



Murray Delivers Speech “On Faith”



Stephen S. Murray H'54 '55 '65 '16 P'16 '21 delivers his convocation speech

Courtesy of The Lawrenceville School

HEAD OF SCHOOL STEPHEN S. MURRAY H'54 '55 '65 '16 P'16

One gray morning on the outskirts of the town of Killarney, in County Kerry, Ireland, as I stood by the side of the road with my thumb out, the skies opened up, and I was quickly soaked to the skin by a passing shower.

I was 20 years old and hitchhiking by myself through the British Isles. I could only afford a Bed and Breakfast about every third night, and in between nights under a roof, I'd sleep out in cow fields or behind hedges. I sustained myself primarily on tea, Irish soda bread, local cheddar cheese, and, in the evening, a pint or two of Guinness.

After my drenching that morning, the sun eventually came out, and dried me slightly, but I was looking, and feeling, like a drowned rat, and wasn't sure anyone would dare pick me up. But this was Ireland in the 1980s, where people still had a bit of faith and trust, and I was getting used to the fact that even little old ladies would stop for a scruffy, unshaven hitchhiker like me.

Sure enough, in spite of my appearance, a car pulled over before long. The driver introduced himself as Frank Hickey and said he'd be happy to take me as far as Skibbereen, a small coastal village where he was headed.

Our route took us along the beautiful Ring of Kerry, with its rolling green hills, ancient stone walls, and dense thickets of purple rhododendron in full bloom. He was chatty and personable, and I learned quite a bit about him as we drove: He was university educated, well traveled, and cosmopolitan; he had studied choreography and was passionate about classical music, especially Brahms, which played in the background as we drove; and he had survived a serious bout of throat cancer through a remarkable surgical intervention.

Suddenly, without explanation, he pulled off the road and headed down a narrow, overgrown, dirt track. As we drove out of sight of the main road, in the middle of nowhere, it occurred to me that I had just met this guy, and a slightly

uneasy feeling crept into the back of my mind.

After bouncing along the uneven, deserted trail for some time, we pulled up to a forlorn-looking graveyard dominated by mossy, stone Celtic crosses poking up out of the tall grass. He told me that he was looking for the grave of a woman.

According to Frank, she was an unofficial local saint, and folks in the area had an almost mystical regard for the story. As he said this, he took a handful of earth from the top of her grave and put it in a small bag. "I have a friend dying of cancer," he said, and then added earnestly, "I am going to put this under his bed. He is in tough shape, and I want to make sure we try everything."

Later that day, I thought back on that moment in the graveyard earlier—here was a worldly, highly-educated individual who had significant, personal experience with the medical establishment, and who, at the same time, in almost contradictory fashion, placed great store in what appeared to be local folklore.

As I reflected, it occurred to me that many would dismiss his belief as mere superstition, but the more I thought about it, I preferred to call it a kind of faith—faith that there is wonder in the world beyond our understanding, an acceptance that there are currents at work that we simply can't explain, that are beyond our ken. Indeed, aren't our lives reduced to more of a soulless transaction with the physical world if we don't accept, if we don't have faith, that there is just a bit of magic out there?

As for me, I maintain a faith that has many of the dimensions I have described: a belief that there is mystery and magic in our world beyond our understanding; that science and religion don't have to be mutually exclusive, if one can set aside dogma; and that leadership based on compassion and empathy can prevail against cynicism and brute force.

But what I rely on most is even more promising and hopeful for me. I have faith

in you. All of you.

As we kick off a new year, your arrival has breathed life back into this campus; you are at the heart of this rejuvenating cycle that we all have the privilege of being a part of. But it is not simply youthful joy and energy. What inspires my awe and respect is your ability to emerge out of the challenges of recent years, to have faced sacrifice and disappointment, as you all have, and still muster the kind of hopeful, forward-looking passion I have seen and sensed so clearly these past few days: I saw it at preseason; I saw in the warm welcome given to our new students; I saw it in school meeting last Wednesday; and I saw it yesterday at House Olympics.

Sometimes, simply getting out of bed in the morning to face the day, even with the anxiety and dread you likely felt at times, is an act of faith and courage. And you did it over and over, and found strength you didn't know you had.

And I speak especially to you V Formers, as we rely on you to provide leadership this year—you will set the tone, you will set the example. I think especially of you when I refer to challenges that have been endured, and yet here you are, already out front, already showing us the way. For all of the obstacles you have encountered directly in your path, you are wiser, more thoughtful, more appreciative of the opportunity of being here, and this is precisely why you are so well equipped to lead the School this year, and why I have such faith in the year that lies before of us. So indeed, faith comes in many forms.

And as I look out at all of you here today, you give me tremendous faith, not simply that a great year lies ahead, but that you will take with you out into the world your resilience, your hard-earned wisdom, your belief in yourselves, and put it all to work in wonderful ways. And this is the faith that sustains me most.

So find the faith that sustains you—it is truly a gift—and hold it close.

Note from the Editor: This is an excerpt from Murray's convocation speech.

Lawrenceville Brings LPAC Back to Campus

ARYA SREEDHAR '24
NEWS ASSOCIATE

On August 8, a group of Lawrentians returned to campus as counselors for the Lawrenceville Performing Arts Camp (LPAC), following a two-year hiatus due to the Covid-19 pandemic. An effort started in 2006 by Celina Satija '07 and Nick Johnson '07, LPAC has continued to provide summer music lessons to passionate students.

The camp provides a special experience for students from underserved communities to perform music and is an equally cherished opportunity by the counselors. This year's LPAC counselors included head counselor Kate Dillard '22 and assistant head Grant Shueh '23, as well as Alexander Xia '23, IV Formers Jane Atkinson, Cassie Dillard, Lily Hager, William Huang, Aurora Ingenito, and Ian Lee, and III Formers Sonia Ivancic, Ellie Turchetta, Claire Wu, and Angela Yang.

The counselors' many responsibilities included planning out daily agendas, organizing craft supplies, and coordinating games and lessons. Over the span of the week, counselors mentored a small group of students in instruments such as saxophone, piano, drums, and voice, and taught them musical pieces, which students performed in front of an audience at the end of the camp. Cassie Dillard remarked, "Watching [the students] defeat their nerves and perform their pieces beautifully made me

so happy."

The program holds a special place in LPAC Director Colette Burns's heart. "I get goosebumps over the development I watch unfold throughout the week," she said. "Some campers come in so shy or scared, but by the end of the week, they have confidence and are able to perform what they have learned." Her favorite part of the campers' final performances is spotting the looks of astonishment and joy on the faces of family members in the audience.

For the counselors, volunteering with LPAC is a fun, rewarding, and valuable experience. What starts as a counselor and counselee pairing forms into cherished bonds as the camp progresses. Atkinson mentioned how she is still in touch with her students and how their funny messages always put a smile on her face. "They said they could not wait for more piggy back rides, walking the imaginary runway, frisbee tosses, popsicles on a nice summer day, and, most importantly, [spending] more time together," she said.

It's these fond memories and heartfelt connections that keep LPAC going. In spite of the obstacles posed by Covid-19, Burns decided to continue the program because of the rewarding experience it creates for both the campers and the counselors. "To see the bonds form and how these youngsters look up to our counselors is so heartwarming. I certainly don't regret bringing [LPAC] back to life!" Burns said.



LPAC counselors with campers

Courtesy of The Lawrenceville School

SYA in France

Liza Strong '24 describes how she spent her summer in France immersing herself in the French language and culture.



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What in the world is happening?

An alien on the pitch, a Manchester team in shambles, and Arsenal at the top? Bryan Boanoh '25 breaks down a strange Premier League start.



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Taking on Theatre: Trip to Edinburgh

Claire Jiang '24 and Sofia Carlisi '24 talk about their Harkness Trip to Edinburgh and their journey with theater as they travelled.



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Photo of the Week (Travels) Emily Pan '24



Editorial Big Nate, Big Autri, Big Summer Dreams

As a child, one of my favorite comic strips was Big Nate. Nate was nothing like me—he enjoyed going to the beach, neglected his schoolwork, and constantly made trouble with everyone around him—and yet, I found his stories to be oddly relatable. One scene in particular remains etched in my mind: Nate is sitting in a classroom, lamenting his miserable school life, when all of a sudden, the bell rings. He runs out, dumps all of his papers into the garbage, goes outside, and exclaims something to the effect of “Summer is here!”

For all of our differences, my younger self did have one thing in common with Nate: I did absolutely nothing productive during my summers. While many of my friends were shipped off to camps or were forced to attend tutoring sessions, I would sit at home, waking up at noon each day to play video games and eat ice cream.

As I got older, however, I slowly started noticing a profound shift—not in my peers, or even in my parents, but in myself. My thoughts moved from “Look at those suckers, wasting their only time off,” to “Why am I the only one who’s doing nothing?” When I asked my peers about their summers, my intent changed from hearing about vacations to scouting out vocations. And when I came to Lawrenceville, the pressure only got worse—my classmates’ fast-food jobs and summer camps evolved into research internships and service trips, and no matter how much I did, I always felt like I was falling behind.

We Lawrentians already work hard enough; our six-day weeks and 12-hour

days would probably destroy the majority of students our age, and yet, we go through this grueling routine for years on end as if it is nothing. By junior year, even my Saturday nights lost their sacred status as “no-work hours”; I wrote Lawrence articles and TFA applications during my winter and spring breaks, and filled my Sundays with rehearsals and club work. So why is it that when I finally got a chance to pull myself out of the competitive, high-pressure Lawrenceville environment for an extended period of time, I came crawling back just a few weeks later?

It would be a stretch to call my summer 2022 a “break.” For all the fun I had browsing the Bunn Library archives or putting on a show in Edinburgh, my endeavors were still, in essence, work: I had deadlines to meet and routines to follow no matter how hard I tried to bend them. Yet when I’d come back home for my brief interludes between programs, I’d find myself at a loss: I was bored. Waking up late and playing video games no longer sufficed as entertainment; even going out with friends got old quickly.

I began to think that for all my complaints about tiredness and burnout, I needed work. I needed structure, I needed stress to keep me going. It almost felt like an epiphany. No wonder I’d feel so lost whenever I’d finish my homework early to “give myself a stress-free evening”; my stress-free night would mean having time, time during which I would be forced to confront the void I had created by solely dedicating myself to work. For all of the worries that came with classes and extracurriculars, I began

looking forward to the school year as a way to finally give me back that structure I so desperately thought I craved.

Today is Tuesday, September 6; I have completed three days of my senior year. Today is also the third day in a row after which I’ve gone home early, sat down to do my homework, and immediately fallen asleep. I guess I did get the structure and stress I was looking for—but maybe a little too much of it.

So when I look back on those summer days—not just the scattered empty ones of this past break, but the countless ones of years before—I won’t think about “wasted opportunities” or “unproductivity.” I won’t think about the sheer boredom that I often found myself buried in. Sure, it might feel annoying in the moment—but you’re always looking for what you don’t have.

We’re lucky enough for Lawrenceville to give us three-month-long summer breaks—let’s put them to good use.

Next summer, try to intentionally find yourself in one of those moments of boredom. You may wish you were somewhere else at the time, but someday, you’ll be aching to go back, even if you’ve forgotten that it had happened in the first place. We’re lucky enough for Lawrenceville to give us three-month-long summer breaks—let’s put them to good use.

-ABB

Don’t Suffer Firearms and Fools Gladly

We Have to Stop Gun Culture from Taking Over the Shooting Debate.

SABRINA OTTAWAY '25

Amid-July Economist/YouGov poll found that six in 10 registered voters consider guns to be a “very important” issue in the upcoming elections. In response to these concerns, state governments have proposed conflicting laws concerning gun violence and the sale and distribution of guns. 27 Democrat states and the District of Columbia strengthened background checks and community intervention programs. Conversely, 19 Republican states unraveled restrictions on where and when to obtain and carry guns, like “permitless carry laws.” The widening dichotomy of American responses to mass shootings reflects clashing assumptions over gun violence solutions. More specifically, these local communities’ clashes over the historical and cultural value of firearms greatly hinder America’s collective progress in eliminating our epidemic of gun violence.

As with almost everything, the history of guns in America begins with the U.S. Constitution. The widely-cited Second Amendment declares that a “well-regulated militia” is “necessary to the security of a free state” and asserts that “the right of the people to keep and bear arms... shall not be infringed.” Though this clause’s interpretation evolved over time, its original text designated a well-regulated militia as a tool for the state government to secure itself and its laws. In maintaining that the right to bear firearms was unalienable, the Constitution laid the groundwork for firearms to be associated with security, and the preservation of law.

The cultural value of firearms is also reinforced by mythologized teachings of local

history. Take a look at my home state, Nevada. Firearms hold a dear place in my state’s history; residents’ long-standing reliance on firearms along with the lore of revered historical figures’ heroism with guns have ensured the social importance of firearms. I remember lessons at school on Kit Carson. A U.S. Army agent, wilderness guide, and propeller of Western expansion; stories of Carson’s immense bravery, leadership, and self-sufficiency created a narrative of reverence. In the many statues I saw of him around Carson City, Nevada’s capital, Carson usually brandishes a rifle; sometimes, he rides valiantly on horseback. When we memorialize figures like Carsons through our history books, statues, and cities, we feed into the American narrative of a “good man with a gun.” Eventually, and inevitably, the rifle becomes practically synonymous with all the values said historical figures championed: power, safety, and security.

But these historical ideals also spill into the present. In the past two years, I attended rallies supporting Democratic leaders around Northern Nevada. Some attendees chose to brandish written signs conveying their political values, while others would visibly showcase their firearms to convey their opinions. Of course, Nevadan conservatives have always been quick to claim the mythological equivalence of gun ownership with power, security, and local heritage for their own. For example, in rural areas, guns are often lauded as a security measure against bears and mountain lions.

But the practical use of these weapons has become a way to justify their use as a political weapon. This phenomenon is far from limited to Nevada. Across the nation, politicians and officials wield the firearms’ cultural symbolism in their respective town, district

or state as the basis for solving mass shootings. After the 2012 Sandy Hook



Photo by Sabrina Ottaway '25 / THE LAWRENCE



shooting reignited the national debate on school shootings, a spokesman for the National Rifle Association (NRA) notoriously claimed that “the only way to stop a bad guy with a gun is a good guy with a gun.” This logic has become a popular saying among conservative pro-gun politicians and pundits, and with sound reason: this saying articulates the security and safety Americans feel towards the positive symbolism of the armed police officer and the protective militiaman.

Such logic then translates into legislation. Six majority-Republican states have repealed

requirements for background checks and permits to carry concealed and loaded weapons in public spaces. Montana passed a law allowing guns in K-12 schools and on university campuses. Ohio passed a bill allowing teachers to be armed in the classroom. Supporters of these bills argue that loosening gun regulations ensures that there will always be a “good guy with a gun” when people are in danger.

But laws that reinforce the firearm’s cultural value fail to actually ensure a decrease in mass shootings. We’ve seen the disproving of this “good guy with a gun” argument at the Uvalde, Texas shooting in May. Despite the deployment of 376 law enforcement officers to the school, a State House panel concluded the law enforcement response was plagued by “systemic failures, egregious poor decision making, and a leadership void.” The result of this inefficient law enforcement was the third deadliest school shooting in American history. While there is not an immense volume of research on school shootings, an Everytown study confirmed the explicit correlation between weaker and more lenient gun laws, and a higher rate of gun deaths, including homicides.

But even these statistics aren’t enough for many states. While politicians across the country face pressure to provide gun violence solutions, they are often expected to avoid solutions that conflict with Americans’ ingrained perceptions about guns and those who carry them. To put it bluntly, the cultural significance of guns stymies political progress that should have been accomplished long ago. As a result, attempts at productive discourse

and solution-building surrounding “culture” and “values” in a country staunchly divided on gun control fall flat.

Still, there remains hope. If Americans were to scrutinize and implement gun policies based on how well they fare in studies, the benchmark for action would be based on research and facts. Accepting that the benchmark should be founded upon objectivity rather than nostalgia and romanticization will be difficult, but is a necessary step that more Americans and politicians must agree to. Shifting the crux of the gun control discussion from Constitution-era ideological values to modern research and statistics will require the American deconstruction of mythical notions that surround guns. It is the only way to ensure that we can produce popular solutions successful in preventing gun violence.

If we rely more on research in political discourses on how to solve gun violence, our solutions will be more efficacious and attract the support needed to survive the democratic process. Finally, there’s a clear plan for moving forward: funding more causality-based research in gun violence and evaluating possible solutions to gun violence already implemented in some states. We must establish a national plan founded upon a common ground of American commitment to rid gun violence to solve our mass shooting problem. We have seen too many times how ignoring our biases and preconceived notion about guns impedes our ability to pass preventative gun violence laws. As our political environment grows even more ideologically polarized, implementing these laws will only get harder. We simply cannot wait any longer.

Summer Spotlight: Immersion Learning in France

LIZA STRONG '24

Immersing yourself in a different culture teaches you more about a language than any four-walled classroom ever could. This past summer, I had the opportunity to travel to France for five weeks with the School Year Abroad (SYA) program. When an SYA representative came to my French class last year to discuss the idea of living abroad with a host family, I knew I was interested in because I enjoy speaking French and I wanted to learn more about French culture. My group was comprised of around 35 students, including some Lawrentians, ranging in age from 15-18. During the program, I lived with the Steimetz Family, who had never hosted anyone from the U.S. before. At the beginning, I was nervous about living with an unfamiliar family who did not speak English. I soon realized that I had nothing to worry about, because my family was welcoming, caring, and generous. I had three host siblings: two girls ages five and 11 and a 14-year-old boy. On my first night, I was faced with my first challenge as a foreign exchange student: I was having dinner with the entire family, but I could barely understand their conversation. I was so focused on deciphering their French that I ended up getting a headache. Whenever they posed a question that I couldn't understand, I would

just answer "oui." Trying to understand my youngest host sibling was especially challenging because she spoke so quickly, and her sentences didn't align with any of the grammar "rules" I had learned in class. French spoken casually felt like a different language altogether.

Over the following few weeks, my language comprehension skills steadily improved. I spent weekday mornings studying French language and culture at the SYA school in the city of Rennes, Brittany. In the afternoon, we would do various immersion activities, from museum visits to kayaking on lakes. Some days, our host siblings could also come to the activities with us. One afternoon, my host brother came ziplining with us, and my friends on the trip loved meeting him. The more time we spent together, the closer our SYA group grew.

During the evenings, I helped make dinner, watched French television, and spent time with my host siblings biking around the neighborhood and playing board games. On weekends, my host family and I would go to the beach or visit their relatives in the south of Brittany. My host family lived in the village of Châteaugiron, which is a 30 minute drive from Rennes, so I'd have to take two buses and the metro every morning and afternoon to get to school. When I first started taking the bus and metro, I was very confused, as I didn't have much ex-

perience taking public transportation alone in the U.S., let alone in a foreign country. On the bus ride back home on my first day, I actually missed my stop, and my host family had to search for me two towns over. With time, however, traveling to and from the Steimetz's house became much easier, and I was able to navigate my way home regardless of my starting location. Speaking with my host family significantly improved my French, and the more I spoke, the less I had to think about translating everything I heard into English. By the final week, I was able to comfortably explain complicated scenarios to my host family, something I could never have done with my traditional French education.

I spent the last five days of the SYA Summer Program in Paris, where we visited the Eiffel Tower, the Louvre, and the Musée D'Orsay. Before we traveled to Paris, everyone said goodbye to their respective host families. I was sad to say goodbye to the Steimetz but was so grateful for everything they taught me, and I will forever cherish my memories with them.

In France, I discovered the importance of learning about new cultures and how rewarding taking risks can be. Living in France elevated my perception of the country's language and allowed me to cultivate my respect for different cultures. The entire SYA group became so close over the course of the five



Strong (center) with her host-sisters

Courtesy of Liza Strong '24

weeks, and I'm so thankful to have had this experience and to have met all of the amazing people that I did!

Summer Spotlight: From Hutchins to Machu Picchu

DAPHNE VOLPP '24

One of my goals this past summer was to reset and find a healthy balance between challenges and relaxation. I had the opportunity to participate in the Hutchins Scholars program and hike the Inca Trail to Machu Picchu. Although both activities were challenging in vastly different ways, they both taught me lessons I probably could not have learned any other way. More than anything, I learned to live in the moment, a lesson I hope to carry with me throughout this school year.

The first program I participated in was Hutchins Scholars in Science Research, during which I stayed on campus for two weeks to gain experience with reading scientific literature and working in the lab. My time was certainly very rewarding, but it did come with its challenges. My first night back on campus, we were given approximately 70 pages of reading on molecular biology. My friend and I decided to read it together, and the first page alone took us 30 minutes to get through. Given this discouraging start, I was very nervous about the program and unsure whether or not I was adequately prepared. The next day, we were expected to give presentations on the previous night's reading,

and although I was nervous, I spoke about what I knew and even mentioned what I was not entirely sure about. I got through that class, and all our other assignments, because I kept pushing forward. When I was exhausted and felt like I couldn't complete a reading, I would take it one page at a time. Each page I read I was a page closer to my goal. These two weeks were a unique opportunity for me to work closely with my fellow classmates with similar academic interests and to push my peers to be both stronger students and people. They taught me not only how to be more com-



Volpp hiking on the Inca Trail to Machu Picchu, Peru

Courtesy of Daphne Volpp '24

fortable with uncertainty, but also how to achieve difficult tasks and push myself beyond what I thought I could do.

Later in the summer, my family and I went on a trip to Peru to visit my older sister

and hike the Inca Trail to Machu Picchu. The Incans, native to Peru, were quite deliberate in their planning and building. In the 15th century, the Inca Empire was intent on protecting Machu Picchu from their enemies. The Inca people were known for their craftsmanship, which was evident when you compared their buildings to the imprecise and poorly preserved

Spanish colonist reconstructions made hundreds of years later. The Inca Trail was deliberately created to be so physically demanding that only the Inca people could reach Machu Picchu. I personally ex-

perienced how physically and mentally challenging the trail was when I got sick on the last night of my trip; the following morning, I could barely walk around our campsite. Although the last day was supposed to be the easiest day of the trek, since we had finished climbing several high-altitude passes and were heading downhill, the trek pushed me to my limits. All I wanted to do was sleep, but I knew that the only way through was out; I had to keep hiking. I kept telling myself that every step I took would lead me one step closer to Machu Picchu. When my family and I reached our destination, I was filled with relief, but when I look back on this experience now, I appreciate the hike and the grit of my family.

I am very grateful to have had both the opportunity to participate in the Hutchins program and to hike the Inca Trail. Although these two experiences were vastly different, they cemented the same lesson: keep pushing and keep working, even when you are on the brink of failure. As the Fall Term resumes, I will take one step at a time when things get difficult. Sometimes, the best option is to just keep hiking, little by little.

Taking on Theatre: Trip to Edinburgh

SOFIA CARLISI '24 & CLAIRE JIANG '24
COPY EDITOR

This year, the two of us went on the Periwig Club's Harkness Travel Trip to the Fringe Festival in Edinburgh, Scotland, where we tested the limits of theatre and produced our own show, *Stay Safe*, written by Director of Student Activities Ian August. Immersing this experience into our every waking moment gave us such a different and new perspective on theatre.

Sofia: I never thought I would say that I walked Edinburgh's Royal Mile in a black tutu, silver face glitter, and eight-inch holographic silver pumps, but alas, I can cross that off my bucket list!

Acting has always been my way of traveling to new places. When I step into a role, I am no longer fully myself, but a completely different person living in an entirely different world. The worries of reality do not seem so important when you are standing on stage. Theatre transports both me as an actor and audience members to



Claire Jiang '24/THE LAWRENCE

somewhere new and exciting—but I never thought that my love of theatre would allow me to physically travel somewhere new and exciting.

In *Stay Safe*, I played the denizens' virtual instructor, Astrid Starpepper, and boy, was she so fun to play! Astrid's character wasn't complete without two elaborate costumes: silver heels that made me well over six feet tall and five neon-colored wigs! Her mannerisms

and attitude were so cheery and bright to the point of coming off as creepy and concerning. I absolutely loved managing that fine line between sane and insane and then crossing that line, going full-blown crazy by the end of the show. I was told I made the children in the audience cry, which I can't say I've ever done before.

At the Fringe, I was enveloped by theatre like a big bear hug. Everyone

there held a love for the performing arts, and more than anything, I wish more people loved theatre like that: like it's magic. I have always seen the magic of performing arts, but to be surrounded by many others who saw what I saw and felt what I felt about theatre was simply surreal.

Claire: In all honesty, my exposure to theatre has been scant. I've acted in and watched numerous middle and high school productions, and I love watching musicals. But up until now, all I've really ever watched is musicals. Going to Fringe helped me realize how far people have stretched what theatre is; I mean, we went from watching actors on a grand proscenium-style stage to experiencing a show in total darkness while cramped in a shipping container. For just 10 pounds and 50 pence, I saw a one-man performance by Alan Cumming in the National Theater of Scotland's Burn. For two hours (with no intermission!), we watched Cumming convulse on the ground, dance around, woo brightly colored heels dangling from the ceiling, and conclude the performance with a casual whisky and song. The

whole experience was so confusing, yet also wildly exhilarating.

Going to Fringe also allowed us the freedom to watch "bad" shows—yes, some shows were just plain awful. But watching various good and bad productions allowed me to distinguish what works and what flops in a performance. Here are a few lessons: Improvised musicals can be amazing, but with the wrong prompt can spiral into madness. Reuben Kaye is a brilliant performer. Molière, gosh, his plays are simply works of pure bliss. Some high school productions are terrible. Some high school productions can leave me reeling and questioning my definition of theatre for weeks on end. Theatre is incredibly divisive. It can probe tears of anger, sadness, frustration, and happiness. Theatre is healing. It bridges the challenges of reality with our wildest fantasies and dreams. I am so grateful to have experienced the Fringe because when will I, or any of my peers, see a show hidden in a small alleyway, performed in a castle, or tucked into the corner of a bar and learn all of this?

The Wackiest Premier League Start Ever

BRYAN BOANOH '25

Despite still being in its infancy, the 2022-23 Premier League season is shaping up to be one of the most unpredictable and exciting seasons we've seen since the league's inception in 1992. In just under a month, soccer fans have already witnessed heated rivalries, shocking upsets, and results that just make you scratch your head. All of the signs so far are pointing to a season for the ages: all thanks to the inconsistency of top teams and the surprising rise of unexpected contenders.

For the past four years, Liverpool and Manchester City have indisputably been the two best teams in England. These two teams have twice been involved in title races that went down to the last game of the season, with Manchester City beating Liverpool to the title by just one point each time. These teams have been labeled the only two choices to win the league this year.

Well, forget all of that, because neither team is sitting at the top after a month of play. Manchester City's immortality is showing signs of waning, as the Manchester outfit was played to a 3-3 standstill by

heavy underdogs Newcastle during Match Week Three. The Citizens were also down 2-0 at halftime against Crystal Palace just a few days ago. While hatrick from talisman Erling Haaland eventually gave them the win, that untouchable aura the champions have had for the past half-decade is seeming to fade.

Not even Liverpool is sure what Liverpool is doing at this point. They started the season winless after three games, opening their title charge with a 2-2 whimper against newly promoted Fulham. They were then held to a 1-1 draw against Crystal Palace, a game where their €100 million striker got a red card for headbutting an opposition defender. Despite two underwhelming performances, Liverpool was still the favorite going into a Game Week Three matchup against bitter rivals Manchester United. They were completely outplayed in a 2-1 loss, giving their most hated enemies their first victory of the season. As stated earlier, even the higher-ups at Anfield are struggling to answer the question of Liverpool's legitimacy.

Brighton and Leeds are two teams that are having starts to the season that nobody expected, albeit

for a good reason. Brighton had a respectable campaign last year, finishing at a solid ninth place, tied with Wolves on 51 points. Leeds wasn't as good last year, finishing in 17th out of 20, just one spot

As you can probably guess from the context clues, both teams are heavily overperforming. Brighton opened its season with a 2-1 win against the mighty Manchester United at the storied Old Trafford, much to the

their opening four fixtures. After a win and a draw in their opening two games, Leeds welcomed the English giants Chelsea to Elland Road after they came off a big summer transfer window in terms of spending, in addition to an elite performance in an all-time classic 2-2 draw with Tottenham Hotspur the week before. Leeds literally outran the 2021 Champions League winners off the field, covering 13.9 kilometers more than the Blues in an emphatic 3-0 statement win. Both teams are punching high above their weight, and while some regression is to be expected, both Brighton and Leeds are looking to finish high above their preseason expectations.

The Premier League is almost unanimously viewed as the best league in the world for good reason: the competition and spectacle it provides is simply unmatched, and this season it seems as though the craziness has been cranked up to 11. Arsenal is top of the league—that should be enough to let you know this Prem season is a little different from the rest. But I think I speak for almost all fans when I say that we love it so far.



Manchester City star Erling Haaland.

Courtesy of GettyImages

above the relegation zone: a team heavily burdened by injuries that just managed to stay afloat. Going into this year, Leeds was seen by most fans as a certain relegation team, while Brighton was expected to fall a bit in the standings but remain relatively mid-table.

surprise of literally everyone outside of the southern coast of England. Since then, the team has maintains their strong start to the season, with wins against another quality side in West Ham and a 1-0 victory over their fellow upstarts in Leeds, who have had a similarly big upset in

Board Picks

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<i>Favorite thing about our EIC</i>	nothing	crusty toes	lol	his socks	closed-toe shoes	sour cream	how he restricts our feed spending
<i>Most looking forward to this fall</i>	going full clownfish	luke	abusing senior privileges	football season. go big red.	the spring	the winter	november first.
<i>Favorite onomatopoeia</i>	oomph	kapow	BARK	fizz	gargle	pew	ribbit