exhibition that we engage in both in our daily lives and as artists.

Postcrypt Art Gallery in the basement of St. Paul's Chapel.

Fri., Oct. 6, 8-10 p.m.

Cost: Free.

2 IDs to drink.

MUSEUMS

THE SPLENDOR OF ISLAMIC ART

This three-part event will feature an Iranian film entitled *Children of Heaven*, a lecture by Jolyon Leslie on "The Challenges of Preserving Cultural Heritage in Afganistan," and a concert given by Afghan musician Homayun Sakhi on "The Art of the Afghan Rubab."

Sun., Oct. 8, 1-4:30 p.m.

The Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1000 Fifth Avenue at 82nd Street., (212-396-5460), Cost: Free with Museum Admission.

Metmuseum.org.

RESTAURANTS

03

AMERICAN BISTRO

CAMILLE'S

1135 Amsterdam Ave. (116th St.) 212-749-2428. Breakfast, lunch, dinner. Pastas, sandwiches, burgers, salads, ethnic specialties. 10% off dinner with CUID.

BAR

PORKY'S

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BARBECUE

RACK & SOUL

2818 Broadway. (109th St.) 212-222-4800. Eat-in, take-out. Free delivery. Authentic southern-style pit barbecue and soul food. Catering.

CAFE

CAFE FRESH

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MAX CAFFÉ

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COLUMBIA COTTAGE

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ZHONG HUA

854 Amsterdam Ave. (102nd St.) Tel: 212-864-7997; Fax: 212-864-3238. Phone/fax orders. Eat-in, take-out. Free delivery. 10% off for Columbia students & staff with ID (min. \$20 order.)

CUBAN

CAFE CON LECHE

Two locations: 726 Amsterdam Ave. (96th St.), 212-678-7000; 424 Amsterdam Ave. (81st St.), 212-595-7000. Authentic Latin cuisine. Free delivery. Special lunch menu. Free delivery.

CRÊPERIE

CRÊPES ON COLUMBUS

990 Columbus Ave. (108th St.), 212-222-0259. Café, crêperie, ice cream. Major credit cards accepted. Free delivery.

DINER

WEST WAY CAFE

2800 Broadway. (109th St.) 212-932-9059. Break-fast, lunch, dinner, weekend brunch. Fresh juice bar.

ETHIOPIAN

AWASH

947 Amsterdam Ave. (107th St.) 212-982-9589. Vegetarian and non-vegetarian specialties. Half-price entrée Mon-Thurs w/ CUID when you purchase 1 entrée of equal or lesser value.

FRENCH

CAFÉ DU SOLEIL

2723 Broadway. (104th St.) 212-316-5000. French bistro. \$9.95 Lunch Special. Outdoor terrace. Free deliver. 20% off w/CUID (Eat-in, dinner only, after 8 pm).

MÉTISSE

239 W. 105th St. (B'way/Amsterdam.) 212-666-8825. Excellent food, moderate prices. Free delivery. 10% off w/CUID.

GREEK

SYMPOSIUM

544 W. 113th St. (B'way/Amsterdam) 212-865-1011. Authentic Greek cuisine—the best in town. Low prices, warm ambiance, garden dining. Open 7 days.

ITALIAN

MAX SOHA

1274 Amsterdam Ave. (123rd St.) 212-531-2221. Fine home-style Italian cuisine. Reasonable prices. Casual dining.

REGIONAL

2607 Broadway. (99th St.) 212-666-1915. Cuisine from many regions of Italy. Saturday and Sunday brunch.

SEZZ MEDI

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INDIAN

INDIAN CAFE

2791 Broadway. (108th St.) 212-749-9200. Lunch, dinner. Eat-in, take-out. Free delivery. Large party orders welcome.

TAMARIND

424 Amsterdam Ave. (81st St.) 212-712-1900. Eat-in, take-out. Lunch, dinner. Catering. Fast free delivery.

INDIAN WRAPS

ROTI ROLL

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JAPANESE

OSAKA

854 Amsterdam Ave. (102nd St.) 212-864-6869. Fax: 212-864-3238. Phone/fax orders. Sushi, tempura, bento boxes. Eat-in, take-out. Free delivery. 15% off for students & staff w/CUID (min. order \$20).

TOKYO POP

2728 Broadway. (105th St.) 212-932-1000. Bistro Japonais. Authentic Japanese cuisine. 20% off w/CUID (eat-in, dinner only).

KOREAN

MILL KOREAN RESTAURANT

2865 Broadway. (113th St.) 212-666-7653. Authentic Korean specialties. Lunch specials. Free delivery.

SOUP

THE SOUP MAN

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You're Invited

Open House New York

Real New Yorkers are obsessed with real estate. If you are indeed a real New Yorker, you are likely to fantasize about owning a five-story brownstone with views of Central Park, even as you and your six roommates chase the resident rat out of your one-bedroom sublet on 186th and Amsterdam. As we all know, the worlds of high-end real estate and architecture have very limited, specific audiences—ones that generally preclude college-aged students. Yet for one weekend a year (this weekend!), the city's best and most unique skyscrapers, houses, apartments, auditoriums, restaurants, and office complexes go on display for all to explore. The event is called Open House New York, and this is your official invitation.

By Maxwell Foxman

what

Inspired by a London predecessor, OHNY only hit the states in 2003. Since then, the organization has become one of the largest and most public non-profit groups to promote and celebrate architecture and design in America. This weekend's event consists of free tours and public access to buildings across New York that are typically closed to the general public. Having added dozens of new sites each year, OHNY has grown to be one of, if not the largest, premier Open House programs in North America, surpassing competitors in Toronto with 180 sites and 60,000 tourists.

why

While the changing faces of certain New York City neighborhoods are fairly visible (especially when rent hikes and sidewalk detours are involved), most observers rarely contemplate what such development entails in a broader, civic context. OHNY has attempted to examine socio-economic issues arising from redevelopment. In particular, some of the new sites in Red Hook point to "neighborhoods that have traditionally been either a working-class neighborhood or a residential neighborhood actually being redeveloped and re-imagined by business and developers and artists that live there," said OHNY Executive Director Joy Villaino. For Villaino, the addition to OHNY of the harbor at Red Hook and the tour of the Gowanus Canal Dredger Club "show how the built environment affects your daily life. He continued to muse: "So that includes various issues that concern development. That concern sustainable design. That concern use of land. Repurposing of land. It's important to have conversation about these topics."

Villaino has been observing a variety of architectural trends, including multi-functional buildings, such as One Hanson Place in Brooklyn, a former bank that is now a combination of retail and luxury condominiums, and the Waterfront Museum and Showboat Barge that doubles as both a boat and a museum.

Another architectural trend has been the development of "green" buildings, such as the new headquarters of the *New York Times*, whose plans were featured in OHNY last year.

when



where

The only way to truly experience the grandeur of OHNY is to attend the event, which takes place from Oct. 7-8, free of charge. If you're heading out of town this weekend, you can pay a fee to catch one of the tours—like the recently added visit to 7 World Trade Center—during the year.

The event offerings run the gamut from traditional favorites such as the Little Red Lighthouse of children's storybook fame, the Midtown New York Public Library, the UN Secretariat Building, Grand Central Terminal, and the Arsenal in Central Park, to morbid novelties, such as some of the country's oldest cemeteries and most beautiful mausoleums. If you prefer cute, check out the studio of public artist Tom Otterness and the divers at Lincoln Center restaurant Rosa Mexicano.

An outdoor highlight is the newly added Rockefeller Center Roof Gardens, viewable on Sunday afternoon. The gardens, which are usually closed to the public and used for special Australian and New Zealand ministry ceremonies, remain one of the few places in New York where one can see an unfettered sunrise. "It's going to be quite an opportunity for people to get up there and just experience that kind of Midtown area from the air, literally," said Villaino.

But it is the less renowned buildings not only in Manhattan, but all the boroughs that are the real gems of Open House. "New York really has very distinctive places and spaces that reflect sort of the history of those boroughs," Villaino said.

If you don't have time to travel downtown, wander over to the spots in Morningside that made the cut, such as St. John the Divine, along with two Columbia sites, the Arthur Ross Greenhouse as well as a new lab in 901 Schermerhorn. Hillary Callahan, the greenhouse chair and assistant professor of biology at Barnard, had shown the site, which was redesigned in 1998, in recent years. "It was very well attended," she said, adding that Morningside residents had come out of a desire to enter a garden that is off limits to the public most of the week. Callahan became an attendee after the greenhouse was shown and has enjoyed the event ever since.

"It has everything from cemeteries to our greenhouse, so from the living to the dead," she said.

rsup

Just show up at the site of your choice. A full list of sites and schedules is available online at www.ohny.org. If you do make it out, you'll finally be able to understand "that looky-look tendency," as Villaino put it, that New Yorkers tend to have about the uncharted building next door. "It's a moment to join the curious," Villaino continued, "I think a lot of times New Yorkers are really good just being really focused. And this is an opportunity to really just kind of take the city at your own pace and stroll and just simply be curious at what you're looking at."



Filming Politics, Filming People

In college, Academy Award-winning filmmaker Freida Lee Mock saw her career heading to the courtroom rather than the cutting room. With yesterday's release of her new documentary, *Wrestling with Angels: Playwright Tony Kushner*, the producer has undoubtedly proven that abandoning a law career was the right decision. Between Sept. 11, 2001, and the 2004 presidential election, Mock followed the Pulitzer-winning playwright and Columbia alum, chronicling his personal life and social activism. With the film finally completed, Mock joined *The Eye* to reflect on her craft, political awareness, and the last movie that she saw in theaters. —By Adam Brickman

How did you get involved in documentary filmmaking?

I studied history, English, and law at UC-Berkeley. I had a pretty good idea I wanted to be a lawyer until I realized that I really, really wouldn't like law school. It just came to mind that I wanted to make documentary films—you could say I had an epiphany. I started working in Los Angeles—this was 20 years ago—at one of the best companies in town doing independent documentaries. I really believe you learn to make films by being hands-on rather than studying. You know, studying how to make films is a great thing, but if you look at some of the top filmmakers, it's not something all of them have done; they come from very varied backgrounds.



How did you get involved with Mr. Kushner as a potential film subject?

I first met Tony when I heard him speak [at a Vassar College commencement]. He gave a one-minute speech, and I was moved by his simultaneous humor and seriousness and the inspiration with which he expresses his ideas. In a way, I hope the film has a similar impact. As a filmmaker, I discovered him as a living person before I learned about him as a playwright. I said to myself, "I can make a film about him, where the audience, even if they don't necessarily know his work, can be as transported as I was." I had also read some of his essays, which are amazing in that they can be hilarious, extremely serious, and inspirational all at once, and in a lot of

ways, they had the same effect for me as hearing him speak. Right after 9/11, I read an article about a new play he was releasing about Afghanistan [*Homebody/Kabul*, released in December 2001], and I just knew, here was this compelling, charismatic character who is unique, who is alive, and who I

knew the audience would want to follow.

Mr. Kushner is a very political figure, and the period during which you chose to follow him was very politically charged. What do you feel is the role of the artist in a political climate like this one?

Well, Tony really wants to explore big ideas through the intimacy of character and human setting. At the same time, both his artistic and social [and] political sensibilities really spoke to me, because I am really interested in social and political issues, but usually from a story context. What really interests me is the ability to engage an audience in these larger issues which can't be expressed in a lecture, but which people really discover through the journey of the story and through their involvement with the characters in the film. They may not expect themselves to feel the way they do at the end of the film, and to me, that's very exciting—to figure out a way to take them on this journey through this story, this idea.

The film is bookended by Sept. 11, 2001, and the 2004 presidential election. Parts one and three focus on Kushner's public life while part two focuses

on his private life. Can you explain a little bit more about the format of this film?

Sometimes you can just be searching for a way to tie all this dysfunctional material together—to make sense and order out of it—so in that way I was really grateful there was this logical ending to the narrative. And you look back at that play he released right after 9/11, and it resonates even more strongly today. You know, if you're awake, if you're concerned about the world, it's right there for you to connect the dots.

I also often do a lot of research before I launch into making a film. All the material really broke down into what I called global issues, then national issues, then regional and personal issues, and that's how I really began to see the film shaping up, because it's not really a straight biography at all. There were all these global issues to deal with, and, pretty soon, people want to know who the person behind these ideas is. I like to do nuanced stories and issues and characters and, by the end of this film, I hope you begin to know this man on so many different levels.

What is the last film you saw in theaters?

The last movie I saw was *Little Miss Sunshine*, and it was great—even though *Entertainment Weekly* only gave it a C! It's so funny, and the characters are so wonderfully dysfunctional, that you can't help to laugh. I swear—and this is something I'm always thinking about when I'm doing my own movies—if you can make them laugh and cry, you're home free.



Wrestling with Angels: Playwright Tony Kushner

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06

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night activity. By the time you finally decide, you're likely to feel grumpy, tired, and wondering if you should have gone for the French bistro down the street. But who says you have to pick one spot? Many of us enjoy a good night of barhopping—getting a drink at one venue, then moving on to the next. So why not do that for dinner? Why not restaurant-hop? I decided to give the idea a try. Since there were no set rules, I created a few guidelines: find a geographical location and stick to a one-or-two-block radius, order only one dish per restaurant, find places with nothing over \$15, go to at least three different spots. An adventurous friend agreed to join me for a trial run in the East Village.

Our first stop was Tai Thai, a small, narrow space with exposed brick walls and dim red lighting. After we explained the one-dish-per-restaurant plan, the waiter recommended the Gai Ra Ma, a fried marinated chicken dish with curry rice and Thai chili peanut sauce. He said this was the house specialty, and I could taste why. Simultaneously sweet, savory, spicy, and slightly crunchy, each bite of the chicken was a small explosion in my mouth. Five dollars bought us goblet-sized glasses of chardonnay. The wine was mediocre, but a lot of bang for the buck. We stayed just long enough to enjoy the intimate atmosphere, but not so long as to lose the drive to hop.

The second stop was next door at Café Himalaya, a restaurant serving Tibetan and Nepali home cooking. This place could have been someone's kitchen—a few tables thrown together with mismatched chairs, and two couches in the front on which to recline and eat. Continuing the effort to try a signature dish, we ordered Sha

BY LYDIA ROSS

In a city of endless dining options, it's hard to pick just one. Choosing the perfect restaurant for dinner can turn into an all-

spent. Although the quality of the food steadily declined from the first to the third venue, it felt like we had eaten a full meal with three very different experiences. There were certainly things I'd do differently next time, especially giving more thought to having some kind of harmony to the type of foods consumed. However, bouncing from place to place, each with a unique character, was one of the most enjoyable dining escapades I've had in a long time.

Remember, the point of restaurant hopping is to alleviate stress, not create it. Make up whatever rules you want, and have fun.

CAFÉ HIMALAYA
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Momo, traditional Tibetan dumplings steamed and stuffed with herbs and beef (standing in for yak meat, which is typically used in momo). Thick and doughy, these dumplings failed to impress. The beef was dry and whatever herbs were used did nothing to enliven the flavor. The relaxed vibe of the small joint seemed to be its greatest attribute. Slightly disappointed, we headed out the door for dessert.

The third and final destination was a few doors down at Tuck Shop, an Australian restaurant that looked more like a dive bar. More curious to try an Aussie dessert than to patronize this harshly lit place, we let the man behind the counter bring us their two options. The first, a lamington, is a small square of plain cake dipped in chocolate and coated in coconut. This version tasted like sawdust sprinkled on a dried sponge. The vanilla slice was more enjoyable. The Australian take on the French pastry known as a Napoleon, the vanilla slice consists of custard sandwiched between two puff pastries and topped with vanilla fondant. The textures of the custard and pastry worked well together, but the custard was bland, and I would have been fine eating just the fondant. Tuck Shop's savory food, including sausage rolls and meat pies, looked and smelled more appetizing, though I would recommend taking the food to go.

After three restaurants, we were
TUCK SHOP
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PLAYTIME'S OVER

Learning the ABC's and 123's of Teach for America

By Elizabeth Brown

Just like the shock one feels upon first seeing the words “Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger,” there’s something strange about a brightly colored flier that reads, “Joint Teach For America & JP Morgan Meet-and-Greet.” The words aren’t necessarily at odds, yet there’s something about the pairing of these strange bedfellows that may keep you awake at night. In a classroom on the third floor of Hamilton Hall, the eager standing-room-only crowd is undisturbed by any conflict of interest.

Teach for America’s Columbia recruitment director Emily Bobel dominates the front of the room, punctuating her sentences with sharp hand movements and emphatic, unbroken eye contact. In smart navy pants and a necktie belt, she is as much the picture of professionalism as that of a young, relatable idealist informing some friends about a super new way to fight social injustice. The Teach for America vernacular—replete with phrases like “enlisting the country’s future leaders” and “fighting educational inequality”—flows smoothly from her mouth. A rarity: not one student has asked about the free dinner promised by the fliers (it’s spread out on a table two rooms down the hall—Bobel’s idea to help the meetings and greetings run smoothly).

Out in the hallway, a representative from JP Morgan in office attire looks over-dressed and tragically aware of the fact. Brushing aside the offer for a paper name-tag, she reaches into her tote bag to pull out a metal plaque engraved “Ali Leibenhaut,” which she fastens to her chest. Leibenhaut is approached by one eager student who wonders if Teach for America might be his “in” at JP Morgan. No, Leibenhaut replies, an applicant must be accepted into each program separately. Once that happens, he can defer his start-date at the bank for two years to pursue teaching in underserved public schools.

Bobel speaks of Teach for America’s double-barreled “theory of change.” First, the graduate from, say, Stanford (Bobel’s alma mater) commits her first two post-collegiate years to Teach for America. She experiences the education crisis that is totally foreign to most elite college graduates. When she fulfills her commitment to Teach for America, her previous two years have armed her with the experiences to, as Bobel puts it, “go into law or go into medicine, and do [advocacy] work on a much more credible level.” Once a Teacher For America, always a Teacher For America.

Although Bobel’s proselytizing has me ready to fast-forward to graduation, forget all my other plans, and sign up, I still wonder where JP Morgan fits into my

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zeal for charity. After the meeting, I approach Leibenhaut, who explains that plucking students ripe from their Teach for America service yields well-rounded employees for her firm: “Partnering with TFA is a way to provide our future employees options. So, essentially, it’s a win-win-win situation.” The graduate gets to make a difference before making profits in the market, Teach for America broadens its applicant pool, and JP Morgan injects its workforce with a little social conscience.

Few seem to notice that to feed corps members into the corporate world would defy the Teach for America mission statement, a platform intended to foster a culture of advocacy and to stress “lifelong leaders for expanding educational opportunity.”

FROM ZERO TO INFINITY

Like many college seniors, Wendy Kopp’s future was undecided as she entered her last year at Princeton in 1988. That year she would transform her innovative thesis and her misgivings about her own future into what is now one of the nation’s most well-known service organizations, Teach for America. Its stats read like credentials in a top-tier college admissions pamphlet: a 13 percent acceptance rate, successful alumni, and a network with connections to some of the country’s best jobs. The organization’s Web site describes the 2005 New York corps through four criteria: average GPA (3.57), average SAT (1335), percentage of accepted members who held on-campus leadership positions (95), and percentage of people of color (26).

In 1990, Teach for America’s first corps sent 500 college graduates to teach in six targeted areas. Today there are about 4,400 first- and second-year corps member who reach over 375,000 students around the country. New York City’s troubled public schools have warranted the largest site. Last spring Kopp told *Current Magazine*, “We are aspiring to become the top employer of top recent college graduates. We are very, very committed to reaching these goals.”

Clearly, the spirit of Ivy League-level competition hasn’t left Kopp.

Teach for America is well on its way to achieving Kopp’s goals. Collegegrad.com, an Internet hiring guide, ranked the organization as the tenth-largest employer of graduates for 2006. Furthermore, the non-profit has laid out a growth plan as comprehensive as that of any corporation. Citing “a moral imperative” to carry its torch, Teach for America aims to expand to 7,500 corps members in 33 regions over the next four years. By 2010, its target for alumni is the development of 600 school leaders and 100 elected officials. The final leg of the plan is simply to last. And last. And last. In order to do so, Teach for America plans to enlarge its funding base, enlist alumni support, and “build brand awareness.”

While Kopp may seek to build the world’s pedagogical Golden Arches, some corps members are disheartened by Teach for America’s acutely corporate aspirations, noting the emphasis on “building brand awareness” and pushing alumni achievement. When his two years with Teach for America began in 2004, University of Chicago graduate Andrew Elliot-Chandler started blogging his experiences at www.thetrenches.blogspot.com (hopefully his students don’t know that URL). By the end of his first year, he began to call for an end to the corporate culture: “The T.F.A. font, the consistent language of ‘takeaways’ and ‘norms’ drive me a little crazy. Perhaps it’s an effort to appear professional, but it often feels like filtering and structuralizing what should be normal, organic, human relationships.”

Beth Katz, CC ’06, also notices the ubiquity of TFA’s corporate language. She admits: “I do try to avoid using the TFA lingo, which we were inundated with at [Summer] Institute on a daily basis.” Still, she relies on Teach for America’s classroom strategies when she needs them, while skipping over the jargon.

But corporate trappings don’t concern Kopp. In a 2001 address to Princeton’s Woodrow Wilson School of Public Policy and International Affairs, she proudly noted the many ways in which Teach for America has excelled due to its business management. She believes its high standards and efficiency have enabled it to go farther, and to do so in a shorter time frame, than any comparable organization.

Kick-starting her plans are Columbia’s ever socially conscious students. Columbia is annually one of the top suppliers of Teach for America corps members, ranking eighth overall and first among schools with fewer than 8,000 students. Other elite schools are jumping on board as well: 12 percent of Yale’s senior class and 11 percent of Amherst’s applied to be a part of last year’s Teach for America corps.

Teach for America continues to attract smart, active graduates with its highly organized recruitment campaigns. At colleges across the country, TFA employs alert students to give it a hand by keeping track of campus goings-on. Jordy Lievers, CC ’07, is one of three such Columbians this year. Manning the dinner—a low-key pizza buffet—at the joint meet-and-greet, she explains her job: “We keep our ears to the ground to see what people are doing cool things, who’s making a difference, what names come up over and over again.” She and the two other campus campaign managers then give recommendations to Bobel.

Lievers’ enthusiasm is so great that it comes between her and her pizza, as she sets down a slice to defend the Teach for America–JP Morgan partnership. Essentially, she says it affords graduates a way “to balance their bank account and their social conscience.”

The idea offers a sharp contrast to the community service organizations of yesteryear. In 1976, Peace Corps administrators worked to ensure the best possible health care—not six-figure salaries—for their volunteers. Then again, Teach for America



is not to blame for a money-loving culture. Are we so insatiably greedy that we demand our national service with a side of Benjamins? Ours is not a generation known for its benevolence; it seems something about this do-good group must give.

THE PATRIOTS

Despite her current employment with the organization, Lievers has no obligation to work for Teach for America when she graduates. In fact, she says, it probably doesn’t fit her life-plan to pursue musical theater. “It’s a great program, but it’s not exactly a straight path to the stage.”

Yet for high-achieving students with a higher calling, Teach for America seems like the place to be. Rob Meyerhoff, CC ’06, is in his first month of teaching ninth grade at Frederick Douglass Academy in Harlem. Ever self-deprecating, he explains his “corny” reason for applying: “I’ve always had these great opportunities in life. And I just really felt like I had a responsibility to people who haven’t had that, to help open doors for them.” What’s more, Meyerhoff was still unready to commit to a career path when senior year arrived.

Meyerhoff’s speech is as nonchalant and unfussy as his hair. He has a big smile, which he offers freely and often in small talk. So when he dives into a discussion of his work, trading in the smile for brow-furrowing concentration and a palpable effort to get every word exactly right, the effect is distinctly disarming. He breaks down his teaching habits, precisely describing practices that make him sound like a teacher going on three years, as opposed to three weeks. “Every morning my students come in, I shake their hands, look them in the eye, and say, ‘Good morning.’ If the answer’s ‘Yo, what’s up?’ I say to walk back outside. If they try to give me daps, I say to walk back outside ... I believe they should know how to shake hands because I believe in their future jobs where they’ll need to do that, you know what I’m saying?”

Frederick Douglass Academy is just right for students who want a future job complete with plenty of hand-shaking: the school sends almost all its students to college. It is a pioneer in the New York City’s “replication schools” program. Under the program, a school can pilot innovative methods, and if it proves successful, as measured by test scores and community satisfaction, other schools that replicate the original can pop up across the five boroughs. At Frederick Douglass, students wear uniforms and can attend sponsored trips to Japan. Principal Gregory Hodge says, “We try to give our kids everything they would have if they had went to Stuyvesant.”

High expectations are of special emphasis for Teach for America. It’s one of the

many points that instructors stress during the five-week summer training mandated for all incoming corps members. During what Teach for America calls Summer Institute, the trainers—TFA staff and veteran educators—cram as much information as they can into the eager, sharp minds that sit before them. After the first week of schmoozing with past and present corps members, the hours are long—5:30 a.m. to about 12:30 a.m.—and the demands are far-reaching. It’s a grinding introduction to the time and energy the corps members will have to devote to two years of teaching. David Sonnenborn, CC ’06, calls the training a “really terrific, survey-tested, results-oriented program.” He adds, “There’s support for every step of the process.”

Sonnenborn attributes his easy transition into Mott Hall Bronx High School to the Summer Institute. But Mott Hall is another rare example of New York public school calm. Students play chess and work with technology in class. Most incoming students read at or above grade level. With acceptance to the school come requisite uniforms and four years of Latin.

Holly Guzmán, CC ’06, has a heartfelt and honest voice, but she sounds noticeably fatigued when describing her less than rosy experience with Teach for America. She teaches sixth grade at C.I.S. 339, a middle school in the South Bronx. “It was definitely overwhelming, and it’s a lot harder than what it looks like. Every day you’re either smiling or just totally depressed,” she says. Throughout her story, she returns to the word “crazy” time and again.

Guzmán’s school suffers from real academic problems. Only 20 percent of students at C.I.S. 339 meet the language arts standards set by the city, and just 15 percent meet the math standards. Guzmán teaches humanities, where literacy struggles are more than just statistics: “If they were all at one reading level, even if it was low, it’d be okay. But my lowest level is second grade, and my highest is fifth. When it’s spread out that way, it’s really hard to teach because you will always lose someone, due to either boredom or confusion.” She fears risking either.

AND THE TORIES

On average, between 10 and 15 percent of corps members leave before their two-year commitment has ended.

One of TFA’s particularly vocal critics is Stanford University professor Linda Darling-Hammond, who led a 2005 Houston-area study on the in-classroom consequences of a mere five weeks of training. The study analyzed the achievements and gains of over 132,000 students over a six-year period on six different tests. It con-

cluded that uncertified Teach for America teachers are less effective than certified teachers and perform about the same as other uncertified teachers. When the *Stanford Daily* reported the study’s findings, a spat ensued between Darling-Hammond and Kopp, which then played out in the paper’s op-ed pages.

Kopp struck back with a study of her own, conducted by Mathematica Policy Research in 2004. It examined a larger geographic pool for only one year and yielded results which indicate that Teach for America corps members “outperform even the veteran and certified teachers in their schools in a statistically significant way,” as Kopp described in her April 18, 2005, op-ed. She questioned both Darling-Hammond’s methodology and the integrity of the journalist who ran the story on what she deemed a flawed study.

Three days later, Darling-Hammond’s next op-ed called into question Kopp’s interpretation of the Mathematical study. Strangely, Darling-Hammond also questioned the utility of either study: “It’s important to look beyond specific programs to ask the bigger policy question: Rather than pitting under-prepared teachers against others in comparisons of effectiveness, how can policies provide well-qualified teachers to low-income students? While a band-aid on a bleeding sore is helpful in a crisis, healing the wounds of inequality and poverty is also a policy problem worth solving.”

Furthermore, Teach for America’s use of high-achievers who often fail to commit to careers in teaching after their two-year commitments are over jeopardizes the reputation of the profession. Professor Margaret Crocco of Teachers College says, “On one hand TFA looks like a very positive thing, a domestic Peace Corps, if you will, with many eager, committed, young people wanting in.” But she also cautions, “What worries me is that it positions teaching less as a profession and more as charity that people of a more elite background engage in on their way to the ‘real world.’” The ripple effect, she argues, belittles teachers by opening the profession to cursorily trained twenty-somethings.

In her criticisms, Crocco refers to the corps members’ short-term teaching commitments as well as the limitations of the five-week Summer Institute. Guzmán, who completed training this past summer, says, “No matter how much they train you, it’s just not going to be enough for when you step into class the first day of school.”

Although Teach for America stresses its efforts to bridge the achievement gap, critics point to the main consequence of putting elite-college graduates into low-income schools: the culture gap. When the respective cultures of a student and his teacher clash, conventional wisdom tells us that the ramifications in the classroom can be severe.

But Katz, who teaches ninth grade in Los Angeles, disagrees with the conventional wisdom. She asserts: “I don’t find it difficult to relate to [my students], even when their life experiences are so different from my own. I recognize that every student has a unique story and a plethora of difficult life circumstances, but I don’t let that perspective shape my expectations for them.”

Meyerhoff considers how he, a privileged kid from Baltimore, can understand where a student of his, standing across the cultural gap, is coming from. “I can’t,” he answers. But he sees no advantage to allowing the culture gap to become a permanent obstacle. “Look, all the experience in the world isn’t going to take the place of what’s happening in classrooms in this country, you know?” In fact, Meyerhoff says his advantages allow him to expect more: “People say, ‘What can we really expect from these kids whose test scores are so low?’ Well, I expect high scores. Letting kids fall behind and setting a low standard is not doing them or anyone a favor.”

Here again is the language of high expectations that Teach for America trumpets on its Web site, drives home to its corps members, and preaches to the undergraduates they court. But strangely, it doesn’t sound like a marketing plan or corporate spam when it comes from Meyerhoff and Katz.

Professor Crocco agrees. She does not foresee that Teach for America will do any harm, and she emphasizes the effect that good teachers have on students. “Education research more and more is coming to understand that critical role played by the teacher. ... A good teacher can overcome many dimensions of the achievement gap.”

Breaking out a toothy smile, Meyerhoff admits, “The change is definitely dramatic. I mean, six months ago my hardest decision was Strok’s or Nussbaum.” The smile fades again, this time into something beyond earnestness. “You know, sometimes I think I can’t do it. Sometimes I know I can. And then there’s the third kind of time. The ‘I have to do it.’” There’s gravity and a little sadness around his mouth as he goes on, describing phone calls with his students’ parents. “I’m talking to them about their kid and these things at home—stuff I really have no idea about—and we’re both crying. And then the next day I walk in [-to school], and I don’t think in terms of ‘I can’ or ‘I can’t.’ All I can think is, ‘I have to do this.’ There’s no other choice.”

Meyerhoff’s heartfelt words demonstrate that Teach for America has undoubtedly affected him. How the program has affected his students, however, is less clear. For better or worse, the ninth graders have to go to school—just like Meyerhoff has to instruct them. Hopefully, his time at the blackboard will push each of them toward a dream career. Still, generations of youngsters will attend Frederick Douglass Academy after Meyerhoff’s tenure at TFA has come to an end. At that point, Meyerhoff should be well entrenched in his own dream career; whether that job is in teaching has yet to be determined. ■

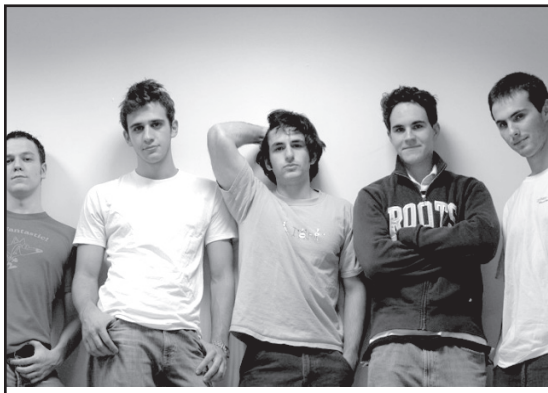
The Band Next Door

How to catch the latest wave of campus music

By Maxwell Foxman



VAMPIRE WEEKEND
vampireweekend.com



THE FOLK
thefolk.net

Unless you're a first-year who hasn't explored Columbia or a senior who is emotionally done with Columbia, you have seen them somewhere—at a subway party, at a raucous, near bar-brawl rock show, or perhaps in a room full of sweaty, skinny-jean-wearing campus hipsters. They are some of the few Columbia musicians who—with the help of grassroots publicity campaigns and despite the obstacles of school and space—have managed to gain notoriety through hard work, a few tricks, and a bit of luck.

Matt Beilis, SEAS '07, has just recently joined the Columbia scene. Influenced by artists like Billy Joel, Ben Folds, and Elton John, Beilis has skyrocketed to fame. He spent the summer touring with tween-star Teddy Geiger. "I picked up a bunch of little teenage girl fans that way," he said. He added that he had been surprised at his popularity. "It was awesome. We would get off the stage and people wanted to take their pictures with me."

Beilis' band is a hodge-podge of musicians from around the city. "I put out ads actually for musicians. I didn't go the route of like getting together a group of friends. These were the best musicians I found," Beilis said. Shows were the hardest part for Beilis. "It's definitely harder to break into the music industry in New York City as opposed to a small town. Not necessarily in the industry itself, but it's harder to get known." Still, he said, anywhere else he might not have been heard by Chris Keup, who produced Jason Mraz's last album and approached Beilis with the offer to produce an EP.

Beilis' upcoming show at The Underscore on Oct. 12, his first since his return from tour, is unique for the average Columbia performer because of its independence from the University's infrastructure.

By contrast, Vampire Weekend—a band that classifies itself as "preppy African"—has a career and a fan base that began within Columbia's walls. "It's just kind of because we were friends, so we've always been helping each other out with different music stuff we've been doing," said lead singer Ezra Koenig, CC '06, who had previously played with some of his current band-mates in the hip-hoppish group L'homme Run. L'homme Run performed around campus for a few years but did not branch out, so widespread recognition eluded the group.

All the members of Vampire Weekend live off campus, so the band is able to explore new ways of recording and playing. "It's not like at Columbia where we had all the time in the world," Koenig explained. Now when they record, they just record, or they just practice—instead of "hanging" in somebody's dorm.

In the 10 months of Vampire Weekend's existence, its popularity has been growing beyond its strong Columbia base. "At Columbia we did some great shows," Koenig said. But lately their shows have been a "culmination" of a

growing amount of listeners and a new "captive audience"—though Koenig was quick to say how much he appreciates the support of his Columbia friends.

Still, nobody has campaigned as ardently on campus as Anton Glamb, CC '07, who did his first show at orientation as a first-year. From there he recorded an album in his room, effectively documenting his first chance to really sing without his parents around. He proceeded in distributing his CD to anyone and everyone, and even sold it in the Columbia Bookstore—"I just asked," he explained. Glamb continued doing shows both on and off campus with mixed results—when his computer died in Hawaii, he had to have part of his show beat-boxed.

Also a competitive skater, Glamb has sometimes had trouble balancing his extracurricular activities with schoolwork. Still, he has pursued his music and is currently preparing his next album.

Glamb's marketing focuses on having a good time. He used a choreographer to help him do a show with back-up singers and promoted his music with subway parties. Ultimately, his musical career comes down to enjoying himself and doing shows anywhere, at any time, as frequently as possible.

The Folk are also successful at marketing their shows as events that should not be missed. "We started out talking to friends about shows," said lead singer Nick DiCarlo, CC '07, who described some of the shows as a "bunch of people that were drunk and boisterous." Eventually, word spread and strangers made their way to the wild shows. Now, by DiCarlo's estimates, shows consist of 70 to 130 people, though the band performs, at most, one or two shows a month. "We'd rather have bigger turnouts" and play fewer shows, he explained.

Most of these bands have played together throughout their four years at Columbia. They represent an odd lineup of synth pop, pop/rock, hard rock, and other genres. "At places like Wesleyan," said DiCarlo, who at one time dated a girl at the school, "shows usually consisted of what you'd expect—college rock, psychedelic rock ... stuff that sounded the same."

For those who are thinking of trying to break into the campus music scene, Glamb offered the advice: "I'd say, like, just try and play for your friends. If it takes throwing a party and setting up a band in the hall ... Just going and having fun, try and e-mail songs to your friends if you can, and if you have a band and there's like five people in the band just try to get as many of your friends to come out, and then they'll bring their friends, and hopefully you got a party on your hands."



MATT BEILIS
myspace.com/beilis



ANTON GLAMB
myspace.com/antonglamb

Exploring the Caribbean With Islands

By Justin Goncalves

In 1986, Paul Simon released *Graceland*, an album that showcased his songwriting prowess by mixing traditional pop formats with South African musical motifs. Nick Diamonds was only four years old at the time, but already preparing to release his take on the record 20 years later. Diamonds and his musical project Islands were birthed out of the Simon tradition, experimenting with calypso rhythms and Caribbean styling (as their name might suggest). Islands' debut album, *Return to the Sea*, is to the West Indies what *Graceland* is to South Africa.

The musical similarities are no accident. "I think *Graceland* is the real checkpoint for the record," Diamonds said. "I don't think there are any others [albums] that influenced us as a guiding light. We used that record as a model for the kind of vibe we wanted to get—pop format with a world music influence." Tracks like "Jogging Gorgeous Summer" and "Don't Call Me Whitney, Bobby" highlight the band's use of steel drums and melodic bass lines to accentuate Diamonds' sweet, concise pop songs. Diamonds, however, urges his listeners not to mistake the term pop for meaningless, a distinction that is guiding the composition of Islands' sophomore album, and a distinction that Diamonds' previous band, The Unicorns, could never quite grasp.

Understandably wary about finding foundations for his present project in his past musical experiences, Diamonds is very relieved to have rid himself and Islands of the ex-Unicorns epithet. "I couldn't dwell on that band even if I wanted to, and I think it's great considering how far I've come," he explained. "I'm so into what I'm doing"—mastering his craft and bringing even more dimensions to his music.

"The new songs are better," Diamonds claims. "Heavier. Heavier in every sense, in the philosophical sense and in the sonic sense." The band's distinct sonic quality comes from its unique instrumentation which includes two violins, a couple of guitars, a bass clarinet, a bassist, and a percussionist. As heavy as the songs may be, Islands certainly have not lost their penchant for fun. Diamonds aims to create "a bit of a riot scene," a project continued in the band's guerilla concert tradition.

"Some people came out to our show and asked if we could do this guerilla performance in the street. We said, 'Okay, but we don't have gorilla costumes or anything,'" Diamonds joked. "It seems like something fun to do, just to go into the streets—dogs and taxi cabs. We came close to being hit by a few cars." The video of the band's performance includes all nine of its members and is particularly fitting considering the band's tendency to ignite a ruckus—this past spring, the band concluded its performance at the Avalon with a mass processional into the street, where the show continued.



Picking up where Paul Simon's *Graceland* left off, Islands explore the limits of pop music by introducing calypso rhythms and engaging in guerilla performance tactics at their shows.

Islands are preparing to embark on another tour which Diamonds sees as "an excuse to rehearse the new songs—kind of greasing them up for a recording session." Count on guerilla tactics and a dash of chaos, because Islands' similarity to Paul Simon ends with their last recorded track.

UPCOMING ISLANDS CONCERTS

Mon., Oct. 9, Bowery Ballroom

8 p.m./\$15

Tues., Oct. 10, Northsix

9 p.m./\$15

11

Album Reviews

Beck

The Information

The Information begins with a "one, two, you know what to do," and, boy, does Beck know what he is doing. Though none of the songs really stand out as number-one singles (like "Girl," from his last record, *Guero*, did), all of them are still quite an earful. "Cell-phone's Dead" starts off with a samba beat and then leads into a rap that can only be described as Jason Mraz meets Eminem.

The piano in "Strange Apparition" makes for a nice jam, one to roll the windows down to on a long drive in the middle of nowhere. But it isn't until the album's seventh track, "New Round," that Beck breaks from the *Guero*-style and opts for a slower beat. On the last track on the album, a 10-minute saga titled "The Horrible Fanfare/Landslide/Exoskeleton," he might break too far from the danceable *Guero*—the song is a creepy mix of random audio clips and Gregorian chant-like music. Though *The Information* is definitely worth a few listens, Beck needs to find a niche he hasn't filled before.

—Lana Limón

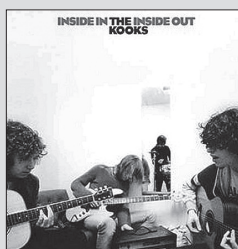


The Kooks

Inside In/Inside Out

The Kooks, Britain's biggest (musical) obsession, are finally hopping over to the states. With the label "NME Band"—also slapped on the likes of the Arctic Monkeys and The Libertines/the many off-shoots of The Libertines—chasing after these four boys from Brighton, you can guess not only how big they are but also that they are superficially hated by the music elitist and loved by *NME*'s impressionable puppets.

It takes a few listens to start appreciating *Inside In/Inside Out*, which initially runs through you like water and then hits you with bang-bang-bang two-minute screeches. *Inside In/Inside Out* creeps up on you, grabbing you with the flawlessly heartfelt "Naive," pulling you in with "Match Box," "Ooh La," and "Sofa Song," and finally overcoming your power to remain disinterested. The 15-track album rides on the beauty of seven good tracks, but something about Luke Pritchard's often unintelligible slurring and the accompanying reggae chords make this album click. Experimental and rhythmic with a new, honest take on old emotions, *Inside In/Inside Out* is the William Wordsworth of British indie music. It seems shallow and amateurish at a glance, but a longer look reveals deeper meanings. —Frances Bodomo

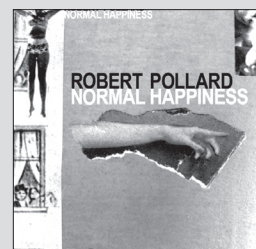


Robert Pollard

Normal Happiness

Times are tough for musicians of the '90s. Given the apparent danger of the passage to the millennium—Kevin Shields, Jeff Mangum, and Rivers Cuomo are but a few of those who have perished en route to our new world—it's almost surprising that Robert Pollard's new album *Normal Happiness* is better than mediocre. As its title suggests, the record strives for little and comes up beaming, delighted at fulfilling its own meager standards.

Then again, we should expect better. As frontman for '90s lo-fi gods Guided by Voices, Pollard recorded some of the most imaginative music of the decade, sculpting one- and two-minute pop songs on albums populated by UFOs, elves, and "hot freaks." Since disbanding GBV in 2004, Pollard hasn't exactly dropped that indie talisman—*Normal Happiness*' content retains some of the wild-eyed enthusiasm of records past. Songs remain brief, even flash-fried, and the lyrics are still quite fanciful. The luster has worn off, though, and Pollard sounds like he's just reusing old stencils. Unlike Stephen Malkmus, one of the few refugees of the '90s who remains relevant today, Pollard seems uninterested in, or maybe afraid of, reinvention. —Geoff Aung



Columbia Alum Exorcises His Demons

New documentary exposes the sweet side of Pulitzer Prize-winner Tony Kushner

By Julia Stroud

The media like to label playwright Tony Kushner, CC '78, a polarizing figure. Gay, Jewish, and extremely liberal, he has famously “nuanced” opinions about tricky issues like Israel and American politics. But anyone who hears him speak (at a college graduation or, as in the documentary *Wrestling With Angels*, on gay pride day at JP Morgan Chase) witnesses a staggeringly intelligent, bashful, and soft-spoken man. Fervent in his ideals and conversational in his delivery, he inspires action and preaches an “ethical obligation not to despair.”

Documentary filmmaker Freida Lee Mock (*Maya Lin: A Strong Clear Vision*) saw just that in a speech that Kushner made at her daughter's college graduation and decided, with little knowledge of his body of work as a playwright, to make him the subject of her next film. She followed him from just after Sept. 11, 2001 through the presidential election in 2004. Her cameras captured the author at work through several productions of his critically divisive *Homebody/Kabul*, the creation and subsequent Broadway production of his musical *Caroline, or Change*, his adaptation of the concentration camp opera *Brundibar*, and the soaring, Emmy-winning HBO film version of what remains his most famous work, *Angels in America*.

Through Mock's lens, Kushner's powerful social voice is elevated by his otherwise mundane circumstances. We meet his octogenarian father, his middle-aged brother, his diet doctor. We see scenes of his wedding party, his visit to his childhood shul. We hear of his coming of age at Columbia—something with which surely we can relate. There is also plenty of time spent watching him in action: toying around with an idea that might take 20 years to mature or collaborating with the composer of *Caroline*, Jeanine Tesori, BC '83. Mock makes Kushner's work seem possible—as if any one of us could sit down and write



Documentary filmmaker Freida Lee Mock's latest picture profiles playwright Tony Kushner (*Angels in America*), CC '78. He got his start writing theater reviews for the *Columbia Daily Spectator*.

an epic like *Angels*. The fact that that's probably not true is what makes him so appealing.

Kushner lives the life of an everyman with big ideas, and his journey is to find a forum for them. If Mock's documentary never quite gets deeper than that—the portrait of an upright artist on a mission to save the world—it's heavy enough for one film.



Damon, DiCaprio, and a Dildo Make a Masterpiece

Martin Scorsese's most puerile, star-studded gangster saga, *The Departed*, is an instant classic

By David Ehrlich

Martin Scorsese's *The Departed* is not the famed director's return to form, but rather his return to quality. After 15 years of middling successes (*Kundun*, *Bringing out the Dead*); bloated, overwrought, and under-nurtured epics (*Casino*, *Gangs of New York*, *The Aviator*); masterful non-fiction throwaways (*My Voyage to Italy*, *No Direction Home: Bob Dylan*); and one elegant curiosity (*The Age of Innocence*), Scorsese has finally found material that matches his immaculate prowess. Although his early triumphs have left him largely pigeonholed as the cinema's Mario Puzo, Scorsese's talents are hardly genre-specific—his eye for projects just seems a bit keener when some bloodshed is involved. His highly visceral, detail-obsessed approach meshes with a flawed script like gremlins and water, but he and *The Departed* are such a perfect fit that the state should cut them tax breaks.

A structurally loyal yet tonally ambitious remake of Hong Kong's 2002 *Infernal Affairs*, *The Departed* is the shockingly comprehensible saga of Billy Costigan (Leonardo DiCaprio) and Colin Sullivan (Matt Damon), two fresh-faced Boston police cadets who grew up in the wrong sphere of influence—Frank Costello's (Jack Nicholson). Colin was always a rat for the perpetually unfazed mobster, but once Billy gets roped into going undercover with Costello's crew, the real fun begins.

What follows is a lucid, white-knuckled ride that favors neither the seedy un-



Leonardo DiCaprio frustratedly listens to Matt Damon's daily apology for his guest appearance on *Will and Grace*.

and as sprawling as it is refined. Scripts this good are meant for Martin Scorsese, and it's about time he finally used one.



derworld nor the bureaucratic one above, but rather the unsteady limbo in between. Buzzing with the unforced energy that Scorsese has been faking since 1990, *The Departed* finally realizes the raw potential that the director's pairing with DiCaprio was destined to someday yield. Billy finds the descent from proper civilian to the purgatory of utter anonymity to be disturbingly quick and far-reaching, and DiCaprio has a ball experiencing the erasure of that identity, as he takes the script's metaphysical asides to very real, very messy places. And while Damon and his sorely missed Southie accent do their part with a finesse that makes some third-act plot pivots play organically rather than contrived, and Vera Farmiga turns her nothing of a role into a star-making part, not even the venerable Jack Nicholson (or his infamous dildo) can make this into an actors' film. Surgically attacking William Monaghan's bestial yet contained adaptation, Scorsese fashions *The Departed* into a masterclass of cinematic density—as light as it is filling,



The 44th New York Film Fest

Given the religious frenzy that Pedro Almodóvar inspires in intelligent circles, it is no surprise that his latest film, *Volver*, was selected as the centerpiece to this year's New York Film Festival. The movie is hotly anticipated due, in part, to the grand return of former muse Carmen Maura, the 180-degree turn of Penelope Cruz from disposable starlet to indisputable diva, and the unanimously rapturous reviews it has received in Europe. Deceptively disguised as a whimsical comedy about female camaraderie, *Volver* could more accurately be approached as the director's mid-life confrontation with death, a subject that has always had a prominent role in his films but is this film's central preoccupation.

Volver displays all of Almodóvar's signature trademarks—an enthusiasm for iconic women, melodrama, an hyperbolic color palette, and an absurdly implausible premise. The story focuses on the ghost of Irene (Maura) returning to her hometown to take care of her senile sister and to remedy her turbulent relationship with her two troubled daughters (Lola Dueñas and Penelope Cruz). The deceptively chirpy Sole (Dueñas), a freelance hairdresser, disguises her loneliness through plastic smiles, while Raymunda (Cruz) grapples with raising her own teenage daughter as her no-good husband loses his job and spends his nights drinking. As is always the case with Almodóvar, these narrative threads splinter and overlap, leading to a very sophisticated and complex layering of reality with the magical, tragedy with comedy, and narrative absorption with post-modern disengagement.

Of course, Almodóvar elicits better performances from actresses than actors, so it is no surprise that the ensemble cast shared the best actress award

at the Venice film festival.

The honor, however, should have gone exclusively to Penelope Cruz. She has done some remarkably stupid movies in America, but she has since been consciously moving away from such cretinism. In *Volver*, Cruz is fleshier and earthier, donning a prosthetic ass and brilliantly channeling Anna Magnani and Sofia Loren. Like a true neorealist heroine, she steals our sympathies by experiencing the whole emotional gamut—all-devouring grief, rapid flashes of temper, effrontery, and joy. It takes remarkable presence and technique to pull this off without making it seem kitschy and inauthentic, but, guided by a sacred monster of modern cinema, Cruz pulls it off superbly. —Iggy Cortez



Cruz's Adopt a Wayward Actress Program was going well until Sharon Stone bit her new owner.



This shot of an obese man absorbing dozens of children is actually *Paprika*'s sanest moment.

If David Cronenberg, Michel Gondry, and Federico Fellini's physically impossible love-child dropped a lethal dose of acid and attempted to make an anime... well, it probably wouldn't get very far, as lethality and death often go hand-in-hand. In theory, however, the hypothetical wunderkind would produce something vaguely similar to Satoshi Kon's *Paprika*, a deliriously maddening meditation on fiction, reality, and the myriad roles that the subconscious plays in shaping the individual psyche.

Kon has been anime's most subversive filmmaker for almost a decade. His *Perfect Blue* is the medium's most penetrating study of erotic madness (in a medium that offers many), and his serialized *Paranoia Agent* remains among the most penetrating studies of mass psychosis in any format. His deliberately plain character

traits often hide insidiously creative sociopath—as Kon believes we're all equally vulnerable to some rather dark desires—and *Paprika* finds him addressing that notion more directly than ever.

Ostensibly, *Paprika* is the story of Dr. Atsuko Chiba, a gentle psychotherapist who plunges into and observes the dreams of her patients with a device called the DC Mini. A prototype being prepared for government analysis, the DC Mini is stolen before it can be legislatively approved. One of Atsuko's co-workers is missing, she breaks into his apartment, and then, somewhere before the film's 15th minute, Kon jumps the rails, and the line between fantasy and reality isn't blurred so much as repeatedly passed through a wood-chipper.

What literally transpires between the theft and the apocalypse (if you consider that a spoiler, this is likely not the film for you) are of marginal importance—this is a film that exists to wallow in its nightmares and dreamscapes, not explain them. Atsuko's intrepid alter-ego, the eponymous *Paprika*, dives into the dreams of those attacked by the stolen DC Minis, and what she finds is a subconscious mess that's occasionally as entertaining as it is utterly beguiling, if for the images alone. By turns a diatribe on the need for fantasy (namely cinema—it's perhaps the first anime to feature a fully stylized Audrey Hepburn) and a visual expression of the psyche's inability to communicate via traditional means, *Paprika* is always arresting, occasionally enjoyable, and seldom as complete as anything else in Kon's oeuvre. —David Ehrlich



If Princess Diana were alive today, she would be approaching 50. But not unlike Marilyn Monroe or James Dean, the sudden shock of her death—and the frenzied media coverage that ensued—has bestowed on her the eternal youth of myth. Queen Elizabeth II, in contrast, has aged. The images of her as an elderly, bottle-shaped woman are more iconic than her incarnation as a young adult. Stephen Frears sets up this contrast masterfully in his insightful, sharp biopic about England's reigning monarch. While Diana was eternally young, public, and performing her vulnerability, *The Queen* is emotionally impregnable, old, and remote. That the modernizer should have tragically died before the old guard becomes—in the hands of Frears and writer Peter Morgan—a brilliantly executed opportunity to understand contemporary British society through its monarchy, depicted as not only the country's most bizarre and surreal institution, but also what conveys the British people to themselves as a collectivity.

Like most docudramas, *The Queen* is best when it goes haywire with speculation that is nonetheless informed by facts and circumstantial evidence. As Alastair Campbell scoffs at the Queen's frigid TV address, Tony Blair furiously berates him, as he has come to understand the personal sacrifices the Queen has made for her country. However, the mourning following Diana's death, in Blair's eyes, is incommensurate to her actual significance. The Queen herself is presented as being purely dutiful to her ceremonial role even in her most intimate hours, except for a single, poignant scene where—completely alone in the vast wilderness of her estate—she cries with her back turned to the camera.

The cast is uniformly excellent. Michael Sheen's performance as Tony Blair is compelling, eerily accurate, but also generous and intelligent. Still the ob-

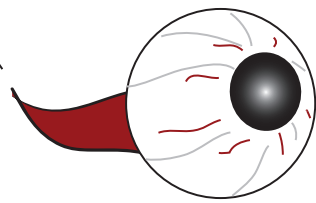
vious heart of the film is Dame Helen Mirren in the titular role—her performance is simply outstanding. For the uninitiated, Mirren will be remarkable for her authenticity and her uncanny ability to be emotionally exact through the most economical of means. But longtime admirers of Dame Helen will also admire the richness of her portrayal and its echoes of her past performances—the reticence of *Gosford Park*'s Mrs. Wilson, the grandeur of her background in Shakespearean tragedy, and the countless royal figures she has already brilliantly incarnated. —Iggy Cortez



To look devastated for Princess Diana's funeral, Helen Mirren simply recalled her role in *Teaching Mrs. Tingle*.



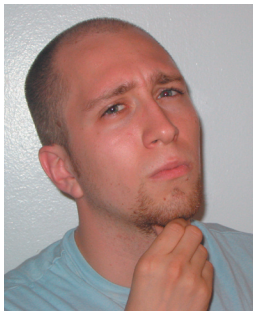
THE ROLLING EYE



Thus Spoke Dan

Dan and Steve go to White Castle

By Dan Haley



Last Tuesday night, I was watching *Harold and Kumar Go to White Castle* with my friends Steve and I'mFromQueens. After the movie was done, at around 1:30 a.m., Steve proposed we make a pilgrimage to White Castle. Initially, I was hesitant, thinking of the work I'd planned to get done. Then,

I remembered that I'm an English major and don't have much actual work.

Steve was excited, in that giddy Midwestern let's-beat-up-the-awkward-kid-while-the-teacher's-aren't-looking type of way. I'mFromQueens was more cautious, saying, "White Castles are only located in really bad areas," and, "Going to 125th and Seventh at 1:30 in the morning is fucking stupid." I'mFromQueens expected this sort of dumbassery from Steve; Steve was from Ohio. But me? How could I, a native New Yorker, knowingly venture uptown at 1:30 a.m. on a Tuesday?

Maybe it was the desire for delicious mini-burgers. Maybe it was because my girlfriend of four years had just left me for another man, and I was looking for a way out. Whatever my motive, there was no denying it—I had the crave!

Predictably, Steve and I got lost soon after crossing into Harlem. I've lived in New York all my life and been a student at Columbia for two years now. But I don't go above 123rd Street, and I certainly don't go east of Morning-side (don't pretend like you do, either). So, imagine my surprise when the streets stop being numbered and start being named after various African-American leaders. Malcolm X Boulevard? Marcus Garvey Square? How am I supposed to know where St. Nicholas Street stands in relation to Seventh Avenue?

I was trying to get my bearings when Steve suggested that we ask the three or four men standing outside the corner bodega for directions. I stared back blankly at Steve. Around 125th and St. Nicholas, someone approached us. He was dressed in rags and was roughly 6 feet 2 inches tall.

"Hello, my name is Calvin. I'm not a killer," he began.

Oddly enough, Calvin's insistence that he was "not a killer" did little to reassure us.

We tried to walk away, but Calvin started following us. He continued: "I don't do drugs. I don't steal. I see you have a cellular phone. May I make a phone call?"

Steve and I spotted a well-lit Shell station in the distance. We made a beeline for it, and Calvin faded off once we were within sight of the gas station's owner.

"Guy was lucky I didn't break out my karate," Steve said. I resisted the urge to punch my friend in the jaw.

After re-grouping, we set out again. Almost there, we could see the neon "White Castle" sign looming in the distance and ... but wait ... it wasn't lit up. The sign wasn't lit up. White Castle was closed!

Steve and I looked at each other. Just as Harold and Kumar's satisfaction of their mini-burger crave led them to inner truth, our rejection proved to be a near-religious experience.

"The God that Failed," I whispered.

"What? Dude, this fucking sucks."

"There are some things we weren't meant to have, Steve. Like my ex-girlfriend, for instance. I wasn't meant to have her. I thought that mini-burgers wouldn't be such a stretch, though."

"Hey, mini-burgers are pretty awesome."

"Yeah ... they really are."

"I can't believe we have to walk all the way back."

"I can't believe there's no God."

Take That, Dianne Murphy

The funniest part of this whole Hockeygate scandal is that the hockey team actually thought "Stop being a pussy" was a good recruiting slogan. That's right up there with "Golf is my anti-drug" and "Army of One." Incidentally, we here at the *Rolling Eye* ran a tagline that said "Alliteration is for Pussies" in our second issue. Now we're saying it again. Go right ahead, Dianne—just try to cancel our season. —Dan Haley



ILLUSTRATION BY DANIELLE ASH



- **To the guy in my political economy class:** Believe it or not, some things can't be privatized. Like air. Air cannot be privatized, because we all ... I'm sorry. I'm not even going to continue. It's air.
- **To everyone who left Facebook because of the News Feed:** Come on, do you really think no one was using Facebook to stalk before?
- **Dear first-year who asked me for directions to the Language Lab:** I lied. I don't even know what a language lab is and my directions to take the two train to 116th were completely bogus.
- **Dear squirrels:** Sure, you're cute and all, but I'm not giving you any of my food because you're not fooling anybody. We all know that you're whores and your pimps are the rats.
- **To the guy who stands outside of Nussbaum, screaming, "God! God! God!" almost every night:** Thank you. I have seen the error of my ways. I will drag my sinning ass to church tomorrow. Now shut the hell up.
- **To a certain visiting professor:** What a jolly idea having the first paper due on Yom Kippur! It's not like anyone at this school is Jewish or anything.
- **Dear EC security:** Get laid more. Then maybe you won't feel the need to ruin everyone else's good time.
- **To the female half of the nauseating couple in my language class:** You do realize you're his beard, right?
- **To my suite-mate who boils a giant vat of fish heads every Sunday morning:** What the hell do you do with a giant vat of boiled fish heads?
- **To the Delta Gamma chick I hooked up with last weekend:** Sorry, I probably should have mentioned the chlamydia before we did anything.
- **To everyone who uses Facebook mobile:** Do you guys really need to be perpetually connected to Facebook?
- **To Jose Cuervo:** I'm sorry, I don't think I can see you anymore. I love you, but you hurt me so, so much.
- **Dear Wien washing machines:** Why do you always smell like pee?
- **To the fourth-floor McBain hottie:** I miss when you used to get dressed with your window shade all the way up. Can we go back to that? Love, your Nussbaum neighbor.

If you'd like to see your own Legal Slander in future issues of The Eye, e-mail your submissions to therollingeye@gmail.com.

<p>THE DEPARTED OCT. 6</p> <p>Leonardo DiCaprio. Jack Nicholson. Matt Damon. Mark Wahlberg. This veritable who's who of Hollywood are all together in one Scorsese film. No pretty boys here. Instead, Scorsese goes for grit, with a rivalry between the Massachusetts police force and a local Irish-American gang. The story follows a member from each group who has to infiltrate the enemy, and you can expect Scorsese to deliver the usual helping of violence and gore. Say farewell to Jack from <i>Titanic</i>, for these heart-throbs are getting serious.</p>		<p>NEW YORKER FESTIVAL OCT. 6-8 BARNES AND NOBLE, 33 E. 17TH ST. SEE FESTIVAL.NEWYORKER.COM FOR FULL SCHEDULE</p> <p>This event is every avid <i>New Yorker</i> reader's dream—three days of lectures, panel discussions, and other events led by the city's best writers, cartoonists, and lecturers. While some can't imagine spending a weekend listening to someone else speak (isn't that what we do Monday through Thursday?), others know that this is the time to hear truly talented fiction writers and politicians spout their knowledge. While many of these events are already sold-out, with three jam-packed days, you're sure to find something of interest.</p>		
		<p>FIRST FRIDAYS AT THE GUGGENHEIM OCT. 6, 9 P.M.-1 A.M. FREE FOR MEMBERS, \$20 FOR NON-MEMBERS</p> <p>Sick of the same old people you meet at The Heights each weekend? Try a classier crowd at First Fridays at the Guggenheim, a monthly event for the chic and sophisticated young New Yorker. Mingle amid modern art and architecture while sipping cocktails and listening to a DJ spin carefully selected tunes to create an elegant atmosphere. Even if you don't end up with a date, you can still say you spent your evening in a Frank Lloyd Wright-designed building decked out with priceless works of art, which is a story that's sure to impress on weekends to come.</p>		
<p>EMPLOYEE OF THE MONTH OCT. 6</p> <p>The fall movie season has begun, which means serious, Oscar-caliber performances are vying for spots on the big screen. Thus the girl last seen sporting her Daisy Dukes, Jessica Simpson, is back in <i>Employee of the Month</i>, with Dane Cook at her side. Set in a Super Club (think Costco on steroids), Simpson plays a cashier who will only date co-workers who earn the prestigious "Employee of the Month" title. Now if only she were so discerning in real life...</p>		<p>A CHORUS LINE OPENING NIGHT FRIDAY, OCT. 5 8 P.M.</p> <p>It's "one singular sensation" that is the talk of the town and the newest gem on Broadway. Set behind the scenes at a Broadway musical, this revival dances and sings its way into the spotlight, kicking up its heels and aiming to please the crowd. Director/choreographer Michael Bennett's vision was to make his dancers represent the thousands of performers who dedicate their lives to making the start of the show look great. Glittery musicals are the backbone of Broadway, and this one is sure to strut its stuff all over the stage.</p>		<p>YOUTUBE.COM DAVID HASSELHOFF'S "JUMP IN MY CAR"</p> <p>The Hoff is nothing but cheese, but this video, currently making the YouTube rounds, takes his normal Velveeta to a whole new level. Heading back to the days of <i>Knight Rider</i>, he's got the kit car, the plastic girls, and the beach. Hasselhoff also has ridiculous graphics of himself appearing in the background, as well as a scene in which he wears a shirt that says "Don't Hassle the Hoff." While this first hit the Internet over the summer, thanks to YouTube, millions of people have now tormented themselves by downloading this video, causing some to call it a true success.</p>

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