

Concert Choir Tour cut short

page 2



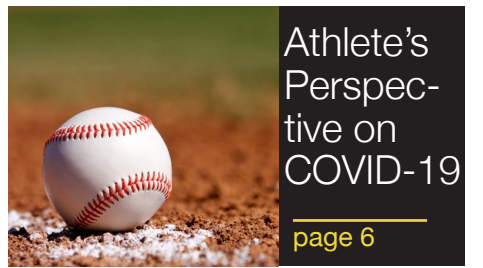
Entertainment in quarantine

page 3



Op: Zen and the Art of Quarantine

page 6



Athlete's Perspective on COVID-19

page 6

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# THE DIAMOND

## Student teaching in an online school

Jaclyn Vander Waal—Staff Writer

After spring break senior Katie Bartels expected to stand in front of a classroom of Sioux Center Middle School eight-grade language arts students.

Instead, she introduced herself to them for the first time this past Monday via YouTube video.

Bartels, an elementary education major, is among 41 Dordt University student teachers who have had their educational training dramatically altered by the COVID-19 virus outbreak. With schools suspending in-class instruction, their educational platform has shifted from the classroom to online to fit the needs of their homebound students.

"I love teaching because of the relationship building and the communication between the teacher and student," she said. "I will not be able to observe how my students are processing information or see first-hand how they are responding to anything. I hope to teach online in a way that is collaborative. I hope to create a community with these eighth-graders in a place



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where we all are alone on our computers."

Dordt University student teachers are unsure about how their student teaching experiences will unfold. They also are uncertain if they will meet state requirements.

Education professor Ed Starkenburg is staying in touch with cooperating teachers, student

teachers, and university supervisors during this time. Dordt is waiting on the state of Iowa to make final decisions on student teaching since teacher licensure is a state issue. He said these decisions take time and patience, which can be difficult to accept during this pandemic.

As of now, student teachers are expected to

help out their cooperating teachers in as much as possible. Schools are taking many different approaches, however, so it is difficult to create a standard for what each student teacher should be doing.

"That varies a great deal from teacher to teacher," Starkenburg said. "We have some students who are the primary teacher for most of their classes and subjects. Others are helping teachers find resources to utilize and are involved in communicating with students and their families. We have a few students whose schools are simply closed, and they are doing very little other than the other assignments and paperwork that goes with student teaching. The wide range of experiences is part of what makes this very complicated."

Senior elementary education major Hayley Visser also finds it difficult to effectively give students feedback without developing a relationship.

"When I provide comments to them, I want to be able to connect with them," she said. "I do

continued on page 3

## Bore and peace: exploring boredom in the time of social distancing

Emi Stewart — Staff Writer

"You know I'm bored when I start cleaning." Nebraska resident and former Dordt student Megan O'Gorman feels the pressure of boredom. If there were not a viral illness festering throughout the globe, she -- like all of us -- could fill her day with errands and social outings. However, that is not the case. She resorts to dusting.

On March 12, the World Health Organization declared the outbreak of COVID-19 to be a global pandemic. Suddenly, establishments are closed to the public. Suddenly, employers are imploring their staff to work from home. Suddenly, millions of people have no option but to be still, to sit with themselves, and to endure long bouts of boredom.

For most, Netflix, Twitter, and good old fashioned books can only provide so much relief. Eventually, we need to address boredom and see it for what it truly is -- which is... what, exactly?

"Boredom is that place that either leads to distraction, or to contemplation and creativity," said Dr. Justin Bailey, Assistant Professor of Theology at Dordt. "We aren't sure we're

going to like what we see if we go towards contemplation, and we aren't sure that we have what it takes if we move towards creativity. And so it's easier for us just to distract ourselves."

He sees the word as a sort of catch-all, junk drawer for many emotions.

"We're not being accurate and naming exactly what it is we're feeling." Digging a bit further into the sensation of boredom often unveils deeper, root emotions, and he notes that "if we're honest, when we say we're bored, what we really mean is that we're lonely."

2019 Dordt graduate Elayne Heynen agrees.

"My desire to avoid boredom is really a desire to avoid loneliness," said Heynen, who moved to California after graduation. A new job is a big transition in itself -- when paired with a new state and few established relationships, that jump proves to be an even more daunting one. "When I run out of things to do, I realize I don't have any friends to hang out with."

According to Heynen, we often confuse boredom with rest. When people are uncomfortable with the idea of being at rest -- for whatever reason that may be -- they may simply claim that they are "bored." Heynen views this time through the lens of Sabbath.

"Rest is something God commands us to do in order to remind us of our own insufficiency and our lack of time, and the fact that we actually need God," said Heynen. "Our current addiction to caffeine is an indication of our desire to be sleep-optional people. We refuse to rest... and that is a form of self-idolatry, in some ways."

Is this refusal to rest anchored by weighty feelings, and not simply wanting to accomplish more tasks? It could be an indication of underlying negative emotions that we don't wish to address, or rest in disguise, or the instinct to create. Why does the prospect of

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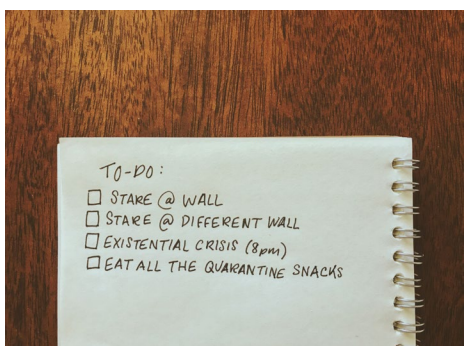


Photo Credit: Emi Stewart

## Canceled on the court

Sam Landstra—Staff Writer

Ebby Prewitt knew her tournament was over as soon as the commissioner stepped foot on the court. Southeastern and Ohio Christian had just finished their game and had gone into the locker rooms. Her team sat next to her on the bleachers dressed and ready to play.

With resignation in his voice, Commissioner Westra spoke and the Tyson Events Center fell quiet.

"The NAIA National Basketball Tournament has been cancelled." He said.

Players looked around at each other. Stunned. Were they serious? Was it really over? Prewitt buried her face into her hands and started to cry. Her senior season had vanished in an instant, stolen by the COVID-19 epidemic.

A teammate approached her and placed a hand on her shoulder. Another cradled her head. Sienna Stanness, the junior guard who lost much of her own season from two ACL tears, wrapped both her arms around Prewitt.

This was supposed to be their year.

"It was almost unbelievable at first," Prewitt said. "All of us players have a bond that won't be broken because no one else understood what that was like."

With two games already played on the Thursday morning, and eight others the previous day, a sudden abandonment of the tournament seemed out of the question. Any news of similar cancellations or postponements in the sports world felt distant before that moment, small ripples in an ocean far away.

"Never did I think that we would just cancel it." Coach Bill Harmsen said. "The rug was kind of pulled out from under them."

At 11:07 pm the night before, Harmsen received an email while in his hotel room mandating a restricted number of fans at the tournament. Each player would be given six tickets for immediate family members, amounting to 126 people per team.

"I won't forget it," Harmsen said.

Still, while dominoes fell in the NBA and NCAA, he believed the tournament would

continue.

Earlier that evening, assistant coach Abby Schultz led the team in a devotional on showing gratitude in every moment. She told a story of a boy who suddenly passed away after collapsing on the court during a game, urging her players to recognize the gift of basketball, of living each day. We are not guaranteed anything, she said.

"It's true," Prewitt said. "I thought I was going to get up and play my game at nationals. But I didn't."

After the announcement, Prewitt and her teammates wandered onto the court to meet their families. Still shaken, tears flowed for lost opportunities and hugs shared in their grief.

continued on page 8

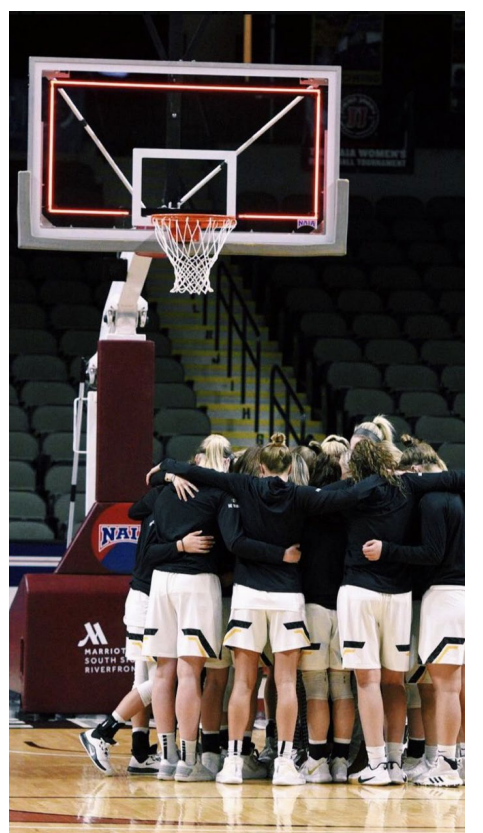


Photo Credit: Ebby Prewitt



## The Invisible Man review

Zach Dirksen— Staff Writer

It was 2014 and it was high time Universal Studios had its own cinematic universe. Disney and Marvel, with only a handful of fun, interconnected movies, had themselves a cash cow with the MCU. But Universal didn't have superheroes. So, scouring the depths of their intellectual property, someone had an amazing idea. What if, we rebooted all the classic monster movies we made in the 1940's, but also crossed them all over, Avengers-style. The idea was solid gold. Soon, the first film in the so-called Dark Universe, *Dracula Untold* hit theaters.

No one remembers *Dracula Untold*, and rightly so. It's not a bad movie, per se, but it certainly isn't one that can anchor a tentpole franchise. Unfazed by *Dracula's* lack of success, Universal went all in. You know what'll really put butts in seats? Tom Cruise. Fighting a mummy. Heck yeah! 2017's *The Mummy* came, and went, with a whimper. It seems as though the Dark Universe just wasn't meant to be. But, Universal still had release dates lined up for future releases. Surely cancelling them all would be embarrassing. Plus, it might be nice to get a bit of the money they spent back, right? Thus, Universal turned to Blumhouse, which was dominating the scene with low-budget, but consistently entertaining horror movies like *Get Out* and *Split*, to help them pick up the slack.

Now, in 2020, we have the first of their efforts, *The Invisible Man*. In it, we follow Cecilia, a woman racked by fear and paranoia. After barely escaping the clutches of her abusive, tech millionaire ex-boyfriend, Cecilia finds herself holed up in a friend's house. She is hesitant to even go outside, fearing the possibility that her controlling ex, Adrian, is out there looking for her. Adrian and Cecilia's relationship was extremely one-sided, with Adrian controlling nearly every aspect of her life. Separating herself from that will take some time.

Cecilia soon finds that Adrian has committed suicide, and that he's left much of his fortune to her, pending she keep to some conditions. She can't commit a crime and she can't be ruled mentally unstable. Cecilia is ready to move on, and having this money and Adrian out of

her life can help her do that. But soon, strange things begin to happen. Cecilia feels breath on the back of her neck. Kitchen items begin to move, seemingly by themselves. Someone else is in the house with her. Is she crazy? Is it a ghost? Or is Adrian not ready to let her go just yet?

*The Invisible Man* is a masterclass in suspense. We know what we're expecting going in, it's in the title after all. What we aren't expecting, however, is how nervous that thought can make us. The *Invisible Man* could be anywhere. Sitting in the chair in the corner or standing right behind us. He might not be there at all, but how could we tell? This is the constant state of paranoia that Cecilia is in throughout the film, and we feel that with her. Every empty space becomes a held breath, an I-Spy book, where we search for the slightest abnormality.

On a metaphorical level, the concept also works marvelously. While an *Invisible Man* is literally stalking Cecilia, the trauma of Adrian's abuse haunts her as well. Those memories will never leave her, and Adrian's presence, whether that be physical, mental, or metaphorical is still with her.

Perhaps the strongest element of *The Invisible Man* is Elizabeth Moss as Cecilia. Moss has been consistently tearing it up on television for two decades, starting on *The West Wing* and moving to *Mad Men* and *The Handmaid's Tale*. Only recently has Moss made an impression in film, but she's certainly here to stay. Moss brings a realistic and energized performance here. We experience these horrors as she does and Moss does wonders expressing Cecilia's fear and pain.

I don't know the state of the Dark Universe. After *The Mummy*, it seemed dead in the water. But with the success of *The Invisible Man*, Universal might actually have something. Instead of pandering to box office guarantees, they've chosen to take a risk with a smaller amount of money, making a personal story while still being scary, reinventing the classic monster movie for a new generation. With Universal and Blumhouse making plans to do the same with another *Dracula* movie, it looks like the monsters are here to stay. The Dark Universe is dead, all hail the Dark Universe.



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## Disney+ early releases

Haemi Kim— Staff Writer



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Cinema 5 theater in Sioux Center has announced they will be closed until the end of March. They are not alone as theaters all over the country temporarily shut their doors over COVID-19 as families stay home. Many movies have pushed back their release indefinitely, while those that have made it to the theater came out with poor opening weekends.

Streaming services are stepping into the entertainment gap left by movie theaters. Disney brought a happy surprise by releasing *Frozen 2* globally on Disney+ over three months ahead of its original release on June 26.

"Frozen 2" has captivated audiences around the world through its powerful themes of perseverance and the importance of family," said Bob Chapek, Chief Executive Officer of the Walt Disney Company, on the early release, "messages that are incredibly relevant during this time, and we are pleased to be able to share this heartwarming story early with our Disney+ subscribers to enjoy at home on any device."

Sophomore Acacia Phillips is currently subscribed to Disney+ and says appreciates that movies are being made available to the public early.

"I was trying to figure out what to watch one night and saw that *Frozen 2* was already on there

so it was really nice to see it already," Phillips said, "especially due to the coronavirus."

Noah Deist, another sophomore, said it was "a smart business move from movie studios" to get audiences excited about their movies.

"They spent millions on these film and three months from now when the theater open up again, the hype for their movie will have died out," said Deist.

Both Phillips and Deist have a positive look towards Disney's early releases in Disney+ because of the changes and isolation that has been going on due to COVID-19.

However, Phillips did have some worries on people wanting more from the companies.

"People may demand them to be on [Disney+] sooner now because it is certainly really nice," Phillips said.

Even though for now, people will have to watch movies through their streaming sites, Deist believes that the movie theatres will not have a negative impact in the future.

"I think the theaters are going to be extremely overlooked once they are allowed to reopen," Deist said.

Disney has announced that Onward will also be streaming early to Disney+ on April 3, less than a month after its theatrical release.

## Tables turned for the theatre: where to next?

Allison Wordes— Staff Writer

Dordt's response to COVID-19 has changed the direction for the theatre department this semester. The theatre building sits empty, without the raucous laughter and jokes from the theatre students.

Three major upcoming events included the performances of three seniors for their final projects—Zach Dirksen, Kaitlyn Baljeu, and Harrison Burns.

So, what are these seniors going with their shows now? For the most part, the news of change wasn't too much of a surprise.

"It was already a week into the major shutdowns around the country so I was already expecting it," said Harrison Burns, who was going to put on his own piece of playwriting, *Bankrupt*. "So, it wasn't really surprising, but it was still really disappointing and frustrating."

Because he is a senior, Burns will not be able to direct this play as a Dordt student. However, there are perhaps bigger and better things for his production. After several months of revising and rewriting, he hopes to publish his final draft. It would then be possible for it to be performed at another time or in another place.

"In my mind, this felt like my big, creative senior project that all my theatre experience had been building to," Burns said, "so to have it completely disappear like this is rather jarring."

The group was able to do one read-through before spring break—unaware that it would be

their last. Still, it was an encouraging experience and Burns praised the talent of the cast.

"I was incredibly lucky to even have the chance to perform the play in the first place," Burns said, "and I am confident that much of my work on the writing will pay off eventually."

Senior Kaitlyn Baljeu also has to deal with these changes with her show about Vincent Van Gogh, *Break of Day*, but sees hope ahead.

"I have the chance to continue *Break of Day* next [fall] semester, which I am so grateful for." She originally planned to graduate in May, but earlier circumstances caused her to add an extra semester to accommodate a third major.

Baljeu has been in this process of putting on a show for almost two years. She felt the change coming over spring break as well as Burns, because as the fear of COVID-19 slowly crept over campus it started to affect her meetings in the theatre and put her project on hold.

The process was just about halfway for Baljeu—the production team had been working on their designs, and the cast had two rehearsals down. Luckily, she won't have to recast everyone—just the people who are graduating.

"I'll have the chance to finish out my dream project," she said. She has been learning just how big of a task directing a show can be, and a little extra time is a hidden blessing. She plans to spend most of the summer prepping for *Break of Day* rehearsals and production meetings, so that the result will be even better

continued on page 8

## Movie nights from miles (cont.) Bore and peace away

Lindsay Kuiper— Staff Writer

During this time of social distancing, many aspects of life have been moved online, and social gatherings are no exception.

In response to the coronavirus crisis, a new Chrome extension called Netflix Party has been increasing in popularity. Netflix's website states that it "synchronizes video playback and adds group chat to your favorite Netflix shows," making the virtually impossible task of connecting with friends a virtual reality.

Only one person has to download the extension on their browser, but all participants must have their own Netflix account. From there, they can find the movie or television show they'd like to watch and create a link to share with their friends or family.

Anyone in the group can play or pause the show unless the host has specified otherwise. Everyone can share their thoughts in real time using the group chat feature on the side of the screen.

Freshman Sommer Schaap recently tried out



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the Chrome-exclusive feature. "It's super easy to navigate," she said. "It's a really creative way to talk about the movie without verbally interrupting it so you can still understand what's going on."

So far, over 1 million people have downloaded Netflix Party to their browser. However, some users have pointed out issues with the extension. For example, it automatically kicks everyone out of the chat room once a show is over, and a new session must be created for every episode that is watched with the extension.

There are also no usernames in the chat room, so users must memorize the icons given to each member of the group to determine who is saying what.

Despite the issues, many people are praising Netflix Party as a way to make social distancing more tolerable. While everyone is confined to their own homes, having more online features such as Netflix Party makes the isolation easier.

## PLIA 2020: a journey to remember

Tabetha DeGroot and Benjamin Boersma— Staff Writers

During this time of social distancing, many aspects started with French toast in our leader's kitchen and ended with a cinnamon roll hug.

We left the first Friday morning of spring break after breakfast and stopped at the Maurice City Park on our way out. Towards the back of the park is a tube slide that looks like it was built inside the tank of a water tower. One by one, the seven of us slid down and experienced the slide's twists and turns.

"That was a good indication to me that we would have a great week," said junior Isaac Porte, reflecting on the trip.

Little did we know, however, that our trip would end with twists to rival the Maurice Slide. After stopping overnight in Western Nebraska, we traveled the windy roads into Colorado. Gideon Brandsma, one of our leaders, plugged in his phone before heading out. As the mountains rose before us, a familiar tune began to play.

"I can show you the world..." Slowly, the music grew in excitement, and we crested a hill just as the big crescendo happened. Before us was the winding highway leading down into the valley below.

"A whole new world, A new fantastic point of view..."

We pulled up to Bethel CRC of Shiprock, New Mexico, as night fell upon the dusty desert town. We breathed in the dry air, excitement spreading through the van. It was crystal clear: we weren't in Iowa anymore.

A Navajo woman was sweeping the entryway as we approached the door. We greeted her, and she explained that she was cleaning up after her daughter's funeral. Death is a common occurrence on the Navajo reservation of Shiprock. There had been two funerals shortly before we arrived, and there was a third during the week we were there. Later in the week, some of us helped drywall for a member of

the congregation. She explained to us that she had lost a granddaughter while on the way to the hospital. None of us were ready for how straightforward she was in telling us.

We found Pastor Jon Greydanus inside the church and he showed us around. We would sleep and eat in the church. Our only option for showering was at a nearby pool, which was closed when we arrived on Saturday night and would not open until Monday. This was our first lesson on how to "improvise, adapt, and overcome." We became practiced in the art of sink bathing, dry shampoo, and deodorant wipes that week.

"I'm going to have to be okay with looking and feeling a bit greasier than usual," freshman Grace Nanninga remarked.

For devotions that evening, one of us prayed that God would use the time to help us reorient our focus toward Him. A word of advice: be careful what you ask for. You might not like how He answers.

For most of the week, we cleaned up around the church, burned tumbleweeds, hauled tree branches and two-by-fours, and drywalled. When we weren't working, we spent time getting to know our teammates and introducing ourselves to the local wildlife, such as dogs, peacocks, and lots of spiders.

On Wednesday we traveled into Arizona to visit the Grand Canyon. It was overcast and foggy when we arrived. The rangers told us not to expect good visibility. We went in anyway, just in time for the fog to lift and a rainbow to appear several hundred feet below us. As the day continued and we hiked around the canyon, the sky cleared up. We saw at least seven more rainbows that day, as well as a sunset that turned the canyon walls from brown to flaming red before fading into the blackness of evening.

"God just can't stop flexing," said sophomore Sydney Stiemsma.

"Careful what you ask for," someone else replied. "He's more than happy to oblige."

We returned to our work Thursday morning

continued from page 1

... stillness and a blank to-do list make some of us so uneasy?

Associate Professor of English Luke Hawley is an advocate of boredom. In his classes, he encourages students to see what happens when they let themselves become bored. He believes some of his most creative moments come from embracing boredom, and allowing his curiosity to wander. However, having actively, willingly participated in boredom, he understands the instinct to avoid it at all costs.

"I think there is a deep existential dread that is around the corner, all the time," said Hawley. To him, boredom -- although intimidating -- creates space for crucial questions. "Be brave and ask the hard questions of yourself. What do I really like to do? What am I interested in? What do I think would be really fun to learn, instead of just learning in order to get a degree?"

Senior social work major Holly Testerman is another defender of boredom, but her focal point is presentness.

"What am I doing now? Who am I with now? What's important now?" Testerman frequently checks in with herself by asking these questions.

She was living in Uganda for the semester, as a part of a study-abroad program. Once the news of the COVID-19 outbreak spread, she was ordered back to the U.S. Although her experience was cut short by several weeks, she finds immense value in the time she was given.

The director of the program had a motto that sticks with Testerman. *This, here, now. This, here, now.*

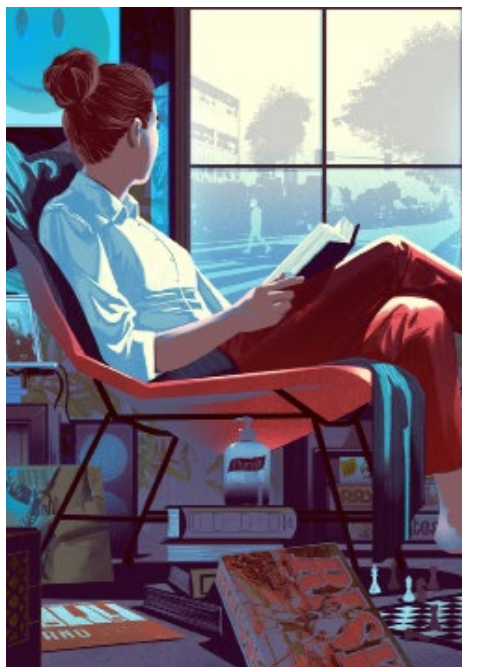
In Uganda, Testerman would spend hours in silence, drinking tea, waiting for transportation, or watching chickens run across the road. She turned her watch and phone off, allowing herself to not be aware of the passing time.

"When you take time out of the equation and you just let yourself sit, I think you can surprise

yourself with how much time you can actually spend," said Testerman. "Which is hard to do in America because we are super time-oriented. It is hard to detach from that and still be a member of society. But when you have the opportunity to do that, I think it's really beautiful."

Boredom is an inevitable element of human life. It can be an opportunity for personal growth, rest, introspection, or the launching pad for a new creative endeavor.

"How we spend our days is how we spend our lives," said Bailey, who includes the movie *Groundhog Day* in his curriculum on the basis of this idea. "What could you do with 30 or 40 years? Guess what, you have them. One day at a time."



Contributed Photo



Contributed Photo



## (cont.) Canceled on the court

*continued from page 1*

Every player shot a layup to close out their season.

Having emerged from the locker rooms in equal bewilderment, the Southeastern team milled around the arena as well. One person scrimmaged one-on-one against her brother.

“We’re both dressed. Do you guys want to play?” Prewitt asked a Southeastern player, only half-kidding.

She nodded back, jokingly.

... But when a group of Defenders struck up a game of knockout, Southeastern joined in one by one until both teams were fully lined up in competition.

“It was really fun to see these women find joy in the game they loved to play since they were little kids, find joy in the situation.” Harmsen said.

Amid the hysteria and heartbreak of the COVID-19 epidemic, many seek out the silver lining, the sources of light and positivity. When the Dordt and Southeastern women came together in their brokenness and sorrow, they found theirs.

“I have never felt so connected to hundreds of other girls in other states from around the country.” Prewitt said.

After returning to the hotel, Prewitt texted her

old AAU teammates who had their own seasons upended as well. Across the nation, student athletes became collateral damage taken in the name of necessary precaution. For seniors like Prewitt, many had played their last game without even knowing it.

“I hope that once all the pain goes away, I can realize my career was great.” Prewitt said. “I think we can call [the season] a success just because we set the standard for ourselves even higher than last year.”

During the 2019/2020 season, the Defenders etched their name into the record books with an all-time-high 24-win season. They also won their first GPAC conference tournament game and scored a repeat appearance at nationals.

All this in mind, Harmsen views his team’s commitment to each other as their truest achievement.

“Our seniors played for three different head coaches, stuck with the program, and absolutely were agents of change because they had to be.” Harmsen said.

After 88 practices, 32 games, and 6 months of dedication to the game, the Defender women learned how to serve each other and took home a stellar season in the process. Not even a global pandemic could take that away.

## (cont.) Concert Choir tour

*continued from page 2*

“I wasn’t at peace with leaving at first, but the tour had been such an incredible and amazing experience that I was so thankful for it all,” Hoekstra said.

“We sang and shouted praise and worship to God on that trip,” Zuidema said.

Concert Choir spent nearly a week performing in concerts, church services, and assemblies at thirteen different locations. Although their long-anticipated tour and overall semester ended much earlier than expected, they maintained the same goal.

“I think I will always be a little sad that my last [choir tour] got ‘cut short,’ but ultimately, since our goal is to be Christ’s ambassadors, I think we accomplished that and more,” Blauw said. “It could not have been more complete.”

Throughout their tour, the choir celebrated

each other and the opportunity to sing in unity. Moreover, they celebrated the God about whom they sang so joyfully. To quote the closing song of the tour: “*Gladly for aye we adore Him!*”



Photo Credit: Dordt University Music Department Facebook

## (cont.) Tables turned for the theatre

*continued from page 4*

than if the show had come out this April. “I have hope for *Break of Day*. Though the situation is not ideal, God will see us through,” Baljeu said. “I’m currently still in a grieving process, but I’m hanging in there.”

Zach Dirksen is feeling the effect of his Shakespearean show, *Rosencrantz & Guildenstern*, being cancelled for the season.

“I found out about it around the same time as when choir tour was cut short and spring break was extended,” Dirksen said, “so all of those thrown together really put me out for a couple of days.”

While disappointed, he clung to the hope that the show, while temporarily postponed, might yet go on. Even if he won’t be able to get everyone back together to have another go at it, he wishes to direct again—either this show or another project—sometime in the future.

Directing has brought Dirksen a greater understanding of the collaborative process.

“I can’t just tell my actors where to stand or my designers what their work should look like,” Dirksen said. “I really enjoyed bouncing ideas off people and hearing their ideas as well, all working together to make something.”

As well, working with actors has made him

aware of his role as a director.

“It’s taught me to be more conscious of the needs of my audience and my actors,” Dirksen said. “The director’s place is sort of an in-between audience and performer. I needed to be able to

know what my actors needed to be doing, but also what the audience would need to see onstage to get the story.”

The theatre has provided these students with ways to tie up their projects this semester, even if they miss out on getting to be on the stage itself. “This was supposed to be my big final project for theatre,” he said. “It kinda leaves my theatre experience at Dordt with an anticlimactic ending.”

“It’s disappointing to not see all the hard work put into these productions thus far be finished and put up before an audience,” theatre faculty Laura Andersen said. “Having to be apart and not having the same sense of community that’s so big a piece of the department is difficult.”

As of now, Dordt’s theatre arts is still communicating via canvas announcements, emails, and hopefully a virtual theatre meeting. Theatre activity scholarship interviews will take place soon. And there is always next season to plan for.

## The Weeknd album review

Caleb M.S. — Staff Writer



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Abel Tesfaye, better known by his stage name The Weeknd, returned this month to the forefront of the R&B stage with his newest album *After Hours*. The project is a 56-minute-long collection of 80s synth-pop inspired cocaine-driven sex ballads, and perfectly culminates the anti-hero hedonistic persona the artist has been building across his previous projects.

Every song on *After Hours* could only be on *After Hours*, a quality which is lacking on most other main stream acts’ albums. Each song is clearly part of a cohesive whole, and thematic and technical elements carry through each individual song. Abel is at his most developed in *After Hours*, and it is clear the most recent album is more polished than any previous work. Thematic elements from Starboy crosspollinated into *After Hours*, in only the best way. Early themes of a villainous aesthetic present in Starboy come to fruition in *After Hours* in “Hardest to Love,” and “Save Your Tears.”

Musically, *After Hours* contains similar elements to any Weeknd album. Driving bass lines, rapid synths, and reverb-heavy vocals permeate each song on the album. From the very beginning of the album in “Alone Again,” listeners are treated to an aesthetic introduction to the album around the two-minute mark. Within the din of synth runs, airy vocals, and

stereo switches, a build in the synths emerges. A pulsing beat is added, the synths intensify, and like a brick of cocaine to the face, a heavy synth note drops- pushing forward Abel’s vocals and intensifying the track. It is moments like these that justify the emphasis on instrumental bits throughout the album, though the lyrical content is strong as well.

The Weeknd moves from sorrowful, to disillusioned, to hardened across the 56-minute runtime of *After Hours*. What begins as mournful lyrics in “Too Late,” becomes desensitized by “Faith,” only halfway through the album. Cocaine-related bars increase in frequency around this mark, but a common theme is the singer’s awareness of the pain he has caused for others. “I’m losing my religion,” the singer notes in faith, but by “Save Your Tears,” this self-loathing becomes more accepted and redirected into the portrayal of the jaded anti-hero.

*After Hours’* real achievement is in the cohesive aesthetic permeating all through the album. Similar to what made Panic! At the Disco’s *Death Of A Bachelor* so impressive, each song belongs with the next in more than thematic content. The futuristic, yet retro-space age; soulful, yet emotionally distant musical elements of *After Hours* are timeless, and this album stands a better chance than any previous Weeknd album of solidifying Abel as a standout musician.

### SONG BREAKDOWN

#### Will Listen to Again:

Alone Again

Faith

Blinding Lights

After Hours

Until I Bleed Out

Delightfully Meh:

Snowchild

Escape From LA

Burn It Down:

N/A

Dark Horse:

Hardest to Love

## Quarantine watchlist

Zach Dirksen — Staff Writer

Bored? Tired of sitting around doing nothing all day? Looking for something different to watch? Here’s some movies to watch during the next 4-6 weeks, at least, give or take. Who knows?

**REAR WINDOW:** Sitting home alone needn’t be boring. In this 1954 classic, an injured, apartment-bound photographer thinks he’s witnessed a murder from across the courtyard of his apartment complex. When few people believe him, he takes it upon himself to solve the mystery. *Rear Window* is one of Alfred Hitchcock’s most engrossing stories, and Jimmy Stewart’s performance is a career best.

**MY DINNER WITH ANDRE:** Do you miss those long, philosophical late-night talks with you friends? Ever get so lost in a conversation that you find yourself completely immersed in the words of another person. Such experiences are perfectly replicated in *My Dinner With Andre*. The film, made up entirely by a conversation between two friends who haven’t seen each other in a while, is amazing. The camera work is minimal, the setting singular, but so much imagery abounds in the dialogue and the performances. Definitely check this one out.

**THE MARTIAN:** Quarantine can make you feel like you’ve been cut off from civilization, left completely to your own devices to survive and keep going. Now imagine if you got stuck on another planet, by yourself. Do you get depressed? NO! You suck it up and start a potato farm, just like Matt Damon. *The Martian* remains one of the most entertaining and

engaging films of the last decade, and a surefire good way to pass the time during this lockdown.

**INDIANA JONES AND THE LAST CRUSADE:** Film can be an escape, and you need one. Maybe bring the family along with you. I can think of no better way of escapism than a rip-roaring adventure with everyone’s favorite Nazi-punching archaeologist. Join Indy, Indy’s dad, and the rest of the crew in the quest for the Holy Grail. *Last Crusade* might not be the best Indiana Jones movie, but it’s by far the most fun.

**RAISING ARIZONA:** Sometimes you just need to laugh. Things are dark and crazy out there. Sometimes the only way to overcome it to watch two rednecks steal a baby to raise as their own. *Raising Arizona* boasts one of Nicolas Cage’s best performances (yes, they exist), as well as a complete and fun crime caper. Plus, it’s a Coen Brothers movie. You can’t go wrong there.

**MARY POPPINS:** Guys, sometimes you just want something to make you feel good. *Mary Poppins* does that for me. Maybe it will for you too. *Tiger King:* Okay, okay, it’s not a movie. But have you seen it? It’s insane. Like literally bonkers. This Netflix docu-series follows the exploits of private zoo owners and big cat breeders in the US, taking special focus on Joe Exotic, a gay libertarian polygamist redneck who at one point owned the largest collection of live tigers in the United States, and is now serving a 22-year prison sentence for murder-for-hire. And that doesn’t even begin to scratch the surface of how weird this show can get. If anything can make you forget about the Coronavirus, it’s this.