

2017 Belmont Undergraduate Research Symposium

Belmont Honors Program: The Artist's Studio II

Moderator: Devon Boan

April 20, 2017, 7:00pm-9:00pm

IHSB 140

7:00-7:20

CivMag

Riley Wallace

Faculty Advisor: Dan Johnson

CivMag is a four-issue online magazine that aims to reconcile Nashville's complex past, bustling present and potentially bright future through in-depth storytelling and visual exploration. By breaking the city down into four key "pillars" of civilization— art and architecture, religion, transportation and trade and language— each issue not only examines how the city has changed since its foundation, but also delves the cultural factors that have molded Nashville and the people who call it home. The magazine is written, illustrated and produced by students, who have used journalistic techniques to present the stories of Nashville-specific people, places and topics, and draw connections about how what happens here affects not only the state and nation, but the world at large as well.

7:25-7:45

SHE: A Concept Album

Dana Marie Rogers

Faculty Advisor: Dr. Deen Entsminger

SHE follows one young woman's struggle with her search for knowledge and clarity in terms of her sexuality, growing up, and figuring out that she is not alone in any of it. Main character Jem seems to have her whole life figured out; she is confident, sure of herself, and firm in her opinions. That is, until a beautiful woman with scarlet hair comes into her life and turns it upside down. At first, Jem can't place what it is about this girl that makes her so different.

Suddenly, she is baffled with self-doubt and uncertainty, as everything she once thought to be true turns out false. How could she be falling for a woman? She thought she knew who she was. She is in love, and she doesn't know what to do. Forced to come to terms with her true self, Jem struggles to navigate the rocky waters of love, heartbreak and self-acceptance.

SHE is a cry for help to the world, from every person who has ever felt alone or confused; and the world, surprisingly, responds with compassion and understanding.

7:50-8:10

Muted Heartstrings: A Musical

Brandon Stephens

Faculty Advisor: Ms. Elisabeth Small

Set in modern day Nashville, *Muted Heartstrings* is a musical in which a famous singer struggles to truly find his voice until he loses it completely.

Phoenix Sterling seems to have just hit his big break, with the anticipation of a sold-out show before his popular upcoming tour. Although seemingly ready and passionate about his performance, a fight with his violinist leading to a passionate soliloquy discussing the nature of vocal and instrumental music start to derail the program. Just when he starts to pull things together, however, his voice goes away completely, without any explanation. Unable to get any explanation or assistance with this problem, Phoenix quickly fades out of the public's minds. Distressed by his inability to make his way as a vocalist, the protagonist falls into despair, until his best friend discovers Phoenix's old violin and encourages him to continue his passion through that. Through a series of strange events, including a reunion with the violinist and even a funeral, Sterling learns to find his voice again. A tale of overcoming insecurity and following passion, this unique musical explores the true value behind all kinds of music.

8:15-8:35

The Phases of Falling in Love

Noreen Prunier

Faculty Advisor: Lucas Boto

Following the introduction of Taylor Swift's *1989*, pop music re-discovered 80's era synth sounds intended for Top 40 radio. Several pop music makers such as Tove Lo and Ellie Goulding further extended the trend of utilizing electronic sounds, artificial drum beats and compelling bass lines. This study is an exploration of the questions and uncertainties that accompany falling in love. With episodes of dreamy vocal arrangements followed by moments of EDM, *Phases* experiments sonically while containing cohesive pieces.

Split up into three sections, the album flows through thoughts of believing that love is probably real, then considering that love does not exist at all, and finally that love is possible again. Doubts and fears within and out of love reverberate in statements such as "love is scary as hell," and "I'll go on thinking love is just hard to define," and love is found again with lines like "when I'm in your orbit, it feels like coming home."

Heartbreak is a universal emotion that ultimately has us asking "Does love really exist?" At times, these songs question this, but the album intends to bring the listener to hope that on the other side, love is out there for us to find, capture and keep safe.

8:40-9:00

Karma Payment Plan

Blake Pipes

Faculty Advisor: Gary McDowell, Ph.D.

Karma Payment Plan is a chapbook of poetry that draws on the themes of stability, dysfunction, and atrophy. Throughout the chapbook, images of the mundane and surreal mix. The first offers tangibility and relatability, while the second flies in the face of normality. The contrast between the mundane and the surreal lends these poems a sense of odd distortion. Each poem forces the reader to parse whether the distortion is the result of the speaker or the actual events.