

Student Reporter

UDLA's Korean American Day Cleanup



Aidan Bang

Grade 11
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Stepping out of the car and walking toward the meeting spot, it was truly a brightening experience to see so many people coming together for this special day. It was a partly sunny day, the perfect weather to work in.

On January 13th, 2024, a volunteer organization group named UDLA, which I am a part of, grouped up together to celebrate another Korean American Day. This day was created in order to celebrate the immigration of Koreans coming to America, and to honor the contributions Korean Americans have made to society. When one thinks about a celebration, they tend to think about getting a day off and having some sort of party. UDLA did the opposite on this day, and as we have always done every time for Korean American Day, we picked up our tools and ventured onto the streets to clean up the litter.



A group photo of those who participated in the cleanup on Korean American Day. [Source: Jina Kim]

UDLA, led by Ruben Hernandez, is a volunteer organization filled with youth as well as members of the disabled community. Hernandez himself is a blind man, who lost his sight after a certain incident in his life. Although he has this obstacle, it does not stop him from doing what is good for our society and leading other youth towards this same goal. This is exactly why he always plans a cleanup for Korean American Day every year. The

street cleanup is a form of setting an example for the community and doing what is morally right. Like Hernandez himself had said, "UDLA is like a lighthouse for the community. We show the way of what's right for others to follow our example."

Although many dread the idea of cleaning, especially if it is litter on the street, this was an amazing experience that held much value and allowed those who partici-

pated to create memories. I myself had found great joy in this event, and so did my peers. We were able to engage in a lot of discussions while participating in the cleanup, making the whole thing a much more enjoyable process. Many other people had engaged in discussion with each other as well, as they had come from different areas of LA. Many stories were shared throughout the process of the cleanup, allowing for an enjoyable experience while doing something that would be considered a hard task for many people.

LA is not a very good place regarding its sanitation. UDLA is trying its best to set an example on Korean American Day to show that leaving your trash outside is wrong. Through this experience, I learned how joyful it is to help the community and partake in activities that improve our society. Hopefully, this inspires those of you reading this to do the same.

Student Reporter

Students' Thoughts on Snow Days



Zoe Lok

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This winter, many states in the US have been hit with unusually extreme winter conditions, resulting in some deaths. In my town of Lake Oswego, Oregon, schools closed for over a week, from January 13th to January 21st. Classes and other afterschool activities were canceled due to the icy road conditions and debris. Many Lake Oswego School District schools have been affected by fallen trees and bursting water pipes: Lake Grove Elementary, Palisades World Language School, Lake Oswego Middle School, and Lakeridge High School. Students were given a week off from school due to the district's day-by-day cancellations, and the number of days canceled ended up being longer than the duration of our Thanksgiving break in November. However, students loved the snow days because they could sleep in, play games, take a break from school, and, if they were lucky enough to retain power, watch TV.



Neighborhood streets froze overnight preventing families from leaving even with no power and heat. [Source: Jennifer Pek]

The severe storm and related 40-mile-per-hour winds caused many power outages and multiple damaged houses from fallen trees, affecting students' time to study and concentrate. Most of the district lost power, making most assignments hard to complete, as most require internet access. Overall, this past winter storm increased the stress students and parents undergo during this time.

Our district had previously scheduled finals from January 30th to February 1st because our

district started school after Labor Day. Many students were worried about finals because a week of classroom material was lost, and the district did not reschedule these exams. This means students had to learn two weeks of material in one week in addition to the materials for the whole semester since most classes have cumulative finals. A 10th grader at Lake Oswego High School, Jasmine Liu, commented on the feelings surrounding finals, "It's pretty stressful having this whole week off because I was just worried about the

topics that we haven't covered, but at the end of the day I think it's nice because I have so much time to review the previous stuff."

Furthermore, students who are taking AP exams are even more stressed out. The exams are scheduled during the first half of May, and the date will remain the same. So, every day is precious because we have to learn a year's worth of material in one less month than usual. Unfortunately, for our local students, our school district started later than most schools and lost a few days at the beginning of the year, but now we've lost an additional week. Many students must cram and learn more independently to prepare fully for their AP exams.

The past snowstorm has left many students content and delighted with no school but has also left many students feeling uneasy and pressured with the upcoming exams within the next two weeks and following months.

Student Reporter

Mainly Mozart Youth Orchestra's Spanish-Winter Showcase!



Aspen Lee

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To start 2024, the San Diego local Mainly Mozart Youth Orchestra held a winter showcase: España. This concert was opened to all family members and friends who had tickets to watch the performance of over 100 musician students. Community members who enjoy classical music by talented performers were also allowed to purchase tickets to come watch the Spanish showcase.

The Mainly Mozart Youth Orchestra held their concert at Lincoln High School in a theater space within the campus. In this professional space, the students were exposed to performing in front of a live audience and instructors who helped them reach where they were. For some, music could be what they pursue beyond their high school years, so every performance was an experience that builds on their joy and passion.

The two-hour performance

consisted of many songs by famous European composers. Emmanuel Chabrier, a French composer of the 19th century, wrote España for a full orchestra. Starting with a pizzicato for the strings, each instrument slowly entered the piece as the percussion boomed behind the staccato and ornaments of the piece. To follow the Chabrier piece, Spanish composer Manuel De Falla composed La Vida Breve, and the youth orchestra played The Spanish Dance act from the piece. Containing many high trills and musical lines for each instrument, the song brought life into the auditorium. It held suspense as the music built up throughout the strong beats and peculiar rhythm. The third song performed was composed in 1875 by French composer Georges Bizet. Originally performed as an opera, the orchestra took movements and turned each piece into a work of art. Solos by clarinets, flutes,



MMYO's Advanced Orchestra wrapping up the final song of the España-themed winter showcase. [Source: Emma Lee]

violins, harps, and many other instruments made the Carmen Suite intentional and told a story to the listeners. Nikolai Rimsky-Korsakov, a Russian composer of the mid-1800s, created a piece that consisted of five movements, all inspired by Spanish folk melodies. It was softly introduced after the Carmen Suite and played delicately yet powerfully as the audience experienced the Capriccio Espagnol suite's musical line reach every corner of the theater.

Members of the MMYO Advanced Orchestra ended the con-

cert with a subtle yet beautiful piece composed by Maurice Ravel, a French composer of the 20th century. Representing the sounds he heard as a young boy in the factory, the snare drum enters the scene and plays a steady rhythm for the entirety of the song—16 minutes. One by one, each wind and brass instrument has a solo that is smoothly connected by the lasting sound of the drum. At the end of the last solo, all the orchestra's instruments come together to end the piece firmly and to end the entire concert with an unforgettable finish.

Student Reporter

A Piano Prodigy Returns to Perform at Carnegie Hall



Eonbin Lim
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Grover Cleveland High School

Yunchan Lim, a South Korean pianist, is most known for winning the Cliburn Competition, an exceedingly difficult yet renowned competition that selects just a few participants, from 14 countries, from among hundreds of brilliant and dedicated pianists. Yunchan Lim, despite being just 18 years old and the youngest out of all the competitors, won the gold medal at the Van Cliburn International Piano Competition, therefore becoming the youngest champion in its history.

Yunchan Lim will do an all-Chopin etude performance at Carnegie Hall on February 21st. Chopin's etudes are noted for their great expressiveness as well as their emotional depth, but this does not imply that they are technically simple. He will be performing Chopin's Op. 10 No. 2. This piece, often considered



Music my friend and I used when attempting to play one of the pieces that Yunchan performed during the Cliburn competition. [Source: Author, Eonbin Lim]

the hardest Chopin etude, is distinguished by its quick chromatic passages and ability to balance the dynamic range. Playing all of these songs back-to-back is pure brilliance and deserves to be acknowledged by more people.

In a press conference after the Cliburn competition, Lim stated, "I made up my mind that I will live my life only for the sake of music, and I decided that I will

give up everything for music. ... I wanted my music to become deeper, and if that desire reached the audience, I'm satisfied." This shows his complete commitment to prioritizing music and his connection with his audience above anything else. He aims to create a performance that surpasses its notes to touch the audience's heart and emotions. His artistic philosophy will add much more to the upcoming performance in

February at Carnegie Hall.

In addition to Yunchan Lim's exceptional achievements and artistic philosophy, his scholastic background has been a pillar of his success. He gained popularity quickly after taking up piano seriously at the age of nine. At 13, he was admitted to the Korea National University of Arts, demonstrating his exceptional potential. Within a few years, he had won several prizes, including the Isang Yun Competition, at the age of 15. The combination of exceptional education and intuitive skill, combined with Yunchan Lim's awe-inspiring creativity, personally makes me think Yunchan is among the top pianists ever to have lived. All of these accomplishments and talent for music promise a remarkable musical experience when he performs at Carnegie Hall on February 21st.

Student Reporter

Look Out For These Up and Coming Musical Artists in 2024!!



Sain Kim
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Los Angeles County and Orange County are two of the largest hot spots for tourism in California. Whenever you see a country-wide world tour by a large artist, I can guarantee you that either LAC or OC will be on that list. Every time Drake or Taylor Swift drops by the city, it's a massive spectacle, and it's all I hear about for weeks. Yet no one stops to think about the smaller artists residing in these two cities who are paving the way to break out of the bubble they're in and into the mainstream with their niche sound. Musical acts such as the band "Julie" and soloist Quadeca are two artists on the brink of popping that bubble and finding a larger audience.

The band "Julie," consisting of Keyan Pourzand, Dillon Lee, and Alex Brady, is a shoegaze and grunge/alternative rock and noise band originating from Orange County, California. Forming just before the start of COVID-19 in 2020 and releasing their first single, "Flutter," just a couple of months later, they have already gained a cult following in the underground shoegaze community. Their atten-

tion-grabbing walls of distorted guitars, energetic drum patterns, and sluggish yet powerful vocal delivery give rise to a fresh, modern sound to the mostly stagnant shoegaze scene. Not only are they a shoegaze act, but through their catchy melodies, lyrics, and hooks, "Julie" has also been able to extend their reach to other genres, specifically alternative rock and noise rock. For now, they have only released a handful of singles and one



Quadeca's Los Angeles performance at The Roxy Theatre (6/3/23) on his QQQ Tour. [Source: Author, Sain Kim]

EP, yet they have already opened for big bands such as the Foo Fighters and have just recently played a set at Tyler, The Creator's festival "Camp Flog Gnaw."

Benjamin Lasky, stage name Quadeca, is a multi-instrumentalist rapper and singer-songwriter based in the city of Los Angeles, California. First starting as a decently successful music-based YouTuber, he steadily began his

transition to full-time musician after his 2019 hip-hop album "Voice Memos," followed by his 2021 experimental hip-hop/glitch-hop album "From Me To You." Just one year later, he released his self-produced and critically acclaimed folktronica/art pop concept album "I Didn't Mean To Haunt You." By combining elements of industrial hip-hop, experimental R&B, and glitch-hop, Quadeca tells the story of a lonely ghost trying to find peace after years of yearning to find his family in the afterlife. With support from features such as Danny Brown and the Sunday Service Choir, Quadeca seamlessly tells his haunting story through muddy layers of guitars, eerie synths, liminal sounds, and brash glitches. Although not as popular as "Julie," his art has been critically acclaimed and was considered for album of the year in 2023.

Although you may hear names such as Taylor Swift everywhere you go, if you dig into your local music scene, I promise, you'll find some amazing music and new bands you might not have heard of otherwise.

Student Reporter

What Do Bananas Have To Do With Covid?



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The most harvested fruit, the banana, produces 115.74 million metric tons. COVID-19 has recently crossed 7 million confirmed lives, according to the CDC. But, what do bananas have to do with COVID, anyway?

Bananas have a "COVID" of their own, the Panama disease. This banana epidemic has no cure, and bananas cannot recover like humans do from COVID. With the origin of its name coming from the disease hailing from Panama, the disease has evolved over time with new strains, pestering farm owners and banana fanatics. Bananas' most popular variant, the Cavendish, is the biggest victim of the Panama disease. Over time, as the disease passed from tree to

tree with the help of water, soil, and farming equipment, it genetically evolved into a super fungus, surpassing the superior plant immune system of its counterparts.

The pesky disease is a fungus that enters the plant from the roots of the tree and blocks its water intake by suffocating the tree's xylem, a vascular tissue that transports both water and nutrients. By suffocating this xylem, the growth of banana trees are hindered, and this essentially acts as a death sentence. Scientists have desperately looked for cures, but to no avail, and a workaround has been insurmountably difficult, and not many leads are available.

Historically, the Panama dis-

ease's first strains affected a different type of bananas: the Gros Michel, also known as "Big Mike" bananas. They were the plantation industry's favorite type to use because of their lucrativity and convenience, but years of neglect eventually led to an inevitable infection. The banana industry faced a problem: limited genetic diversity. And unfortunately, a combination of corporate greed, neglect, and other socioeconomic concerns forced the same problem onto the Cavendish, which served as a specimen that could initially resist the banana epidemic. Ultimately, it, too, would fall short of the malicious fungus within a few decades.

As part of the public, we can help



A ripe Cavendish mocks the Panama Disease, although the bananas themselves are not affected by the fungus. [Source: Author, Derrick Ahn]

to solve this banana crisis by supporting the export of genetically resistant bananas, even if they do cost a tad bit more than the Cavendish. Or else both humans and plantations might go—bananas!