WEEKEND *CULTURE & ARTS*

REVIEW

Scouting for new songs: Find them at Yale

// BY ESMERALDA VASQUEZ-FERNANDEZ

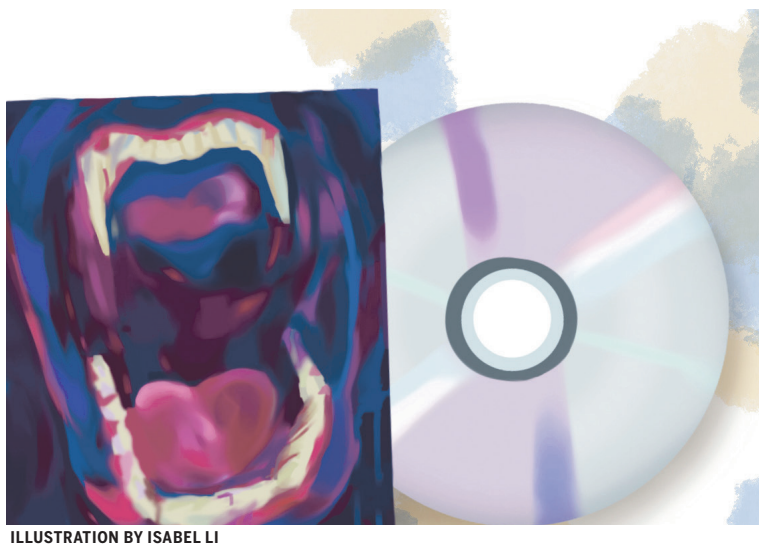


ILLUSTRATION BY ISABEL LI

Growing up in Southern California, it seemed like many teenagers wanted to be alternative, underground, incomprehensible. Many scoured the thrift stores to find vintage pieces that nobody else at school would be wearing. Thrifted vinyls by bands from the 90s filled my room. My Bloody Valentine, Current Joys, Beach Fossils, Weyes Blood, Sunbeam Sound Machine and Washed Out blasted in my friends' cars. Then, those people grew up and searched for ways to preserve their uniqueness. One way of doing so is by listening to music others haven't heard of. Being the first fan of someone's work. Luckily, Yale is home to a plethora of artists, DJs and bands to add to playlists. For those who want to have the most niche music taste of anyone in their friend group, Yale's music scene is the place to be.

The first time I heard "Hunting Days" by Khatumu Tuchscherer '24, I knew it would become a song that gets played multiple times a week. Immediately, the initial 10 seconds of Khatumu's vocal run over the acoustic guitar creates an ethereal atmosphere. As someone who cares a lot about knowing the lyrics to songs, her first couple of lines "comes home at five, says he's fine" sparked personal interest because it created a storyline for the song. Khatumu's lyrics convey the familiar feeling of being forgotten about in a relationship, undervalued with "treat me like a dog, take me out back, put a bullet in my brain. Tell me that my hunting days are done… just treat me like I'm someone." It's the perfect song to listen to on a pensive walk on or when you want to belt lyrics in the car. Over 4 million people have streamed this song on Spotify. It's for a reason.

Recently, I've been leaning into the 2012 fall aesthetic. From wearing vanilla bean perfume to seminar to walking around a bookstore with a pumpkin spiced latte to listening to "Bright" by Echosmith. I search for that nostalgic warmth. Strictly Platonic's song "You" emulates everything that I love about indie songs released in the early 2010s. The vocals of Audrey Hempel '25 remind me of being 10 years old and sitting in the backseat of my mom's car on a crisp rainy day. Suddenly I am seeing the world through a golden filter and awaiting the next "back to school supply haul video."

Marin Korenaga '27, whose stage name is Marin Clarisse, recently dropped "internet stalking" on Sept. 18. The piano and rawness of Clarisse's voice elevate the song. My favorite Clarisse song is "moral bankruptcy." The vocals, lyrics and drums work perfectly together to create tonal shifts and beat drops. It sounds like a song that would be in a film's soundtrack in the best way possible. It's been added to many of my personal playlists, and I continue to send it to many of my friends from other universities.

You can find me walking around campus listening to the songs that my fellow peers have created. I find their lyricism inspiring, and it also pushes me to expand on my own creative hobbies.

Contact **ESMERALDA VASQUEZ-FERNANDEZ** at *esmeralda.vasquez-fernandez@yale.edu.*

PERSONAL ESSAY

Bring back the magic

// BY LEAH SKINNER

Syllabus week is over. It's the first full week of classes, and I'm making the trek to the Yale bookstore to pick up a package, a walk that feels more like a hike to East Rock when rushing. My plan is simple: secure the package, go back to my room, finish my three readings and then go to my two back-to-back club meetings. I'm walking, looking down at my phone and watching my time-blocked Google Calendar schedule run away from me.

And, of course, a meandering tourist couple is taking up the full sidewalk right in front of me. I'm irritated. I'm anxious. I'm ready to resent them for life.

I remember it like this: I looked up angrily from my phone at the couple, audaciously disrupting my schedule. Obviously, they weren't Yale students, probably not even New Haven residents. They were walking near campus, stopping, chatting and taking pictures of each facade and gothic window, in total awe of Yale's majesty. I realized that I was watching people do something I hadn't done in a long time.

When I first visited campus after getting my acceptance letter, all I could feel was an overwhelming sense of gratitude for the rich beauty that surrounded me. During the 60-minute tour, I filled my camera roll with the same iconic spots that the couple had captured in front of me.

Before the stress of classes set in, those pictures became a reminder of my new home — the culmination of my hard work in high school. Campus felt like a magical place. a place where every corner held the possibility of something new. The magic stayed past move-in. I looked with wanderlust at corners of campus left unexplored. Hearing the bells in Harkness Tower out of my window reminded me that the place of my dreams had become home.

I wish I could pinpoint the moment when campus lost its magic. Hearing the bells out of my window became more of a nuisance than a joy. Going to Sterling Library felt more like a duty than a privilege. Walking around at Yale became more of a routine than an experience. Something that I used to love so deeply became a burden. It must've been a slow descent. My footsteps quickened and I stopped taking pictures.

Like any dream, when Yale was an idea, it was easy to romanticize. Upon arrival, my romantic bubble popped. Yale stopped being a dream and became my everyday life. Everything became familiar.

Maybe I'm just melodramatic. Your thousandth visit to Sterling won't be like the first. But with that mindset, will the magic of campus ever come back, or will we be stuck in a constant state of indifference until graduation?

The wonder dissipated as I filled each cell in my Google Calendar. Instead of looking around and enjoying the scenery, I spent my walks optimizing my time: sending emails, updating my schedule, texting back friends and family, making a to-do list.

Not everyone has time in their day to take 20-minute strolls around campus and smell the proverbial roses. We don't want to get in the way of a student rushing to the package center. Sometimes there is an essay due at midnight, a problem set waiting to be finished, three club meetings squeezed into one night, or a "let's get a meal" that you actually have to follow up on.

To get the magic of campus back, I became a tourist at my own school. I had to treat campus like it was my first time seeing it. I started walking without checking my phone and stopped to photograph the sunlight hitting Harkness. I slowed my pace to let the love of this school run free.

I will never be able to recreate the feeling of my first visit. I wasn't seeing it for the first time anymore. There was another kind of magic in seeing a familiar place with fresh eyes. I picked up my package. The resentment I felt toward that slow-walking couple had turned into appreciation. They had no idea that by slowing me down, they had reminded me to look around. Maybe that's all it takes to find the magic again: not a new place, but a new way of looking at the one you are already in. Next time you're stuck behind slow tourists, take a beat, take a photo and allow your mind to wander.

Contact **LEAH SKINNER** at *leah.skinner@yale.edu.*

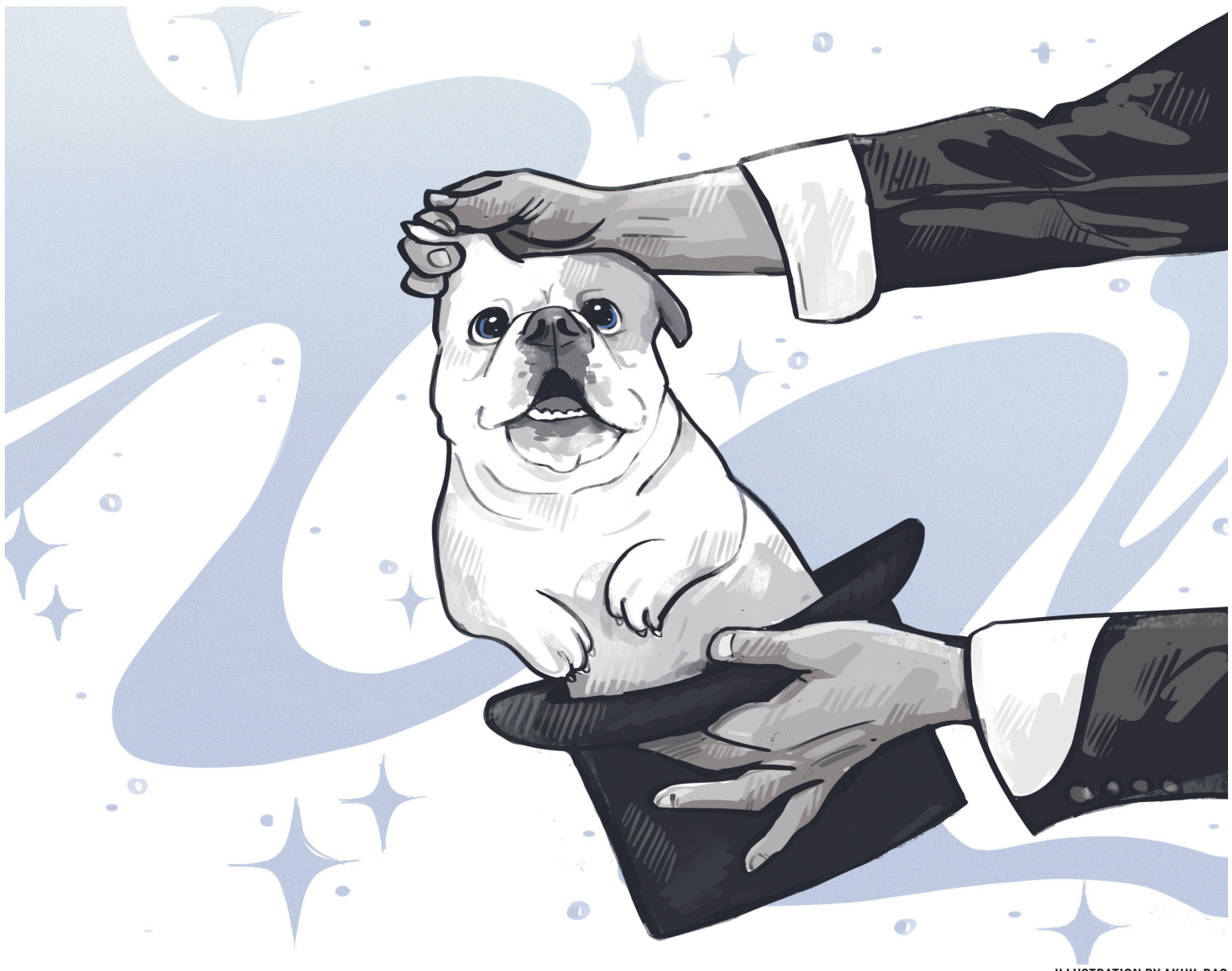


ILLUSTRATION BY AKHIL RAO

WEEKEND RECOMMENDS:
HALLOWEEN PREPARATION