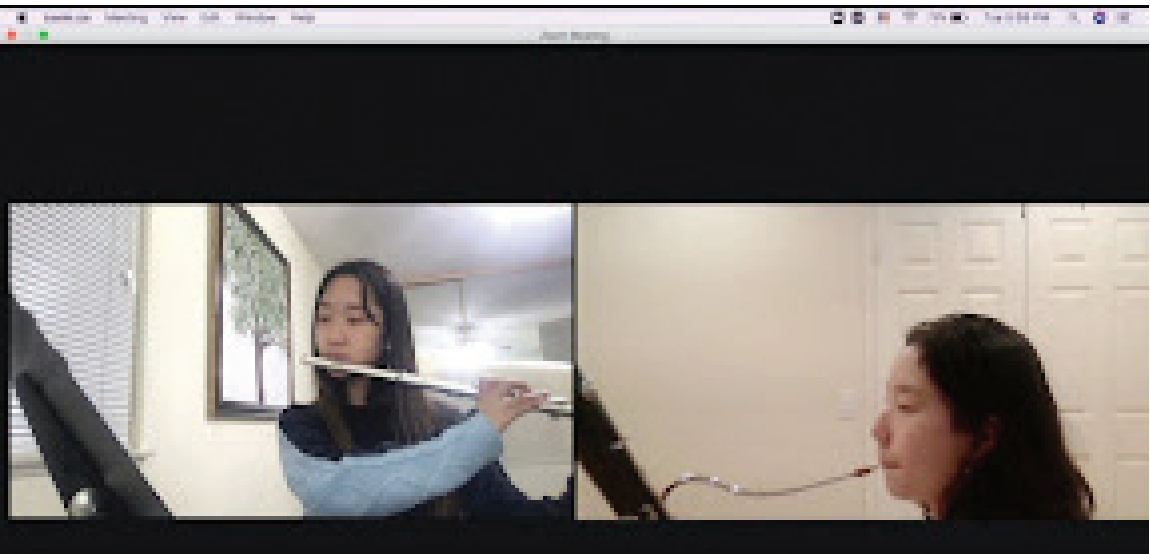


Student Reporter



Heather Kim
Grade 10
Orange County School of the Arts

The Pandemic’s Lasting Impact on Music



A chamber music rehearsal over Zoom. Wind instrument chamber rehearsals were especially difficult to have in person during the pandemic, as it is difficult, if not impossible, to play woodwind instruments with masks on.

After COVID was reported for the first time in December of 2019, and social distancing orders were put into place, everything from schools to church services to volunteer programs became partially, or completely, virtual.

As a student at an arts school, COVID affected more than just my academic studies and school life. My conservatory classes at school were held through Zoom like my other classes, but changes were made to my music-life outside of school as well.

My youth orchestra went on a year-long hiatus, announc-

ing that no rehearsals or concerts would be held during the 2020-2021 school year. Even professional orchestras were unable to continue playing concerts and having rehearsals, as large gatherings were banned for months. All-state ensembles and smaller district ensembles were either canceled, or held completely virtually, with “rehearsals” held through Zoom, and edited videos substituting concerts. Music related community service events were also difficult to find, since many instruments could not be played with masks on, and because we were all forced to keep a distance from one another.

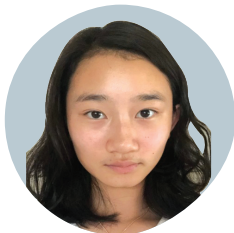
While the emergency alternatives that were created to replace normal music programs definitely took much away from the usual experiences, some parts of music thrived even during the height of the pandemic. Virtual music related volunteer programs began springing up almost as soon as school started in August of 2020. Many students at my school, including myself, began teaching younger students, or students with no access to music education, virtually through platforms such as Zoom and Google Meet. We were able to teach students from outside of not only our district, but our state, and even our country,

because everyone was joining from home.

Music competitions also transitioned to being completely online during the pandemic. Since live auditions were impossible, students were asked to submit recordings of their playing along with other competition specific requirements. Final performances for some competitions were also recorded, and participation in many solo competitions increased due to how time efficient and easy it was to record and submit from home rather than having to travel long distances to get these things done.

With vaccines now accessible to most people in the United States, lives are gradually returning to normal, as if they have been unpaused after over a year. However, volunteer programs that were created during the pandemic, as well as some music competitions, are choosing to stay virtual. Although most people were reluctant to change, and adjust to the situation that COVID put us in because it seemed “temporary”, programs and students that took advantage of the novel circumstances were able to make a lasting impact on music, and showed us how parts of it could benefit from staying partially, or even completely virtual.

Student Reporter



Rubie Choi
Grade 10
Torrance High School

An Exciting Game

To start off the new year, I attended an ice hockey game between the Los Angeles Kings and the Philadelphia Flyers at the Crypto.com Arena, formerly known as the Staples Center. The game started around 7:30, but my dad and I arrived an hour early so that we had a chance to explore the arena. Although the exterior and interior of the stadium was the same as when it was the Staples Center, it felt as if I was in an entirely different place just because of the name change.

Ice hockey is divided into three periods of twenty minutes. The first period started with Victor Arvidsson scoring a point for the Kings only twelve seconds into the game. This was said to be the first point since 1991 to have been scored that fast. Afterwards, Joel Farabee



The players of both the Los Angeles Kings and the Philadelphia Flyers warm up before the game starts. [Source: Author, Rubie Choi]

scored the first point for the Flyers in the thirteenth minute of the first period, followed by Trevor Moore, who scored the second point for the Kings ninety seconds later.

During the time between periods, there were multiple performances by dancers, DJ’s, and the

host who held activities, such as doing trivial questions with the fans. Many people used this time to use the restroom, order food, or buy merchandise.

In the second period, Adrian Kempe and Brendan Lemieux each scored a point for the Kings. Whenever the Kings scored, the

arena was blasted with a deafening noise as the host and crowd screamed.

In the last period, each team scored two points. Kevin Hayes and Ivan Provorov each scored a point for the Flyers, and Phillip Danault and Viktor Arvidsson, again, each scored a point for the Kings. Ultimately, the Kings won the game six points to three, and Todd McLellan secured his five hundredth win as head coach.

Although I do not know much about ice hockey, I found myself immersed in the game and even enjoyed watching it because the rules were easy to understand. Although, if there is one thing I learned from going to an ice hockey match, it is to dress warm the next time I come!

Student Reporter



Claudia Shin
Grade 10
Granada Hills Charter High School

How to Find the Perfect Sweater

With a couple more months of winter left, many people are searching for sweaters, scarves, and warmer pieces of clothing. As a person who loves to knit and crochet, and also as an overall lover of clothing and textiles, I have gone through my fair share of projects that involve different types of fibers and materials. To those who do not have experience with making clothing, the types of materials that go into a garment may not have ever been something they have thought about, but these things can actually drastically change the outcome of a piece of clothing. Some of the most common fibers used for knitwear are wool, cotton, and acrylic (and other synthetic fibers).

Different sweater materials can

serve different purposes. Certain materials are warmer, some more breathable, and others itchy or soft. For example wool, which is a natural animal fiber, is much warmer than a cotton or acrylic sweater. Cotton, which is also a natural fiber, is the most breathable material out of wool and acrylic; it is best for lighter weight sweaters to be worn in warmer weather. Cotton is also the least likely material to be itchy, for those with sensitive skin. Synthetic materials like acrylic, nylon, and polyester are usually cheaper than natural fibers, but they can also be good options for a nice warm sweater. These materials are more sturdy than natural fibers and require less care when washing. This means that synthetic materials may last longer, but they can tend

to be itchy, especially for people with sensitive skin.

Most sweaters will have a blend of natural and synthetic fibers. When walking into a store and feeling different sweaters, they may at first feel more or less the same, but when paying attention to the right things and checking tags for composition, figuring out what a sweater is made out of is pretty simple. The tag with a sweater composition is most often found on the inside side seam of a garment. When online shopping, the materials in a knit piece can be found in the description of the product.

To find the perfect sweater, make sure to check the materials that go into a piece to figure



A handknit sweater made with 80% acrylic and 20% wool. [Source: Author, Claudia Shin]

out what will most suit you. A great sweater can be found at any price point, if looking for the right things.

Student Reporter

How Your Hair Can Make a Child’s Day



Sophia Lee
Grade 11
Buford High School



Preparing to mail off my third hair donation. [Source: Author, Sophia Lee]

Community service has been a constant part of life, whether we are the ones providing help or in the situation of receiving help from others. Volunteering has become more popular in recent years, as opportunities are easily found via social media. Although people may choose to approach community service in a different

manner, one way I have been striving to impact my community is through hair donations.

My first experience donating hair was in first grade when my pastor suggested it. Back then, I thought “I could help my friends have hair!” Although this was a naive thought, it led to me growing out and donating hair two other times. It also helped me to realize and appreciate the true impact and message behind the act.

One positive aspect of choosing this method of donation is that, truly, anyone can contribute with little time and effort. A downside is that for many, it may be a challenging endeavor to not damage your hair for many years, while also growing it out to a length sufficient enough to be able to meet the requirements for the institution one chooses to donate to, such

as Locks of Love or Wigs 4 Kids.

Even though hair donations can seem to stray from our usual nursing home and food drive volunteering, it does not have to be an intimidating experience. The first step to this long, but rewarding process would be to choose the organization to which you wish to donate to. This can be chosen largely based on three criteria: the cause you wish to support, the target audience you wish to support, and the length/hair requirements that the organization has. The requirements of hair are, in general, fairly simple. Most organizations will not accept dyed or bleached hair because the chemicals interfere with the wig-making process, but some will accept permed hair. There will also be minimum length requirements, reaching anywhere from 8 to 12 inches.

The next step in donating your

hair would be to convey the style, in which your hair would have to be cut, clearly to your hairdresser. Most organizations require you to tie your hair into at least three ponytails or more, depending on the amount of hair you have, and cut on top of the tie, to keep the hair together. After these bundles of hair are cut, you put them in an envelope, along with your personal information, and mail to the address provided.

As most organizations target pediatric cancer patients, it is extremely rewarding to know that you have made a child’s day by giving them the hair that they are unable to have because of the hardships they are going through. Personally, it has also helped me grow as a person, by allowing me to learn more about pediatric cancer and the social/psychological effects it can have on the children fighting cancer.

Student Reporter

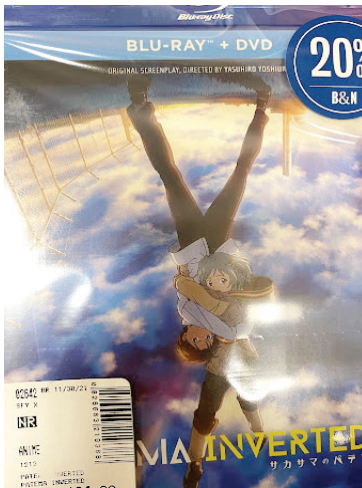
Popular Anime to Watch During the Last Week of Winter Break



Regina Lee
Grade 11
Saugus High School

As Winter Break for students is coming to a close, many may be pondering what to do to wrap up the last break of relief before a long semester that is quickly approaching. One recommendation to successfully end Winter Break is to start watching a new genre of TV shows, such as anime. Anime has become popular due to the engaging art, as well as storylines that are different from most TV shows that are currently broadcasting. Additionally, most anime shows are “binge-worthy” as there are many completed shows that are easily accessible. Therefore, to introduce anime, one should know the popular shows that most anime fans start out watching.

The anime fever that has taken over most of the world mainly started due to two popular animes: Demon Slayer and Attack on Titan. These two shows are pretty recent, causing most Gen-



An anime movie available at Barnes and Noble called Patema Inverted. [Source: Author, Regina Lee]

eration Z viewers to quickly become exposed. As a result, these shows have become extremely well known. Demon Slayer and Attack on Titan are both fictional shows that deal with monsters and demons. Although Demon Slayer and Attack on Titan may only appeal to a certain group of

viewers, they have caused a huge rise in anime popularity simply because of their completely different plots, compared to not only normal anime shows and manga but also compared to the other TV shows that are currently broadcasted.

For a more realistic genre, one may be interested in Haiyaku and A Silent Voice. Haiyaku is based on a story of a boys’ volleyball team while A Silent Voice focuses on a boy trying to make amends with a deaf girl after bullying her in elementary school. Although these two stories are both extremely different genres, the real-life storylines of these two animes are extremely powerful, especially as the stories of Haiyaku and A Silent Voice revolve around the underdog story.

However, for those who are hardcore anime fans, classic an-

ime shows are extremely important. For example, Studio Ghibli films, Naruto, Dragon Ball, One Piece, Death Note, and even Pokemon are all shows that have introduced the world to anime, especially as most of these are available on popular streaming services, such as Netflix, Hulu, and Crunchyroll. Again, the accessibility of anime is part of why anime is so worldwide.

Watching a different genre of animation compared to what most people are familiar with, such as Disney movies or Spongebob Squarepants, is always beneficial, as stepping out of one’s comfort zones is what is so great about the wide variety of TV shows that are available. As a result, in this last week of Winter Break, be sure to check out anime, whether that be the popular fiction anime, realistic fiction anime, or the binge-worthy classic anime.

Student Reporter

Stop Complaining—Our Brains Are Shrinking!



Alexis Choi
Grade 9
South High School

If people had a dollar for every time they complained, the nation’s poverty rates would be reduced in an instant. Complaining is just something humans do, similar to eating, breathing, and being too lazy to take down holiday decorations until February. For many, verbalizing our complaints is an immediate reaction to negative events. When you rant to your friend about the weather, your boss, the overpriced steak you had for dinner, it may just seem like venting—a nice way to relieve stress, for free! But is it?

The horrifying reality is that every time you open your mouth to grumble, you physically damage your brain. Studies from Stanford University show that just thirty minutes of complaining shrinks the hippocampus, the area responsible for cognitive functions, such as memory and problem-solving.

Complaining doesn’t expel negativity; it breeds it. Ever heard

of the old saying “Synapses that fire together, wire together”? In order to more easily transfer information, neurons branch out to each other when behaviors recur. This builds ‘bridges’ for electrical signals carrying relevant information to travel across. Every time this electrical charge is triggered, the synapses move closer together. With repetition, the brain rewires itself to think dark thoughts, creating a vicious cycle of pessimism and hippocampus shrinkage.

Complaining also hurts your poor, supportive friend. While you lament over that overcooked steak, your friend’s brain attempts to fire the same synapses in order to empathize with you. Simply listening to someone complain for thirty minutes also has detrimental results.

Beyond the brain, complaining increases stress hormone levels, enlarging risks for various health issues, including depression, heart diseases, and strokes.

It’s difficult to refrain from complaining. Especially with the pandemic sweeping through the nation and stress from school and work, there are more than enough issues for complainers to choose from. “I’d say I complain at least forty-five times a day,” high-school student Diane Joung said. “I think school, which is honestly very overwhelming, plays a huge factor in why I complain so much.”

How many times have you complained today? For many, the truth will be shocking. In order to reduce this number, it’s important to realize that you can create negative neural pathways, but in a similar way, positive ones, as well.

When you actively replace negative thoughts with positive, constructive ones, you can rewire your brain to focus on the good things. This pays off: a study reported in the Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences proved that optimists live up to



Complaining physically damages your brain by destroying neurons and shrinking your hippocampus. [Source: Author, Alexis Choi]

15% longer than pessimists.

Overall, aside from various health effects, the plain truth is that no one likes complainers. Spending time with negative people is mentally and emotionally exhausting. But, if you just can’t seem to stop yourself from complaining, at the very least keep your negativity away from your friends and family. Their hippocampi will thank you.