

# THE POOR PRINT



## Stressed About Exams This Trinity?

### Here's Why You Should Go and See *Guardians of the Galaxy Vol. 3*

**Hani Ali**

WETHER YOU HAVE FINALS, PRELIMS, OR obscure second-year exams (why?) coming up, I can imagine you are probably under a lot of stress. Your friends are too busy to see you, the work never stops, and you've had to cut down on formals and other leisure activities. Why wouldn't you be? As a self-proclaimed Good Samaritan, I am here to bestow upon you the best stress-relieving activity. Close your eyes to looming deadlines and exam timetables, visit your nearest Curzon or Odeon, and go and watch *Guardians of the Galaxy Vol. 3*.

Why, you ask? You probably scoff at the thought of going to watch a weird comedy-superhero-action-sci-fi blockbuster, or your favourite movie is a controversial Serbian black-and-white snuff film from 2010 and you wouldn't dare waste your time watching a superhero film. Perhaps you haven't watched anything Marvel since *Avengers: Endgame* (2019). Regardless, I can promise you that watching this movie will be sure to change your life. The feeling is comparable to little else.

For our Bradley Cooper fans (who also happen to be furries), the placement of Rocket Raccoon at the centre of the story will have you teary eyed and emotional. While for those who consider themselves fans of Doctor Who, it will be a delight to see the beloved Amy Pond (played by Karen Gillan) as the bald and blunt Nebula. I'm not sure whether Chris Pratt has any fans, but the weirdly charming and humor-

ous portrayal of Star-Lord will be sure to pull you away from your Trinity worries.

Drag your computer science friend away from her robot bunnies in the AI course and sprint down the High Street to your favourite cinema. If your girl has left you, forgo drowning your sorrows away with alcohol and go on an adventure to Curzon. Count your blessings and thank the stars for the chance to witness Marvel's first F-bomb on the big screen. Forget the Face Off with your tutor about your lack of complete assignments and failed collection, and marvel at the beauty that is *Guardians of the Galaxy*.

Music students will be overjoyed by the use of music throughout the film (although I imagine they don't have exams and probably have quite a lot of time to go to the cinema). If you can recall the excessive use of Fleetwood Mac in the last movie, imagine that and delightfully more. Forget the combination of Spotify and problem sheets and bask in the glory of musical classics and outer space. Oh, and fans of Florence and the Machine – enjoy.

I hope I have convinced you to take three (3) hours out of your time to watch this movie, and if not, I leave you with this:

I am Groot (derogatory).

And yes, if I had to pick between passing exams and seeing this movie, I would pick seeing this movie. ■

## Champagne Concert: A Review

**Jerric Chong**

WE AT ORIEL ARE QUITE PRIVILEGED INDEED to be able to listen to an extraordinarily broad range of live music. Even discounting the superb ensembles and performers of every genre who can be heard across the city and university, Oriel is fortunate to be able to put on a wide array of musical activities across the academic year: Choral Evensong, Communion and Compline every week in chapel; Oriel Fridays in the bar; jazz in the MCR; the annual garden play in Trinity term – and all this without an active college music society (*sed usquequo?*).

A definite highlight of the college's musical life, though, is the twice-yearly Champagne Concert, in which eminent performers come to immerse us with chamber music, often featuring relatively obscure or less-performed works. This term's concert, held at 7:30pm on Friday 5 May in the college chapel, was definitely no exception, titled 'Guillaume de Machaut: 14th-century music of liturgy and love'. In fact, I would reckon that this far outstripped any previous Champagne Concert in terms of time period: Machaut (c. 1300 – 1377) wrote poetry and composed music in the *ars nova* style that flourished in mediaeval France, around the same time as Oriel was getting started in Oxford!

In another departure from usual concerts, which feature external musicians of note being invited to perform in college, this one featured Oriel's very own fellow and tutor in music, director of chapel music, and fellow librarian: David Maw. From a chamber organ placed in the chancel, he directed an intimate quartet of singers – Hannah Cooke (mezzo-soprano), Joy Sutcliffe (mezzo-soprano), Tom Robson (tenor) and David de Winter (tenor) – in a captivating performance of Machaut's greatest 14th-century hits. Indeed, David Maw might possibly be the best person in the world to lead this concert: Machaut has been a long-term research project of his, with a DPhil thesis and many papers under his belt, and a new edition of his work being produced.

The concert began with a brief tribute by Julian Armstrong, who chairs the alumni Music Committee that generously funds these events, to John Albert (1935–2023), a longtime member of the committee who was instrumental in supporting the concert series and other musical

events. This was a stark reminder that putting on such noteworthy events in college requires the pivotal support of munificent benefactors, and it is to them whom we are grateful for being able to enjoy great opportunities like this – those 'by whose benefits we are here maintained in godliness and learning'. Fittingly, this concert was dedicated to his memory.

The first half of the concert was especially suited to the venue: Machaut's *Messe de Nostre Dame*. Composed perhaps in the 1350s, it has the distinction of being the earliest complete setting of the Mass ordinary that can be attributed to a single composer. The concert programme describes Machaut's music as 'unfamiliar and can seem strange. In fact, it strikes the listener still with the force of modernity now.' From the first open fifth of the Kyrie, this was undeniably evident. The four professional vocalists, without needing conducting, adeptly weaved through each other's vocal lines, replete with augmentations and diminutions, creating a startlingly ethereal sound that, to the ear trained on Baroque, Classical and Romantic works, would sound quite strange indeed. Yet this ethereality was perhaps what lent the work a unique and appreciable flair, effectively conveyed by the singers. This was combined with short organ interludes from the contemporaneous *Codex Faenza*, played by David Maw, which sensitively brought a distinct dimension to the liturgical music. Before the concert, I had listened to the *Messe de Nostre Dame* and was struck by its rawness, but nothing certainly compares to hearing it live, and it was thoroughly stress-relieving.

In a previous piece published in this newspaper ('Springing Out of a Fourteenth-Century Lockdown', Issue #76 – Spring, 6 March 2022), David Maw wrote of the possible effect of the Black Death and imposed lockdowns on Machaut's musical output. This was on full display in the second half of the concert (after the customary champagne interval), which featured performances of Machaut's secular songs in the three *formes fixes* of mediaeval poetry: the *ballade*, the *rondeau* and the *virelai*. Eschewing the conventional concert approach of performing the programme straight through, the opportunity was taken to arrange the songs in a meaningful order to tell a convincing tale: of inspiration by

## Tres Aestates Three Summers

**Leonard Shaw**

non puntonibus  
soles non placet nostris  
capti labore

terror ob finem  
documenta morati  
cor iam sanatur

solis occasus  
membra calefactantes  
mox laboramus

we are not in punts  
sunny days delight us not  
held hostage by work

panic for the end  
tutorials are delayed  
my heart is now healed

the sun is setting  
though our bodies are warmer  
soon we work again

## Mono

**Siddiq Islam**

O a wondrous yestermorrow,  
Wrapped up with my missus Mono.  
Cuddles, nuzzles, hugs and kisses,  
Wrapped up with my Mono missus.

But, next day, I'm fever's captive.  
What has made me so reactive?  
Tossing, turning all night long.  
What has happened? What is wrong?

Hearing Doctor's diagnosis:  
'You have Mononucleosis.  
Drink some water, get some rest,  
And stay away from me! is best.'

Once I see my fever's end,  
Still my Mono does extend.  
My glands puffed up, my spirits low.  
How could my missus hurt me so?

You know what makes me feel most sore?  
Dear Doctor says there is no cure!  
So, each new night, I wait and pray  
That I might be all right some day.

And when I start to show improvement,  
My Mono starts her next grand movement.  
Lethargy reaches out her grasp;  
I fall back into Mono's clasp.

Eight weeks pass, and nine, and ten.  
Will I ever be well again?  
How it caused me so much sorrow,  
One wondrous night with missus Mono.



and reflection of nature, of lockdown during the Black Death, of courtly love with a young lady. As well as laconic snippets of context provided before each song by David, excerpts from Machaut's own poetry were read out in the original French by Cécile Varry, one of Oriel's French lecturers, and more organ intabulations were interspersed among these too. This definitely allowed the greater appreciation of Machaut's œuvre by the captivated audience. The concert concluded with 'Armes, amours', a double-ballade *déploration* lamenting Machaut's death in 1377, with poetry by his pupil Eustache Deschamps set to music by the otherwise unknown F. Andrieu. As in the previous part, the performers complemented each other wonderfully and with subtle sensitivity.

Thus ended possibly the most unique Champagne Concert so far: a profound exploration of the life and work of a trailblazing French artist, masterfully put together by a world-leading expert on him. As I stepped out into the cool May evening, a raucous sound wafted across First Quad – Oriel Fridays was on in the college bar, with JCR members rowdily singing 'Sweet Caroline' and other bawdy tunes into a microphone while making strange dance moves. Seven centuries of music, spanning seven centuries of Oriel. I smiled at the juxtaposition. ■

## Sisyphus House : A Review

**Sam Hardaker**

UBTITLED A 'TIME BENDING ROM- COM', the student-run *Sisyphus House* touched a nostalgic and sentimental nerve. Written by Abbie Nott and Megan Bruton, the new play had a unique and fresh voice, both loving and honest, truthful and fantastical, and *Sisyphus House* was able to transform a rather grey Thursday and my rather grey outlook, with essay deadlines looming, into a hopeful one.

The dual timeline, with jumps between 1590 and the present day, made for thoughtful comparisons, the past feeling closer than ever. The two Tudor characters, Arthur (Josh Gray) and Francis (Alex Bridges), opened the doors to a queer history, a loving one, a hidden one that deserves a voice.

For a setting that felt at once exciting and familiar, a dilapidated Tudor mansion that I'm sure many can imagine thanks to the various National Trust sites the description evokes, the story was comforting and enthralling. The almost-romance between a soon to be history graduate (Robin, played by Kate Harkness) and a young council worker tasked with the closing and selling of the old house (Ben, played by Geena Morris) was both relatable and lovingly awkward.

The brief featurettes from Emmeline (Phoebe Winter) were the most entertaining, enchanting and hilarious moments. The rest of the ensemble (Carolina Cortés Vilaplana and Antonia Anstatt) equally succeeded in believably constructing both the past and present, which made for an incredibly enjoyable evening.

Despite some audio issues, the performance was enthralling and engaging, and the actors especially witty and instinctive, even when things went wrong. ■

*Sisyphus House ran from Tuesday 2 May to Saturday 6 May at the Burton Taylor Studio, Oxford.*

## Stress Playlist

For more inspiration on this issue's theme, check out this playlist, curated by one of our editors. It has been hand-picked and custom-made to soothe your mind and chill your vibe.

Say 'no' to stress, kids!



To access the playlist, scan the code above using the Spotify app on your mobile device.

### UPCOMING ISSUES AND THEMES

#### ISSUE #91 – WATER

Submissions by 24 May (Wednesday, 5th week)

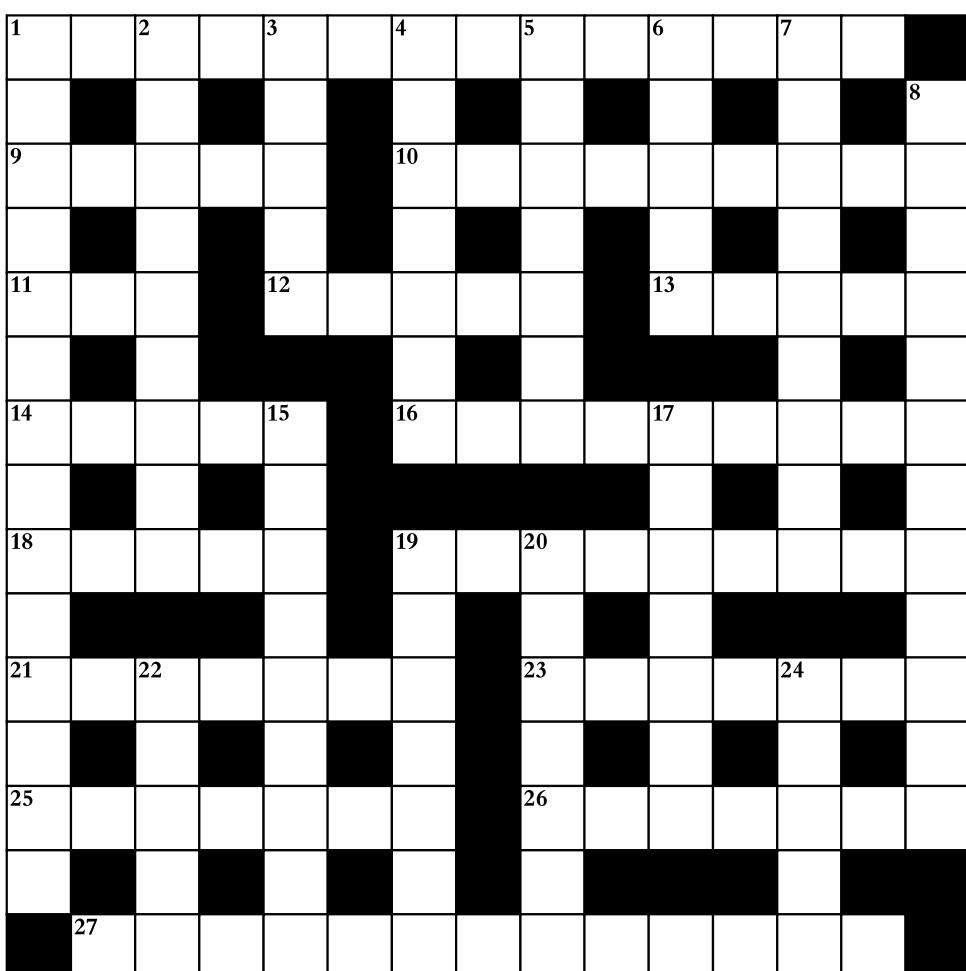
#### ISSUE #92 – REMINISCENCE

Submissions by 7 June (Wednesday, 7th week)

We publish pieces from any member of college. Send them in at [thepoorprint.com/submit](http://thepoorprint.com/submit)

# Cryptic Crossword

Tom Rose



Editor's note: The solutions to this puzzle will be published online at [thepoorprint.com](http://thepoorprint.com) on Sunday 21 May.



## ACROSS

- 1 A unit representative of a typical, grizzly hospital (8,6)
- 9 Gods of a mount from the east (5)
- 10 A welcoming signal? (9)
- 11 Decapitate pig with blade (3)
- 12 *Minecraft* block-style copper starts to become increasingly corroded (5)
- 13 Make a bet, lose £1000, walk on slowly (5)
- 14 Time left in the end for map (5)
- 15 Trust money with one big booty redhead (9)
- 16 Princess: 'I'm not going to stay in charge.' (5)
- 17 Bulk deliverer to repackage his original crap (5,4)
- 18 Sour bop organisers expressed indignation (7)
- 19 Doctor, I sedate first, scan, then I probe? (7)
- 20 Alphabet to reorganise its letters, holding accessory character (7)
- 21 Cloth covering sure to keep you from losing energy (7)
- 22 'Take one of the top three chess pieces.' Old plotter is a pro at planning moves (13)

## DOWN

- 1 Sign to confirm consent and close off endless agreement (4,2,8)
- 2 A penal colony, as a trial, shuffled around leading undesirables (9)
- 3 Column about bar with enticing interior (5)
- 4 Uncommon segment of Welsh dish (7)
- 5 What Armstrong rode on to be in regular orbit (7)
- 6 What Plato would call a natural leader? (5)
- 7 Stash looted food north after revolution in capital (9)
- 8 'Objection! Nutrition rep? That's ridiculous!' (12)
- 15 A globe almost fully captured in CT of anus component (9)
- 17 Troubled SOS on phone: 'head right back' (7)
- 19 Brighten into extremely jovial goodbye (7)
- 20 It drives competitively fast, forwards and in reverse (7)
- 22 Green is in fashion? (5)
- 24 A portrayal of Isengard's foremost wizard (5)

## HOW CRYPTIC CLUES WORK

Though not always formulaic, a cryptic clue is generally made of two halves: one that defines the answer, and one that constructs it using wordplay. This could be an anagram, taking abbreviations, using a less obvious definition, or some other trick. These halves can be in either order and can be connected by a short word. Here are two examples of deconstructed clues, with the definition half underlined.

1. It makes things no greater bafflingly (9)

### GENERATOR

Anagram of NO GREATER ('bafflingly' indicates a baffling arrangement of the letters)

2. Before it reversed, craft was characteristic (5)

### TRAIT

ART (synonym of 'craft') reversed before IT

## Exam Season

Siddiq Islam



LOOK AT ALL THOSE PEOPLE STUCK IN THE LIBRARY REVISING FOR EXAMS...



## 'Dear Beary ...'

Beary McBearface

HELLO THERE! MY NAME'S BEARY, ONE OF the giant teddy bears who hang out in the JCR – I'm the brown one; my purple counterpart is John Henry. As *The Poor Print's* self-anointed agony aunt, I'm here to help you with any troubles you're facing. Please send me your college (or general) worries, and I'll help you find a solution. To submit a question, just send an email to [thepoorprint@oriel.ox.ac.uk](mailto:thepoorprint@oriel.ox.ac.uk) with 'Dear Beary' in the subject line.

Of course, if you'd prefer to remain anonymous – and I encourage naming no names; we don't want any beef here – just drop a note with your concern for me in one of the editors' pidgeons in the Porters' Lodge (names are available below). And please do: I need a nice hobby in my twilight years!

NB: Please remember that old Beary here has had no formal welfare training, so if you have a more serious issue to raise, please reach out to our beloved JCR Welfare Officers (Ben Thomson and Rose Hickman) and MCR Welfare Secretary (Gabe Calvo), or get in touch with the Peer Supporters, the Welfare Deans (Marta Bielinska and Dan Brennan), the Chaplain (Rob Wainwright), or the College Nurse.

And now, for the matter at hand:

### 1. Dear Beary, why am I so stressed?

That is the age-old question that has plagued many an Oxford student. But ultimately, I think you know the answer; you signed up for this after all! Whether the rigorous academic requirements and numerous assignments you are required to complete that are due in approximately three hours, or the excessive extracurriculars and responsibilities you thought would be a good idea months ago (and look good on your CV), or a combination of the two, stress was always inevitable. So there you are, biting your nails in a corner of the Pantin, dissociating in the Glink, distracting yourselves and others in Third Quad, as stress rises and falls in waves. And all because you applied to this (surprisingly?) intense course. Ah well.

### 2. Dear Beary, what should I do if I fail my exams?

'Fail' is an interesting word. Many have used this simply to describe some less-than-ideal grades, while others take it very seriously, saving, harbouring this term for the most dire of situations, the scary ones where tutors require extra meetings to discuss your future at the college. Now, depending on the sincerity and severity with which you are engaging this locution you will have to take different actions: whether it simply be getting a wiggle on and actually going to lectures, or actually having to re-sit an examination or two. It will be alright (wow, am I actually being nice?), despite what it may initially feel like – and, before you know it, the worst will have passed.

### 3. Dear Beary, why is it always raining?

Dear Reader, why is it that you are always complaining? The rain is rejuvenating! It is life-giving! While it may chill your bones and send your teeth chattering, and mean that your sentient radiator will be dressed in dripping socks and the jumper that you thought would protect from the weather, and make your room have a damp smell for the next week, it is nature's way of cleansing of course. Washing the slate clean, starting fresh, blah blah blah. If nothing else, it may simply be an omen that one needs to stay inside, in a library, and finish one's work for once. No? Just an idea.

### 4. Dear Beary, can I submit my own questions to you?

Absolutely! In fact, that's highly encouraged – my entire *raison d'être* as an ursine agony aunt is to provide answers to the college community. That can only happen if I have some questions to answer. Now, it so happens that most of the questions that come my way are written by your indefatigable *Poor Print* editors on the day before publication, feverishly trying to fill this column up. While I'm certainly happy to humour their

tireless editing work, it does admittedly tend to get a little unvaried over time. What I really need are some fresh, inquisitive voices who are hankering to ask me something.

Ergo: do you have any college concerns or worries that you'd like to raise (anonymously)? Are there any burning questions that have popped into your head recently while in the shower? Do you just want a new method of procrastination or boredom relief? Then we'd like to hear from you! Just send your questions for me – long, short, deep, shallow, serious, frivolous – to [thepoorprint@oriel.ox.ac.uk](mailto:thepoorprint@oriel.ox.ac.uk) with 'Dear Beary' in the subject line, and I'll do my utmost to answer it in the next issue. I even hear that an online submission form has been set up at [thepoorprint.com/submit](http://thepoorprint.com/submit) for your convenience. The question can be on any topic you like (although the editors tell me that there isn't enough space to publish answers to everyone's tutorial essays).

Best of all, I can promise much better, wittier responses than Ch\*GPT, if you were thinking of using that wretched large language model. AI can never take my job away! ■

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