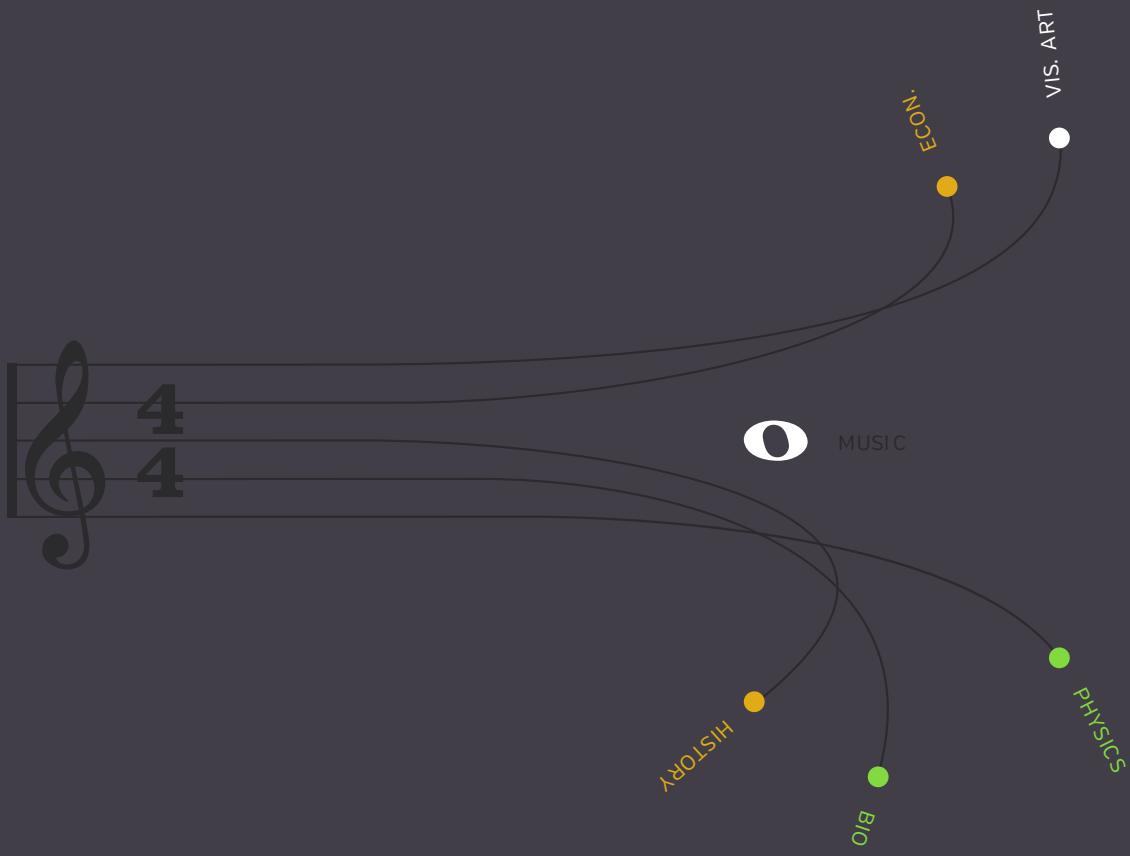


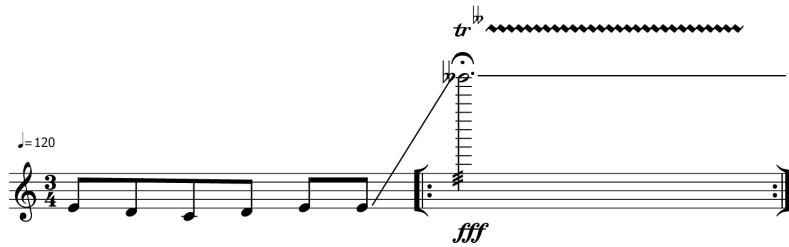
→ CONVERGENCE ←



THE ANOMALY

IB1 MUSIC ENROLLMENT HAS HIT A NEW, DEPRESSING LOW OF **0. ZERO. ZILCH.** WHAT UNDERLYING FORCE IS DRIVING FY STUDENTS AWAY? CONVERGENCE INVESTIGATES.

GABRIEL BIRMAN - P. 2



THE MUSICAL ANOMALY

GABRIEL BIRMAN

A&E EDITOR

Approximately six months ago, Foundation Year students were just finishing off their course selection reports for the following year. The selection process was certainly not an easy one for most students, myself included. After all, the contents of those documents would have a direct impact on each boy's future with regard to the education he would receive and subsequently the university programs he would apply to. When all was said and done, most students chose two sciences or two humanities to complement their education. Everyone chose some form of math. But not a single person chose IB music.

Music forms part of IB's group 6, a subject grouping that incorporates artistically inclined subjects such as the visual arts, drama and film, as well as dance, which is not currently offered at the school (you might guess why). This group is notorious for being the only optional group of all six, which in and of itself points to the IB's cynical attitude towards the arts. Perhaps the IB deems that a subject "designed to foster critical, reflective and informed practice, help students understand the dynamic and changing nature of the arts, explore the diversity of arts across time, place and cultures, and express themselves with confidence and competence" does not offer enough value to a curriculum that "aims to develop inquiring, knowledgeable and caring young people who help to create a bet-

ter and more peaceful world through intercultural understanding and respect" (both quotes were taken from the IBO website). Thus, as far as the IB is concerned, art and knowledge are two mutually exclusive entities, or at least very tenuously intertwined. Nevertheless, in spite of the blatant disdain that the IB maintains for the arts, the fact remains that absolutely zero people decided to enrol into the IB music course. A policy that at its worst encouraged freedom of choice could not have singled-handedly caused the outright dismissal of the music program. The foundational issues are evidently a lot more complex.

There are several possible explanations for the small enrolment in IB music. Samuel Gernburd, one of the four IB2 students who currently take the course, believes that the perceived difficulty of the course has something to do with it. "It is ridiculously hard to achieve a 7", he conceded. "In the past three years, [now-graduated music student John Greene] didn't know anyone who's finished with one." So regardless of one's passion for music, proficiency is considered a must. This poses a distinct problem for those who want to explore the creative elements of music but lack the background to do so; unfortunately, this constitutes a large majority of the student body. Even then, the creative element inherently masquerades as a double-edged sword. On one hand, allowing students to express themselves creatively allows for broader and more heuristic learning.

On the other hand, the notion of creativity manages to alienate many boys in the sense that no amount of brute force studying will make you more creative (although it will help you to gather and present ideas in a more cogent manner). Mustering up the right amount of creativity and the right amount of musical knowledge makes IB music a challenging, and rather intimidating, course selection.

Gernburd also posits that the issue at hand is potentially even more deep-seated than that; the lack of enrolment in the music program is simply a manifestation of the modern educational dogma. "There's a belief out there that you have to take two sciences, that you have to be a doctor. Sciences definitely look good on paper, but the value that music adds to one's education is unquantifiable." Our education has

become increasingly profession-driven. If you want to be a doctor, you must take chemistry and biology. If you want to be a lawyer, you should take history and literature. These have become maxims of sorts. The truth is that most people do not have vested interests in becoming musicians. Why spend over two years of your life studying something that adds no benefit to your future career, especially given that you can satisfy your artistic proclivities through extra-curriculars? IB music teacher Mr. Gomes has a response to this train of thought: "our biggest concern is having parents and students understand that lacking math or science is not an endpoint. You can pick it up in university. There truly is a lot more flexibility with what happens in high school". Of course, there are multiple benefits to a musical education, some of which include improving mathemati-

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cal skills ("it's no coincidence that engineering schools have a large number of musicians," he notes) and invoking one's creativity, yet none of these are deemed important enough to us to warrant selecting the course. Profession-based education is being adopted out of necessity. Whether it's the realization that a sturdy career is a must in the face of a diminishing job market, or the promotion of STEM from inside the school, our value systems have been torn apart and flipped upside down.

Nevertheless, Mr. Gomes maintains a much more optimistic outlook. In his years teaching IB music, this is the first time no IB1s have enrolled. "Normally we have four to six guys take IB music every year. This is just a small blip," he opined, "so I would not consider enrolment an issue for next year. This is simply a small part of a big picture, which is very healthy. Look at Music Night (a recent evening performance featuring all the bands in the school) - we had approximately a quarter of the school up on stage!" Mr. Gomes also noted that in public schools, music credits are awarded for being a member of a band. Thus, we see that the music program at UCC consists of two distinct parts: IB music and extracurricular music. So even if no students whatsoever take the IB music course, there are approximately 40 kids per grade who participate in the extracurricular program. Not too shabby.

The enrolment issues observed for IB music can also be noted for several of the arts programs as well. Visual art only has 9 IB1s enrolled at the HL and SL levels, while drama only has 8. A notable exception to the trend is IB Film, with 12 IB2s and a staggering 22 IB1s. Obviously, the Film department must be doing something differently. I suggest two possible explanations: Film provides a much more relaxed environment, and the course inherently caters to boys more easily. The former can be explained by the public perception that Film is a relaxed and not overly-demanding course. IB1 Devonte Case concurs that "the environment in Film is unlike any other class in terms of the structure and freedom. It's quite relaxed and unrestrained." When asked why he chose the course, Devonte responded,



PHOTO CREDIT: RAJBIR AHLUWALIA

"I've always wanted to explore the intricacies of film-making. It has been a desire of mine to understand the whys a director goes through in the film-making process." Film has indeed become one of the most relatable art forms for boys, especially as society transitions towards visual media as a whole. With movies like Interstellar and Guardians of the Galaxy now forming the basis for artistic entertainment practically everywhere, it is hard not to find yourself caught up in the frenzy. Perhaps on a reductionist level, this all comes back to the predefined concept of masculinity embedded into our culture that rejects all notions of ostensible "artsy-ness". After all, the expectations for film class are to make movies, not to paint paintings or perform in plays. Although this last explanation may be a tad too extrapolative for any conclusive deductions, it is almost certain that such a lacklustre display of enrolment across the group 6 subjects would not be seen in an all-girls school.

Encouraging enrolment in the arts will require more than appealing to boys' masculinity, however. The problem is a social one. Some changes could be made to the arts programs to ensure that the zero enrolment phenomenon does not become a trend, but the rigidity of IB mandates prevents major alterations from taking place. Ultimately, the main solution would be making a group 6 mandatory, although the less radical approach would be to make another group subject optional instead. At this point, the IB would have a tough time deciding what to cut from the curriculum. Are sciences more important than maths, or perhaps humanities are more important than foreign languages? The sad truth is that, in trying to make its curriculum more worldly and cultural, the IB has alienated the arts. At the end of the day, I wouldn't want to discredit the entire student body for the actions of just the IB1 grade. UCC's artistic future is probably not as bleak as I would have it. After all, the majority of the student body is engaged in some way or another in an artistic venture - whether it be performing in a play or a band or even teaching visual art through Horizons. At the risk of undermining this entire article, I'll be the first one to say: I hope I'm wrong!



MY EXPERIENCES IN THE TSYO

HENRY LEE
STAFF REPORTER

The Toronto Symphony Youth Orchestra (TSYO) is an orchestra affiliated with the Toronto Symphony Orchestra. It is considered the most competitive youth orchestra in the city. IB1 Henry Lee tells of his experience with the group.

My first year at the Toronto Symphony Youth Orchestra has been an exciting one. The orchestra forms a very diverse group, with musicians as young as 11 and as old as 22 all coming together to fulfil their passion for orchestral performance. Despite the age gap, the group managed to surprise me with the ease of their communications during our very first rehearsal of the year.

Being a part of this orchestra took a lot of dedication. I had to practice the solo excerpts throughout the summer. A whole two

months of my life were thus predicated on the result of an audition less than ten minutes long. Nervous would be an understatement. If there exists a universal takeaway to this story, it would certainly be “hard work pays off”.

So far, we’ve worked extensively on Tchaikovsky’s Marche Slave and his Fourth Symphony, as well as Pelléas et Mélisande by Gabriel Fauré. Being a part of the orchestra truly showed me the difference between hearing and performing a piece of music: although I’ve heard these pieces countless times on YouTube, there exists a certain magic in being an integral part of the music, in creating and conjuring it from thin air. So even though we practice same passages over and over again, they never feel the same each time.

The orchestra has had a variety of positive impacts on my life. I’ve made a lot of friends through the orchestra, especially through the music camp program, which allowed for a more intimate bonding experience. In

particular, I became really close to other cello players such as me, since we sit together while performing and share sheet music most of the time. I find that the TSYO offers an outlet for expressing my passion for music because it is generally hard to find people with the same musical interests as mine outside of an orchestral setting. In terms of the educational aspect, I find myself privileged to receive one of the best musical trainings in Canada from the directors and instructors. At the end of the day, I have grown more passionate and fond of my instrument.

On October 22nd and 23rd, the youth orchestra performed two side-by-side concerts with TSO at Roy Thomson Hall. It was extremely nerve-wracking having to perform in front of hundreds of people. Perfection was the minimum requirement. But it was more than worth it: at the end of the performance, I could not recall a time when the sound of applause had been so gratifying.

BOY IN THE CENTER

INTERVIEWER: RONAN MURPHY
STAFF REPORTER



**AMÉRICO
GOMEZ**

RONAN MURPHY: So have you been growing this since the beginning of November?
AMÉRICO GOMEZ: ...yeah

PREVIEW: VARSITY BASKETBALL



PHOTO CREDIT: RAJBIR AHLUWALIA

PAUL WEISER SPORTS EDITOR

With winter around the corner, the UCC Varsity Blues Basketball team is starting up their 2014-2015 season. The team is looking to be very strong this year despite only having 5 returning veterans. The plan is to revolve around a quick and defensive mindset this year, according to Mattia Colangelo (IB1). Colangelo also commented on the height of this year's Varsity team. Despite the lack of height, Colangelo is confident that the team's ability to finish and their overall talent will enable them to beat rivals St. Andrew's and St. Michael's. Colangelo looks to step up his game this season by expanding his role. Last year, Colangelo primarily served as a 3-point shooter. This year he wants to fill in some

of the gaps left open by the graduating class of 2014, whether that be helping out fellow IB1 Devonte Case with handling the ball or squaring up for some tough defensive matches and getting rebounds.

One of the tough opponents for this year's team will be familiar foe and defending CISAA champions, St. Michael's College. Devonte Case commented on SMC's team, describing them as "a well-oiled machine." He says that their mixture of size and skill as well as a large returning class will be their major strengths.

However, SMC is not the only competition in the CISAA loop this year. Saint John's Kilmarnock, Crescent and TFS have improved their teams compared to last year. Another burden that the Varsity Blues will

have to face is the empty depth that the team has on the bench. With only 5 returning players, it seems that the rookie class will need to step in to fill in gaps left by Blues stars such as O'Neil Halstead and Liam Power. Case believes that this won't be an issue for the Varsity Blues with talented players such as Jalen Butler (FY) and Hunter Okubasu (IB1) spearheading the rookies. Furthermore, Case also believes the athleticism and overall talent that the rookies bring has great potential to exceed that of last season.

This year, the Varsity Blues opened their season with an exhibition game against Vaughan Secondary School and a pre-season tournament at Crescent School and York School.

PREVIEW: VARSITY HOCKEY

PAUL WEISER
SPORTS EDITOR

Having had a tough, heartbreaking loss in the finals to St. Andrew's College last year, the 2014-15 Varsity Hockey Team is out to reclaim the CISAA championship. Led by new head coach Mr. Beaudoin, as well as 10 returning players, namely captain Matt Baker (IB1), the Blues looked poised for another successful year. According to Baker, the goaltending should be solid, with a strong tandem of IB2s Jack Pendrith and Johnny Li. Additionally, Baker claims that there are many exciting rookies, with the likes of Jeremy Smith (IB1), Jeremy Marco (FY), and others hoping to contribute in a big way. All in all, Baker says this team is most definitely capable of winning the championship. However, the CISAA finals is a long way from now, and the Blues have a busy schedule between now and then. This includes three tournaments over the Christmas break, all taking place in the U.S.A. and highly anticipated. These include the Lawrenceville tournament in New Jersey, the Belmont Hill/Nichols tournament in New York, and the Tabor Academy Showcase in Massachusetts. The Blues are also taking part in the inaugural end of the year Showcase Tournament that will compile some of the best teams across all of Canada, and will be held at SAC and our very own William P. Wilder Arena. Of course, there will be important CISAA matchups throughout the season that will determine who gets home-ice advantage in the playoffs as well. Expectations are always high for the boys, with the program being at the top in the world of UCC sports. The team started training as early as August, and have been on the ice 2-4 times a week since then. "The team has been training hard and we are looking forward to a strong...season," said Baker. The rest of the UCC community is undoubtedly excited as well. A noteworthy piece of information however, is that Mr. Green, who has been behind the bench of the last ten years (and over 400 games), decided last spring to step away from the team. Throughout his tenure, UCC hockey garnered a great deal of success, and he is owed our upmost gratitude for his dedication and hard work. Taking his place will be Mr. Beaudoin, as previously mentioned. Baker says it has been "a pleasure to have [Coach Beaudoin] on the bench," and that the team is looking forward to a fantastic season under new leadership. With the season only just beginning, the path of this year's Varsity Hockey team is relatively unknown; however, it is safe to say that the whole UCC community will be behind the boys throughout the entire campaign.



PHOTO CREDIT: RAJBIR AHLUWALIA

BLAZER

UCC'S HUMOUR
PUBLICATION
WRITTEN BY PEOPLE
WHO THINK THEY'RE
WAY FUNNIER THAN
THEY ACTUALLY ARE.



'Tis the season

Ho-ho-ho! The holiday season approaches, a time of presents, the presents you actually asked for, and then those other presents that you *swear* your relatives messed up on purpose (*Game of Thrones* shirt does *not* mean another green sweater, grandma!). Thanksgiving has passed, much like that Careers assignment we never did, mostly because of the lack of presents. However, does Blazer have a present for you! This issue of Blazer is all about the holiday festivities, so sit back, relax, and forget all about the fact that exams are in like, what, 2 weeks?

Blazer's "Christmas List"

One of the greatest things about Christmas that goes really underappreciated is the *receiving* part of the whole "give before you get" thing. Yeah, yeah, "giving" is real swell and all, but we here at Blazer have already given enough and think that it's high time we start getting more. Nothing's better than waking up on Christmas morning and getting that 400\$ wooden cane you were always dreaming of getting. "Oh boy, now everyone will think I'm even cooler than I already am! No way this will backfire". Yup, we all dream that dream. Anyways, to celebrate the coming of Christmas and all of the getting presents and not giving any, here are our top gift recommendations for the 2014 holiday season.

1) Raptors Jersey

The Toronto Raptors are the only good sports team in Toronto right now, apparently, so like every other person in the city, it's time to jump on the bandwagon. Some people may tell you that you can't just cheer for them now that they're winning, but that's a bunch of baloney. Just ask a Drake jersey or something and you'll fit right into the hardcore group of raptors supporters



2) Club Penguin Membership

Don't lie to us. We know you played Club Penguin, and we know that you always wanted that membership that Billy had, but *noooo!* Your parents wouldn't let you, and you were felt inferior when you and your friends would go play the tubing game and Billy always had that stupid, shiny hat on opposed to your disgustingly bald head. But no more, we say! Since you're old enough now and have your own credit card (or your parents don't really care what you spend it on anymore), it's time to finally pay Billy back when you get your 12 month membership that only costs 40\$! That's almost as much as an actual game!

3) Corvette car

Parents absolutely love it when their kids ask for super-expensive gifts. Trust us, that life-size statue of David Tennant as "The Doctor" was *not* cheap (*I love you David*). In fact, don't even ask for a car. A statue of David Tennant is way better than that.



4) Light-up shoes

We here at Blazer are inverted in all different sorts of "cool" things. And you know what was cool back in the day? Bionicles. Also, those zipper shoes that lite up every time you stomped the ground. Trust, if you want to be hip and hop, you want some of these "dope kicks" (did we do that right?).

5) True happiness

True happiness has alluded us for some time. After all, what even is true happiness? Is it even attainable? Will we ever understand it even if we possess it? These are all really deep questions, and would probably warrant around a 4 to 4+ range for Mr. Dick. But, we can fake true happiness by getting a bunch of cash. Nothing says "I don't care" like cash does when it comes to Christmas presents, but everyone knows that money can buy happiness. Right? *Right?*

Dan Humphrey is the gossip girl

If we've offended you with this issue of Blazer, we're "sorry". Send all christmas cards to blazer@ucc.on.ca. Also email us if you want to join our team. xoxo, - BS



Merry
Christmas



12 days of UCC Christmas

There's only 12 days left until exams (hooray!), and UCC really likes to remind you of this by giving you plenty of things to do in the meantime. Here's a carol to celebrate the times.

On the 12th day of Christmas, UCC sent to me:

Twelve Tok journals,
Eleven Careers assignments,
Ten CAS reflections,
Nine varsity ties,
Eight bright red rockets,
Seven Y1's gaming,
Six SAS schedules,



Hello,
Here is the SAS schedule this week
open during spare periods through
Monday @ 7am - ELITE FITNESS
Monday @ 3:30pm - open gym
Tuesday @ 6:30am - rowing worko

Five, golden 7+'s (courtesy of HL Film)



Four chocolate milks,
Three hours of sleep,
Two DCI's



and a David Cash Friday assembly

Happy Holidays, everyone!

Festive Headlines

- Matthew Ye roasts school for Thanksgiving
- Sports Science students having extremely tough time trying to find something to study for
- Y1's devastated after discovering their mothers and Santa have the same wrapping paper
- League of Legends club moves to swimming locker room to save time and resources
- Taking TTC now qualifies for CAS Action reflection
- Mme. Lowndes leads student-filled rebellion against school
- HL Philosophy students asked to ponder metaphysical meaning of Luc Cesta shaving his legs
- IB enrolment rate drops significantly after announcement of ToK exam
- Model UN argues over very controversial topic of whether or not their ties need to be coloured red or Alizarin crimson
- Rowing team spends entire budget tailoring uniforms to be as tight as possible
- Cross Country, Swimming and Track and Field all-star John Tattersal top in polls for Athlete of the Year
- Mr. Sims to leave school to pursue pizza-delivery career
- Mr. Heffernan to be cast as Wolverine in next X-Men movie

Blazer was too busy doing 9 hours of homework to finish for Friday