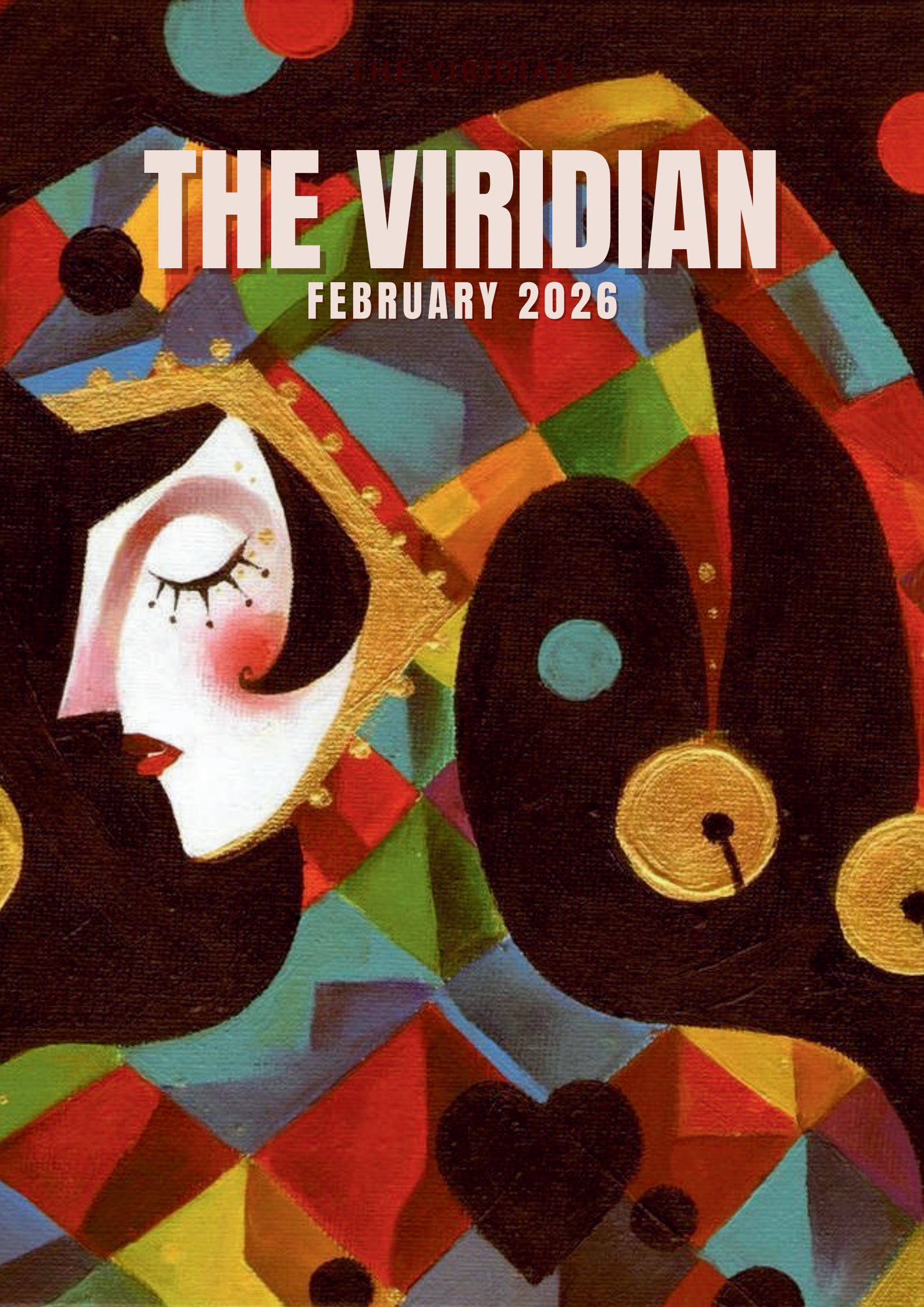


THE VIRIDIAN

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FEBRUARY 2026





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PHOTOGRAPHY

LOUKA DEMANGE

EDITED BY

STEPHANOS ARTEMIS, MR. ANTONIOU



THE VIRIDIAN

BOOK CORNER

BY

ANNA PAVLOWITCH



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Happy carnival! Is that the appropriate celebratory remark for this allegedly jovial ritual? I wouldn't know. As you can tell, my enthusiasm for carnival has dwindled over the years as the furtive search for multi-coloured hairpieces and extravagant heels has transformed itself into the alarm-bell for the beginning of mock exam season. Bit of a shorter one this month as I find myself in the throes of Apolyterion exams, but hope you enjoy joining me in my dive down the rabbit hole.

'ALICE'S ADVENTURES IN WONDERLAND' BY LEWIS CARROL



Mad Hatter, Cheshire Cat, Queen of Hearts, little girl wearing blue dress. All endearingly enchanting characters of a Victorian fantasy children's tale, characters with enough charm and absurdity to make several appearances at costume parties across the globe. We all know the story. Alice takes a tumble and falls through a conveniently large hole, where she makes the important decision of to drink or not to drink, to eat or not to eat, and the rest is history. Could there however, be a different side to the ever so innocent white rabbit and his ever-ticking pocket watch, to the hookah-smoking caterpillar, to the delightfully naïve little girl who talks to animals? Is there something behind the chilling grin of the pink-and-purple-striped pussycat? I give you this. The Mad Hatter represents the madness of the Victorian era. He embodies people's cultural obsession with mental illness. Another proposal. Food in wonderland is a metaphor for temptation and the consequences it entails. Alice changes sizes as she savours 'Eat me' cakes and 'Drink me' drinks, and yet it does not occur to her to hesitate before sampling all sorts of delicacies at the Hatter's tea party. Now I'll take on the role of the fatalist. Alice's descent underground is actually a "Descent into death." The Queen's favourite "Off with her head!" catchphrase is a constant reminder of humanity's inevitable demise, while the animals' view of death as a humorous concept adds to the unsettling nature of wonderland. And of course, there always exists the more straightforward theory that Alice suffers from an identity crisis. Believe it or not, Lewis Carrol insisted '**Alice's Adventures in Wonderland**' to be pure entertainment, hiding no moralistic purpose. I suggest he take a leaf out of his own book and broaden his sense of imagination. Perhaps he should even have a re-read of the section on the Caterpillar's magic mushroom before he claims the work to be a mere children's story.



RAPID-FIRE RECOMMENDATIONS

'The Travelling Cat Chronicles' by Hiro Arikawa: A man and his cat on an important journey against the backdrop of Japan's changing seasons. Ethereally heartbreaking.

'Nineteen Steps' by Millie Bobby Brown: Still gripped by the lingering shadow of the Stranger Things saga? Well, Millie Bobby Brown has certainly branched out with this one. War, anguish, lost innocence. Another tear-jerker.

'My Family and Other Animals' by Gerald Durrell: Ok, now for something a bit more cheerful. Follow the Durrells as they take on the role of the British expats navigating life in Corfu. This one's for tears of laughter.



The background is a painting. It features a woman with brown hair, wearing a white, strapless, floor-length dress with a blue and yellow patterned hem. She is looking upwards with a wide-eyed, fearful expression. Above her is a large, dark, hairy creature with a face, possibly a giant ape or a similar beast. The creature's body is dark brown and black, with long, shaggy hair. The background is a solid, textured red color. The overall style is reminiscent of classic pulp magazine illustrations.

THE VIRIDIAN

MORBID MYSTERIES

BY LEONIE WEIDERUD AND
LOUISA LIAPIS

THE VIRIDIAN

THE PROPHECY THAT KILLED

BY LEONIE WEIDERUD

The woman sat beneath dim lantern light, her fingers heavy with rings, her voice low and confident as she traced the lines in her client's palm, and flipped through her tarot cards. Outside, carousel music twisted through the night air. The carnival promised wonder. She promised truth.

But sometimes, she promised death.

Ottilie "Tillie" Klimek (born Otylia Gburek) in 1876 in Poland came to the United States as an infant with her parents. Marrying her original husband **Jozef Mitkiewicz** in 1895.

In early 20th-century Chicago, Tillie made her living as a fortune teller, a profession thriving on mystery and performance. Tarot cards, crystal balls, whispered prophecies. But Tillie wasn't just predicting fate. She was manufacturing it.



Her first husband died suddenly in 1911 after a mysterious illness. However, before his death, Tillie had calmly told neighbours he wouldn't live much longer. When it happened, they dismissed it as coincidence, obviously tragic, but unsurprising. Death visits everyone eventually.

Then it happened again.

She had quickly remarried **Joseph Ruskowski**, and all seemed well until he fell violently ill in 1920, his body wasting away while Tillie quietly told friends that his end was approaching. When he died, doctors blamed natural causes.

She married **Frank Kupczyk**, in 1919, then Frank began becoming ill, same symptoms. Same prediction, she began to tell neighbours that Frank "Would not live long." Even mocking Frank, greeting him in the morning by saying "It won't be long now," and "You'll be dying soon," She even knitted her own 'mourning hat' as she sat at his bedside (which she later wore to the trial), and asked for the landlady's permission to store a bargain coffin she'd found for sale in the basement.

Three husbands. Three prophecies. Three funerals.



THE VIRIDIAN

At this point, Tillie's reputation began to change. What once sounded like mystical insight began to feel like something darker. She wasn't just reading palms, she was reading obituaries in advance.

Behind the curtain, the trick was Arsenic – a slow, patient poison, not killing quickly or dramatically, but gradually through nausea, weakness, and internal failure often mistaken by doctors at the time for stomach disease or infection. Tillie slipped it into meals, letting her husbands fade away while she stood by like a widow in rehearsal.

In 1921, after Frank's death, Tillie married Joseph Klimek. When he became ill, doctors suspected Arsenic, and tests confirmed it. She was arrested.

Bodies of Tillie's other husbands were soon exhumed and found to contain lethal doses of Arsenic. Police also arrested her cousin, **Nellie Koulik**. Tillie told the police that she had told Nellie she was tired of her husband Frank. Nellie suggested divorce. Tillie said that "I will get rid of him some other way," and claimed that Nellie had given her a "**Goodly portion,**" of a poison called "**Rough on Rats.**"

AMAZING MURDER CASES IN CHICAGO, WOMAN HAS SLAIN THREE HUSBANDS



Associated Press
Chicago, March 8.—Evidence in connection with the deaths of two husbands, as well as the third wife of Mrs. Tillie Klimek, charged with murder, was allowed by the court but her co-defendant, Mrs. Nellie Koulik, her cousin, was held today by Superior Judge Cassanough. Mrs. Koulik, however, still is under indictment in connection with the death of one of her husbands by poison, it is alleged. The state has sought to show the cousins were involved in murder conspiracy.

Charges that Mrs. Klimek set by the bedside of her third husband, Frank Kopyck, shortly before his death, and strangled her mourning garments, were made by Assistant State Attorney Wm. F. McLaughlin in his opening statement. "We will show that she also showed him an advertisement of an undertaking firm, showing catalog for \$25," the prosecutor said. He charged that the defendant before Kopyck's death had said that he did not have long to live. "Three of her husbands are dead and one still is in the hospital," he declared.

By ROY J. GIBBONS, NEA Staff Correspondent.
Chicago, March 8.—With a woman held as notorious a case of arsenic poisoning as that of the well-known "Bluebeard" Landis in Paris or of Mrs. Belle Storer, whose infamously "murder" fame startled the country 20 years ago? Detectives are waiting a word of evidence around two women whose trial, they declare, will result in sensational revelations those which stirred an interest throughout the world.

The women, around whom this world-wide sensation may hinge, are Mrs. Tillie Klimek and her neighbor, Mrs. Nellie Storner Koulik. Both are being held on a formal charge of murder, while authorities are studying the exhumed bodies of 20 people—widely and widely—in traces of arsenic poisoning.

Out of these chemical examinations, coupled with criminal investigations, may arise a story of one of the most audacious poison plots in the history of crime.

Oh—and this is a possibility which the police admit exists—the whole investigation may reveal nothing more than a series of accidental coincidences.

Indices of former husbands of these women have been subpoenaed and examined. And in each case the police in charge of the investigation, chemists have found traces of arsenic remaining. Their discoveries have led to inquiries into the deaths of Mrs. Klimek's first three husbands, a former partner, three cousins of her children, besides twin children, grand children and a former husband of Mrs. Koulik.

The whole case requires a mass of startling revelations concerning the lives of these two women, Colonel Peter M. Hoffman and the detectives who are following the mystery trails night and day, debate the story they are unearthing from anything as far as sensational stories of death.

Records show that Mrs. Koulik, who is 45, has had 11 children in the past 20 years. Of these six are dead.

She gave birth to twins in 1917 when she was married to Vincent Storner. Storner refused to acknowledge paternity of the twins, police say their investigations have shown that some time later both children died of an interval of a month apart.

Next year Storner died. His body now has been exhumed and examined. It had in a "poisoned" arsenic to kill a dozen men," according to the William L. McKelvie, who made the examination.

Grandchildren Examined.
From this point the avenue of death leads investigators to the cases of Mrs. Koulik's grandchildren, starting with her daughter, Mrs. Charon Spira. Three of the children lie in the same cemetery, and their father has asked police to exhumed their bodies.

As for Mrs. Klimek, police claim definite evidence against her. They cite the case of John Conover, a former partner, who died previously after he had refused to marry her. They also say they have evidence of quarrels between Mrs. Klimek and relatives who later died under strange circumstances. The bodies of these relatives are being examined.

Yet all this collection of intriguing evidence fails to connect the women in the case. Both Mrs. Klimek and her co-accused, Mrs. Koulik, remain quiet about the whole affair.

Whether they are merely the victims of a series of misadventure events, or the center of a huge poison plot, no one connected with the case will venture to deliver from the fact as far revealed.

After Klimek's arrest, it came to light that several relatives and neighbours of the two women had died. Two neighbours Tillie had quarrelled with became gravely ill after being given candy by her. A dog that annoyed Tillie in her Winchester Street house had died of Arsenic poisoning. Several of Tillie and Nellie's cousins and relatives were found to have become gravely ill shortly after eating at Tillie's house. In all, the list included twenty suspected victims, fourteen of whom had died.

In 1924, Tillie Klimek was sentenced to life in prison, where she died in 1936.

So the next time you see a fortune teller's sign glowing beneath striped canvas, remember sometimes the scariest part of the show isn't the prediction.

It's the person making sure it comes true.



THE VIRIDIAN

YOU'LL NEVER WALK ALONE

BY LOUISA LIAPIS

Following his wife's devastating death, the reputable sculptor, Daniel Muller, carved an unconventional, menacing carousel horse, rendering it his "**Military horse,**" yet unaware of what it would ultimately manifest.

The horse itself was initially painted sanguine, like that of blood. Its muzzle was stretched into a savage, grizzly scream, revealing its array of vicious teeth. It was notorious for petrifying the youth, and rumours of its cursed nature tainted its image.

Despite its haunting appearance though, the horse was favoured by various national parks, who dragged it around the US, until it eventually wound up in Cedar Park, Texas, half a century after its debut, where the rumours adopted a physical, or better yet, liminal form.



During a seemingly unremarkable shift on a rather stale night, an employee at the park claimed to have spotted the carousel slowly spinning on its own, creaking with every pause as if it were struggling to sustain itself. As he hesitantly approached it, he noticed a subdued, glow radiating from a rather dishevelled woman who remained stagnant on the horse's back. Her hair protruded from all directions, coiling around her arid eyes and ashen lips. Her head lay tilted to the side, parallel to her scrawny shoulder.

Terrified, the employee immediately fled the park, never to return. The sightings of this unearthly woman continued, with several visitors allegedly feeling someone bite them when they merely neared the rusty structure.

It is speculated that the entity is Muller's deceased wife's soul, lurking around the park, attached to the horse her beloved husband sculpted and refusing to allow people to ride it.

In an attempt to ensure everyone's safety, the authentic horse is now stored elsewhere and was replaced with a replica, though employees proceed insisting on the fact that gentle footsteps still echo around the desolate park late at night.



THE VIRIDIAN

VIDEO ARCHIVES



BY SIMONA MITSU

THE VIRIDIAN

ELVIS

Indirectly, carnival is about complete and untamed freedom. It's an opportunity to explore our identity by stripping ourselves of everyday mundanity and reveling in our most extroverted, exuberant, extravagant selves. We're invited to be expressive in flamboyant and excessive personas, let go of our inhibitions and get lost in the pulse and thrill of the occasion.

On the surface, it's an intoxicating blend of community, culture, costumes and dance, overloaded by sound and color that overstimulates every sense. However, to me, the main event is music. It's the driving force behind the façade of sequins and feathers, that frees us from our inhibitions and turns crowds into communities. Which brings me, surprisingly, to Elvis.

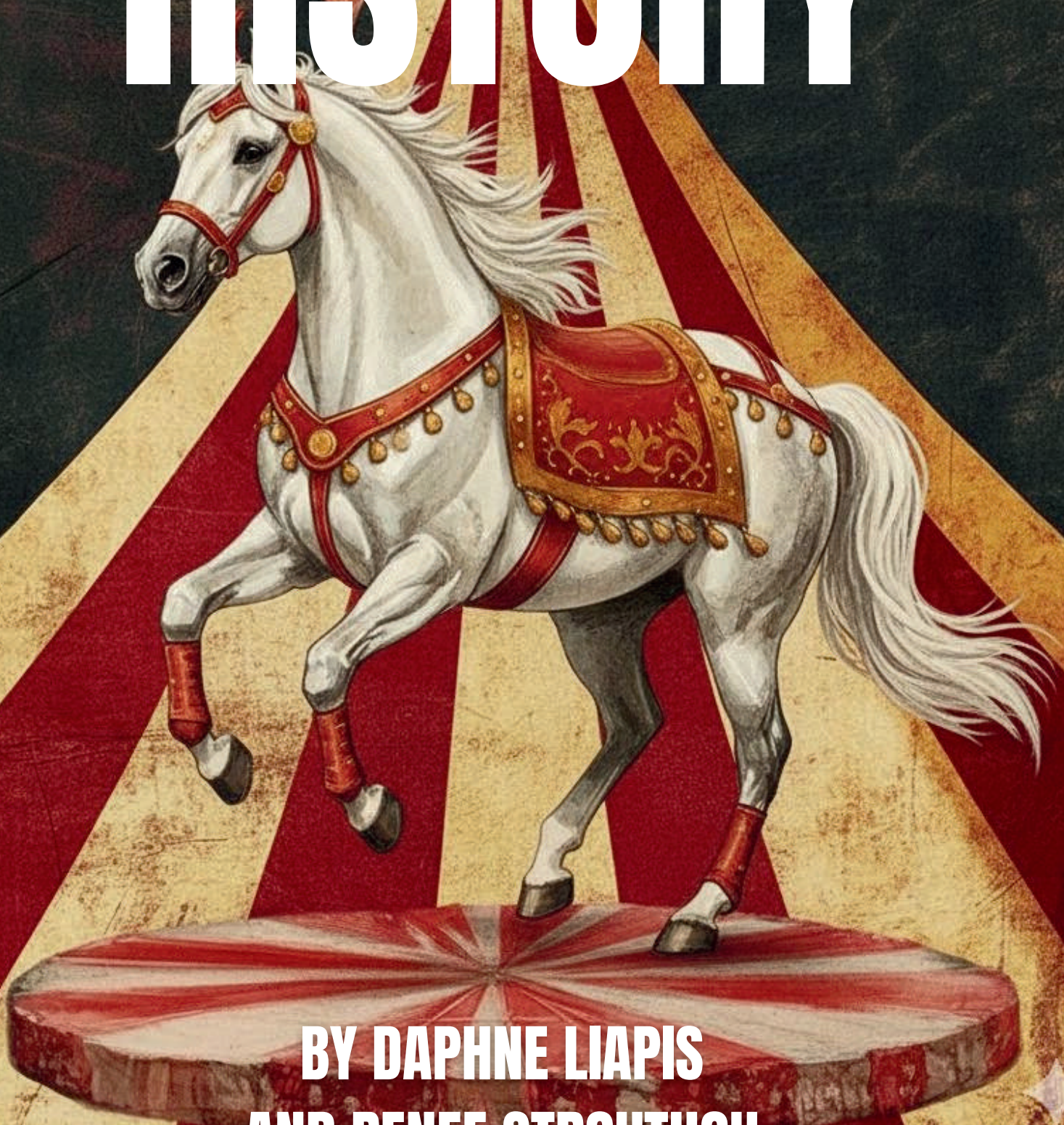
'Elvis (2022)' is an electrifying biopic directed by Baz Luhrmann starring Austin Butler in what Guardian deems a "Kaleidoscope of portrait of the king of rock and roll." Now, I'm aware of the controversy surrounding mediocre musician biopics, but I assure you that the Elvis movie does not fall into this category. Doomed to sub-par reviews and being dismissed as "Cliché," for failing to live up to fans' harsh expectations, it's a genre that rarely excels. By no means do I claim that the Elvis movie is a revelation but considering how low my expectations were in the first place due to my profound indifference to Elvis or his music whatsoever, I was pleasantly surprised.



I loved how Baz Luhrmann captures the 50s as a frenzied and electrified cultural carnival, placing Elvis in the center stage: the main spectacle of the global wave of rebellious rock and roll. He wasn't just a popular artist; he was the face of restless youth and the time's biggest pop icon. From radically breaking down racial boundaries between 1950s segregated American society to his saucy hip-action, flashy sequined outfits and hypnotizing allure, Elvis embodied a revolutionary cultural carnival. However, Luhrmann sheds light on a much more sinister and dark side of Elvis' life in the second half of the movie. Colonel Tom Parker is characterized as an evil circus ringmaster who mistreated and victimized Elvis by feeding into his drug abuse, driving him to complete and utter exhaustion as well as exploiting him through psychological manipulation, much like a tortured circus animal. In this way, the Elvis movie explores how the life of fame can become a sick carnival with no exits.

THE VIRIDIAN

HISTORY



BY DAPHNE LIAPIS
AND RENEE STROUTHOU



THE VIRIDIAN

Whether to celebrate religion, embrace your community, or have some fun, the carnival is a significant period where everyone can come together. No matter what part of the planet you are from, carnival is a time when people can express themselves, feel joy, and celebrate tradition. Some of the most popular carnivals are the ones hosted in Rio and Venice.



During the 16th century, Brazil was under Portuguese colonization, and life in the streets of Rio de Janeiro was simple and communal. During this time, a small street festival would take place, where locals gathered to play street games, dance, and enjoy light-hearted mockery. Over time, new elements were added to these celebrations. Costumes became part of the tradition and by the 1840s, lively music had become a key feature of Rio Carnival. These developments gradually shaped Rio Carnival into the world-famous celebration it is today.

The most famous part of Rio carnival is the samba parade. Large performance groups, known as samba schools, prepare for this moment all year. Wearing bright, colourful costumes and rehearsing complex dance routines, they parade through a special arena called the Sambadrome telling stories of their culture and tradition. With the help of the drummers and cheering crowds, an unforgettable atmosphere is created. Simultaneously, the carnival is also embedded deeply into the roots of Christian traditions. For many around the world, not just the people in Brazil, it is a way to mark the start of Lent, a forty-day fasting period leading up to Easter.



The Venice carnival is one of the oldest, most fascinating traditional carnivals. It originated in 1162, in Venice, and became an official celebration in the Renaissance. Its carnival took place in the first months of the year, usually February and March, to mark the period before Lent. It is usually characterized as a period of hedonistic pleasure, since people let loose, dress in eccentric costumes, and have a good time, enjoying the party.

It was symbolised through the bizarre and colourful masks everyone wore, which acted as a façade, because they did not know who the other person was. This sense of anonymity evoked a sense of freedom and clouded the social class positions people were born into. Masks such as Bauta, which was a famous white mask, with a hat, that allowed eating and drinking without removing it, and Moretta, which was a small black velvet mask worn by women were two of the prevalent masks seen at the time.



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Throughout history, this celebration was famous for its luxurious balls, its masks, and its gambling nature, which served as an economic outlet for the city, as it gained international recognition, especially from European nations, and so an increased level of tourism. It would be a way for manufacturers to make more profit, because there would be immense demand for costumes, and it allowed people to gamble which was usually illegal, but was permitted during this time, and so increased funding.

Although this is the case, following the invasion of Venice by Napoleon in 1797, this carnival and its traditions were banned. It was forbidden to wear masks or to celebrate in any way. This had detrimental effects on the socioeconomic health of Venice, since there was no means of celebration, which reduced its tourism, manufacturing, and gambling gains. This led to a fall in prosperity. However, two centuries later, in 1979, it was brought back, allowing Venice to benefit from the positive social, cultural, and economic gains of the carnival once again. It was re-introduced as a means for the Italian government to revitalize the historical importance of this carnival and celebration, whilst also to increase tourism, to grow more economically.



In conclusion, globally, many carnivals have shaped the economic and cultural development of nations through traditional music, costumes, and food; carnivals bring people together to enjoy this blissful time of the year. The Rio carnival and the Venice carnival are two of the most infamous, and historically rich carnivals, with immense traditional significance.



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THE FASHION FIX

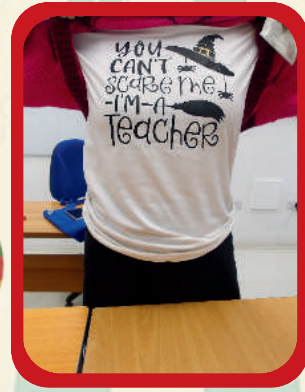


BY
NEFELI VASSILIOU

THE VIRIDIAN

What better way to kick off carnival season than with some Fashion Favourites? The Senior School, while being an educational institution, intentionally or unintentionally doubles as a fashion show. Whether we'd like to admit it or not, our teachers are some of the best in the game.

For February, we gathered 7 lovely fashionistas and fashionistos, best reflecting the spirit of the carnival season.



THE VIRIDIAN

A DIP IN THOUGHT



BY FATIMA SANJAKDAR

THE VIRIDIAN

ALL IN GOOD FUN

Through the window of the Ferris Wheel or the gap in the circus tent, you'll find that beyond the attractions, a carnival acts as a microcosm for spirituality, expression, and ludicrousness. These characteristics have been inherited from carnivals' polytheistic origins and have seamlessly seeped into modern festivities. After all, our present is a patchwork of all that has been preserved from the past.

In Pagan traditions, carnivals were inaugurated as a cultural denotation of the natural world such as the Earth's agricultural cycles. As humanity followed the Earth's rhythm, the regulations and proprieties of society were blanketed beneath radical traditions like intoxication, gambling, and roleplay, such as the liminal phenomenon whereby masters served their slaves. Carnivals encapsulated absurdity and rebellion for centuries to follow, and the modern perception of these celebrations was adopted in the Middle Ages. Traditions such as how the infamously elaborate European Masquerade Balls permitted a shedding of one's identity in a time full of social divisions and taboos. And so, for one day, under the influence of alcohol and impressive anonymity, mischief was masked as madness.

In North America, the erasure of indigenous tribes and exploitation of colonised slaves removed freedoms and civilisations but borrowed traditions that proved to be fraught with hope. For example, in Louisiana, slaves from French territories in Africa brought with them celebrations such as Mardi Gras. In contrast, the resistance against racial violence in other African countries, such as Trinidad and Tobago, have evolved from protests into annual celebrations of freedom.

Whether intentional or not, modern carnivals have sprouted in the west from Abrahamic origins, and most significantly from the season of Lent. The word 'Carnival' comes from the Latin "**Carne Vale,**" which means "**Farewell meat.**" This concept manifests itself around the world, but is also found very close to home, with the Cypriot tradition of **Tsiknopempti**. Aside from the characteristic parade, costumes, and barbeques, the celebration acts as a tribute to the Orthodox Christian blood that is found deep in the soil of Cyprus.



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In Dharmic Faiths, carnivals embed mythology in our modern society through sound and colour, creating a holistic experience whereby teachings of life and death are celebrated. Though these festivities date back millenniums, they are impressively adjacent with modern values, such as environmental consciousness and pacifism. Many of these practices are a propagation of the teachings and scripture and promote moral conduct.



Throughout humanity, carnivals have acted as a reminder that contradiction ruptures through our normalities yet can persevere when it's accepted. Disorder is portrayed as intentional and disguises as playful to mask the complexity each celebration is embedded with. Nonetheless, as proven across the globe and throughout history, spirituality has been most prominent when it is celebrated.



THE VIRIDIAN

SCIENCE



BY ALEXANDROS HADJISYMEOU

THE VIRIDIAN

When I hear the word “Carnival” the first thing that comes to mind is the *Macarena*. And when this song does come up (and it will), it is obligatory to dance to the *Macarena*. Every single person born after the 1980s has danced to the *Macarena* at least once in their life (yes even yours truly). Now imagine you start doing the *Macarena*, but once you start you don’t stop until you die.

Today’s yap session takes us back to the early 16th century, in a time where if you repeatedly said 2 consecutive numbers over and over again, you would be called a witch and burned at the stake (you know who you are). The incident which I will yap about today occurred in the town of Strasburg, in what is now France. This town had a very hard time in the early 1500s, since it was ravaged by famine and a Smallpox epidemic. So, like anyone in this predicament, the citizens of Strasburg claimed that the end times were upon them. To add to this, the Protestant Reformation was well on its way. Although the Reformation was still in its infancy in 1518, it had a big impact on the citizens of the predominantly-Catholic town.

All of this was just too much for one woman by the name of Frau Troffea to bear, and so she started to dance in the street in July of 1518 (the months are important, so pay attention). Seems harmless, right? Just a woman letting out her frustration in the form of a dance. Wrong! This woman was dancing for a week non-stop, day and night. In this week, she managed to compel approximately 40 more people to join in her frantic dance. By the end of the month, she managed to gather over 400 participants. That may not sound like a lot, but for a relatively small town in the Middle Ages, it had a big impact on the town, since the dancers disrupted trade and even scared off some residents and pilgrims.

At the time, the cause for this dancing was unknown, and to a certain extent, it still is (more on that later). The City Council, clueless on what to do, first turned to the doctors for a solution. The doctors said that the people’s blood was overheating due to the hot nature of the summer of 1518. The cure for this, according to the doctors, was to just keep dancing, in addition to doing some bloodletting (the Middle Ages were a weird time). So, the city employed an orchestra to follow these people around until their blood “Cooled down.” This did not work. Shocker, I know.

So, the City Council turned to the Church. The Church, like always during this time, said that the root of the unstoppable dancing was some good old-fashioned heresy. More specifically, the church said that the dancers angered St. Vitus, and thus the Saint punished them by making them dance uncontrollably. This explanation by the Church was (somehow) a good explanation for the City Council, hence the City Council decided to take the dancers on an all-expenses-paid trip to a monastery (yes, really). This surprisingly worked, and so this “Dancing mania,” was cured.

I may or may not have lied when I said that by the end of August 1518, there were over 400 people dancing. The truth is we do not know the exact number of people afflicted by the “Dancing mania,” or their exact symptoms. Although most sources agree on the core events of this incident, there are some disagreements regarding the more specific details – this is starting to remind me of IGCSE History...

And now, as promised, an explanation for what actually caused this. The short answer is, I have no idea; the long answer is that scientists have some theories. The most widely accepted theory is mass hysteria. To cut a very long story short, mass hysteria is when a group of people collectively experience intense fear, anxiety, or physical symptoms without a real or identifiable cause, often spreading through social influence. In other words, the stress caused by hardship along with the belief that St. Vitus would punish the citizens of Strassburg for their sins, caused some people to start erratically dancing, without any clear cause. Other (and funnier theories in my opinion) state that Frau Troffea initiated this dance to embarrass her husband.

Moral of the story, next time you think about dancing the *Macarena*, don’t, because you may not be able to stop...



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MUSIC

BY ALEXA MICHAEL

THE VIRIDIAN

There are genres that care deeply about your taste. They want to be understood. Categorized. Curated into the right playlist. They want five stars, a paragraph of thoughts, and a clean place in your identity.

Carnival music does not want any of that.

Carnival music does not ask what you're into. It does not wait for your mood to stabilize.

It couldn't care less that your Spotify Wrapped insists you're "Mostly chill, sometimes nostalgic, occasionally unwell." Carnival music operates on a much simpler, much more aggressive premise: you don't have to like it - you just have to give in.

This is what makes it confusing to explain and impossible to resist.

We live in an era of infinite choice. Skip buttons, filters, algorithms that flatten your personality into listening stats. Even enjoyment has become a decision. Do I like this enough? Is this my vibe? Should I post this or will I regret it later?

Carnival music shows up and removes the question entirely.

You don't choose the song - that's been taken care of a while ago. You don't choose the volume - your chest feels it before your brain does. You don't choose the moment - it's already happening around you. There is no skipping, no easing in, no carefully curated entry point. Carnival music is anti-choice, and that's exactly why it feels so good.

At first, everyone thinks they're immune. You stand to the side with your arms crossed and keep looking at the time. You tell yourself you'll just watch for a bit. You confuse distance with control. Carnival music doesn't rush you. It repeats itself loudly and patiently, until standing still becomes more exhausting than moving. This isn't persuasion so much as pressure - collective, rhythmic, joyful pressure. At some point, when you haven't decided to join in, you realise you already have. That's because carnival music doesn't reward taste. It doesn't matter if you know the lyrics, if you've "Outgrown it," or if you only like one very specific era and nothing after. It doesn't respond to critique or ranking. All it asks for is consent - not enthusiasm, not understanding, just a willingness to stop resisting the moment, which is maybe why it unsettles people who are used to overthinking everything. Carnival music does not meet you halfway. It meets you where you are and keeps going anyway.



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For those who grew up around carnival, especially in smaller communities like the Cypriot carnival scene, this dynamic never needed explaining. Carnival wasn't something you discovered or opted into. It was part of the year. The same streets, the same noise, the same songs returning no matter how much time had passed. You didn't choose it. You absorbed it. Carnival marked time. For a few days, the rules softened – not dramatically, but noticeably. And then it ended. Trying to explain carnival music later can feel awkward because it was never meant to be justified. It wasn't built as a cultural export or an intellectual exercise. It was built as a shared interruption.

This is also why carnival music refuses to behave properly within modern listening culture. Your algorithm wants to know how long you listened, whether you saved the song, what you'll want next. Carnival music doesn't care if you ever play it again. It isn't trying to age well or become timeless (although let's be for real it is). It isn't made for seclusion, quiet spaces, or headphones. It exists to be loud once, all at once, and then to vanish till the following year, leaving you yearning for these enjoyable times spent with loved ones that nothing else can match that time. Listening to carnival music quietly, alone, weeks later will feel illegal, like replaying a voice note that only made sense in the moment it was sent. Without the crowd, the repetition feels excessive. The volume feels unnecessary. That's because carnival music isn't interested in your inner life. It goes straight for your body: your stamina, your balance, your ability to keep up. The repetition isn't laziness. It's strategy. The volume isn't excess. It's instruction. You are not meant to interpret carnival music. You are meant to briefly submit to it.



And in a world that constantly asks you to explain yourself, brand yourself, and optimize your enjoyment, that submission can feel like freedom. Carnival music is often described as joy, escape, celebration. But underneath that is something quieter and stranger. For a short window, you don't curate yourself. You don't perform taste. You don't decide how you feel. You just consent to the noise, the repetition, the crowd – and let that be enough.

Then, it ends. You go back to choosing everything again, so enjoy that freedom and carelessness while it lasts.



THE VIRIDIAN

THE ARTS

BY MARILIA EVANGELOU

THE VIRIDIAN

THE UNDERGROUND CIRCUS

Dare I say, in the theme of Carnival, the Drama department is a little circus of its own in the basement of our school, and as a Drama student myself, I am loud and proud to be part of that parade! This article is dedicated to the one and only Miss Cosma, so without further ado I present to you... her final act.

THE CIRCUS GOES ON TOUR!

For every A-level Drama student, there is one thing they look forward to throughout the year, besides all the endless essay-writing and academic stress, and that is... drum roll please... the EXHILIRATING... the ADVENTUROUS... the ONCE IN A LIFETIME EXPERIENCE... ANNUAL DRAMA A-LEVEL LONDON TRIP! Much-anticipated by every single drama student, dare I say the expectations were not only met but exceeded. A journey of four full days and two travelling days filled with incredible theatre performances, tours, and amazing workshops, all relevant to our syllabus and every single student's individual interests. You may think five plays, four workshops, and two tours are impossible to do in four days; you stand corrected, and we stand exhausted! We had the opportunity to watch the most fantastic plays, each so different from each other and so unique in their own way. The stand-out for me was the play, 'Bengal Tiger' – a story set in the midst of the second Gulf War in Iraq, with American soldiers, haunted by a murder tiger caught in the crossfire of war, slowly losing their sanity and humanity amongst the sorrow and despair brought to the Iraqi people. The play raises many questions that test faith, the greediness and selfishness of man, the concept of war, and the role everyone has in either increasing or relieving suffering. From the moment the lights went out and the song "Thunderstruck," by AC/DC caught us by surprise, it was gripping and I was sure it would be an unforgettable production. The play blended dark humour with moments of brutal honesty, exploring the idea of power and the never-ending chase of it. The performances were raw and fearless, particularly Peter Forbes's, who played the Tiger. His presence commanded the stage in moments of intensity, comedic relief, and silence. The minimalist but clever use of the stage and set reminded me that theatre, just like life, doesn't need to be flashy and over the top – it just needs to be truthful. This was one of the most striking experiences of the trip that will remain unforgettable and trust me when I say this... there were many. By the end of this trip, we returned home tired, but buzzing with ideas. London gave us more than memories – it gave us motivation. Seeing professionals at work, in workshops, backstage, and on stage, made the dream of theatre feel more real and more reachable. It was a trip that reminded us why we chose drama as an A-Level subject, and why we love theatre in the first place. We couldn't be more eager to go back into Drama 1 and work on our own devising pieces.

THE UNDERGROUND CIRCUS MASTER

Miss Cosma is the quiet force behind everything magical the Arts department has ever done, and this London trip, her thirteenth and final one, felt like a perfect, full-circle moment, because again, in the midst of all the chaos, complaining, and exhaustion, she was truly our driving force. As her student, it feels almost impossible to measure the space she has filled in our school and in us. She didn't just teach us or just organise these trips, she built worlds.

When the Arts could have faded into the background, she kept them breathing, loud, and unapologetically alive, no matter how many times they have been tested. Through school musicals that stretched our limits, welcome parties, winter showcases, afterschool activities like the Drama Club and the Backstage Club, talent shows that gave courage a stage, and the individual attention she pays to each of her students to help them reach their full potential, she made chaos feel like creativity and pressure feel like purpose. That is why she will always be our "Miss Cosmic," – because she is literally out-of-this-world amazing; our Underground Circus Master, the one holding all the strings, trusting us to fly without letting us fall. I believe

I am speaking on behalf of all my classmates when I say this, knowing these are her last lessons with us hurts more than we expected, but knowing she is taking the same passion to teach in China (yes, China) feels right, like the next act she was always meant to play. We will miss her insanely, especially her perfect calm in the chaos, perfect notes, perfect feedback, perfect advice at the perfect time, and her perfect faith in us before we had it ourselves.

Although she is leaving our school, she is permanently etched into the story of the Arts department, and the story of who we are!



DEDICATED TO
MISS ELENI
COSMA



THE VIRIDIAN

STUDENT SPOTLIGHT

BY
MARCHELLA SOULTANI

THE VIRIDIAN



We are very proud to announce that Marchella Soutani (Year 11), has been awarded First Prize in the Under-18's category of the Heritage New Writing Contest. The competition had 200 entries from 16 different schools in Cyprus. The topic this year was **Moving!**

SECOND SKIN

i return home,
the streets curve differently now.
The market stalls still stand the same
Yet faces i don't recognise
eye me down like hawks
when i talk -
as though my tongue has betrayed them.

"you've changed," they say.
Ask me if i'm familiar with dishes
i grew up with.
The spices pulse through my veins but
i'm too soft,
too strange.
i'm a foreigner wearing their skin.

i leave again.
To a country where i do not
belong.
i swallow my tongue
in exchange for a sweeter voice
that
 never
 quite
 fit
in my mouth.

My name was music.
Now it's been chipped,
Reshaped.
To fit the sharp edges
of mouths that move
in unfamiliar ways.

i am a tick between boxes.
 i circle
between two lives
to the point where
"home"
becomes a concept;
a story i tell,
rather than a place
where i can
 stand still,
 where i
belong.



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**Thank you for reading this month's edition,
Stay tuned for our next edition, out soon!**



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