

THE BRIGIDINE OBSERVER



VLADIMIR PUTIN ORDERS THE INVASION OF UKRAINE

BY BILLY MORRELL

On the 24th of February 2022, Russian President Vladimir Putin, a long-time controversial figure in global politics, announced the immediate invasion of Ukraine, following two separate build ups of troops in the past year, falsely claiming it to be a series of military exercises.

This act of aggression appears reminiscent of a time long before present, a violent invasion with little motive other than that of bloody conquest. When addressing the people of both Ukraine and Russia upon the initial entry into the country, Putin made a number of false accusations, in attempt to justify his actions, citing that the nation is being run by a 'Neo-Nazi thugs' installed by the US and Europe, in the hopes of forcing them into NATO to eventually defeat Russia. Whilst it is true that Ukraine has been gradually westernised, this is only the result of years of Russian aggression towards the nation, with the Crimean Peninsula being annexed by Russia in 2014.

Whilst fear of a global war, as Putin threatened if any nation intervenes, or the requested 'No Fly Zone' is initiated, has prevented the official sending

of troops to fight Russia, many western nations, such as our own government, the USA, and every country within the EU, have provided some form of aid to Ukraine. Some have made the individual decision to travel to the nation and take arms in the fight, which The Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office has advised against.

In an unexpected turn of events on the frontline however, the Ukrainian people have been seen to defend their country in a strong and patriotic nature. Many experts around the world predicted that the sheer force of Russia, which was the fourth highest spender on its military in 2020, bettered only by two of its closely linked nations, China and India, and its biggest rival, the United States, would take control of its major cities in a matter of days.

The true story that has played out has been far from that. Some Ukrainians within the nation are reporting a waiting list to enlist in the army, as civilians take up arms to defend their country and its people, whilst those without a weapon can be seen to make 'Molotov cocktails' to fight back. On the other side, numerous online videos show a

disorganised and unprepared Russian military force, with dated tanks breaking down on the side of the road, as Ukrainians mock the soldiers, offering lifts 'back to Moscow'. The morale of many of the Russian troops, as well as civilians back home, is questionable, as they seem to have no desire to fight against what many refer to as their 'brother country', with tennis player Andrey Rublev writing 'no war please' on a camera lens following a win at the Dubai Duty Free Championships.

However, Russia's biggest weapon cannot be found on the battlefield, or even in the country it is invading at all. Slowly but surely, independent Russian media has been squandered, and all that is left is now state controlled, which has been portraying the war as a quest to free the Ukrainian people. The Russian 'Ministry of Enlightenment' also announced it would be holding a virtual lesson to 'educate' children as to the 'Danger of NATO' and why the war is necessary. Some Russians have claimed that images being shown by remaining independent journalists of destroyed buildings in Ukraine are 'not real', whilst others refuse to comment in fear of their lives.



LIFESTYLE

SPRING FASHION

BY LUCY MADDOCKS

As spring approaches, our wardrobes can often need refurbishing. The transition from winter to spring can mean that our woolly coats are being switched to cotton overshirts, however, British weather is not always reliable. How do we dress for spring to make sure we aren't too cold or too hot? Here are 5 spring fashion trends that you can expect to see in 2022.

The first one is a change of trouser silhouettes, the new trend seems to be switching out high waisted trousers for those that are low waisted. The trend has appeared on many fashion runways, such as that of the designer Tom Ford, as well as high end brand Versace. Arguably, this was to be expected, following the recent rise of y2k

trends, such as baby tees and crochet clothing items. Fashion is known to work in almost a spiral, where trends always resurface.

The second apparent trend showcased in many designer fashion runways, is pleated skirts, but not in the trendy pleated tennis skirt way that was seen throughout 2021. You can expect to see many midi pleated skirts this spring, styled with cropped woolly jumpers to ensure protection against the unpredictable UK weather.

Of course, spring is the time to show off all the colourful pieces in your wardrobe, but what colours are 'in' this year? The Versace spring fashion show displayed many bright colours such as a full fuchsia suit with a bright or-

ange t-shirt underneath. Additionally, many bright greens and deep blues can be spotted.

The common theme this year is brighter the better! So, why not make a statement with a bright pink skirt or a green jacket? Either pair them with neutral pieces or go full colour.

In addition, a staple that could be key for spring is cut-out pieces such as one sleeved dresses and tops, even halter necks. This trend was also seen last year which can ensure that buying a cut-out piece of clothing is not a micro-trend but something more long term, which will be useful all year round. This trend might even be in your wardrobe already, however, designers like Michael Kors are showcasing these pieces monochromatically, so to switch it up, why not buy a white cut-out top, which will be timeless and reusable.

Lastly, a huge trend that you can expect to see in the upcoming months are Mary Janes. These retro shoes are coming back into style in multiple different colours and materials. Mary Janes are very versatile and can be used to dress up a simple outfit and elevate your look. You can wear them with frilly socks underneath to add some more depth, or keep it simple and wear them with a statement piece.

Spring is all about colour, so make sure to buy a few staple 'out there' pieces, but also keep it fresh and light with either white trousers or a white cut-out top. Make sure to be fun and creative, while not giving in to microtrends, but investing in timeless pieces!

AROUND THE SCHOOL

BY AINE SMYTH-JONES

Since last writing, our school has seen a lot happening! From hosting a winter ball for our sixth form, to many collecting their various DofE awards, the past couple months have been far from slow-paced for students at St Brigid's. The month of February started with our very own St Brigid's day being celebrated on the 1st of the month, an annual tradition for our school, with crosses being visible all around and the history of St Brigid being taught, it is good to see the tradi-

tion has been kept alive for 2022.

January is never a fun one for many people, with the looming presence of 'Blue Monday' and mock exams for our GCSE and A-Level students, it can generally seem like a month with nothing to look forward to. However, it was apparent that many of us were able to come together and make the most of it, commemorating Holocaust Memorial Day and re-introducing face-to-face assemblies.

We are now rapidly approaching Easter, and having just wrapped up the half term holiday, are amidst one of the shorter terms in the academic year, with it remaining lighter outside for longer each day that passes, and more of us being able to spend time outside as a result, there is a lot to feel happy about. As an A-Level student, being done with exams at the end of June and having an extra long summer holiday is my motivation to keep going when things seem tough!



FOLLOWING YOUR DREAMS

How you can start living your best life

BY SABRINA CASEY

By now, everyone has heard the saying ‘follow your dreams’. It’s a saying that is easily passed around and taken lightly, however learning to ‘follow your dreams’ could eventually lead to your best life, full of adventures, purpose and meaning. So, how do you follow your dreams?

First, you have to know what your dream is. Most people who don’t have a clear vision of their dream will end up following the lead of others or settle for what’s safe and comfortable. You have to think about what you want, what the right fit or you is and what you want to achieve. Following your dream can give your life fulfilment

and purpose, so think about what you want your life to look like. Is it to become a doctor? A journalist? An artist? Your dream doesn’t have to be career based. It could be to travel the world or change how we treat the planet.

Now that you know what your dream is, here are six steps to achieve them:

1. Know exactly where you want your dream to take you. Do you want it to take you around the world? Take some time to define for yourself exactly what you want to achieve with your dream.

2. Seek advice. Find people who you trust and has done something simi-

lar to what you want to achieve. Ask them how they got there and to help you in your journey of following your dreams.

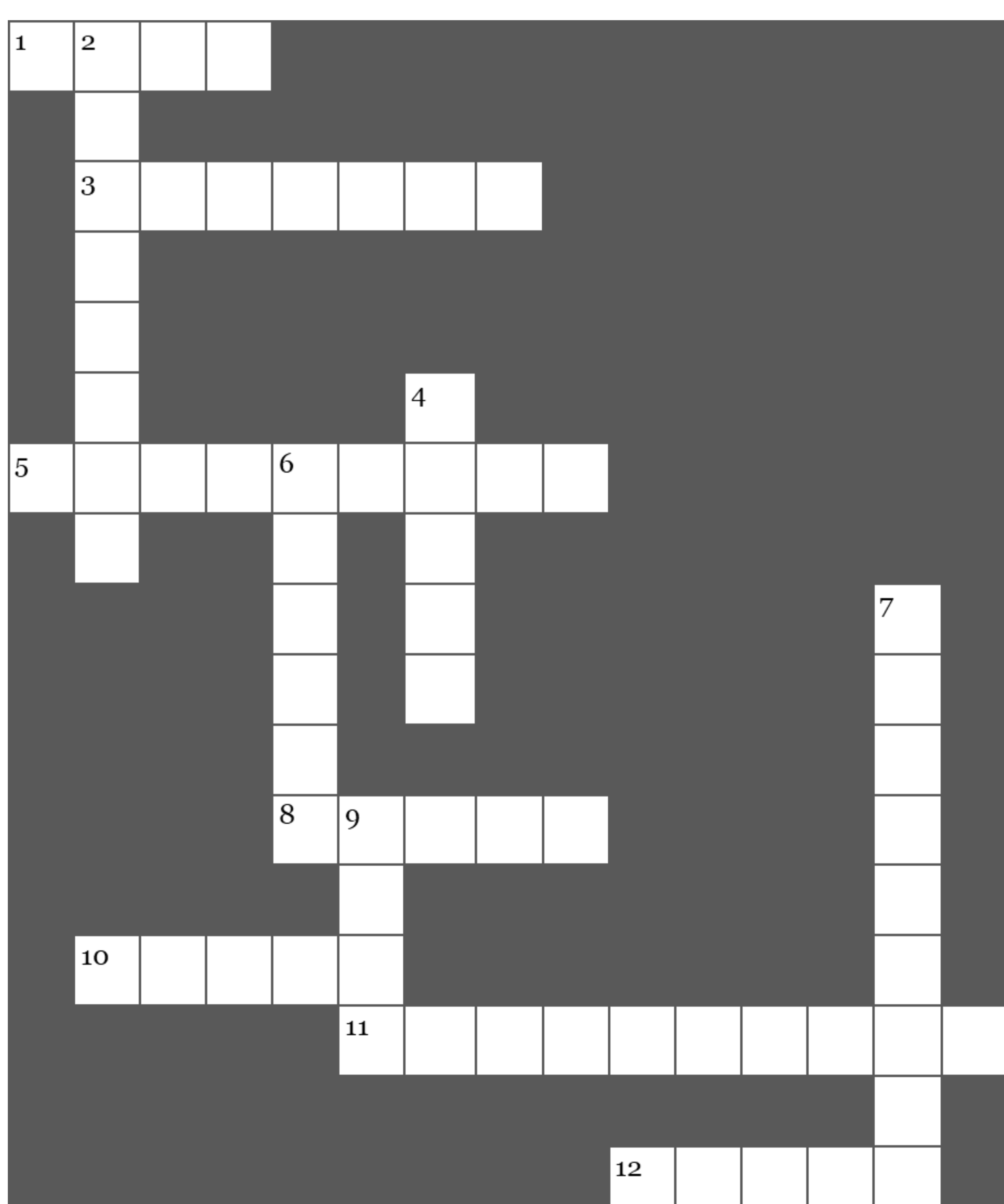
3. Figure out the steps it will take to get there, don’t take the easy path. It’s going to take patience and time but it’ll eventually all be worth it.

4. Set both small and large goals. Do something each day and don’t wait for big blocks of time to do something serious, doing a small task each day to follow your dream will keep you motivated and wanting to carry on.

5. Be prepared for setbacks. There will always be setbacks and disappointments when you follow your dream. They shouldn’t stop you from following your dreams but encourage you to move forward.

6. Find a way to use your dreams to help others, it’ll keep you motivated and wanting to finish the dream you set out for yourself. If the dream is just for you, it will be easy to lose motivation and give up.

Your dream is not going to happen just because you want it to, you must make it a priority in your life and actively seek it out. Remember to not give up, and appreciate all of the the small successes along the way.



THE CROSSWORD

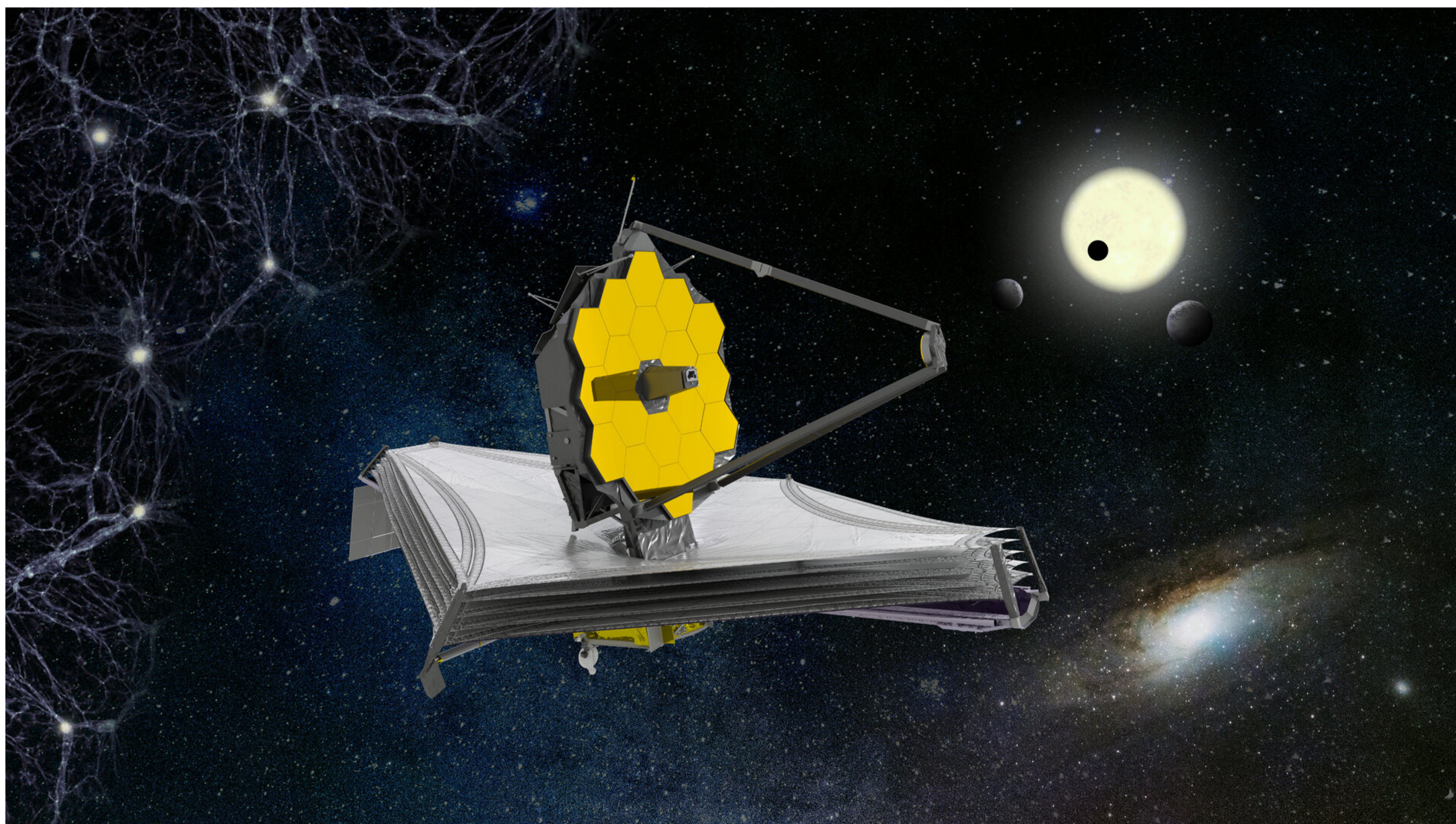
BY BILLY MORRELL

ACROSS

- 1. Christian period observed in March and April.
- 3. The state of a button after an action has been made to it.
- 5. Football Team currently challenging Manchester City for the league.
- 8. A book containing a collection of maps.
- 10. Another name for a large disk that contains music, most popular in the 1980’s.
- 11. South American country that was the first to adapt bitcoin as an official currency.
- 12. “I’ll be ..., I’ll be jury, said cunning old Fury” - *The Mouse’s Tale* by Lewis Carrol.

DOWN

- 2. A popular TV show starring Zendaya as ‘Rue’.
- 4. The first name of the current Prime Minister.
- 6. One of the countries currently involved in an ongoing conflict.
- 7. A device used to observe space.
- 9. Shortened version of the longer ‘TV’.



INTERNATIONAL

THE JAMES WEBB SPACE TELESCOPE

A new mission to uncover the mysteries of the early universe

BY MATTHEW HOWARTH

On December 25th, 2021, the long-awaited launch of the James Webb telescope took place. This telescope is the pinnacle of modern human engineering, being constructed by a team of 1200 international scientists and engineers; and is set to explore the beginnings of the Universe. The telescope has now arrived at its observation post, the second Lagrange point (L2), which is a point 1.5-million kilometres away from Earth. The L2 point is such that the telescope can observe deep space with minimal disruption from sunlight.

This telescope, with its 6.5-meter gold-plated mirror, has 6.25 times the light collecting area of its famous successor: the Hubble telescope. The Hubble telescope made numerous significant discoveries, such as the fact that all galaxies, such as our Milky Way galaxy, are anchored by a super-massive black hole. With the increased capabilities of the James Webb telescope, we can only wonder at the potential scientific development that it will bring.

The James Webb telescope does not see in visible light – the light that we see. Instead, it observes in the longer wavelength infrared range. This is favourable as the long wavelength en-

ables the telescope to see inside the clouds of gas and dust that are nurturing the formation of stars and planets, which will provide us unprecedented knowledge on how solar systems, like our solar system, form. The telescope is so precise that it can analyse the atmospheres of planets lightyears away from us; allowing us to understand the exotic processes occurring in the harshest places of the Universe, and to potentially spot the presence of biological molecules on other planets. James Webb will capture light that is only now reaching us from 100 million years after the beginning of time, a time when only the building blocks of the Universe, hydrogen and helium, existed, in a chaotic and coalesced mixture.

The excitement surrounding this telescope has engulfed other members of the school, including Charlie Cooper, a Year 13 student aspiring to study physics at university. In an interview with Charlie, he revealed his thoughts on the telescope, and his wonderful opportunity to meet an engineer who worked on the telescope.

What mystery are you most excited for the James Webb telescope to solve?

I think the mystery that I'm most ex-

cited to see solved is the 'Hubble Tension': the discrepancy between figures showing how fast the Universe is expanding and hence how old the Universe is. Missions like these encourage me by showing how little we know of our Universe, thus continuing the road of space exploration.

What was your experience with speaking to an engineer of the James Webb telescope?

My experience (with meeting the engineer) was in a career's advisement. I myself am considering working in this area, so being able to see blueprints before launch, as well as to learn some of the problems the telescope may face was a real honour.

Now, we must wait for the telescope to complete its calibration, after it arrived at the L2 point on January 24th. This will take until June or July. In the meantime, we can enjoy what is perhaps the furthest cosmic selfie from Earth.



INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY

BY SEREN FERGUSON

Marked annually on March 8th, International Women's Day is one of the most important days of the year, and serves as a global celebration of the all-around achievements of women everywhere. People from all over the world come together to celebrate the importance of women's achievements and advocate for the promotion of gender equality, as well as raise awareness and fundraise for female-focused charities.

The official colours of International Women's Day, originating from the Women's Social and Political Union in the UK in 1908, are purple, green, and white. Purple signifies justice and dignity, green symbolizes hope, while white represents purity, which has more recently become a controversial talking point.

Whether hosting an event, launching an initiative, reporting on achievement, or donating to a charity aimed at aiding women, there are many ways anyone can support IWD

One simple and important thing to do is to take time to think of all the women who made a significant impact on the world we live in today. One such woman is Rosa Parks, an African American living in Montgomery, Alabama, who in 1955 challenged the racial segregation that existed in the south by refusing to give up her seat on a bus for a white person, which was the law. Her refusal led to the 'Montgomery Bus Boycott', a period which had tremendous effect on the movement, encouraging pro-civil rights changes made by the Supreme Court, paving the way for an integrated society.

Another important woman is social reformer Emmeline Pankhurst, who back in the UK, founded the Women's Social and Political Union to campaign for the parliamentary vote for women in Edwardian Britain. These are just two of the many women who have had incredible impacts on society, and we can help ingrain their importance for future generations by learning about them and telling their stories.

You may be wondering whether we really need an International Women's Day anymore, however, according to the World Economic Forum, none of us will see gender parity in our lifetimes, and nor likely will many of our children. Gender parity will not be attained for almost a century. There's urgent work to do, and we can all play a part.

THE SCIENCE BEHIND MUSIC

BY TED SAUNDERS

Sound is vibration, according to science, and the frequency of vibration is what distinguishes distinct sounds. The study of the sound made by those vibrations, and how to put it into patterns that induce emotion, is called music.

Music, in terms of the brain, helps to keep you calm and focused by releasing dopamine and serotonin. Because some music is invigorating, your mood will automatically improve. This approach enables you to enter the zone and achieve more. In fact, researchers have arrived at the conclusion that classical music can help people perform tasks more efficiently. This has been referred to as the "Mozart Effect", which shows that listening to classical composers might boost brain activity and serve as a trigger for better health and well-being. One reason for this might be that classical music avoids being lyrically driven, which makes the piece less distracting than songs that incorporate lyrics. Another aspect is that classical music has been shown to be soothing and peaceful, therefore helping the brain contribute to achieve goals and become more productive.

According to studies, music can improve our physical health in a number of ways. Experts have concluded that listening to music can make blood flow more smoothly, lower heart rate, blood pressure, and stress hormone levels. Nevertheless, music can be quite stimulating, as I'm sure most people have discovered, whether it's listening to music as the breeze from the window brushes against your face or dancing alone in your room. Researchers from Shanghai University discovered in 2015 that soothing music helped minimise tiredness and sustain muscular endurance when participants were doing a repeated job. Music therapy sessions also reduced fatigue in cancer patients and enhanced the fatigue threshold in persons who were doing strenuous neuromuscular training.

Many people would comment on the shattering effect which sorrowful music can have upon them, and this might explain the success of several well-known singers, like Adele, who is recognised for her painful and dramatic breakup songs. Contrarily, upbeat music makes our brains generate chemicals like dopamine and seroto-

nin, which make us feel happy, but relaxing music calms our minds and bodies. For a long time, scientists have debated whether music has medicinal or mood-boosting properties. According to recent studies from Durham University in the United Kingdom and the University of Jyväskylä in Finland, even sorrowful music provides most listeners joy and comfort. Sad music, on the other hand, was shown to create unpleasant sensations of great sadness in certain persons, according to the study. Three surveys of over 2,400 people in the United Kingdom and Finland were used in the study, which focused on the feelings and memories that are connected with listening to sad music

Overall, music may be seen as a form of therapy because of the mental and physical benefits it brings to listeners. It's as if these vibrations have taken possession of our body, causing us to feel emotions and recall memories. There is a lot of evidence that supports the concept that music has such a positive influence on our lives and that it helps us create stamina and energy by relaxing and soothing our bodies.

ART AND ENTERTAINMENT

CODY FRY

By SOPHIE ROWLEY

Born on July 10th, 1990, Grammy-nominated singer and songwriter Cody Fry is also a composer and producer based in Nashville. The singer saw huge success in 2021 following the viral success of his hit song 'I Hear A Symphony' which climbed the Spotify Global Viral Charts, charting in 38 countries. In the same year, his cover of 'Eleanor Rigby', a classic song from The Beatles' 1966 album 'Revolver' also went viral on TikTok, and was consequently nominated for a Grammy in the category of "Best Arrangement, Instrumental and Vocals".

Son of orchestral composer Gary Fry, Cody was steeped in the world of music from a young age. The singer grad-

uated from New Trier High School in 2008, and moved to Nashville to study voice at Belmont University. Like father like son, Cody's love of orchestration passes through much of his work and lends his song writing a unique and truly cinematic quality, this theme is particularly evident in his song 'I Hear a Symphony'. But it is not only pop music that Fry has written, he has also written music for national ad campaigns, video games, apps, fashion events, online branding campaigns and even a super bowl advert for McDonalds.

However, the singer's accomplishments don't stop there, as he also featured on the 14th season of American



talent show 'American Idol', ending up as one of the 48 final contestants of the show. Since then, he has performed all over the globe, including with the world-famous Metropole Orkest. Cody now has over 3.3 million monthly listeners on Spotify, and is waiting patiently to find out the result of the Grammy awards! Below are 5 of Cody's most popular songs, according to Spotify, if you'd like to explore his music further...

1. *I Hear A Symphony*
2. *Eleanor Rigby*
3. *Underground*
4. *Photograph*
5. *Flying*



WHAT'S ON AT THIS CINEMAS THIS MARCH?

By PAIGE ROBERTS

Cinemas have had the ability to remain open for full-time viewing, to ensure this extended period of access remains, when considering using the services at these establishments, please ensure you follow their guidelines and rules put in place to protect yourself and others.

With the start of a new month comes the abundance of new film releases within cinemas! 2022 is a year for su-

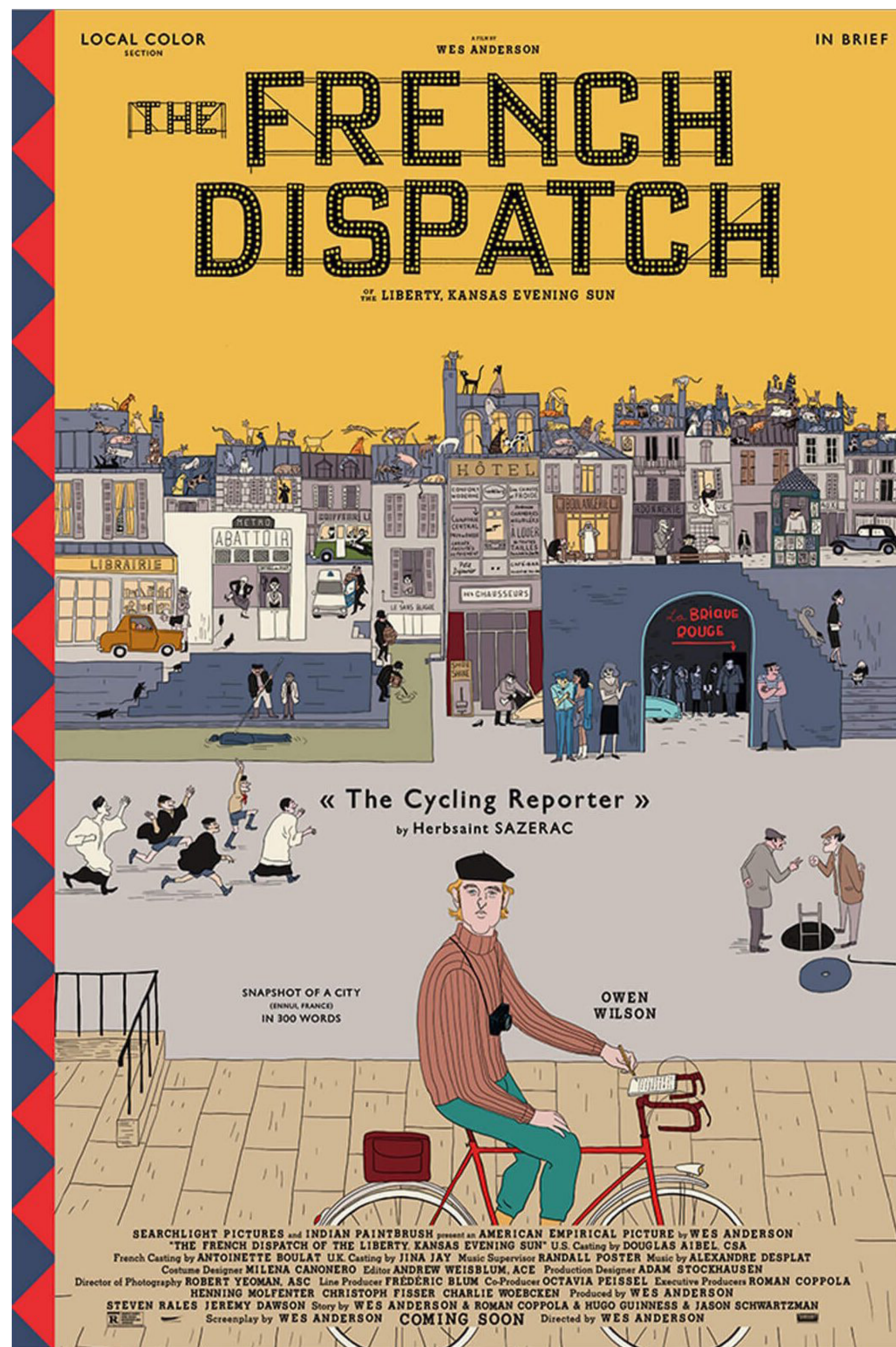
perhero/ action movies, and following on from the widely successful Spiderman No Way Home, which became the sixth highest grossing film of all time, March has presented action lovers with The Batman, in many ways introducing a new level to the fantasy previously seen from Marvel and DC.

Over the next two months, cinemas will have a wide variety of films being played:

Suitable for those of all years: Sing 2.

Suitable for those from Year Seven and above; The Phantom Of The Open, Morbius, Uncharted, The Duke.

For those in Year Ten and above: The Batman, The Nan Movie, Ambulance.



THE FRENCH DISPATCH: A REVIEW

By BILLY MORRELL

'Ennui rises suddenly on a Monday'

Whether by its distinctly limited colour palettes, meticulously curated settings, or recycled actors used again and again, a Wes Anderson film is hard to confuse with that of another director. His twelfth credit as such, with at least two more confirmed for the next few years, his newest film, 'The French Dispatch', long title 'The French Dispatch of the Liberty, Kansas Evening Sun', serves as Anderson's 'love letter to journalism', and the stories which have continued to be shared through history via the medium of writing.

Fragmented into three parts, with a prologue outlining the history of 'Ennui-sur-Blasé', the town where the story finds itself, as told by Owen Wilson's character 'The Cycling Reporter', and an epilogue entitled 'Obituary', telling of the death of the magazine's editor (a fact which the viewer is made aware of from the opening scenes), surrounding these. Perhaps most interestingly, the visual aesthetic of the film finds itself constantly shifting as its stories do, and each distinct section in the film serves as a different article found in the titular magazine.

Firstly, in 'The Concrete Masterpiece' from the fictitious magazine's 'Art/Art-

ists' section, we are told the story of Moses Rosenthaler, a mentally unstable imprisoned man found guilty of murder. In a not-so-secret fling between him and a Prison Guard, Moses paints her, which is then drawn to the attention of a fellow inmate (played by Adrien Brody, most notable for his academy-award winning portrayal of Władysław Szpilman, a Polish composer who survived the Holocaust, in 'The Pianist'), who purchases this piece of art, and becomes his exclusive art dealer from outside of the prison, making him 'the most famous artist in the world'. Much of this story revolves around the value, both fiscally and metaphorically, of art. A testament which can be applied to the film's subject matter of writing, and in an extended interpretation, the film itself.

The second portion, entitled 'Revisions to a Manifesto', and told through the writing of Francis McDormand (played by Lucinda Krementz), is arguably the most powerful piece found in this film, or perhaps just the one which hits the closest as a young person in our current climate. Somewhere between a comedy, a tragedy, and a romance, this piece tells of Zeffirelli, (played by Timothée Chalamet), as he attempts to lead the 'Chessboard Revolution', a result of the timeless conflict between youthful rebellion and a gov-

ernment that just won't listen. As the movement grows from focussing on a petty concern to a genuine angst towards military conscription and life as a young person, Zeffirelli comes head-to-head with Juliette (played by Lyna Khoudri), a fellow revolutionary symbolising the female aspect, all whilst Krementz engages in a fling with the young leader as she adapts his manifesto.

Despite being filled with action and suspense (Will the son survive? Will the chef survive? Will neither? Will both?) and a hugely well-renowned cast (Liev Schreiber, Willem Dafoe, and Saoirse Ronan, to name a few), it is this third act which fails to leave as much of a lasting impression as its predecessors.

Coming from the 'Food' section, 'The Private Dining Room of the Police Commissioner' jumps between the writer, Roebuck Wright, (played by Jeffrey Wright) recounting the story in a television interview and the story itself. When the son of the 'Commissaire of the Ennui police force' is kidnapped, he tells in morse code to 'send the cook', who then cooks for the kidnappers, poisoning all but one criminal's food, leading to a dramatic chase around the streets of Ennui.

Whilst the story in this final piece is enjoyable enough to watch, the plot feels somewhat confusing purely for the sake of being confusing. Similarly, whilst beautifully executed and visually pleasing, the decision to animate the car chase, even in a film where the aspect ratio and colour grading is constantly changing, just feels like an excuse to be different for the sake of it.

Otherwise, however, the unique narrative choice and creative decisions made by Anderson for this film are extremely fulfilling to watch, and one could argue, the perfect medium to encapsulate the subject matter. Whilst perhaps not as accessible as 'The Grand Budapest Hotel', a comedy-drama, or 'Fantastic Mr. Fox', a stop-motion animated comedy, Anderson's two most well-renowned films, this film is certainly a must-watch for those with a passion for writing or for cinema.

The French Dispatch is available to stream on Disney+



SPORT

THE RISE OF WOMEN'S FOOTBALL

And what the men's game can learn from it.

BY BILLY MORRELL

In the sporting world, which has long been dominated by men, women's football in recent years has seen a rapid increase in quality and coverage, as grassroots movements have been improved, and clubs have formed women's teams. Resultingly, further coverage of the sport has opened the eyes of many, shaking pre-judgement that may have existed, revealing positive qualities that the men's game can learn from and adopt.

Perhaps naively, my own view of the sport had been severely impacted by much of the dominating commentary, which is wildly negative, in online football communities, a commentary that is only supported by cherry-picked negative highlights, as well as a pre-existing misogynistic undertone. As a result, aside from an odd check of the scores of my favourite club's women's team, wrongfully, I largely ignored them, and continued to focus on the men's game.

However, as I made a conscious effort to challenge my own pre-dispositions, I have recently begun to watch more and more women's football, finding it to be at times, a much more enjoyable and skilful game, filled with players just as, if not more, passionate, talented, and hard-working as their male

counterparts.

One dynamic of women's football that holds superiority over the men's game is accessibility. For example, A ticket for from the men's Arsenal team, who sit fifth in the Premier League can cost up to £95.50, and are mostly limited to those who are club members, a paid subscription. However, tickets for Arsenal Women, who are second in the FA Women's Super League, England's top division, costs just £4 and £8 for juniors and adults respectively. Such pricing and accessibility have allowed for more and more fans to experience live football in some of the sport's most iconic grounds. In the Quarter Final of the UEFA Champions League, FC Barcelona Feminí, one of the competition's front-runners, played fierce domestic rivals Real Madrid at the Camp Nou in front of a crowd made up of 91,553, a new record by over 1,000, largely a result of tickets costing only between €9-15.

It is not just in-person viewing that is more accessible either. In the UK, BT Sport holds the exclusive rights to men's European competitions, and costs around £30 a month to subscribe to. Contrastingly, women's European football is streamed exclusively, and freely on the 'DAZN UEFA Women's

Champions League'. Resultingly, the four second leg ties of the quarterfinals accumulated almost five million concurrent views, with many more watching the highlights after the fact. Whilst it is true that there are biological differences between men and women, such as a general difference in stature and strength, some have argued that this benefits the sport. Despite being less physical, according to the BBC, women were 50% less likely to foul than men during their respective world cups, a fact which underlines the gulf in the morals and behaviour adopted by men and women in the game. Resultingly, women's matches often find themselves to have a much better flow, and more attention is given to skill, accuracy, and tactics, as opposed to brute strength towards their opponents

But, at its core, what makes them so different? Or one less deserving of support than the other? Both games are 90 minutes, require teams to attack (and defend) a goal, stay onside, and most importantly, they are both the game many of us have spent our lives so far watching, playing, and loving. Each player on either pitch loves the sport just as much, or was once a fan, just like us, all are deserving of the utmost respect.