

the eye

VOL. 3, ISSUE 4 - SEPT. 27, 2007

write
your
own
ending

SHOUTS AND MUR-
MURS IN THE FIELD OF
LINGUISTICS • IRANIAN
MUSIC: KEEP ON
ROCKING IN THE FREE
WORLD • IN HUMOR...
OTHER WORLD
LEADERS



Editor in Chief
Alex Gartenfeld

Managing Editor
Dani Zalcman

Eye Publisher
Grace Chan

Online Editor
Mark Holden

Lead Story Editor
Alison Bumke

Urbanities Editor
Medaya Ocher

Interview Editor
Sara Davis

Style Editor
Xiyin Tang

Film Editor
Emily Rauber

Music Editor
Justin Gonçalves

Humor Editor
J.D. Porter

Production Editors
Danielle Ash
Emily Greenlee
Alisha Ling

Photo Editor
Tina Gao

Copy Editors
Emilie Griffin
Esther Weisbrod

Senior Writers
Frances Bodomo
Laura Hedli
Ben Reneinga
Kate Linthicum

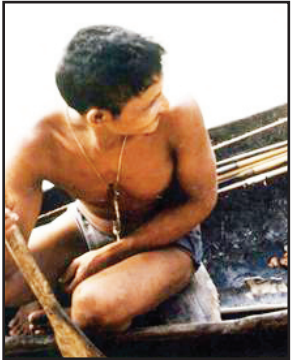
Senior Reporters
Daryl King
Lucy Tang

Senior Photographers
Nicole Friedman
Joey Shemuel
Diana Wong

Spectator Publishers
John Davisson
John Mascari

Contact Us:
eye@columbiaspectator.com
eye.columbiaspectator.com
Editorial: 212 854 9547
Advertising: 212 854 9558

© 2007 The Eye,
Spectator Publishing Company, Inc.



WRITE YOUR OWN ENDING 07-09

FEATURES

EYE TO EYE Sara Davis 3

FIGHTIN' WORDS AND NUMBERS Medaya Ocher 4

HUMOR J.D. Porter and Raphael Pope-Sussman 14

EDITORS' PICKS: YOUTUBE VIDEOS 15

ARTS

THE REEL NEW YORK Emily Rauber 6

WHAT'S COOKING WITH THE FRIEDBERGERS Andrew Martin 10

AHMADINEJAD CAN'T STOP THE ROCK Alexandria Symonds 11

LET'S GIVE THEM SOM-THING TO TALK ABOUT Sarah Anolik, Reporting
by Xiyin Tang 12

LOOKING BACK ON THE SPICE GIRLS Lara Schilling, Daria Chirkov,
and Moira Lynch 13

EDITOR'S NOTE:

President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad is, among other less reputable things, well ... rather cute.

When I first voiced this opinion, my staff rebelled. In this case, the opinions enclosed in no way reflect the policies, views or attitudes of *The Eye* or the *Columbia Spectator*.

One staff member, who to that point had shown no signs of mutiny said, "If you announce that in your letter, I won't be friends with you anymore." Well, if she couldn't accept my sexual proclivities, so be it. Next, another insisted, "Would you say Hitler was hot?" To which I reply: "If he looked more like Gael Garcia Bernal on a long camping trip, then yes."

This latter question interests me, however. Would Columbia have invited Hitler to speak in the United States in 1942? Coatsworth apparently said yes but the logical answer is probably no. The country was at war, and the trip would have been logistically impossible.

But the wartime Hitler was not the same as the pre-war Hitler. Hateful, yes, and he was already inaugurating policies

of discrimination and sterilization. But he was not yet the genocidal terror we know today. Would a debate and confrontation of Hitler's racial theories and politics have been of use? It may be naive to say yes, but is it perhaps too cynical to say no?

The comparison of Ahmadinejad with Hitler is a facile one. It is a divisive tool designed to heighten emotion and thwart rational discussion. And its overuse could very well undermine WWII's and the Holocaust's pedagogical significance.

What is important, however, is our encounter with seemingly radical or archaic values, and the ability of a change-up to force us to reconsider the fastball. When Ahmadinejad insists that "In Iran we do not have homosexuals like in your country," and that homosexuality is a sign of moral decadence, of course, in Manhattan, he only elicits laughs.

But in other parts of the nation, where sodomy laws were on the books as recently as five years ago, the notion that homosexuality can be "purified" is not so far from the mainstream. Let's hope the chuckles of the Lerner Hall audience were

sprinkled with self-consciousness.

In his own speech, President Bollinger called Ahmadinejad "either brazenly provocative or stunningly ignorant," and one wishes that the Iranian leader were only a master of satire. But within every provocative statement is a desire for response, or change.

It's easy to forget that the United States' military's "Don't Ask Don't Tell" is tantamount to a denial of the gays in the military. Maybe Iran has a little to teach us, even if it's only in its wrongdoing.

It's unfortunate that news media is generally so ill-equipped to circulate this kind of well-informed provocation. It's difficult when network news channels seek out 20-year-old correspondents hours before their proposed interview, and pair them against professional debaters and pundits with whole staffs of researchers.

But that's only one example.

Alex Gartenfeld

EYE TO EYE: DENA YAGO INTERVIEWS ALFRED MILANESE PHOTOS BY TINA GAO

The Mennonite Martin family of Lancaster, Pa. is one of the last handmade-pretzel-making families in America. Alfred Milaneze takes these snacks out of the country and into the city and sells them at the Union Square Greenmarket every week.

So when did you become involved in pretzel making?

Back in about 1980, I was living in New York and dividing my time between the city and Lancaster County. I was working as a writer—I had come to New York to be a poet and be part of the poetry scene. I had all of these friends that were doing these wild things. I went on to a job where at least I was only working four days a week. I worked for Revlon for a while as a copywriter. I named lipstick colors and I spent the other three days in Pennsylvania. One of the places that I would stop often was the pretzel bakery that was right out of the industrial revolution. These women were often barefoot in print dresses, rolling and twisting pretzels. It was really compelling. They were singing old hymns while they worked. Eventually I became very close with the Martin pretzel-making family. I decided that selling these pretzels at farmers markets would also give me more time to write my own things and not work for someone else.

You went into it knowing that you would be selling them at the Greenmarket?

At first I tried to sell some to stores. George DeLuca was the first person in a store that I ever gave a pretzel to. I didn't know who he was at the time. He said "Oh, they're great, I'll take them." I realized that selling the pretzels to stores was not something that I wanted to be doing, though.

Did Dean and DeLuca pick them up?

They did, and that sort of became our calling card. It didn't take me long to realize that that didn't make any sense. Some of my artist friends would sell things at flea markets, so going to Greenmarket was a better start. It dawned on me that if I were going to have anything to do with the pretzels, that the Greenmarket was a good place to do it. I developed a real love for the Amish country at that time with the Pennsylvania Dutch in Lancaster County, and selling their pretzels made all of that come together.

What was the name of the family?

They are the Martins, and they are a Mennonite family out of Lancaster, Pa. They are two brothers that run it, and one at the bakery turned it over to his brother and they actually opened another bakery in upstate New York. There are actually Amish communities nearby, and mostly related Mennonite communities. They opened a bakery there, and I represent both of them. We sell through mail order, but other than that they are only available in local areas.

Are there any competing Mennonite pretzel bakeries or does Martins' stand on its own?

In Pennsylvania there were some other pretzel bakeries, but they died a long time ago. There were maybe 20 or 30 handmade pretzel bakeries once upon a time in the early 1900s, but they all went the way of machines, but machines make a different product. Among the few that remain, Martins' are really the best.

Do they make different types of pretzels?

They are whole wheat, they are all baked pretzels, and they are all twisted by hand. They are oiled and watered in caustic soda, then baked and dried like the old fashioned way of pretzel making. Pretzels suited everything I liked at the moment, and there was always very little possibility of expansion. It's something inherent to the product that it is not replicated easily and takes such an intense amount of labor, that outside of these communities it would be very hard to produce them. The idea was never to expand within a small range.

Are there any other communities that make a similar niche product?

There are Moravian cookie makers that are a similar product. There aren't too many examples of anybody making a product that has a limited expansion possibility.

Have you thought about moving up to the Columbia Greenmarket?

We have been asking to go to the Columbia market, but we have been told that there isn't enough space. We use mostly local wheat from Delaware, Maryland, Pennsylvania, and the majority is not from very large farms, which is part of the Greenmarket mission, but if they do have space we would like to be there on Thursdays.

With the people I work with, I try to teach them the language that is contained in the pretzel. The pretzel is just a means for representing something that is really important with the Martins and what is happening within the pretzel stand. Sometimes the workers from the bakery have come to the city and sung their hymns right next to the pretzel stand.

What is the main pretzel demographic?

We get sweatshop sewing ladies to advertising executives to stars. Lauren Bacall loves pretzels. Around Christmas time she would buy tons of pretzels to send to Humphrey Bogart's children. There was a *Sex and the City* episode that was anchored by a scene with the pretzel stand and eating pretzels. It was in *You've Got Mail* and plenty of other places.

We don't often go searching for new markets, but recently some of the guys talked about how great it would be if we could get up to Columbia. College students eat a lot; it's a great thing to eat while you're studying. They are kind of like an aggression food in a way. You get out all of your frustration with all of this pretzel chewing. It would be great.



URBANITIES FIGHTIN' WORDS AND NUMBERS

BY MEDAYA OCHER



PETER GORDON IS IN HAWAII, and the interview I had hoped we could conduct in his Teacher's College office has been moved to the Internet. It seems appropriate that our conversation would begin with communication problems. Having recently discovered iChat, Gordon suggested we meet via video. But the program kept malfunctioning and the computers refused to connect. The problems mounted until at one point we were speaking on Skype, typing IMs, and trying to start a chat at the same time. This all lasted an unfortunate half hour, during which I thought he had hung up (he hadn't), he thought I had signed off (I had, but not forever), and iChat evidently thought we should both hang up and just use a telephone.

It so happens that Peter Gordon is an associate professor of speech and language pathology at Teachers College. He is in Hawaii on sabbatical—not because of any special linguistic research to be done there, but because “it's a nice place to be. Mostly we just wanted to get away ... It's just 85 degrees every day.” And although a surfboard gamely leans against the wall behind him (it wasn't his), Gordon insists that he is writing and conducting research at the local university. And it's actually for his research that he is most well-known.

Peter Gordon graduated from the University of Stirling in Scotland and received his Ph.D. in psychology at MIT. As Gordon himself explains it, his field of study is mostly in child language, and he is interested primarily in the relationship between language and cognition. He came to Columbia after working at the University of Pittsburgh and doing field work in Brazil, where he traveled in the early '90s, to do research in the Pirahã villages on the Maici River.

The Pirahã are a rare example of a people not at all assimilated with modernity or foreign culture. Their isolation has yielded a language untouched by neighboring Portuguese and Spanish and is a new point of contention for modern linguistic thought. The Pirahã language does not at all resemble the vast majority of spoken languages. It is based on one of the simplest sound systems in the world, consisting of only three vowels and eight consonants. The tribe, however, usually drops those vowels and consonants altogether, so conversations could be made of just whistling or humming, for example. The Pirahã use

what linguists term “prosody,” which is communication that uses only variations in rhythm, stress, and intonation. Most linguists who have gone to work with them have failed to grasp the essentials of the language, let alone master it.

Enter Dan Everett, a linguist and friend of Peter Gordon, about whom the *New Yorker* did an extensive profile this past April. The two worked with the Pirahã together and have suffered a rift (they actually didn't speak for a while) because of the research and the views that Everett has since put forward. In the *New Yorker* article (as well as in articles that he had written himself), Everett asserted that the Pirahã seem to prove that it is actually culture that shapes language, which, in more general and more important terms, means that Noam Chomsky (and all of his widely accepted ideas) might be wrong. This, as the *New Yorker* article explains it, “was like a bomb going off at the party.” More linguists traveled to the Amazon, more experiments were done, and Chomsky himself wrote Everett an e-mail. Gordon dismisses the culture claim as “too sweeping” and, in some ways, simply inaccurate. But let's start at the beginning.

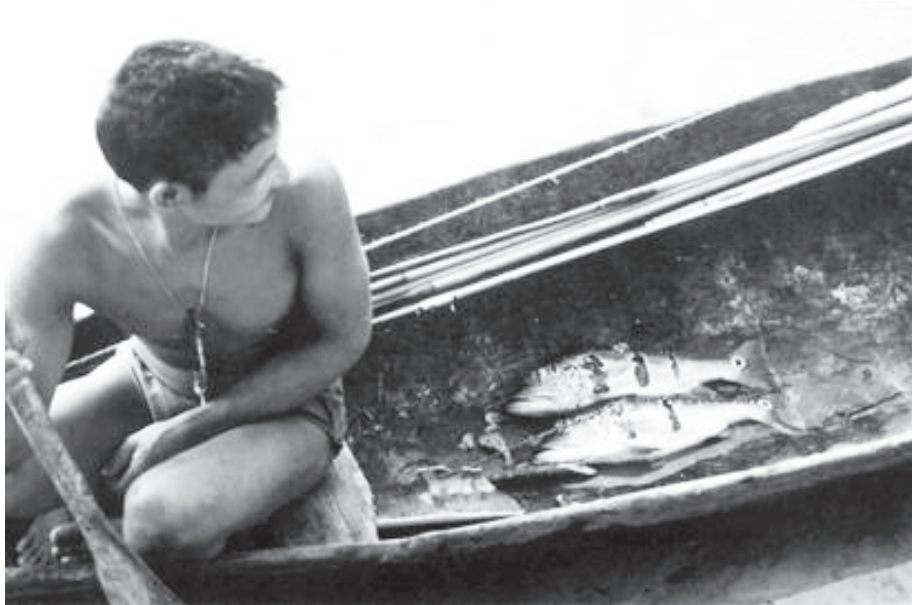
Gordon and Everett traveled together to the Amazon for the first time in 1991, and, during that time, Gordon explains, “we were just scouting out and seeing what the culture was like and trying to learn a bit of the language.” The Pirahã way of life, as Gordon describes it, is extraordinarily simple. “They literally live in these very basic straw huts” he says, “and if too many people die in that location, they just move it down river and pretty much all they take are their canoes and bows and arrows and that's it.” They are hunter-gatherers, not farmers. Everett and Gordon followed the minimalist way of life. They lived in hammocks slung between two trees.

Because they didn't want to interfere with the culture too much, the two men also tried to avoid introducing foreign and modern objects. Most of the items that Gordon and Everett brought were used for trade, “for supplies, for them to help us.” Manioc, a root that they cooked into “little granules” was a favorite. They also brought “fishing hooks, stuff for them to fish with, shiny plastic beads—which sounds corny, but that they actually really like to make necklaces with them.”

Gordon did, however, bring a video



PETER GORDON LIVED AND DID FIELD WORK IN THE AMAZON WITH THE PIRAHÃ TRIBE IN THE EARLY '90S (TOP). A YOUNG PIRAHÃ MAN PERFORMS ONE OF GORDON'S EXPERIMENTS. GORDON WAS RESEARCHING THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN LANGUAGE AND COGNITION (BOTTOM).



GORDON TRADED FISHING SUPPLIES WITH THE PIRAHÃ, WHO DEPEND ON HUNTING AND GATHERING, NOT FARMING.

camera with him (as well as a tape recorder, which proved helpful when the video camera immediately broke). The equipment did not amaze them. “They think it’s cool,” Gordon explains, “[but] they don’t understand what it takes to create a video camera. It’s just something that makes nice, funny pictures.” He compares it to telling them about traveling to the moon. “They’re amazed not by the technology, but that you can get there before the moon disappears,” he said.

It was on his second trip, in the summer of 1992, that Gordon did most of his experiments on how language affects the structure of thought. He chose to explore Pirahã cognition through their terms and conceptions of numbers. Their “one” for example, can also mean “a few,” and “two” can be “not many.” “The idea,” he says, “was if you don’t have the number words, what’s your numerical knowledge like?”

Gordon presented Pirahã subjects with a series of tasks that would “evaluate their numerical knowledge without requiring them to use number words.” The tasks increased in difficulty. First, he asked them to match batteries one by one by lining them up next to a line that he had set up. They started to make mistakes after three or four. Then he lined up some batteries in one spot and asked them to recreate that line in another. Finally, he showed them a line of batteries and then covered them up, so that they would have to match them one by one from memory. He conducted another test with nuts, in which he put a bunch of nuts on the ground and then placed them one by one in the container and then took them out. After each one was removed, he asked if there were any left inside the container. “On pretty much all

of the tasks,” Gordon says, “they made significant errors that only increased as the numbers got bigger.”

The results of the experiments led him to support a version of the Whorfian proposal, which Gordon explains as the idea that, “Language can shape the way you think about the world, and that even though you might have many differences between languages, there would always be a way of encoding the meaning in any language.” Except Gordon proposed a stronger theory. “What I was arguing,” he explains, “was incremental abilities. There are actually some things you can’t translate.” It is also another way of saying that “the structure of thought is learned through language, rather than being innately structured.”

Gordon’s conclusion clashed with Everett’s claim that the Pirahã language structure comes from their culture. Everett insisted that the Pirahã have “no numbers, no fixed color terms, no perfect tense, no deep memory, no tradition of art or drawing ... no collective memory that extends back more than one or two generations, and no original creation myths.” He put forward that they live solely in the immediate experience, in the present, and that this has directly formed their grammar. His culture claim would be convincing, except that some of Everett’s assertions, as Gordon points out, simply aren’t true. “Dan tries to claim that all these different things about the tribe connect together into this single cultural value,” Gordon says, “that they have no myths. That they don’t talk about past events or don’t tell stories about past events.” Gordon says that he has tapes of the Pirahã telling stories and telling myths and Dan Everett is actually the one translating—“Dan’s on the tape saying what the guy is say-

ing ... I don’t know how he claims that that’s not a myth.” Everett also claimed that they don’t have “recursion,” which is the human ability to have a sentence go on forever (like, “I saw the cat, who saw the dog, who ate the bone, which I had buried, etc.”). It is also the cornerstone for Chomsky’s theory of universal grammar.

When it comes to Chomsky, Gordon jokes, “If you take Chomsky on a good day, he’ll say that language has nothing to do with thought and nothing to do with communication.” Chomsky proposes, and this is a largely accepted belief, that “language is not shaped by the way we communicate ... but has its own internal structure.” While Chomskyans, which is how Gordon referred to Chomsky’s followers, obviously chafe at Everett’s views, (and Chomsky himself has indeed chafed in public, publishing an article with two other scholars contesting Everett’s points), Gordon points out that they also reject the Whorfian position, because it claims that the structure of thought is learned through language rather than being innately structured. But he adds, “Dan is trying to tie too much together in this one theory.” And he seems to be ignoring various facts in the process. He also got a lot of flak for it, Gordon admits, not only because so many linguists are loyal to Chomsky but because he seemed to make the Pirahã sound, essentially, stupid.

Everett, however, is continuing with the research. Gordon makes sure to mention that other studies of the Pirahã have meanwhile yielded different and improved results. They used balloons rather than batteries, and the Pirahã made fewer mistakes. Gordon suggests that it might have been the relative stability of balloons to batteries (which

tend to roll around) that triggered the change.

Gordon himself has since moved on to other subjects—babies, namely. For the past six years, he has been researching infant even representation, which is how infants perceive events and how their perception of events shapes their language development. Gordon explains, “It’s sort of like how cognition shapes language as opposed to how language shapes cognition.” He explains what the experiments are about, but it’s too early to draw any conclusions and there are no definitive results yet. His lab assistants are running the lab while he is in Hawaii.

And it is on the subject of Hawaii that we end our iChat. Gordon eagerly shares the history of the house he’s staying in (apparently, it was once the scene of a famous murder). It seems clear that Gordon is happy to be far from the labs, the kids, and the Pirahã. Although, maybe that was just a glitch in our communication.



GORDON PLAYED WITH THE PIRAHÃ CHILDREN BUT DID NOT HAVE A CHANCE TO WORK WITH THEM BECAUSE THEY WOULD GET SCARED AND RUN AWAY.

PHOTOS COURTESY OF PETER GORDON

FILM

THE REEL NEW YORK

BY EMILY RAUBER



JASON SCHWARTZMAN, ADRIEN BRODY, AND OWEN WILSON IN *THE DARJEELING LIMITED* (ABOVE). JAVIER BARDEM IN *NO COUNTRY FOR OLD MEN* (RIGHT).



TO THE CASUAL COLLEGE FILMGOER, THERE are few events more intimidating than the New York Film Festival. With most tickets selling out in a few hours, a healthy majority of subtitled foreign films, and big names at the directors' dialogues, it may seem like just another near-impossible-to-get-into event, like Fashion Week or the Ahmadinejad forum.

Of course, with enough chutzpah to wake up early—limited student rush tickets are sold at the box office each day—the festival, and the latest stars of Cannes, Venice, and Toronto are within reach for just about anyone.

The festival was established in 1962 by the Film Society of Lincoln Center, making it one of the longest running festivals in North America. This established respectability within the New York demographic attracts a wide array of talent, and this year's roster is no exception. In addition to repeat festival darlings Wes Anderson, Joel and Ethan Coen, and Todd Haynes, veteran directors John Landis and Brian De Palma will each make their festival debut this season. Sidney Lumet also returns for the first time since presenting 1964's *Fail-Safe*.

With a keen eye toward both critics and the public, the festival opens tomorrow with celebrated indie-auteur Anderson's new film, *The Darjeeling Limited*. The movie treads the familiar territory of sibling estrangement, and features a straight-faced cast of fairly well-respected actors, including Owen Wilson, Adrien Brody, and Jason Schwartzman. (Luckily for those without festival tickets, the film premieres in limited release in normal theaters on Saturday.)

The festival's centerpiece selection is the Coen brothers' *No Country for Old Men*, which garnered significant praise when it premiered at Cannes. The combination of *Darjeeling* and *No Country* marks only the third time that two American films have been selected for the opening and centerpiece features at the festival—perhaps a sign that the dominance of international films in terms of pure artistic value is waning.

"We have a considerable U.S. presence this year," says Richard Peña, the Film Society's program director and festival selection committee chairman, as well as a Columbia professor. "The films selected this year represent strong personal visions made by artists willing to take chances with film style and form—which is how we hope every year's offerings at the NYFF are seen."

The festival's closing-night feature, the French-language *Persepolis*, is among this year's international offerings. The animated movie is based on the popular graphic novel by Marjane Satrapi, who also wrote and directed the film version with Vincent Paronnaud. In a sight now familiar to Columbians, the film—which follows Satrapi's experiences growing up in an oppressive Iran—was decried by Iranian officials, including one of Ahmadinejad's cultural advisers, Mehdi Kalhor.

"Islamophobia in Western drama started in France, and producing and highlighting the anti-Iranian film *Persepolis* in Cannes falls in line with Islamophobia," Kalhor said, following the film's jury-prize win at the French festival.

In addition to Iranian ire, Columbia students may recognize something else on closing night: Bent-Jorgen

Perlmutter, a recent graduate of the film division of the School of the Arts, will have his short film, "The Vulnerable Ones," screened alongside the feature. Although Perlmutter is no stranger to the festival scene—his feature *LUMO*, which addressed sexual violence in the Democratic Republic of Congo, was part of London's Human Rights Watch International Film Festival—this marks his first appearance at the New York Film Festival.

Columbia can also claim Ira Sachs, who teaches in the film division, as one of their own. His feature film *Married Life* screens twice this weekend, and stars Patricia Clarkson, Chris Cooper, Rachel McAdams, and Pierce Brosnan in what is described as a "comic melodrama." Sachs, too, has made the rounds at film festivals before—his previous feature, *Forty Shades of Blue*, won the grand jury prize at Sundance.

Critics like *Slant* magazine have noted that this year's lineup is "top-heavy with Cannes carryovers," which is certainly true for many of the films. And while it may sting for a New Yorker to admit that somebody else has seen it first, the repetition affects only a small number of jet-setting cinephiles and industry professionals. This festival also doesn't award prizes, so some filmmakers may be more tempted by a chance at a Palme d'Or, if given the chance, than the notorious critical honesty of the New York public.

The New York Film Festival remains, true to its name, a film festival for New York—in the end, it doesn't matter whether some distant, foreign panel has already evaluated a film. New Yorkers, obviously, are much better judges of character anyway.

PHOTOS COURTESY OF FOX SEARCHLIGHT PICTURES AND MIRAMAX FILMS

Write Your Own Ending.

By Atossa Abrahamian

“YOU’RE GOING TO STARVE,” MY MOTHER SAID FLATLY WHEN I announced my plans to BEcome a writer. “You’ll have to marry rich, or win the lottery. ... But never in New York. I’m telling you, you’ll starve.”

Although my mother has a point, that’s not always the way things work. Consider Meghan Daum, a 1996 graduate of Columbia’s Master of Fine Arts program in Creative Writing. At the age of 37, Daum writes a weekly column for the *Los Angeles Times*. Her debut novel, *The Quality of Life Report*, was a New York Times Notable Book in 2003. She published a collection of essays in 2001, and has written for the *New Yorker*, the *Village Voice*, and the *New York Times Book Review*. Daum’s diet is more than adequate.

Daum is one of a flurry of successful writers to graduate from Columbia University in the past two decades—Edwidge Danticat, BC ’90, and Marisha Pessl, BC ’00, are others. While their success may be atypical, the unpredictability of their paths to fame is more familiar.

Daum followed her graduation from Columbia’s MFA program with a stint as an editorial assistant for *Allure*, a magazine she describes as being “basically about skin.” The job was at odds with her “pretentious, grandiose ideas” about becoming an essayist straight out of school. “It was a humbling experience. It burst my bubble,” she says. Still, the position put her in contact with “some great literary people,” giving her useful connections and creating a stimulating, intellectual environment. “It was the best thing I ever did,” she says.

As Daum’s experience suggests, there’s no direct path to becoming a successful writer. Aspiring writers might find guidance in Columbia College’s new creative writing major, created this September to replace the school’s former writing concentration. But what then? The degree won’t get anyone’s novel published. Rather, there are multiple options, ranging from MFA programs like Daum’s to jobs at publishing companies and quests for inspiration in the real world. The final result? Anybody’s guess.

This week, members of Columbia’s Beginning Fiction Workshop have been asked to create a dialogue between two characters. The challenge: to expose a conflict between the characters without having either mention it explicitly. “Mine was strange and fun to write,” Emi Noguchi, CC ’10, says. “It was a little bare, though. I’m extremely inexperienced with dialogue writing.”

Noguchi is considering Columbia’s new creative writing major, and is



PHOTOS COURTESY: SAM LIPSYTE FAN PAGE ON MYSPACE.COM, NPR.ORG, OPENCITY.ORG, HARVARD GAZETTE

taking the class partly to determine how much she wants to write during her remaining years at Columbia. “It’s a nice glimpse into the type of writing classes Columbia offers. I’m excited for the chance to hone my skills through being forced to write a certain amount each week.”

Elena Megalos, CC ’08, plans to graduate this year as an English major with a concentration in creative writing. She is among the last to graduate with this combination.

The major offers a more comprehensive approach to writing—12 classes on writing, textual analysis, and related subjects in the humanities—than the concentration’s six writing workshops. Still, Megalos says she has been pleased with what the concentration offers, especially with the intimacy of her writing workshops and seminars. “I’ve always gotten helpful feedback from my classmates. I feel like I’m part of a community. The English major can feel less personal, due to its size.”

The major will retain the concentration’s intimacy while trying to give students a “craft, technique” perspective of writing, Sam Lipsyte, the new program’s director, says. Lipsyte, a creative writing professor, is notoriously funny, offering a positive yet realistic take on professional writing. A novelist himself, Lipsyte published his third novel, *Home Land*, in 2005.

He hopes the major will prove useful to all recipients, even if they don’t end up writing professionally. “It equips graduates with the ability to write well, and an ability to tell a story and shape a narrative. Those skills are essential to any profession, whether you’re a doctor or lawyer or politician.” Noguchi sees similar value in her writing workshop. “The class gives you the tools to express your thoughts—to organize them, to make them understandable to the public. I know I’ll continue to use them, regardless of what I end up doing.”

Barnard’s writing program—an English major with a creative writing concentration—helps students focus their writing while encouraging them to develop their individual, female literary voices. Claudia Roth Pierpont, a creative nonfiction instructor at Barnard, says that she’s trying to make students’ lives easier. “I spent years stumbling around, piecing things together for myself. I’d like to distill the kind of knowledge it took me so long to acquire and help students find a more direct path to their goals.”

Barnard’s writing program has been particularly successful at helping students achieve these goals. Its nurturing environment, small classes, and supportive atmosphere help shape confident, well-rounded women who write convincingly about personal experience. The *New York Times* calls Barnard’s writing scene a “literary hatchery,” likening it to London’s Bloomsbury Circle or 1920s Paris. On Aug. 24, the *New York Times Sunday Book Review* published a cover review of *Circling My Mother*, the new memoir of Mary Gordon, BC ’71. On Sept. 7, two weeks later, it published a cover review praising another

Barnard alumna’s work, *Brother, I’m Dying*, Danticat’s memoir.

How closely is Barnard alumnae’s literary success linked to their undergraduate education?

Victor LaValle, a 1998 graduate of Columbia’s MFA program in creative writing, actually regrets being an English major as an undergraduate. LaValle has achieved significant literary success. His first novel, *Slapboxing with Jesus*, won the PEN/Open Book award in 1999, and his second, *The Ecstatic*, was a finalist for the PEN/Faulkner award in 2002. This semester, he leads a senior fiction workshop at Columbia with enthusiasm and honesty. Although he teaches writing classes and finds them useful, he says an English major is not essential for a writing career.

“I read great fiction for the major, but I probably would have come across most of it eventually. If I’d majored in something else—Anthropology or History, say—I might have come to writing with an expanded set of facts and a different way of looking at a story.”

Daum agrees that graduate school might be the best time to focus on creative writing. “Writing should be a graduate discipline you take on once you have something to write about. I managed to make a living writing about myself, but when you’re white and middle class, there’s only so much to say.”

Monica Finley, BC ’06, has been working in academic publishing since graduation. Although she’d hoped to be writing her first novel by now, she’s been surprised by her level of job satisfaction.

“An entry-level job in publishing could be titled ‘associate photocopier’ or ‘paperwork router.’ But once you move up, your job becomes more interesting. You have opportunities to develop the books the company’s working on.”

Megalos understands the appeal of publishing—it’s a dependable source of income that keeps you in the literary world. “I think the pressure to get a ‘real job’ makes it especially intriguing. Publishing can mean steady exposure to quality writing, which can be inspiring. If all else fails, the knowledge that you’re in the service of literature seems to be a natural extension of the English/Writing track.”

The financial security a publishing job offers is another attractive factor for Megalos. “Seeing as I will graduate with huge loans to repay, writing most likely won’t be something I pursue in a primary way any time soon.”

Jon Kriesky is currently taking the semester off from Reed College to work in the production division at Knopf, where he says he’s met people with a great passion for books and writing. “You’re in an environment where your work is based around ideas and words and you’re still surrounded by books.”

Daum worked as a temp at several publishing houses, where she admits the job was not geared toward writing. Still, the experience taught her to take rejection less personally. “You learn that if your manuscript is

rejected from, say, Random House, it’s more about Random House than your own writing. In the end, it’s a business like any other.”

Will Greene, a junior majoring in creative writing at Pratt, says the year he took off from school has affected his writing more dramatically than any of his creative writing classes.

“I needed to get out of New York, and the northeast in general. All my peers were writing the same angsty stories about life in New York. There were some great writers among them, but it was all the same. I felt shut off from myself, and unable to care about school.”

Last year, he decided to take some time off. “I was trying to write about things I hadn’t done—I needed a fresh perspective.” He knew he needed to get away from the city, so he tried to find something that was the opposite of going to art school in New York. Living on a ranch in the mountains of northern California seemed to fit the bill.

“I knew the owners of the ranch. They host a camp every summer, which provides the funds they need to stay in the house, where they’ve lived since it was homesteaded in the 1800s. It seemed like the perfect solution.”

Greene worked on the farm for eight months. “I was doing ranch work, taking care of the animals. Dry wall installation, a ton of cooking, slaughtering animals, building. I was learning all the things I didn’t learn as a city blower.”

Returning to New York, he had a fresh perspective on the city and writing. “It was nice to come back to city—I was ready.” The time off has directly affected his writing. “I wrote a lot of poetry while I was up there—mostly ranch-based. I have a ton of unfinished poems that I’m now revisiting.”

His break also affected his plans for the future. “After graduating, I’m not planning to live in New York ever again. It’s exhausting to constantly have to fight off the negative feelings. I realize it’s a personal thing. City isn’t bad—just doesn’t work for me.”

Daum also says traveling was the best thing she ever did for her writing career—in 1999, she moved to Nebraska, which provided her with experiences she used for *The Quality of Life Report*.

“You need to think about what stories are worth telling at all. Do things that are interesting, that you can write about later,” she says. “Become a reporter, travel, see the world. We live in a global society now—your white, middle class suburban stories just won’t cut it.”

Does that mean—God forbid—leaving New York? Daum laughs.

“I love New York. But because of the economic and cultural factor, it is not the place for creative people like it used to be. The idea of the intellectual, Upper West Side bohemian is a myth. New York is an infantilizing, provincial place. You discover this when you go to the provinces, like I did.”

“You shouldn’t feel like a failure if you leave New York,” she adds. “Reality is elsewhere.”

MUSIC

WHAT'S COOKING WITH THE FRIEDBERGERS

BY ANDREW MARTIN

THE FIERY FURNACES, THE BROTHER AND SISTER team of Matthew and Eleanor Friedberger, have become heroes in the left-of-mainstream music community as a result of their constantly evolving studio sound and hyperactive live shows. Since releasing their first record, *Gallowsbird Bark*, in 2003, the duo has been on a well-documented creative tear, with four albums released since then and a new one, *Widow City*, set to come out on Oct. 9. The new album is another bold step in the band's progression as songwriters and performers, and heavily features the chamberlain, a keyboard instrument that plays tape loops. The *Eye* spoke to Matthew Friedberger about the new record, the concerts, and songwriting.

You seem to have become more interested in production over the course of your records. Is that accurate?
I'm always thinking about how the songs are going to be arranged, how they're going to sound when you write them. Our first record, we had very little money, but it still had some trickery. But all the records have different sorts of studioizing. This one has a lot of different sounds. *Bitter Tea* had all these turn-of-the-'80s sounds on it and this has got mostly early '70s keyboard sounds on it. I mean, it doesn't have any keyboards from later than that. [laughs] Does that make any sense?

But what determines how a record is going to sound? You mention very specific eras and sounds—what influences the sound of the record?
It's what we decide the record's going to be. Then you pick all the sounds based on that. As opposed to you get into the studio and mess with things or get inspired by things you hear that morning. It doesn't go like that unfortunately. It goes according to plan.

So you go into the studio with sort of a master plan?
I wouldn't call it a master plan. I'd call it a relatively detailed plan. There's no master. [laughs] There's a mister. That's me. And there's a mister and a sister. But no master.

What's the work division like between you and Eleanor on this record? I know that it seems to change on different records.

There's 16 songs, and five of them we wrote the words together and then the other ones I wrote the words and I wrote the music. But we talked about what the record would be together and then I went away and did it according to the specifications we agreed. [laughs] 'Cause she was involved in thinking about what the record would sound like, but I had to do the slave work and make up the songs. Does that make any sense?

I write songs as a hobby or a thing to do, all the time. And my sister writes songs more when she feels moved to do so. It's good. Anyway, the main division in the band is Eleanor is the singer, and more of the personality, and I do the music. It doesn't so much matter where the songs come from before that point. The songwriting stuff is sort of before that, it doesn't matter. We don't think of it as much as that other division.

When you're writing songs, do you identify with the characters?

Well I would say I don't identify with anything I write. I don't think of it that way. I try to make it true to the character. But I don't identify with the person. It's definitely at arm's length for me.

When I was a kid, I was always fascinated with the idea that someone could sing the phone book and it would sound great. And that's really true. Some people can sing the phone book and make it sound great. And some people can't. And I remember always thinking I wish they would sing the fuckin' phone book, the lyrics are so bad. I'm a *Who* fan, you know, and there's the song "Join Together," and the line, "It's the singer, not the song, that makes the music move along." And that's particularly ironic, you know, 'cause the songwriter in that band, [Pete] Townsend, hated the singer, [Roger] Daltrey, and didn't think that way at all. So it's a kind of, like, funny tension, where the songwriter thinks the

singer's all-important, but really doesn't think that. It's kind of weird.

In your live shows, you often play your songs completely differently than the way they sound on the record. Do you come up with the different arrangements when you write the songs or is that a process with the band when you tour?

I often think of 'em while we're recording, cause its just normal contrary to think, This is light, early-'80s-synth sound and it's slow, so live, let's play it fast with guitars. You often think things like that—it's just kind of natural. But if you ever play pieces that are written down when you are a kid, you often feel the urge to play it the opposite of how it's written down. I always did. That's how I get to know it better. That's where it comes from. The idea is that when you come see the band or listen to the record, you get something different. And then in between the recorded version and the live version, you can make up sort of your ideal version of the song. 'Cause they have different perspectives on it.

How did you feel about the reaction to *Rehearsing My Choir*? (note: The album, featuring the Friedberger's grandmother reciting story songs with Eleanor, was not well-received commercially and was scathingly reviewed in some circles.)

I was happy with it. It got a lot of nice press. There was a lot of nice, bold-line press, a lot of nice print reviews. And people who didn't like it—that's their problem. This is kind of a larger issue, that people have certain expectations for rock music and certain expectations for individual rock bands. And that very much colors what they think of something. So a lot of people didn't have a lot of use for the record—the people on the Internet—the youths, as they used to call them. But some people, that's the only record they like by us, the other records are bad indie rock pop.

People should like whatever they want. I don't have any problem with people not liking our records. 'Cause the guitar-rock community is very conservative now because people still think they have these kind of punk rock notions, where music is supposed to be like Elvis or the Sex Pistols or supposed to be concise and trashy and have sort of interesting gestures. They just want enjoyment—music that is interesting socially to them. In the rock tradition, there's lots of records that don't sound like Laura Branigan, but people just want records that sound like Laura Branigan, it seems to me.

Uh-huh.

Do you know Laura Branigan?

No. (note: Laura Branigan is a remarkably cheesy '80s pop act.)

Well, she sounds like a lot of bands nowadays. And why not? Why not sound like Laura Branigan? That's fine. I don't like it, though.

The Fiery Furnaces will play the Hiro Ballroom on Nov. 3, and an "in-store in Williamsburg sometime in the beginning of October for free in a place called Southsix."

PHOTO COURTESY OF ROUGH TRADE RECORDS



MATTHEW AND ELLEN FRIEDBERGER (CENTER LEFT AND RIGHT), WITH OCCASIONAL MEMBERS OF THEIR BAND.

AHMADINEJAD CAN'T STOP THE ROCK

BY ALEXANDRIA SYMONDS



GOOGOOSH (LEFT), HYPERNOVA (ABOVE)

BANDS WHO CITE THE STROKES, KINGS OF LEON, and Arctic Monkeys among their influences, who play simple, guitar-driven post-prog, and whose lead singers sound a lot like Interpol's Paul Banks: they're a dime a dozen, right?

In theory, Hypernova is no different. They're four guys in jeans and striped shirts who want to play a decent-sized venue. Stylistically, they don't sound much different from their influences—which isn't to suggest that they won't develop their own sound in time. They've got a Web site and an EP—both are accomplishments, certainly, but still nothing unusual in a music-saturated United States. So hypothetically, there's no reason why Hypernova should be having such a charmed year, enjoying attention from the *New York Times*, MTV, *Blunt*, and NPR.

Except for one little detail.

Hypernova is an Iranian indie band, playing music in an era when they pretty much define that genre. In Iran these days, there exists a delicate tension between the power of the law (officially, at least, Western music is verboten) and power in numbers (half the population of Iran is under 26, and they want their MTV). Despite President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad's claims during his Monday speech at Columbia that Iran "loves all nations," it's clear that Ahmadinejad is wary of an infiltration of Iranian thought and culture by Western ideals. According to an edict issued Dec. 21, 2005 by Iran's Supreme Council of the Cultural Revolution, "Blocking indecent and Western music from the Islamic Republic of Iran is required." Additionally, women can't sing lead vocals if an audience contains men, a stipulation specified by sharia.

The Council's setup is actually a fitting allegory for the way the nation of Iran functions as a whole: though President Ahmadinejad is the first and presumably most important member listed on the Council's Web site, any decision it makes can be overridden by Ayatollah Ali Khamenei.

So what's a band to do in Iran, with its hands so summarily tied? The answer isn't a particularly shocking one—groups go underground.

It's easier than you might think, since enforcement of the law banning Western music is inconsistent at best. Martin Hodgson reported in April for the *Guardian* about a DVD shop in northern Tehran whose owner maintains a hard drive full of American mp3s under the counter, with the bootlegs available for purchase if you just know who to ask. Likewise, the ban on music with Western influences is an entirely public one—the government has no way to implement the ban inside cars and houses with closed doors, and their efforts would be wasted in trying to. Many concerts take place in the suburbs of Tehran, where police forces are less concentrated and thus less likely to be able to control the shows.

Still, that isn't consolation enough for most Iranian musicians (or would-be musicians), for whom the lack of opportunity to release their music represents the ultimate frustration.

And when Iranian police do enforce the ban, they take it seriously. On Aug. 1, over 200 revelers were arrested after a secret concert the police deemed "satanistic," which occurred in Karaj, about 12 miles outside of Tehran. In addition to the music played, the concert featured men and women dancing together and drinking alcohol—both prohibited activities under Islamic law. Though efforts were made to conceal the concert—parties were notified of its location just a few hours before it began—the arrests served their intended purpose of sufficiently frightening would-be organizers of similar events. The result: even less opportunity for musicians to release and perform their work.

For their part, Hypernova's solution has been to hunker down in America for awhile. After narrowly missing their chance to play a showcase at South by Southwest in Texas—they couldn't secure travel visas in time—the band has been trolling the States

for the last six months or so, including a buzzed-about run in New York at Fat Baby Bar, Arlene's Grocery, Delancey, NYU, and Snitch. Though becoming an expatriate might not be the ideal solution, it's an oft-used one, particularly among Iranian hip-hop artists: the first notable Persian rap album was released by Los Angeles-based hip-hop group Sandy, and prominent Iranian rapper Deev also currently resides in California.

Others choose silence. The best example might be Googoosh, a phenomenally popular chanteuse (often likened to Barbra Streisand, Celine Dion, and Madonna) in the 1960s and '70s who was forbidden to sing by Ayatollah Khomeini after the Iranian Revolution of 1979. Under virtual house arrest, Googoosh claims to have decided to stay in Iran and effectively give up her performing career for the next 20 years. In 2000, she was granted the right to leave Iran again, and has spent the past seven years touring the Western world. In a 2001 interview with *Time*, the artist attempted to predict what was next for her. "I think my decision would eventually be to return home, but it's hard to know what will happen to us, if we have no news of the future."

She currently lives in Toronto and tours mostly in Canada and the western United States. Given Ahmadinejad's return to a stricter, more conservative lifestyle in Iran, it seems unlikely that Googoosh could live in Iran and still continue to tour.

For Hypernova, too, the future is uncertain. "We're jeopardizing our lives every show we play," frontman Raam told the *New York Times* earlier this year. But there's passion in the forbidden. It's possible that the next great Iranian rock band, whatever it might be, is more earnest, more urgent than yet another Brooklyn collective—simply because there's a greater risk involved.

As Hypernova, and bands like it, evolve and find their particular place in contemporary music, they can be sure of at least one thing: the world is watching.

PHOTOS COURTESY OF ALI ANARI AND NY TIMES

STYLE

GIVE THEM SOM-THING TO TALK ABOUT

BY SARAH ANOLIK WITH REPORTING BY XIYIN TANG
PHOTO BY NICOLE FRIEDMAN

IN RETROSPECT, MARC JACOBS' reinvention of Louis Vuitton marked a paradigm shift.

In his footsteps, Dior and YSL re-launched their own brands, and the emphasis was branding, branding, branding. Even long-neglected labels like St. John, Aquascutum, and Gant have undertaken massive changes in recent seasons—all it takes is an inspired designer, or, in some cases, a celebrity photo campaign.

Bill Blass, the house opened by the seminal American designer in 1970, has in recent years looked to build its name into a youthful, marketable brand. In July, the house appointed two new designers—Michael Bastian for menswear and the coveted women's spot for Peter Som. The announcement was the coup de grace for Som, who has quietly built his following over the years with *Vogue* singing his praises.

It was only a few years ago that Som took his first job as an assistant in the design room to Bill Blass. The San Francisco native had graduated from Connecticut College and Parsons School of Design. Som also held apprenticeships with Calvin Klein and Michael Kors.

Som launched his own line in spring 2001. His collection garnered him comparisons to the classic American sportswear of Michael Kors, though Som has quickly carved out his own muted, modernist niche. In 2002 and 2005, Peter was nominated for the CFDA Perry Ellis Award for Emerging Talent. And in 2004, Som was among the 10 semi-finalists in the Vogue/CFDA fashion fund initiative.

"It's been a full circle because that was my first job out of school," Som says of his return to Bill Blass. "I'm very excited."

After the late Blass' retirement in 1999, the position of creative director at his eponymous house passed to Steven Slowik, Lars Nilsson, and then most recently to Michael Vollbracht in 2003. Though Vollbracht aimed to remain true to Blass loyalists while adding appeal for the next generation of women, he struggled to establish his own interpretation, and the brand watched as others surpassed it in visibility.

The choice of Som as creative director by Michael Groveman, CEO of Bill Blass Ltd. LLC, is no accident. Som's

appointment is a call for an infusion of youthful edge into a historically sophisticated label, and it comes at a pivotal moment for the Bill Blass house as well as at a timely point in Som's burgeoning career.

Groveman follows in the successful footsteps of the classic Italian luxury-label Tod's, which appointed a young dynamic American designer, Derek Lam, as creative director last year. The addition of Lam to the Tod's team was part of an overt effort to vamp up the Tod's image and appeal to a more varied clientele base, one akin to Som's following.

Any enduring design house faces the challenge of reinvention without neglecting the heritage that brought it to prominence. So it is common for designers at houses like Chanel, Ralph Lauren, and Bill Blass to ignore trends and to focus on concept revival inspired from the famed house archives.

Som's spring 2008 line for his own collection shows considerable maturity, abandoning past seasons' ruffles for simplicity. Som showed longer, belted blazers, higher waists, bold-beaded necklaces, layered separates, pocketed dresses, and soaring heels, par for the season.

Som describes his collection as "a little bit of modern architecture meets sort of a ... '30s artsy schoolgirl. I kind of wanted that quirky dorkiness, but I wanted to keep it clean and crispy." The collection is at times airy and elegant and smartly matched a combination of textures.

The Bill Blass spring 2008 collection offers minimalist innovation, though true to form there is an array of lace, satin, and floral vintage-inspired dresses, with waists thinly belted, sophisticated, prim, clean lines, and classic shapes.

And though designers Prabal Gurung, Ana Carolina Coelho, and Tyler Rose rely heavily on Blass designs of the past, when asked what can be expected for his upcoming debut at Blass, even Som says he is still researching in the archives to inspire his pre-fall 2008 collection. A fan himself of the Blass classic, Som says that "there's such amazing language and vocabulary there already. It's really great American sportswear."



LOOKING BACK ON THE SPICE GIRLS



WHEN THE SPICE GIRLS FIRST ANNOUNCED THEIR reunion tour this past June, the world once again seemed to teeter back to those glory years in fashion—the '90s, laden with enormous Union Jacks and towering platform sneakers. Fashion as fearless as it was iconic, just like the girls behind those unbearably silly names.

Though this new era of tailored pants and cinched waists does seem a bit too grown-up for glittery miniskirts and bubble-gum pop, three Columbia students look back to their own adolescence, and to the stylishly bold girls that fueled it all.

Unfortunately, my childhood and pre-teen years were spent wallowing in the painfully barren outskirts of '90s fashion trends. Sure, I was a devoted fan of the Spice Girls—Posh's all-black austerity, Baby Spice's shrunken glittery minis—but as far as my own style went, my threads seemed rather lifeless, if not downright pathetic. I wore nothing but solid colored T-shirts from the Gap, paired with a rotating collection of overalls, jeans, and pedal pushers (strictly in denim, khaki, or white). Rare shopping sprees to Limited Too added bell-bottoms with flower patches and glittery T-shirts proclaiming "Girl Power!" to my rather minimalist wardrobe, but even those punches of pop flair did little to boost my fashion cred.

But then there was that pair of double-decker tennis shoes, the closest I ever came to matching my style with that of my pop idols. They were your typical tennis shoes magnified—done in sparkling white canvas, sitting monumentally atop at least two inches of rubber, just like the ones Baby Spice and Britney wore. Cool girls and uncool girls alike sported them—we stomped around the black asphalt playground, our "high heels" guaranteeing our ultra-feminine natures and finally allowing us to tower over the boys. I even wore mine in a choreographed dance that my friends and I performed to Britney Spears' "(You Drive Me) Crazy" at the school talent show. Needless to say, I no longer own platform tennis shoes, nor do I aspire to achieve pop idol status. However, my style hasn't changed too much since the good old days—solid color T-shirts and jeans still crowd my closet.

--Lara Schilling

I'M ONLY SLIGHTLY EMBARRASSED TO SAY THAT MY first ever album was the 1997 Spice Girls classic, *Spice World*. I have my age at the time to blame—I was only eight years old and highly impressionable—but the truth is that not a small part of my childhood memory is devoted to Baby, Ginger, Posh, Sporty, and Scary—in that order. Before I knew of *Vogue*'s existence, I knew blond pigtails, mini-dresses printed with the Union Jack, and ridiculously oversized platform heels. While some girls may remember playing "house" or "princess," I remember playing "Spice Girls," an elaborate dress-up game where my girl friends and I longed to recreate their outrageous fashion statements. To my mother's horror, I embraced their overtly flashy style and did my best to seek out tiny, tight, sparkly, and sexy clothes—well, sexy in *Spice World*'s terms, which often meant confusing the tacky with the alluring. Now, having read many more issues of *Vogue*, I can confidently say that I recognize the mistakes of my past but certainly don't regret them. Though I was never allowed to leave the house in my outfits, it still felt inexplicably empowering to imitate and grow up with the ultimate "girl power" band.

--Daria Chirkov

I CANNOT REMEMBER EXACTLY WHEN I BECAME A SPICE Girls fan. However, I do remember the several years of my life that I spent as one. It's understandable that such a fun yet glamorous group had such a hold on legions of preteens, so much so that if you ask any of your female friends today, they will admit to having dressed up as one. Their outfits, no matter how extreme, gave teenage girls—ones who had just begun experimenting with make-up and styling their hair—something to which they could aspire.

Though my favorite was always Posh, I somehow pulled off being Sporty better. Because tight dresses and thigh-high boots were slightly scandalous for an eight-year-old, I did the next best thing: I went out and bought a pair of Adidas track pants, the same kind that Sporty wore, and paired them with the ubiquitous platform sneakers. In that first grand style experiment, I felt that I had achieved ultimate gratification, had somehow scaled that pillar of cool.

There are rumors floating around that Donatella Versace will design the clothing for the Spice Girls' comeback tour. Whether or not that happens, I have entered myself into the lottery to buy tickets. Because the clothes, at least, are bound to look amazing.

--Moirra Lynch

The Spice Girls' reunion tour hits New York City on Dec. 11, venue TBA.

HUMOR

STUDENT PROTESTS GEORGIAN PRES.

BY J.D. PORTER



WITH NO ONE BESIDE HER, AMANDA ECKE, CC '09, PROTESTS THE GEORGIAN PRESIDENT, ALONE. THE STUDENT WITH A BOOK IS NOT A PROTESTER.

AMERICA MAY LOVE GEORGIAN PRESIDENT MIKHEIL SAAKASHVILI, but at Columbia not everyone is convinced. Specifically, Amanda Ecke, CC '09, is not convinced. As the nation tuned in to watch his speech with Toomas Hendrik Ilves of the Republic of Estonia yesterday, Ecke exercised her right to protest.

“Everyone always talks about how great he is,” Ecke says, alone. “Well, I’m here to set the record straight.” Armed only with a guitar, some moxy, and absolutely no companionship, Ecke arrived at Low Library at 7 a.m., three hours before Saakashvili’s speech. Although few students, faculty members, or passersby were present at that hour, she began to chant provocative slogans. “Remember the Sandro Girgvliani Murder Case!” she yells.

Before security asked her to keep her volume down until more people woke up, Ecke also performed a few original folk songs, which no one heard. In a brooding minor key she sang:

“You want to love Mikheil / But he just won’t seem to let ya / He tries but he can’t resolve / Separatism in Abkhazia and South Ossetia.”

As students began to arrive on the scene around 9:30 a.m., Ecke, still completely alone, strove to convince them that their hero might not be so heroic after all.

“We’ve all heard that Saakashvili won his presidential election with 96 percent of the vote, but were you aware that he was briefly involved in a political scandal with Economics Minister Ivane Chkhartishvili, State Security Minister Vakhtang Kutateladze, and Tbilisi police chief Ioseb Alavidze?” She adds: “Kind of makes you think twice.”

In spite of Ecke’s failure to persuade a single other protester to join her, the media had a strong presence at the event. *Spectator*, *Bwog*, the *Current*, and the *New York Post* all appeared. So far none have run a story.

WHY DIDN'T THEY COME?

BY RAPHAEL POPE-SUSSMAN

WORLD LEADER	HAILS FROM	REASON FOR NOT ATTENDING
Nicholas Sarkozy	La France	Ennui.
Saddam Hussein	Iraqistan	Hung up.
Vladimir Putin	Mother Russia	Trademark “Polonium” cologne banned on transcontinental flights
Hamid Karzai	Afghanistan/Bananastan	Conflicts with annual “State of Disunion” address
Atone Tong	Kiribati	Kiribati
George W. Bush	USA! USA! USA!	General Petraus’ orders.
Commodore Zirk	Alpha Centuri	“F**king warp speed transmission!”
Alvaro Uribe	Colombia	Typographical error.

ROVING REPORTER: “Death to...?”



Gurbanguly Berdymukhammedov
President of Turkmenistan
Все, потому что жизнь утлы.



Michelle Bachelet
President of the Republic of Chile
La tristeza del potencial perdido.



Dr. Bingu wa Mutharika
President of the Republic of Malawi
Kupweteka.



Josh Maas
CC '10
The indigent.

EDITORS' PICKS

YOUTUBE VIDEOS

LYNSEY DE PAUL'S "SUGAR ME"



One-hit disco queen Lynsey De Paul sits at the piano, under the spotlight, singing “Gotta get my candy free/Baby, Sugar Me.” It’s so much more than a performance video—she wears such a floppy hat!

ALEX GARTENFELD
EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

"JAPANESE PENGUIN GOES SHOPPING"



This video is even cuter than *Happy Feet*. It makes me wish that all penguins were domesticated (if that weren’t cruel), so that I could cuddle with them every day.

EMILY GREENLEE
PRODUCTION

VITAS



Everyone must experience the cult of Vitas.

TINA GAO
PHOTO

"BLACK ANTHEM"



It’s not what it sounds like—it’s some ridiculous guy running around singing about being an outcast. Trust me, it’s funny.

ESTHER WEISBROD
COPY

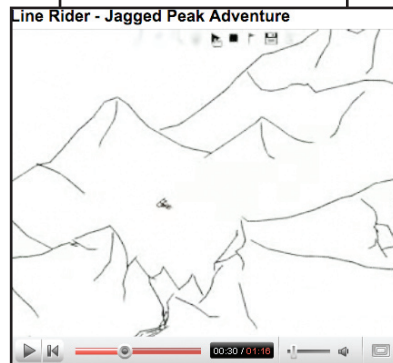
"1980S WENDY'S TRAINING VIDEO"



Hilarity ensues when watching this actual training video from the mid-'80s for Wendy’s employees, complete with a Mr. T look-a-like and diva burger backup singers. The instructions for making a burger are absurdly complex, but the rap’s just fine.

DANIELLE ASH
PRODUCTION

LINERIDER



Run a search for “Linerider” on Youtube and you get over 20,000 videos of a tiny figure on a sled coasting along a series of hand-drawn lines. I suggest you wait until after midterms to discover the game that inspired the videos.

DANIELLA ZALCMAN
MANAGING EDITOR

EXPERIENCE THE LEGENDARY SOUND OF CARNEGIE HALL

Get student tickets to Carnegie Hall events for less than you might think!

Learn more at carnegiehall.org/students.

Join the Carnegie Hall Student Subscriber Program.

Buy a three- or four-concert package at just \$15 a seat and receive guaranteed seating to help you plan your semester.

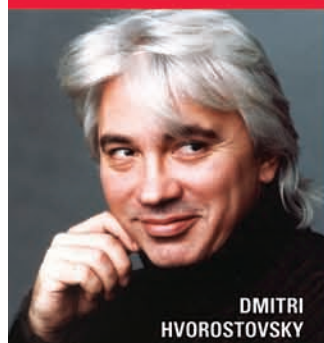
Enjoy online student-ticket purchasing privileges, plus additional special offers.

Join the free Carnegie Hall student e-mail list.

Receive weekly listings of last-minute \$10 seats.

NEW THIS SEASON! **MUSIC AMBASSADORS**

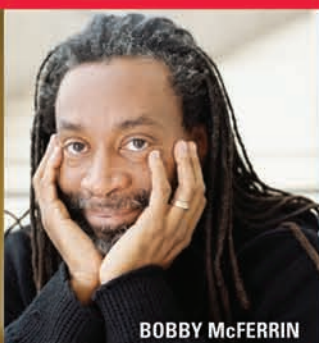
If you love music and enjoy working with people, join Carnegie Hall's Music Ambassadors program. Participate in volunteer projects and receive free concert tickets and Shop discounts. Contact us at 212-903-9778 or volunteer@carnegiehall.org.



DMITRI
HVOROSTOVSKY



HÉLÈNE GRIMAUD



BOBBY McFERRIN



CHICK COREA



JOSHUA BELL



MAX RAABE



*Student rush tickets are generously supported
by The Merkin Family Ticket Fund.*

© 2007 CHC. Photos: Hvorostovsky by Pavel Antonov, Grimaud by Kassara/DG, McFerrin by Stewart Cohen, Corea by Michael Grecco/Icon International, Bell by Chris Lee, Raabe by Frank Eidel.

CARNEGIE HALL

Bank of America 

Proud Season Sponsor of Carnegie Hall