



# Sixth Form Mercury

Wilson's School's newest student-run publication Volume 2, Issue 8, March 2012

## Titus Andronicus: 'Behind the Scenes'

**Last time: With *Titus* auditions complete, the rehearsals began.**

From the first drop of blood, the audience knew they were in for a treat. Shock Tactics' performance of Shakespeare's *Titus Andronicus* began rehearsing just four weeks previously but it was soon clear that the performance would be of the highest class.

Within five minutes, the audience had been treated to two deaths, one on stage, and was wondering where the action could go next. Two hours later, they knew.

*Titus* is *not* your stereotypical Shakespeare. It includes, in total: one rape, one act of cannibalism, two decapitations, three limbs being hacked off (and a tongue) and a grand total of 12 deaths.

But how easy were the monstrous acts to stage and rehearse?



The rehearsals went well, with each scene getting one slot of rehearsal time due to the pressing one-month deadline. Some scenes ('cough', the rape, 'cough') were more tricky than others.

How to make the act of rape and mutilation seem non-offensive and 'artistic' was a question never far away from the cast's minds. But, under the guidance of Mr. Kavanagh, it was pulled off ... just.

One of the most memorable moments came when the costumes arrived. With two of the cast playing females, there was great interest in how they would look. The results were astounding, with the costumes convincingly changing male to female (some times too well, as some members of the cast failed to recognize their colleagues as women).

With just a few days until the big performance, things began to move. Fast. The English office became filled with buckets of congealing 'blood', sheets and wigs. The stage, with a pit set especially for *Titus*, was erected and the cast began its first full run-through.

Although some of the cast's grasp on their lines seemed sketchy, it went well, with performances being fairly impressive. The full dress run went similarly well, with the striking make-up complementing the performances.

However, movement on and off stage soon became accompanied by a sticky sucking noise, as liberal amounts of 'blood' seemed to appear everywhere.

After a quick mop up and last minute learning of lines, the cast was ready. The audience was ready. The big night began.



Both nights were received extremely well, with the audiences gripped by the barbarity of the atrocities on stage.

The entire cast performed exceptionally, with Jason Kajdi's *Titus* captivating the audience with his revenge-driven madness.

The final scenes were staged to perfection, with the deaths of Chiron and Demetrius, rapists of Lavinia, chilling the audience to the bone, and the final 'dinner party' scene seeing half of the surviving cast being dispatched to an early grave.

*Titus Andronicus* is often described as Shakespeare's worst tragedy, but after such a performance it is hard to see how.

**By Henry Stanley**



Greetings,

The Mercury magazine is back again! Having taken over the role of editors, we hope to continue the standard of production you are all used to.

Coming to the role, we wondered what we might do to put our "stamp" on the magazine. Pictures. That's the only thing we've been missing. And with artistic talent so high, the scope for caricatures seemed great!

Enjoy reading, observing, laughing and maybe even, if you're strange, crying while you read the Mercury.

Yours,  
Kane Walpole and Nikhil Vyas

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# Problems, the Planet and a Call to Arms

By Nikhil Vyas

2012 has been ushered in with a mix of emotions: joy over the Olympics, dismay over the continuing economic depression, anticipation over elections in the USA, France and other countries - and of course the dreaded wait to see whether the world will actually end on 21 December as the Mayans apparently predicted.

Of course, even if the apocalypse doesn't happen, it won't make much difference either way, since the world is still going to end. There are considerably more risks to humanity and other life on the planet. And, unsurprisingly, most of them are of our own doing.

The most obvious of these is global warming. It's a problem that has existed for long enough that most people are starting to get irritated by it. Why hasn't science 'cured' it yet? Unfortunately, the problem here isn't the scientific community but governments.

To see the problem, look at the recent United Nations Climate Change Conference in Durban, South Africa. Thanks to the Indian and Chinese governments stopping stricter carbon emission legislation (which would restrict their economic growth), the main agreement of the conference was to actually start doing something to stop climate change in 2020. By then, the crucial two degree threshold could have been passed, which would result in a significant increase in freak weather events such as hurricanes, droughts and wildfires - resulting in thousands of deaths, and millions more people ('climate refugees') being displaced.

Now, this is within the span of our lifetime. And global warming is just one of a multitude of problems facing our generation.

Let's go through them, just to get the spirits down even more. Peak oil: the eventual

draining of the earth's natural reserves of oil. At our current rates of consumption, this will happen in 40 years time - probably sooner when you factor in the growth of developing nations. And at a time when renewable energy is more important than ever, 100 MPs recently sent a letter to the PM urging him to cut back on wind farm subsidies.

Overpopulation: this dark horse of eco-problems is also rearing its ugly head. While nearly all resources required for life (water, food, land, fuel) are running out, many governments across Europe are encouraging more childbirths to even out population demographics. The current world population is seven billion. This seems incredible when you bear in mind that the earth was designed to only support a few hundred million humans.

And to the final factor. You're probably familiar with the Cretaceous extinction event: the one which resulted in the extinction of the dinosaurs 65 million years ago.

It may then come as a surprise to you that we are in the middle of a similar period: the Holocene extinction event. And while the causes of the Cretaceous extinction event are still debated today, the causes of the Holocene extinction are far clearer: humanity. Through a combination of global warming, poaching and the introduction of invasive species, an upper bound estimate is that over 100,000 species may become extinct every year.

Many people may just say, 'They're just animals, who cares?' The problem is that eventually an animal that is crucial to life (for example, the Western honeybee) becomes extinct, and then we're all screwed.

Besides, we've all seen the famous 'blue marble' photo of planet earth, taken by the

Apollo 17 spacecraft. No one wants to see that replaced by a scaling grey mass of buildings.

So. Quite a few problems. In fact, probably no other generation in history has had such an uncertain future as ours.

But fortunately, it's not all doom and gloom.

Science has taken great bounds in discovering alternative fuels, such as hydrogen, which could conceivably be made available en masse. Improvements in farming and trade have also made it easier to ensure that people have enough food. And although thousands of species become extinct, many more are saved from the brink, reintroduced or even created.

On a governmental level, the USA has finally agreed to take definitive steps towards lowering carbon emissions. And on a personal level, actions such as simply switching off the lights, recycling and saving water have a massive impact when carried out by millions across the country (for example, simply turning off the tap when brushing your teeth could save over 400 million litres of water when performed across the country).

I'm not forcing people to convert to vegetarianism (although it's not as bad as it sounds!) or join Greenpeace. You could donate your money to these charities instead, and be assured that it will be put to good use.

Finally, to go back to the old debate about whether humans cause global warming or not. In the end, it doesn't really matter.

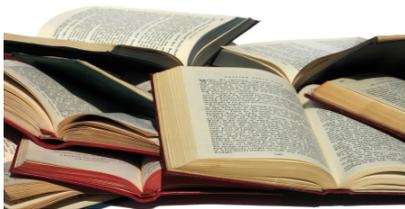
The fact is that we are the masters of the planet, and the burden therefore falls on us to save it.

## Booking Yourself a Place at University By Kane Walpole & Ben James

In a competitive world, how does a student stand out from the crowd? Being well read is a big advantage, but where does one begin their quest for words? The answer is right here!

This fortnightly feature will bring you some of the best works in a range of subjects.

For the mathematicians, for the scientists, for the journalists and for everyone else, these books will be of use to you in whatever you do.



### Fiction

#### The Passage

Justin Cronin

★ ★ ★ ★

#### Who's it for?

Anyone!

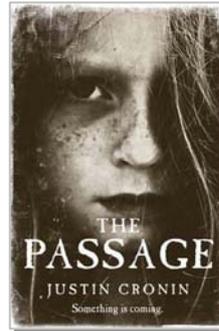
(Especially people who don't like what *Twilight* has done to vampires.)

#### What's it about?

A gripping novel detailing a post-apocalyptic world where an outbreak of a virus leaves everyone under fear of "the smokes" – a new kind of vampire! The only hope they have lies in a small girl who underwent military experimentation many years ago ...

#### Why the rating?

This book is an exciting and brilliant read, though long descriptions can occasionally drag if you aren't committed.



### Non-Fiction

#### Freakonomics

Steven D. Levitt

and

Stephen J. Dubner

★ ★ ★ ★

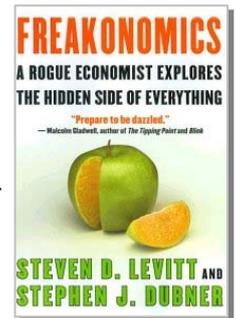
#### Who's it for?

Highly recommended to the cynics!

#### What's it about?

Have you ever wanted to know what estate agents and the Ku Klux Klan have in common?

*Freakonomics* is a thoroughly entertaining whistle-stop tour through the economics that shapes our daily lives. Whilst maintaining enough data to make the conclusions credible, the authors give a smack of charm and wit to lead you through an eye-opening gallery of what patterns human behaviour follows.



## Can You Tell Who it is Yet?

Manu Pillai, our resident artist extraordinaire, is the newest member of the *Mercury* team.

Each edition, he will provide a fantastic caricature like the one here.

#### To quote Rolf Harris:

"Can you tell what it is yet?"

See if you can guess who this famous figure is.

Find out next issue!

If you have an idea for a caricature, contact the editors at:  
[wattsk@wilsonsschool.sutton.sch.uk](mailto:wattsk@wilsonsschool.sutton.sch.uk)



## 'One Way' to Slightly Annoy Someone

By Louis Woodhead

No one guessed this would happen: a rant in the Mercury about the annoying but not really that bad one way system.

The over keen have decided to start the NOW (No One Way) campaign, largely for the pleasure of saying 'what do we want? NOW! When do we want it? NOW!' Despite the "over-the-top-ness" of talking about such things as petitions, the one way system trial obviously isn't working.

It relies upon the assumption that there is always the same number of people walking up the stairs as going down. But the school is not a factory and the stairs are not conveyor belts.

A minute after the 154 pulls up at 8:23, a hundred boys walk up the staircases in both buildings almost simultaneously. Two minutes later and the same boys are walking back down, bag in hand, to their lockers.

The same happens after lunch and at the end of school. Before assembly I looked at the empty staircase in despair while two year groups were funnelled into the only one we were 'allowed' to use.

One thing the new system has highlighted is the difference between the lower and upper school. A flock of year 7s ran down the wrong staircase on the first day of the new system in the hope of being behind two, as opposed to three people in the canteen queue. One shouted over his shoulder, 'nooo wrong staircase'. Oh dear.

Year 9s, who pretend to be a little bit anarchic, scurry under the tape to avoid the inconvenience of having to walk the extra 10 metres, or perhaps due to their hormones compelling them to show that they do 'what they want, when they want'.

And in the middle of the school's self inflicted chaos stand a few sixth formers. They think they're really mature because they've got a suit on, instead of a suit with the school logo, so they just make sarcastic remarks about the younger kids.

Whilst the problem of the odd crowd of teenagers on the main staircases has been amplified by the system, the real bundle hotspots remain. It still takes about 10 minutes to get from the science department to reprographics.

And what's wrong with an occasional bundle anyway? It's a rite of passage every 'all-boys' school' attendee goes through.

Don't wrap us all up in cotton wool.

## Riman's Roundup: My Favourite XI

By Harley Riman

With it only being a matter of weeks before I leave Wilson's I thought it important to squeeze in a piece outlining the my favourite 11 footballers

This is a topic that often comes up in conversation so I feel it is important for me to take time to create a list with a delicate blend of modern icons and historic legends.

### Goalkeeper

**David Seaman:** Never have I seen such confidence and dedication to the moustache-ponytail combination. This combined with a gleaming personality make it impossible for me not to include him.

### Defenders

**Micah Richards:** Anyone who read my previous article will understand my obsession with Micah Richards. He is a genuinely brutal guy. A brute with a winning smile and bags of passion for the game he loves. Plus he was roaring the national anthem before the Holland game. Good on you Micah!

**Philippe Albert:** Newcastle hero, moustache pioneer, Belgian TV pundit. Such a well rounded man cannot be denied a place in this line-up.

**Bobby Moore:** 30 July 1966 ...

**Roberto Carlos:** Also known as thunder-thighs, Roberto Carlos proved that it is possible to have legs wider than your torso. Bobby C earns his shirt for one reason and one reason only; he kicked the ball harder than anyone else.

### Midfielders

**Nolberto Solano:** Nobby is a thoroughly marvellous man. However, his humble and quiet nature does not mirror that of his truly wicked right foot. He is also a talented trumpet player.

**David Ginola:** Style, both on and off the pitch, has got Dave into this team. Known for being the only man in history to get away with waxing his chest, David now finds himself in a picture with my mother on the dining room table.

**Zinedine Zidane:** A different, more agreeable breed of Frenchman. Zidane combines quality with grit and will never be forgotten, be it for his incredible ability or for head butting Materazzi.

**Jonas Gutierrez:** Potentially the most

industrious left winger in the history of the sport. I can dig that. He also has samurai hair and a strong beard.

### Forwards

**Lionel Messi:** Not only is he the best player in the world, he is also one of the most honest. In a game full of whining Mascheranos and diving Bales, Messi proves that class and integrity win games, not lies. A truly great role model.

**Alan Shearer:** Also known as 'Big Al' or 'Wor Alan', Alan Shearer is my favourite player ever. Truly English in his style of play, Shearer turned down a lucrative deal at Manchester United in 1996 to join the club that he loved, Newcastle United. Alan is a Geordie hero and is the physical manifestation of loyalty and pride.



Solano and Shearer

