

Music

“Found Heaven”

Conan Gray

2024



“Found Heaven” is the third studio album by 26-year-old American singer-songwriter, Conan Gray. This album, released by Republic Records, takes heavy inspiration from ‘70s and ‘80s pop hits from artists like Elton John, David Bowie, Queen, Depeche Mode, and more. The glam-pop influence is clear on all 13 of the tracks on the album with songs like “[Lonely Dancers](#)” which has a 70s disco effect, “[Miss You](#)” sounding straight off a Depeche Mode vinyl, or “[Forever With Me](#)”, clearly inspired by big ballads of artists like Queen and Elton John. Gray’s vocals throughout the entire album are incredible as he showcases a wider range of both

notes and style than he ever has before. In comparison to his past albums “[Superache](#)” and “[Kid Krow](#)”, Gray proves that he can create many styles of music as “Found Heaven” definitely has a different feel than the other studio albums and singles that he has produced in the past. While there are some songs that have a goofier, more lighthearted tone (see: “[Bourgeoisies](#)” and “[Boys and Girls](#)”), Gray doesn’t spare his audience any of the heartbreak that past albums are known for causing. “[Winner](#)”, a song about Gray’s relationship with his father, is incredibly powerful and utilises the drama of the glam-pop style in order to elicit an emotional response from the audience. “Found Heaven” consistently showcases Conan Gray’s flexibility and range within different styles of music, as this album is essentially a genre switch from his typical indie-pop, calm and sad music. Though it was a risk, this style really suited the artist and made for a very fun and surprising album that’s packed full of absolute bangers. **-Morgan Cranford**

“CHROMAKOPIA”

Tyler, The Creator

2024



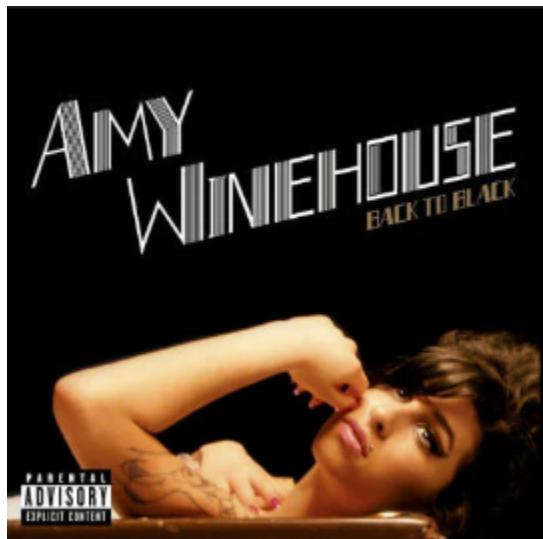
“CHROMAKOPIA” by Tyler, The Creator was an immediate sensation at its release with 85 million listens on Spotify during its first day making it the biggest hip-hop hit of 2024 and top 20 of all time. The album has hits like [“Sticky \(feat. GloRilla, SexyyRed & Lil Wayne\)”](#), [“St. Chroma \(feat. Daniel Caesar\)”](#), and [“Like Him \(feat. Lola Young\)”](#). Tyler, The Creator popped up on the scene around 2008 and grew even more substantially in 2011. Since the rise of apps like Instagram and TikTok, his songs have become part of major social media trends and at the moment he has 52.1 million Spotify listeners.

“CHROMAKOPIA” is all about Tyler’s struggles as an artist in the music industry as well as some good old-fashioned songs about his love life. Songs such as “Like Him (feat. Lola Young)” explores his life without his father talking about the struggles and even reenacting conversations with his mother. He hits his listeners with a powerful line, as if asking his mother, “Do I look like him?” Track 1, “St. Chroma”, is all about Tyler's motivation to rap and make music, and the “fire” within his soul, and the feeling within that he will succeed. And succeeded he did. The album is an incredible work by Tyler and in my opinion, one of his best. The album is one of extreme emotion and details his complex feelings. Though some songs are about, for lack of a better phrase, less philosophical and emotional things, his album is an all around hit with all of the tracks being extremely unique. Through this album, he has proved that he is a once in a lifetime creator and it is rare that a musician like him will be seen again. - **Lila Qualteri**

[“Back To Black \(Deluxe Edition\)”](#)

Amy Winehouse

2006 (Explicit Content)



“Back To Black (Deluxe Edition)” by British singer and songwriter, Amy Jade Winehouse, was her second and final album she released based on her single “Back to Black”. This album was released in 2006 by Island Records, five years before she tragically passed away on July 23rd of 2011. Her last recorded song released before she passed was a duet with American singer Tony Bennett. Their single from, “[Body and Soul](#)”, was released the 14th of September, 2011 on MTV to commemorate what would have been her 28th birthday. Her “Back to Black” album covers her life through her drug abuse, going to rehab, and her relationships, all of the grief, guilt, infidelity, heart

break, and traumas in her relationships. Her whole album started with the song “[Back To Black](#)”, which she wrote really quickly and easily because all of her lyrics were what she was going through at the time and needed to get off her chest. Winehouse had married Blake Fielder-Civil whose actions of infidelity actually inspired most of the songs and album. -**Chloe Martin**

[“Alligator Bites Never Heal”](#)

Doechii

2024 (Explicit)



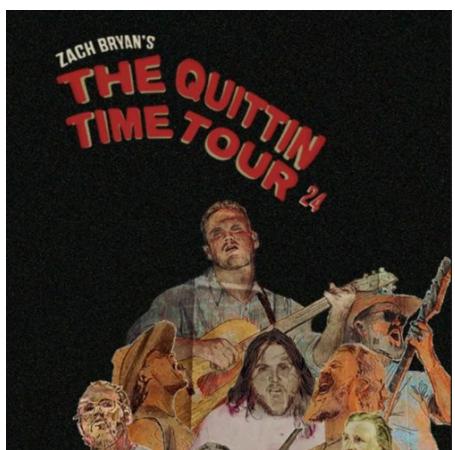
Doechii's rise to prominence was kickstarted in 2021, when her single “[Yucky Blucky Fruitcake](#),” from EP “[Oh The Places You'll Go](#),” began to trend on TikTok. Since then, Doechii has signed with Top Dawg Entertainment, the same label that signed incredibly influential artists like Kendrick Lamar and SZA, and her career has skyrocketed. Two Grammy nominations, one for the 2022 MTV Music Awards, opening for SZA and multiple major features, including one on Tyler, the Creator's 2024 album “[Chromakopia](#),” Doechii has proved herself one of the best and most versatile up-and-coming artists of the last few years. This

versatility, I believe, is most well showcased in Doechii's latest project, "Alligator Bites Never Heal." Though Doechii has made it clear that "Alligator Bites Never Heal" is not an album, but a mixtape, one that she says was finalized only a month before its release, this didn't stop it from receiving immediate and overwhelmingly positive attention from the public. *Alligator Bites*, with its 19 tracks, spans less than 50 minutes, and with an incredibly creative and diverse list of tracks, it never feels drawn out or boring. From the panicked, urgent feel of "[DENIAL IS A RIVER](#)," a fast-paced track framed as a conversation between Doechii and a therapist character, delving into her feelings and conflicts being so quickly thrust into the fast-paced life of a star, to the slower, more intimate "[BLOOM](#)," the beats and instrumentals accompanying Doechii's unique lyrics, *Alligator Bites* is not only a masterful show of sound design, but a deeply personal and moving work. Vulnerable and hard-hitting, fun and upbeat, mellow and intimate, *Alligator Bites* highlights Doechii's versatility in her music, and her refusal to let her surroundings influence the way she feels her way through her art. - **Nyah Marquez-Dean**

["The Quittin Time Tour"](#)

2024-2025

Zach Bryan



Zach Bryan kicked off his third world tour in March of 2024, but this one is different from his previous tours, 'Ain't for Tamin', 'American Heartbreak', and 'Burn, Burn, Burn' because of the fact that he was selling out full football stadiums for 'The Quittin Time Tour.' The setlist for this tour had on average 24 songs per show, including hits like "[I Remember Everything](#)", "[Something in the Orange](#)", "[Overtime](#)", and "[Revival](#)", which was the encore that lasted over ten minutes. In the midst of his tour, he came to Denver, and played at Empower Field Stadium for two nights in June. Based on my personal experience, this was one of the best concerts to see

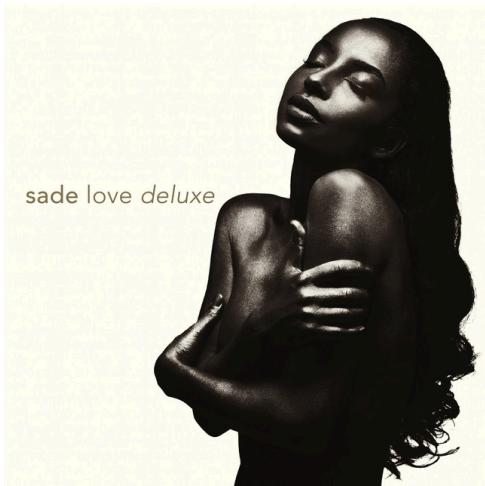
because of the way that he connects with the crowd. In between every song, he would say "Thank you so much for coming," and continue to put on a show to never forget. The lights, the way you could feel the stadium shaking because of the amount of people there, that created an irreplaceable memory. The setlist had the perfect combination of songs from all of his albums so that everyone could have a great night. Zach Bryan's music is arguably some of the most relatable and recognizable, so even if you don't know all the songs, you can listen to the lyrics, and understand why he is as famous as he is, because of the music he creates. 'The Quittin Time Tour' is on a small break before it continues to London, then back to the United States. All in all, I believe that if you

get the chance to go to one of these concerts, you should, because of the memories, music, and opportunity to experience it yourself. - **Kamryn Casebeer**

“Love Deluxe”

Sade Adu

1992



Released in 1992 by Epic Records, Sade Adu's timeless album “Love Deluxe” is filled with songs about love, war, and peace. This collection of deeply emotional songs was the then 33-year-old British-Nigeria's fourth studio album. Drawing on her life and experiences, she created a universally understood motif in songs like [“Feel No Pain.”](#) In this song, she sends an overall message of forgiveness and the importance of second chances by connecting these overarching ideas to her familial struggles.

Sade's beautiful lyrics and angelic voice infuse life into the stories of love and heartbreak. Her music feels like lying under the summer sun without care, embraced by the warmth that

soothes and comforts her. The listening experience feels almost as intimate and nurturing as a hug.

This is prominent in [“No Ordinary Love.”](#) the album's opener and arguably its most iconic track. The lyrics and tone of the song support ideas of undying love. Another one of her songs, [“Like A Tattoo.”](#) went viral on TikTok some time ago, opening the doors for the younger generations to discover the artist Sade. The song itself imprints onto you with every lyric. Throughout the album, Sade uses many different instruments to combine the various moods and styles of the songs. Overall, the album is perfect for listeners who enjoy slower R&B songs with intricate lyrics. This album is one of my favorites of all time because of its pace and fluidity between songs. -**Rowan Watkins**

“Igor”

Tyler, The Creator

2019



In 2019, Tyler, The Creator's world shifted, with the release of “Igor” Tyler had his first number one on the US Billboard 200, for Tyler, this was much needed in his career and helped bring him to the level of fame he has now. It features many hits like “[EARTHQUAKE](#)” (1,111,479,534 streams) “[NEW MAGIC WAND](#)” (732,441,755 streams) and “[ARE WE STILL FRIENDS?](#)” (571,229,7111 streams). This album was a bold “transformative” leap in Tyler's career. His previous albums [Flower Boy](#), and [Wolf](#), were much calmer, and predictable roller coasters, but in 2019 Tyler came crashing in with “Igor” where he shocked his fans with an

emotional masterpiece that described the ups and downs of falling in love. In this album, Igor, one of Tyler's gothic alter egos, follows a love triangle between Tyler, his male crush, and his male crush's female love interest. The album describes the dynamic conflict and describes Tyler as he goes through the many emotions he has, trying to navigate his way into a relationship with complications that he may not be able to handle. The beginning of his album starts with a softer tone as Igor watches Tyler, become more desperate and heartbroken, as it goes from “[EARTHQUAKE](#)” to “[RUNNING OUT OF TIME](#)”, into “[I DON'T LOVE YOU ANYMORE](#)”, and finishes with “[ARE WE STILL FRIENDS?](#)” Tyler's emotions go up and down as he realizes he may be chasing a relationship he will never catch. “[Igor](#)” is described as a masterpiece. - **Zeta Abell**

[“Perverts”](#)

Ethel Cain

2025



On January 8th, 2025, “[Perverts](#),” produced and written by Ethel Cain, was released as Cain’s 4th studio album. “Perverts” is made up of nine songs that make it an hour and 29 minutes long. Cain states the album was originally inspired by the book “[Knockemstiff](#)” by Donald Ray Pollock, a novel that follows two siblings growing up in malicious abuse from their parents. She says the album started as “a character study about different “perverts”... a sex addict, a pedophile, an arsonist, a sedative addict, etc.” However, the album wound up straying far from the original concept, “[Amber Waves](#)” and “[Punish](#)” are the only two songs left from this early draft. The final product is an

exploration of Cain’s theory about music in relation to the “closeness” to God. According to Cain in a YouTube video called, “[the ring, the great dark, and the divine theater,](#)” her philosophy describes the journey one takes through music to feel ecstasy and enter “The Divine Theater,” which Cain describes as the closest one can get to God. The event that brings one into “The Divine Theater” is called “The Ring,” which is the full spectrum or frequency of a song when it is at its climax. This is reflected in the first song on the album “[Perverts](#),” which is a 12 minute song made up of low unsettling vocals and an almost hypnotic, droning instrumental. This song encapsulates the start of Cain’s journey and brings The Ring into actuality. Cain’s music tends to have heavy biblical themes as seen in her 3rd studio album “[Preachers Daughter](#),” which carries into many of the songs on “[Perverts](#)” such as “[Housofpsychoticwomn](#),” where the “e” and the “a” are removed from the word referencing Adam and Eve, as well as in “[Vacillator](#),” where the phrase “If you love me, keep it to yourself” is repeated, alluding to an adage found in John 14:15. “[Perverts](#)” is an eerie, disturbing album to listen to. The songs are long and slow with unsettling sound effects such as that of a lawn mower and a squeaky swing set. It evokes a liminal feeling in a way and is meant to make one feel afraid and uncomfortable. Cain’s incredible production abilities make this possible through combining low echoing vocals and sustained synthesizer chords, combining sounds to effectively create, as Cain puts it, a Ring. This album reminds one of being lost on cold dark nights, and the confusion and fear that accompanies them as they become consumed in the unknown. This collection of songs is perfect for anyone who enjoys a disquieting oddness. Individuals searching for

something out of the ordinary will immediately fall for the unique, unquestionable, excellence, that is “Perverts.” **-Jax McKinnon**

“HIT ME HARD AND SOFT”

Billie Eilish

2024 (Explicit)



“HIT ME HARD AND SOFT” is Billie Eilish’s third studio-recorded album released on May 17, 2024. Billie Eilish Pirate Baird O’Connell is an American singer-songwriter from Los Angeles, California. Eilish and her Brother Finneas O’Connell have been making music together since Eilish’s debut song, “[Ocean Eyes](#)” in 2015. “[SKINNY](#),” “[LUNCH](#),” “[CHIHIRO](#),” [BIRDS OF A FEATHER](#),” “[WILDFLOWER](#),” “[THE GREATEST](#),” “[L'AMOUR DE MA VIE](#),” “[THE DINER](#),” “[BITTERSUIT](#),” and “[BLUE](#)” are the 10 tracks on **“HIT ME HARD AND SOFT”**. From this album, I really

enjoyed listening to the song “[WILDFLOWER](#).” The song’s overall emotion, how the song has so many different backing vocals in the second verse. “Well, good things don’t last (Good things don’t last.)” is only one of the many.

The tour for this album started in Quebec City, on September 29th. The openers for the US tour are Towa Bird, Nat and Alex Wolfe, The Marias, Ashniko, and in LA, FINNEAS. The US leg of the tour ended in LA just before Christmas. During the 5 nights in LA, she sang beautiful versions of “O Holy Night”, “I’ll Be Home For Christmas”, “Silver Bells”, “Have Yourself a Merry Little Christmas”, and “Silent Night.”

At the end of 2024, [BIRDS OF A FEATHER](#) was Spotify’s most-streamed song with 1.755 billion global streams. That’s just one of many of Eilish’s accomplishments from 2024. Also includes six Grammy nominations, winning her second Oscar, her second Golden Globe, and being Apple Music’s top streamed artist of 2024. - **Sofia Pelletier**

["Kansas Anymore"](#)

Role Model

2024 (Explicit)



"Kansas Anymore" is a second studio recorded album by a singer-songwriter from Maine Tucker Pillsbury, professionally known as Role Model. "Kansas Anymore" was released on July 19, 2024, with 13 tracks. ["Writing's On The Wall"](#), ["Look At That Women"](#), ["Scumbag"](#), ["Oh, Gemini"](#), ["Frances"](#), ["Superglue"](#), ["The Dinner"](#), ["Deeply Still In Love"](#), ["Slut Era Interlude"](#), ["So Far Gone \(feat. Lizzy McAlpine\)"](#), ["Slip Fast"](#), ["Compromise"](#), and ["Something, Somehow, Someday"](#). My favorite track from this album is "Frances." This song is mostly upbeat with emotional lyrics about a recent breakup. I like this

song because of the lyrics. For example, "But at the end of the day, what's my mother gonna say when I come home crying?" It puts the song together and makes it an emotional ballad—besides just this song, "So Far Gone (feat. Lizzy)", "Something, Somehow, Someday", and "Compromise" are also pretty emotional songs. From lyrics, "Well, I know most things end in a disaster for ya / But I'm still keeping all my hopes up high," in "Compromise" to, "But now I drink like my brother / Since the day we went our separate ways."

Role Model recently opened for Gracie Abrams's tour for the "Secret Of Us" in September. He is currently on his tour that started in November and will be coming to Denver in March. The tour will end in April before going back to open for Abrams once again in August. Role Model is still a small underground artist but will play his first arena with Abrams at the Kia Forum, Madison Square Gardens, and more. - Sofia Pelletier

["Pure Heroine"](#)

Lorde

2013 (Explicit)



"Pure Heroine" by Lorde is her debut album that boosted Lorde to fame. The New Zealand singer and songwriter was only 16 when this album was released and immediately acquired fans. The album's fame was led by its single ["Royals"](#) but 11 years later ["400 Lux"](#), ["Ribs"](#), ["Team"](#), ["Glory and Gore"](#) and others still make appearances today, an album that truly withstands time. Since then Lorde has released two other albums,

“[Melodrama](#)”, and “[Solar Power](#)” and various other singles including “[The Love Club](#)”. The album “Pure Heroine” encapsulates the characteristics and essence of being a teenager. Bringing in elements of social hierarchy and fame and what value that holds for a teenager. Lorde’s use of honesty and vulnerability within her songs makes her lyrics more meaningful and relatable, allowing the listener to feel her emotions. Her lyrics are neat and clever while creating a sense of rebellion and unleashed, unapologetic curiosity and personality. A huge part of Lorde’s music comes from her rare neurological condition called synesthesia. Synesthesia is when someone’s senses mix together, in Lorde’s case when she plays certain musical notes she can see different colors. This explains the large presence of passion and organized pattern in her songs. —**Nina Wither**

[“Arctic Monkeys: Whatever People Say I am, That’s What I’m Not”](#)

Arctic Monkeys

2006

Arctic Monkeys first came to fame in Liverpool, England, this is where they had their first tour in 2005, it only took them 7 years before they were able tour world wide. The band consists of 4



members, Alex Turner who is the band's lead singer/songwriter, he also helped create the band. Jamie Cook is the band's guitarist who also assists in writing the songs and sometimes singing them, he is one of the founders. Nick O'Malley is the band's bassist, he actually replaced their original bassist who left them before they hit real fame. Matt Helders is the band's drummer who on occasion sings, he was a co-founder to the band as well. Their most popular album is “[AM](#)”. I disagree with this and think that “[WPSIAMTWIN](#)”(Whatever People Say I am, That’s What I’m Not) is the best album they have made. The album has hit songs

like “[The View From The Afternoon](#)”, “[I Bet You Look Good On The Dancefloor](#)”. These certainly aren't their best songs but they are the songs that accumulated the most amount of money in this album for the band and even then they are really solid songs. The best songs from the album are “[Riot Van](#)”, “[Red Lights indicate Doors are Secure](#)”, and “[Fake Tales of San Francisco](#)”, they are upbeat and have the repeating aspects that gets the songs stuck in your head all day long but you still can't bring yourself to dislike them. Overall the album is one of their most upbeat ones they've made, with music that will immediately fix your mood and energize you in a way no other songs can. -
Hailey Bland

"No Vacancy"

Treaty Oak Revival

2021



"No Vacancy", an exceptional album, released in 2021, is progressively gaining popularity as many of its songs have recently gained traction on TikTok. The top songs of this album include, "[Missed Call](#)", as the thought-through lyrics share feelings of heartbreak from a different perspective than most would take. The heart-wrenching feeling of not getting an answer from a lover you no longer can have a connection to. "[Irish Goodbye](#)", sharing the desire to "run away" and start a new life, which I'm sure everyone has had this idea at least once, even if you weren't serious about it. "[No Vacancy](#)" incorporates mass amounts of techniques between how the

band blends and how the instrumentation impacts the listener. Overall, their songs can be related to how many people feel, and describe it in a way to be seen by everyone so no one feels alone. For a band to do this, they must be highly skilled, have a lot of patience, and care about their listeners. The most elite thing about this band is they started small, in Odessa, Texas, with little to no money, and now have created a big name for themselves. This proves you can do anything if you put your mind to it, and that message is conveyed through their passion and continuing to pursue an amazing career. - **Delilah Dare**

"I Love Life, Thank You" (Explicit)

Mac Miller

2011



Have you heard of the song "[The Spins](#)" or "[Congratulations](#)" by Mac Miller? If you have, I suggest that you listen to the album "[I Love Life, Thank You](#)". This album was written by Miller in 2011, with one of his most popular songs, "[Love Lost](#)". Two of my favorite songs on this album are "[All This](#)", because it represents the way that I think about Miller's music, upbeat with unbeatable lyrics, as well as "[People Under The Stairs](#)", because when I listen directly to the music, I think to myself "How did he make these words work together and make them into lyrics for his song?" I love listening to this album while I'm doing homework,

or even as background music. Miller has an incredible way of making his music personable, humorous, and relatable. - **Kamryn Casebeer**

Movies & TV Shows

“Wicked”

2024 (PG)

Starring: Cynthia Erivo, Ariana Grande, Jonathan Bailey, Jeff Goldblum, Michelle Yeoh



For those of you who don't know, which by now is most likely very few of you, the musical “Wicked” has been adapted into a 2024 blockbuster movie. The movie was a smashing success and replaced “[Mama Mia](#)” as the highest-grossing musical adaptation, which had held that spot for nearly 16 years. Opening weekend, “Wicked” made 164.2 million dollars and continues to bring in revenue, and it moves to streaming services. “Wicked” was revealed to only be part one of the original Broadway musical. It was later revealed that “Wicked: For Good” will be coming out in November of 2025, almost a year after its predecessor. So how is it possible that the movie act one version of “Wicked” took up almost the same amount of time as the Broadway production? The movie is a twist on the original [book](#) and [movie](#), “The Wizard of Oz.” “Wicked” follows the

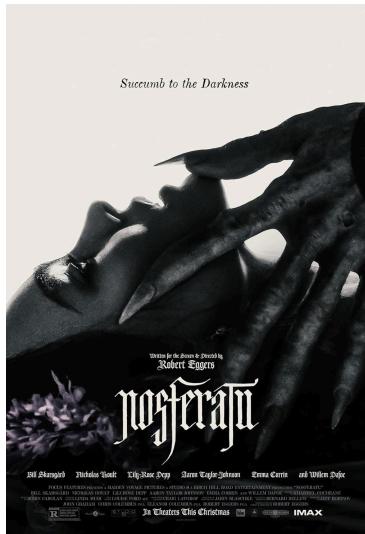
Wicked Witch of the West, who's name we find out is Elphaba (Cynthia Erivo), back story and we find out she is in fact, not wicked. Elphaba is green and that causes many issues, and she faces the issue of just wanting to be average. The movie reveals that Elphaba and Glinda, formerly Galinda (Ariana Grande), were friends at their school, Shiz. Though they originally start as enemies; however, after Galinda helps Elphaba's sister, and Elphaba helps Galinda get into a prestigious class, they become fast friends. However, as the song sings, something bad is happening in Oz. Oz is a musical place where animals and humans alike can live in harmony but it seems that someone doesn't want them to speak and they are being removed from Oz. Elphaba has many powers, and is later invited to the Emerald City by the Wizard, and Glinda accompanies her. The musical has many hit songs such as “[What is This Feeling?](#)”, “[Dancing through Life](#)”, and of course “[Defying Gravity](#)”. The musical is not only a beautiful story about true friendship, but is also a social commentary on the persecution and judgement of those who do not meet typical social standards. The music, cinematography, and choreography are all beautiful and it is an inexplicable feeling to watch it. This

movie was incredibly groundbreaking and its sequel is highly anticipated by the masses. See you in November! - **Lila Qualteri**

“Nosferatu”

2024 (R)

Starring: Lily-Rose Depp, Nicholas Hoult, Bill Skarsgård



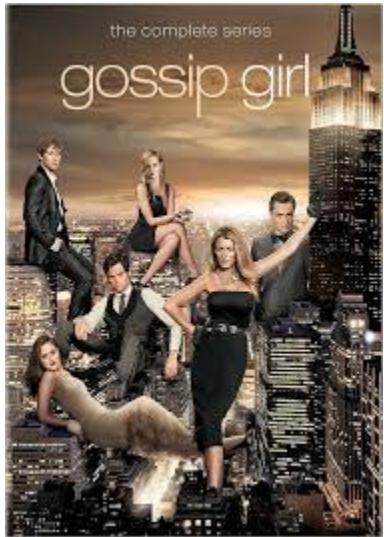
Over a century ago, one of the most influential directors of the silent era, German F.W. Murnau, directed a film that many people today consider one of the finest and most influential early horror films. Murnau's [Nosferatu: A Symphony of Horror](#), though being the source of some controversy at the time of its release, is now recognized as the masterpiece of film and horror that it is, which makes it all the more difficult to recreate. First in 1977, with [Nosferatu the Vampyre](#), directed by German director Werner Herzog, and just a few weeks ago with Robert Eggers' "Nosferatu", the film has been remade for a more modern audience. The plot remains the same across all three films, a newly married Thomas Hutter, played by Nicholas Hoult in Eggers' version, is called away from his wife, Ellen (Lily-Rose Depp) on business to sell one Count Orlok (Bill Skarsgård) a property,

becoming trapped in Orlok's castle while Orlok boards a ship toward Wisborg. All the while, Ellen is plagued by violent nightmares and visions of darkness. Eggers' *Nosferatu*, however, slightly tweaks the original story, adding the detail that Ellen had encountered Orlok before the events of the film, calling out for comfort, love and touch from a higher being as a young girl, and instead inadvertently connecting herself to Count Orlok. Combined with the use of light and shadow surrounding Ellen's character throughout the film, this detail adds a moving aspect to the sorrow that surrounded the story originally, as well as a theme of shame surrounding lust and sexual desire. Though the role was originally intended for Anya Taylor-Joy, and it is noticeable that it is not entirely written around Lily-Rose Depp, the actress still gives a haunting and undoubtedly memorable performance of Ellen, making the shame and chastity that surrounded female sexuality during the time so potent that the audience feels almost choked by it. Count Orlok himself, portrayed by Bill Skarsgård, is a genuinely unsettling character, with his deep, growling voice stealing the attention of every scene he was featured in, and the threat of his bloodthirst creating an anxious atmosphere throughout the film. While both a faithful and loving adaptation of its source material, many of Eggers' *Nosferatu*'s strengths lie in its originality and new takes on century old characters. - **Nyah Marquez-Dean**

“Gossip Girl”

2007 (TV-14)

Starring: Leighton Meester, Blake Lively, Chase Crawford, Ed Westick



The 2000s-2010s show was a worldwide phenomenon when it first came out and has since come back into popularity. “Gossip Girl” is a show set in the Upper East side of New York. The series is six seasons long with about 20 episodes per season, starring Leighton Meester (Blair Waldorf), Blake Lively (Serena van der Woodsen), Ed Westick (Chuck Bass), Chase Crawford (Nate Archibald), and more, the series is also narrated by Kristen Bell. It follows a group of wealthy, high class teenagers in New York City as they go through high school, college, and life in Manhattan, with an anonymous gossip blog watching and posting about them the whole time. The classy vibes, scandal filled lives of the characters, and romanticisation of New York in the show immediately hooked the audience and especially caught the attention of teenagers, and has done so for

years since it came out. Chase Crawford, one of the main actors says “There’s been like these three different waves on Netflix... I don’t know how it keeps coming around.” Which shows just how popular the show has been. “Gossip Girl” is an entertaining, drama filled show, mostly watched by teenagers, but can be interesting for adults too. Its popularity comes from the fact that it's timeless and just overall very entertaining for most who watch it. **-Lilly Phillips**

“Moana 2”

2024 (PG)

Starring: Auli’i Cravalho, Dwayne Johnson



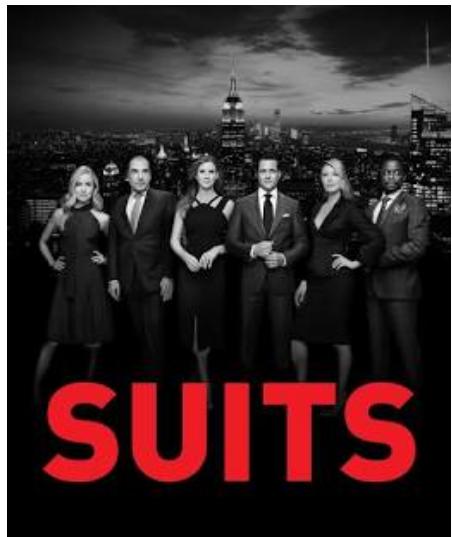
Following the popular release of [“Moana”](#) in 2016, which captivated audiences, the sequel, “Moana 2”. Released in 2024, “Moana 2” follows the protagonist, Moana, on another adventure on the ocean. In this movie she attempts to find other people in the ocean and connect with her wayfinding ancestors in this magical Disney movie. While it may not have been as memorable as the first film, it was a heartwarming and fun film with a lot of catchy songs and it also acknowledges the Polynesian culture of sailing. The film is most

popular with kids but can be fun for anyone and is a great pick for a family movie. -**Lilly Phillips**

“Suits”

2011 (TV-14)

Starring: Gabriel Macht, Patrick J. Adams



This show is based in a law firm called Pearson Specter. In this show you are taken through the legal system and into trial with Harvey Specter and Mike Ross. Harvey is a Harvard graduate that was second in his graduating class. In “Suits” Harvey is the main lawyer that takes almost every case and his motto to win a trial is “don't go to trial if you aren't going to win”. Mike is a high school graduate that was selling drugs and he was hired at the law firm due to his photographic memory. Since he never attended college it was illegal for him to practice law and so he goes to jail because the state found out that he had worked on 88 legal cases illegally. This is my favorite show because it takes you in depth on the entire legal

system while also letting the characters have their own personal lives. I would recommend this show to fast paced action people while also putting yourselves into the minds of really smart people. -

Cody Martin

“Peaky Blinders”

2013 (TV-MA)

Starring: Cillian Murphy, Paul Anderson, Joe Cole, Helen McCrory



“Peaky Blinders” is a British television series that was broadcast by the BBC, running six seasons. The BBC drama was set in post-First World War Birmingham and chronicled the rise of the notorious Shelby family gang during Europe's Industrial Revolution. At the center of the series is Tommy Shelby, an appealing, ambitious leader whose complex character was masterfully put together by the great performance of Cillian Murphy. By his side is a fiercely loyal family: the cunning Aunt Polly, played by Helen McCrory, and hot-headed brother Arthur, brought to life by Paul Anderson. From the very rise to power, the Shelby family has to face constant conflicts with

rival gangs, law, and their personal demons. Yet, it is not only criminal life and violence that give the show its signature; it's about their struggles to transition from an underground world of illegal business into the legitimate world of business. This craving for legitimacy hurtles the Shelby's into a path paved with political intrigue, corporate maneuvering, and moral compromises. What really makes "Peaky Blinders" stand out, however, is the outstanding camera work that drags the audience into an immersive atmosphere of grime and tension. This facilitates my enjoyment of the fast-paced world of the Peaky Blinders Gang and their high-paced world of wealth and illicit transactions by allowing me to visualize myself in the show. While the series is steeped in the violence and power struggles of the time, it's also deeply human, exploring themes of loyalty, ambition, betrayal, and family. The world of "Peaky Blinders" is raw and grim, taking viewers on a maze of suspense that makes every season an emotional rollercoaster. Whether it is the in-depth character arcs or the historical context, "Peaky Blinders" proves to be an outstanding television experience, which will keep you hooked until the very end. This facilitates my enjoyment of the fast-paced world of the Peaky Blinders Gang and their high-paced world of wealth and illicit transactions. I recommend this show for anyone who likes lots of action with underlying themes. — **Otis Metz**

"Squid Games"

2021 (TV-MA)

Starring: Lee Jung-jae, Park Hae-soo, Wi Ha-joon, Jung Ho-yeon



"Squid Games" is a South Korean survival drama series that took the world by storm, quickly becoming a global phenomenon on Netflix. It tells the story of people who are on bad financial grounds being invited to take part in some weird, deadly games where one must win various children's games to get this life-altering prize. In the middle of this story is Seong Gi-hun, an unlucky man played by Lee Jung-jae, in whom the complexity and deep humanness bring into focus desperate choices made by so many. These characters find themselves competing with a diverse group of contenders, each with his or her own motives and frailties, including the cunning and merciless Cho Sang-woo and the kind-hearted Kang Sae-byek. What really sets "Squid Game" apart, however, is not only the question of life or death in these games, but rather the deep socio-economic themes which the series tackles. The personal struggles of

the characters with debt, poverty, and moral dilemmas make the story heart-wrenching and thrilling. The game in itself is a dark mirror to society, where the brutal competition underlines issues of class, desperation, and human nature. Every episode is nail-biting, with high tension, unexpected twists, and characters constantly being forced to make life-or-death decisions that leave viewers on the edge of their seats. The show is also strikingly good in visual storytelling, be it the jarring set designs of the childhood-inspired games or the cold, sterile environments of the secretive game organizers. Squid Game utilizes these visuals remarkably well to bring in a sense of unease and discomfort, raising the stakes of every round in the game. It is a series that dwells deep into psychological and emotional themes, where the audience is often left with raw, emotional characters pushed to limits to take opportunities toward their perceived improvements in life. Squid Game isn't just an action series or its plot twists but rather is a series on survival, the morality behind making a choice, and pressures in society that lead them to their limits. With gripping drama, moral ambiguity, and high-voltage suspense, the show offers a powerful commentary on inequality and the lengths people will go to for a shot at redemption. It's a show that has you questioning human nature long after the credits roll. For anyone who enjoys thrilling dramas with psychological depth and societal reflection, Squid Game is an unforgettable ride. — **Otis Metz**

["The Office"](#)

2005–2013 (PG-13)

Starring: Steve Carrel



"The Office" is an American sitcom based off a British sitcom under the same name starring actor Ricky Gervais. "The Office's" first episode aired on March 24th, 2005 and received mixed reviews from critics. However, as the show continued into its second and third seasons the reviews picked up with many hailing star Steve Carrel's performance. The show focuses on a small paper company called Dunder Mifflin in Scranton, Pennsylvania and incorporates hilarious characters like Dwight Schrute to make the sitcom a success. The show follows the drama of several characters throughout the show and highlights character development through many leading characters such as Michael Scott who is portrayed by Carrel. The show lasts for nine seasons and is a big success. However many critics claimed that around the eighth season there was a decrease in

the quality of the episodes, which many see as the result of the departure of Carrel during season seven. However, "The Office" was a very big success with Carrel making around \$297,000 per

episode by the seventh season. "The Office" received 42 Emmy award nominations and five wins along with nine Golden Globe nominations and one win. "The Office" is regarded widely as one of the best American sitcoms to date and has a large following to this day for its sarcastic and dry humor. **-Chance Carlisle**

["Dinner in America"](#)

2020

Starring: Kyle Gallner and Emily Skeggs



"Dinner in America" is a 2020 film by Adam Carter Rehmeier. This movie is about a man named Simon (Kyle Gallner) who is trying to make money. He couch surfs and it leads him to a home which he sets on fire. So, Simon is a criminal on the run. He stumbles into 20-year-old Patty (Emily Skeggs). It is not completely specified but it is hinted that Patty is neurodivergent. She has temper issues where she is stims and she frequently asks questions like, "What is cumin again?" or "What's a vice again?". She has no hesitation when talking to people and does things that are considered abnormal. Her favorite band is called "PSYOPS" and she writes the lead singer, John Q, love poems. I deeply love that Patty is neurodivergent, which made me gravitate towards this film. There is not nearly enough representation of the community, and when there is, there is not

usually an accurate love story attached to it. There is nothing really special about Simon other than his character development throughout the movie. He goes from this rude and tough guy who doesn't care about anything or anyone to this kind partner who really cares about Patty. He is very passionate about his interests and motivated to do anything to get what he wants. Overall, this movie is very good and well-paced. The characters have time to change, fall in love, and grow while entertaining and having a good plot. **-Addison Bruce**

“The Dark Knight”

2008

Starring: Christian Bale



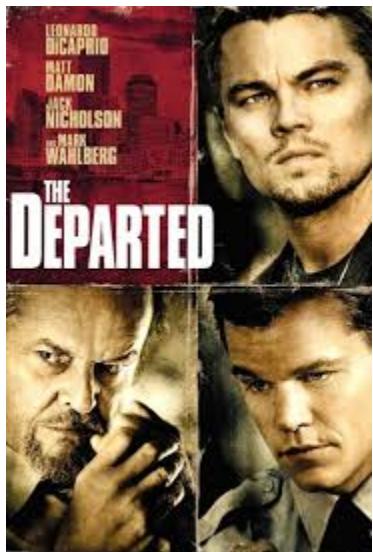
“The Dark Knight Rises” was a 2008 super hero action thriller directed by Christopher Nolan, one of the most renowned directors in the history of film. As Nolan was becoming an established entity in industry he took on a trilogy project, He created “[The Batman Begins](#)” and then “The Dark Knight” and subsequently “[The Dark Knight Rises](#)”. A trilogy that is arguably the best adaptation in the action and superhero genre. This movie is accompanied by a genius level score by the composer Hanz Zimmer, a legend in his own right. Over a decade later, this film is still hailed as the pinnacle of the superhero genre. I believe this appreciation of the film stems from a few different factors. Christian Bale plays a perfect Batman, but he plays the role of rich billionaire Bruce Wayne even better. The other main star Heath Ledger delivered a legendary performance as the Joker.

Even though Heath Ledger passed the year the movie was released, it managed to cement his name in infamy as one of the greatest performers of our time. The movie is visually stunning due to Christopher Nolan's artistic vision. Nolan managed to elevate a standard story into a cinematic masterpiece rich with life. The way Nolan uses the Hanz Zimmer's score elevates every single moment of the film, bringing ambiance when needed while also offering intense tracks during dramatic moments. The final product of all of these geniuses' work was potentially the realest and greatest superhero film of all time. Instead of settling for mediocrity Nolan and his team pushed forward to curate a true modern masterpiece. Some argue that “The Dark Knight Rises” is the best of the trilogy, I disagree. Although Nolan grew as an artist during the production of this trilogy, creating Interstellar one of the greatest films of all time fresh off the heels of his success on the dark knight trilogy. The reason “The Dark Knight” is the best isn't because of Nolan's direction but Heath Ledger's transformative performance. This becomes more evident when you see how hard it has been for any other actors to take up this role after he perfected it. The Heath Ledger version of the character is so transformative that soon after these films a non-action adaptation of the joker's story was written, where Joaquin Phoenix, a master of character acting, built off the image of the Heath Ledger Joker.

"The Departed"

2006 (Rated R)

Staring: Jack Nicholson, Leonardo DiCaprio, Matt Damon, Mark Wahlberg, Vera Farmiga



Who can be trusted? That is the question both the police and the mob are asking their constituents in Boston. Colin Sullivan (Matt Damon) from a young age was recruited by Frank Costello (Jack Nicholson) to infiltrate Boston PD so the mob would be able to thrive in Boston without concern of police interference. However, Boston PD's main goal is to bring down the mob which is where William Costigan (Leonardo DiCaprio) comes in to help. Boston PD sends him into the mob to be a "rat" for the police in an attempt to bring down the mob. The director Martin Scorsese, who directed movies like "[Wolf of Wall Street](#)", creates an eerie feeling for the viewer throughout the entire movie. Being on the edge of my seat is something that I love when it comes to movies and Scorsese makes it impossible not to be. Throughout the movie these two "rat's" lives

start to become entangled with each other as all of the people they are connected with through their work become connected with each other. Furthermore, the in depth showing of how the mob is run and what they do to people allows the viewer to truly understand what these people are experiencing and what some of them are trying to stop. This movie had me locked in, not being able to look away for a second because of all the action and mystery that it created. This movie is definitely in my top 5 movies of all time and everything from the directing to acting is perfect. There is no question that this is a cinematic masterpiece that leaves every viewer astonished and shocked. - **Aidan Owens**

"Five Feet Apart"

2019 (PG-13)

Starring: Haley Lu Richardson, Cole Sprouse



"Five Feet Apart" is a beautiful film that is based on a genetic disease called cystic fibrosis, a disorder that damages the lungs and the lungs and digestive system. Two young teenagers falling in love in the same hospital, with the same condition. Yet unable to come closer than six feet to each other due to the risk of contracting dangerous germs and bacteria, which puts their life at risk even more. When you watch this movie not only do you get to learn the

life and struggles of Stella Grant, but you start to empathize with her and realize the other thousands of things you have to be cautious about when having CF. Stella made me realize the privilege I have to touch my loved ones, something I've been taking for granted my whole life. Her best friend Poe Ramirez also suffered from CF and Stella never got to hug him or experience many different things we

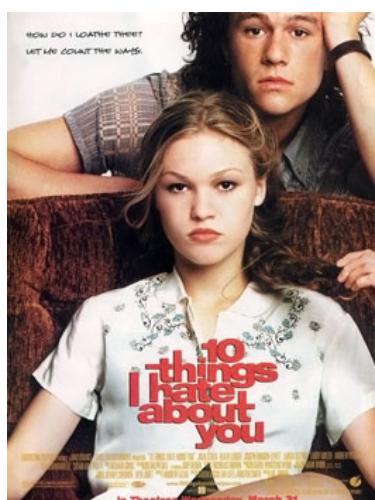
do with our best friends everyday. You get to see how strong their friendship is throughout the movie, relate to some of their life experiences, and watching the distance they keep makes you want to go hug your own best friend. When I first watched this movie I started crying, the acting makes you feel like you're the one experiencing this emotional pain. Will Newman never got to kiss nor hug his girlfriend Stella, seeing them not being able to touch made me appreciate human contact even more. When you see this movie, you start to appreciate the little things, there are thousands of stories that are very similar to this one. After watching "Five Feet Apart" I started to read some reviews from people who actually struggle with CF, and saw many people relate to the film, saying they've never seen another CF movie that is so relatable. "Five Feet Apart" really did become my comfort movie to watch. This film includes all of the medical necessities CF patients need, G tubes, surgeries, the O2. But it also shows the mental part of it such as survivors' guilt; it demonstrates that for some people it never really gets better. The realism, feeling, and accuracy of this movie really left me speechless. There are millions of movies when it comes to romance but this is a different kind of love, love where you can't touch someone. You will definitely not regret watching this film.

-Angelica Loya Lopez

"10 Things I Hate About You"

1999 (PG-13)

Starring: Julia Stiles, Heath Ledger



"10 Things I Hate About You" is a romance film of cold hearted Kat Stratford (Julia Stiles) and trouble maker Patrick Verona (Heath Ledger). It sends a beautiful message of how meaningful love can be, and although it all started with a small bet about taking a girl out, it ended up leading to a genuine long lasting relationship. What I liked most about "10 Things I Hate About You" is the humor and exaggeration on how far a boy will go in order to get a girl to fall for him. Kat's sister, Bianca is a popular girl who is liked by Cameron James. He goes out and learns French in order to tutor Bianca, now this is taking a stretch, but it's the thought that counts

and it adds engagement in the movie. The acting in this movie, the production, the quality is all outstanding, it kept me interested and I felt exactly what these characters were feeling throughout the film. Everyone ends up happy and that's the ending I love seeing the most, it's as popular as it deserves to be. Although this movie was made over 2 decades ago it never gets old. The fact it was inspired by Shakespeare's "The Taming of the Shrew" makes it even more worth it. They produced it so younger people are more interested in it.. The personality of these characters can be super relatable and that's why I watch it so often, you will definitely not regret watching this movie.

-Angelica Loya Lopez

["Alice in Borderland"](#)

2020 (TV-MA)

Staring: Kento Yamazaki, Tao Tsuchiya, Nijiro Murakami



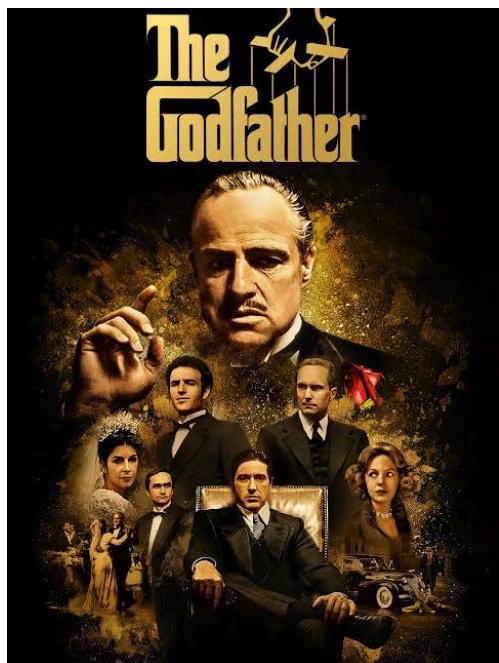
“Alice in Borderland” originally called “Imawa no Kuni no Arisu” is a Japanese ‘Thriller series’ made by Haro Aso. With a Rotten Tomatoes rating of 86% and an IMDB rating of 7.7/10, “Alice in Borderland” is about a large collection of people forced to participate in a series of twisted games created by a small group of unknown people that are only known by their selected ‘playing card type.’ These games get more and more intense depending on the “card rating” of each round and have the “contestants” put into horrendous situations that put their lives at risk continuously. The only times they aren't at risk of imminent death is when they survive a game and wait to be put into the next. This show is a bone chilling series that has you sitting in utter silence and disbelief as you watch the disturbing and intense scenes, matched perfectly with incredible acting, and perfect editing that will leave you

confused and worried for your favorite characters' survival in the end. **-Devon Devito**

“The Godfather”

1972 (R)

Starring: Al Pacino, James Caan, Marlon Brando



“The Godfather” is a classic film that everyone needs to see. Francis Ford Coppola directs a rising star-studded cast about an inclining-to-power New York mafia family, the Corleone family. The film revolves around a son of the Godfather, Michael Corleone, who hesitantly joins the family business. He tries to disengage with the family mafia but gradually becomes increasingly preoccupied with them. As tensions rise between the rivaling New York mobster families, Michael must help take control and lead his family to success. The cinematography expertise with lighting and camera angles brings together the film, along with a superlative soundtrack and hauntingly good acting. Ranked number 2 on the [American Film Institute's](#) top 100 films of all time, “The Godfather” is a standout film because of its unique storyline. It has a 97% Rotten

Tomatoes and a 4.7 audience rating out of 5. Some may say it is too slow-paced, but this just adds to the authenticity and overall experience of the movie. “The Godfather” brings intensity, suspense, and action to one of the greatest films of all time. – **Owen Roberts**

“Black Doves”

2024 (TV-MA)

Starring: Kiera Knightley and Ben Whisaw



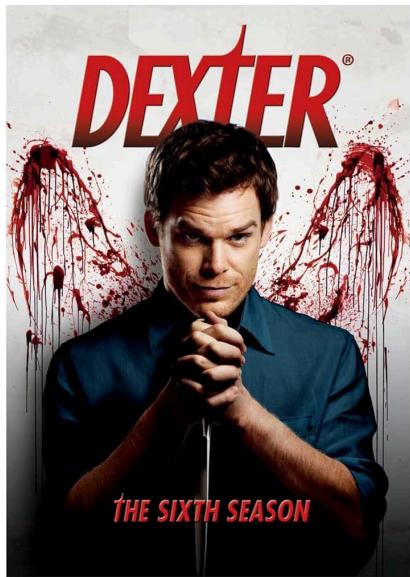
Already securing a Golden Globe nomination for Kiera Knightley after its premiere on December 5th, 2024, “Black Doves” – written and created by Joe Barton – is set in the modern day and follows the story of a team of pay-for-hire assassins as a comedic thriller, featuring one season with an already secured second. Helen Webb, played by Kiera Knightley, as well as her best friend Sam Young, played by Ben Whisaw, star in a Christmas-themed investigation of the murderer of the Chinese ambassador. The duo have to recruit unlikely partners, in an action-packed, yet

heartwarming display of friendship, family, sacrifice, and skill. We also see an amazing representation of LGBTQ+ figures in the show playing a prominent role in its overall plot progression that leaves nothing to question, truly embodying an accepting and humorous dynamic between the characters in a progressive fashion. It was a bold move to replicate the long-time debate of action themes in Christmas media – like what we see in “Die Hard” – yet it did not disappoint, having thoroughly kept viewers on the edge of their seats and rushing to click for the next episode. Barton has written a cinematic masterpiece that was more than what was promised from the trailers shown, with amazing direction from Alex Gabassi and Lisa Dunning, as well as skillful performances from the actors, the originally assumed basic thriller was proven to far surpass expectations. Featuring Comedy, Comfort, Excitement, Betrayal, Anticipation, and more – “Black Doves” was revealed to be more complex and deep than originally thought, climbing to Netflix’s top 10 in a matter of days. **-Riley Sharp**

“Dexter”

2006-2012 (TV-14)

Starring: Micheal C. Hall



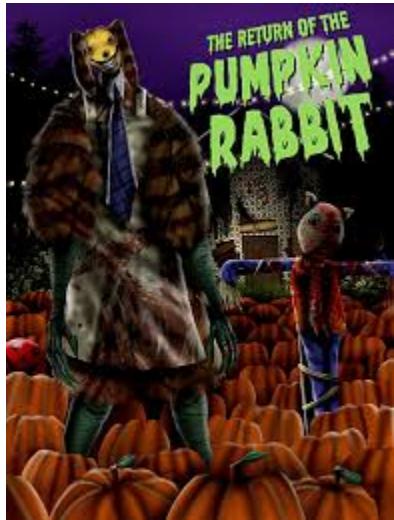
“Dexter” is an exciting and darkly humorous series that uses a masterful blend of psychologically thrilling elements with a sitcom format. Dexter, the main character, is a psychopathic blood-spatter analyst who works for Miami Metro PD. He follows a code that his father instilled into him throughout his childhood to keep his mental desires, and dark secrets in check. The series explores a way to have a Batman-like vigilante catching those who escape the justice system. Overall the series is a well-rounded sitcom that explores the idea of family, death, and vigilante justice. The series includes many gripping characters that the audience can easily become attached to. With strong character development and connection, the series becomes more thrilling as you continue to rifle through the seasons. Though this

series may explore some darker themes, it is a very good and gripping series for the more mature viewer, especially for those who enjoy psychological thrillers. **- Zach Smith**

“The Return of the Pumpkin Rabbit”

2024 (R)

Made by Martin Paredes



“The Return of the Pumpkin Rabbit” is a 2024 short horror film made by Chilean animator Martin Paredes and released for free on YouTube. Now, it might seem a bit strange to review something like this at face value. An animated, 33-minute horror YouTube video, a sequel to a four-year-old, 12-minute video called “The Mysterious House”. This is not something that would even make a blip on most people’s radars. This is a shame, because this short movie is one of, if not, the best horror-related things to ever release on YouTube and definitely one of the top five best horror movies of this decade. Those are, admittedly, bold claims. However, “The Return of the Pumpkin Rabbit” deserves its accolades and then some. The movie follows four children, Jay, Ralph, Paco, and Dino (voiced by online users Izzsplash,

Petertriesricecakes, CoralineHecc, and Martin Paredes respectively) on Halloween night as they find and explore an abandoned house. The house originally belonged to the Pumpkin Rabbit and the Witch Sheep, who, three years before the events of this movie, were dragged out of their house and burned to ash by the townsfolk due to their heinous actions. The group enters the house, only to find that the house might not be as abandoned as they once thought. The first thing that most people will notice will be the animation and the presentation. “The Return of the Pumpkin Rabbit” facades itself as an old VHS tape you are watching, with the entire movie having a slight static throughout, like a thin layer of pretzels on a cake. This is then complemented by the animation style, which resembles paper puppets, like the ones on children shows.. These factors give this movie a hint of false nostalgia as if you might have seen this before during your youth. This then contrasts with the movie being in the horror genre.

The movie is genuinely unnerving. The abandoned house is both sprawling and cramped, with fascinating yet terrifying landmarks, like the pumpkin patch and the entirety of the basement. The expansive darkness of the house gives the occupants a way to move undetected. Those occupants, and the most interesting part of the movie, are the duo of the Pumpkin Rabbit (voiced by EVA/Bravvy) and the Witch Sheep (voiced by -Lighth0use-). Firstly, their designs are superb and super intimidating. They look almost as if they are dead, and the movie shows that the two of them tower over the children. The movie even uses the static from this being a VHS to trick your mind into seeing them when they aren’t even there. However, what really sells them is what they do and how they do it. They are murderers, plain and simple. The movie goes into detail, saying that, before they were burned, they lured kids into their house on Halloween night and those who entered were

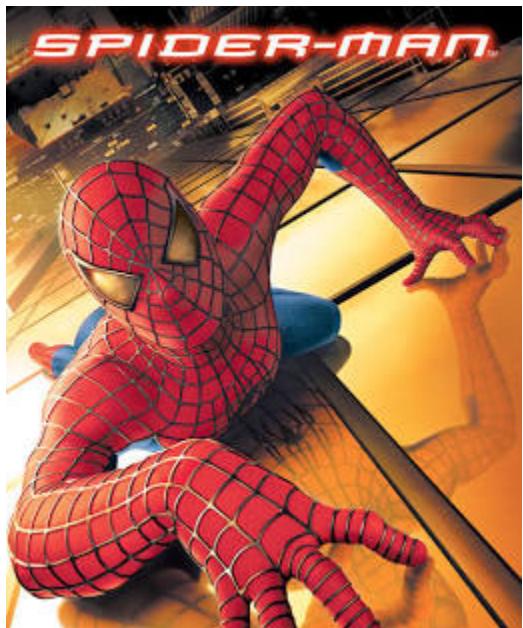
never seen again. The Pumpkin Rabbit and Witch Sheep are not just some standard slasher villains, the Witch Sheep speaks like a mother to gain the false trust of the children, so that the Pumpkin Rabbit can kill the people who stay. The Pumpkin Rabbit doesn't just kill people, he revels in it, believing what he is doing is as a game. This is then accompanied by amazing voice acting for every character, especially for the Pumpkin Rabbit. The movie does not shy away from the gruesome side of things, as it certainly deserves its R rating. As stated before, this is a sequel, but "The Return of the Pumpkin Rabbit" manages to work as both an amazing follow-up and a standalone movie. What this means is that, while they expand and give more information on the events in "The Mysterious House" in this movie in a satisfying way, the short movie works and is just as enjoyable if you have never seen the first short movie. "The Return of the Pumpkin Rabbit" is, admittedly, not meant for the general audience. However, if you are a fan of horror movies and the like, you should consider watching this stellar horror movie. It's free on YouTube, the only thing it will cost you is your sleep.

-Olly Johnson

"Spider-Man"

2002 (PG-13)

Starring: Tobey Maguire, Kirsten Dunst, William Dafoe, James Franco



"Spider-Man" is the first installment of a 3 movie series based on the comic book character Spiderman. Spiderman is an American comic book character created by writer-editor Stan Lee and artist Steve Ditko. Spiderman's first ever appearance would be all the way back in August of 1962 in the comic Amazing Fantasy #15 published by Marvel comics. In years prior to 2002, there had already been many interpretations of spiderman from live action appearances in the 70's and 80's to his more widely known cartoons interpretations that span throughout the 60's, 70's, 80's and 90's all of which were different. However in 2002, "Spider-Man", directed by Sam Rami, would end up being a massive hit. "Spider-Man" would become the first film to reach \$100 million dollars in a single weekend and would be

the most successful film based off of a comic book at the time. Tobey Maguire puts on a great performance and becomes a fan favorite. After "Spider-Man" (2002) he would go on to play Spiderman three more times in three different movies. He would also go on to win 24 awards for his

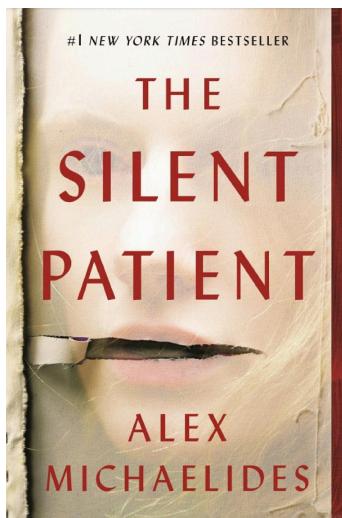
portrayal of Spiderman and would be nominated 110 times. The movie itself is a great superhero film. It follows Peter Parker (Spiderman). The film shows the struggles and challenges that Peter Parker has to deal with when he gets his new powers. The movie follows Peter Parker as he tries to learn how to balance his personal life and superhero life. Overall, the film is a great one with many lessons to take from it and overall just an enjoyable watch. **-Dominick Barela**

Books

[The Silent Patient](#)

Alex Michaelides

2019



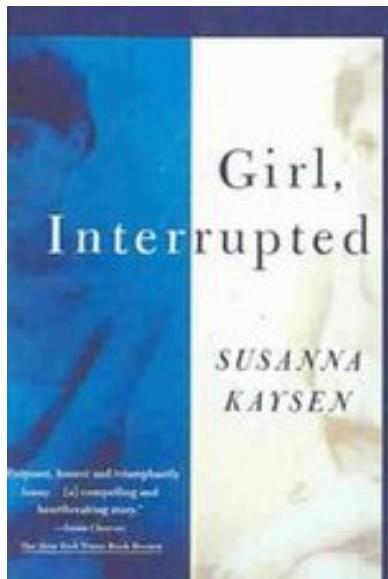
Written by British-Cypriot author Alex Michaelides, “The Silent Patient” follows Theo Saber who is a forensic psychotherapist at a psychiatric institution in London called The Grove. Here, he treats Alicia Berenson who allegedly shot her husband five times in the face out of the blue and never spoke again. Theo takes on the goal of helping Alicia regain her speech and some incredibly interesting information about the nature of the case is revealed along the way. This novel, earning a spot as the #1 New York Times bestseller is fast paced and gripping. Michaelides does not have the most beautiful prose and the writing style is at times best described as cringeworthy, but the characters are compelling and the world that he is able to build is intriguing. The story moves very quickly and it's easy to turn a

hundred pages without even realizing it. Despite the writing not being the strongest, this book was hard to put down and brought one of the most surprising twists that most readers could never anticipate. “The Silent Patient” is Michaelides’ debut novel and he shows great promise for future writing endeavors, creating mysteries that have genuinely shocking reveals and characters that, no matter how unlikable, are just the kind that you find yourself rooting for as the tale unfolds. This book is a very quick read and promises an immersive experience with a shocking ending. **-Morgan Cranford**

“Girl, Interrupted”

Susanna Kaysen

1993



“Girl, Interrupted” is a best-selling, and very personal memoir written by Susanna Kaysen who wanted to share her experiences and how they affected everyone in her situation. She wrote this book looking back on her time and experiences as a patient and young woman in the American psychiatric system in the 1960s. During her time there she got diagnosed with genetic Borderline Personality Disorder (BPD), which is a condition that is diagnosed by unstable moods, behavior, and relationships. Susanna reflects on all her interactions with both the system and all of the other patients that she meets. She paints a perfectly candid picture of the mental health treatments offered and her internal thoughts and struggles. This memoir is noted for its raw look at mental illness but also for its explanation of how society identifies sanity and how there is a very fine line between being mentally ill or just misunderstood.

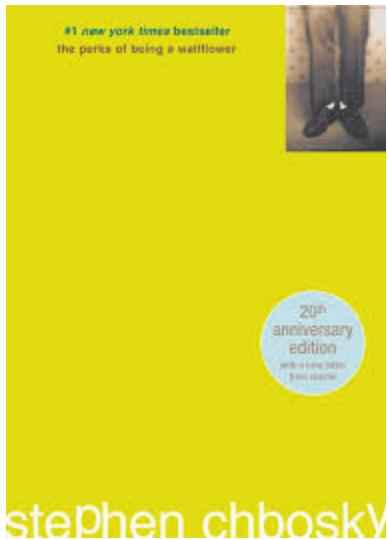
The book was published in 1993 and a few years later made and adapted into an award-winning 1999 movie “Girl Interrupted” directed by James Mangold and starring Winona Ryder (as Susanna Kaysen), Angelina Jolie, Brittany Murphy, and other astounding actors we all know today, brought the story to life and a broader audience. The film stayed very true to the themes and tone in the book, although it strayed from the original memoir in portraying some events. Susanna Kaysen's memoir brought into view some very important discussions about mental health, the psychiatric system, and the social stereotypes surrounding mental illnesses. Through “Girl, Interrupted,” Kaysen gave a voice to people who have been labeled as “crazy” or “different.” By writing out her very personal traumas and experiences she lived through, she really highlighted the difficulty of mental health diagnosis and all of the often very questionable methods of treatment used in psychiatric care during that time. -Chloe Martin

“The Perks of Being a Wallflower”

Stephen Chbosky

1999

I read “The Perks of Being a Wallflower” by Stephen Chbosky in November, 1999 and although the text is small and hurts my eyes, the migraine I get is so worth it. After every page I read, I think to myself how I have never read a book that completely resonated with me until now. I



hate reading, I have never found peace or joy in it and I believe that reading is a waste of time. “The Perks of Being a Wallflower” is the only book that I have chosen to read after school. Charlie Kelmeckis is the main character of the book. He is a freshman in highschool and his best friend had just committed suicide before he began school so he's going through a lot of mental battle while trying to make new friends.. Last November was tough and reading the book and knowing exactly how Charlie feels is an unfamiliar sensation. It is so weird to know that I am not the only person who has ever thought or felt this way. I have notes of every quote that has ever given me chills, articulate things that I've never been able to articulate, or experience things that I've experienced. It is so hard for me to conceptualize that I am not the only teenager who has read this book or watched the movie and seen themself in Charlie.

Then again, I do this with a lot of movies/shows/books. This book is special to me and others because it's so genuine. There are no cheesy or unrealistic characteristics in the book, (other than maybe Patrick being the loud gay best friend) it has awkward conversations, the confusing feeling of feelings you've never felt before, the feeling of loss whether it be friends or family, and how mental illness can completely consume your time. Something refreshing is seeing characters with the same problems as real people. It's almost like when movies and toys started becoming diverse beyond just including only white people. They added differently-abled people, or people with skin conditions such as vitiligo. Charlie has seasonal depression and his mental illness gets so bad to the point where he blacks out when he overthinks. When Charlie thinks about thinking or thinks about trying to stay out of the state of being “brainless” it makes the situation worse. I appreciate how the author words things because it feels so natural. There's no weird lingo he uses and he isn't the archetype of a bratty stupid teenage boy. He's this kid who values unconventional beauty, music, scenery, and love. The reason the book is called “The Perks of Being a Wallflower” is because at some point one of his friends, Patrick, tells him he's a wallflower. He just listens and observes and is quiet which makes him an amazing person. He always knows what gifts to get his friends and family, he knows how they feel even if they don't say it directly, and he values being alone. I think it's important that he is a

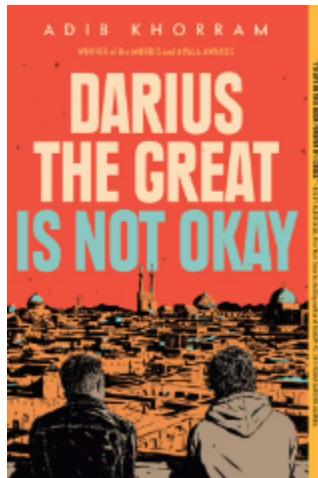
victim of abuse. I think it is tough to pick up on cues that someone is being abused in some way and since he is a victim and a wallflower, he picks up on it easily. It's rough how realistic his situation is (as a whole) but almost everyone he knows is being abused. He witnessed sexual assault when he was young, he noticed his sister was being domestically abused, and he can sense the people at his school are being abused by their parents. Early in the book he says something about how kids are just born in the middle of wrong lives and every time I read it or think of it I get chills. It's just insane how articulate the author is while also sounding identical to real teenagers. - **Addison Bruce**

["Darius The Great is Not Okay"](#)

Adib Khorram

2018

"Darius The Great is Not Okay" is an amazing coming of age story showing the life of mixed Americans. Darius, who is from Portland, Oregon, says that he is "too Farsi" for the people there and often gets bullied because of this, his father believes this is Darius' fault

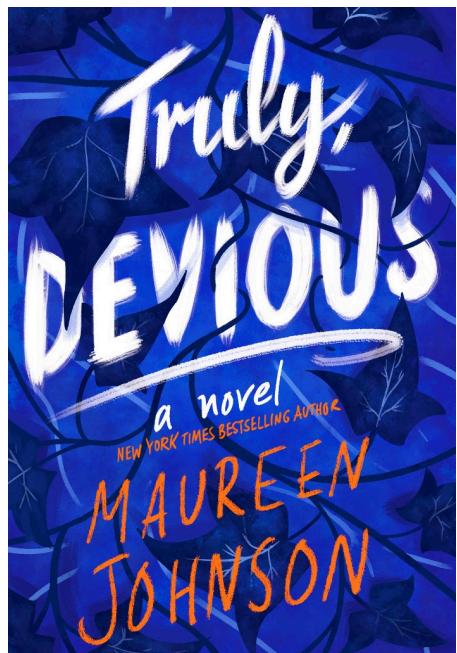


and not the bullies. Darius' grandfather falls ill with a brain tumor and he and his family travel to Iran to see his more distant family whom he's only ever spoken to over video calls, he's excited but realizes he has the same issue he had back in America except now he was "too American". He doesn't speak Farsi but the rest of his family does, he eventually makes a friend, a true friend and that's something he's never had. The book gives a look into a different kind of life, having ethnicity and mental health battles going hand in hand, it gives an effect that most coming of age books leave out, it's realistic and gut wrenchingly sad at times. Darius was only away from America for 3 months but in that time his life changed completely, shaping him into someone more confident in himself. All of this change transferred to his life in America, getting bullied less, finding his passion, his people, and himself. -**Hailey Bland**

“Truly Devious”

Maureen Johnson

2018



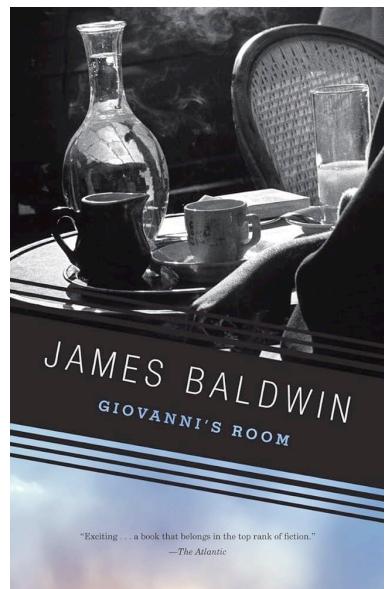
“Truly Devious” is the first book in one of my favorite trilogies, the Truly Devious trilogy. The author, Maureen Johnson, a critically acclaimed author, specializes in mystery and thriller novels. This story is a perfect blend of mystery, teenage wit, and intrigue. The story follows the life of Stevie Bell, a high school girl who is inexplicably good at solving mysteries. The story begins with her being invited to attend The Ellingham Academy, a boarding school for the gifted in Vermont. The story intertwines two timelines, connected by the setting. The first is the cold case disappearance of the school's founder as well as his wife and child, and the modern-day escapades of student Stevie Bell as she works to crack not only the case of Mr. Ellingham and his family but also that of one of her murdered classmates.

The novel is filled with beautifully intricate writing, even through its many twists and turns. This book reignited my love for reading and set me down the rabbit hole of Johnson's writing. It is safe to say that I am now obsessed with her writing. This book is perfect for anyone reading funk or looking for something fresh and new. - **Rowan Watkins**

“Giovanni's Room”

James Baldwin

1956



James Baldwin's, “Giovanni's Room”, is a 159 page novel that follows American protagonist, David, as he leaves his home to find himself in Paris, France. Early on in his travels, David falls in love with a man named Giovanni. David spends the book at war with his internalized homophobia, tackling the polarization that he feels. In trying to love a man, David punishes the nature of the relationship and rejects Giovanni therefore rejecting himself. For the duration of the book David is engaged to a woman named Hella, who is traveling in Spain contemplating marriage for the majority of the story. Baldwin aligns queerness with race struggles in one large

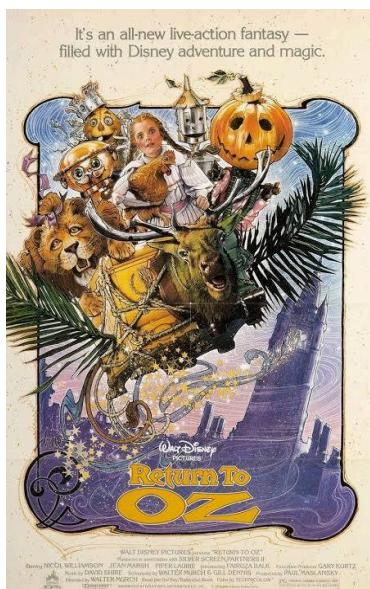
“Exciting . . . a book that belongs in the top rank of fiction.”
—The Atlantic

metaphor that is “Giovanni’s room.” The room David and Giovanni find themselves in for a large part of the book is Giovanni’s apartment, which is described as dark and filthy, with wine and rotten potatoes strewn about the floor. The room acts as a private place, foreign to the world of public society that is filled with judgement and hatred for queer people. Giovanni’ apartment is the one place that the two men can express themselves without the fear of hatred from others. However, David finds himself battling the love he feels and receives from Giovanni, perceiving it as a direct attack on his masculinity. Loving a man is a failure to him, and needs to be stamped out. Therefore, David ends up loathing Giovanni’s room, the space that an unapologetic love could, and has lived. The room becomes a place that David gets stuck in often, an isolating metaphor for his constant struggle in living with himself as he loves a man. Baldwin stated in an interview that the book is "not so much about homosexuality, it is what happens if you are so afraid that you finally cannot love anybody." As Hella starts sending David letters saying her trip in Spain is coming to an end, the weight of his affair starts to feel more intense as he is conflicted between choosing Giovanni and self hatred, or Hella, giving up a genuine love. Baldwin wrote “Giovanni’s Room” to reflect the struggles he was facing as a gay black man in America. “Giovanni’s Room” starts and ends in tragedy as the story is sandwiched in between one event, Giovanni’s execution. Giovanni had been falsely accused of stealing money and later killed the man who accused him in a fit of rage. David is left with the mental image of Giovanni alone in a cold cell, stuck in yet another room. David never returns to Giovanni’s room and leaves Hella to go to Nice, his life upturned forever, and the private room where his queerness could live gone forever. “Giovanni’s Room” is a beautifully written love story of those who cannot love themselves, and it is the fear and isolation that consumes those who try. **-Jax McKinnon**

“Return to Oz”

1985 (PG)

Starring: Fairuza Balk, Nicol Williamson, Jean Marsh, and Piper Laurie



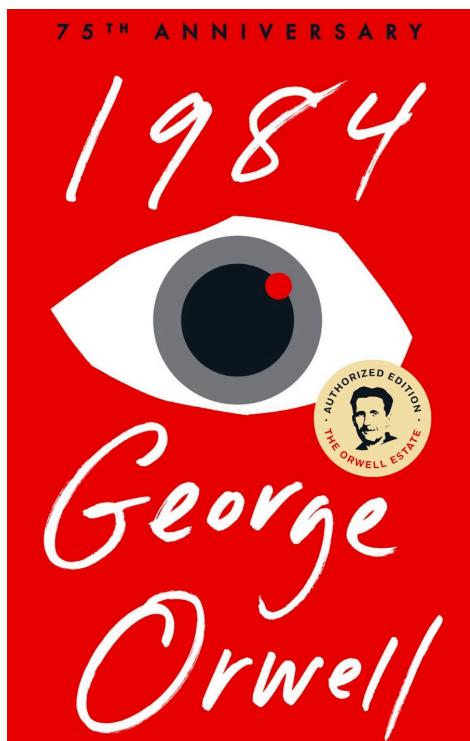
“Return to Oz” is the sequel to the book [“The Wonderful Wizard of Oz”](#) and the movie [“The Wizard of Oz.”](#) made in 1985 by Walter Murch for Walt Disney Productions with a 28 million dollar USD budget, receiving an IMBD Rating of 6.8, and a shockingly low rotten tomatoes score of 58%. “Return to Oz” is a Dark Fantasy story about a young girl named Dorothy Gale returning to ‘The Land of Oz’ after running away from a psychiatric hospital and falling into a river during a horrible rainstorm. When arriving in Oz, Dorothy is met with a strange talking chicken named Billina.

Dorothy and Billina are then tasked with finding Dorothy's old friend, The Scarecrow, and returning him to his throne in the Emerald City after Dorothy sees what is now the ruins of the Yellow Brick Road and the destroyed remains of Emerald City. However, she is halted in her efforts of finding the Scarecrow by many people who did not want Oz to return to his rule due to their newfound power in Oz. Finding new friends along the way to help her in getting the Scarecrow back to Emerald City, Dorothy and her friends are put into perilous situations as she is faced with the possible risk of never being able to return home again. This movie was an incredible showcase of how to bring back a character for a sequel or prequel, even with limited usage rights and no use of the iconic cinematic portrayals that we all remember from "The Wizard of Oz". And although the movie is a bit fast paced, the range of characters, incredible acting, creepy atmosphere, beautiful sets, and the incredible costuming really makes up for what felt like a blink of what could have been a fairly long movie - **Devon Devito**

["Nineteen Eighty-Four"](#)

George Orwell

1949



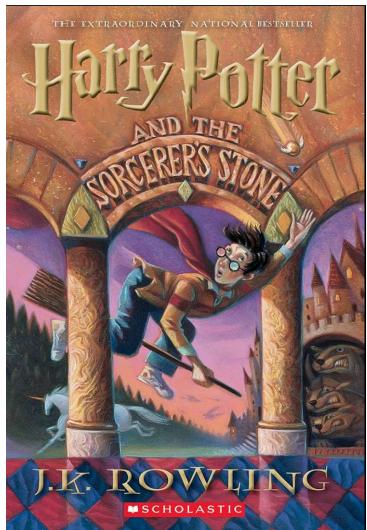
The award winning book "Nineteen Eighty-Four" by George Orwell is a dystopian novel focused around a citizen named Winston Smith living in the totalitarian society of Oceania. The leader, known as Big Brother, makes all citizens follow three key principles: "War is Peace, Freedom is Slavery, Ignorance is Strength." Winston is looking to rebel against Big Brother and his Party. Orwell's unique writing style shows a chilling prediction of a place with no freedom and no free thoughts. The vivid imagery and narrative serves as a warning of a likely future. Aspects like constant surveillance from the government, and the creation of a new language makes you think and distress over where the human race could be going, where it almost was, and how to prevent this from happening. "Nineteen Eighty-Four" was published in 1949, four years after the second world war, which gives a clear insight to Orwell's thought process throughout the book. This book is a must

read because it appeals to many genres like historical fiction, political fiction, and psychological fiction. It is a chilling page turner that keeps you thinking. - **Owen Roberts**

[“Harry Potter and The Sorcerer's Stone”](#)

JK Rowling

1998



“Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone” introduces readers to the magical world of Hogwarts through the lens of a young orphaned boy. Raised by neglectful relatives, Harry Potter finds his true identity on his eleventh birthday, when he receives a letter and reads it, much to his Aunt and uncle's dismay. In this letter, he is told that he is a wizard, and shortly after he is whisked away into the magical land of spells and wizardry. At the Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry, Harry finds a new life, befriending fellow students Ron Weasley and Hermione Granger. Through trials and tribulations, this trio finds their way through their first year at Hogwarts. Eventually uncovering the mystery of the sorcerer's stone, an artifact with the power to give one immortality. Together throughout the book, these three test their wit, loyalty, and courage. As the first novel in a series,

JK Rowling does a good job of world-building and creating various iconic fictional events, to further hook the reader into the magical world of Harry Potter. Rowling's debut novel draws the reader into her masterfully crafted world of whimsy, magic, and adventure. Exploring themes such as friendship, loyalty, identity, and an inherent battle between good and evil, this book is perfect for the younger reader. This book lays the perfect framework for the seven-book series to follow, with fictional history and traditions being crafted diligently by Rowling. Using things like the sport of Quidditch and the Sorting Hat to set the stage for a well-established magical society. **-Zach Smith**

Food & Restaurants

The Steak Burrito, with pinto beans, white rice, queso, and cheese, from Chipotle



Many cold winter days I have found myself indulging in a burrito from Chipotle, but with their prices you must be confident in your order. For years, fear led me to settling for a steak quesadilla, settling for mediocrity. But now I am a changed man, and it all stemmed from a life changing experience. To paint an accurate picture I will give all the details I can. Thursday, August 3 2019, a young, oblivious 11 year old boy walked into a Chipotle. This boy never leaves, as he becomes a man. He faces his

fear and makes a real order for the first time, this order changes everything. The boy made a series of random choices of topping ending with the cashier asking if "Steak burrito with white rice, pinto beans, and lastly a coating of queso and cheese?" was the right order. Within the first bite I knew I had signed a lifelong contract, the same as a young boy picking what franchise he will support. I picked steak, pinto beans, white rice, and queso and cheese. In retrospect I can't even imagine a world without this order. That young boy had a choice, let yourself stumble through life getting beat into submission by mediocre steak quesadillas, or embrace the queso and let it carry you down its flowing stream. Now when I spend \$17.56 on a burrito and a small drink at 11am, I remember my heritage, I remember my order. - **Kieran Ambrose**

Chipotle

Founded in 1993



Chipotle started off as a little local restaurant in Denver in 1993. Since then it has grown into one of the biggest and fastest growing food chains in the United States while also opening many locations in different countries. I personally love Chipotle because of their service and food quality allowing for a fast, but delicious experience. Having the ability to build your own burrito or bowl allows for everyone to find something that they like. Not only this, but it is able to be done in less than a minute. When I go I usually get a chicken or steak burrito that always comes freshly prepared and hot even though it is considered fast food. I have never had a single complaint about the quality of the food and everytime it is the same as the last time. Even

sometimes when I get sick of this order I can always change it up. Being able to choose is huge and it always has a lot of diversity in meals. Anyone is able to order at Chipotle and it will be done lightning fast with great quality. Chipotle has transformed itself into a huge chain restaurant in a short amount of time, while also becoming my favorite restaurant to go to. - **Aidan Owens**

Acova

Est. June 1st 2018



Acova makes the Denver Highlands its home. Everything about the restaurant is done with purpose and style, everything from the name, which pays tribute to the Hornet (the old restaurant that used to be located where Acova is), to its timeless atmosphere. A space where rustic meets chic, an exciting new place that still feels like home. There is a bar and table seating so whether you're going out for a girls night or family dinner there's something for you. The glass garage doors work to weave the raw authenticity of the city and greenery of the highlands into the restaurant. And not to mention the food. Their vast variety of menu items yet ability to nail every flavor in their dishes only adds to the homey vibe. Whether you're in the mood for a classic burger or a miso noodle salad they have it. A personal favorite are the street tacos, their blend of braised pork and cotija cheese creates a mouth-watering mix of flavors. And don't worry they don't shy away from dessert, their grilled pineapple and apple donuts are some highlights but you also can't go wrong with a scoop of sorbet. Not to mention their keen ability to cater to allergies. They have various vegetarian, and gluten free options. As someone with celiac disease, it feels like being a kid in a candy factory when dining at Acova. A restaurant on its way to becoming "the next highlands institution" should be on your list if you happen to be in Denver. —**Nina Wither**

garage doors work to weave the raw authenticity of the city and greenery of the highlands into the restaurant. And not to mention the food. Their vast variety of menu items yet ability to nail every flavor in their dishes only adds to the homey vibe. Whether you're in the mood for a classic burger or a miso noodle salad they have it. A personal favorite are the street tacos, their blend of braised pork and cotija cheese creates a mouth-watering mix of flavors. And don't worry they don't shy away from dessert, their grilled pineapple and apple donuts are some highlights but you also can't go wrong with a scoop of sorbet. Not to mention their keen ability to cater to allergies. They have various vegetarian, and gluten free options. As someone with celiac disease, it feels like being a kid in a candy factory when dining at Acova. A restaurant on its way to becoming "the next highlands institution" should be on your list if you happen to be in Denver. —**Nina Wither**

Olive Garden

Est. 1982



Olive Garden is a fast casual Italian dining restaurant that opened its doors on December 13th 1982. By the year 1989 there were 142 Olive Garden restaurants, making it very popular. It soon caught up to its sister restaurant [Red Lobster](#)

in sales. Olive Garden was then rebranded in the 1990s due to falling sales but sales picked up again soon after. Since then, Olive Garden has been a popular choice for Italian food. I would personally recommend Olive Garden to anyone looking for fast, hot, and good food. Olive Garden has also long received praise for its breadsticks which are soaked in butter in order to acquire their great taste. I would personally recommend Olive Garden to anyone as not only are their breadsticks excellent but their wide variety of Italian food including any pastas and pizza make for an excellent lunch or dinner. -Chance Carlisle

[Winter Edition Red Bull](#)

Redbull



Iced Vanilla Berry, ring a bell? You've probably heard of it, all over TikTok, all over your grocery store advertising, and maybe even your best friend drinks it. The way the name rolls off the tongue, the bright blue packaging, and the smell of blue raspberry syrup, all are what make this year's Winter Edition Red Bull so recognizable. Each season, Redbull works hard to create a winter, summer, and spring edition flavor. The taste can be described as delectable. Although not liked by many, there's a large group who have such a strong liking and buy out stocks at gas stations, grocery stores, and even

the online store is sold out. The best way to describe it is, if the [Blue Fun Dip](#) and [Trix Cotton Candy Swirl Yogurt](#) combined into one. If you enjoy blue raspberry you will most definitely enjoy the taste of a sweet treat while helping with not taking a nap while trying to work. Red Bull does such a great job at promoting this and producing a flavorful amazing taste. If you haven't tried one yet, I would recommend it 100 percent. - Delilah Dare

[Crumbl Cookies](#)

Est. 2017



Crumbl Cookie was founded in 2017 in Logan, Utah. This business was made by Sawyer Hemsley and Jason McGowan. The reason Crumbl Cookies are well known is that they change their menu every week so they have new cookies to try. Crumbl

Cookies are more on the pricier side of cookies, ranging from \$6- \$34, depending on how many cookies you get. In my opinion, they do not taste too good for all the hype put in it, but it is fun trying different types of cookies every week. Crumbl's cookies also tend to hold lots of calories. For one normal size cookie, it holds 700-800 calories. In all, I feel like it is not worth as much as it costs but is fun to get once in a while, but can be a hit or miss sometimes.

-Lily Gierszal

Dutch Bros

Est. 1992



In our school, Dutch Brothers seem to be very popular. Dutch Brothers was founded by Travis Boersma and Dane Boersma, who originated in Grants Pass, Oregon. The brothers started Dutch Brothers as a push cart in downtown Grants Pass next to the post office. Dutch Brothers is known for their high quality coffee, drive through, and their variety of drink choices. Their most popular drink is the Golden Eagle, a caramel & vanilla brew espresso with caramel drizzle. Aside from coffee, they have energy drinks as well, with funny names everyone can enjoy. For example, the Laser Cat, Vampire Slayer, Dinosaur Egg, Shark Attack, etc. They have many locations all over the US, the state with more locations than any other state is Texas which is about 22% of all Dutch Brothers. They have many locations in Colorado, even one that's about 10 minutes from our school, making it the perfect refresher for lunch. -Ella Helm

Products & Games

“Trivia Murder Party 2”

2019 (T)

Made by Jackbox Games



When the concept of a party is brought up, games are often not too far behind. Whether it's a game of cards, a board game, or even a video game like "[Mario Kart](#)", people love to get together and play games. But, there is one crowning party game series, beating the other contemporaries. That series is called "[The Jackbox Party Pack](#)", made by Jackbox Games and

had its first entry in 2014. They have a decade-long legacy and span a total of ten entries (plus a few spin-off entries). Each main entry included five games to play, leading to a total of 50 Jackbox games. In a similar vein to [“Kahoot”](#), Jackbox games can be played on any device that has a web browser. Your phone, computer, smart refrigerator, anything can play along if at least one person owns a party pack, and they don’t even have to be in the same room together. Where Jackbox differs from “Kahoot” and similar websites is that, instead of doing boring trivia, you play actual games. Since the players use their phones to play, the games have a huge player limit at, most of the time, 8 players, with 10,000 people being able to play along to a lesser extent than the main players, known as the audience. With ten packs to pick from, one of the games that shines the brightest is “Trivia Murder Party 2”, hailing from [“The Jackbox Party Pack 6”](#).

“Trivia Murder Party 2”, as the name would imply, is a trivia game where a question is asked by the serial killer host and all the players pick between four answers. If you get it right, you get \$1000 dollars. If you get it wrong though, you get sent to the “Killing Floor” along with everyone else who got it wrong. At the “Killing Floor”, you are forced to play death-defying minigames, such as doing more math problems than everybody else, playing a version of Blackjack using dice, or even letting the other players try and guess your password using [“Wordle”](#)-style rules. Death-defying is used in a literal sense, as failure in the minigame will result in your demise. This makes this trivia game, a genre known for lacking depth outside of the theme of the questions and being overall boring, into one of the most fun and intense games that Jackbox has ever made. If you are absolutely terrible at trivia, the minigames give you another chance to win the game if you are good at them. The scramble to get trivia right and dodge death for long enough is always an exhilarating time. This is all tied together by an amazing final round. When there is one player left, they are placed in the middle of a hallway and given categories, such as Indian states, and answers that may or not fit that category. If you get a question right, you will move forward one space in the hallway, with the goal to get to the very right and win the game. The main twist is that everyone else is playing too. You see, when you die, you are not out of the game. They are instead turned into ghosts, where they can still answer questions and get money, but you can’t go to the “Killing Floor”. This pays off in the final round, where all the ghosts are placed at the very left of the hallway, put closer to the alive player depending on who has the most money. This creates an intense race, where any slipup could result in a ghost passing you, which will result in the ghost stealing the body of the alive player and having a chance to win the game. It could also result in the following darkness, which will move forward along with the players and will permanently eliminate them from the game if it touches you, to swallow you. This is further compounded by the amazing soundtrack that builds to insanity as the players get closer to the end of the hallway. At this point the players hit a barrier, where to break it and win the game, one must get the question fully right. This final mad dash to try to get through the barrier, as players keep passing each other, and the darkness getting ever-closer, with the soundtrack hitting its peak here. “Trivia Murder Party 2” is one of Jackbox’s stand-out titles, with so

much love and charm infused in the game. “Trivia Murder Party 2” is a perfect introduction to Jackbox, and gives a major reason to obtain the party packs it’s attached to. **-Olly Johnson**

“ROXY breeze”

By Marvin

2021



The ROXY Breeze (2021) snowboard was designed by ROXY and made by Marvin. It services all-mountain terrain and is made to explore. Making it the perfect board for groomers, powder, park runs, and anything in between. This board is recommended for intermediate to advanced riders. This board has a camber/rocker/camber profile that is snowboard specific, it puts the rider weight on the two raised cambered areas, and produces a strong pressured carving zone, making it easy to shred on heel-to-toe edges, pop-up, and grind rails. The core is wood

allowing for medium flexibility, and has mangle-traction which produces more touch on the snow making control 10x easier. For me, this snowboard fits all of my perfect needs and its flexible nature allows me to ride in style, while also making sure my balance is where I need to be to balance with ease. This board is a perfect choice for anyone looking to conquer everything the slopes have to offer. **- Zeta Abell**

