

ROAR-EE: THE MAN WITH THE FURRY MASK  
THE GALL OF THE GAULIC • THERMALS TURN UP THE HEAT

# the eye

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## SINGLE SEX STALEMATE

HOW BARNARD'S FATE MAY PLAY OUT





# the eye

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## Will There Be a Next Move?



### Urbanities



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Jewish college students embark on Birthright Israel

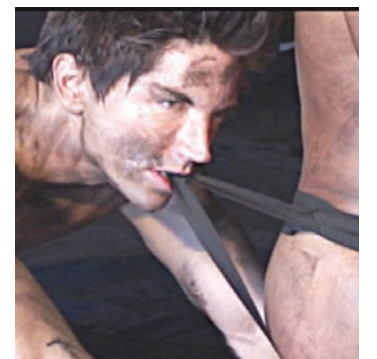
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## From the Editor...

For the last few seminars of *The Body and Abstraction*, we've spoken of the "eye" as it involves corporeality. Assistant Art History professor Jaleh Mansoor has deemed the eye phallic; she's called it vaginal. She's even called it viscous. I've squirmed all along. Then on Monday, Mansoor (with help ready-made, as always, by Marcel Duchamp) concluded, "The function of the eye is always libidinal." The subconscious—and so even more dangerous!—implications of the pun sent me on a dangerous intellectual path. Can everything in *The Eye* be read as the sum of sexual energy?

There's this week's lead story (page 7), written by former *Eye* Managing Editor Julia Israel—a woman whose umbilical link to the organization she co-founded was so tragically cut at the beginning of this semester. Israel penetrates the tension of the Columbia-Barnard relationship, bearing in mind the recent repudiation of single-sex education.

Simone de Beauvoir pronounced in her landmark *The Second Sex*, "One is not born, but becomes, a woman." But given the college's public relations campaigns, you might be operating under the assumption that Barnard women are just born strong. The question for Beauvoir would hinge upon whether

single-sex education breaks the privileged signifier of the phallus. Then again, Beauvoir was so often accused of devalorizing the feminine.

Sara Davis' interview (page 3) is fraught with phallic imagery. Boy leaves college, effectively Oedipalizing the father, and then reconstitutes his identity with meat. The violence of the cutting—the sensuality of the basting! If that isn't cathexis (libidinal transfer), I don't know what is. And the metaphor of the grill—how it glows with the fire of the loins.

*Spectator* A&E Editor Andrew Martin profiles up-and-coming indie rockers and iconoclasts the Thermals (page 11). For these relapsed Catholics, renouncing religion reeks of anti-papalism, Martin dares not ask the band to detail their relationships with their fathers. Jacques Lacan tells us even more about religion, saying that to access desire, we must "go through a crazy trance, through religious experience, through passion or anything else" and then return. With some luck the piece will inspire the same sort of ecstasy. Psychoanalysis couldn't have been far from the band's intention when they chose their name, the thermal being a column (phallus!) of warm art that, lighter than air,

expands (erection!) within an air mass.

It's lucky that Freud never convincingly resolved homosexuality. One can only wonder at the implications for his universe of sexual desires frustrated by AIDS. Discussing Jay Corcoran's documentary (page 13), which follows crystal meth addicts as they move in and out of rehab, Brandon Wolfeld taps into the recesses of Lacanian morality. Lacan defines the good citizen by jouissance, "the drive of the other within oneself," and indeed, Corcoran gives us a lesson in empathy.

Think back to your earliest memory. Inevitably, it involves the catastrophic realization that your mother possessed no penis. Shocked, your face fell, your eyes replacing the penis with your mother's long, fleshy foot. Now check in your closet, and witness the binding apparatus of your sneakers, and those flickering, fluorescent metallic tongues. Moira Lynch and Alex Greer will reconceptualize sneaker devotees (page 6).

Touch *The Eye*; note how your pupils dilate, how the newsprint so sensually marks your fingertips. Read *The Eye*, and undo the repression inherent in your scopophilic gaze.

AG



## INTERVIEW

By Sara Davis

# What I Did Last Summer: How Jonathan Badal Helped Smuggle Elk Antlers and Sent a “KTV” Girl To College

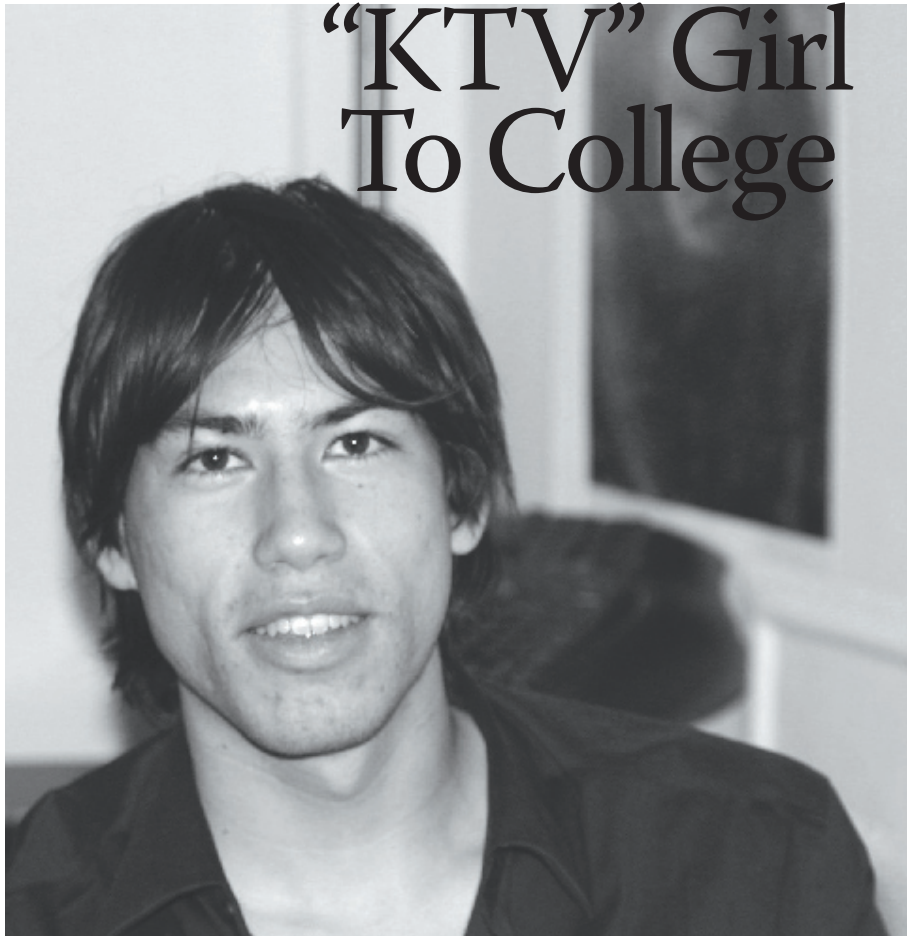


PHOTO BY KAT FALCONE

*It was on my floor of John Jay, that **Jonathan Badal, CC '08**, attracted my attention when he started cooking high-quality steaks on a personal grill in the hallway. Here was a college first-year clearly marching to the beat of his own unabashed drum. It seemed likely that he would have some kind of story to tell. After glossing over such banal topics as his private pilot's license and the large nails in his wall (to display clothes he had bought for his sister at the Barney's sale), we hit upon a topic that may seem passé ... a summer job of his. But Jonathan's job did not involve scooping ice cream, the mall, or résumé-building, but rather a stunning combination of elk antlers, karaoke, and prostitution.*

A couple summers ago I worked in China for a company that specialized in importing elk antlers.

### Why elk antlers?

It functions as an aphrodisiac for Chinese and South Koreans.

### It only functions as an aphrodisiac for Chinese and South Koreans, or other people just haven't tried it yet?

Well, those are the people who are willing to pay money on the belief that it functions as an aphrodisiac.

### Would you be willing to pay money on the belief that it functions as an aphrodisiac?

No. Not my hard-earned money. It's kind of ironic because the company was actually based in Dalian, China, where the major production facilities of Pfizer are, so all the world's Viagra is made in Dalian.

### Oh.

The interesting thing about the company is that all the product that they sell is technically illegal, since after mad cow disease, Japan banned the import of any animal that has four stomachs. And the rest of Southeast Asia followed Japan.

### So do you take the whole elk or just the antlers?

Just the antlers. Actually, they just fall off each year.

### Oh, so you don't even have to kill it?

No.

### So you just run around the forest looking for them [the antlers]?

Oh, no. I mean, well the person I worked for had his own elk ranch and he started buying up all these elk antlers and ranches...

### And what is this elk rancher like?

He's exactly what you would imagine. I would characterize him as a hillbilly, but in the most endearing respect. But he's like an "Am-ur-ican" rancher. He wears a cowboy hat...

### Does one herd elk? Is there a herding aspect where you need to wear a cowboy hat? Where you "round 'em up"?

Yeah you round them up, and ... well, an elk antler is sort of like a fingernail. So it grows during the year and then you sort of lop them off. So it's kind of like getting your nails clipped, but more painful.

### How did the business side of things work?

The business operated on fairly liminal legal terms, even for China, which is saying a lot. So those big cargo containers that you see on the back of semis, those actually get lifted up onto like a big barge and brought overseas...

### All full of elk antlers?

Yes.

### Do they grind it down in the U.S.?

It's all processed over there. And actually they're made into these little slice things—more like a potato chip.

### So you can eat it?

Yeah, you're supposed to eat it. So it makes you powerful like a bull or whatever.

### Really, you can bite it? Even though it's a bone?

Yeah [it goes through] a really long curing process, it literally takes a month.

### What does it taste like?

Bad.

### What kind of bad? Like medicinal bad?

Yeah. More like Chinese-herbal-medicine bad. Sort of what you would imagine an elk antler to taste like.

### I'd imagine it would be ... I guess a little bit like fingernails, with woody overtones.

Yeah, it's exactly like that. Anyway, they operate just by bribing everyone in sight.

### To pretend that it's not elk antlers?

The most cost-efficient thing is to pretend that it came from Australia. It's only illegal to import them from North America.

### So were there Chinese people working in the plant who had been trained in some kind of ancient wisdom of curing elk antler?

Yeah they would say, like, "Oh, this guy cuts elk antler like none other!"

### Did you sell it to stores?

They basically sell it to smugglers [who sell it in South Korea]. I mean there is an indigenous Chinese market but the price in South Korea is so much higher, because it's completely illegal there. The smugglers were actually very interesting people. I interacted with them a lot since I had to entertain them at night.

### What was that like?

Well the main thing to do there is called KTV and basically it's like a combination of karaoke and prostitution.

### Oh! How does that work?

Well I can't say for businesses in general, but for illicit activities like these, KTV tends to be a popular venue. It's pretty much a karaoke bar where a business will rent out a private room and bring in some pretty girls, and you sort of pick a pretty girl to sing songs with you, and get you alcohol, and if you're willing to pay a few more bucks you can take her home.

### So sex is not obligatory [for the girls]?

No. It's certainly not forced prostitution. It's largely contingent on what kind of place it is. There's a whole range, from ones that are like very cheap whorehouses to ones that are—well, I couldn't really say classy, but—that have that sort of Las Vegas-esque classiness, if that's how you can describe it.

### I see.

In this kind of business literally hundreds of thousands of dollars in all-cash transactions would change hands and there's no legal enforcement, since everything's illegal. So having a high level of comfort is very, very important. The KTV girls basically function to make everyone feel comfortable.

### What were your interactions with the KTV girls like?

I thought it was fairly important to pick out a few girls who were pretty and willing to put in the extra effort, to create this sort of environment. Like, since English was the language used mostly for business I thought it would be good if the girls knew some funny English phrases or jokes. Or just proper etiquette or little things like that that make people feel good, like if you tell them, 'Oh, this is the man who's making the big deal so focus on him, make him feel good. Whenever his drink is half-empty make sure to refill it,' that kind of thing.

### Is this something you undertook on your own initiative?

Yeah. And I thought it worked out very well. And I sort of became friends with them [the girls]. I actually helped send one to college. Like, I paid for a year's worth of her tuition.

### And how did you get this job?

Through a friend of a friend of a friend.

### So did you apply, with a résumé and cover letter?

No, I basically just told them what I could do for them, which was figure out whether their business made sense financially.

### And did it?

No.

### So did the business end when you stopped working there?

Within a year after, I think. The guy is now involved in plastics or something.

### What do you mean, "plastics"?

I don't know exactly what it means but apparently he bought like 6,000 tons or some astronomical amount of unprocessed plastic that can be somehow can be converted into ... something.

### Any idea what? Like ... Tupperware?

I heard actually like some type of fishing cooler was what he had in mind. ■



# urbanities

## The Rite of a Birthright

A free trip to Israel—all you have to do is be Jewish

BY LIZ BROWN

**F**ree. Gratuito. Gratuit. The concept is a cross-cultural, cross-lingual hit, especially for college students. Who cares what it is that's free—it's free.

In only six years, Taglit-Birthright Israel has untangled the matted mess that is the college students' psyche and established perhaps the sovereign of all freebies: a free trip, complete with free transportation, free hotel stays, and free food all in one freely distributed package. All you have to do is be Jewish.

If the deal sounds too good to pass up, 120,000 Jews around the world think so too. As do the Israeli government and Les Wexner, CEO of the Limited Brands corporation, which owns stores like Victoria's Secret and Express—just a couple of the big names that help fund Birthright. Birthright garners support from such big names and boasts such a staggeringly large number of participants, that there must be more to it than simply a good deal for college kids.

Rachel Trager, CC '08, has been to Israel 10 times, which makes her ineligible for a Birthright trip because it requires that participants have not been on a previous educational trip to Israel. But she still wishes that she could travel with Birthright: "I'm generally there [in Israel] during the times Birthright is there, and I love passing the buses because the people all seem incredibly giddy and excited and exhausted—it's just a really good vibe." For her, their happy fatigue is natural in this country she lovingly describes over the phone as "diverse," "special," "vibrant," and her "homeland."

What Trager finds intoxicating about Israel has not much to do with her practice of Judaism (she describes herself as not religious). Rather, it is her strong sense of the histories of Israel and the Jewish people, which, from her observations, are what Birthright is all about. With a truly genuine tone, she gushes: "With Birthright, it's not just exploring a new country, but it's exploring a country that has those people's [the program participants'] history—their ancient, ancient history and their more modern history. It's not just saying look at these sights and how incredible they are, but it's saying look at these sights—and this can be yours, too."

The Birthright mission is clear and present to others also, but it doesn't ignite the same awe in everyone as it does in Trager. Danny Magariel, GS, who traveled with Birthright in June of 2004, describes Birthright's mission as "an agenda." He explains that "part of the trip to Israel, part of that sponsoring, is to make an 'Aliyah,' which means in Hebrew 'going up.' Basically, to move to Israel is to elevate yourself." He says the program leaders and the guest speakers

noticeably pushed that agenda. "I mean, I have no exact or 100 percent proof, but everyone pretty much knows it. They push it because they need Jews to out-populate Arabs and Palestinians in Israel in order to maintain control." And it was no subtle push when then-Prime Minister Ariel Sharon spoke at the "super convention" of, in Magariel's case, 10,000 Birthright participants.

Magariel seems to anticipate the opportunity for a

liefs as decidedly not pro-Israel. But he is ethnically Jewish and therefore welcomed onto a Birthright trip with open, undiscerning arms.

This past winter break, he selected, out of the many options Birthright offers, what the organization marketed as a biking trip. This turned out to be a misnomer, considering that his group biked only four times in their 14 days in Israel, which disappointed him and the other "pretty crunchy people," he says, who opted for biking. When describing what they did in place of biking, Waldman uses the same word as Magariel: agenda. "Essentially, they had an agenda of things to show you. The message they were trying to give you is that Israel is your home."

Waldman says his parents were concurrently excited and wary about his Birthright adventure. While on one hand anticipating Israel's ability to instill in him a "deeper Jewish connection," Waldman explains that "my mom thought it was sort of a conflict of interest for me to be going when I don't have these religious beliefs and my political ideology is what it is. My side of that debate was, 'No, Mom. It's free.'" He breaks into a smile that betrays his mock seriousness behind his argument. "No, Mom. It's my right."

But in fact, Waldman notes immediately in a more serious tone, the idea of a birthright—indeed the name Birthright—rests on tricky ground in a country where "every rock has some significance attached to it." The history in Israel was palpable to Waldman, but it didn't translate into a nationalistic entitlement to Israeli land, a connotation that he finds problematic in the name Birthright.

"It's not a right—it's a privilege to go to Israel for free. If anything, I learned that there is so much history there. And if anything, also I learned that it's not just about the Jews, and we shouldn't claim that it is," he says.

For others, like Trager, that claim is inspiring. "Socioeconomically, Israel is much more diverse than [the Jewish population in]

America. Going there and recognizing your cultural identity help show that there's a real responsibility for the Jewish people to help out their, I guess, brothers and sisters." She laughs at the apparent cliché, but it's clear she believes in it. Once she finishes college, Trager plans to move to Israel.

The diversity that Trager emphasizes and trumpets about Israel seems to permeate not just the country's culture, but also the experiences of those who interact with its culture. The breadth and depth of Birthright Israel experiences found among Columbia students is only the tip of a 120,000-person iceberg. Not bad for a program that's only been around for six years. ■

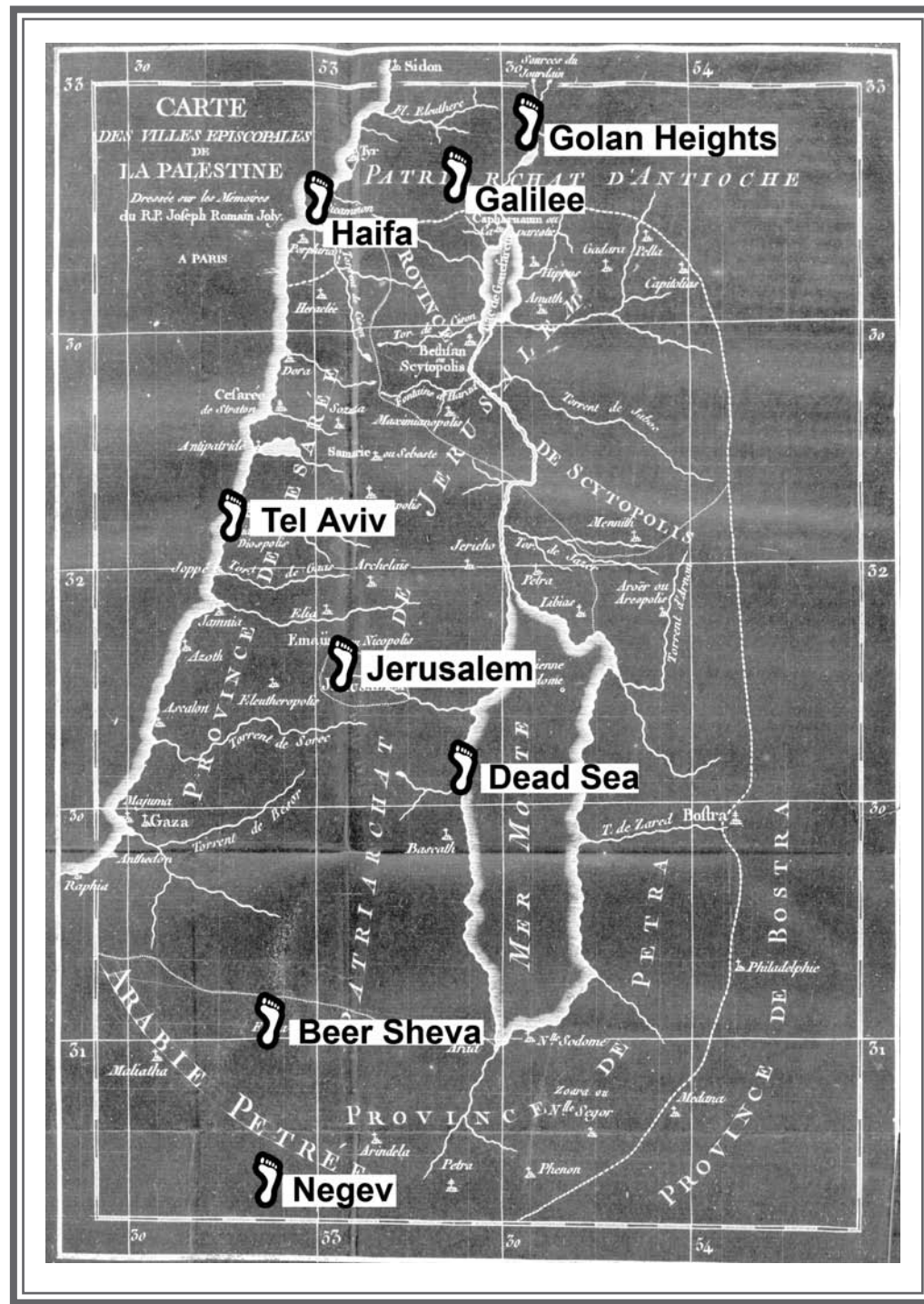


PHOTO ILLUSTRATION BY DANIELLA ZALCMAN

sensationalist analysis and preempts a hasty conclusion. "But I don't want to overplay the, what I heard someone call, 'brainwashing.' I don't want to overplay that because it's a non-issue as long as you recognize the agenda and you're able to think for yourself. Then, when you go, it's an unbelievable experience. Israel is the most beautiful place I've ever been in my life."

Important to note is that Birthright Israel is most fundamentally concerned with the Jewish cultural identity Magariel describes as a point of pressure and not necessarily with Judaism itself. For some, like Jesse Waldman, CC '09, that's a fortunate distinction. He is not a practicing Jew and describes his political be-





## Nurturing the Female Voice

### Barnard's Great Writers series celebrates the achievements of female authors

BY ALISON BUMKE

**T**imea Szell, BC '75 and senior lecturer of English at Barnard, used to describe her favorite student's senior project to her literature classes without mentioning the author's name. Now, however, that name—Jhumpa Lahiri—gives the anecdote an additional resonance.

Lahiri, BC '89, is one of many respected writers Barnard has fostered in recent years. "It's something in the drinking water," suggests Mary Gordon, BC '71 and Millicent C. McIntosh Professor of Writing at Barnard.

The school's dedication to nurturing writers is embodied in its Great Writers series, an annual sequence of lectures in which accomplished authors read from their works. Each spring, the series exposes students to a well-rounded collection of prose and poetry.

"We try to present all different aesthetics," says Saskia Hamilton, assistant professor of English at Barnard. Hamilton is also director of the Women Poets at Barnard series, a subset of the Great Writers series.

Barnard will be hosting its next event March 6, a lecture featuring Rosanna Warren and Peg Boyers, two "intensely lyrical poets," according to Hamilton.

The series continues April 17, when Cathy Park Hong

will be reading excerpts from *Dance Dance Revolution*, a book-length sequence of poems for which she was awarded the 2006 Barnard Women Poets Prize. "A meditation on revolution," *Dance Dance Revolution* focuses on a "shared global experience," says Hamilton.

The programs for both evenings reflect the Barnard writing concentration's emphasis on reading contemporary literature. "It's part of students' education to hear what's actually being written while they're alive and writing themselves," Gordon says.

Gordon agrees with Hamilton and Szell that comprehensive exposure to literature is more fruitful than taking a cluster of writing classes: extensive reading gives writing "a grounding that we consider intensely important," explains Szell.

Lahiri, known for novels like *The Namesake* (the inspiration for the film of the same title to be released March 9) pursued classes mostly in literature, not writing, during her time at Barnard. Her senior project was an analytic research project, rather than a piece of creative prose.

"It wasn't creative writing, but she was a very good writer across the board," Szell recalls. "She worked from the small to the large. At the time, I had no reason to think

that she would move into fiction at all."

The writing concentration's focus on literature includes an emphasis on female writers, reflected in the series' high percentage of women speakers. Respect for female authors and poets is hardly new at the school—Szell and Gordon, both Barnard graduates, recall that their college experiences in the late '60s and early '70s were marked by efforts to legitimize and cultivate the female voice.

Now as then, though, "It's not like, 'Oh, you're a woman, you're wonderful,'" Szell explains. "We do students the courtesy of serious criticism. They are held to standards as high as any male writer. So it's not just touchy-feely."

Hamilton, Gordon, and Szell believe that this balance between nurturing and rigorous criticism offers an advantage over Columbia's writing program. "We've been able to offer a continuity and coherence that Columbia's program simply wasn't prepared to do until now," Gordon says.

The Great Writers series carries on the tradition of intensive individual attention that marked Gordon's and Szell's experiences as Barnard students. Gordon reflects that passing along the training she and Szell received seems fitting. "I feel like we are paying back a debt to the school." ■

COURTESY OF PEG BOYERS AND ROSANNA WARREN

## Columbia's Most Loyal Fan

### Roar-ee speaks about his life as the school mascot

BY ALISON BUMKE

**"L**isten, I don't want my real name to be in the article," Roar-ee tells me as he takes a seat at a table in Ferris Booth. The school mascot grins as he announces the pseudonym he has prepared for the interview—Sidney Luckman, the name of a famous Columbia football star. Watching carefully to make sure I've got the right spelling, he explains, "His team won four championships, back in the day." Laughing, he adds, "He's old school."

Though recent Columbia football teams have had less success, they certainly have a loyal fan in Luckman (Roar-ee, that is). After replacing Columbia's former mascot—a kid in a lion Halloween costume—at Homecoming 2005, Luckman became a fixture at football and basketball games. Though only a few friends know the mascot's actual identity, countless others have seen him passing out high-fives, ruffling younger fans' hair, and tackling opponent teams' mascots.

Life as the mascot isn't all glamor and fame, though. Roar-ee cites a Johns Hopkins study that found that, with all the sweat lost in the toasty suits, the average mascot loses more than eight pounds per game. "I'm dying in there. I've played sports my entire life, and I'd never sweat that much ... You can't do this unless you're in tremendous shape."

What keeps him performing, despite the discomfort? There's his passion for Columbia athletics and sports in general, as well as the occasional invitation to an elite social event, like *Sports Illustrated's* March Madness party last year. Jousting at Glass House Rocks and watching

an opposing mascot wipe out the Columbia television crew in mid-handspring are savory memories. But Roar-ee, that is, Luckman, says the main thing that keeps him going is his younger audience.

"People have told me the only reason they come to games is so their kids can hang out with Roar-ee," he says. Many of the kids are members of a "Little Lions" club, composed of children ages 13 and under. One, a regular attendee, writes Roar-ee love letters that she hands to Luckman during games.

Roar-ee also interacts with kids outside Morningside Heights. In March, Luckman and several football players will go to the Bronx to spend a day at a Boys and Girls Club, one of a nationwide

organization of clubs dedicated to offering inner-city children safe, engaging recreational environments. "We go and spend the whole day with the kids, and just goof around."

Luckman wasn't always comfortable with performing. When deliberating about becoming the mascot, he almost balked when he learned the audition was to entertain a crowd, sans suit, at a pep rally for two minutes. But by the end of the tryout, "I had ripped off my shirt and was doing Rocky up the Low steps." Roar-ee had been born.

Because Columbia "isn't exactly known for our athletics," as Luckman says tactfully, it can be tricky to keep fans motivated. Still, he has some creative tricks up his furry sleeve. During an intermission at the March 3 game, Roar-ee will perform "The Evolution of Dance," a continuous sequence of dances tracing the progression of grooves over the last five decades. Not easy for a guy with paws. ■

COURTESY OF ROAR-EE







**Nike Dunks High  
Pro Unkle**  
\$625-\$700  
flightclubny.com



**Bapesta**  
\$285-\$300  
flightclubny.com

## Put Your Best Foot Forward

How sneakers are reshaping the urban fashion landscape

BY ALEX GREER AND MOIRA LYNCH



PHOTO ILLUSTRATION BY  
DANIELLA ZALCMAN

**S**ick of your beat-up Converse? Wondering what all the fuss is over those infamous Nike Dunks? If you're looking to supplement your sneaker collection with some of the colorful kicks you've seen prowling the streets, you may be in for a pleasant surprise. As Nick Santora, owner of Classic Kicks on Elizabeth Street, will tell you, designer sneakers are more than just footwear.

"It's definitely a lifestyle," he says. "It's not just the sneakers, it's everything else that's involved—art, music, sports..."

The sneaker fetish emerged as a New York City subculture in the 1970s, but has expanded over the years—from episodes of *Entourage* to award winning documentaries (*Just for Kicks* is now available on DVD) and articles in *The New York Times*, it's impossible to

deny that sneaker fetishism has become a pop culture item. There is now a widespread, if small, group of individuals from Paris to Rio de Janeiro who will stop at nothing for the latest pair of Nike Dunks.

Supreme NYC employee Alex Dymond attributes the attention to hip-hop. "They've entered into pop culture now because rappers are all wearing them, and rap has become a part of pop culture," he says.

Santora, meanwhile, simply thinks that "a lot of ... magazines are just looking for something to write about, and sneakers just happen to be the hot thing right now—there's no real reason to it."

Though publications may just be adding fuel to the fire, there's no denying that it has become a quest for diehard sneaker fanatics to hunt down one of the relatively few pairs that get released for a limited-edition

model. This clever marketing strategy by the sneaker industry encourages a kind of feverish lust in the devoted. People will get in line weeks before a new shoe drops to make sure they get their pair. Roscoe, an employee at Nort in SoHo, has even seen "kids pay other kids for their spot in line—they'll drop \$250 on a spot, and then another \$250 on top of that for the actual shoe."

"You have some people that pay the extra money for a pair of Jordans because it was something they couldn't have when they were younger, and now they can afford to have 'em," Santora says.

Others, meanwhile, see sneakers as statement items. "They're a sign of social status, especially for kids in urban areas," Dymond says. "In the city, people don't really have cars—they tend to get around more on foot, so it's the equivalent of having a nice ride."

So if you're ready to buy into the sneaker phenomenon but just don't know where to start, skip Herald Square and head to SoHo or the Lower East Side instead. To perpetuate a culture of exclusivity, companies prefer to sell their shoes in small boutiques. Laces, on 252 Mott St., is one of the best small sneaker boutiques in the city, and only carries women's shoes, giving ladies an incentive to switch up their Jimmy Choos for some more comfortable footwear. The inventory changes every two to three weeks, and prices start at under \$100 and. Most of the shoes are Nikes, but they come in a fascinating variety of materials, ranging from snakeskin to fur lining. One white, rhinestone-encrusted pair of Nike Sprint Sisters (that come with a white satin bag) were made specifically for the Oscars and are only sold in two other stores.

For slightly more unique finds, A Bathing Ape on 91 Greene St. carries a plethora of star-emblazoned shoes, all based on, or sampled from, the most classic of urban footwear, like the Air Force 1, Adidas Shell Toes, and Puma Clydes. Each design, priced at \$180 and up, is limited-edition and only carried in the store for a month at most.

One hardcore collector, who spent 16 hours waiting for a pair of laser-tattooed Dunks outside of Nike-town, tipped that the sneakers to collect are now from Japan. Brands like VisVim (sold at Head Porter, 140 Wooster St.) and Madfoot ([www.madfoot.jp](http://www.madfoot.jp)) are the newest must-haves. Vans are making a big come back as well, with shout-outs from rap quartet The Pack and collaborations with Marc Jacobs. You can still customize your own pair online, but for the exclusive collection (their Vault and Syndicate lines), you'll have to track them down in boutiques.

The Web is also a good sneaker-hunting ground. Original Air Jordan I's in metallic blue, which retailed at \$65 in 1985, sold for \$2,001 last year on eBay. Other places to find the newest, most-limited-edition sneakers include [vintagekicks.com](http://vintagekicks.com) and [pickyourshoes.com](http://pickyourshoes.com). For the latest sneaker news, check out [hypebeast.com](http://hypebeast.com) and [kix-files.com](http://kix-files.com).

Maybe it's about time to toss out those Sauconys and move on to brighter territory. And if the triple-digit price is still causing you to waiver, just keep Santora's words in mind. "People pay upwards of \$500, \$600 for dress shoes."

So what's a mere \$300 for a killer pair of Jordans? ■

# SEPARATE BUT EQUAL?

Written by Julia Israel

Photos by Daniella Zalcmán

**I**would not have minded a merger,” admits professor Anne Prescott, pulling her legs onto her swiveling desk chair and leaning back. In a shared office on the fourth floor of Barnard Hall, Prescott, one of the most senior and candid members in the college’s English department, has dredged up thoughts that took root in her mind in the early 1980s when, in the midst of financial troubles, Columbia College seemed likely to absorb Barnard as it became coeducational.

Prescott’s colleague in the Barnard history department, Robert McCaughey, echoes her sentiment of adaptability. “I did not see the merger as the end of the world. And I did see that Barnard had a very different situation in light of Columbia’s difficult situation,” he said. “That was the problem—the big 800-pound gorilla, heaving, wheezing ... If Columbia got in a serious financial problem, Barnard would feel it. I was fairly alert to that notion, so merger seemed to me to be not unthinkable.”

The ambivalence rife in Prescott and McCaughey’s words is jarring today, offering stark contrast to the persistent battle cries of Barnard women. In a recent opinion article in the *Columbia Daily Spectator*, three students proclaimed: “Extinction is not an option for Barnard.” Yet while a merger with Columbia has been removed—for now—from the table, the question of whether Barnard’s autonomy makes sense is still one that pervades Columbia’s campus, sparking tension and causing students to remain on guard.

While every Barnard and Columbia student participates in the conflict differently, student groups on Facebook manifest the type of provocation that reverberates across both campuses. Perhaps surprisingly, the largest of the 13 Facebook groups throwing stones or advocating peace is one in which Barnard women simultaneously embrace a stereotype and spur on the rivalry. “Barnard: Making Columbia Boys Wet Since 1889. Making Columbia Girls Sweat Since 1983” has

576 members and claims in its mission statement that “attitude”—here directed at Columbia women—“never goes out of style.” Coming in at a distant second is the group “No, I absolutely do not go to Barnard,” a Web page which includes 211 Columbia women who want to answer the question of where they live “once and for all.”

The remaining groups run the gamut of opinions. Three of them recommend harmony, five express hostility toward Columbia students (particularly Columbia women), one group—“Barnard to Bed”—was created by Barnard women who “understand the value of random sex,” and another group “Barnard Bothers Me,” pointedly enunciates reasons for scorning Barnard. The latter group’s appointed “chief defender,” Michael Campagnuolo, CC ’06, tends to base his arguments on deep-seated opinions rather than the run-of-the-mill rationales that Columbia students know by heart—such as Barnard’s higher acceptance rate or that Barnard students crowd Columbia classes and social spaces. Instead, Campagnuolo aims to dismantle the very reasons Barnard presents to defend its contribution to the community. Painstakingly thorough in carrying out his role, Campagnuolo engages in long-winded, unceasing discussion, hoping to lay claim to the last word on the matter. His argument has garnered nearly universal approval from his Columbia peers, he says.

“When Barnard is lauded as a place to nurture female students, it does have an insulting implication upon the rest of the students,” Campagnuolo explains. “[If it’s] nurturing because admissions are confined, then it does have the implication of male Columbia students as inimical to them.” Campagnuolo more stringently believes that Barnard “has not contributed some kind of equivalent, worthy enough contribution to achieve the stamp of approval or moniker of [its students’ being] Columbia University students. If Barnard is its own separate entity and has its own ideas, it should apply its own stamp of approval rather than extending Columbia’s stamp of approval to what it considers to be worthy.” Currently, the degrees of

Barnard students are co-signed by Columbia President Lee Bollinger.

When asked about the curricular contributions of Barnard, Campagnuolo responds with confidence, “I don’t think the contribution of a dance department or a theater department is commensurate with a mathematics department or a computer science department.” When pried about the fee that Barnard pays Columbia for the use of its facilities and courses, Campagnuolo fights back, asserting that if Barnard pays for one of its students to become a computer science major and that person becomes a successful, well-paid employee and then gives all her money back to Barnard, the donation becomes more valuable than the annual fee that Barnard provides to Columbia.

Salient or not, Campagnuolo’s arguments raise the question of why Columbia students concern themselves with Barnard’s status, a distinction with little to no effect on their daily lives. Danielle Wolfe, BC ’07, attributes the attacks to the type of bonding that takes place during first-year orientation. “You attack what you don’t know because it can make you fit in with the group you do know better,” she says. Mary Paranac, BC ’07, who transferred in 2005 from Smith College, considers it a problem of stolen identity, citing the “type of girls who are like, ‘I go to Columbia,’ and like ‘I’m a Columbia student,’ and it’s like, ‘No, you’re not ... actually, you’re not.’”

Dean of Barnard College Dorothy Denburg, BC ’70, is less sure of the animosity’s source. “I don’t know whether it’s because in every student culture, people ... need someone else to be the scapegoat ... and how much of it is that Columbia students are more likely to arrive at Columbia without knowing much about the existence of [Barnard] ... In the absence of real information, you get disinformation,” she quips. When pressed as to why Barnard is not mentioned more prominently on a tour of Columbia College, however, she responds: “I don’t know. I’m not going there.”

Examining the history of the Barnard-Columbia rivalry reveals another, often neglected antecedent of the discord. Deeply embedded in Columbia’s his-



tory is a tension between students at the undergraduate colleges. While the trajectory of its strength is difficult to measure, it appears that tormenting markedly increased after the merger between Barnard and Columbia failed to materialize.

“There was a tremendous amount of hostility among Columbia men toward the fact that Barnard first refused to merge,” said Christine Shin, BC ’84, of her early years on campus. “They were just like ‘We’re clearly superior. We have the Core Curriculum; we have this, this, and this. Why wouldn’t you want to be part of us? ... And then once the decision was made to go coed, there was a certain amount of hostile glee of ‘You didn’t go along with us. Now you’re going to die!’”

Denburg describes the rivalry in her time—a period marked by significantly less discussion of merging— as composed largely of “amusing name-calling.” “When I was a student, Columbia men, even though they were dating Barnard students, would refer to Barnard as ‘the Barnyard,’” she says.

Cross-Broadway taunting today involves a great deal more than this sort of amateur linguistic manipulation. The situation, Denburg affirms, has grown worse with the advent of women on Columbia’s campus.

“You never get over the defensiveness and the need to get angry about it,” says Gillian DiPietro, BC ’07. She is one of the co-authors of the aforementioned editorial defending Barnard’s right to exist, responding to what Melissa Diaz, CC ’10, called a “confusing gap” in University ties in her Jan. 22 editorial, “An Offer Barnard Should Not Refuse.” Yet despite DiPietro’s article’s assertions of Barnard and Columbia’s relationship as comparable to “a snake-less Eden,” she confides that when she chose Barnard, she “didn’t really understand the relationship that well, and it has completely colored [her] experience.” As she struggles to describe just what she means, memories of the Columbia University Marching Band, for which she plays the flute, joking about Barnard girls’ being easy flood her mind. She recalls a male friend telling her that Barnard’s Student Government Association “wasn’t real, that it wasn’t really on the same level as ABC [the Activities Board at Columbia] or CCSC [the Columbia College Student Council] ... like, if you got SGA recognition, it didn’t really count.” She remembers another friend’s saying, “Aw that’s cute—you go to Barnard,” with apparent condescension. Every time DiPietro sees a Facebook group that denigrates her college, she says that she becomes “angry and hurt,” and when relaxing in her suite in Hogan—a Columbia College dorm that she opted into after falling out with Barnard friends—she has on occasion winced as her peers, forgetting that she attends a different college, have “slipped” and said of other women, “But does she go to Barnard?”

In the end, DiPietro concludes that had she known in high school or in her first year of college she would be “under that kind of pressure all the time, I might have been not as willing [to come to Barnard].” Of course, she also asserts that at 22, she has no regrets about where she attends school. “It’s been really fabulous being here,” she insists, a statement whose meaning is confused by her Columbia-centered lifestyle. Indeed, since she began living in Hogan, she admits, “I don’t really feel sometimes like I go to Barnard anymore.”

This contradiction raises the conundrum surrounding the uniqueness of a Barnard experience which has plagued students and administrators for over 30 years. As articulated by one concerned member of the Barnard faculty in the early 1970s, with open access to the Columbia University curriculum and campus, “the sole Barnard-taught-and-designed course required of all students would be [first-year] English ... Is Barnard simply the university which admits women and where you do not have to take humanities and Contemporary Civilization courses required at Columbia?” Today, the Barnard-taught-and-designed course requirement has been extended only slightly: it now includes first-year English and a first-year seminar. As Prescott explains, the requirements of Barnard and Columbia offer a choice between “smorgasbord” and “straitjacket,” respectively.

Still, DiPietro and co-authors Wolfe and Chelsea Zim-



merman, BC ’10, are adamant in their defense of Barnard’s independent, distinct offerings. Among other arguments in their editorial, the students traced Barnard’s autonomy back to negotiations in 1982. “When Barnard refused to relinquish autonomy, Columbia had no choice but to accept women on its own,” the students wrote. But historians and eyewitnesses disagree with this portrayal of the event, arguing that the failure to merge stemmed not from a refusal on Barnard’s part but rather from Columbian impatience.

“It seemed like it was moving towards merger, and,

“THEY WERE JUST LIKE ‘WE’RE CLEARLY SUPERIOR. WE HAVE THE CORE CURRICULUM; WE HAVE THIS, THIS, AND THIS. WHY WOULDN’T YOU WANT TO BE PART OF US?’”

instead, all of a sudden the talks broke off somewhere in there, Columbia made the decision to go [coed on its own], and I think it was shocking and alarming [for Barnard],” says Shin, who was a student at the time. “I think there was a feeling of ‘Wow, what does this mean?’ Just really sort of a fear that it wasn’t going to be good for Barnard.”

McCaughey, who penned *Stand, Columbia*, a single-volume interpretive history of the University, undercuts the idealism. “Columbia decided with a new president coming in to go ahead and do it [become coed], and wish the best to Barnard,” he says. “It was a decision that was made by Columbia trustees, and then Barnard trustees were informed.”

Similarly, the initial decision by Columbia to include

women in its student body was made without Barnard’s consent. In 1972, the agreement that opened up cross-registration and cross-billing held one significant stipulation: Columbia was not to admit women. Yet even in this evolution of the status quo, the contract hinted at the possibility of a merger, calling for the establishment of an ad hoc tenure committee that gave Columbia a majority representation in votes regarding Barnard faculty. “A number of people who were involved ... saw that as a sort of first step in preparing the Barnard faculty for admission to Columbia,”

recalls McCaughey, who was one of the first in the Barnard faculty to receive tenure in this way. The new tenure procedure put greater emphasis on the importance of professors publishing their works, whereas the former had allowed for tenure based on scholarship in teaching.

In the winter of 1976, however, the Barnard faculty was still shocked to learn that the Columbia College faculty had voted months earlier to work toward ad-

mitting women. That spring, University President William J. McGill told Barnard College President Jacqueline Mattfeld that he envisioned a merger between the two schools by 1985. Tension between Mattfeld and McGill brought negotiations to a halt as Mattfeld endeavored—and succeeded—in gaining support for Barnard’s continued autonomy. But failure to reach a compromise on curriculum changes forced Mattfeld to resign from her post in 1980 at the request of the board of trustees. When McGill retired soon thereafter, the moment of possible merger between the two schools seemed to have passed.

“The new president, Michael Sovern, was not going to spend his presidency defending Barnard’s integrity,” explains McCaughey of what transpired next. Instead,





McGill's successor organized a committee charged with the task of determining if Barnard would survive were Columbia to accept women. The committee concluded that in fact the college would—although students, faculty, and trustees remained more skeptical. "I did not anticipate that Barnard would survive Columbia's decision," says Rosalind Rosenberg, the current chair of Barnard's American studies department and author of *Changing the Subject: How the Women of Columbia Shaped the Way We Think About Sex and Politics*.

On a cold January day—the last before students would return to campus for the start of a new semester—the decision was made. Barnard women arrived on campus to a college that had been forever altered. The buildings looked the same and the classes ran on schedule, but the question of how much longer it all would last lingered in the air.

Barnard hadn't agreed to an immediate merger with Columbia because it was not prepared to disappear, because its trustees believed in the benefits of a tight-knit, women's community, and because its faculty feared losing tenured status. With Columbia's unexpected decision to go coed, Barnard had to prepare to face the consequences. Its students—many of whom are believed to have supported the merger—feared for their school's future.

In Columbia's first year of coeducation, Barnard suffered from an immediate drop in applications as Columbia improved its applicant pool, admitting a class that was 45 percent female and that possessed higher SAT scores and class rankings than in previous years. Of 126 women accepted at both Barnard and Columbia, eight chose Barnard and 78 chose Columbia. Nine of 26 transfer students to Columbia College's sophomore, junior, and senior classes were formerly Barnard students. In the early 1990s, as New York City fought its way out of a depression, Barnard's admission rates at last began a steady rehabilitation.

Today there is still a disparity—albeit, as some say, an

overemphasized one—in selectivity at the two schools. The admit rate for Barnard's class of 2010 was 25.5 percent, the most selective among women's colleges in the United States, of which there are about 60. Columbia College's admission rate was 9.7 percent, less than half that of its single-sex neighbor. The middle 50 percent of members of Barnard's class of 2010 scored between 1310 and 1470 on the SAT verbal and math sections, respectively. At Columbia, the middle 50 percent scored between 1380 and 1530.

For current students, the differences between the two schools present themselves more palpably in other aspects of collegiate life. Barnard exclusively houses the education program and the dance, theater, architecture, and urban studies departments, while Columbia has sole control over computer science, engineering, and statistics. A perusal of Barnard's course offerings in mathematics leads one directly to the Columbia College course bulletin. Barnard professors are required to teach five courses per year, and Columbia professors are only required to teach four.

On a community level, Barnard prides itself on its identity as a small liberal arts college. "The classes are smaller and the faculty expects to hear from students," Denburg says. Indeed, DiPietro confides that when she thinks of the class she has participated in the most, "it has probably been in my first-year seminar at Barnard, which was only first-years and only women." Students maintain that this feeling of comfort extends beyond the classroom and into the backdrop of everyday life. "One of the nice things about being a student at Barnard is sort of that women's education that is there ... behind you in the administration, and also there's the feeling in the residence halls," describes Wolfe.

Paranac nearly becomes overwhelmed as she tries to list what she loves about Barnard. "It's like really the best of both worlds," she gushes. "I know it's really cliché, but ... you have this really strong base from which you can go out to the world academically ... I think the advising is re-

ally great, health services, like all the infrastructural stuff is so personal and nurturing."

Paranac and Wolfe's praise of Barnard could be pulled straight from the college's Web site or the dean's mouth. They pinpoint Barnard's undeniably appealing assets, presenting the college as a haven where women receive, as Denburg articulately describes, "an excellent education and leadership opportunities and the supports and opportunities to help them grow into whoever it is they're going to be." Philosophically, however, these benefits do not necessarily justify a reason for autonomy. Indeed, had Barnard merged with Columbia, elements of this supportive, tight-knit environment might have found ways to bloom in new forms, such as a women's center, single-sex housing, mentoring, and improved advising at Columbia College. The departments that Barnard houses exclusively would have been transferred to the auspices of a new administration.

Barnard was born in 1889 because Columbia's board of trustees was set against allowing women to join men in the classroom. With the arrival of coeducation in 1983, Barnard's primary rationale for existence—as the female counterpart to Columbia College—no longer stands. The result is a newfound self-consciousness and need to defend why it is important to maintain single-sex status.

"All of us here believe the answers [to the question of being a single-sex college] are pretty self-evident," Denburg says. "We haven't reached a point in our society where it's easy or comfortable to think of a woman president, we don't have 51 women senators, which, given the fact that women make up slightly more than half of the electorate, is what we should have. Similarly, women are not represented in the House of Representatives or on the Supreme Court or anywhere in direct proportion to their numbers. When we've reached a point that that happens and that women don't feel the gender gap, then maybe we'll have to revisit whether we need women's colleges or not."

Certainly no one would dispute the figures that Den-



burg presents. That does not mean, however, that everyone agrees with Denburg's assessment. Experts and students alike question the notion that single-sex education will bring women closer to achieving gender equality. DiPietro, who mentioned in her *Spectator* editorial that "graduates of women's colleges constitute more than 20 percent of congresswomen and 30 percent of a *Business Week* list of rising women stars in corporate America," says she worries that "the skills I have learned and leadership qualities and things we've all been instilled with are not going to transfer" into the coed world, post-graduation.

Rosalind Barnett, the senior scientist at the Women's Studies Research Center at Brandeis University and author of the book *The Same Difference: How Gender Myths are Hurting Our Relationships, Our Children, and Our Jobs*, sympathizes with DiPietro's concern, arguing that even if one assumes—likely incorrectly—that women are reticent in the classroom, "you can't make the leap that you should teach them separately. Why wouldn't you want girls to learn to be more aggressive in a coed environment?" She also finds fault in the political and business statistics DiPietro, Wolfe, and Zimmerman's editorial cites. "Hillary Clinton and Madeline Albright are from Wellesley, but that's not any kind of argument," Barnett says. "For any woman who was successful, you can point to one who wasn't successful. One should never confuse that with data." She also points out a contrasting factoid: mixed-sex teams succeed in business more often than single-sex ones.

Barnett is also skeptical of a figure Denburg relies on to bolster Barnard's legitimacy. "It's not by accident that women's colleges historically produce more Ph.D.s, more leaders in science and education, and so on," Denburg boasts. According to Barnett, however, it very well may be an accident.

"I think that [idea] has been challenged. ... The critical variable was the sex of the faculty, not of the fellow students," she explains, adding that "the research is bound to be faulty because you can't control for all the other factors ... Girls who tend to go to a single-sex school are a select sample. Is it about values, about history, or what is it?" she asks.

It should be said that Barnett sees no moral dilemma in single-sex education at the private collegiate level.

"Some single-sex schools are very good," Barnett offers, "but it's not clear that they're very good because they're single-sex schools." She points out that a recent study in the United Kingdom shows that as the number of single-sex schools has dropped, the number of girls taking physics has grown "astronomically."

In the United States as well, interest in single-sex education is waning. Wells College in the Finger Lakes region of New York decided to begin admitting men in 2004; Randolph-Macon College in Virginia will allow men to matriculate this coming fall; and Douglass College, formerly the largest women's college in the United States, will merge with its coed counterpart at Rutgers in New Jersey next semester.

Particularly pertinent about Douglass College is its history and setup. Like Barnard, Douglass is a liberal arts college affiliated with a large research university. It maintains its own endowment, alumnae base, admis-

sions office, and degree requirements, but enjoys open access to the courses offered by Rutgers' three undergraduate schools—Rutgers College, Cook College, and Livingston College.

Douglass students speak of their experience in familiar terms. "We're in touch with our administrators—they know our names," says Sarah Pooley, a senior who campaigned to preserve Douglass's autonomy after Rutgers University President Richard L. McCormick announced his planned merger of the undergraduate colleges. Se-

"WE HAVEN'T REACHED A POINT IN OUR SOCIETY WHERE IT'S EASY OR COMFORTABLE TO THINK OF A WOMAN PRESIDENT ... WHEN WE'VE REACHED A POINT THAT THAT HAPPENS AND THAT WOMEN DON'T FEEL THE GENDER GAP, THEN MAYBE WE'LL HAVE TO REVISIT WHETHER WE NEED WOMEN'S COLLEGES OR NOT."

nior Lillian Forero, president of the Douglass College Government Association, lists even more parallels. "We take most of our classes in a coed atmosphere ... [but] we have a very distinct piece of land. The atmosphere and the focus are really women's lives and women's leadership ... we have weekends dedicated to women, lectures that take place on campus ... we have a lot of traditions that people at other colleges don't have. We have a Yule log ceremony, we have a moving-up ceremony where Douglass women get charms."

After significant student protest funded by a generous, active, alumnae network, a compromise was reached that will allow the Douglass community—including its advising, mentorship and externship programs, housing, and even a class requirement in women's studies—to survive. Douglass will become a 2,000-person residential college that female students can elect to join after they gain admission to the more-selective Rutgers College. The merger is the finishing touch of a restructuring of the Rutgers consortium that took place in 1985 when the faculties from each college became one entity. This final push was prompted by reasons with which Barnard skeptics might sympathize. McCormick said it made sense to standardize the admissions criteria of students who are taking the same classes. He also hoped to ease tensions between the student bodies. According to Forero, "Rutgers kids think they're the smartest ... and people think, 'Oh Douglass, it's a women's college—lesbians live there.' ... It's very similar to what happens at Columbia University."

SGA has endeavored to take measures to improve matters here at Columbia. Wolfe, who is both a University Senator and a member of SGA, hopes to change the scope of the New Student Orientation Program (NSOP) to include more joint activities and fewer opportunities for Barnard-bashing. She and scores of her peers agree that the first year at Barnard is the most difficult to endure in terms of negative relations with Columbia students. In addition, she hopes to pass legislation that will make signing Barnard students into Columbia dorms a more streamlined process and to transform Dining Dollars into a University-wide currency, thereby opening up campus eateries more completely to both schools.

For the administration's part, Denburg says she has asked Columbia's Dean of Student Affairs Chris Colombo to discuss being mutually respectful with student leaders, and he has agreed that the concept is a sound one. "Does it happen?" Denburg asks. "I don't know." She says the administration also planted factual historical descriptions of each undergraduate college in the campus facebook, but adds, "I don't know if students read those."

"We've tried everything," she says, and then rethinks, "Well, we haven't tried everything."

An option that Barnard has dismissed is the one that

Douglass students—though nervous about the future of their school—hope will put an end to the teasing. It is a solution that resembles, to some degree, the fate of Radcliffe College. Though quite different from Barnard in that it did not have its own faculty or degree requirements, Radcliffe began to ease undergraduate tension in 1975 when it merged its admissions offices with Harvard College and put an end to quotas of female undergraduates. The merger of the administrative offices in 1970 required an enormous effort, specifically reshuffling

550 full-time employees. In 1999, a complete corporate merger between Harvard and Radcliffe posed further logistical hurdles, such as transferring building uses, redistributing endowments, and, as Radcliffe archivist Jane Knowles describes in an e-mail, "satisfying all the constituencies of the former college—principally the alumnae and those engaged with the programs which were closed."

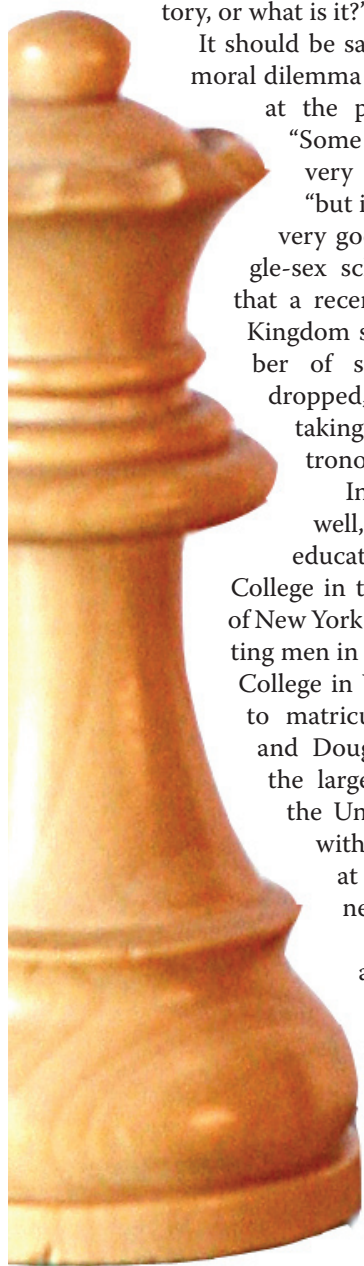
Certainly Harvard's history and recent off-color comments by Lawrence Summers, its former president, do not confirm the university as the paradigm of a feminist, woman-friendly institution. In fact, Denburg believes that "the ill-informed, ultimately very costly remarks that Summers made came precisely because there was no example of the strength of women academics that he would have had if there had been a strong women's college at Harvard."

And yet, the same might be said for the significantly more ill-informed comments promulgated by male and female students in the Columbia community. As DiPietro explains, she didn't feel aware of what "being a marginalized individual felt like" in high school. "And then I came here and everyone's telling you that you're a strong, beautiful Barnard woman ... and then people are negatively telling you all these things," she says, referring to stereotypes of Barnard women's promiscuity and lower intelligence.

While Knowles writes that there is "much work to be done" in molding the presence of Radcliffe at Harvard, the Boston merger can be held accountable for one significant accomplishment. "Was there ever a moment when there wasn't teasing between Harvard and Radcliffe?" Knowles asks. The answer, it seems, would be the present. Having entirely restructured its corporate and administrative organization, Radcliffe has tried "everything" to build a unified undergraduate community. But because Barnard employed its own faculty, Denburg says, "it never had a reason to look back" in this way.

Regardless of the successes and failures of mergers at other institutions, the Barnard-Columbia relationship—in this period of gender inequity and New York City's vitality—is here to stay. "When [then-University] President [George] Rupp came in to the presidency in 1993, he hit the ground running with questions [like]... what's Barnard doing here?" McCaughey confirms. "I haven't seen even those questions as part of [University President Lee] Bollinger's presidency, so it seems that the relationship has stabilized."

But Douglass seniors—the last to graduate under the auspices of Rutgers' autonomous women's college—offer a warning. "You could look in the newspaper this summer and hear about it [a merger]," Forero says. "It happened out of nowhere. It took one powerful person, our president, to have this initiative. And it happened so quickly." ■







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## Preaching to the Converts

### The Thermals caution listeners against Christian Institutionalism

BY ANDREW MARTIN

If you've got a band, you should probably move to Portland, Ore. According to Kathy Foster, bassist and sometimes drummer of The Thermals—and confirmed the city's Craigslist site—the housing is cheap, the jobs are plentiful, and the music scene is pumping out indie hit-makers at a rate that rivals the glory days of the Seattle sound in the early '90s. Appropriately enough, it's that old Seattle warhorse, Sub Pop Records, that is responsible for two of the city's biggest recent successes: the ubiquitous Shins and the glorious Thermals.

The Thermals, comprised of guitarist/vocalist Hutch Harris, Foster, and, as of this tour, Joel Burroughs and Lorin Calman, have been touring off and on for about six months for their third and most fully realized album *The Body, The Blood, The Machine*, a sustained criticism of hypocritical, government-pushed Christianity that has drawn new converts to the band at mega-church rates. The album's sound is, for the most part, massive, anthemic punk, but despite its accusations of corrupt religious-political alliances, the band's MO isn't a Dead Kennedys'-style overthrow of organized religion.

"A lot of Christians and religious people like it because it's saying what they're thinking about our government," Foster says. "You know, they're [the government] pushing their ideas off to people because they're Christian. ... A lot of good people are being tricked we think."

Foster and Harris have earned their right to debate religion: they were both raised Catholic, and Foster went to church until she was 18. "I've always thought the actual teachings of Jesus are a good way to live your life," Foster says, "and it's just the organization, the structure of religion is what I wasn't feeling so good about as I got older." This background makes it clear that *The Body* is about a feeling of betrayal and dissatisfaction rather than simply a call to arms against

the church.

Despite its powerful sound, the album itself was recorded by just Harris and Foster after the departure of long-time drummer Jordan Hudson. Foster played the drums and most of the bass parts on the album, which came naturally enough to her as she has been playing the drums in bands since she was 16. "When we were recording, Hutch and I played drums and guitar together and then added the other stuff afterwards," she says. "It wasn't difficult, we were used to doing that." Their ability to create such a rich sound with relatively limited personnel was helped by their past experience recording together on four-track machines, as well as by the presence on this album of producer Brendan Canty, formerly the drummer for D.C. legend Fugazi. "It's amazing to work with someone you've grown up with and looked up to," Foster says. "He would be in the control room and turn the mixing board up all the way, full blast, and be jumping up and down and air guitaring."

While the Thermals have already enjoyed a great deal of success in the relatively insulated indie scene, their ambitions are pointing towards something bigger. "First we make music that we love, and then we just wanna make music that's not alienating to anybody," Foster says. She went on to catalog the band's career thus far.

"Every record's been kind of alienating to somebody in a way," she says. "The first record was really lo-fi, and some people don't like listening to that kind of quality.

The second record's called *Fuckin A*, that's not gonna sell tons of records. The record we have now, the topic ... well, some people aren't that into it. We're talking about the next record being sort of a combination of a bigger sound, like the last record, and then lyrics more like the first record, where its broader, where people can interpret the themes and lyrics on their own rather than having a set theme story to the record. See how many more people will like it."

With a battle plan like that, it seems likely that there will soon be even more Thermals fans walking the earth. New York is certainly on its way to being conquered—their Bowery show on March 4 is sold out, and they're playing Studio B in Brooklyn the next night to bring in the rest of the true believers. But would Foster ever leave her idyllic Oregon for New York?

"It's just really expensive," she says. "I wouldn't want to be busting my ass to work there, you know?" She makes a good point—we'd probably all be better off in Portland. ■

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# Music to Take Home to Mama

**“W**e start with Harry Smith in 1950, a beatnik weirdo living in New York City. His huge collections were insane: of Easter eggs and paper airplanes, and rare records (he had about a million and 60). To change America through music was his hope, and to make some money because he was broke, he compiled a triple-decker collection of songs from his records released as the Smithsonian *Anthology of American Folk*.” So Jeff Lewis starts his epic song, “History of Punk on the Lower East Side of NYC 1950–1975.”

True to its reputation, Smith’s *Anthology of American Folk Music* has sent ripples across music scenes since its original 1952 release in three volumes: *Ballads*, *Social Music*, and *Songs*. Smith collected raw showcases of fiddles, banjos, mandolins, foot stomping, pep-stepping, rural American sagas, and gospel singers—to name a few—for fear that they would be lost.

Long before Madonna became a Kabbalist, bohemian, activist, anthropologist, and filmmaker, Harry Smith added anthologist to his long list of “-ists.” He compiled folk recordings from 1926 to 1933: the years that saw the introduction of reproducible electronic recordings and then saw record sales quashed by the Depression. Released on three volumes of two vinyl discs each, Smith’s seminal anthology would prove a forebear to the folk and blues revivals of subsequent decades. After a life of painting, hanging with primitive art rockers the Fugs, poet Allen Ginsberg, and living with Native Americans, Smith died like a true bohemian—in New York’s Chelsea Hotel.

The raw, activist nature of early folk music was the forefather of many music genres of the 20th century, and this anthology alone, as Jeff Lewis goes on to explain in his song, inspired bands and musicians like Bob Dylan, The Holy Modal Rounders, and Lou Reed.

Folk started out as “the people’s music”: music by everyday people, for everyday people. The genre calls for community and is created for everyone to play and enjoy. Some tunes date so far back that the lyrics read like something

## The Smithsonian *Anthology of American Folk* influenced the artists that influenced the artists you love.

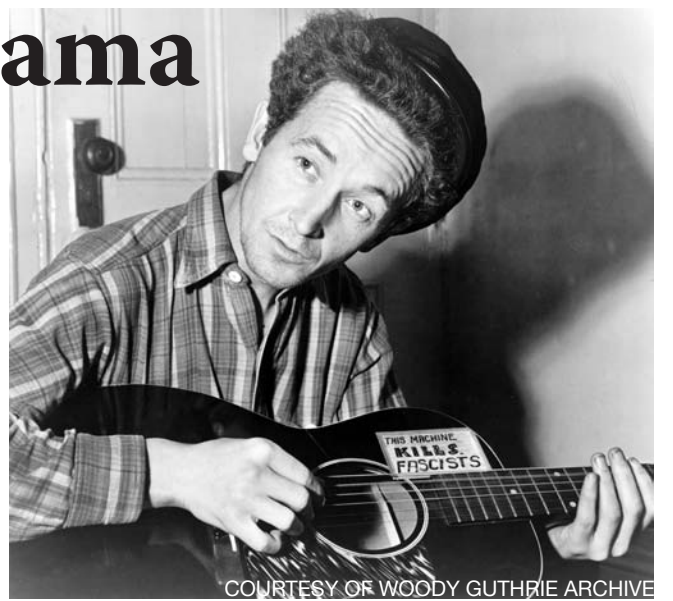
BY FRANCES BODOMO

out of a history textbook, albeit with banjo and harmonica accompaniment—the subject matter ranges from death, to confessions, twar, to plain old farm living. As the music of the working class, folk music was used to protest working hours and demand workers’ rights. Songwriter Joe Hill mixed Baptist hymns with labor activist lyrics to protest unfair working conditions. Working-class poverty inspired the songs of another—and better known—member of the Wobblies (or Industrial Workers of the World): Woody Guthrie.

Following the American folk-storytelling tradition, Volume 1, *Ballads* features broken voices lamenting tales of a dead dog, the long-sunk Titanic, highway bandits, and “White House Blues”—scarily evoking Woody Guthrie’s “Baltimore to Washington,” except here it’s Buffalo to Washington. As inventors of “Carter-style picking” and vocally focused country music, The Carter Family—featured twice on *Ballads* and twice more in the rest of the anthology—sing sad tales of desperate men and long-lost love.

Whilst *Ballads* focuses on an oral storytelling tradition, with *Social Music*, the Anthology’s second volume, you’d be up and line dancing to the music if you only knew how. In 1926, legendary fiddler Uncle Bunt Stephens entered Henry Ford’s fiddling contest and walked away with a new car, \$1000, and a new set of teeth. Volume 2 opens with his song, “Sail Away Lady,” which gives way for the Alabama Sacred Harp Singers, Jilson Setters, and a couple of the Reverends to do their thing.

Finally, with more song titles ending in “Blues” than on the other discs, Volume 3, *Songs*, sees the vocal focus of *Social Music* merge with the expert instrumentals of *Ballads*. Uncle Dave Macon’s work song “Buddy Won’t You



**THIS MAN KILLS FASCISTS:** WOODY GUTHRIE SINGS INSPIRED SONGS ABOUT POVERTY AND THE WORKING CLASS.

Roll Down The Line” describes the hard life of miners, saying, “they leased the convicts out to work in the coal mines, against free labor South.” Other mine workers chant back a retort, underscored by Uncle Dave Macon’s trademark banjo expertise.

Smith included with the anthology a handbook full of annotations that detail the context, history, and structure of the songs.

The anthology stands as a document of an era of pre-commercialized music: years when country fairs, workplaces, and churches fostered community. Smith also disregarded the common trend of the time, categorizing music into hillbilly (white) and race (black) recordings, by including black and white (and Cajun and Creole) musicians on the same records. The anthology was re-released by Smithsonian Folkways Recordings in 1997 to critical acclaim, winning two Grammys.

Smith’s goal in creating the *Anthology of American Folk Music* was to create a comprehensive collection of the various incarnations of American traditional music, showcasing—through its diversity and brilliance—the predominance of American values in its musical heritage. If there were ever a mixtape to take home to mama, this would be it. ■

## Bob & Gene



COURTESY OF NEW YORK SOUL RECORDINGS

**BOB & GENE** AFTER 50 YEARS OF OBSCURITY, DAPTONE RECORDS RELEASES THIS BUFFALO DUO’S SPRIGHTLY GOSPEL.

**I**n American music, there often arise folklore stories of men and women who struggled to make something of themselves, who fought hard to record and distribute their music, and whose battles against the odds are as ingrained in their instruments and voices as any particular style or message. And then there are those who never really made it—more numerous, but barely, if ever, recognized for their efforts, swept away in an obscure sea of demos, home recordings, and bankruptcies. But sometimes making it was never really the point.

When William Nunn started the independent, soul-and-funk-label Mo Do Records in his hometown of Buffalo, N.Y., in the fall of 1967, he was not interested so much in fame as he was in establishing a safe space in which his son Bobby, then entering high school, could record music. It was a way of encouraging him, and other local youth, to stay home after school—the recording studio was located in his basement—and thereby avoid

## David Griffiths and Daptone Records release lost classic

BY GLOVER WRIGHT

interaction with local gangs by concentrating on more creative endeavors. Nunn, himself a singer, saxophonist, factory worker, and union leader, wound up publishing a total of three singles and three albums before, in 1971, he ran out of money and was forced to close up shop. Mo Do fell into obscurity, and all seemed lost.

But 30 years later, in 2001, David Griffiths, a New York state music historian, happened upon a Mo Do single at a record fair in Philadelphia and realized immediately that it was something special. “There were two [record dealers] arguing over a record. These two people broke this 45 in half because they were arguing over it,” he says. “And it wasn’t the greatest music in the world. But I remember everybody wondering why it happened, and I went over and looked at the record, and was like, oh yeah, that label from Buffalo, and I guess that just got me thinking.”

That thinking eventually led Griffiths to discover a Mo Do single by Bob and Gene, a duo consisting of Nunn’s son Bobby and his friend Eugene Coplin, who were 15 and 16 years old, respectively, when they released the 45 called *If This World Were Mine...*

“The original 45s don’t sound that great, but they have a really unusual sound,” Griffiths says. “A lot of these records really sound like a place and a time and a personal space.” But the initial sound of the record was not, he admits, what excited him the most—rather, it was the advertisement on the single for an upcoming Bob and Gene album. And when he did some research and found out that the album had never been released, he decided to find out what happened to the promised tracks. So he looked up Nunn, called him at home, and

said that he wanted to hear the music.

Griffiths got more than he bargained for: Nunn gave him the original recordings and told him to do whatever he could with them. With his blessing, Griffiths began to explore the possibility of culling together an album from the Bob and Gene tracks. Eventually he found his way to Daptone Records, an independent, Brooklyn-based, funk-and-soul label. “I knew the label [Daptone] prior to this,” he says. “But I realized they were in New York, and I felt really comfortable with them. They were excited in a way I could empathize with.”

Last week, Daptone officially released Bob and Gene’s *If This World Were Mine...*, a 12-track album overseen by Griffiths and produced by Daptone’s Gabriel Roth. Nunn did not survive to see the project’s culmination, but Bob and Gene are still alive—Bob is still involved with the music industry in California, and Gene pastors a church in Buffalo. And though they were not involved in the new release, both have expressed their admiration and support for Griffiths and Daptone.

“What’s really cool to me is imagining being in their shoes and having that period of your life when you’re a teenager, and you’re really creative, kind of pulled back up and polished and worked over and presented to you in a booklet form with an accompanying CD,” Griffiths says. “That’s got to be a little scary and exciting. It brings back these intense memories that time in your life. And that’s what I hear in both of their voices.”

For more information on Bob and Gene’s *If This World Were Mine...*, visit [www.daptonerecords.com](http://www.daptonerecords.com). ■





*Vengeance is Mine* (1979)  
Directed by Shohei Imamura  
Starring Ken Ogata, Mayumi Ogawa, and Rentaro Mikuni  
**Opens Friday at BAM Rose Cinemas**



*Zodiac* (2007)  
Directed by David Fincher  
Starring Jake Gyllenhaal, Robert Downey, Jr., and Mark Ruffalo  
**Opens everywhere Friday**

## The Depths of Addiction

CU student and employee Jay Corcoran's new doc explores the connection between crystal meth use and AIDS in the gay community

BY IGGY CORTEZ

**F**or Raymond, a good day is withstanding another day afflicted with AIDS. A better day begins without resetting the count of days since his last hit of crystal methamphetamines, or "crystal," as it is dotingly called by its users. Eric qualifies a good day quite differently. He has been using various drugs for 20 years, and he's happy to continue down this path. These subjects are just a few of the evocative stories in Jay Corcoran's new documentary, *Rock Bottom*, which opens Friday at the Quad Cinema.

Corcoran works as the assistant director of career services for the Columbia Business School and also attends the School of Journalism while performing his civic duty as a documentary filmmaker.

"I make films because I get so impatient with the regular cookie cutter way of telling a story that so many networks have used. ..., he says. "They're all fine, but they don't get under the skin." And *Rock Bottom* certainly dives under the skin, which is part of its disturbing—but memorable—appeal.

Some of *Rock Bottom*'s themes are more poignant when looked at in context with Corcoran's other films. *Rock Bottom* is the final installment in a trilogy of films Corcoran has made on the AIDS epidemic. The first, *Life and Death on the A List*, examined the initial outbreak of AIDS. The second installment, *Undetectable*, looked at how new medications were able to alter the prognosis for people diagnosed with the virus. *Rock Bottom*, perhaps the grimmest of the trilogy, looks at AIDS prevention and how it has changed since the initial battle against infection.

Corcoran illuminates the problem of the growing rate of AIDS infection within the gay community. Many people with AIDS point to crystal as one of the major sources of the crisis. Every one of Corcoran's subjects said that sex while under the influence of the drug is one of the most addictive parts of the entire experience.

*Life and Death on the A List* "was based on sexual obsession," and *Rock Bottom* "is the bookend: the sexual obsession, the horror that people went through of watching all of their friends die, and then the drugs come out, it worked for some people," Corcoran says. "But its like, 'I'm kind of disfigured and I'm still not well. But I can take this drug now and I can have all the sex I want, I can be young again.'"

But Corcoran feels that each person needs an individualized motivation to drive him or her into action, which is part of his inspiration for filming the documentaries. "I have a friend of mine, actually, Raymond [one of the subjects in *Rock Bottom*], and he was a very good friend of mine, and for two years he just disappeared," he says. "I got a call, he was in the hospital, and all of a sudden it brought back the whole AIDS epidemic. When I was in my 20s I remember visiting friends in the hospital as they were dying, and it just kinda brought me back 20 years ago."

The graphic sex scenes will make the point for the average viewer. Much of the film discusses the link between sex and crystal methamphetamines. In order to capture the raw nature of this drug, Corcoran refused to shy away from this facet of the addiction, covering such uncomfortable topics as "Meth and Fisting."

"You know what? I'm telling it like it is," he says. "I'm telling it how I see it, and it's going in. I don't care if people aren't going to tune in."

Perhaps the reason Corcoran is so able to show an



**TUMBLING DOWN** A NEW DOC SHOWS THE DANGERS OF DRUG ADDICTION FOR GAY MEN, ALTHOUGH SOME DISREGARD THESE WARNINGS.

COURTESY OF WRINGING HANDS PRODUCTION

average viewer the ins-and-outs of this problem is because, going into the making of *Rock Bottom*, he was also unaware. "It was really disturbing—it was a really hard film to make. I didn't realize how disturbed I was till it was over. I finished the last year, and I went on the festival thing, and there were days in the first festival I was just like: I'm done."

The filming of *Rock Bottom* was far from easy. The transition from white-collar-university faculty to documentary filmmaker is one that requires balance. "I had just started working [in Uris Hall], and I got this call at nine o'clock in the morning," he says, recalling a day in which one of his subjects phoned him at his new job to say he was planning to have sex under the influence. Corcoran had to make arrangements to follow the man's group after work—a jarring transition into another world. "I didn't know what to expect," he says. "First I got scared because I didn't know what I was walking into. ... Are they going to be total drug addicts? Are they going to behead me? My mind just started going."

The film proceeds with a growing relationship between the subjects and the viewers. Each clip shows a side of the person that is identifiable. In one clip we see Eric's family, in another we see J's aspirations to be a singer, and in another we see CJ working through relationship problems. Corcoran builds likable characters despite the fact that we are watching them struggle against a stigmatized addiction.

Despite their crutches, Corcoran's subjects are markedly redeemable—even likeable. They're mostly seen during transitions, either coming out of rehabilitation or relapsing into addiction. The audience watches the subjects' struggles and the circumstances that lead to relapse. Ultimately, *Rock Bottom* provides an excellent window in which to look at the factors that led up to this lapse, though not without asking questions.

"Why? Why are you doing this?" Corcoran asked.

"Even though they would say, 'because of sex, because of this because of that,' but I just didn't buy it. ... Why are people now choosing now to self-destruct?" ■

## Front of the Queue

*There is more to St. Louis native Phyllis Smith than the customer-sales-representative, Phyllis Lapin, that she portrays on the NBC comedy, The Office. Here are the next five movies Smith's planning to see:*

- 1** *Ballet Russes*—"I bet you didn't see this one coming. My ballet teacher, Mrs. Mendolia, of many, many, many years ago performed and toured in this company, so I'm very anxious to see if it includes her and some of her stories 'on the road.'"
- 2** *Dreamgirls*—"I want to see it before the Oscars. In fact I will be going today [last Wednesday] at 12:45 p.m."
- 3** *Evan Almighty*—"I can't wait for this to be released. I hear there is a really talented actor in it—his name escapes me right now, but I really am looking forward to it."
- 4** *Music and Lyrics*—"I love both Drew Barrymore and Hugh Grant and I'm anxious to see their chemistry together."
- 5** *The Secret*—"I saw it advertised on *Oprah* and it seemed very interesting—doesn't everyone want to know the secret of life?"



# A Date With French Films, S'il Vous Plait

Lincoln Center series confirms France's place in world cinema

BY IGGY CORTEZ



THE SPARROW'S SONG MARION COTILLARD STARS AS BELOVED SINGER EDITH PIAF IN *LA VIE EN ROSE*.

COURTESY OF PICTUREHOUSE ENTERTAINMENT

When the financial crisis faced by Parisian art house cinemas became a minor news item overseas, some smug critics from the English-speaking press delighted in the apparent demise of French cinema. Like Starbucks and prohibitive smoking laws, the earnest straight-forwardness of Hollywood, they imagined, had won over another formidable bastion of French culture.

However, they neglected to mention that the crisis of the art house theater has little to do with French cinema—for while in New York, independent and foreign movies cater to highly specialized venues, in a Parisian multiplex a Claire Denis or a François Ozon are shown alongside the latest Pixar extravaganza. The supposed crisis of small French theaters is one, tragically and predictably, of capitalism, but French cinema is still alive and well, its distribution having simply had to compromise in changing times.

In its 12th year, the perennially sold-out film festival Rendez-Vous with French Cinema at Lincoln Center asserts the enduring Gallic grip on contemporary-film culture. Immediately following the more global embrace of Film Comment selects—which this year featured movies from Taiwan, Germany, and Egypt—the popularity of Rendez-Vous reveals the enduring interest of New York's cinephiles to trace the latest cinematic trends in France, even while countries like Iran or Hong Kong have seemingly dethroned its monopoly on cinematic innovation. Although ostensibly a celebration of French culture, Rendez-Vous also plays a vital function in exposing films to potential distributors, without which they would never expand outside of the narrow festival unit. Hence the directors' unenthusiastic participation in inane Q&As with Lincoln Center's eclectic audience.

Although 2006 was not a particularly memorable year for French movies, this year's Rendez-Vous still outshines the lackluster March offerings at the cineplex with an auspiciously large number of intimate, psychological portraits, such as the Hitchcockian *The Page Turner*, about a failed piano student's revenge on a famous pianist, beautifully portrayed by Catherine Frot. After his shocking adaptation of Georges Bataille's *My Mother*, Christophe Honoré's more subdued *Inside Paris* is a successful film about mourning, starring the young and beautiful actors Romain Duris and Louis Garrel.

This year's most anticipated film, *La Vie En Rose*, also opens the festival. Olivier Dahan's drama about French singer Edith Piaf stars Marion Cotillard, best known to American audiences as the vengeful prostitute from *A Very Long Engagement* and Russell Crowe's

love interest in the disastrous flop, *A Good Year*. Capturing both the brassiness and heartbreak of France's most famous musical icon, she certainly deserves the almost-unanimous praises she has received for her performance. Dahan's baroque style is also more successfully harnessed in this ambitious film than in the uneven but admirable *The Promised Life*, his last release in the United States. Another hotly-anticipated, musically-themed film is *The Singer*, largely due to Gerard Depardieu's highly hyped, dramatic portrayal of a singer facing a mid-life crisis in a performance considered by many to be his best in years.

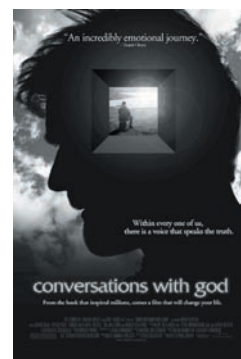
But while actors often are center stage at the festival, Rendez-Vous' true success is its emphasis on the directors. It is both simplistic and misguided to think French auteurs are more visionary than their American colleagues, but it is a well-known fact that the French entertainment industry allows directors greater creative autonomy than in America, where directors are often constrained by the conventions of big studios and producers that threaten to undermine the notion of cinema as art.

Some of France's most established directors will be showing their films at the festival, which will most certainly be the most polarizing for audiences. Following the controversial *29 Palms*, Bruno Dumont's *Flanders*, with its sprawling and deliberately unfocused intermingling of the Northern French countryside and brutality, caused an even more heated debate at the Cannes Film Festival. *The Untouchable*, Benoit Jacquot's latest collaboration with actress Isild Le Besco and cinematographer Caroline Champetier, is as stylistically edgy and breathtaking as their last team project, *Right Now*, also shown at a past Rendez-Vous. Le Besco stars as a young French woman who becomes obsessed with finding her father in India in yet another psychologically gripping and stylistically audacious film by Jacquot. Lastly, Guillaume Canet directs a remarkable cast, including Nathalie Baye, Kristin Scott-Thomas, and François Berleand, in what is arguably this year's most sophisticated film, *Tell No One*, about a doctor who faces his wife's murder eight years after it occurred.

The festival's themes touch upon all the major and predictable contemporary conflicts, both personal and universal: homosexuality, class, nihilism, and the lost idealism of youth. Even during its weaker years, Rendez-Vous' loyal audience, including myself, dutifully returns. I remember my time as a disenchanting first year, alone in New York for spring break, when Rendez-Vous with French Cinema was the type of exhilarating cultural opportunity unique to New York that reminded me why I shouldn't transfer—the best piece of advice I've had in the past four years. ■

## DOUBLE DVD FEATURE

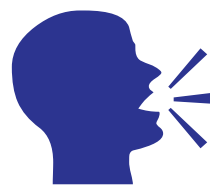
- ☒ *A Beautiful Mind* (2001)
- ☒ *Conversations with God* (2006)



There is nothing sadder than seeing a person struggle with mental illness—so it's all the more compelling when someone is able to cope with a debilitating mental condition by ascribing their condition to divine prophecy. *Conversations with God*, out on DVD this week, is a crafty film that dramatizes the rise of Neale Donald Walsch from homelessness to stardom, resulting from the popularity of his published dialogues with a higher power. It's an exciting film to watch, as Walsch fulfills the American dream by making himself into someone great, despite the fact that hearing voices is usually detrimental to that end. *A Beautiful Mind* provides an excellent example of a person struggling to overcome mental illness. Its protagonist, John Nash, struggles against his own delusions in his quest for mathematical mastery and recognition. The two films provide a sharp contrast in the way each person deals with their disability. In *Conversations with God*, the listener is a person of religious faith, for whom the voices are proof of his prophecy. Nash, a man of science with a particular attachment to his beautiful mind, is less receptive to the abnormality. Both films examine their heroes' pursuits of their goals, whether the voices be cheers or jeers.

—Brandon Wolfeld



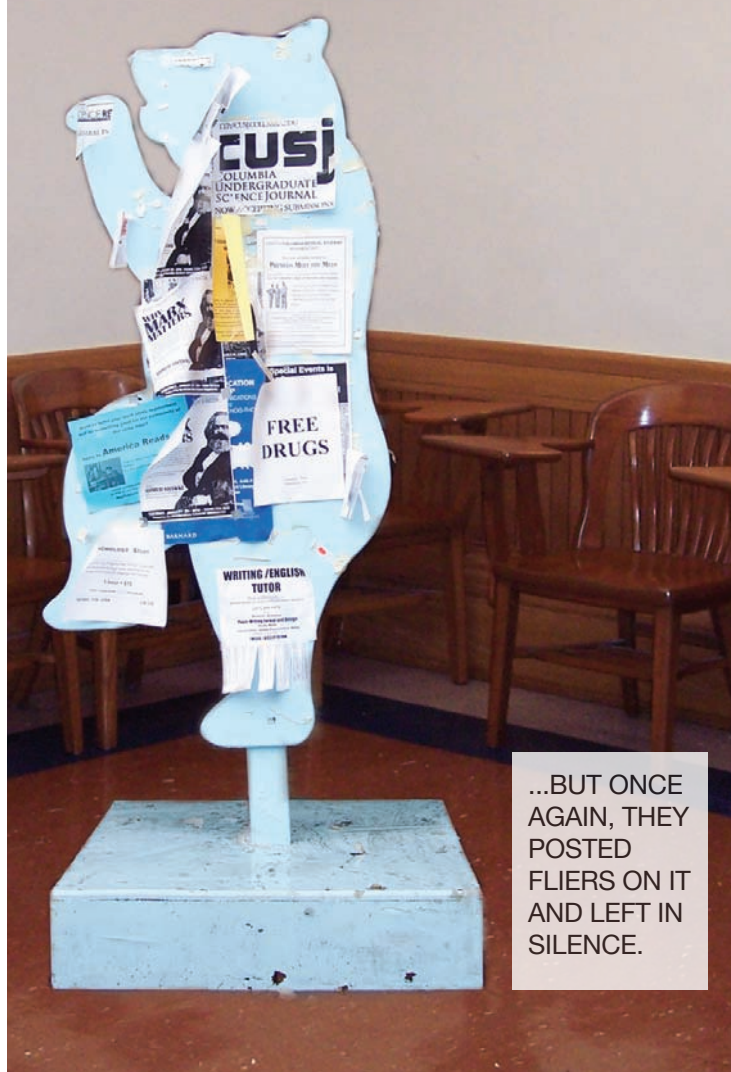


## Photo Essay

*"They say all bears live lives of glamor."*

BY J.D. PORTER

ABANDONED AS USUAL, THAT WOODEN BEAR FROM BARNARD JUST WANTED TO HANG OUT AFTER CLASS...



...BUT ONCE AGAIN, THEY POSTED FLIERS ON IT AND LEFT IN SILENCE.



FRUSTRATED WHILE STUDYING HAVING SOUGHT SOLACE IN THE LIBRARY, THE CONFUSED BEAR WOUND UP DESTROYING THE COLLECTED NOVELS OF JANE AUSTEN.

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I GUESS WE ALL KNOW WHAT SONG THE BEAR WILL BE SINGING TONIGHT.



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RICCARDO CHAILLY, Music Director and Conductor



Li

**MON, MAR 5, 8 PM**

Stern Auditorium / Perelman Stage

**YUNDI LI, Piano**

STRAUSS Don Juan, Op. 20

LISZT Piano Concerto No. 1 in E-flat Major

STRAUSS Ein Heldenleben, Op. 40

Tickets start at \$29.

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SCHUMANN Symphony No. 1 in B-flat Major, Op. 38,  
"Spring" (orch. Gustav Mahler)

MAHLER Symphony No. 5 in C-sharp Minor

Sponsored by Toshiba Corporation

Tickets start at \$29.



Chailly

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Quasthoff

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TILL BRÖNNER, Trumpet

ALAN BROADBENT, Piano

DIETER ILG, Bass

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