

THE CONCORDIA

• COURIER •

INVESTIGATE. INFORM. IGNITE. INVOLVE.

Volume 18, Issue 6

Concordia University Irvine

Friday, December 8, 2023

“Navidad-A Concordia Christmas” creates joyous music for all

GRACE NYBERG
STAFF WRITER &
REBEKAH MICHEL
MUSIC COLUMNIST

It’s the most wonderful time of the year and Concordia’s Music Department is orchestrating a symphony of festivities. From Segerstrom concerts to TV specials, the Music Department is making sure everyone feels the Christmas spirit. This year’s highly anticipated PBS production, “Navidad-A Concordia Christmas,” aims to honor the vibrant Latinx culture and traditions.

“This year we are exploring our unique place in the world here in Southern California,” said Bil Hood, Senior Director of External Operations. Hood serves as the Director and Producer of the PBS special and has been a part of Concordia’s Christmas productions since the beginning.

Hood’s 20-year background in video production, web content and event management for companies such as Disney, Microsoft, Starbucks and Nintendo has made him well-equipped for his role as director. Yet even with this experience, the task of showcasing the immense talent of Concordia’s diverse music program within a one-hour time slot remains a challenge.

“All of the challenges of PBS are actually more like opportunities,” said Hood, “How do we keep it fresh and original? How do we make sure that we tell the story the way we want to while staying within the boundaries that PBS has set?” Despite the tight production timeline and TV regulations, the team has found creative ways to let its stars shine bright through its theme of “Navidad,” which sheds light on the unique Christmas traditions of Mexican culture.

Student group Nuestra Voz and the Hispanic Serving Institute (HSI) have been working closely with Hood to ensure their heritage is well represented on screen. Alumni of Christ College, Rev. Carlos Velazquez, and his church have also been in communication with the video team, collaborating and contributing ideas on how to best display their culture. They agreed to host a “Los Posadas” event on Nov. 11, where people from all cultural backgrounds were welcomed to join in a video shoot featured in the TV special. Held at St. Paul’s in Orange, Concordia students performed music for nearly 100 people who participated in the fiesta.

Majo Insuasti, a rising star in the Music Department, wrote an original song for the production that is sure to be a showstopper. Titled “Little Boy of Bethlehem,” the song seeks to understand the

humility of Christ in His birth on Earth. “What stands out to me about Majo’s song is the beauty of the lyrics,” said Mason Wong, the guitarist on her piece, “The lyric writing carries the weight of the truth and you can feel that by the way she sings it.”

Wong, a guitarist and cello player on multiple featured pieces, emphasized the musical diversity of this year’s production. From traditional folk music to electronic dance pop, it “stretched our creativity,” he said. Though challenging, this diversity better equips Concordia’s musicians to enter the industry. “Having these new ‘tools’ helps expand my sonic palette going forward,” Wong explained.

Amidst the filming of the PBS production, another event has been in the works. On Dec. 9, at the Renee and Henry Segerstrom Concert Hall, thousands of audience members will be brought into the Christmas spirit by the orchestras, choirs and handbells of the Music Department at Concordia. With an astounding 200 musicians across eight ensembles, Concordia Christmas Navidad: A Journey to Bethlehem is one of the most highly anticipated and elaborate concerts within the Music Department’s season.

Under the direction of Dr. Michael Busch (Director of Choral and Vocal Activities), Dr.

Jeff Held (Director of Orchestral Activities), Dr. Clarissa Shan (Adjunct Voice Professor) and Erik Der (Community Engagement Manager), audiences can expect to hear joyful music of the holidays, featuring familiar classics and new arrangements of traditional Christmas hymns. The 4 p.m. performance is sold out. However, tickets for the 7:30 p.m. performance are available and can be purchased by visiting scfta.org/events/2023/concordia-christmas.

The joy of Concordia Christmas can also be experienced by watching the televised production “Navidad: Concordia Christmas” premiering on Dec. 22 at 8 p.m. on PBS SoCal. Serving as our fourth annual made for television Christmas special, “Navidad: Concordia Christmas” will also be available across various local and national PBS stations.

“Both Segerstrom and PBS are incredible platforms to showcase the incredible talent our students have,” said Hood, “They also give us an opportunity to share the joy and hope of Christmas with very large audiences.” Through the collaboration of the Segerstrom Concert Hall and PBS SoCal, the gifts of Concordia’s music students will help bring thousands into the holiday spirit and the joy of Christmas.



Concordia Golden Eagles, The fall semester is quickly coming to a close, as you are all too aware. After such a long semester, you kind of just want to hang out with your friends until you leave for home. However, you still have work to do... you need to put the final touches on those essays (OK, let’s be honest, some of you still need to start those essays!). You might need to finish up requirements of your internship or research project. And some of you are anxious about those dreaded final exams. Certainly all of these projects and deadlines are on your mind. But could I please offer you some advice from someone who was in your shoes many years ago? And no, we’ll not talk about how many years ago! When your roommate is griping about a professor, others are complaining about an exam or when you realize you have dozens of hours of studying before you, just take a breath, slow down, smile and send up a prayer of thanksgiving. What a privilege you have as a student at Concordia! You have faculty and staff who care deeply for you, friends and teammates who are cheering you on and family and friends ready to welcome you back home. You’ve definitely earned the respite that is coming. Enjoy your time at home. Slow down, smile and send up another prayer of thanksgiving... yes, even for your crazy uncle. But let me remind you of the true meaning of Christmas, the Lord of the universe took on human flesh and was born in Bethlehem to bring light to a world in darkness and hope to a world in desperate need. Because He has lived as a human, He knows weariness, anxiety and sorrow, and He knows the joy of friendship, the pride of accomplishment and the love of a family. My prayer for each of you is that you will take a few minutes to reflect on the blessings in your life. Thanks be to God for all the gifts and joys He showers upon us! May the Lord bless and keep you and yours this Christmas season. Dr. Michael Thomas P.S. But for now, you need to get back to work... those essays and exams will not just take care of themselves!



PICTURED ABOVE: Los Posadas event at Rev. Carlos Valazquez’s church
Photo courtesy of: Bil Hood



PICTURED ABOVE: Sarah Dubbeldam, founder and editor-in-chief of Darling Magazine, speaking at Concordia's Brunch and Boutique event. Photo courtesy of: Campus Development



PICTURED ABOVE: Sarah Dubbeldam, founder and editor-in-chief of Darling Magazine, speaking at Concordia's Brunch and Boutique event. Photo courtesy of: Campus Development

Alumni Sarah Dubbeldam's journey to Darling Magazine

GRACE NYBERG
STAFF WRITER

On Nov. 11, Concordia hosted its annual Brunch and Boutique event featuring guest speaker and alumni Sarah Dubbeldam, the founder and editor-in-chief of Darling Magazine. The Costa Mesa Hilton was packed with ladies, shopping from local vendors and enjoying brunch while Dubbeldam shared her story.

Darling is a brand that aims to emphasize the natural beauty of women by refusing to photoshop its models. With a following of over 400,000, its vision has created a ripple effect in the industry, with Vogue Greece recently releasing an untouched cover photo. Dubbeldam felt called to this mission after her own experiences in the business, working as an actress and model for brands like Target, Kohl's and Crocs.

"It was in that industry, just seeing how messed up it is and how narrow the view of beauty was," said Dubbeldam, "All of that led me to start to think-something's wrong with this whole system of beauty and the way we advertise."

Founded in 2009, Darling Magazine seeks to empower

women through a blend of fashion, food and finding one's self. Whether it be holiday recipes, tips on how to dress or relationship advice, Darling reminds the reader of their unique importance and purpose in the world. The magazine has collected some big names, with Meghan Markle, Kristen Bell and LeAnn Rimes among those who have shared their stories and support for the Darling mission.

The magazine has since developed into a lifestyle brand, including home decor products and a clothing line. The unique design of clothing is "what sets us apart as a fashion brand" said Dubbeldam, as she reached inside the lining of her blazer to reveal Darling's mission statement printed on the inside tag. It serves as a reminder to the wearer that "you are a work of art."

After graduating from Concordia in '05 with a degree in studio art, Dubbeldam knew her strength was in creativity. "I've always loved visual art," she said, "and I think that's what's so cool about fashion." The concept of everything working together in a photoshoot, from "the hair and the makeup to the clothes and pose" is something that intrigued her and led to the

development of her brand.

The journey to Darling wasn't easy, however, and she emphasized the importance of working hard. "In our day and age, there's a perspective that things happen fast and easily because of instant fame and Tik Tok," she explained, "but really good things take time."

Starting as an intern, she read scripts at Sony Pictures while attending school. That taught her the value of good writing, something she relies on as editor-in-chief. As a track and field athlete, she learned the skill of mental discipline which helped her become a fierce entrepreneur. Her experience working as an actress and model is something she now incorporates into her current job of directing models for shoots.

"I would say, just go through the open doors that are in front of you, even if it's not perfectly related to what you want to do," said Dubbeldam, offering advice to aspiring entrepreneurs and professionals. "Everything you do will give you valuable experience."

You can support Dubbeldam's mission by subscribing to her mailing list and checking out the Darling website at darlingsociety.com.

Conc's declassified finals week survival guide

JENNA HOFFMAN
EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

Next week is finals, and student's stress levels will be at an all-time high. It's important for this upcoming week to prioritize your mental health and figure out the best studying strategies for you. So here are a few tips from fellow students to get you started.

Senior Alexa Johnston is a big fan of the outdoors and uses the sun to revive her spirits. For finals week, she recommends that in between the times spent studying students go outside and have an adventure, "Today I went and took a walk and played with some golden retrievers I found on a hill," said Johnston.

She also recommends that when decompressing from finals and studying, students should "binge a specific corny throwback show as your reward throughout the week." Currently, her show of choice is "Jersey Shore."

While studying, in order to make it more exciting, Johnston also recommends that students buy a new fun snack and drink to keep their spirits high when homework is getting them down.

Senior Anna Welsh is a connoisseur of music, so the songs she listens to while studying are very important

to her productivity. She recommends that students curate a "good playlist to listen to while studying." A fun idea, in her opinion, would be to make a new playlist to match your mood each day of finals week to set the tone.

Senior Sarah Quinlan says she "survives finals week by getting one sweet treat a day." Quinlan notes two essentials to making it through finals week, the first being creating a calming environment. She says you should be in comfy clothes, find a cozy spot and "get a big bottle of water." The second essential is "calling your mom." No one can calm you down and hype you up quite like your mom can, so reach out and regain some mental energy that way.

Finally, no one will understand your stress like your classmates will. So find a group from your class and make studying a more enjoyable task by doing it with others. Then, after all the hard work is done, go out for frozen yogurt afterward.

Finals week can be stressful, so it is important to have some mentally replenishing rewards planned so the week doesn't overwhelm you. Good luck to everyone, and have a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year!

THE CONCORDIA COURIER

INVESTIGATE. INFORM. IGNITE. INVOLVE.

Jenna Hoffman: Editor-in-Chief

Delainie Delgado: Media Editor

Eva Prewitt: Sports Editor

Madison Zuniga: Campus Editor

Ryn Casteel: Arts & Reviews Editor

Maddie Jahshan: Layout Editor

Caroline Janik-Wong: Faculty Advisor

Find us online at concordiacourier.com or
email us at
drafts.courier@gmail.com

The Courier staff asks that you dispose of your copy in an environmentally-friendly way. **Thanks!**



Follow us on
social media!

Comments? Suggestions?
We want to hear from you.
Write a "Letter to the Editor."
drafts.courier@gmail.com

Letters to the Editor must be typed and include the author's full name and telephone number. Letters that are printed may be edited for space and content. Letters to the Editor do not necessarily reflect the views of *The Concordia Courier*.

The opinions expressed in *The Concordia Courier* are those of the contributors and do not necessarily reflect the views of the administration, faculty, staff or student body of Concordia University. Editorials reflect the views of the majority of the editorial staff.

Crafts and charcuteries create thriving LLC community

MADISON ZUNIGA
CAMPUS EDITOR

Every Monday afternoon over the course of the fall semester, the Bella Amore Living Learning Community (LLC) gathered together to enjoy hands-on crafts, delicious charcuterie board snacks and close-knit, organic community.

At 4 p.m. on Mondays in the Omicron lounge, Bella Amore residents, professors and students bond over a shared interest in working on or learning about handmade activities such as knitting, crochet and embroidery. Special holiday-themed events included pumpkin painting and wreath decorating. Whether you are a beginner or a longtime crafter, Bella Amore welcomes you to join Craft and Charcuterie.

"There is a lovely cadence to Bella's Monday Crochet and Craft with Charcuterie," said Bella Amore faculty-in-residence and professor of sociology Dr. Kristen Koenig. "It has been especially nice to have a dedicated time in the week for Bella residents, friends and neighbors, to simply drop in to chat, grab a snack and craft."

"Knitting club has

fostered a wonderful community of people interested in all kinds of crafts and at all different skill levels," said Cassandra Cate, senior. "These crafts are more than useful skills. They give the opportunity to tangibly track your progress and improvement, and reward you with a physical product for all your labor."

"I am so glad I found my crochet club," said Maddie Durkin, junior. "Crochet club has been a great way to start my week. We get to participate in a ton of different crafts while talking and eating charcuterie boards. I also love getting to know some of the professors better."

Crafts and Charcuterie in Bella Amore is not only a time to relax and catch up with your latest knitting project. It also provides an opportunity to engage in enriching conversation about academics and life. Concordia describes the LLC communities as "a unique environment[s] where you will have the opportunity to learn, collaborate, and build lasting connections with your peers and the Faculty/Staff in Residence, which provides students with a space that encourages personal and academic development."

Highlights of Crafts and

Charcuterie included a guest visit in November from professor of anthropology Dr. Jack Schultz and his wife Christine, who taught students a traditional style of indigenous American basket weaving. "It was so great to have Dr. Schultz come and teach us how to basket weave, it was such a fun craft to try that I never would have otherwise," said junior Ariel Spilman.

"For students who are so often engaged in the production of abstract things, this can be a welcome and refreshing change. And you can be encouraged to see all of the interesting and unique creations of the people around you," said Cate.

"These moments in a hectic week offer a wonderful opportunity for conversation and fellowship. I especially enjoy chatting with students in this more informal setting, which nicely offsets our more formal Taco Talks. I am very grateful for the students that helped to organize this," said Koenig.

Stay tuned for updates about the time and day for Craft and Charcuterie next semester! For more information about the Bella Amore LLC, contact Dr. Kristen Koenig at kristen.koenig@cu.edu.



PICTURED ABOVE: Dr. Koenig and Bella residents enjoy charcuterie board snacks.

Photo courtesy of: Madison Zuniga

Shining bright for the holidays

KIARA AZUMA
STAFF WRITER

All around Orange County there are locations where students can look at bright and colorful lights to get in the holiday spirit. In fact, Concordia University offered a free shuttle for students to explore Balboa Island's Christmas lights on Wed., Dec. 6.

The First Year Experience organized the FYExplore Christmas Lights Shuttle. Jessica James, Assistant Director of Orientation and Student Activities, drove students to Balboa Island in Newport Beach from 6:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m. Students could walk around, look at the lights, shop at nearby stores and eat.

"It was a perfect night to look at all the lights and walk around with a cup of coffee," said Sabrina Stahl, freshman. She grabbed a cup at Dad's Donut and Bakery Shop before looking at all of the twinkling lights that decorated the houses in Newport. Stahl spent the night walking around

the entire island and taking pictures of all the spectacular sights to see.

Notable decorated houses included a two-story house filled with teddy bears lined up against the windows inside. To top it off, they had a giant teddy bear light structure outside the house. Another house was winter wonderland themed with white Christmas trees around the front porch accompanied by penguin statues.

Other locations are decorated with Christmas lights for students who could not attend the Balboa Island trip. The most popular places near Irvine are Tanaka Farm, Dana Point Harbor and the Winter Fest OC.

Tanaka Farm, located down the street from Concordia University, hosts Hikari- A Festival of Lights. Inspired by Hikari, which means "shine" in Japanese, the farm is covered with over a million lights. Guests can ride a wagon through the farm and go through light displays and fields covered in lights. Besides the light

displays, there are barnyard animals, a corn maze, food, games and arts and crafts for guests to enjoy. Tanaka Farms also hosts live music on Friday, Saturday and Sunday nights.

The Tanaka Farm website states, "The farm is transformed into a homey, farm-themed winter wonderland with a nod to Japanese culture thrown into the mix." The event is open from 4:30 p.m. to 10:00 p.m., with ticket prices ranging from \$25 to \$35 dollars.

Dana Point Harbor is covered in over 700,000 LED lights. They will celebrate their 48th annual boat parade at 6:30 p.m. on Dec. 8 through Dec. 10, with this year's theme being Candyland. Guests can walk around for free around the harbor and explore lighted palm trees, walkways, and light sculptures like a giant whale and Christmas trees. Some boats are also decorated with lights on the docks. A popular photo-op among people at Dana Point Harbor is the "Merry Kiss Me" arch.



PICTURED ABOVE: House on Balboa Island decorated with lights and teddy bears

Photo courtesy of: Kiara Azuma

The Winter Fest OC occurs at the OC Fair and Event Center in Costa Mesa. This festival has over a million lights, holiday decorations and a Christmas tree. Guests can participate in the North Pole Journey, simulating a lesson on how to become an elf. There is also an ice rink where people can ice skate and sled. The festival also houses multiple amusement rides, snow games, a trackless train, carnival rides and games, live entertainment, food and drinks. The Winter Fest is described as Southern California's largest winter

festival. Ticket prices range from \$32.99 to \$55.00, depending on whether they are purchased online or at the gate. The festival starts from 2:00 p.m. or 4:00 p.m. and ends at 10:00 p.m.

Numerous opportunities are available for students who wish to get into the holiday spirit and explore beautiful lights around the area. So check it out and have a happy holiday season.

“The Hunger Games” prequel leaves fans starving for more

CHRISTOPHER SEXTON
STAFF WRITER

“The Hunger Games: The Ballad of Songbirds & Snakes” is the biggest surprise of the year. Released eight years after the final installment of “The Hunger Games” four-movie series, “The Ballad of Songbirds and Snakes” takes audiences back to the country of Panem decades before the events of the original “Hunger Games” series. It is in this setting that we are introduced to the young Coriolanus Snow, the eventual dictator of Panem.

Portrayed by newcomer Tom Blyth, Snow’s character arc throughout this film creates a compelling narrative that makes “Songbirds & Snakes” one of the best films of the year.

“The Ballad of Songbirds & Snakes” is directed by Francis Lawrence, who previously made three of the four mainline “Hunger Games” films. Lawrence is no newcomer to the dystopian world of Panem, as illustrated through the flawless worldbuilding and creative direction found in this movie. Lawrence puts to screen a dog-eat-dog society in which one false step could mean a character’s demise. The amount of backstabbing and betrayal portrayed here could be likened to what is found in “Game of Thrones.” In essence, the dramatic and political elements present in this film lend themselves to an epic narrative, or more accurately, an epic ballad.

Stepping away from the grandiose political elements of this film, “Songbirds & Snakes” finds its emotional core in the character of Lucy Gray Baird, played by Rachel Zegler. Lucy Gray finds herself way in over her head when she is selected to participate in the tenth annual Hunger Games, a bloody competition which will surely mean her demise. However, she gains the attention and favor of the nation through her voice after unexpectedly singing on live TV after learning about her selection for the dreaded event. Lucy Gray and Snow are forced together after Snow is chosen to be her mentor, and the crux of the story unfolds as the free-spirited country girl and aristocratic city boy begin to work together to ensure each other’s survival.

What makes “Songbirds &

Snakes” such an effective piece of storytelling is that it doesn’t shy away from deep and thought-provoking themes and ideas, as other young-adult series have done. The resounding question found throughout this film is “what are the Hunger Games for?” Snow answers this question at multiple points, giving more detailed and understanding answers as the story progresses, and as he learns more and more about the two-faced nature of Panem’s leadership. Many philosophical questions posed by “Songbirds & Snakes” remain unanswered at the end of the film, but will inevitably be satisfying food for thought for the politically and ethically minded.

As with all “Hunger Games” movies, action is at the forefront of the experience. “Songbirds & Snakes” does not disappoint by any metric. The intensity of the arena sequence, in which Lucy Gray is pitted against 23 opponents from across Panem, had me grabbing the armrests of my seat with white knuckles and a well-above-average pulse. To avoid any spoilers, I’ll just say it’s good. Really, really good. Lawrence absolutely pushes this film to the limits of what is allowed with a PG-13 rating. Punches are not being pulled here.

As someone who has only seen the original “Hunger Games” films once apiece, I can safely say that “Songbirds & Snakes” is a film that can be appreciated by both newcomers and long-time fans of the series. Fans will be satisfied with the numerous easter eggs and references to the original films, and everyone will be amazed with the in-depth character study presented by this film. “The Hunger Games: The Ballad of Songbirds & Snakes” is now playing in movie theaters nationwide.

Student Jessica Perez’s practicum journey navigates the complexities of healthcare

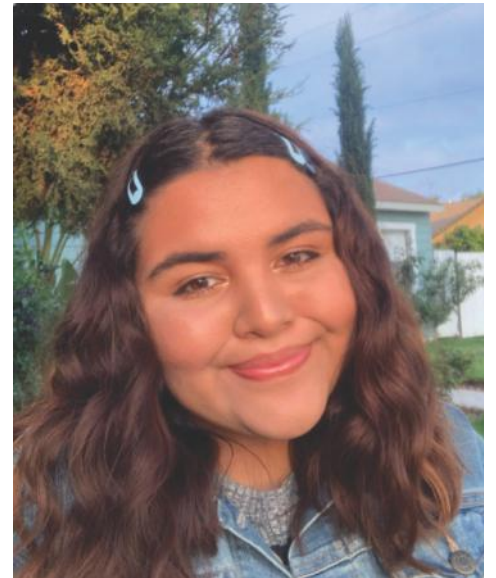
NARALY SOBERANIS
STAFF WRITER

Students like Jessica Perez embrace transformative journeys through practicums. She is a dedicated intern at St. Joseph Hospital and a participant in the COPE Health Scholars program, where she devotes her time outside the classroom. Assigned with specific tasks, Perez works with patients from beginning to end, from taking vitals to discharging patients. Looking forward to pursuing a career as a nurse, the internship has provided meaningful insight and first hand experience in what awaits her in the near future.

COPE Health Scholars Program is an organization that provides students with hands-on experience as well as exposure to what healthcare settings really look like. Perez said, “I started the program in the first beginnings of June and it’s almost December.” The duration of the program is 15 months. So far, Perez has had the opportunity to work in departments such as Medical Telemetry and the Mother-Baby unit with the General Surgery unit. Each department has its own unique set of tasks like taking vitals, repositioning patients beds, assisting patients with eating, bathing patients and answering phone calls.

Navigating the facility’s environment is no easy task, the fast paced nature of the hospital keeps her sharp and alert as she performs a constant flow of tasks each weighing vital importance.

Perez said, “I chose St. Joseph hospital due to its positive reputation among the medical staff,” emphasizing how the supportive atmosphere strengthens her approach to new experiences. Interestingly enough she found herself applying knowledge from her previous and current courses to challenges that presented itself. Perez said, “Having positive patient interaction is very important and I believe the topics within my communications course have contributed heavily to



PICTURED ABOVE: COPE Health Scholars program intern Jessica Perez
Photo courtesy of: Jessica Perez

my approach with patients since we must follow a specific communication framework.” Infection prevention strategies from her microbiology class guide her in maintaining cleanliness procedures that prevent the spread of illnesses within the hospital.

Since attending the practicum, she has grown significantly, not only in her understanding of

nursing but also in her overall perspective on the healthcare industry. Appreciative of the support she receives from the nurses and CNAs, Perez said, “The staff are very welcoming and encourage me to ask questions.” This is a big turn to how she initially felt when she started the program, she said, “At first I was really nervous about working alongside experienced nurses, but then I realized how friendly and encouraging everyone was.”

There is no doubt that her practicum journey serves as a testament to the seamless connection between education within the classroom and real world application. With her experience she demonstrates the importance of hands-on learning, collaboration and effective communication within the healthcare field. As she continues her 15 month practicum, she solidifies her commitment to making a constructive impact in the lives of those she serves.

Fall Honors Recital 2023: A Crescendo of Musical Excellence



PICTURED ABOVE: Concordia student pictured performing on violin. Photo courtesy of: CUI Music Department Website

RYN CASTEEL
PERFORMING ARTS

As the academic semester reaches its final notes, Concordia is gearing up for a musical extravaganza with the highly anticipated Fall Honors Recital. This recital will take place on Mon., Dec. 11, at 5 p.m., at the Concordia University Center for Worship and Performing Arts (CU Center). This event promises to showcase the pinnacle of musical talent cultivated on campus.

"This recital consists of student performers who excelled in their fall jury performances," said Professor Tom Mueller, a key Music Department faculty member overseeing the event. "In the music program, juries are brief performances that music students give in front of a faculty panel; you could think of it as being similar to a final exam in a lecture course. The outstanding student jury performances are nominated

and selected by the music faculty."

The meticulous selection process adds an element of prestige to the event, ensuring that only the most exceptional performances make it to the stage. "We still had some jury exams this [past] week, so we are actually still in the process of selecting students," said Mueller, highlighting the rigorous standards upheld by the faculty in choosing the crème de la crème of musical talent.

This event takes place much later in the semester, and there's a reason for that. "Inclusion in the recital is based on students' jury performances, which take place during the last few weeks of the semester," Mueller said. The timing of the event aligns with the conclusion of these jury performances, allowing for a showcase of the semester-long dedication and progress of the selected students.

Mueller continued, "I love seeing how students grow as performers over the course of their studies at Concordia.

By the end of the semester, I've often heard multiple performances of the repertoire that students are playing, whether that is in a department recital, studio recital, or even just hearing students in practice rooms in the music building. It's gratifying to hear students as they work towards mastering their repertoire."

The Fall Honors Recital is not merely a showcase of musical prowess; it's a celebration of growth, dedication, and the transformative power of music education. As the selected students prepare to take center stage, the audience can expect an evening filled with virtuosic and musically challenging solo repertoire that reflects the culmination of a semester's worth of hard work and passion. Save the date! Dec. 11 at 5 p.m., to witness the harmony of talent at Concordia's CU Center. Tickets are not required!

For more information, visit <https://www.simpletix.com/e/fall-honors-recital-tickets-142021>.

Chamber Music Ensembles promote creative collaboration

MADISON ZUNIGA
CAMPUS EDITOR

On Sat., Dec. 7, Concordia's Chamber Ensemble performed a festive class recital in Zhang Hall, where over 30 guests experienced the unique, intimate and collaborative nature of chamber music.

"My personal favorite is chamber music," said Olivia Thoenke, sophomore cello performer. "It exists in between orchestra and solo performance. Orchestra is a bigger ensemble and it's a lot of people working together whereas with chamber music there is a little more individuality, with one person to each part, and it's not as intimidating as solo playing because you have other people to lean on."

"Chamber music boasts a rich history dating back to medieval times and has evolved into a versatile art form," said Director of Chamber Music and Collaborative Piano, Dr. HyeJung Shin. "Performances can range from intimate recitals in smaller venues to larger concert halls, maintaining the essence of close collaboration among musicians."

The recital performance featured 10 performers participating in a trumpet duet, a harp and flute collaboration, a string trio and a string and piano high-school trio. The program of songs ranged from intricate sonatas to classic Christmas melodies. "It made me want to be a part of something like this group,"

said recital attendee John Trinklein, senior.

"Our ensemble comprises a diverse group of musicians specializing in various instruments, including strings, woodwinds and occasionally piano," said Dr. Shin. "Throughout the semester, the Chamber Music Ministry hosts two recitals: the Sacred Music Recital and the Chamber Ensemble Class Final Recital. These events present a wide repertoire, including classical compositions, contemporary pieces and sacred music."

Shin commented upon the spiritual aspect of Concordia's Chamber Ensemble, "The sacred compositions in our repertoire serve as a bridge to our broader community, offering musical expressions that resonate with our faith values. They provide a unique avenue for spiritual reflection and artistic connection."

"Something I love about this ensemble is the people that I collaborated with," said Natalie Younger, senior viola performer. "In this ensemble we're given the opportunity to do stylistic things and rehearse together. It's teamwork building, and it's really fun to make music together. I love chamber."

"The coordination between all of the musicians was really great, and you could see that they were working together as a group, which is really great in chamber music, that's the goal. We're excited for more," said Emily Thoenke, freshman, an attendee at the performance.

"As the director of the

Chamber Ensemble, my dedication stems from a lifelong passion for chamber music and a strong background in performance and education," said Shin. "It's

a privilege to collaborate with such talented and committed musicians."

Keep an eye out for future chamber recitals next semester!

For more information about the Chamber Ensemble, contact Dr. HyeJung Shin at hyejung.shin@cui.edu.

Marty the Golden Eagle in:
DORM ALONE

hey, Johann, have you read today's *Concordia Courier*®?

FIFTH NIGHT OF DORM BREAK-INS
Christmas gift thieves still at large

I gotta prepare.

safe box

RHO PING-PONG BALLS

the next morning
ready.

SLIP
hey guys, time for a quick room check?

SLAM

TRIP

CRASH

GOTCHA THIEF!
guess "RA" stands for "Robbery Assistant" for you, huh?

Marty, we got the thieves last night. They were your suitemates. Also, you were no help in the case at all.

first i can't have candles, now my suitemates are thieves. it's christmas, mr. critical, chill out.

Swim hits the midpoint of season

LUKA BRANCATO
STAFF WRITER

The men's and women's swim team competed in the Collegiate Winter Invitational Nov. 17 to 19 in Monterey Park hosted by La Verne.

Senior Hailey Garcia said, "Everyone raced their hardest and took every race as an opportunity to show what our training has done so far. At the meet of over 200 races, we had 165 races that were either personal or season bests. We also made it a goal to have someone at the end of a lane cheering for every race there is and I think we did good at that."

Garcia recorded multiple personal bests and the third best 50 free in school history. Garcia said, "I had been trying to break the 24 second mark for a long time now and I finally broke through placing me third fastest now. This was all possible to my teammates and coaches hyping me up and cheering for me knowing how bad I wanted that."

Other notable performances included junior Jayden Hernandez, who had two second place finishes in the 50 free and 100 butterfly, and freshman Rachel Maki who was able to PR in the 100, 200 and 500 free.

Maki also qualified for the NCAA "B" standard. Maki said, "Since I've now got the B cut I have a potential chance to swim it at NCAA championships this season. However if I drop some more time, like three or four more seconds, I will have an even better chance of getting a swim at NAAs."

The teams also both competed in the County Challenge in Orange, California on Dec. 1 and 2 hosted by

Chapman. This was a quick turn around after the midseason meet. "Keeping up team morale, we just pushed ourselves as hard as we could for our mid-season meet right before break and now we're going straight into another meet," Maki said.

Garcia added, "I think for the County Challenge, the team needed to focus on racing the person next to them and using it as an opportunity to learn something new from our races." Garcia added, "We are just looking to have good attitudes and do the best we can."

The swim teams are also participating in the Pledge Plunge on Dec. 9, which is one of their biggest fundraisers. Garcia said, "We are going to swim as many laps as we can in an hour while someone is counting our laps, our goal is to get donors to either donate an amount per lap we do or a flat donation." All the proceeds will go to a team winter trip to San Diego.

The swimmers have two weeks of hard winter training before attending this trip called the CSUEB Invitational at San Diego State.

Garcia said, "We also are going to have two tough winter training weeks over the break, so putting in the work for that and staying motivated during that will be imperative. We are also trying to fine tune the details for our races, so keeping technique and race strategy in mind will also help us be successful."

To follow the teams throughout the rest of season visit cuigoldeneagles.com or on Instagram [@cuiswimdive](https://www.instagram.com/cuiswimdive).

Women's basketball shoots for the stars

EVA PREWITT
SPORTS EDITOR

Women's basketball is in full swing after kicking off PacWest competition on Dec. 6 with the anticipated rivalry matchup against Biola.

The Golden Eagles are starting conference strong after securing a 76-61 win over Biola, never letting the rival team catch up to them on the scoreboard. "Playing Biola is always a tough match up so just remembering the little things and controlling what we can control is huge," said junior center, Teagan Thurman.

After facing a challenging lineup of pre-conference competition, the Green and Gold had an opportunity to work out their kinks and prepare to take on the PacWest. "In every game we played so far we were a step closer to turning a corner to really find our groove and get us going," said freshman guard, Izzy Navarro.

Navarro is currently flooding the stat sheet as she racks up 89 points, 23 assists and 14 steals. Navarro received PacWest Player of the Week after her performance against Simon Fraser and Northwest Nazarene scoring 49 points over the weekend.

Junior center Teagan Thurman was a major asset for the team last year, ending the season with 350 points and 49 steals. In just six games, Thurman adds to this season's running tally of 71 points, 49 rebounds and six blocks.

"We are a pretty young team, so this preseason has shown us we can be great, we just have to figure out how we play together and the best way to fit all the great pieces together," said Thurman.

"What our team has taken away from our previous competitions is how we are most successful when we play together as a team," said Camryn Kiernan, junior guard. "When we are all moving the ball and celebrating each other is when we are at our best, which is something we are trying to continue as we enter conference play."

The Golden Eagles know the secret to success on the court is through developing a passionate team culture and strong relationships. "The bond this team shares is what makes us so unique," said Navarro, "Being on this team is like having 16 sisters."

"We have so many new girls this year and our team is much more aggressive and athletic than we have been in the past. When we are all giving that energy is when we are playing our best," said Kiernan.

After making it to the PacWest championship last season for the first time in Concordia history, the Golden Eagles are eager to get back on the championship court. "We all want to win and will do whatever it takes to do so," said Navarro.

The Golden Eagles will be flying South to San Diego on Sat., Dec. 9 to face Point Loma. On Dec. 16, the Dominican Penguins will enter the Eagles Nest in the first conference matchup at home.

Stay up to date about all things Golden Eagles as they continue competing over Christmas break. Follow [@cuiwbb](https://www.instagram.com/cuiwbb) and [@cuigoldeneagles](https://www.instagram.com/cuigoldeneagles) on Instagram and to stream live games, visit cuigoldeneagles.com.

Disc Golf Club members compete in regional tournament

KENT BEWLEY
STAFF WRITER

On Sun., Nov. 12, members of Concordia's Disc Golf Club competed in a tournament against clubs from other schools across the country in Seaside.

The College Disc Golf West Coast Conference Regional featured disc golf clubs from schools that hail from the western states of California, Oregon, Nevada, Arizona and Idaho.

Concordia was represented at the tournament by four student participants. Disc Golf President and Team Captain Preston Leptich, ASCUI President Sam Schult, Logan Werner and Jedidiah Rufner competed in the tournament held near the campus of

California State University, Monterey Bay.

In total, there were 12 colleges and universities that had their disc golf clubs participate in the tournament and some of the schools had multiple groups of four participate. In the end, the Golden Eagles disc golf team finished 15 out of 16 groups, and a group from Cal Poly San Luis Obispo won the tournament.

Leptich gave his take on the courses that the team had to compete on in Monterey. "We played two courses during the tournament. The first course we played... was very open and sprinkled with cypress trees that would catch your discs. Some of the par fours were long... In addition to being a difficult course, we had to play it blindly because we did not have

time to practice."

He continued saying, "The second course was... more difficult. The fairways were tight, making it a difficult birdie if you landed anywhere adjacent to the fairway. Since we had practiced the [second] course the day before, we were much more prepared to compete."

Leptich thought that the most surprising group from another school was the UC Santa Cruz B Team. "They were a very similar skill level to our team and we were neck and neck on every hole we played with them," said Leptich.

Schult joined the disc golf club on campus during his freshman year. As a senior student, Schult decided to participate in the tournament "because it was a really cool opportunity to compete against other schools and

play some disc golf in a really awesome area."

On the topic of his performance in the tournament, Schult said "I played pretty well in this tournament. Had some good shots and some bad shots. I played really well off the tee, however, I missed some putts that I should have made."

Leptich added, "We were proud of our performance since it was our first time at the West Coast Regionals and we did not know what to expect. We were close to many teams in the bracket and are confident that next year we can place higher. We plan to work our way into the top 100 schools in the near future and compete in the College Disc Golf National Championship."

In spite of placing an over-par score, the disc golf team still had a load of fun

at the tournament. Schult said that the best thing about the tournament was "the camping and hanging with the guys. The team really bonded and it was just fun to be out there hanging out all day."

Leptich's opinion on the best thing in the tourney "was getting to hang out with the team and celebrate each other's victories."

The disc golf club has occasional meetings happening throughout the school year and anyone with or without a frisbee to throw is welcome to play, regardless of their club membership status. So if you want to try something new and trendy, grab some discs and step onto the grass for a unique round of golf. Just be careful not to lose any discs, and hopefully, you don't shout out "Four!" too much.

It takes a village

INDI EBO
STAFF WRITER

Village of Hope is run by the Orange County Rescue Mission and has been fruitful in the donations made to their organization by giving members of the community and Concordia family.

"We need your help more than ever! There are 91 children and counting that need their wishes granted. More families are expected to be added in the next few weeks as well. This will be our biggest year ever," said Dessa Soper and Deborah Lee, both faculty and staff members at Concordia in an eblast out to the campus community.

"Concordia and VOH (Village of Hope) have had a partnership for many years, and one of our favorite things is to provide Christmas gifts for the children who are housed at the mission. Last year, we granted 112 wishes for 67 children and created 75 party favor bags," the announcement continued.

According to the Orange County Rescue Mission

website, "Village of Hope provides transitional and emergency housing for up to 262 homeless men, women and children, and emergency housing for survivors of human trafficking."

In the very beginning, Concordia's School of Education sponsored the event and people signed up to donate toys and brought them in wrapped. Over the years, the initiative was refined and updated during COVID. "We wanted to keep the project alive but everyone was remote so we had to rethink the process. We partnered with the mailroom and people could have their packages sent directly to Concordia so we can pick them up and wrap them. This is great for all of our remote workers who want to participate," Lee and Soper explained.

"The toys used to be taken in black trash bags but several years ago we found some red ones that look like Santa bags. They're so cute! We tie them with ribbons and add custom tags with the children's names on them. Deborah also makes the cute elves that we put in each child's bag," said Lee.



PICTURED ABOVE: Village of Hope workers and Christmas presents
Photo courtesy of: Dessa Soper

There are a myriad of ways to get involved and make a parent and child's holiday that much brighter this holiday season.

"Decorate a Party Favor Bag. Pick up a blank bag (or five) at the Registrar's Office and decorate them... drop off your decorated bag by Mon., Dec. 11," the announcement encouraged.

The goal for this holiday season is to reach 100 bags.

For gifts that are being mailed to the campus for the drive, the packages can be addressed to Deborah

Lee and sent to the Concordia official address, 1530 Concordia West, Irvine 92612.

"We want to give a shout out to the mailroom – especially to Kamaura Taylor. She has to take in all these packages and ensure they are all routed to us. As Dessa mentioned, this is a campus-wide effort," said Lee.

"There are a number of extra items that are needed if you'd like to bring them by the Registrar's Office," Soper added. "There are Diapers sizes 4-7, Pull-ups

especially sizes 3T/4T and 4T/5T, Goodnights (bed wetting underwear) and baby wipes."

With so much love, joy and cheer in the air over the holidays, it's the perfect time to give some of that extra love to the ones who need it most. For more information, contact Deborah.Lee@cui.edu or Dessa.Soper@cui.edu.

A guide to the most creative Christmas things to do in Orange County

ZOE HARDY
STAFF WRITER

The holiday season is in full swing in Orange County, and with it comes a host of magical Christmas activities. From dazzling light displays to festive parades and markets, there is no shortage of ways to get into the holiday spirit in our sunny Southern California.

Sherman Gardens in Corona del Mar is a beautiful botanical garden transformed into a magical wonderland during the holiday season. The annual 1,000 Light Festival is a must-visit event for anyone looking to get into the holiday spirit.

The festival features over 1,000 lights illuminating the gardens, creating a stunning display of color and light. Visitors can stroll through the gardens and enjoy the festive atmosphere, taking in the

sights and music of the holiday season.

In addition to the lights, the festival also features live music, holiday treats and a visit from Santa Claus. Children can participate in holiday crafts and activities, and families can enjoy a festive photo booth. You can buy tickets to the festival at <https://thesherman.org/nights-of-1000-lights/>

"If you are in the Newport Beach area during Christmas, check out the Balboa Boat Parade. It's a truly magical experience!" said Lindsey Manhart, senior.

The Balboa Boat Parade is a Christmas tradition in Newport Beach. Yearly, boat owners decorate their vessels with festive lights and decorations, creating a stunning display that everyone on the bay can enjoy. The parade occurs in the harbor, with boats cruising along a designated route for

spectators to admire.

"I have been going to the boat Parade since I was 10. It has always been my favorite thing to do for the holidays," said Jessica Felicko, an Irvine resident.

The Balboa Boat Parade is a beautiful way to get into the holiday spirit and enjoy the beauty of Newport Beach at night. The parade will begin at approximately 6:30 p.m. each night from December 13 through 17.

"This year, my daughter and I are going to watch the parade from a Duffy boat and sip hot cocoa while we watch the beautiful lights," said Felicko.

The best places to watch the parade are the Balboa boardwalk on the Balboa Peninsula, along East Balboa Blvd, or at the various restaurants along the water, such as the Newport Landing, Harborside, Joe's Crab Shack, Rusty Pelican, Charhouse and Villa

Nova.

The parade typically draws large crowds of locals and visitors which means you will need to get there early to catch a good parking and viewing spot. You can find more information on their website here. <https://www.christmasboatparade.com/>

The Fire and Ice Festival in Newport Beach is another must-visit event during the holiday season. This festival offers a unique experience that combines ice skating, holiday lights and festive activities for all ages.

One of the festival's main attractions is the 4,000+ square foot ice rink, where visitors can enjoy a 90-minute skating session for \$20. After skating, visitors can warm up with a hot chocolate and a smores kit by the fire, coffee, or festive cocktail at the rink-side Igloo Bar, open

Wednesday through Sunday.

The festival also features the Lighting of the Bay, a stunning display of over 50 holiday lights afloat starting at dusk nightly. Visitors can stroll through the inflatable garden, perfect for holiday picture-taking, and enjoy weekend live entertainment, including fire dancers. You can find more information on this event on their website at <https://www.newportdunes.com/ice-skating-rink/>.

These top events in Orange County will surely put you and your friends in the holiday spirit without spending too much for the holidays.

ATW reroute! Concordia students navigate conflict in the Holy Land

GRETA JONES
STAFF WRITER

For many “Rounders,” the most anticipated portion of the Around-the-World semester is the pilgrimage to the Holy Land. For two weeks students get to walk where Jesus walked, learn where Jesus taught and commune where Jesus spilled His blood. Our team was no exception to that excitement.

Every day leading up to our flight to Tel Aviv, someone would express enthusiasm for climbing into the caves where the Dead Sea Scrolls were found, or for attending mass in the Holy Sepulchre. Perhaps the most discussed event was our upcoming appointment at Razzouk Tattoo in Jerusalem, where we would have been inked with the same images that Christians have worn as symbols of their conviction for over 700 years. We constantly sketched crosses, olive branches and bible verses in Greek or Hebrew onto one another in black sharpie - trying to figure out the perfect placement for a

permanent profession of faith.

On October 6, we went to sleep in Athens, eagerness for our future travels still intact. We did not know that we would be waking up to the beginning of what has now become the largest conflict that the Holy Land has seen in decades. For a few days, the Rounders were glued to news updates as Professor John Norton answered our innumerable questions with, “We have to wait and see.” After a week of active war, the answer became, “We’ll let you know where we decide to reroute when everything is booked.”

Visiting Professor Paul Elliott was one of the Lord’s greatest blessings to us during this time of uncertainty. When asked about the decision process for where ATW would divert, Dr. Norton said, “I really wanted to keep Paul as long as we could. We were just looking for some place with some Biblical history.”

Dr. Elliott’s deep and knowledgeable pockets allowed us to experience a detour to Rome that was just as spiritually and ed-

ucationally enriching as Israel would have been. He also remained a constant reminder of God’s word and comfort to our doubting spirits while we waited for decisions to be made. In Mykonos, he led us into a greater understanding of our role as Christians during political strife and turmoil. Through a sermon on Psalm 45 we learned that while,

“The nations rage, the kingdoms totter;

He utters His voice, the earth melts.

He makes wars cease to the end of the earth;

He breaks the bow and shatters the spear;

He burns the chariots with fire.

“Be still and know that I am God.”

Psalm 45,
ESV

Dr. Elliott told us that “being still” is not a passive thing that Christian’s are called to do. Being still and knowing who God is means actively trusting in God’s provision for His children - even during extreme darkness. To

pray fervently and without ceasing for the victims of war, for civilians who died and to reach out to strengthen those that we know on the ground. Many previous Rounders were able to make deep connections with both Israeli and Palestinian people through service with Mitri Raheb, a Palestinian Lutheran.

As we continued into Poland, we were gifted with another wise angel while visiting the genocide memorials at Auschwitz. Father Manfred Deselaers explained to us that what happened during WWII is intimately connected to the creation of Israel. The state was formed from a desire for Jewish people to have a place where they could be safe and not exist as guests of other nations. While he admits that this arrangement offers protection to Jewish peoples, he also says that, “the fact that Jews were victims here does not mean they can make victims of others. If you say, “We have been treated like animals,” our answer cannot be to become animals.” He also instructed us to learn lessons from Auschwitz so similar atroci-

ties are never committed. “It is important to listen to the voice of this soil,” he says. “The people who died here should have been respected. So what do I learn? That I have to respect the people that I meet.”

Although ATW VII was kept physically out of the Holy Land, we threw our hearts and spirits into prayer and contemplation of the ongoing combat. To be still and to find a way to respect and love both sides of God’s creation was painful. It was only through the help of Him who melts the earth with the sound of His voice that we were able to work through the political tension and sadness that accompanied this devastation.

Cheers from Cambridge: Concordia students wrap up a semester abroad

ELIANA HARRIS
STAFF WRITER

Seven students from Concordia, myself included, have been studying abroad at Westfield House in Cambridge, England since early September, and are now wrapping up their studies and preparing to head home for Christmas.

The students participating in the Concordia Cambridge Program have experienced life in a historic university town and have learned to navigate a different approach to education that encourages students to be self-motivated and independent.

Heather Hershfield, sophomore, said, “The educational approach is definitely different; there’s a big emphasis on individual reading and

studying. However, there’s less class meeting times to accommodate for this extra reading. Not having to worry about having a quiz or a test every week or so, has placed more of an emphasis on learning material rather than just memorizing it for a grade.”

Concordia students that live and study in Cambridge have the privilege of taking part in a tradition of academic excellence that is distinctive from secondary education in the United States and has existed since the university’s founding in 1209. Dr. Cynthia Lumley, principal of Westfield House, said, “Being based in Cambridge, UK, the faculty of Westfield House strive to provide an opportunity for students to experience the ‘Oxbridge’ (a term used to describe Cambridge

and Oxford universities) system of pedagogy, which requires students to read extensively and prepare short essays for discussion in small group teaching supervisions every two weeks, while also recognizing the different requirements of North American higher education.”

The small group supervisions that make up the core of the Oxbridge system allow students to learn interactively, get individual feedback, and talk through the material that was covered in the weekly lectures. During supervisions, students present their essays and give feedback on the essays presented by other students.

The Oxbridge system is also more tailored to a student’s interests as students frequently get to choose

their own topics to write about. Dr. Lumley added, “Students have access to the outstanding library resources of Cambridge, both hard copy and digital, and are able to pursue their own ideas and interests in their papers and class presentations.”

In addition, with fewer class meeting times, students have the flexibility to explore Cambridge and travel around the United Kingdom. Jillian Endicott, sophomore, said, “One aspect of studying abroad that I love is the level of immersion in a foreign culture that you just can’t experience on a simple vacation. Attending church services in another country, getting to know other Cambridge students, and exploring the surrounding cities from the perspective of a resident is so fascinating

and enriching.”

Outside of lectures and supervisions, Cambridge is brimming with activities such as going punting on the Cam river, attending plays at one of the local theaters, or visiting the beautiful churches and cathedrals scattered around the city. Camille Beeson, sophomore, said, “Whether it be staring dumbstruck in art filled cathedrals, or sight reading hymns in an evensong service, I have truly experienced God’s majesty in the global church, in a way I had never known before.”

If you are interested in the Concordia Cambridge Program or other study abroad opportunities, contact lonnie.lee@cui.edu for more information.