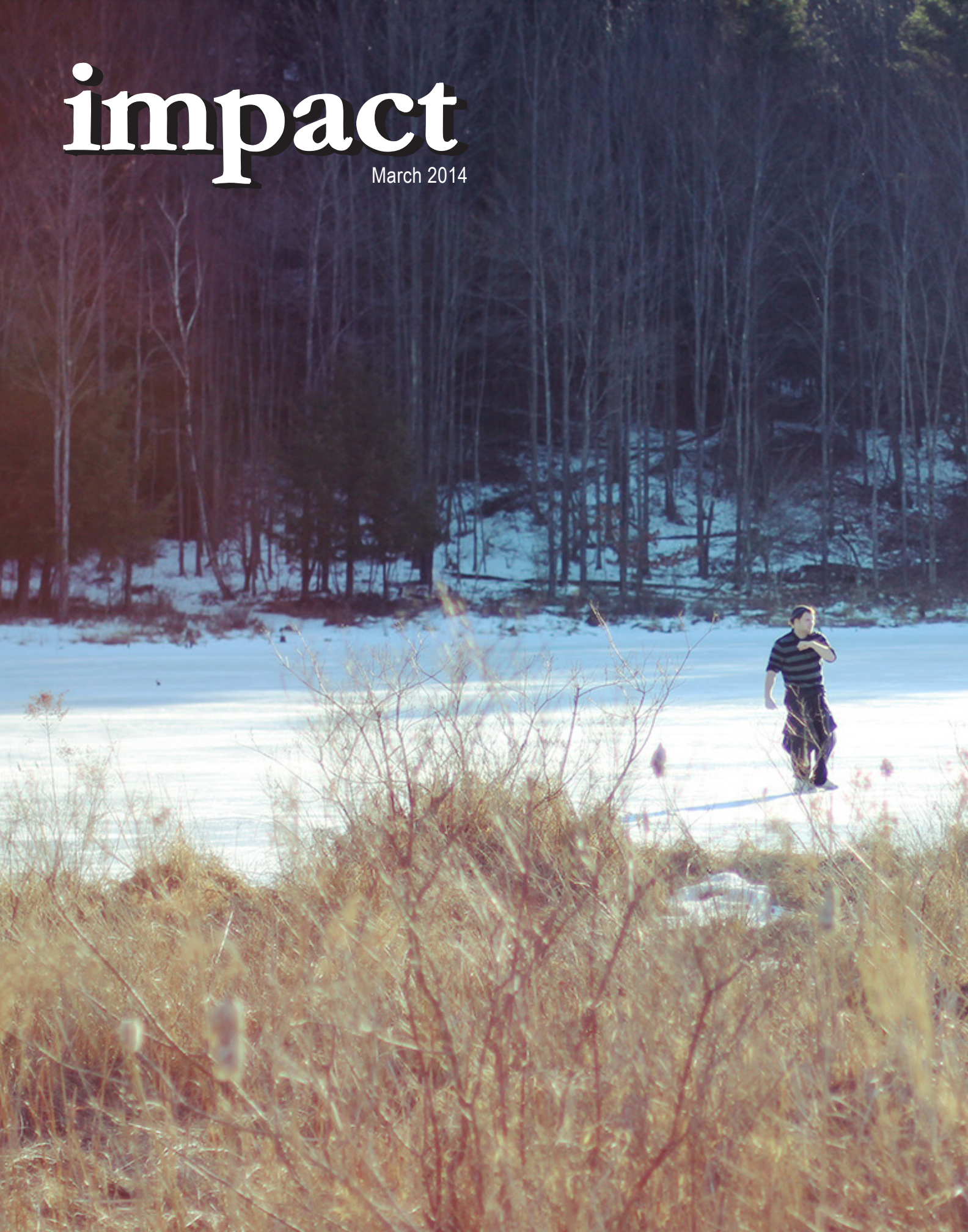


impact

March 2014



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TRUE DETECTIVE: TOO GOOD TO BE...?

THE NEW HBO SERIES HAS SET THE BAR TOO HIGH FOR ITSELF

True Detective is a formulaically guaranteed success. It features an inspirational cast, is backed by a powerhouse production company, and the kicker: is created and written by a little known writer, and is directed by an equally little known director. The former two on the list were what obviously drew viewers - the unexpected rise of Matthew McConaughey and the reputations of Woody Harrelson and HBO secured the audience's interest initially. However, it's the latter two that assure that the first installment of the series will retain a following beyond its decade.

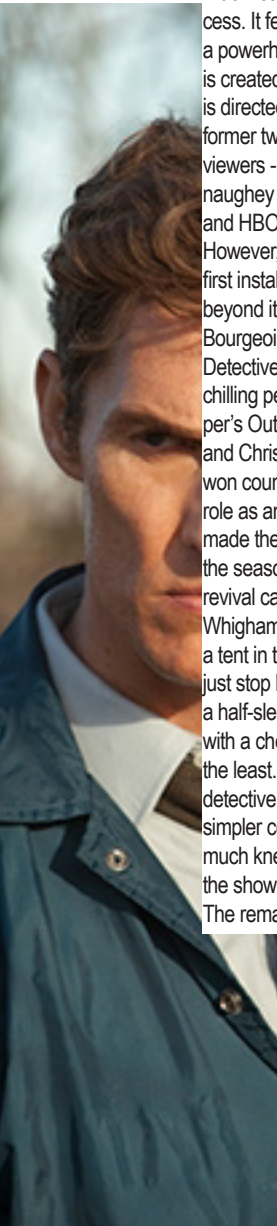
Bourgeois viewers are obligated to watch True Detective. Harrelson has recently given a very chilling performance as the menace of Scott Cooper's *Out of the Furnace*, starring Casey Affleck and Christian Bale, and McConaughey has already won countless awards, including an Oscar, for his role as an AIDS patient in *Dallas Buyers Club*. I made the mistake of watching the third episode of the season first. The episode opens at a Christian revival camp where Reverend Joel Theriot (Shea Whigham) is giving a charged sermon underneath a tent in the middle of a vast green field. Let's just stop here: Whigham in long sideburns and a half-sleeves shirt crooning into a microphone with a chewy southern accent is exquisite, to say the least. Adding the banter between dry realist detective Rust Cohle (McConaughey) and his simpler counterpart, Marty Hart (Harrelson), I pretty much knew everything I needed to know about the show in the third episode's first five minutes. The remaining fifty-five minutes were surprising,

intriguing, and absorbing, to say the least. Surprising is the strong focus on the personal lives of the detectives, intriguing is the level of darkness the show delves into without warning, and absorbing is the cinematic genius of director Cary Joji Fukunaga. Writer Nic Pizzolatto takes a neo-Noir approach to the crime mystery, creating suspense behind the crime being investigated as well as in the detectives investigating it. Pizzolatto's approach is classic, yet is very reminiscent of Sherlock Holmes at times. The traditionality of this approach sometimes leaves the story feeling simple, with much to be desired. However, once the show is taken for what it is, it's easier to tolerate episode six, a buffer episode in my opinion, that is completely predictable and only rewarding for viewers who give a crap about "feelings." McConaughey should be given credit for making Rust's philosophical tirades about life, humanity, death, etc., bearable with slow and skillful deliveries. At times he tests the viewer's patience by speaking every word in a whisper to the point where it's best to altogether to mute the viewing device until his latest revelation comes to an end. Still McConaughey shows a developed acting range with Rust's many transformations as well as demonstrates skill through artfully crafted action sequences. Harrelson plays the simple-minded yet flawed Marty, the man who repeatedly cheats on his wife with younger women. However, Harrelson's portrayal still makes you feel for the guy. The show's two leads never outdo each other in terms of performance. This speaks to McConaughey and Harrelson's unique partnership and history. They're a duo, in which one cannot be successful without the other and neither holds more weight, parallel to their respective characters.

This is unlike the relationship of Fukunaga and

Pizzolatto - the director makes the writer's Noir story seem brand new. The most epic scene sees Rust undercover and assisting a robbery that can potentially cost him his life. While the idea itself is very interesting, it is Fukunaga's impressive six minute vision that catapulted the scene into countless online discussions the day after the episode's release. This is why episode six was such a bummer. Pizzolatto took a break from all of the intensity when shifting the story from the past into the present with a greater focus on relationships. It was less workable material for Fukunaga.

HBO has had its share of flops like *The Newsroom*, the latest season of *Girls*, and the lackluster new series *Looking*. But of course, the failures can never outweigh HBO's successes like *Veep* and the cultish *Game of Thrones*. True Detective is HBO's answer to the captivating AMC drama *Breaking Bad*, but the next season is said to feature a whole new cast and story, begging the question: can the second season possibly live up to the first? With a new set of actors we can get a definite sense of the newer talents: Pizzolatto and Fukunaga. For now, HBO has set a whole new bar for television. Whatever the case may be, the first installment of True Detective shall go down in history as a masterpiece in modern television because, well, you just have to plug it into the formula.



by paola diaz, a sophomore majoring in psychology who favors the sauce



There's a difference between going to a party and going to a good party. Some may say the difference comes from the people gathered that night; others might solely base it on the amount of alcohol available for them. To music lovers, though, a good party must have good music. It seems that now more than ever, the people demand good beats. The choices are easy: you can either throw an iPod playlist on or you can get a little more creative and have someone DJ your party. So who is DJ Jizzy Fra? When he makes an appearance behind the turntables, there are always heads turning in search of whom is controlling the music. And all eyes land on him.

Jared Frazer, also known as Jizzy Fra, is a junior majoring in English, and has a strong passion for music. He gets inspiration from producer friends as well as a variety of artists, including Mr. Carmack, Ryan Hemsworth, RL grime, What So Not, and Flying Lotus.

"Different songs have different impacts on me, move me, or make me feel some type of way," he told me during our meeting. What kind of music is it that he is spinning? There's no specific genre requirement, but an overall category of sauce is sufficient.

"I like to spin anything saucy, it doesn't really matter what genre it is. I like keeping people on their toes and having them never know what to expect," he expressed. He knows how to mix things up in order to satisfy the ears of the masses, which is a difficult thing to do in a room full of people with unique musical interests.

"Two things that wouldn't be expected to be together can sound really well together," he told me. For this young artist, it's all about experimenting. DJing has opened up new doors for Jared. He won a Battle of the DJs contest at Venue and has DJed various house and frat parties in the area. To expand his repertoire and develop his technical skills, he has begun producing his own trap and down tempo music in addition to enrolling in a musical instrument digital interface (MIDI) course.

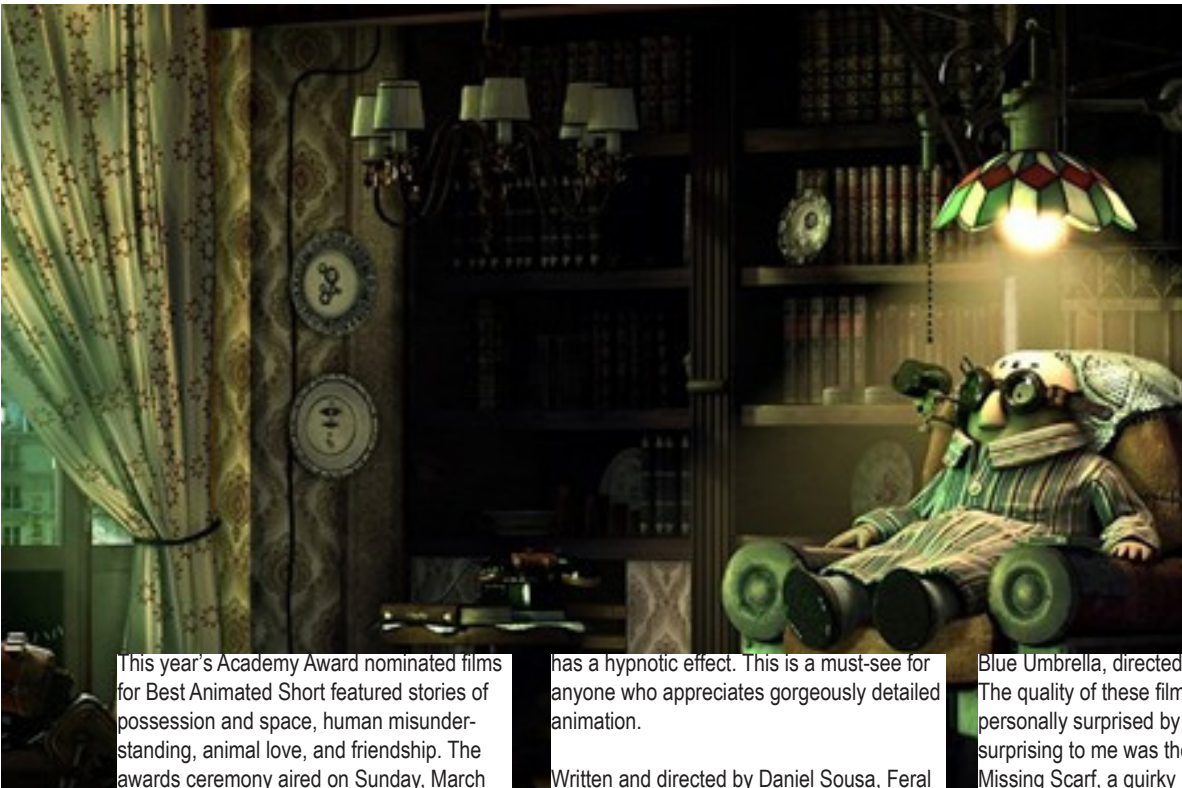
DJing isn't just a job for Jizzy Fra; it has given him a creative outlet he can have fun with, all while making those around him happy with what they're hearing. Enough of those redundant radio songs-check out Jizzy Fra's music on Facebook and Soundcloud. And don't be afraid to get saucy!

LOCAL ARTIST PROFILE:

DJ FIZZY FRA

Student DJ mixes things up
in the party scene

ACADEMY AWARD BEST ANIMATED SHORTS



This year's Academy Award nominated films for Best Animated Short featured stories of possession and space, human misunderstanding, animal love, and friendship. The awards ceremony aired on Sunday, March 2nd, with Mr. Hublot snagging the win.

Mr. Hublot, directed by Laurent Witz and Alexandre Espigares, tells the charming tale of the relationship between an OCD-afflicted shut-in and his robotic dog. In an entirely mechanical world, man's best friend consists of nuts and bolts and soon grows to a seemingly unmanageable size. This film is enough to remind viewers of the ability of true friendship to transform and heal in ways never before possible. Obviously, Mr. Hublot came out on top for its innovative and creative animation style and heartwarming plot.

Disney's Get A Horse, directed by Lauren MacMullan, is a visually engaging and heartwarming tribute to old-school Disney animation. Featuring Mickey and Minnie Mouse, the film transitions from being solely black and white to employing modern color animation techniques, presenting a creative mash-up that's both fun and awe-inspiring. This contender is sure to please educated film lovers and children alike.

Shuhei Morita's Possessions is an eerie analysis of the nature of ownership and hospitality. Beautifully rendered, the film

has a hypnotic effect. This is a must-see for anyone who appreciates gorgeously detailed animation.

Written and directed by Daniel Sousa, Feral is a dark, intense animation. The short portrays the life of a feral child who, after being "rescued" from the wild by a well-intentioned hunter, struggles to adapt to life in the "civilized" world. The film's style is gorgeously drawn and animated. What the film lacks in dialogue and narration, it makes up for with clear conveyance of emotion and general ambiance. In Feral, an age-old story is told in a modern, unique way.

The longest of the nominees, Room on the Broom, is a darling adaptation of Julia Donaldson's children's book by the same name. In this short, a good witch makes an effort to fit her new accumulation of animal friends onto her broom, with mixed results. Narrated by Simon Pegg, the story is sure to spark memories of your most beloved childhood stories.

While all of the nominated shorts are equal in quality, it is important to keep in mind three animated shorts that didn't quite make the cut: A La Française, directed by Julien Hazebroucq, Emmanuelle Leleu, Morigane Boyer, William Lorton and Ren Hsien Hsu; The Missing Scarf, directed by Eoin Duffy with narration by George Takei; and The


Blue Umbrella, directed by Saschka Unseld. The quality of these films is such that I was personally surprised by their exclusion. Most surprising to me was the omission of The Missing Scarf, a quirky blend of childlike plot and existential themes.

Oscar Nominated Short Films of 2014 was shown at the Art Mission and Theatre, located at 61 Prospect Avenue in downtown Binghamton, New York. Besides having two theatres in which independent and foreign films are shown every weekend, the establishment also showcases the multi-medium work of many local and regional artists. The 100-year-old building was once home to a railroad hotel, and currently houses new exhibitions every month. Non-profit programs at the Art Mission and Theatre are funded by the United Cultural Fund of the Broome County Arts Council, as well as by members and volunteers. The theatre offers the town of Binghamton an opportunity to revitalize and expand its art community, as well as to provide otherwise unknown artists with a medium to showcase their work. In addition to positively impacting the local community, the Art Mission and Theatre allows students the chance to experience art and culture at a low price. For more information on exhibitions and showtimes, visit www.artmission.org.

by emily d'emic, a sophomore who loves reeses peanut butter cups and hates talking about herself in the 3rd person

MORISSEY AUTOBIOGRAPHY

by nicholas schafraan,
who don't even know,
he sees how each day
goes.



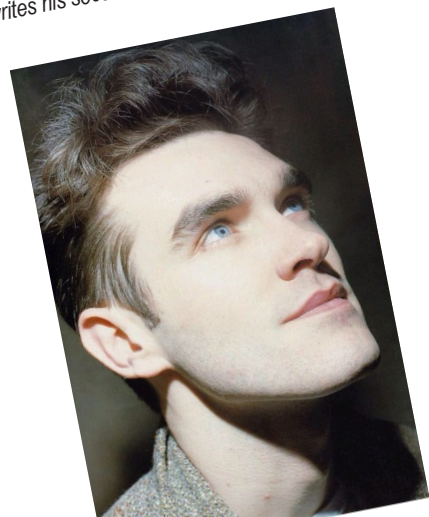
Former Smiths frontman and successful solo artist Stephen Patrick Morrissey has released *Autobiography*, a recounting of his entire life in one long 417 page chapter. The book, which was released on Penguin Classics earlier this year in the U.S. and late last year in the U.K., finds Moz quoting Oscar Wilde, the New York Dolls, and his own lyrics (in addition to his original prose), to give us a rough outline of his life and his interpretation of his career. While this recounting is anchored around the addressing of his various pet causes and perceived controversies, the interesting tidbits and uniquely funny passages are worth the read to any Morrissey or Smiths fan.

The early years, which lasts a few hundred pages, give an insight into Morrissey's youth: hatred of school, hatred of adults, and appreciation of the New York Dolls. While these pages are hard to get through, and are often filled with tedious

descriptions of uninteresting characters from his youth, they are worth making past for the Smiths chapters. Morrissey's description of meeting Johnny Marr and of starting to play music are fascinating for any Smiths fan, and, while his emotional and colored re-telling of the stories make it hard to pick out fact from fiction, he generally tempers his narrative to the point that you can understand the situations. Morrissey goes through the albums, their recording sessions, and the tours that ensued in a way which sheds some light on the inspiration behind the songs, while commenting on the minor inconveniences currently depressing him. The casual Smiths fan, who might be reading this for the obvious questions about Morrissey's mystique, will be disappointed: Morrissey doesn't suddenly transform into a man interested in answering the questions he has avoided for decades, nor does he seem willing to go too far into his personal life. A big fuss has been made in the press over the revelation of his relationship with a man; I assure you there is nothing

earth-shattering here. Every once in a while Morrissey pens a line which makes you laugh out loud; clearly, this is cut from the same cloth as his not-to-be-taken-too-seriously songs. Still, in between these punchlines is excessive score-settling and bickering, which we've all learned to put up with so long as something interesting is yielded in the end. I found myself hoping for more of Moz's wit, especially as I dredged through the dozens of pages Morrissey dwindled on the subject of his lawsuit with Mike Joyce, the ex-Smiths bandmate who sued Morrissey in search of a larger amount of the share of Smiths money. These pages really could have been omitted; I found myself turning every page wishing he would move on.

Overall, the pages which captivate more than make up for those which drag, and I would recommend reading it to anyone who is big enough a fan to be curious. Perhaps Morrissey does not live up to his dreams of being a writer like Wilde, or a figure as captivatingly humble in autobiography as Neil Young, but that's not the reason to read. Suggesting that Morrissey deflate his ego a bit is a pointless exercise - he wouldn't be the man he is without it - however, he might be serviced by a little more focus on the interesting bits as he writes his second book.



by olivia cuccaro, a junior english major who spends her days on spotify

lineup lowdown:

Talking basics about the
biggest music festivals
this summer.



Hangout

Gulf Shores, Alabama; May 16th-18th

If you're looking for a summer music festival to heal your finals woes, Hangout may be the place for you. Hangout kicks off the summer with 3 days of songs and sun. If you can get out of Binghamton fast enough to road trip-it down south, this lineup promises a little bit of everything. For the rap fans, Wiz Khalifa and Chance the Rapper are sure to provide. If you'd rather be dancing to a DJ, Pretty Lights and Tommy Trash are where you should be. There's no shortage of bands with the Avett Brothers and The Black Keys on deck. For a mellower vibe, Jack Johnson or BU alum Ingrid Michaelson can keep you calm. And, if you're just looking to sing along to something you know, you can hit up The Killers, Bastille, or Capital Cities. The cons? \$260 for only three days and no campsite, meaning you'd need to post up in a hotel or make fast friends with some Alabamians. All in all this may be the most expensive festival to pull off, but if you're looking for variety and can spare the dough, you may have found your match.

Governor's Ball

Randall's Island, NYC; June 6th-8th

Experiencing withdrawal from Binghamton friends soon after school lets out? Governor's Ball in NYC is the perfect spot to reunite. This festival is easy enough to squeeze in before your summer job starts. If you can't make it to Hangout, the two share lots of big names like

Outkast, Childish Gambino, Fitz and the Tantrums, Chance the Rapper, The Bloody Beetroots and more. But rest assured, this festival has its own New York flavor. Vampire Weekend and The Strokes will please all rock fans, while Axwell & Ingrosso will satisfy those still saddened by the disbanding of Swedish House Mafia. Rap lovers can enjoy J. Cole, Tyler the Creator, and Earl Sweatshirt. Most impressive is this festival's nod to 2014 Grammy nominees like Jack White, James Blake, and Disclosure. For three days, this festival is a little pricey at \$250 and there's nowhere to stay onsite. But, if you live in the NYC area or know someone who does, this festival serves up something for everyone with an added bonus of location, so that even when the music stops, you can keep the party going in the city.

Bonnaroo

Manchester, Tennessee; June 12th-15th

Next, the festival that needs no introduction: Bonnaroo. Uniting music lovers for four days a year since 2002, the event appears to have stood the test of time. But is it worth the hype? For about \$315 you'll spend June 12-15 in the company of Sir Elton John, Frank Ocean, Ms. Lauryn Hill, Kanye West, and Lionel Richie. Jam out with Umphrey's McGee, grab your lover for City and Colour, or sway to Chvrches synthesizers. Not only does Bonnaroo boast dozens of big names, the festival also includes General Admission camping right into

the price of your ticket. If 2014 marks your last summer of freedom from the workforce, driving cross-country and tenting out with your friends could be the best way to spend it. If you can't afford the gas, not to worry—Bonnaroo shares Phoenix, Janelle Monáe, The Naked and Famous, Skrillex, Jack White and a few more with Governor's Ball.

Firefly

Dover, Delaware; June 19th-22nd

For those of us who like to hear it first, Firefly is the place to be. For four days, Firefly Festival delivers a few big names (Foo Fighters, Imagine Dragons, Beck, Weezer) with a lot of little ones. At \$259 plus fees, some concertgoers may not find such a festival worth their time. For the real music junkie, however, Firefly is a huge opportunity for new favorites and a preview of what will be eventually become all the rage. If Hunter Hunted, Kodamine, Haerts, and Sky Ferreira are already blasting through your headphones, this is where you should be. If names like this mean nothing to you yet, but the idea of winging it excites you, you should get yourself to Dover too. While the cost of camping isn't including in admission, \$145 will get you a five-person campsite for four nights, so you can split the cost with friends.

by ashley lieberman, a freshman who likes to drink code red and watch futurama re-runs



MAC DEMARCO:

SALAD DAYS

demarco's new album is familiar yet explorative

Although Mac DeMarco's newest album *Salad Days* is not due for release until April 1st, it has already been released online and it is pure magic. *Salad Days* is a flawless combination of Mac DeMarco's two previous albums: the haunting melodies of *Rock and Roll Nightclub* with the charmingly honest lyrics of *2*. These two styles culminate in an album that is familiar, though generally not explorative.

This combination comes together best in "Goodbye Weekend." On this track, a dreamy, laid-back guitar riff juxtaposes lyrics dripping with post-adolescent angst: "Don't go telling me how this boy should be leading his own life/ It's sometimes rough but generally speaking I'm fine".

As expected, there are several love songs scattered throughout *Salad Days*, all undoubtedly dedicated to Mac's longtime girlfriend Kiera. The first of three, "Let My Baby Stay," is a delicate and simple ballad. This track reveals some of DeMarco's deeper insecurities, a side of him rarely seen by the public. While the song begins with his certainty of Kiera's affections, Mac's doubt takes over by the end and he is left wondering about the day she might leave him. As the song fades out, Mac croons wistfully: "So please don't take my love away/ Let my baby stay, let my baby stay."

While the majority of the songs on *Salad Days* are fairly typical of what we've come to expect from Mac DeMarco, "Chamber of Reflections" takes the album in an entirely new direction. Forsaking his guitar for a synth, DeMarco creates an eerie and surprisingly sexy sound, one that I can only hope he explores more in the future.

I wouldn't say *Salad Days* is a huge leap for Mac DeMarco in terms of sound, but there are definitely baby steps in that direction. And although it can feel a bit lethargic at times, the album is definitely solid. I highly recommend getting this album on April 1st! Also, listen to the single "Passing Out the Pieces" and "Chamber of Reflections" slowed down – you won't regret it.



beck morning phase:

Beck, with a varying array of styles under his belt, releases an underwhelming album

Beck's twelfth studio album has been anticipated by many, including myself, for quite some time now. Though his last studio album *Modern Guilt* was released almost six years ago, it has been twelve years since he has released anything truly noteworthy. *Morning Phase*, while containing both the familiar styles we've come to expect from Beck as well as new explorations in style, ends up being a let down, particularly when compared with his past repertoire.

In 2002, Beck released what many consider to be his magnum opus: the lush down-beat sounds of *Sea Change*. With Nigel Godrich of Radiohead fame at the helm of producer, *Sea Change* stood as an achievement in Beck's vast catalog because it represented a more honest and mature side of Beck. This side of Beck had been seen in glimpses on a few prior albums, but was never fully explored before *Sea Change*. This album lacked almost all of the bizarre and quirky antics former albums like *Midnite Vultures* and *Odelay* seemed to thrive on. *Sea Change* was a stripped down and heartfelt folk record that still stands as one of Beck's crowning achievements. As a result, when word broke that *Morning Phase* would be a return to the sounds explored in *Sea Change*, the hype around his twelfth studio album began.

Beck seems to be an artist who prides himself on changing his style with every album. From lo-fi to disco, Beck covers almost every ground. I personally have always gravitated towards his more lo-fi recordings. I first discovered Beck like many others did, through his anti-ballad "Loser." I dug that song so much that I picked up *Mellow Gold*, and was blown away by its originality. To me, *Mellow Gold* sounds like the ramblings of a generation X teenager who suffers from schizophrenia and huffed too

much spray paint as a kid, but in the best possible way. Beck's early work was appealingly anti-traditional. With songs like "Truckdrivin' Neighbors Downstairs (Yellow Sweat)" and "MTV Makes Me Want to Smoke Crack," Beck sounded like a more coherent Daniel Johnson.

That's not to say that I don't enjoy the progression Beck has made with his sound over the years. I find myself enjoying some of his more polished work, like *Odelay*, *Midnite Vultures*, and *Sea Change*. However, I feel they lack the primal free-spirited nature of his earlier work.

However, I started becoming more and more excited for *Morning Phase* after hearing the singles he released early this year, including "I Won't Be Long," "Defriended," and "Gimmie." The extended versions of these three tracks in particular are some of the best music he has released, perhaps ever. They have beautiful sonic landscapes, long droned out instrumentals pieces, and the classic Beck lyrics we've come to expect. I had hoped that these aspects would spill over into *Morning Phase*.

Upon first listening to *Morning Phase*, I was struck with how underwhelmed I was. I thought that perhaps with repeated listens, I would get it or it would grow on me. Sadly, I was mistaken. One major problem with the album is that none of the songs really stand out. They all mesh together very well and together create a generally warm feeling. However, all of the songs sound the same. Beck seems to have been so focused on making a cohesive sound for the album that he be-

came afraid to stray from the path. The one instance in which he does stray from the path is the track "Wave," my favorite song off of the album. "Wave" is built around a beautiful lush string section, and when Beck's vocals come in, they sound distant and out to sea. This song has a real, dare I say, "Kid A" vibe to it and is truly the best song off the album. No other track on *Morning Phase* comes close to capturing the emotional pull of this song. The rest of the album is a combination of verse course and bland acoustic folk songs that don't go anywhere and are not particularly memorable.

One thing the album does have working in its favor is the production. While I did not find myself enjoying this album, I would have to say the album does have a real warm feeling to it as a result of its production. Even though I personally feel that the songs sound similar, *Morning Phase* is definitely an "album listen": it is an album that warrants listening from beginning to end, even though this may prove to be a tedious task to some.

Overall, it saddens me to say that *Morning Phase* is in no way a good companion piece to *Sea Change*. While they sound vaguely similar in overall sound and tone, *Morning Phase* lacks the emotional punch and standout songwriting that made *Sea Change* so special to listeners. None of the songs on this album even come close to touching the songs in *Sea Change*. Instead of tracks reminiscent of "The Golden Age," "Paper Tiger," "Lost Cause," or "All in Your Mind," listeners get songs that sound like they were B-sides and should have remained in the vault. While Beck returned to the sounds explored on *Sea Change*, he should have expanded upon it instead of trying to recapture it.

MUSIC YOU SHOULD BE LISTENING TO

IF YOU AREN'T ALREADY LISTENING TO IT: GRRL POWER

by alison drexler, a junior who can now legally consume alcohol!

Courtney Barnett – The Double EP: A Sea Of Split Peas

So, I know I'm late to the game on this one because it came out in 2013, but I had to write about it because it is just so good. Hailing from down-under, this is the debut album by the cool-as-fuck Courtney Barnett. I wish I could be as cool as her. This album is awesome and fun and cool. It reminds me of the 90s (not that I was old enough during the 90s to fully understand or appreciate the great music of the era). Give it a listen. It's completely worth it, I promise. TRACKS TO JAM TO: Avant Gardener, History Eraser

St. Vincent – St. Vincent

St. Vincent is the David Byrne of her generation. I don't know which generation that is, but it is one, I'm sure. She is just so interesting and unique. I'm not just saying that because of Love This Giant - I believe it. Also, for someone so young, she pulls off grey hair really well (props, Annie Clark). Anywho,

I really like this album. It is so wonderful in its wondrous wonderfulness. It's just a really good album delivered by a super talented female artist. I'm digging that.

TRACKS TO JAM TO: Birth in Reverse, Digital Witness

Hospitality – Trouble

The name of this band is fitting because I felt so welcomed into this album. This is the second album from Hospitality, and though it's not an all-female band, it's fronted by the super-cool-beans Amber Papini. My favorite song off this album is "I Miss Your Bones." The first time I heard it, I was all about it (like, I even favorited it on Last.Fm). MY LOVE FOR THAT SONG IS REAL. You should check out this band and this album because it is completely worth it and real (so real, like Real Estate real.)

TRACKS TO JAM TO: I Miss Your Bones, Going Out

Bleached – Ride Your Heart

So, this release is also from 2013, but I had to write about it because I just straight up love this album. It was my album of the summer. I listened to it on my way to the barista lyfe and on my way home from the barista lyfe. It made the Str0ng Island summer a little bit more bearable. It's fun, it's feminine, and it's punk as fuck (well, kinda "summer-punk," if you will.) Make this your Str0ng Island summer album too. You won't regret it. NO R3gr3ts Summer 2k13.

TRACKS TO JAM TO: Dead in Your Head, Next Stop

Dum Dum Girls – Too True

Dum Dum Girls are so fine, fresh, and fierce. They appeal to both my G0th side and my New Wave side, which is awesome. This album is far more 80s than their others, so if you

want some music from an all-girl band with 80s vibes, Too True would be the jam for you. The album is so dreamy and poppy. Coming from an all-girl band, it's girly, but not in a way that dudes wouldn't like. Even if their name wasn't inspired by the candy, this band and this album remind me of lollipops, and lollipops are cool. Just listen to the them.

TRACKS TO JAM TO: Rimbaud Eyes, Lost Boys & Girls Club

Habibi – Habibi

Habibi is an all-girl band that is so cool. SO COOL. One of them had (or has, I can't tell which pictures are older) turquoise hair. Personally, I appreciate this because I used to have turquoise hair, so it makes me feel nostalgic for my crazy youth days (it was two months ago).

Their sound is fun. It reminds me of the city and the days when it wasn't so gosh darn cold (UGH). This is the band's debut album and these ladies are going places, lemme tell you.

TRACKS TO JAM TO: Tomboy, Sweetest Talk



R & B Game Changed

New acts who are changing the way we view R & B

By Michael Scala

The wide-ranging modern enthusiast may have noticed that R&B, more than any other popular genre, has been experiencing considerable stylistic shifts up and down its several strata over recent years. The genre's traditional conception of blues combined with percussive rhythm preceded the proliferation of mid-century American rock n' roll. R&B has since traversed decades, accruing the soul of the 1960s and '70s as well as the swung rap rhythms of the '90s, to become something entirely different. The genre's recent transformation and crossover inertia towards more club-aspirant dance appeal is visible at popular levels (for example, Rihanna). However, it is below the commercial surface where the uncompromising, explorative nature of the Internet has spawned a generation of artists who are thinking beyond the boundaries of yesteryear to inject life into a diminishing genre.

Kelela

Last fall, the D.C. transplant who now calls L.A. home had her critically acclaimed debut mixtape *Cut 4 Me* land on *Fade to Mind*, a sub-label of pioneering London electronic imprint *Night Slugs*. What made the mixtape so appealing was, yes, the songstress' lyrical and stylistic conviction, but equally the experimental production that backed her. "Bank Head," a track produced by *Fade to Mind* owner *Kingdom*, features walking 808 claps, club-aspirant kicks, and absolutely breathtaking, melismatic inflections from Kelela that recall a '90s tradition. Even three years ago, the only instances of R&B and electronic production meshing were in the form of pitch-manipulated Aaliyah bootlegs. This project, however, illustrates what can happen when new-age producer and singer meet for something organic in the name of the genre.

JODY

Chicago is fertile grounds for a few types of music right now, and it's where quintet JODY is from. JODY is the project of David Robertson, Khallee Standberry-Lois, James King, Jeremiah Meece, and Brandon Boom. The latter two form production team *The-Drum*, who take care of beat duties for every JODY cut, although Meece is sometimes found hopping the boards to lay down a verse too. JODY's first EP came in March of last year, titled *Magique*. It comes with a decidedly intimate vibe: the late-night-beckoning bedroom (sorry) production of *The-Drum* proves just the foil for the soft-spoken pillow talk of the four vocalists. JODY is refreshing and has fans looking for soulful R&B on their toes for their next EP.

Tinashe

Tinashe could very well be the pretty poster girl of R&B's new wave. From LA and only 21 years old, she's already gone through industry trials and tribulations (label limbo, big shows, production woes) formerly as part of a group. The young singer has incredible range in terms of both vocal register and song subject. On *Black Water*, her latest mixtape which released last November, Tinashe wowed with titillating croons. The sweltering track "Vulnerable" featuring Travi\$ Scott waxes adversarial on the following "Secret Weapon," and flails about wanting more love with Brandy-like open syllables on "Just A Taste." She's done a lot of her own production as a standalone act as well, which it seems is testament to her output. *Schoolboy Q* features on the most recent "2 On," the single to her forthcoming full length on RCA.

Michael writes about less comprehensive matters on MTV *Iggy* and *Truants*.

RAP GAME RIFF RAFF

by regina bell, a
freshman working on
her twitter brand
@bigfuckinreg



\ Let me get this straight before I start: I love RIFF RAFF in the least ironic way possible. Liking things ironically is way too tiring and I'm over it, but that's a whole other article. I sincerely think Riff Raff is a genius who serves as the voice of this generation.

RIFF RAFF (also known as @JODY-HIGHROLLER, The Butterscotch Boss, The Neon Icon, and Drake's last new friend) has come up like no other: the Houston native got his fame as a contestant on MTV's *G's to Gents* and went on to be signed to Soulja Boy's record label S.O.D.M.G. (Stacks On Deck Money Gang). After progressively gaining notoriety, Riff Raff was signed to Diplo's record label, Mad Decent, under which he has since collaborated with Andy Milonakis and Dirt Nasty in a group called Three Loco. His new album, *Neon Icon*, was supposed to have dropped on January 28th (it was marked on my calendar). Unfortunately, the album is still awaiting release due to legal issues. In the meantime, Riff Raff continues to tour the country, record songs and features, and put up music videos on YouTube like clockwork.

Since his come up, Riff Raff has created

for himself an identity so distinguished that internet notoriety was inevitable. Right now, he's probably wearing basketball shorts, a Neff tank top with his own face on it, a pair of bright green and pink sneakers, reflective ski goggles, and a watch that costs more than your tuition. He has characteristic squiggly, criss-cross cornrows and his tattoos include the MTV logo on his neck, alongside Bart Simpson and the BET logo on his chest. He makes music that sounds like cocaine and lyrics that are borderline surreal. My favorite lines include the very straight-up "your girlfriend's vagina smells like Bumblebee tuna," (Orion's Belt-Kitty ft. Riff Raff) and the semi-sensical "my hash cigar looks darker than tar, darker than an abyss, darker than a midnight fist, darker than a black hole mixed with a galaxy gap, ducked off in a safe duct taped to an Arabian stick shift" (Terror Wrist- Riff Raff). He has a canine counterpart named Jody Husky. In interviews, he either evades questions or answers in epic similes. A perfect example of this can be taken from an interview about *Spring Breakers*, a film that styled a character after Riff Raff himself. When asked for his thoughts on the director/writer, he

responded, "Harmony Korine is a Rocket Scientist who purposely went on a 8-year vacation to let everyone catch up... now he is about to drop more movies than a fat kid running home from Blockbuster who has a bag of chocolate goodies and malted milk balls in one hand..." and kept going. In fact, he's very clever and has a great sense of humor, making obscure references and intricate narratives all while punctuating his thoughts with "RAP GAME <insert celebrity name>" or prefixing his words with "Versace <insert noun/ Taco Bell menu item>." I could write a think piece on his vernacular alone.

Riff Raff is an extreme practical joke on my life. His very presence is a series of questions: Does he even count? How can anyone take him seriously? Does he even take himself seriously? The answer to that, I think, is no.

Riff Raff either has no idea what he's doing or knows exactly what he's doing, making every part of his personality, music, and presence deliberate. This extreme self-awareness can be confusing, adding a pervasive element of irony to his work. However, this only enhances his presence – he is exactly who he is. He works astoundingly hard and puts up no front about his love for money, Versace, and codeine, nor does he put up a front about loving *The Simpsons*, Slurpees, spray tans, and other "poor people" stuff. RIFF RAFF, therefore, is no different from any other rapper; he's just an exacerbated embodiment of mainstream hip-hop culture trapped in a white guy's tattooed, braided, and "(r) iced-out" body.

His coke habit aside, I think we all have something to learn from RIFF RAFF: stay on your grind, rap about José Canseco, create a name for yourself, and essentially, be as absurd as you want to be. People will be confused, but people will love you for it.

local artist profile: HarryB

binghamton student rapper can actually rap

Harry Brodsky, a Junior majoring in Accounting at Binghamton, doesn't want to be an accountant and happens to hate accounting. When not working as a teaching assistant or as the head cook of the Food Co-Op, he pursues a passion for writing and recording hip-hop music.

Under the name HarryB, Brodsky started spitting rhymes for free cookies during his senior year of high school in what became known as "Freestyle Fridays." Eventually, staff, teachers, and over 300 students joined in to watch his performances in the cafeteria. He made a compilation tape of his raps which he sold around school that year. Since coming to Binghamton, Harry has continued to develop his musical style. After a writing process he describes as usually involving marijuana, he records at a friend's apartment in a makeshift studio with padded walls.

Harry was enthused to speak with me about how far he has come as a writer and emcee. He draws influence mainly from his own life experiences and focuses on writing honest lyrics. Brodsky talks casually about progressing his sound by listening to other artists and about learning techniques such as wordplay and rhyme pattern - it's clear he's not just a rapper, but a true fan of hip-hop. Nostalgically, he describes the joy of being introduced to hip-hop through the first album he ever owned (The Eminem Show) and his discovery of the world of alternative rap acts like A Tribe Called Quest.

An Albany resident, HarryB is one of many white rappers sitting at the bottom of an over-saturated global hip-hop scene. Despite this, he seems to be enjoying himself and speaks highly of the people he collaborates with. Currently spending the semester studying abroad in Madrid, Brodsky is working on a new mixtape that documents his experiences living overseas. With the working title *Over the Pond*, he plans to record the material when he gets back to the U.S.

Brodsky's recently completed mixtape *Welcome to the Weekend* serves as a trip into his fun-loving, weed-puffing antics. Written mainly last semester while he was going through "some shit," it has a lineup of beats pulled from the works of artists like Mac Miller, J. Cole, Pro Era, and The Weeknd.



Though he might not rap over original instrumentals, Brodsky knows his way around a beat. Listening to his cadences on the mic, it's difficult to pin him as sounding like someone else - he's got a surprisingly unique vocal delivery. On each track, he manages to vary the tone and flow of his voice, frequently switching his rhythm according to the beat. Whether mellow and reflecting on relationships, or hungry and going off on the pleasures of the single life and substances, he displays a decent amount of charisma. Instead of putting on a false persona and frequently swearing, as is common in hip-hop, HarryB spends most of his bars spitting out clever, funny rhymes. Among his most poetic moments is the line, "Imma spit a little riddle while she fiddle with my diddle / got my balls in both hands, call that shit a double dribble."

HarryB has established a base of solid lyrics, microphone ability, and personality that is rarely seen in an upstate native. He acknowledges his next logical step to be finding original instrumentation to work with. For entertainment purposes, this music is well worth the listen. For providing thought-provoking topics, he's well on his way, but not quite there yet. HarryB's raps, including the *Freestyle Friday* mixtapes and *Welcome to the Weekend*, can be heard at soundcloud.com/harrybro-1.

by jeremyisabella, a sophomore whose personal and academic lives will soon be thrown to the wayside when he is consumed by the upcoming video game, *Dark Souls 2*.

“Never accept things that come easy at you. Make sure that everything you get in life, you decided you wanted even before it seemed possible to happen.” - Jennifer Ortiz

