



# The MO

SELF LOVE ISN'T SELFISH, IT'S IMPORTANT.

# Editor's Notes

By Ellen Berrill-Osborne

Hi everyone,

Welcome back to *The Mo*!

It's been a few months since starting and I hope that everyone has settled back into school nicely. It might've been an unusual start, but I'm hoping everyone has grown accustomed to the 'new normal' and are following the rules for the safety of yourself and others.

I'm sure that October half term was a nice break for everyone, spending time with family and (a few) friends safely to enjoy the Halloween weekend and blue moon! Now that we're out of a second lockdown, looking back Halloween felt like a last celebration before many things shutdown again for us. Fortunately, this lockdown for many hasn't been as brutal as the first in March, since the majority of people are still working and going out to school. Now that we're in Tier 2, I know we're all secretly wishing that we've seen the last of lockdown s, before we can finally go back to the way life was this time last year.

I'd like to give a warm welcome to the new Year 12s who have joined us at *The Mo*! It's so refreshing to see work from new people; it's also great to see who will continue this magazine when us Year 13s are gone!

In this edition, we cover topics such as the pink tax and body positivity, as well as the portrayal of gender stereotypes in the classic musical *The Rocky Horror Picture Show*. As always, mental health in schools is discussed, as is the idea of moving on in our lives into the future, paired with a poem that conveys the feelings of wanting to venture out of the familiar and into the unknown. There's also a very interesting article about Richard Phillips and the injustice in his trial, as well as an interview on one of school's very own bands, Blue Hour!

Please enjoy! Ellen x

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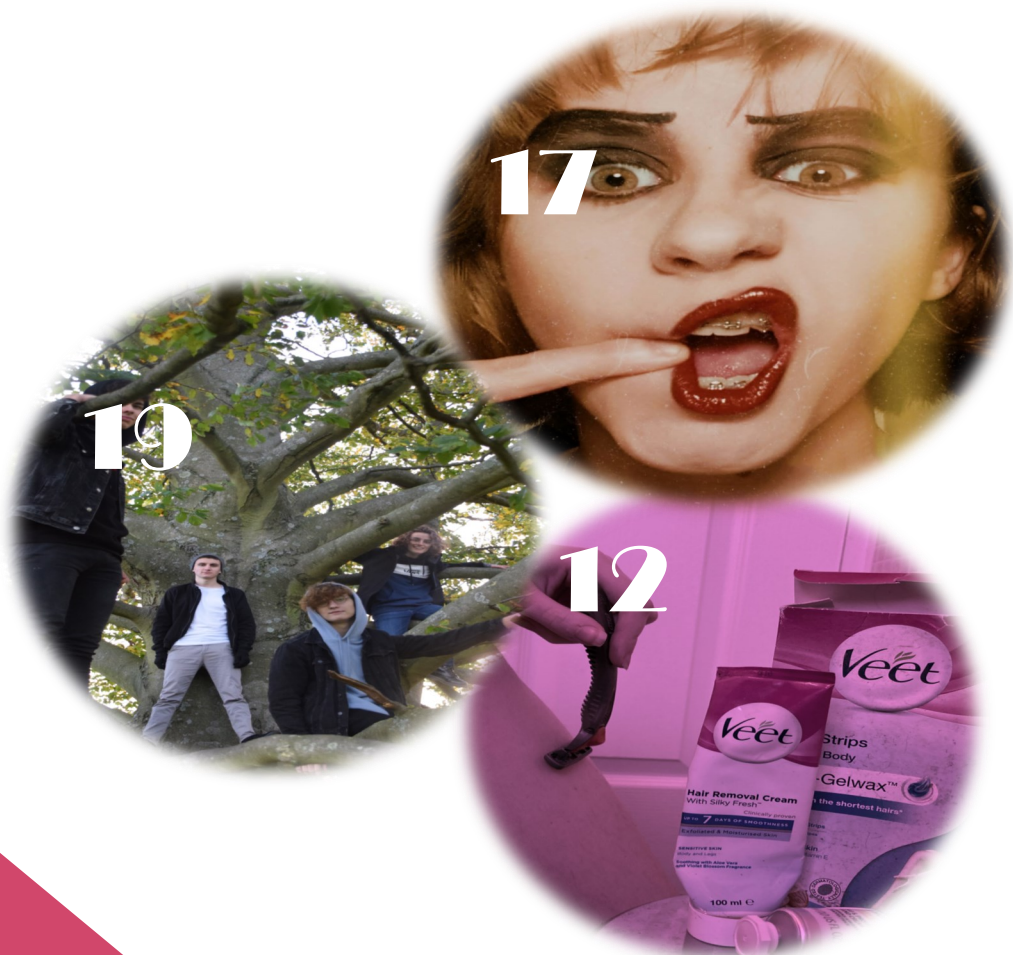
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# Maybe, we should be like Finland

For years we've been told that school is good for us, revision is good for us, exams are good for us - and frankly, I feel a little misled. Last June my GCSEs were so inevitable that I never thought twice about them; I never doubted whether they were actually beneficial to my education. But then the unexpected happened - the Coronavirus arrived - and our exams were suddenly snatched away from us after all those years of work. At first I felt slightly robbed, but that reaction was swiftly replaced by a great sigh of relief. Pandemic aside, I found myself in a surprisingly good situation: I had learnt everything I needed to learn and I didn't have to go through any time-pressured, anxiety-inducing exams to prove it. It made me realise the injustice of our grading system - that our intelligence and "true" abilities are determined by a single exam paper on a single day, without regard to the mountains of work stashed in our teachers' classrooms, work that we painstakingly but proudly completed over three long years.

It seems that Finland spotted the flaw in the system four decades ago, and subsequently reinvented their entire educational system. They put the focus on the mental wellbeing of young people; they lessened the workload; they scrapped standardised testing and provided individualised learning to every student. As a result, they are widely recognised as having the most successful educational system in the world.

So, what makes Finland so ahead of the game? Well, the lack of standardised testing completely alleviates the pressure from both pupils and teachers, creating a more relaxed, enjoyable environment. As a result, students can study at their own pace, without having to balance the pressures of schoolwork and of growing up into functioning human beings. What's more, teachers no longer teach with the sole purpose of ensuring their students pass a test. Instead of wasting time on memory tips and writing techniques, the Finnish consider a deeper understanding of the subject much more valuable. With the knowledge that their school success relies on their teacher's assessment of them throughout their school life, students seem to work to a consistently higher

standard rather than relying on last-minute cramming.

You may be jealous to hear that on top of this, Finnish teenagers also have longer lie-ins, earlier home times, and much less homework. It's hard to believe that less work results in more learning, but when you think about the mental health of secondary school students, it suddenly makes a lot of sense. Despite the warnings about sleep deprivation in the UK, students are still expected to stay up late completing various essays and homework assignments, only to wake up at six o'clock the next morning to prepare themselves for school. The routine is exhausting and detrimental to the state of our emotional wellbeing. How does the government expect us to be attentive and engaged in lessons, if we aren't getting the recommended ten hours of sleep?

Not only was student life completely altered in their educational reforms, Finland decided to switch things up for teachers too. They now require a master's degree to qualify for the role as well as completing selective training programs, resulting in a much higher regard for the profession.

When you compare the UK to Finland's unparalleled success in the realms of education, it is baffling to think that the Department of Education are still sticking to what arguably seem pointless, exhausting, mentally-strenuous policies. When we've been brainwashed our whole lives into thinking that the British way is the right way, it can take a while to consider that maybe we've got it all wrong, maybe we need to change.

Maybe we should be more like Finland.



The current system could well cause exhaustion and be detrimental to emotional wellbeing.



# THE UNFAIR CASE OF RICHARD PHILLIPS

It has recently come to my attention that the man who has served the longest wrongful prison sentence in the US, Richard Phillips, was only released somewhat recently – the 12th of December 2017. His story is quite remarkable, and I feel it needs to be shared with as many people as possible.

It's 1958, Detroit, a quivering 12-year-old Richard Phillips stands before his stepfather, who is demanding to know the whereabouts of his missing watch. His father was holding a belt. Young Phillips says he has no idea of the watch's whereabouts – the belt comes down. The stepfather asks again, again the boy tells his stepfather he didn't take his watch. The belt comes down. The boy's mother watches on with fear, with silence. The stepfather needs a confession; Phillips stands his ground. The belt comes down. Tearing through skin again and again, one more chance. "Did you steal my watch?" The son responds, "Yes". Afterwards Phillips swore to himself that it would be the last false confession he would ever make. He spent that night on the streets of Detroit teaching himself how to survive on his own. It was on those streets that he met Fred Mitchell, the very friend that would later go on to betray him.

As young boys, you wouldn't catch Phillips without Mitchell. The boys were frequently getting into trouble and finding themselves caught up with the police. They were reckless children in a city full of violent crime.

By 1967, Phillips had made a better name for himself. After a brief prison sentence for joyriding, he took a typing class and landed himself a decent job. Putting on his suit and making his way to work, his old life and his old friends quickly became history. Not long after this his then girlfriend, Theresa, told him she was pregnant. They stayed together and soon after, their daughter was born; they later married and had a son. Phillips made it his mission in life to give his children all the things he never had.

Just as fast as he built himself up, things came crumbling down. In 1971, Phillips was wrongfully blamed for pulling a dangerous prank on a co-worker. He denied it – but was fired nevertheless. It was around this time that Phillips' old friend, Fred Mitchell, was released from prison, and a

jobless Phillips with his marriage on the rocks quickly returned to the comradery of his old friend. Mitchell introduced Phillips to his close friend, Richard Palombo, a man he'd met in prison, and the duo became a trio. It was then that Phillips' life quickly turned into a situation not dissimilar to *Doctor Jekyll and Mr. Hyde* – father by day and drug addict by night.

On September 6th, 1971, it was reported that two men had committed armed robbery in a shop outside Detroit. A license for a getaway car was recorded – and it belonged to Richard Palombo. Palombo couldn't deny it was him, but who was his accomplice? Both Phillips and Mitchell, who looked rather alike, were detained (as they were close to Palombo) and after a line-up at the police station two hesitant witnesses decided that Phillips was the accomplice. Palombo refused to confirm or deny who his was with, later admitting that he was afraid of getting someone else locked up. His silence on the crime would last 39 years. So, 26-year-old Richard Phillips was sentenced to 7 years in prison. However, after serving only one of those years, the body of Gregory Harris turned up to complicate Phillips' chance of early release further.

21-year-old Gregory Harris went missing in June 1971. On the 3rd of March 1972 the remains of Harris were found frozen into the ground. Cause of death: gunshot wounds to the head. On March 15th Fred Mitchell was arrested on unrelated charges of armed robbery, and the following day he told police that he knew who had killed Gregory Harris – he gave the names Richard Phillips and Richard Palombo. The police had zero evidence linking the two men to the crime, but with the testimony of one man and little else, the two were put on trial.

Even though further questioning revealed that Fred Mitchell could have a possible motive (Gregory Harris had previously stolen money from Mitchell's mother) the state of Michigan developed another theory. The prosecutor managed to persuade the jury that Palombo and Phillips killed Harris because one of his brothers robbed a cousin of Richard Palombo. Palombo's father even took to the stand to state that the cousin did not



*Art by Anonymous*

exist. But that was it, Fred Mitchell testified, no evidence was found, no one was cross-examined. Minds were made up. Richard Phillips and Richard Palombo were found guilty of first-degree murder. So, Phillips waited in his cell, for justice, trying not to get killed.

It was then that Phillips started sketching and writing poetry to occupy his worn-out mind.

In 1979, Richard Phillips was in his room when another inmate burst in with some news. He'd just seen Fred Mitchell in the food hall of their very same prison. 2,677 days' worth of anger boiled up inside of him. It was clear what he needed to do, so a plan was hatched. He would wait until Mitchell reached a blind spot in the prison yard, take the homemade shank hidden up his sleeve (which he had stolen from the prison's factory) and plunge it into Mitchell's neck. In his eyes, justice.

The prison yard, 1979, Richard Phillips crept towards Fred Mitchell with cold steel pressed against his wrist. Revenge on his mind, death at his fingertips. But he stopped. He still had a chance to prove himself innocent, and if he did this that chance would be gone. He would not let Fred Mitchell make a murderer out of him – because then they would all be right.

By 1990 nothing had changed, Richard Phillips had spent almost half his life locked up. That same year he sent out for some paint so he could add some colour to his drawings – a decision that would change his life. During his time in prison, he made a pen pal and would eventually start sending his paintings to her for safe keeping. Like he had done when he was younger, he taught himself how to survive, this time it wasn't on the streets but to paint with watercolour.

In 1992, defence attorney, Judge Helen E. Brown, reviewed the appeal of two men who claimed to be innocent. She quickly realised how inadequate the case against them was. After reading the files on Fred Mitchell, it soon became clear to her that the man in question had cooperated with the prosecution in order to lessen his own armed robbery sentence. Palombo and Phillips had not been given a fair trial. Judge Brown tried but failed multiple times to have the men granted second chances.

Richard Palombo was silent about the case for a reason, he was scared to talk about what he and Fred Mitchell did in 1971. Scared of the threat Fred Mitchell had put on his family's life. But in 2010 after years of guilt and

nightmares, his fear dissolved. Fred Mitchell was dead. Richard Palombo stood up in a public hearing to tell the story. He and Mitchell had planned an armed robbery to get back at the man who had robbed Mitchell's mother. The two men were in the car with a getaway driver in tow. The getaway driver was Gregory Harris, the man who stole from Mitchell's mother (which Palombo was completely unaware of). Mitchell shot him. In shock at how the situation had gone from robbery to murder, Palombo went along with it and they drove the body to the suburbs – they left the corpse there and drove away.

Questioning continued and they asked about Richard Phillips. Palombo, 39 years later, finally confirmed Phillips' innocence. Richard Palombo never made it out of prison, he died in April 2020 after testing positive for Covid-19.

Even after Palombo's testimony in 2010 it still took another 7 years for Richard Phillips to secure freedom. On December 12th, 2017, after hearing Phillips' own testimony of innocence, Judge Kevin Cox did something astonishing for a first-degree murder case. He granted Phillips a \$5,000 personal bond. For the first time in almost 50 years Richard Phillips could step foot in the outside world. He was 71 years old.

On March 28th, 2018 all charges against Phillips were officially dropped and he was lawfully an innocent man. A murder trial 47 years in the making.

Richard Phillips took a bus to New York, praying that his pen pal of 35 years had kept his paintings. She had. Phillips, along with some marketing friends he'd met through his lawyer, set up a display so he could show off his art. He priced them at \$500, but they eventually started selling for \$5000. His paintings were what paid his bills, kept him on his feet before he received his compensation from the state for being wrongfully convicted.

Five decades spent in the same four walls, five decades of life snatched from his grasp. Though he wouldn't let it oppress him, he would begin to revel in every moment life gave him.

You can preview his artwork at [richardphillipsartgallery.com](http://richardphillipsartgallery.com), and for more information on the case of Richard Phillips, please visit [edition.cnn.com/interactive/2020/04/us/longest-wrongful-prison-sentence](http://edition.cnn.com/interactive/2020/04/us/longest-wrongful-prison-sentence)

Written by Kaylei Callaghan



# *Two-faced Trust*



Like a stray cat searching for a home  
You keep trying to sink your claws in.  
it's not going to work,  
you'll charm them for a bit of attention,  
but I'm sorry,  
our house is full.

Pick the side that suits you best,  
Just in case one of them collapses on you.  
Wouldn't that be a shame?



You fooled them, but not me,  
I've seen this before, last year.  
You two share the same energy.  
Unlucky.

We get on so well,  
Yet the foul taste of tension lingers in our mouths,  
Unconsciously thinking who can get the furthest fastest.  
Love shouldn't be a competition.

Keep preaching the things you eventually destroy,  
Don't forget what you did to her,





Everybody's body type is wonderful and *normal*.

# **BILLIE EILISH**

## **and Body Positivity**

All of you will have heard of, or know who Billie Eilish is; whether you are a fan of her music or have heard one of her songs, which is probable seeing as her music has been played more than 5.7bn times in the last 12 months and her single, 'Bad guy', has been viewed over one billion times on Youtube. For a young woman to receive five Grammy awards within her first years of music is very impressive; however, despite her musical successes, she's often relentlessly judged for her appearance, and being sexualised from a young age.

Eilish often wears incredibly baggy clothing, this has even become a staple of her artistry. It seems that this is in order to challenge the preconceived notion that women have to be judged by their bodies in order to be successful. Eilish has stated that her fashion choices "kind of gives nobody the opportunity to judge what your body looks like, I want layers and layers and layers and I want to be mysterious. You don't know what's underneath and you don't know what's on top." This was a message she wanted to spread; although it didn't mean she discouraged or judged women who did show off their bodies. Rather, her choices often came from a place of insecurity. So imagine how she felt when a member of the paparazzi posted a picture of her on the internet, wearing shorts and a crop top—just the standard clothes that something a normal teenager would wear in the summer months! And yet the amount of hateful comments she received was ridiculous. Some people commenting on her appearance calling her body a "wine mom body", not only insulting her but other women as well. However, there were some 'positive' ones, calling Eilish 'brave' and 'amazing' for having this body that she dared to show.

Although negative comments can be hurtful, in a way the 'positive' ones are almost as damaging as well; the idea that somebody is courageous or brave for just having a body type that hasn't been flaunted across the media and therefore been 'normalized' by the media perpetuates this idea that Eilish out of her comfortable baggies isn't normal. We shouldn't have to celebrate what a 'normal body' is or what a 'normal sized' body looks like; just because she's famous, as people we should normalise it,

because that's exactly what she is: normal.

As a society we should celebrate all body types, just because somebody is 'bigger' than the super skinny singer we see presented in the media doesn't mean they are less worthy or to that matter worth more, rather we should be equal.

Body positivity doesn't just affect women, this affects men as well. Insecurity isn't genderless; the social media movement challenges the ways that plus size bodies are presented. People have even made Instagram accounts dedicated to body positivity in order to create an greater awareness of the consequences of body shaming and to encourage us to be unashamed of our bodies: everyone's body is beautiful. The most well-known (and some of my favourite) are:

@bodyposipanda, @chessieking and @chubstr; promote this idea that "all bodies are good bodies" and it's true.

I think everybody has an internalised phobia of what other people think of them, and sadly, it's especially true to young people. We haven't discovered who we are, we haven't allowed ourselves to form true opinions of ourselves yet; it's hard growing up with how the media portrays what the ultimate body beautiful should be. Billie Eilish is a prime example of how anything, but thin bodies are marketed negatively, which is odd considering nowadays we live in a fairly progressive society.

Over time, I do think that the media will adapt, but it's a shame that we should have to accept this culture as normal until they do. Everybody's body type is wonderful and *normal*, and I think as a society we can work together to enforce this social movement for people to feel more accepted, because we deserve that much.

Written by Nell Delaney

Art by Grace Fitzjohn

# The Pink Tax

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The pink tax was something I learned in one of my Media Studies lessons; as part of studies we had to listen to a podcast called 'Late Night Women's Hour' which is a podcast broadcasted on BBC Four. The one we listened to talked about the idea of a phenomenon called 'The Pink Tax'; which is the idea of gender-based price discrimination, which it alleged, makes women's products more expensive than men's. In the podcast they even raised the question that the idea of 'The Pink Tax' suggested that women need products based on their gender and the way women conform to society's expectations.

When looking at certain statistics, it's actually quite appalling; just because product designers have catered their packaging towards women, the products themselves are seemingly more expensive. The New York City Department of Consumer Affairs conducted a study of over 80 products that showcased the price differences between male and female products, it showed that there was an overall 7% percent difference on like for like products, which doesn't sound like a lot but why should women have to pay 7% more anyway? Surely within a contemporary society that wants to claim that women and men have equal rights, women shouldn't have to buy something more expensive simply because it's targeted towards their gender.

The New York City Department of Consumer Affairs stated that women pay 8% more for adult clothing than men, especially for shirts, which they have said on average women pay \$6.65 more than men; many companies have disputed this claim by saying that more fabric is used in women's clothes, fabric that is used to accentuate curves and fit the average female body, and because men's clothing doesn't usually pertain this level of detail, is why they're considered at a lower price point. However, if we look at the average tailored trouser, which when looking at the cut of men and women's trousers are increasingly similar, women still pay \$3.95 more than men. I believe that the ideology of targeting the genders separately will never change, the economic market will always look for what makes the most profit. By putting a 'tax' on specific products they know women will buy, just gives company more profit.

But it's not just about the fashion side of the pink tax, when looking at personal care products women pay 13% more for products like razors, body wash, and even make-up. It's even been proven that women's razors, despite being more expensive) are less efficient than those aimed at the male market; having said this, some could argue that the main problem of 'The Pink Tax' is not so much the tax itself, but that female consumers continue to feed this phenomenon. Some could argue that women should simply not buy these products, why can't they just buy the cheapest regardless of the targeted consumer and not feed into this marketing strategy. But then a question always comes to mind, why should we? The whole problem is the idea of why women should pay more, it's easy for some men to say, "don't buy it" when they don't have this problem, products are cheaper for them, therefore they don't deal with this problem.

It's also the idea that marketing strategies heavily play into the tax; as women we often feel the need to put make-up on and look presentable in order to be seen and taken more seriously. People seem to notice women looking more 'haggard' than men, because men aren't forced into this ideology of always having to look perfect or be judged on appearance so readily. And marketing companies easily feed into this; making a product seem necessary to women, capitalizes on the ideas of female perfection, an idea that has been around for ages. Who knows, possibly even the influential women in our lives inadvertently promote these ideals to us too.

In order for women to combat this, we need to raise awareness of 'The Pink Tax', and even, dare I say it, promote the idea that women shouldn't have to be seen as perfect and impressionable. Especially to young women and girls who are incredibly impressionable; I myself fall victim to this as I often wear make-up, although I do wear it for myself, I hate people seeing my bare face, just in case I get judged. But through time I've learnt (and continue to learn) that you shouldn't care what people think especially about what you look like. I'll be grateful that part of my media studies brief had included the 'Late Night Women's Hour' podcast and brought awareness to 'The Pink Tax', and I hope this bring awareness too.



Written by Nell Delaney



Photography by Anonymous



# Escapism

For most of my life,  
I have wanted to run away,  
To escape this city and restart,  
Where no one knows my name,  
But my plans never turn to action,  
In fear of breaking my loved ones' hearts,  
That they'll forget me and move on,

So I stay.

But I don't want to stay,  
I don't sleep at night,  
Thinking of places I'd rather be,  
Than in my cold bedroom,  
In this cold city,  
Surrounded by cold people,  
Where do the dreamers go?

I want to follow them,  
Without the guilt of abandoning,

Is that so hard?

I wish I knew what to do,  
Two years left in this place,  
Seems like a long time,

But I think I'll live.

I have to,  
I'll live for them,  
For my friends and family,  
So that eventually one day,  
*I can finally live for myself.*



# Moving on in Life

I've always been imaginative and adventurous. I'd spend my days reading books and fanfiction on different worlds or on my favourite characters, whether that be from a TV show or movie. I'd go outside with friends a lot, either to town or the occasional spontaneous trip to London (when I had enough money to buy a train ticket!). I've always loved exploring new places and fantasising about going to places that seem unreachable. I'm someone you would call a daydreamer, spending more time in my own head and stories than in the real world. Yet, when I am in the real world, I have this constant urge to suddenly drop everything, leave and restart, whether that be in the city or an entirely new country.

I've had these feelings ever since I was younger, back when I used to look out at the night sky from my window, find the brightest star and pretend it was Neverland, wishing that Peter Pan would come and whisk me away like he did with Wendy Darling and her brothers. In fact, from a young age Disney and fiction have inspired me a lot. A character that I've heavily related to growing up has been Rapunzel - known for her adventurous and bubbly spirit. I related to her so much I'd watch Tangled on repeat, to the point of knowing the entire script (and unashamedly I still do). I looked up to her for going into the unknown and following her dreams. Ariel is another character, who sacrificed her voice for a pair of legs just to escape the familiarity of her home and venture somewhere new.

I've grown up in St Albans, I know the city like the back of my hand, and now, not only do I feel it is time to get out of the city, I feel I have grown out of this country altogether. Taking a trip to London is enjoyable but now it's starting to feel even there is too familiar. A trip to the beach is a lovely change of scenery from the busy city, but even that isn't enough to satisfy my thirst for adventure and freedom.

Life is moving fast. I'm in my last year of school, about to enter the real world of work and individuality, which is scary but also something I cannot wait to experience. Yet, life isn't quite moving fast enough. It's still a year until I take my gap year and use that as a chance to finally be independent (something I've wanted for so long) to go

across the pond to North America for a change of scenery. I figured, the USA was a good place to start before I eventually travel the entire world before the age of 30. I close my eyes and wish time would speed up to the year 2022, when hopefully the world is back to normal and I can take a flight, by myself, for the first time and explore my destiny.

I used to be scared of change. I didn't like falling out with friends and the idea of them moving on without me. I didn't like letting go of people, even if I knew they were damaging to my mental health. Yet now, change is all I'm asking for. I don't hide from it, instead, it's what I seek.

I love my friends. I'd never abandon them and no matter where I, or we, go I'll always come back to them, but I know that there's so much more waiting for me out there than just the same old trips to the same old places. That's a part of my problem: attachment. As much as I want to drop everything and leave; my loved ones here. As much as I want to live for myself, I'm afraid of upsetting them—but I know they'll support me in everything I do, especially if it's something that will make me happy.

Everything we know is changing; things are never going to stay the same for everyone and while it's a terrifying and upsetting thought, it's a part of life. We must all be ready to be independent and find our place in this world, to travel, to feel happy, to feel satisfied and accomplished.

Everybody should be ready for change. Everybody should be ready to move on to the next chapter in life, where we begin to be independent and learn to fly on our own. Everyone should start to not only follow their dreams but chase them, even if it means sacrificing things along the way. I know that everyone has a purpose in life, and it's up to you to find it. For me, I know that I won't rest until I escape and discover what else is out there in the world. After that, I'll find my next dream, just like Rapunzel did.

**Written by Anonymous**



Photography by Ellen Berrill-Osborne

*"I want to get out and build my own  
home on a street where reality is not  
much different from dreams I have.  
A dream is all I have."*

*'Daydreaming' by Paramore*

# ROCKY HORROR

'The Rocky Horror Picture Show' will always be one of my favourite musicals, especially around Halloween with the film's wacky 60s style merged with classic 70s style horror and science fiction, something truly fabulous was been created. It will forever give me so much joy and so many fond memories of my friends and I watching it. If you have never seen this musical then I'll tell you the basic plot (be warned... it's very peculiar)...

The plot focuses around a young, recently engaged, couple, Brad and Janet, whose car breaks down outside a very foreboding castle. They go to the castle to seek a telephone to call for help; however, their plans are stopped by very eccentric strangers who are holding an annual convention. They then discover the castle belongs to a Dr. Frank N Furter, who is a mad scientist/alien transvestite and find out he has created a 'dream man'. Brad and Janet are seduced by Frank N Furter, the servants finally free the couple and take control.

Just from reading the basic plot you can see that this musical is not conventional. It might be worth considering that the film came out in 1975. However, Richard O'Brien (who wrote the screenplay and wrote the music and story for the musical production that came out in 1973) stated that it's meant to be viewed as a parody tribute to the science fiction and horror movies of the 1960s. From this, it implies how everything is meant to be taken comedically and that although the musical focuses on topics like female and male objectification, murder and scientific experiments; it is all to a comedically beat. Some people could argue that this is what makes the musical quite progressive for its time. The genre of horror was something very grave (excuse the pun) and frightening, so for it to be so comedic was a shock to audiences.

Yet, not many people paid attention to the movie, it had largely critically panned on initial release, with it having a budget of \$1,200,000 and it only made \$21,245 on its opening weekend, people didn't want to see something so controversial and different for its time. However, it soon became a midnight movie, which is when audiences engaged and participated with the film at the Waverly

Theatre in New York City in 1976. Audience members would talk back to the screen and dress as the characters. Around this time, people would also begin to act out along with the film and this was called a "shadow cast" that would mime the actions on screen above and behind them, while lip-synching their character's lines. Today, the film has a large international cult following and has been considered by many as one of the greatest musical films of all time.

It's clear that the musical has gained a lot of love and is a fan favourite for a lot of people; particularly for the LGBTQ+ community as they make up the majority of the film's cult following. People would find themselves identifying with the themes of sexual liberation despite sexuality and the androgyny of Dr. Frank N Furter, who often wore corsets, stockings, and very feminine make-up. Audiences seem to identify with Brad and Janet as it could be argued that they are the symbol of the discovery of identity, as it was claimed many people found courage to address their sexuality after watching the film for the first time. 'The Rocky Horror Picture Show' helped to create visibility for the LGBTQ+ community and had widened the possibilities of gender expression. It showcases just how important the film is to people, the idea that a film had changed so many people's lives and had made self-discoveries of their true selves just proves how important and progressive the film was for its time.

However, when analysing the character of Dr. Frank N Furter, there is something about how he is presented that could seem quite aggressive and frightening for somebody that is meant to be a symbol of representation for the LGBTQ+ community. His character appears to be a satire (which when we look at what Richard O'Brien had said, it does not seem to be a stretch) of negative stereotypes of the LGBTQ+ community, and is presented as sexually predatory, psychopathic and abnormal. Especially when contrasted against the other characters of the show,



he is especially hostile and represents a very foreboding and zany character.

From what O'Brien has suggested, it seems that it could be argued that the show is a product of the time of production, there might very well be a villainous interpretation of the LGBTQ+ characters and it could be argued that it was a product of it's time, or that because it's a parody it shouldn't be taken so seriously; yet it's just a little odd that the villain just so happens to be the only character within the show who isn't heterosexual. And what some might find difficult to accept is the idea that it is this character that is presented as alien as an excuse for his weird antics: it's okay, he is not from this world.

When arguing whether the musical is progressive or not, people can't deny of it's importance to the LGBTQ+ community and the way it had created so much visibility and exposure to the world. I would recommend this film to just about anyone because I think the flamboyance and oddity of it is so charming and the music is fantastic. Tim Curry, who played Frank N Furter, once called the musical a "rite of passage" and said the musical is, "a guaranteed weekend party to which you can go with or without a date and probably find one if you don't have one, and it's also a chance for people to try on a few roles for size, you know? Figure out, help them maybe figure out their own sexuality" And I think that's a perfect way to describe 'The Rocky Horror Picture Show'.

Written by Nell Delaney

Photography by Grace Fitzjohn



# An Interview with Blue Hour

The band Blue Hour is made up of four former and current Marlborough students: Jevon Langridge, Ben Shephard, Finnian Harris, and Liam Gustafson. The band has been together in some form for over three years now and have seen many accomplishments including the releases of their first single and first EP, title Five More Minutes and Barking at Butterflies respectively, coming second place in the Battle of the Bands hosted by The Horn in St Albans, as well as a 12-show tour in the summer of 2019. Just this past week, they released their newest four-song EP, Matter of Perspective, which shows significant growth and maturity as musicians, in my opinion. Their older material had a rather pure, pop punk vibe, but they have evolved over time both musically and lyrically to a more pop rock sound. Always energetic, this EP really showcases how the band can branch out into different styles while still maintaining their 'sound'. I was fortunate enough to get the opportunity to interview the band (virtually, of course) and they were a delight to get to chat to about the band, life, and their newest release.

## **Q: What got you in to music?**

**Finnian:** Well, for me, I just started listening to rock music and thought it was pretty cool and I wanted to play it.

**Liam:** My dad got me into music. I saw him playing music all the time and wanted to do that.

**Jevon:** I got in to music because I watched School of Rock. I watched the film and wanted to be a drummer, so I got drum lessons and then started playing guitar. It all just kind of went from there.

**Q:** That had to be pretty cool then when you performed in the school production of School of Rock?

**Jevon:** Exactly! That was really cool. It, like, came full circle.

**Q:** How about you, Ben? How did you get in to music?

**Ben:** I suppose through my dad and then I started piano lessons quite early on. And then I went on to guitar because my dad plays guitar.

## **Q: Who inspires you to make music?**

**Jevon:** Anyone that is able to do it. Not just, like, able to play, but anyone who is able to make a living off of it. The whole music scene inspires me to want to be like that. But specifically, the bands I grew up with like Green Day, Linkin Park, and the Red Hot Chili Peppers and stuff like that.

And then also incorporating the bands I listen to now like Neck Deep, Trash Boat, Bring Me The Horizon, and other bands like that.

**Ben:** I don't listen to the same genres of music as the other guys. I into more of Jazz and Blues and, like, Stevie Ray Vaughn, Kenny Burrell and Wes Montgomery. So that's not exactly what you can see in any of the recordings, but that's what I listen to anyway.

## **Q: How did the band begin?**

**Liam:** Mr Scurr!

**Finnian:** Yeah, it was literally Mr Scurr.

**Liam:** We joke about it so much, but Mr Scurr was like, "Here's some kids. Let's throw them in a band together and see what happens!" We started playing a few songs and some band members changed in and out and now we have us.

**Finnian:** I literally went to my first guitar lesson and Mr Scurr told me that I should come to Rock School, so I did and that's when the band formed.

## **Q: Do you remember what the first song you played together was?**

**Finnian:** Absolutely! It's 'Come As You Are'.

## **Q: What is your creative process?**

**Finnian:** I'd say usually one of us will come up with a riff as a part of something and then we'd share it at our next practise. It's always been instruments first.

**Liam:** Yeah, then Jev builds the melody over that.

**Jevon:** But I think as well, with the recent stuff you when you write the music first, you get an idea of what emotion you want to write about. You can get the emotion from the music. Whereas if you have the lyrics first, it's a lot tougher to get the music.

**Finnian:** I've never written that way around, but I imagine it's harder to do melody and lyrics first.

## **Q: Who would you like to collaborate with most, past or present, dead or alive?**

**Finnian:** For me, it would definitely be Paul McCartney.

**Liam:** I would probably say Rivers Cuomo or Pat Wilson from Weezer.

**Jevon:** I think mine would be Chester Bennington from Linkin Park.

**Ben:** Probably Stevie Ray Vaughn.

**Q: What is your favourite song to perform?**

**Finnian:** That's tricky because we just put out songs that might be the best to perform, but we haven't played them out enough to know.

**Liam:** Out of the songs that we have performed live, I would say either Hell Song or Sirens.

**Ben:** I'd say Case Closed.

**Finnian:** Anything but Five More Minutes.

**Jevon:** I feel like Don't Let Me is really quite good from a fan interaction point of view.

**Q: What is the best advice that you've been given?**

**Jevon:** "Don't be sorry. Be Better"

**Finnian:** Mr. James!

**Jevon:** If you think about it, that makes loads of sense. You can apologise about something, but that's not going to change it, is it? You want to learn from your mistakes. I think I take that attitude.

**Finnian:** I like that.

**Q: What's next for the band? Are you writing new material?**

**Liam:** We're always writing. That's the thing about musicians- even when you're doing press for your new release, you have to keep writing. You need a continuous flow of music and creativity. Even if what you write is awful. You still have to keep working on your skills as a writer and come up with something.

**Finnian:** I think the thing that maybe some people don't realise is that 95% of the things I write, I forget about completely and won't do anything with them.

**Jevon:** Because this record that we've just done is at a much higher level than anything we've done before, keeping that up is going to be the toughest thing. We are going to really have to think about what we're doing.

**Q: How have you collaborated during lockdown to keep writing?**

**Liam:** Sending files back and forth, video chats, WhatsApp group chat, everything that we can. Once we're able to again, practises.

**Ben:** We did outdoor acoustic practises as well, when they were allowed.

**Q: Ok. Last question.**

**What is one message you would give to your fans?**

**Finnian:** Stay hydrated.

**Liam:** Eat a balanced diet

**Jevon:** The message of the EP: Don't let other's views and perspectives pull you down.

*It was an absolute pleasure to have the chance to talk with the band. It is clear that they have developed a great relationship over the years that they have worked together. Their talent, hard work, and level of professionalism is commendable. If you haven't checked out their music already, I highly recommend you give them a listen.*

**They can be found on all major streaming**

