





## WORD

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he met Southeast Asian poets who felt their voices are not heard in the poetry community. Yang realized he could reflect on social issues in front of a willing audience, and felt it was his duty to serve the communities he represents, he said.

"Poetry is going to be political if you really care about the message you carry," Yang said. "It's about how raw you can go inward before you can look outward."

During the writing process, Loaiza and Yang adapted to one another's writing styles, benefiting from the other's strengths as a result. Yang's forte is metaphors, Loaiza said, which helped him layer his writing with poetic devices that can draw in the audience. Loaiza said his favorite metaphor from "People of Shame" is his comparison of the Los Angeles Latino community with "the first hit off an ice cold Mexican coke."

Yang said Loaiza's direct and straightforward approach to writing poems kept him from getting lost in obscure metaphors.

Downs noticed Loaiza's easygoing personality also balanced Yang's anxious and self-critical tendencies, she said.

"(Loaiza) is very good for (Yang)," Downs said. "(Yang) just needed someone in his life to tell him to relax."

Through CUPSI, Yang said

he met Southeast Asian poets who felt their voices are not heard in the poetry community. Yang realized he could reflect on social issues in front of a willing audience, and felt it was his duty to serve the communities he represents, he said.

"Poetry is going to be political if you really care about the message you carry," Yang said. "It's about how raw you can go inward before you can look outward."

After graduating in June, Loaiza will teach high school English for Teach for America in Las Vegas starting in the fall.

Although he is walking in graduation, Yang plans to stay at UCLA for two more quarters. He said he will serve as co-director of The Word and continue his internship at photography studio Graphics Metropolis.

Both Loaiza and Yang said they will continue writing poetry. The poets hope to compete individually in National Poetry Slam, the largest-scale poetry competition in the United States.

"I write because a poem is never completely done," Loaiza said. "It reminds me I don't have to be either."

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## Act III Bruin whirls her way to Hollywood Bowl performance



BY LENA SCHIPPER  
*Daily Bruin contributor*

Maggie Darago exhaled deeply with a timid smile as she rattled off her upcoming 10-day routine for "A Chorus Line" – a 10-hour dance and voice rehearsal, a drive home and a personal practice in her room before turning in for the night.

Darago, a fourth-year theater student graduating in June, will perform in the musical from July 29 to 31 at the Hollywood Bowl.

While she auditioned at the end of winter quarter, Darago said she will have about 10 days starting July 18 to memorize choreography and lyrics, and underway study two lead roles. Her background in performance, studying at UCLA's theater department and participating in student theater organizations have prepared her for the show, she said.

Darago fell into the world of performance as a young age, beginning dance at age 4 and voice lessons in the fourth grade. However, she did not begin to formally study theater until she enrolled in the theater program at UCLA in fall 2012.

UCLA theater alumna Megan Fitzgerald worked Darago's first audition for the UCLA School of Theater, Film and Television.

"Even now, in everything she does, she still has that wide-eyed, energetic freshman feel," Fitzgerald said.

Darago is not new to the stage, but "A Chorus Line" will push her limits, she said. The premise of the musical centers on dancers auditioning for an intensive Broadway jazz production. She said audiences wanted to throw up because the show is so athletic.

Darago will dance in the eight-minute-long opening number, the choreography of which has remained exactly the same since the musical's first production, Darago said. Dancers will fill the stage and perform countless repetitions of kicks and leaps while the audition director shouts out steps and critiques.

"It'll just be cool to be part of (a show) that has so much history, so much prestige," Darago said. "I'm pretty sure I'm one of the youngest people in the cast, so it's already very intimidating from that standpoint."

The collaborative spirit of the students in Act III resonated with Darago.

"Student groups are just completely a lesson in professionalism and patience while

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interacting with others," Darago said. "Being able to respect each other and feed off each other's energy – being able to learn from each other – is the most pleasant lesson you can take away from a student production."

Darago joined the student-run Act III Theatre Ensemble during her first year. She participated in production, but mainly focused on choreography throughout her four years. Her favorite annual event was Act III's production Bruins Care, a 24-hour musical to benefit those with AIDS.

Rodd Farhadi, a third-year theater student, met Darago through his involvement in Bruins Care. He immediately connected with Darago because of his interest in choreography and looked to Darago as a mentor, he said.

"She comes to rehearsal with an idea and her song already memorized," Farhadi said. "She spends so much time in all three aspects of performing rather than only focusing on what she's best at."

The collaborative spirit of the students in Act III resonated with Darago.

"Student groups are just completely a lesson in professionalism and patience while

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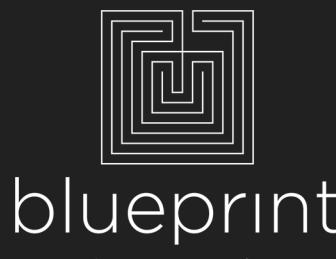
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Magic and Illusion Student Team president, fourth-year student Mike Li (left), will go on to study industrial/organizational psychology at NYU. Treasurer of the magic group, fourth-year student Ada Yu (right) will not pursue magic after graduation.

## FOR OUR FINAL TRICK



HANNAH YE/DAILY BRUIN SENIOR STAFF

Mike and Illusion Student Team president, fourth-year student Mike Li (left), will go on to study industrial/organizational psychology at NYU. Treasurer of the magic group, fourth-year student Ada Yu (right) will not pursue magic after graduation.

plan to take up magic as a profession, they said.

"Magicians are entertainers," Yu said. "It's hard to break into that field."

A student magician walked onto the Northwest Campus Auditorium stage with a bag full of newspaper clippings. He shook 10 clippings and the audience gasped as the pieces took the form of an unscathed issue of the Daily Bruin.

To have this extremely famous magician perform in this super important traditional festival made magic much more popular in China, and I got more and more interested," Li said.

Last year, Li and Yu performed card tricks at MIST's annual show, which ended with one member tearing a string into many pieces, then putting them back together, all while telling a story of how students separate after graduation but their shared experiences and memories tie them in a single string.

"Mike is a very knowledgeable magician. His style is theatrical. It transcends tricks," said Shijun Huang, a third-year computer science student who joined MIST in 2013.

After graduation, Li and Yu don't plan to take up magic as a profession, they said.

For Yu, magic is a hobby, but she hopes to keep in touch with MIST after graduation by attending club meetings and discussing magic.

After graduation, Li will attend graduate school at New York University to study industrial/organizational psychology and continue magic as a hobby. Li said his academic background in psychology relates to his passion of performing magic, because magic involves knowing how people think.

Li said he wants to keep his freedom to choose where he wants to perform magic.

"Only amateur magicians and top professionals will have the luxury to perform to whoever they want," Li said.

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## Former Bruin customizes graduation caps

BY SARAH AHERN  
*Daily Bruin contributor*

Leanna Maaz embarks on a scavenger hunt every time she travels abroad. In each city she explores, she collects a souvenir that contains the name of the city and arranges the items in a scrapbook to document her journey.

"For any restaurant I go to, I collect the menu, and I grab a napkin with the city's name and the tour guide pamphlet," Maaz said. "When you put these things in a scrapbook and decorate it with ribbons and everything, it all just comes alive."

Maaz, a UCLA alumna, incorporated her passion for crafting into a business this year, decorating personalized graduation cap toppers for students. She collects craft pieces such as jewels, flowers and sticker letters over time from large craft stores in downtown Los Angeles. She then uses the pieces as custom decorations for students' caps, she said. She has sold more than 50 cap toppers via UCLA Facebook groups for \$25 each.

When Maaz watched her sisters graduate from UCLA a few years ago and eyed

the line of caps moving across the stage, she envisioned her own graduation cap the following year as one specially decorated to fit her own style.

Maaz's graduation cap last year was the first she designed and embellished, with its large gold letters that spelled out UCLA. She also bordered the cap with fake sunflowers and a polka-dotted yellow ribbon, layered onto a sparkly, white background.

After designing her own cap in June 2015, Maaz posted a photo of it on Instagram. The photo garnered comments from her friends, who asked her if she had time to make theirs as well. Maaz made cap toppers for some friends for free but didn't have time to make more during school, she said.

In March 2016, Maaz put an advertisement on the UCLA Free & For Sale Facebook page that displayed photos of a series of caps she made, to see if other students wanted her to design their cap toppers. Maaz created these based on designs she found on Pinterest and other do-it-yourself websites. Some of her favorites read "game of loans," "I'm psyched!" and "thanks mom, dad and coffee," and were

decorated with the craft pieces she collected and customized for the buyer.

At the end of March, Maaz set up a one-day booth on Bruin Walk that displayed her premade cap toppers.

Brittney Tabel, a fourth-year sociology student, said she chose one of Maaz's premade cap toppers decorated with the words "UCLA graduate" on a sparkly, blue-paper background bordered with jewels.

"Decorating grad caps is about the whole personal touch, and I love how even though they were all made by one person they still reflected very individual personalities," Tabel said. "As I looked through all of her designs, I found so many that, though they weren't perfect for me, they seemed perfect for friends that I knew."

Chigo Anene, a fourth-year sociology student, said she asked Maaz to make a custom cap order in memory of her father, who had passed away two days before her senior year began.

The cap featured the words "Daddy, I did it" embroidered across the surface along with the dates of her father's birth and death. In the center of the cap, Maaz placed three photos of Anene and her father, held in place by clips from Maaz's collection.

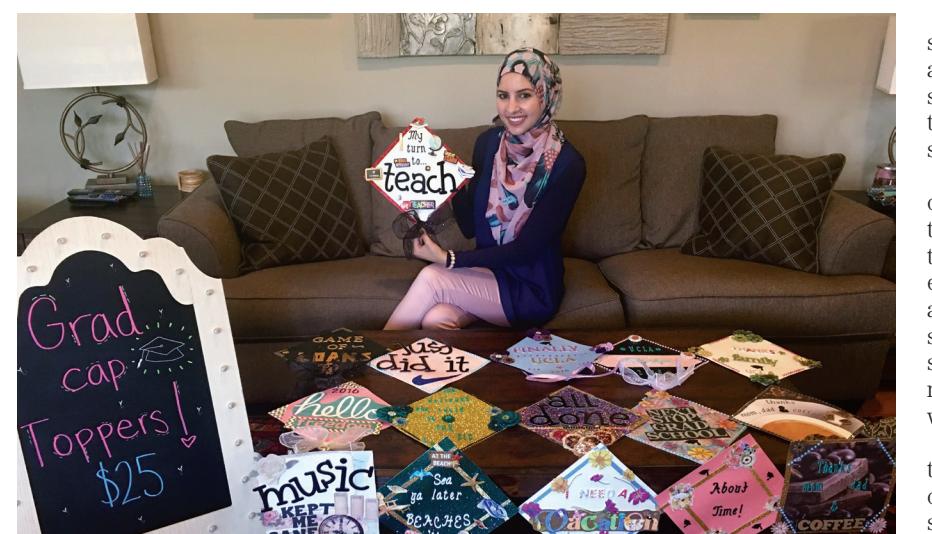
"He couldn't be there for her that day and she did it all for him, so it was really special, and it felt good to give her that cap," Maaz said. "It was the nicest feeling when I gave it to her. You could see in her eyes that it was something she really, really appreciated."

Maaz said while she enjoys the process of making the caps, the rewarding part of the experience is making designs for people that know what they want in a design, but either don't have the time to make one or are not sure how to make it themselves. She said the more caps she designs, the better she becomes at organizing the layout to make it more eye-catching and learning what colors work well together.

Though she is currently pursuing her teaching credentials and is interested in obtaining her master's degree next year, she hopes to keep the cap-making business as a hobby, she said.

"It's nice to help people who have a vision of what they want, and I enjoy making it for them, so it's a win-win," Maaz said.

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COURTESY OF LEANNA MAAZ

UCLA alumna Leanna Maaz started decorating graduation caps after her friends saw her own personalized cap when she graduated last year. This year Maaz sold grad cap toppers to seniors through Facebook.

## BALDWIN

from page B3

HOOLIGAN show together.

As a current managing director of HOOLIGAN, Fish said he admires the amount of hard work and dedication Baldwin puts into his creative projects.

"Things will not be funny sometimes. You will hit a roadblock," Baldwin said. "It's important to not hold onto those things, and think about how I can change, how I can adapt."

Baldwin said creating a connection with the audience is the most important part of performing.

"We've been in nine to 12 shows together," Fish said. "We got attached to the characters and became very close friends."

Fish said his and Baldwin's shared sense of humor leads to plenty of back-and-forth puns and jokes.

"We go on and on and are just having a blast while the

people around us are slowly complaining about how terrible the puns are," Fish said.

Through his experiences, Baldwin said he realized that presenting comedy is about fine-tuning what he finds funny, and how to best connect to and entertain his audience.

"Things will not be funny sometimes. You will hit a roadblock," Baldwin said. "It's important to not hold onto those things, and think about how I can change, how I can adapt."

Baldwin said creating a connection with the audience is the most important part of performing.

"We go on and on and are just having a blast while the

win said. "I will always want to bridge the gap between the audience and me."

Alongside being an actor and director in HOOLIGAN Theatre Company, Baldwin took his acting energy to the UCLA comedy club Rapid Fire Improv during his first year and became the team captain two years later.

Marie Osterman, a first-year theater student, said Baldwin has served as both a helpful mentor and an accepting friend during their work together in Rapid Fire Improv.

"He's like our weird, gruff, joyful dad," Osterman said. "I learn from him by watching him on stage and from him encouraging us in making dis-

tinct choices about characters."

After graduation, Baldwin said he will perform at LEGOLAND Hotel in San Diego, a job he heard about from a friend. Baldwin will continue his passion for comedic improvisation as a pirate character in a medieval-themed setting and entertain kids who are visiting the hotel. He said the job brings him back to his initial passion for working with kids.

Comedy will never stop for Baldwin.

# Members of different a cappella groups harmonize for graduation

BY SUZIE PAPANTONI  
*Daily Bruin contributor*

Six seniors hailing from different a cappella groups will unite to take center stage at Pauley Pavilion as their last hurrah before graduation.

Under the ensemble name Views from the Six, a cappella singers Hannah Bannan, Matt Driver, Lashon Halley, Isaac Mirzadegan, Nisha Nalamala and Kelly Noe will perform their rendition of the national anthem and the alma mater songs at the College of Letters and Science graduation ceremony at 2 p.m. Friday.

The name of the group was influenced by the title of Drake's recent album, "Views." The group had not decided on a name until their audition for commencement when they were asked to state their name on the spot. After a few seconds of consideration, members agreed that Views from the Six would be a fitting name for the six of them, who state Drake as a prominent influence of their work.

Parents might not catch the reference, but it might bring a few chuckles to other students, said Noe, a fourth-year music and social institutions student.

Views from the Six united a month ago when Noe, Brennan, Halley and Nalamala from

Signature A Cappella decided to audition to sing the national anthem at graduation. Halley, a fourth-year art history student, said she originally considered auditioning individually.

"I love singing the national anthem and I wanted to do it solo," Halley said. "But it is less stressful as a group and it actually sounds more energized, like a choir."

Fourth-year psychology student Mirzadegan from a cappella group ScatterTones messaged Noe asking if any girls from Signature A Cappella were organizing a commencement performance, and was welcomed into Noe's group.

Mirzadegan said he wanted to perform at commencement ever since he witnessed previous seniors from his a cappella group perform when he first joined.

The group sought an additional male voice in order to balance the other four female voices, Noe said. The group achieved its desired sound after adding Mirzadegan's friend Driver, a fourth-year statistics student who used to sing with Deviant Voices A Cappella.

Even though Driver left his a cappella group last year, recruiting him into Views from the Six was easy because

the a cappella community at UCLA is tight and all groups frequently perform together, Noe said.

Nalamala, a fourth-year biology student, recalled watching the boys perform before with their respective a cappella groups but only met them in person at the audition for the commencement performance. After hanging out with them backstage during Spring Sing 2016, they bonded instantly, she said. Commencement rehearsals turned into relaxing evenings with the six friends.

Their cover of the national anthem and the alma mater is based on arrangements that Mirzadegan borrowed from his a cappella group ScatterTones. Each member of Views from the Six was assigned a specific part, which they practiced individually before rehearsing as group with music professor Michael Dean.

A choral arrangement is different than a solo, Nalamala said, since everyone needs to blend their voices because only the soprano melody, sung by Bannan and Noe, may stand out.

A cappella is team-oriented by nature, Driver said, and the goal is not to stand out but to synchronize with the other members.



MIRIAM BRIBIESCA/PHOTO EDITOR

Six graduating students from three different a cappella groups merged to form Views from the Six, a singing ensemble that will perform the national anthem and the alma mater at commencement Friday.

The dynamic of the group lightens the pressure of their emotional performance, Nalamala said.

Their last moments on stage at Pauley Pavilion are about putting on a show for their families and peers in the audience, Halley said. Halley will be holding back tears during

the performance, since it will be her last time performing on a UCLA stage as a student, she said.

Commencement by itself is emotional, Noe said, but singing in front of families, student speakers and the chancellor is an incredible way for her to exit college.

"At this point I'm mostly excited to be done with college and start the next chapter," Noe said. "But I feel like when I am actually up there performing it will definitely hit me that it is really over."

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## MONK

from page B3

Bassist Alex Boneham moved from Sydney, Australia, to join the ensemble. He said although the members know each other well now, a huge part of the program is learning to work with strangers.

"It's not uncommon to get on a gig and not know anyone in the band before you play the first gig," he said. "And so (the program) is like a really intensified extension of that. It's like being on tour for two years, being on the road, staying in the same hotel room every day."

Boneham said having music as a common language helped the students work together.

Being in the program helped both Boneham and Staaf see jazz as a global art form connecting people across cultures. Staaf did not realize how broad the focus of her education at the institute would be until she got there.

"(The Monk Institute) isn't just about the music and about me," Staaf said. "It's about a vision for how I can live my life as a human who's doing music but with this sense of it being relevant to the world at large."

The students' disparate backgrounds influence the way they approach their music, Staaf said. Boneham said the ensemble's tenor saxophonist Daniel Rotem is from Israel, and as a result, much of his music draws on Middle Eastern folk music.

Boneham said musicians are

also influenced by their previous instructors in addition to their home scene and background, which shows in their work with the ensemble.

Christian Euman, the ensemble's drummer, grew up in Chicago playing in the church, but he studied with influential instructors like Maria Schneider, who caused him to incorporate the big-band tradition into his work, Staaf said.

Each player's background and influences come together when the band refines a player's original composition.

"One player brings in a piece of music that they've composed, which is their idea, their concept, and then it gets workshoped by the group," Boneham said. "The music by nature is inherently collabora-

tive."

All the players also have their own strengths, Boneham said. In the past, he has turned to the ensemble's singer, Michael Mayo, to help him write lyrics.

After graduation, the members of the ensemble hope to get back into the jazz scene with more confidence in their artistic visions, Boneham said.

Staaf said the institute helped validate her interest in many different styles of music in addition to jazz.

"I feel more at home with myself as a 'jazz plus' musician," Staaf said. "So (my) artistic vision ... is a conversation with other cultures where jazz is the moderator."

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## ► VIDEO

[dailybruin.com/video](http://dailybruin.com/video)

**Thelonious Monk Institute of Jazz Performance  
graduating class speak about their experiences**



NICK O'BRIEN/DAILY BRUIN

The 2016 graduating class from the prestigious Thelonious Monk Institute of Jazz Performance at UCLA's Herb Alpert School of Music spoke to Daily Bruin video about their experience in the program and their plans after graduation.

## ROYCE SEBASTIAN BROWN on ETSY.COM

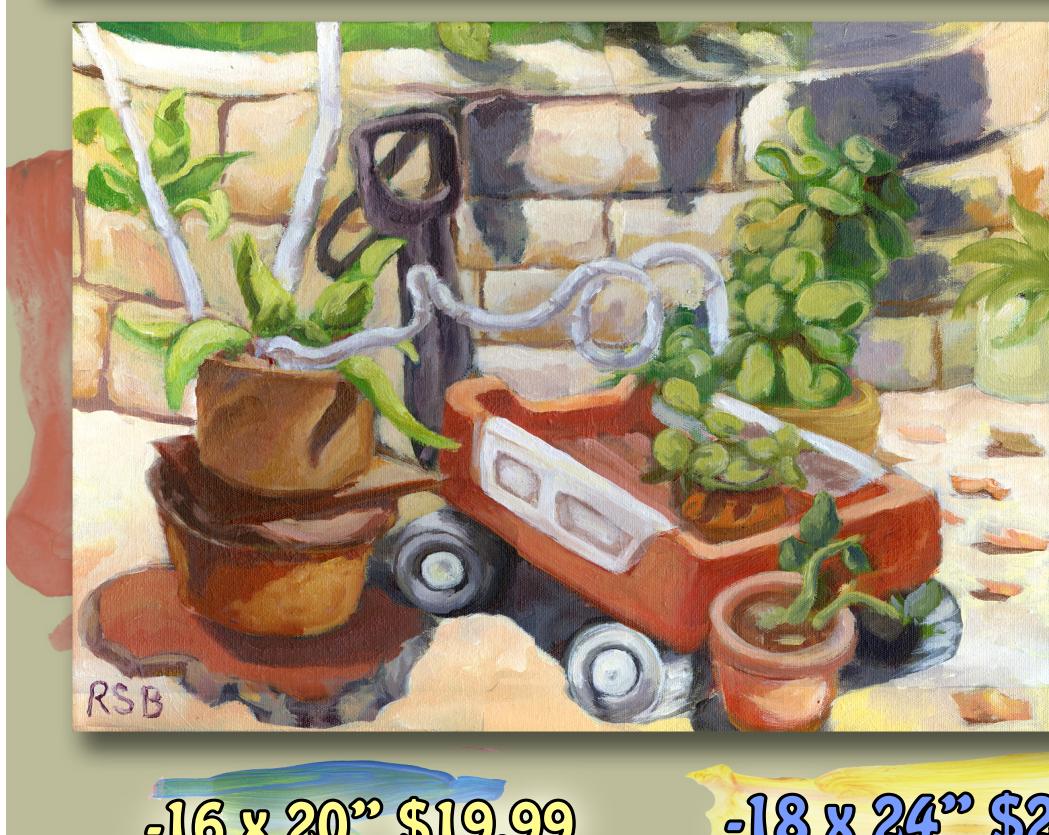


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