

WEEKEND

BLOCKBUSTER

STYLE

The performance of getting dressed

// BY FABEHA JAHRA

Getting dressed is the first performance of the day. Not in the sense of spectacle — not every morning outfit is a showstopper. But in the sense of ritual, of staging, of deciding how we want to be seen and how we want to feel. Even the most indifferent “I just threw this on” look is still a choice, a quiet act of control over a world that rarely bends to our will.

Style is often read as surface, but it’s deeper than that. On mornings when time feels relentless, when exams and deadlines press too close, clothes become armor. A blazer stiffens the spine, boots echo authority with each step, eyeliner sharpens the eyes into focus. On slower days, getting dressed can be a soft joy: slipping into a sweater that feels like a hug, picking earrings just because they catch the light, walking into class wrapped in something that whispers comfort first.

What we put on our bodies reshapes how we inhabit time and place. A sundress in October feels like defiance, while a heavy coat in March admits defeat to the cold. Bright scarves cut through a gray New Haven winter like a declaration, while muted tones in April suggest patience, waiting for spring to fully arrive.

The textures and layers we choose don’t just prepare us for the weather — they prepare us for ourselves. College makes this performance especially visible. Walk through Cross Campus and you’ll see it: the sweats that signal an early 9 a.m. class, the carefully styled outfits that telegraph confidence, the unacknowledged uniforms of tote bags and boots. Each choice tells a story, whether or not it was intended as one. There’s a reason students often remember what they were wearing during the moments that defined a semester — the sweater you pulled over your head before an exam, the thrifted jacket that saw you through your first New England snow, the shoes ruined by a night out.

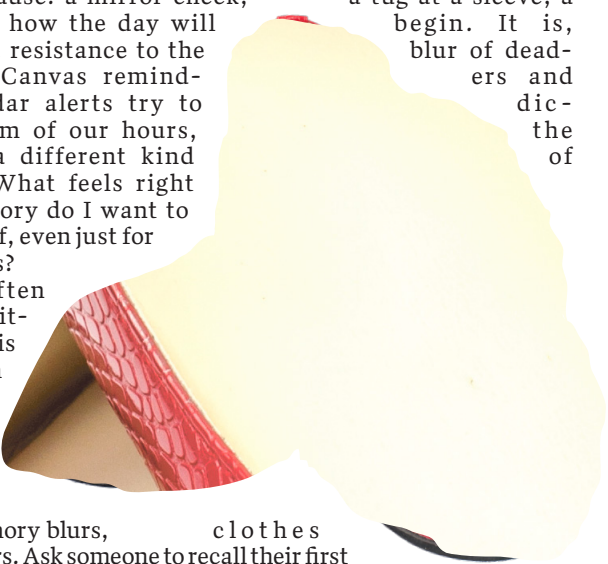
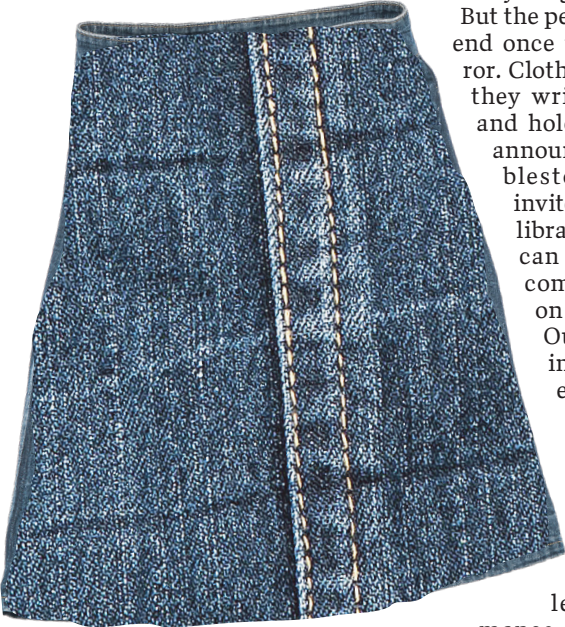
But the performance doesn’t end once we leave the mirror. Clothes move with us — they wrinkle, loosen, slip and hold. A pair of heels announces itself on cobblestones. A hoodie invites anonymity in the library. The same shirt can read as casual or composed depending on who is watching. Outfits shift depending on context, audience and intention. If life on campus is a stage, then clothes are both costumes and scripts, adjusted with every act.

Yet in college, the performance of getting dressed feels heightened because of its simultaneity. Thousands of us wake up within blocks of each other, all negotiating identity in real time. The campus becomes a kind of runway, though not always glamorous. Students in pajamas shuffle to their morning section beside others in crisp trousers heading to a coffee chat, friends swap shoes outside a party because one pair pinches too much. Style here is not just about aesthetics, it is about how we pace ourselves through days that can feel endless and weeks that pass in a blur.

It forces a pause: a mirror check, a tug at a sleeve, a decision about how the day will begin. It is, in its own way, resistance to the blur of deadlines and decisions. Where Canvas reminders and Google Calendar alerts try to tate the rhythm of our hours, closet offers a different kind timekeeping: What feels right today? What story do I want to tell about myself, even just for the walk to class?

I think often about how little we notice this pause. We rush through mornings, treating outfits as necessity, not ritual. Yet later, when memory blurs, clothes emerge as anchors. Ask someone to recall their first college formal, and they’ll describe the dress or suit before the date. Ask about the first day of school, and they’ll remember the new shoes that blistered by lunchtime. Getting dressed embeds itself in memory precisely because it is so ordinary, so daily — the repetition gives it weight. Getting dressed is not just about what we look like. It’s about how we step into the day, how we armor or soften ourselves, how we practice identity in motion. Clothes may not define us, but they shape the way we move through the hours — with purpose, with joy or with just enough style to carry us through.

Because before we write, work or study, before we step into classrooms or onto stages, before we become who we are expected to be — we dress. And that, too, is a performance worth noticing.



Contact **FABEHA JAHRA** at fabeha.jahra@yale.edu.



PERSONAL ESSAY

Notebook to Netflix

Junior Jaidyn Hurst sings in recent release “The Wrong Paris”

// BY EMMA SINGER

I met Jaidyn Hurst ’27 on the first day of the “Representations of the Holocaust” class in the fall of my first year. At first, she was just the girl who sometimes darted out of our HQ seminar room with a quick “I have a music meeting” or mentioned, almost in passing, that she’d stayed up late singing Watchhouse in the Branford Courtyard with her brother Jared. She didn’t talk much about what music meant to her. If anything, she seemed intent on downplaying it, as though her hours at the piano or with a notebook full of lyrics were just another extracurricular on an already long Yale résumé.

Over time, though, as she transitioned from a distracted-seeming classmate to a friend, I realized music isn’t something Jaidyn does. It’s who she is. When we study together, she’ll unconsciously hum the chorus of a song, her delicate soprano notes threading in and out of the conversation. It doesn’t feel like performance, more like instinct, the way some people tap their pencil or doodle in the margins. Music is simply the ground she stands on.

That ground has been solid for years. Long before Yale, Jaidyn was writing and producing her own work, recording in Nashville and New York while still in high school. Yale hasn’t sparked something new so much as it has provided a container for what already was: practice rooms, dorm stairwells, and courtyard acoustics filling in for the stages she was already beginning to claim.

This month, Jaidyn’s voice will reach far beyond campus. Her vocals are featured in the upcoming Netflix film “The Wrong Paris,” where her rendition of “Love Me Like I Need” underscores a character’s most vulnerable moment. It’s striking that such a familiar voice can transition into a formal context.

The movie follows a woman played by Miranda Cosgrove, who signs up for a reality dating show in Paris, France, only to discover it’s set in Paris, Texas. One of the producers had stumbled across Jaidyn’s music and was struck by her sound, so they asked her to record a song already written for the film. Last spring, unbeknownst to her friends, she caught the Metro-North to Brooklyn and spent the day in the studio with the Netflix team and Glow Music Group to record the track. Jaidyn called me in early July to deliver the news, and I leapt up from my bed and started screaming into the phone.

As a child, Jaidyn invented silly songs for her dolls, hummed her way through classwork until teachers begged her to stop, and threw herself into school musicals. By middle school, she had joined an Aspen youth choir, but it was during the isolation of COVID her freshman year of high school that she began writing songs in earnest. The first, “Perfect Life,” reflected the sting of a falling out with a close friend. Songwriting became making sense of experiences as they happened rather than about performance—not a dramatic outlet, but a steady practice, a way of metabolizing change.

That practice took her further than she expected. Her junior year, she traveled to Nashville to record three original tracks. A producer in New York heard her sound, and soon she was recording a nine-song EP with accompanying music videos. Most recently, she spent time in Los Angeles working with Khristian Thymes on six new songs. These weren’t flashy forays into a new world that she accepted on a whim. They were the natural extension of what she had been quietly building since she was fifteen.

During her junior year Jaidyn wrote “Go Clear,” a song that became a kind of mantra during the stressful college application season. “All the haze made of fear / will one day go clear,” she sings. As a single, it set the tone for her sound: a blend of acoustic warmth and indie-pop brightness, shaped by influences like Lizzy McAlpine and Noah Kahan. Like McAlpine, Jaidyn writes in an almost conversational style, with melodic turns that catch you off guard. I can imagine any of her lyrics appearing on my phone in a routine text. Like Kahan, she carries an unguarded vulnerability that makes listeners feel seen. And yet her songs don’t sound borrowed. They carry her own fingerprint.

It’s striking how ordinary Jaidyn’s relationship with music feels. She doesn’t hold songwriting at a distance or frame it as a polished “artistic process.” It’s messy, part of her daily rhythm. Sometimes mid-conversation she’ll pause to jot a phrase into her leather notebook, then return without explanation. Sometimes she’ll circle the same guitar riff for an hour, laughing at herself when it refuses to click. And sometimes, when she feels

ready, she’ll share a half-finished draft with me. Not as a performance, but more like: here’s where I’m at, what do you hear?

That notebook is everywhere. The cover is worn, the pages spilling with scraps of paper and abandoned lines. It’s not the cliché of a teenage songwriter pouring secrets into her journal. It’s her archive, her practical way of keeping track of thoughts before they slip away. Some fragments stay scribbled forever, others grow into full songs, but either way, the practice itself is what grounds her.

After a lot of probing, I got Jaidyn to tell me about her favorite memory as a musician. Walking into the high school dining hall the morning after releasing her first single and hearing classmates blasting it over the speakers. Everyone already knew the lyrics. The whole room sang with her. “I was so overjoyed,” she told me. Her younger brother Jared, who often sings alongside her, put it best: “Jaidyn is the sort of songwriter who derives inspiration from a vulnerable and personal place. She cares so much about the way her music reflects her personality. Having seen her in the writing and practicing stages, I know everyone could benefit from a little more honesty and vulnerability in their lives.”

That honesty is a throughline for her, though she never talks about it in those terms. She’s bubbly, quick to laugh. We’ve coined her the “giggle monster,” and often brushes off her accomplishments with a little self-deprecation. When I first found out she had music on Spotify, it was only because I pried. She blushed, waved it away, then changed the subject. But when I got around to listening to the music, I heard someone deeply attuned to her own inner world, shaping it into songs that feel at once personal and widely resonant.

Still, the story of Jaidyn’s music isn’t about Netflix credits or EPs. It’s about the way her songs create moments of shared recognition. That’s the thread she’s been following since her first single: not fame or download numbers, but the spark of connection when someone else hears themselves in her work.

And she’s already doing it. Even when she’s not in a studio or on a stage, she’s connecting. With me, with Jared, with friends leaning on her dorm room door frame. The Netflix feature is a milestone, yes, but it’s also just another page in the same notebook she’s been filling since childhood.

Contact **EMMA SINGER** at emma.singer@yale.edu.