Student Reporter

Harmony of Musicians: An Unbreakable Bond



Hannelle Yang Grade 10 Campbell Hall



Orchestra students take a picture together before a concert to not only remember the show but also their friendship with each other.

[Source: Author, Hannelle Yang]

Behind every orchestra concert's soothing chord, grand cadence, or gorgeous melody is a musical ensemble's unbreakable bond. You may sit back into your velvet cushioned seat and ponder the beauty of the song, but what makes the performance so beautiful? What makes the emotion seep through

the harmonies and settle deep within the seabed of your heart? The answer lies in the unique voices of the individuals, all strung together with the power of cooperation and camaraderie

"Humans are interesting animals. There's always something that brings them together, wheth-

er it's art, sports, or whatever. For me, it was music. I found my home in music," remarked violinist Kate Weiss during her senior speech. Unfortunately, many individuals struggle to find their "home," as Kate did, meaning that not many musicians know the blessing of being part of a musical ensemble. Research from "Musicians' Union" shows that 80% of musicians experience "burnout," a state of mental exhaustion from activities they usually enjoy. That is why ensembles are so beneficial to maintaining musical treasures. In fact, it has been further proven that working in positive environments with other people can help revive one's love for music. This means musical ensembles are essential for keeping musicians motivated and dedicated.

Novice musicians may be intimidated, as there are so many ensembles to choose from: orchestra, jazz band, you name it. However, the truth is that any musical ensemble can bring musicians

with diverse talents together to create something beautiful, regardless of how big or small. A musical ensemble is like a melting pot. Filled with different people harboring different passions, it blends many talents into a group where bonds and memories can be made. From getting to know each other through hours of strenuous practice to feeling the joy of a successful concert, the connection between musicians can be nourished by the orchestral experience. Every band encourages an emotional connection to be built between members, which can hold the group together and help them materialize their pure feelings through their playing. Without this connection, only a bland melody would drift through the concert halls.

So, the next time you watch an orchestra raise their instruments to follow the swing of a conductor's arm, remember what you see in front of you is the artwork and effort of a hundred musicians bonded together as one.

Student Reporter

KCPC Korean School Is Now Open!



Minjoo Kim
Grade 10
Gwinnett School of Mathematics,
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The KCPC Korean School, Duluth, Georgia, founded by the Korean Community Presbyterian Church, serves as a bridge for Korean Americans and other interested individuals to reconnect with their heritage and culture. With more than 50 students enrolled in the second semester, KCPC Korean School opened on January 13th for every one of various ethnic and age groups.

Culture shows the identity and tradition of a particular group, which is a special bond between people who share a similar language, religion, or ethnicity. During the long journey of Korean American emigrants, they might have forgotten the culture that they once had. To reconnect them with Korean culture, the KCPC Korean program not only focuses on Korean language lessons but also holds special events like chuseok and seollal. Chuseok is Ko-



A student is playing a matching game

on the whiteboard.

[Source: Author, Minjoo Kim]

rean Thanksgiving Day that gives thanks to their ancestors, and seollal is a national holiday to celebrate the New Year and have good luck. As one of the assistants at KCPC Korean School, I saw many second and third-generation immigrants enjoying these events and learning the culture.

Many Korean American parents wish for their children to learn Korean so they can communicate with their relatives who are familiar with it. As such, KCPC Korean School provides a textbook for every single student and has at least one assistant per class. They also divide students by their age, from pre-K to 9th grade, for students' adaptation along with peers so they can feel free to communicate with each other in Korean. For young children from pre-K to 1st grade, many teachers sing fun Korean songs like the alphabet song so students won't easily be distracted or feel bored. Like any American school, the school's structured curriculum covers various aspects supporting writing, reading, speaking, listening, and grammar so students can fluently utilize the language one day.

Every Saturday, all students need to arrive at school before 9:30 a.m., and parents can pick up their students at 12:30 p.m. During class, students have some break time, snack time, and recess time. For recess, students often participate in traditional Korean dancing or singing, such as Ganggangsullae and Arirang.

KCPC Korean School will be suitable for students and parents who want to make connections with Korean culture. For 16 weeks (one semester) and only 200 dollars, the program includes textbooks and services such as a playground, four hours of teaching, and events. As an assistant who volunteered for three years, I highly recommend this Korean school to experience advanced Korean learning and the enormous size of Korean traditional events.

Student Reporter

The Largest Coffee Shop in the World!



Hajoon Song
Grade 10
International School of Beijing

Almost every adult drinks a cup of coffee in the morning. The importance of coffee to focus on work has increased explosively, and the most renowned coffee shop is Starbucks. In Shanghai, there is a Starbucks Reserve Roastery, which is the largest Starbucks coffee shop in the world. According to Business Insider, its total size is up to 30,000 square feet. Inside, there are a variety of differences compared to other normal Starbucks stores. I went to the Shanghai Starbucks and experienced many special, unique aspects of the coffee shop.

One of the main differences between a normal coffee shop and Shanghai's Starbucks Reserve Roastery is the diversity of menu choices. Various kinds of beverages are sold, regardless of if they are coffee, frappuccino, smoothie, or other drinks. Foods were more diverse than the drinks, where there were both desserts and meals, which could target all customers who wanted to enjoy



A variety of food and drink choices are provided in the Shanghai Starbucks Reserve Roastery.

the Starbucks Reserve Roastery

as a dessert shop or a restaurant.

Every food and drink that the

Shanghai Starbucks had looked

delicious, attracting my curios-

ity to try out most of them during

the visit. A variety of choices was

a great and interesting option for

the Shanghai Starbucks reserve

Another difference was the

massive size of the coffee shop;

not only were there countless

[Source: Author, Hajoon Song]

seats that could serve more than 100 people but also a large machine system to roast coffee in large quantities was implanted and exposed to the customers. Although I was not familiar with any coffee roasting or grinding experiences, I was amazed by the machine that composed such a significant space in the coffee shop. Many customers were also amazed by the machine, and it was a popular photo spot. Many



The large tower attracts a lot of customers who are amazed by its beauty, followed by a large system of a coffee grinding machine. [Source: Author, Hajoon Song]

beans were put into the machine to be ground and fined.

A visit to the Shanghai Starbucks Reserve Roastery is recommended if you love to take photos of the foods and the place since everything in the coffee shop is a great photo source. Furthermore, I recommend this Starbucks to those who want to focus on their work because the large space gives customers some free space bubble and not to get distracted by others.

Student Reporter

Gyeongseong Creature: It's More Than a Monstrous Thriller



Alison Hwang
Grade 11
Crean Lutheran High School



Immersing myself in one of the most intense moments in Gyeongsung Creature

[Source: Author, Alison Hwang]

Today, everyone has heard of Seoul, but has everyone heard of Gyeongsung?

Well, Gyeongsung is indeed Seoul's old name. But similar to how many individuals are not aware of this (including me, at first), not everyone knows of the painful history behind the hit Netflix series Gyeongseong Creature.

Director Jung Dong-Yoon's ex-

cellent choice of casting Han So Heeand Park Seo Joon, two of some of the most well-known actors internationally, played a significant role in gaining mass popularity with a global audience. However, with the incredible production consisting of 70 billion won (53 Million US dollars), the series was able to achieve a creative storyline with the author's message of grit and perseverance amidst tough times.

The story is set in the spring of 1945, historically when Korea was going through an emotionally devastating era. Backtracking to 1910, Japan had officially imperialized Korea as a colony instead of a territory after multiple attempts to take control. Once they had claimed Korea, they culturally and politically reformed the nation to the point where Korea's name was replaced with "The Empire of Japan." Any aspect of Korean culture—from speaking the language to the

press, was absolutely banned. Not only were Koreans forced to abandon their roots, but they were also forced to pledge their entire lives to Japan.

The series uses this historical background to focus on Jang Tae Sang (played by Park Seo Joon), a wealthy pawnshop owner who is suddenly accused of adultery and is forced into finding Superintendent Ishikawa's missing lover, Myeongja. On his way to complete the mission, he runs into Yoon Chae Ok (played by Han So Hee), a young investigator searching for her long-lost mom alongside her father. When they decide to team up and successfully sneak their way into the Ongseong Hospital, they find themselves in deep trouble, discovering thousands of lockedup Gyeongseong civilians. Yet the situation becomes even more complicated when those innocent civilians are merely identified as test subjects for a biological experiment conducted in the basement of the hospital, and the hospital has already succeeded in creating a monstrous creature that uncontrollably destroys anyone in sight.

Although it is far more thrilling to dive into the series blindfolded, it is also important to be aware of thebrutality of both the production and the historical implications. Reinforcing Korea's hurtful past through a symbolic portrayal of a clandestine hospital is currently spreading awareness around the

As of now, with both parts 1 and 2 out on Netflix, K-Netizens have given mixed reviews. Some praise the insight into Korea's dark history, while others point out the flaws the series has despite its 70 billion won budget. Nevertheless, I recommend Gyeongseong Creature to anyone who wishes to learn and recognize the strenuous suffering Koreans had to endure against Japan.

Student Reporter

The Profound Study Culture of Irvine



Audrey Park
Grade 10
Northwood High School

Imagine a relatively quiet workplace: it might have a laptop lit to assignments, a few paper notes laid out without any particular arrangement, and a simple drink. If you are a high school student in the Irvine Unified School District, you're likely to visualize the sentence within the setting of a cafe alongside many students who have a workplace that matches this description.

Throughout the past few months, several cafe locations and public spaces have seen a growing influx of study groups or students using the available tables to be productive. While there is nothing wrong with the simple act of productivity, there has been an unspoken consensus regarding the trend: students increasingly find these spaces to be the ideal spotforstudying.

Myinitialencounterwiththetrend happened a few months ago when I satdownin one of the many booths at a cafe and observed the busy atmosphere while eating my dinner. Soon enough, I noticed the unusually large number of individuals typing away at their laptops and scanning study materials, identifying them as fellow students. The "busy" atmosphere



Cafes have provided the ideal environment for numerous young adults and students of the Irvine School District to tackle academic subjects. [Source: Author, Audrey Park]

in the cafe was not generated from the sound of overlapping conversations and dining but rather from the visuals of various study groups. I grew increasingly interested in the unusual, academic air. I even felt a bit self-conscious about having a slightly warmed egg sandwich in my hand instead of a pencil; I was tempted to pull out a notebook and study for a test that I didn't have.

In sum, the unusual yet intriguing encounter of diligent students in such a bustling location piqued my attention across several aspects. Similarly, I've noted that contradictions often function concurrently in order to reach advantageous outcomes. Just

as how entrepreneurs begin the day off by completing the most difficult task, or "eating the frog," the many students of Irvine seemed to increase their productivity by bringing work into a lounge-like atmosphere. Most individuals would not imagine the relaxing ambiance of winding down in a cafe with the hectic nature of completing assignments, but the Irvine School District does.

Now that I look back, I picture the experiences in the same context of how an art patron would dissect a Renaissance painting. The mundaneyetbustlingnature of the scenes exemplified the Baroque depiction of contemporary life in the 16th century. The expressions painted on the faces of the working students ranged from intense concentration to quiet contemplation, exhibiting the muted vigoroffinishingassignmentsbefore a deadline. The varying patterns in the cafe furniture provided a realistic palette of neutral colors, while the textured cushions and walls helped transferthescenetoacanvas.

I've learned to appreciate the unusual clash of atmospheres in everyday life and dissect how certain goals can unify communities—such as the Irvine School District— to fill a blank canyas

Student Reporter

Vrej Agajanian - Candidate for City Council



Reena Jeong
Grade 12
Crescenta Valley High School

Recently, I had the privilege of interviewing Mr. Vrej Agajanian, our former district mayor and city councilmember. Heisrunning to be a part of the Glendale City Council and has the experiences, achievements, and plans to be a successful change-maker.

change-maker.

Mr. Agajanian was the city mayor during the height of the pandemic, from April 2020 to April 2021, and a previous city council member from 2017 to 2022. When he learned that the lockdown and pandemic procedures were causing small businesses to shut down, he provided support by granting thousands of dollars to those businesses to assist in their growth and success. Even during the midst of the lockdown, while the city hall was closed, Mr. Agajanian

 $made sure to keep his of fice available \\ and open to the public.$

Mr. Agajanian stated that his greatest concern is for the safety and well-being of all the residents living in Glendale. Therefore, he has added 39 hybrid police patrol vehicles, improved the city's water system by replacing pipes, and replaced 1,400 street lights with L.E.D. lights, to enhance the protection of all residents. Additionally, he recognized the issue with affordable housing in Glendale, especially among the senior and lowincome residents. He stated that 66% of individuals living in Glendale lived in apartments and that there was an affordable housing crisis with the high rent costs. Thus,to combat this issue, he created and passed a plan to have 507 affordable housing units in Glendale; 157 of which will be ready this year, and 340 units, which are in the process of being ready next year.

As a California-licensed professional engineer, and president of two local and well-known TV stations, as well as the nightly newshost for the past 24 years, Mr. Agajanian utilizes his platforms to inform the public of political and social issues, and he continues to use his passion to assist all residents.

Furthermore, Mr. Agajanian emphasizes the importance of family and community. Therefore, he is continuing to use his voice to demonstrate support for all communities and wants to continue making an impact in our district. Mr.



Mr. Vrej Agajanian, our former district mayor and city council member. He is running to be a part of the Glendale City

Agajanian advocates for a safer and cleaner Glendale, a city that will go back to being one of the safest cities in the nation and a place where children, parents, and all residents may prosper and thrive.