

The Tower

JOHN ADAMS HIGH SCHOOL



Monday, December 16th, 2019

STUDENT-PRODUCED * SINCE 1940

Dear Tower readers: remember, if you would like to submit a Letter to the Editor, we are always accepting them. See details on page 2.

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The Show

5th Annual Tower Rock

ELLIE GRAFF - REPORTER

The Tower held its fifth annual “Tower Rock” show on Thursday, November 21st. The show serves as the primary fundraiser for the self-funded, self-run student newspaper. A variety of acts took the stage, ranging from renditions of classical piano pieces to electric guitar solos. Jonathon Zapf, senior, and Sam Stanton, junior, served as the MCs of the show, and provided a comical transition between each performance. Stanton described the experience: “Hosting Tower Rock was a blast, not only because of how great the performances were, but also for seeing my own classmates were taking charge in putting the event together.”

After featuring a number of talented Adams students, the Tower announced the groups and individual performers that had received the most votes of the night. Three were tied for third place. Aya Ertimi urged the audience to not only listen to her wonderful voice, but

focus on the message of the lyrics, Riley Morgan shredded the electric guitar, and friends of Isabella Ernsberger waived their phone flashlights in the air as she sang her heart out. She recalled,



Photo courtesy of Secilia Scheffler

“I had friends come out and support me, and they absolutely made my night.” Ernsberger described the experience as “magical.”

Max and the Sax and the Horses in the Back, an ensemble made up of Seth Kirkpatrick on the saxophone, Max McCoy on the drums,

Roy Bualuan on the piano, Cameron Dobbins on the bass, and Mitchell Caponigro and Jonah Gezelter on the trumpet, won second place. This group’s performance was largely improvised, but

sounded somehow chaotically cohesive nonetheless. Kirkpatrick revealed, “playing with Max is one of my favorite things to do. If you ever find someone like that, you know you have a strong relationship.”

David Smith, one of the most well known musical

performers at Adams, took home the first place prize of bragging rights. Before singing two soulful and flawlessly executed pieces, Smith announced that he was dedicating his performance to a friend who unfortunately could not make the show. Smith called Tower Rock, “a dream come true, except, in this situation, I’m not in front of Stevie Wonder.”

All of the performances were magnificent but the show’s closing was the apex. Joe Baughman and the Righteous Few, which features our very own English teacher Mr. Ufkin (on bass), closed the show with an original song before being joined by senior Tower staff members, Ryan Downey (on guitar) and Seth Kirkpatrick (on saxophone) for two epic cover songs.

The audience seemed to thoroughly enjoy each and every act, and proud parents as well as supportive friends were beaming throughout the auditorium. Réka Blake-more stated, “It was a lot of fun to see all my friends in their element, doing what they love. We have a very talented student body.”

THE JOHN ADAMS

TOWER

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Jonathon Zapf

PHOTOGRAPHERS

Secilia Scheffler

Anna Schrader

ADVISOR

John Nowicki

EDITORIAL POLICY

The Tower is a student-run newspaper publication and a voice for the Adams student body and staff. Letters to the Editor must pertain to Adams lifestyle, student/staff opinions, or local issues. Letters to the Editor must be sent to jnowicki2@sbcsc.k12.in.us, submitted physically to room 1831, or submitted to our online webpage at: <https://www.sbadamsthetower.com>.

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Tower Rock Spotlight: David Smith & Issanae Bailey

CLAIRE STOWE - EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

David Smith and Issanae Bailey have sung their way through Adams for the last four years, proving to be some of the most accomplished and talented artists from the school. On November 21st, David won the 5th annual Tower Rock, after placing a close second in previous years. This isn't the end of the road for David though - he wants more as a singer, improving and honing his talent. Currently, David has been spending a lot of time in the recording studio, trying to truly develop his craft and even beginning to compose some of his own songs.

In 2017, David participated in American Idol, and although he did not win he made connections within the music world and significantly developed his performing skills. He first sent in an audition tape and sang in the local Michiana American Idol in front of several local judges, including Darryl Buchanan, a South Bend native who both performs

frequently and produces his own music. In the first round of auditions David won the opportunity to travel to Nashville, Tennessee to perform in front of the executive judges of the show. "Meeting Darryl Buchanan changed [me]. He led me into my performing, because before that I wasn't really performing anything."

I was just singing, had my arm on my waist, and singing scared. He got me out of my comfort zone, so I give him credit for that."

During high school David has also been an active member of the track team, and hopes to run collegiately during college. One of his best memories during high school was his first interaction with Coach Scruggs, who immediately noticed his talent for running during an informal race and recruited him to join the track team, which he has participated in all four years of high school.

Both David and Issanae have been in the Adams Show Choir for several years, participating in many Indiana State School Music Association competitions [ISSMA] and performing in various talent shows across the city. Issanae remembers fondly her first time performing in the ISSMA competition, before she had joined Show Choir. "I did a solo and got a perfect score at Regionals. That was really fun for me and I was so happy."



Photo courtesy of Secilia Scheffler

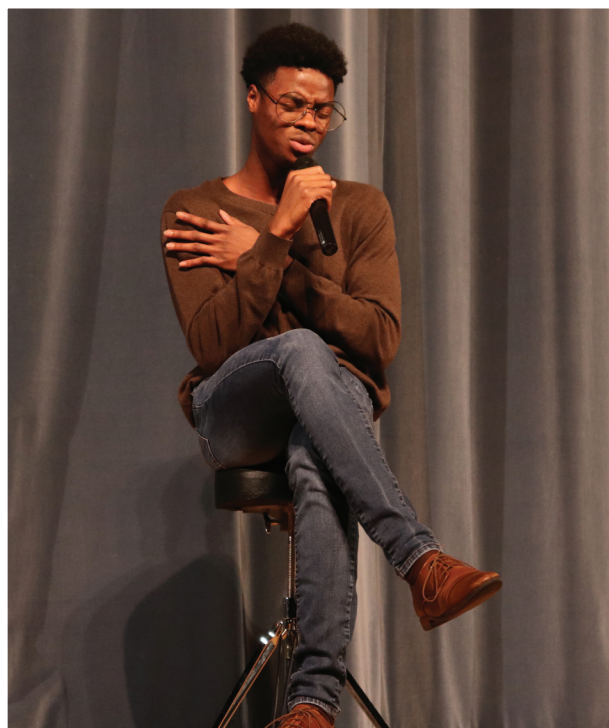


Photo courtesy of Secilia Scheffler

Despite this, they both were somewhat disappointed in the ensemble portion of ISSMA: “If I’m not doing a solo then I know that I’m not going to get the score that I want. It’s a fun experience to go out of town with all of your friends, but what’s not fun about it is performing when you know you’re unprepared,” says Issanae. David feels similarly, but welcomes the chance it provides to meet new people. “Last year we met this girl and sang with her for a couple of hours and almost missed our performance,” he says, “but it was still fun.”

In their futures David and Issanae both hope to continue with their passion for music in college. “Wherever I go I know that I’m going to try to have music follow me, because that’s my life. I don’t know what I would do without it, just to get better and improve my voice and control,” Issanae comments on her future goals. Their goals in music are long-term: “[I hope to] be singing and performing around a city other than South Bend, get out of Indiana,” David comments when asked where he sees himself in five years. Issanae also wants to leave Indiana and cultivate her success somewhere else, continuing with her passion for music.

Music has had an undeniable influence on their high school careers. “If it wasn’t for choir I would probably still be a really quiet kid and not talk to anybody,” David says. Issanae seconds David’s change: “When I first met him he was really shy, and then after a while he started to get out of his shell, and he’s definitely grown; he’s not that shy kid anymore.” Issanae has also grown through music and the challenge it provided her. “I’ve always been singing my whole life, and to come from schools where I’ve always been the best to come somewhere else where I actually have competition was new for me. I’ve had to learn to work harder to still be the best, even if I’m not. I know that I need to challenge myself and try harder. There’s always room for improvement.”

Tower Rock Spotlight: Aya Ertimi

ANNA TARNER - REPORTER

Aya Ertimi is a singer, rugby player, and does not conform to social labels. She is graduating early as a Junior, participates in ISO, JAVA, Mock Trial, Passion Project, Spanish Club, and the business clubs. She also placed third this year at Tower Rock.

Part of Aya’s elementary experience was at Hay Primary and Coquillard from kindergarten through third grade.

“After third grade I was homeschooled in Morocco until freshman year. Nice months of that five years I lived in Morocco, I lived in Saudi Arabia so and got a lot of cultural experience.”

Ertimi’s high school resume is full to the brim with clubs and extracurriculars. Along with being a JAVA board member, she also participated in clubs like Passion Project and Spanish Club. “I participate in a lot,” says Ertimi. “I stay busy because I get bored easily.”

When asked to describe herself in three words, Ertimi simply states, “I wouldn’t say I have three words. I don’t like confining myself to labels. I think it holds us to a standard society pushes us to have and I want to make my own standard.”

Ertimi is a part of Upward Bound, a program through Notre Dame for disadvantaged students. “It helps with academics and college access. I have been able to take summer school for free which has allowed me to graduate early on top of the countless benefits the program has, and I’m so grateful to be a part of it.”

Soccer was a big part of her life since

the age of six, but when she came to high school she decided it would be best to focus on her school work and to start her singing career, which is one of her biggest passions. Sophomore year she started playing rugby and loves it, and she plans on playing in college.

One of her biggest passions is singing, which she has always felt is a form of therapy. “I get lost in singing and I feel so stress free. I’ve always loved to sing, I just never had much confidence in myself to go on stage until recently.” Ertimi wants to pursue a career in singing, so going out

for Tower Rock was the first step. “As cheesy as it is, I try to live by, ‘you miss 100% of the shots you don’t take,’ so I shot my shot and I guess people thought I sounded good I guess.” (More than good. She placed third out of fifteen acts.) “Honestly, I know that what matters most is that I felt good about the performance I gave that night.”

Leaving high school early can be a little nerve wracking, and Ertimi does feel like she may miss being a teenager but she knows that this is the right decision for her in the long run.

Aya’s advice for younger students is, “don’t get caught up in drama and don’t let people walk all over you. Stop caring what people think; graduating early has made me realize that highschool is just highschool and one day you leave, it’s different and new and you don’t care about high school problems anymore.”

Aya’s plans for next year are going to college and majoring in pre-law, and she hopes to spread the message of leaving your mark. “The problem isn’t when they’re talking about you, it’s when they aren’t. What have you left then?”



Photo courtesy of Secilia Scheffler

Letter to the Editor: Lebanon Protests for Freedom – It's Time to Listen

ROY BUALUAN - STUDENT CONTRIBUTOR

Although I was born in the United States, my whole family is from Lebanon, a small Middle Eastern country sandwiched between Israel and Syria. My family and I return frequently, visiting friends and family when we get the chance. I've always considered my Lebanese heritage to be a big part of who I am, and I'm always more than happy to talk about the many amazing things Lebanon has to offer. But despite my national pride, never have I been more proud to call myself Lebanese than since the recent protests began.

Although rich with culture and full of gorgeous scenery, Lebanon has its fair share of problems, most of which stemming from the government. Government corruption is rampant in Lebanon, with taxpayer money going straight to many politicians' pockets. Out of 137 different countries, the Global Competitiveness Report ranked Lebanon as 134th in quality of electricity supply and 130th in overall infrastructure. Pollution and waste management have been a widespread issue since 2015. Lebanon hosts an estimated 1.5 million Syrian refugees, a number which is only expected to rise in the following months. Furthermore, wildfires swept across Lebanese forests in early October with little government action to counter them. Lebanon has the third highest debt to GDP ratio in the world and is in the middle of a financial crisis which could even trigger an economic collapse in the near future. The Ministry of Labor announced a 25% unemployment rate, equal to that of the Great Depression in America. For younger people, unemployment is even worse, with nearly 37% of people under the age of 35 unem-

ployed. For quite some time, the people had been looking to the government to see what measures they would take in order to combat the issue, but to many, the government's response was a slap in the face. So when the government proposed a new bill that would tax text messages and phone calls over popular messaging apps such as WhatsApp, like a modern day Stamp Act, the people were understandably outraged.

On October 17th, spontaneous protests against the new tax swept across the nation. "How was a texting tax going to solve our economic crisis?" they wondered. However, only two days later, the protests had evolved into something much larger. A total of over a million gathered in the streets in every major city protesting not just the tax, but the politicians who had got Lebanon into such a dire situation previously. The aforementioned issues in Lebanon had existed for some time, but the politicians had taken advantage of the sectarianism not only baked into the political system but dividing the people as well, using sectarian divides to prevent different religious groups from unifying against them. However, the recent protests have been a whole different story. Those who had been previously divided among the principal religious groups (Sunni, Shia, and Christian) found themselves united in protest against the government. In fact, my mother, Ghada Bualuan, participated in the protests during her recent two week trip to Lebanon. In speaking of her experience in the protests, she said "the protests were so spontaneous... people from all regions of Lebanon, young and old, men and women, are participating in the protests. They all are united... all holding one common flag: the Lebanese flag, not some other political party or sectarian group's flag."

So far, some progress has been made. When the demonstrations first spread across the country, the government quickly retracted the WhatsApp tax, but it was too late. After

a few days, Saad Hariri, Lebanon's prime minister at the time, proposed a series of sweeping reforms, including tax cuts, development of infrastructure, reassessment of government salaries, and an overhaul of the electricity sector. However, for many, this was not enough. The Lebanese people do not want new policies; they want new people in power. Not even two weeks after the first demonstrations, Hariri, along with the rest of his cabinet, resigned, but the protests continued. As of the writing of this piece, the protests have raged on for nearly a month with no end in the foreseeable future. The people will not rest until everyone is out of power.

However, many worry that the cry for freedom is falling on deaf ears. Although international news sources have covered the topic, the American public remains largely unphased and unaware. Of the seventeen potential democratic candidates, only one of them (Elizabeth Warren) has mentioned the political situation in Lebanon. Even then, it was an offhand tweet most overlooked in their feed. As for those currently in power, Donald Trump has yet to publicly comment on Lebanon: both on Twitter and in person. On November 2nd, however, a state department representative affirmed support for the Lebanese Army, or the counterrevolutionaries headed by the government.

Like Hong Kong, Chile, Iraq, and many others, Lebanon is joining the growing number of countries standing up for their rights and denouncing their governments. Now, more than ever, we need international recognition and support. I am very proud to be Lebanese, and prouder still to watch them stand up for themselves and unite for a common cause. But without the international community by our side, I fear our voices will not be heard. Only time will tell what fate awaits Lebanon. Who knows? In a few years, October 17th could be Lebanon's new Independence Day.

Red for Ed Action Day

CLAIRE STOWE - EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

On Tuesday, November 19th thousands of teachers from across the state met at the Indianapolis statehouse to protest in the hopes of affecting change for public education. Frustrated with years of low pay and dwindling classroom resources, these teachers made their voices heard on issues important to them, ranging from extremely time



consuming standardized tests to the funds increasingly being redirected from public education to vouchers, private, and charter schools. Among the attendees were many teachers from the South Bend School Corporation, which led the administration to close schools for the day. Organized by the Indiana State Teachers Association [ISTA], the activities for the day included several speeches by various ISTA members including the president, Keith Gambill, and a march outside of the statehouse.

The ISTA cites three main reasons for the Red for Ed Action Day: increased teacher compensation, not holding teachers accountable for lower standardized testing scores, and the removal of the externship requirement for teachers. Together, these have been compounded into legislation the ISTA hopes will eventually be passed.

This movement is continuously spreading: as of November 7th 7,000 teachers had registered to attend in Indianapolis and dozens of schools and corporations have closed school for the day. Reverberations from teacher strikes and protests in West Virginia, Colorado, and other states are influencing action in Indiana as teachers begin to speak out against the issues of compensation and testing.

Mrs. Fisher, an English teacher at Adams and Teachers' Union representative, attended the Action Day along with many of her coworkers. She cites the extensive standardized testing as a main reason for her attendance. "It's doing a disservice to students," she says, "having so many high stakes tests and having them over and over and over again. Most of my curriculum now focuses around testing and I just don't think it's right." Fisher wishes the state would decrease the funds going into this standardized testing and also find a more accurate test to measure students' abilities.

"People are overall disgusted with the amount of money that is being funneled away from the public schools," Fisher comments, a general sentiment of attendees, specifically focusing on the increasing prevalence of charter schools and the money that is being redirected to fund them instead of supporting public education. Earlier this year, a bill was proposed to the Indiana legislature that would further split taxpayer money between public and charter schools, essentially decreasing funding for public schools. However, this proposal was later removed, a small victory for public education.

After attending, Fisher and others are proud of the work they have accomplished. Thousands of teachers and supporters attended the march at the Statehouse to protest, ready to grab the attention of the legislators. "I think the greatest benefit from this event was that we realized that when teachers band together we have far more power than we think," comments Fisher.

English teacher Mrs. Drake, although happy with the unification of the teachers showed, was disappointed at the response by the legislators. "Unfortunately, many state leaders failed to engage in dialogue with the educators and then ultimately made misleading statements to the press about the state budget for education." She feels specifically frustrated about the voucher and charter school money being combined in the budget with the public schools, essentially leading to less funding overall. "I was ultimately left feeling pessimistic about whether actual change would occur as a result of the rally," she says. "The outlook for public schools will only improve if citizens vote for leaders who view public education as the backbone of democracy and allocate state funds accordingly."



Tower Rock Spotlight: Max & The Sax

CLAIRE STOWE - EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

Max and the Sax, a saxophone-percussion duo, performed for the second time

at this year's Tower Rock, taking second place in the competition. With Max McCoy on percussion, Seth Kirkpatrick on saxophone, and several other featured Adams students including



Photo courtesy of Secilia Scheffler

Roy Bualuan

on piano, Jonah Gezelter and Mitchell Caponigro on trumpet, and Cameron Dobbins on bass, this band made its mark at their last Tower Rock, as most of the ensemble is composed of seniors.

The band formed casually, according to Seth: "Should we make a band, Max?" "Yes," responded Max. Then, they recalled nostalgically, "Mr. Ufkin said that we should be called Max and the Sax and thus the star power-duo was formed." They soon realized that they "vibed together," in the words of Max, as they both liked to focus on the improvisational aspect of music instead of the written, and of course you can't discredit their "eerily similar chakra frequencies, its 55Hz if you were wondering."

Both Seth and Max are involved with Adams further than simply their music. Both have participated in the mock trial program for several years, and they are both full-IB students, members of National Honor Society, and in the concert band. Both have found mock

trial to be their most influential and entertaining extracurricular activity, as it "has taught me assertiveness and imbued a newfound awareness of the law," according to Max.

After graduating in the spring, Max hopes to receive an undergraduate degree in Chemistry before moving on to pursue Emergency Medicine in Medical School. Seth wants to follow the passion he has found from mock trial, as he plans to attend Law School after attending a liberal arts college. To underclassmen, Seth advises "do your work on time, it isn't that hard. It's tough but it's never as hard as it seems to be." Max, meanwhile, encourages the IB program: "My advice is not to be scared about taking on a 'big' workload. If YOU choose to make your life about IB and sadness, that's your prerogative, but I honestly don't think it's that bad once you're in the thick of it."

Max and the Sax will perform one last time for the Adams community at Night of the Arts in May.

The 2019 Winter Guide

SIERRA WEAVER - REPORTER

Happy Winter! Essentially this is the time of year where there are a bunch of different holidays, and a bunch of different family gatherings. Logically, fashion is a really big deal this time of year, and there are certainly some new trends that will make the winter season great for shopping. There are also some really fun winter activities for if you love the cold weather, or even if you would rather stay inside.

Winter Fashion Trends

Button-up sweaters: I have seen these everywhere recently. They are a super cute variant of cropped or over-sized sweaters, which make them look really unique when styled. They pair really well with a nice pair

of mom jeans, or, if you're trying to be a bit more formal, a skirt. I have found a lot of these at Target for fairly cheap, but pretty much any store is sure to have some.

Animal print: This type of pattern became really popular this summer and the trend has continued to this winter season. Animal prints can add dimension to almost any look, especially when paired with really basic colors. This is a trend that goes in and out of style a lot, so, luckily for everyone looking for a nice animal print skirt or top to spice up a look, there is usually plenty of animal print in thrift stores for great prices.

Corduroys: These are a really good thing to pick up if you are tired of wearing the same five shades of denim on repeat. They look really cute paired with a simple crop top, or a nice over-sized sweater, if you are looking for something warmer. I have a really cute pair from Target, but I have also seen a bunch at PacSun or even Goodwill.

Fun Things to Do

Ice Skating: This is one of my favorite winter activities, even though I am really bad at it. Ice skating is a fun activity to do with your friends, and you can probably get some cute Instagram pictures while you are at it. There are a few places to skate around town, such as Merrifield Ice Rink, Howard Park, and Compton Family Ice Arena.

Skiing/Tubing: If you are feeling like you need a break from South Bend, a nice day trip to go skiing or tubing is a perfect idea. The closest place is Swiss Valley, which is in Michigan and about an hour drive from Adams, but it only offers skiing and snowboarding. A little farther (90 minutes) is Timber Ridge which offers tubing as well as skiing. If you don't mind a longer drive there are few other places farther up in Michigan: Bittersweet Ski Resort, Cannonsburg Ski Area, and Pine Knob Ski Resort Inc.

Oscar Preview

SAM VILLAGRA-STANTON - FILM CRITIC

As we head into awards season, the beginning of the 2019 cinematic retrospective begins. A select few categories from the Oscars will be chosen, as well as my corresponding prediction of the picture that best fits the category. Here's the Tower's 2020 Oscar predictions preview:

Best Original Music Score: Joker

To kick off the list, we have the "Best Original Music Score" category, which, from the films I've seen this year, will most likely go to the 2019 phenomenon, *Joker*. Hildur Guðnadóttir's tracks in the clown prince of crime's chilling solo movie is perfect fit for the gradual decline of Arthur's life. Guðnadóttir's riveting score provides the perfect complement to the picture's twisted atmosphere, heightening Arthur Fleck's growing perversion of the world around him.

Best Original Screenplay: Marriage Story

The backbone of a strong film is a strong script, it serves as the gateway for the production and translation of a project from paper to screen. This year's most effective original screenplay was by far dialogue guru Noah Baumbach's heart-breaking 2019 experience, *Marriage Story*. Baumbach's grippingly real tale

of the divorce process deserves the "Best Original Screenplay" award.

Foreign Language Film: Parasite

Director of *Okja* and *Snowpiercer*, Bong Joon-Ho unleashed an infectious, invigorating tale of socioeconomic diversity and its side effects. Beautiful cinematography, an unnerving story, and intellectual thematic elements that make for a complex mixture of suspense and comedy. 2019's *Parasite*

is sure to earn Bong Joon-Ho and South Korea the "Foreign Language Film" Oscar.

Best Actress: Scarlett Johansson in Marriage Story

Scarlett Johansson absolutely delivers in 2019's *Marriage Story* as Nicole Barber. Johansson shines as she embodies a mother navigating her way through the divorce process, making every scene feel real and absolutely human. In *Marriage Story*, there are no good or bad sides to take, everyone is simply human, and Johansson's heart-wrenching performance solidifies this theme. Scarlett Johansson undoubtedly deserves the Oscar for "Best Actress".

Best Actor: Joaquin Phoenix in Joker

The buzz behind the controversial black sheep of the DC films was well-warranted, and Joaquin Phoenix's legendary perfor-

mance fully supports the rave and chaos behind the film. The actor's effort is on full display (as always), showcasing the outcome of society's cruel behavior toward a man who just wants to make people laugh and smile. Phoenix's now iconic performance is almost a guaranteed win.

Best Director: Martin Scorsese for The Irishman

Documenting a life marred in the gangster renaissance of the 40s all the way through the 60s and mid 70s is no easy task. Scorsese makes a remarkable return to his trademark genre in the biopic of Frank Sheeran, played expertly by frequent collaborator Robert De Niro, showcasing bold choices to his now classical genre. The genius and work behind the craft is masterfully showcased in the three hour epic, and hopefully "Best Director" winner, 2019's *The Irishman*.

Best Picture: Marriage Story

Possibly the most anticipated award of the Oscars is "Best Picture", which, to my internal unrest and debate, absolutely must go to Noah Baumbach's *Marriage Story*. Baumbach's specialty of encapsulating the human experience, the ins and outs of tangible idiosyncrasies is painfully showcased in his wonderfully crafted 2019 emotional rollercoaster. Co-stars Adam Driver and Scarlett Johansson are magnetic, both to each other and the viewer, bolstered by meaningful editing and production design that equate to a knockout spectacle of a gripping, melancholic reel of a couple's separation. Noah Baumbach's touching slice of life, *Marriage Story* will win "Best Picture".

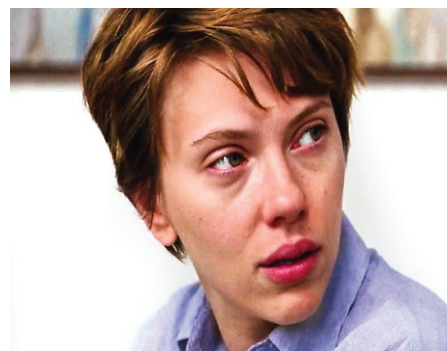




Photo courtesy of Secilia Scheffler

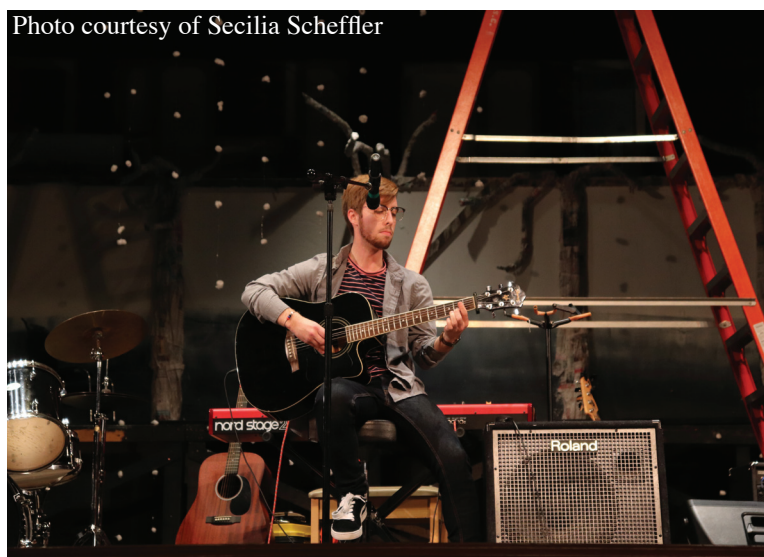


Photo courtesy of Secilia Scheffler



Photo courtesy of Secilia Scheffler



Photo courtesy of Secilia Scheffler

Left to Right: The Show's cohosts Sam Stanon & Jonathon Zapf, Cameron Dobbins, Mimi Panzica, Joe Baughman & Mr. Ufkin



Photo courtesy of Anna Schrader



Photo courtesy of Secilia Scheffler



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Photo courtesy of Anna Schrader

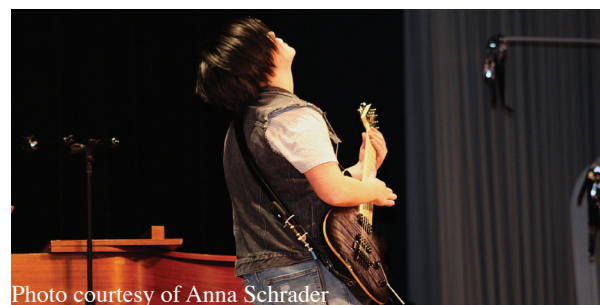


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Left to Right: Erika Ruiz, Isabella Ernsberger & Ryan Downey, Michael Dunham, Rylie Nellans, Riley Morgan, Honora Whitmore

Photo courtesy of Secilia Scheffler



Left to Right: Joe Baughman & The Righteous Few featuring Seth Kirkpatrick on saxophone & Ryan Downey on guitar