Campus Times

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Lecturer reflects on passage of time

Monique Arambula
Staff Writer



Thatiana Gibbs

Michele Assael-Shafia, professor of practice at the College of Law and Public Service, laughs while sharing heartfelt stories during the "What Matters to Me and Why" lecture in the Ludwick Center Sacred Space on April 17, bringing warmth and authenticity to her reflections on purpose and connection. It was the last lecture in the series for the year.

Michele Assael-Shafia, assistant professor of law at the University of La Verne, spoke April 17 in the Ludwick Center Sacred Space, closing out the University's "What Matters to Me and Why" speaker series for semester with a powerful message about the value of time: How we spend it, who we spend it with and how quickly it passes.

Addressing a room filled with students, staff and faculty, Assael-Shafia opened her talk by reflecting on the everyday moments that have shaped her life.

While she mentioned things like family and friends, the main message centered around time and how it shapes our priorities.

"Time doesn't discriminate," Assael-Shafia said.

"It doesn't care who you are, your background, your gender, your bank account, your age. We all get the same amount of time every single day."

Her story was personal but resonated with many in attendance.

She spoke about the challenges of balancing motherhood while pursuing a demanding career, about showing up for all sport games, every performance and about the work ethic her father instilled in her.

"I didn't have a choice but to keep it steady," Assael-Shafia said.

"My dad made us understand the weight on our shoulders. He never had the opportunity to go to college, so he made sure we knew how important hard work was."

After the COVID-19 pandemic hit, her story shifted. She opened up about how the pandemic altered her life.

At first, it seemed like a gift because it allowed her time with her family and a rare chance for them all to be under the same roof again.

Then it took a turn and became a thief that took away the time she had left with her father.

"It was like an uninvited guest," Assael-Shafia said.

"Disruptive and unsettling, but in a strange way, generous with time."

Talking about the loss of her father was difficult, and her vulnerability deeply moved the audience.

A few people wiped away tears and nodded in understanding, creating a space that felt safe, supportive and open to emotions.

"COVID gave us the time to say what needed to be said," Assael-Shafia said.

"That time was a gift, but it was also fleeting. There is nothing romantic about death."

Throughout her talk, Assael-Shafia returned to a theme of presence over perfection.

Whether in the classroom or at home, she encouraged the audience to spend their time intentionally.

She choose connection over constant pressure.

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Campus Times
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Alpha Chi ceremony brings new members

Alpha Chi, a National College Honor Society, inducted about 25 undergraduate and graduate students from the University of La Verne on Wednesday night in the Ludwick Center Sacred Space.

The induction ceremony started at 7 p.m., with a procession of the candidates led by Jerome Garcia, biology professor, around the room and then headed to their respective seats. Garcia then addressed the crowd to welcome them as well as introduce the Chapter Sponsors.

For the California Theta Chapter, the sponsors were Garcia; Victoria Aleman, interim director of regional and online campuses; Megan Grandquist, kinesiology professor; Rick Hasse, accounting and finance professor,; Elaine Padilla, chair of philosophy and religious studies; and George Keeler, journalism professor.

After introductions, the sponsors discussed the history and ideals of Alpha Chi, as well as the requirements for the students to be inducted.

The the students stood up and were sworn into the honor society

Each candidate individually was called up to a table in the front to place their signature in their book, shake hands with all the sponsors and receive a medal.

Once all the students had been inducted, they proceeded to outside the Sacred Space, to light candles and repeat the Alpha Chi motto as well as the ULV motto.

The ceremony wrapped around 8 p.m., and guests were served a variety of food and refreshments. They were also able to take their photos and grab their certificates from the front of the room.

—Olivia Russo

On the Cover

Olivia, played by sophomore kinesiology major Lauren Sandoval, talks on the phone with a lawyer, played by sophomore creative writing major Hailey Garcia, about her mother's upcoming hearing, during a dress rehearsal for "Miss You Like Hell" Tuesday night in Dailey Theatre. The musical follows a teenage girl on a journey to California with her estranged mother, who is an undocumented immigrant. The play opened Thursday night, with additional performances scheduled for Friday, Saturday and May 1-3. / photo by Olivia Russo

Lecture mixes music and musings

Marina Bravo
Staff Writer



Olivia Russo

Reed Gratz, professor of music, performs on piano at his last lecture with Arnold Jacks on bass, Tom Moese on violin, Joachim Marcus Gratz de Lang on drums and Jon Rothe on guitar on Tuesday in La Fetra Auditorium. Gratz decided to mix his final lecture with performances of six jazz compositions he wrote and some were played live for the first time.

A legacy is what professor of music Reed Gratz has left etched into the history of the University of La Verne. After 48 years of being a Leo, Gratz is retiring and saying his final goodbyes in the best way he knows how.

On Tuesday, the University of La Verne Academy Lecture Series introduced Gratz to deliver his last lecture titled "My Last Mini Recital" in La Fetra Auditorium.

About 150 attended to see and hear his send off, including longtime colleagues, friends, students and family members.

Gratz added his own unique twist to the lecture series: he played piano along with other musicians, performing a small jazz set that featured original pieces.

Alongside Gratz was ULV alumni Tom Moese on violin, Jon Rothe on guitar, longtime friend Arnold Jacks on stand-up bass and Gratz' son and 2024 ULV alumnus Joachim Marcus Gratz de Lang.

Before the music began, Gratz was introduced by Jonathan Reed, professor of philosophy and religion, who had nothing but heartfelt things to say about Gratz and the legacy he leaves behind.

Reed highlighted that Gratz was one of the few people in the University's history to be awarded both the Excellence of Teaching Award, the Ellsworth Johnson Service Award and membership to the La Verne Academy. More importantly, Gratz was the very reason for the renovation of the Morgan Auditorium, Reed said.

"He is the ideal faculty member," Reed said.

Reed continued to share and speak upon the legacy that Gratz has built at ULV, which was also evident among his admirers in the auditorium.

Gratz and his band played a total of six original pieces composed by Gratz, all of which were named after places he has been to and have had meaning to him and phrases. "Bitez," "Kuala Lumpur," "Wit Haar Zachte Wind" meaning white hair and soft wind in Dutch, "Crescent Bay," "Indiana River" and "Yo Quiero el Púlpito."

Throughout his performance, Gratz spoke and shared stories and fond memories of his time here, going back to his start at the University in 1977.

He highlighted moments he's shared with many notable faculty members past and present, many of whom were in the audience.

Gratz talked about former College of Arts and Sciences Dean John Gingrich and beloved ULV football coach Roland Ortmayer. He shared how when he had first started working at La Verne, Ortmayer knocked on his door and asked him to be the wrestling coach. Gratz had been a college wrestler.

"How could I say no to the legend?" Gratz said.

Gratz said he followed in his father, Jim Gratz's, footsteps. Jim Gratz had been athletic director at Manchester College in Indiana. Reed Gratz coached wrestling and later tennis for a time at ULV.

Many who know Gratz note his humility. He speaks through his art and performance. During his talk, he highlighted the many people that impacted him.

Gratz' final piece received hearty applause.

"I want to highlight how eloquent and how generous (Gratz) is both musically and as a person," violinist Moese said. "(Gratz) would never shine a spotlight on himself – so it's up to us to shine the spotlight on him."

Faculty members and longtime friends shared their favorite memories with Gratz and the knowledge he has shared.

Guitarist Rothe shared a piece of advice from Gratz that has stuck with him throughout his musical career.

"Don't worry about your CD being purchased by the world… in other words be true to your music," Rothe said.

Music professor Jason Lo shared how welcoming Gratz was when he first started at the University in 2022. Lo said that his personality was just as incredible as his ability to perform.

"I'm just grateful to be a fellow faculty team member and to be on the same roster as (Gratz)," Lo said.

The celebration of Gratz' career will continue at 6 p.m. Sunday in Morgan Auditorium, when the music department will host a tribute concert to Gratz.

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Time...

Continued from page 2

She reminded everyone that even when life feels rushed, the smallest moments can be the most meaningful.

"My biggest takeaway was how invested she is in us as students, it's real," senior law student Erika Zuniga said.

"You can kind of feel jaded in law school, wondering if people really care about you. But seeing her so vulnerable, it just gave me a whole other side of her."

"What we're seeking to do is have a diversity of speakers with faculty, staff, and administrators from different backgrounds and parts of campus," University Chaplain Zandra Wagoner said.

"Michelle's story brought all of that together."

After her talk, Assael-Safia participated in rapid-fire questions from Alesha Knox and spoke with attendees.

Everyone shared Assael-Shafia's favorite snack, which was popcorn, as part of a tradition where the speakers choose the snack served at the event.

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Film producer speaks on faith



Vicente Rodriguez

Professor and film producer Timothy Conley gives the final Pathways to Peace lecture April 17 at the Ludwick Center Sacred Space. The lecture included trailers from some of Conley's films he has either directed or produced, and showcased how faith is important.

Car show puts pedal to the metal

Anthony Eramya
Staff Writer



Anthony Eramya

Visitors browse the classic vehicles on display at the Cool Cruise Car Show on Saturday along the D street drag in downtown La Verne.

This year marked the 29th anniversary of the popular car show where community members of all age come to enjoy the festvities.

Flying Deuces hosted the 29th annual Cool Cruise Car Show in Old Town La Verne on Saturday, featuring over 400 classic cars.

The event spanned from E Street to B Street with some cars parked in the parking lot by La Fetra and the Wilson Library as well.

There were well over 500 people at the event with the purpose of the event to raise money for the La Verne K9 Police Foundation. To raise the money they used a raffle system and even raffled away a TV to whoever wanted to enter.

"We sponsor thousands of car shows,"Jim Frey, founder of Car Guy Garage, a Chicago-based garage refurnishing company said. "Car culture feels like it is dying,"Frey said. "We sponsor these events to keep car culture alive."

"About 30 years ago I had a meeting to see what we can do to revitalize the downtown area. I pitched a car show,"LD Johnson, a long time worker for the city of La Verne, said.

"I talked to a couple friends who produced and promoted car shows and about four months later we had around 179 cars at the first annual show,"Johnson said.

The La Verne K9 Police Foundation were not the only beneficiaries of the event; the event also hosted a pop up shop for the Magic Makers Mart right out of the Ludwick Center.

Inside of the pop up shop they were selling things like bags, key chains, manufactured flowers and some jewelry.

There were consistently 15 to 100 people walking around the Magic Makers Mart and right outside of the pop up they had a play area for kids which included a large Connect Four set, some cornhole and even some child-friendly axe throwing.

La Verne students definitely could have felt frustrated as all the streets were blocked off meaning those exiting Campus North would have to take the long way traveling around the event. The University also was affected by the amount of people at the event, all of the 90 minute to three hour parking spots were filled with vintage car aficionados, even those reserved for the city.

It could have been much worse for La Verne students as one year the event hosted just under 1,700 cars.

Very little of the event attendees took advantage of the University of La Verne parking structure which had many open spots on the ground level.

However the businesses in Old Town La Verne were more than pleased having lines outside the door at Nambah Coffee and Mi Cocina.

The recently opened Beverage House also experienced a boom in customers on Saturday as those looking at the cars were looking for cold beers on the hot day as well.

"I like walking around [Old Town La Verne],"Joe Calderon, a regular attendee of car shows in the Inland Empire, said.

"I have never been to this part of La Verne before but that is the fun of these shows, exploring new places,"Calderon said.

It was so hot that some folks who were not even presenting their cars at the show set up tents and just chatted with other local car enthusiasts.

With some of these cars dating all the way back to the early 1910s it was surprising to see how well kept they were, with very few showing any signs of rust.

The La Verne Police Department and Fire Department also had booths with the Fire Department showing off an old school vehicle as well.

This was a great event for not only gearheads but families just looking for something to do. There were many families with kids and dogs patrolling through Old Town La Verne looking around at all the classic cars.

"I used to come to all these car shows with my dad when I was a kid,"Noah Perez, car photography influencer, said.

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Disney music sets fun tone for bingo

The Campus Activity Board hosted a Disney-themed Music Madness Bingo game on Citrus Lawn on April 17, with more than 80 students in attendance.

The event featured a photo booth opportunity by The Photobooth Guy company, where they brought a white, blown-up backdrop and a table of different photo props to give your pictures more character.

For dessert, CAB got Happy Ice, a family-owned Italian ice company.

Students enjoyed three intense rounds of bingo for which they needed to black out the entire bingo card to win one of three prizes provided by CAB.

The CAB members shuffled multiple Disney songs and announced the names of the songs for everyone to hear, and if the song was on the card, the students would fill in the space with their bingo daubers. The three lucky students who won the three rounds of Disney music bingo got to take home the big prizes: an HP laptop, a Keurig coffee maker and a movie projector. No student left empty-handed. CAB members gave away Mickey Mouse ears, disney keychains, shoe charms and stickers – students got to pick one of each.

"I love Disney and music, so this event was a lot of fun and I enjoyed playing,"said freshman criminology major Isabella Rabelo Dos Santos.

–Alicia Naranjo

Claremonters enjoy Easter celebrations at Memorial Park

Kids of all ages came together to enjoy Easter festivities on Saturday at Memorial Park in Claremont. Countless activities were organized throughout the park including egg hunts, games, a magic show, a petting zoo and face painting.

With the variety of attractions, families were able to indulge in all activities.

A few hundred Claremonters and residents of neighboring cities attended the festivities.

"We're experiencing all of this for the first time and it's beautiful,"Jason Minera, a new father and Claremont resident. "Being able to come together as a community, it's really nice."

"There are familiar faces all around,"said Jennie Patten, who attended the event Saturday. "My daughter goes to daycare in town …She has taken to it like a duck to water."

The event kicked off with a pancake breakfast, a fund-raiser for the city. The egg hunt was planned with various ages and abilities in mind, as were booths, including one that involved sifting for toys in sand.

"They're being a little more proactive and supporting people with disabilities,"Julie Martin, director of the AbilityFirst Lawrence L. Frank Center, said. "I live in Fontana and have been working for the city of Claremont for 16 years… You see everyone involved; young and old, it is very heartwarming."

A second egg hunt, at 10:45 a.m., was for children ages 3 to 12.

There were many colorful eggs scattered throughout the park with kids searching for the prised golden egg.

—Isabella Huerta

Arts, etc...

Happenings

Big Sean

Lavernapalooza, the annual concert event, will be held at 7:30 p.m. on May 8 at the Fox Theater in Pomona. This year's headliner is rap star Big Sean. The concert will be at 7:30 p.m. on May 8.

Tickets are free for undergraduate students only. For others, it is $40.

For more information, visit **foxpomona.com/events/detail/921360**.

Retirement Concert

Professor of Music Reed Gratz is having his final concert with the University of La Verne, including a tribute performance of his own jazz compositions.

Gratz will be joined with his friends, former and current students, and faculty.

The concert will be at 6 p.m. Sunday in Morgan Auditorium. Admission is free.

'Miss You Like Hell'

The theatre and music departments' production of "Miss You Like Hell," a musical written by Quiara Alegria Hudes and composed by Erin McKeown, follows a troubled teen who embarks on a cross-country road trip with her mom, who is an undocumented immigrant from Mexico.

Performances are 7:30 p.m. Friday and Saturday; 7:30 p.m. May 1-3, and 2:30 p.m. May 4 in the Dailey Theatre.

Tickets are $10- $20 for the general public.

'Into the Woods Jr.'

The University of La Verne Choral Organization is presenting "Into the Woods Jr.," an adaptation of the popular musical created by Stephen Sondheim and James Lapine.

The performance will begin at 7 p.m. May 10 in Morgan Auditorium, located in Founders Hall.

Tickets will be sold at the door for $20.

For more information, visit the **@ulvvocalmusic** Instagram page.

—Zachary Grech

'Mayhem' ensues at Coachella fest

story and photography by Marina Bravo



The sun sets on the Spectra rainbow tower and giant Ferris wheel at Coachella on April 18. Lady Gaga headlined the music festival's Friday night lineup for both weekends.

The music finally made its way back to the Coachella Valley for the annual two-weekend music festival Coachella. Weekend two of the festival kept the party and energy going April 18-20.

Featuring a diverse collection of music genres including pop, rock, hip-hop and with the rising popularity of raves, electronic dance music, or EDM. The festival's headliners included Lady Gaga, Green Day, Post Malone and special guest Travis Scott.

The music started at 1 p.m. Friday and continued all the way through Sunday night ending at midnight the next morning. The festival had many entertaining opportunities to offer guests aside from just the music.

From arts and crafts, cooling areas, various food and drink options to the ferris wheel and the SPECTRA rainbow tower, a seven-story spiral walk-way art piece that has become a tourist attraction for the festival. Where guests are able to walk through and cool down while enjoying a journey of a color-changing rainbow walk through and a view of the festival grounds.

Guests also had the opportunity to camp on the festival grounds with the various camping packages offered along with ticket purchase.

When news broke out about the first weekend camper horror stories, many guests were worried. However, Coachella staff took all the opinions and made adjustments to better the experience for weekend two campers.

First-time camper Haleypink Garcia mentioned how the camp experience was very kind to her. Garcia shared that she arrived on Thursday and it took a total of three hours of waiting in because of car searching before they allowed each party to enter camp grounds.

"I understand…[Coachella] was taking the precautions and prioritizing safety," Garcia said.

Garcia also shared how Coachella also had all kinds of activities and resources for campers aside from everything offered inside of the festival grounds.

"[The campgrounds] had so many fun activities with smaller [DJ] sets," Garcia said. "They had food vendors, and even a mini convenience store."

Day one of the festival or as many guests and specifically the "Little Monsters" put it, GAGA-chella featured many rising artists like Lola Young, The Marias and DJO. Along with other big name artists and many DJs known in the rave community.

Day two the festival grounds were divided and in many areas it turned a lime green color or "brat" green as concert-goers anticipated the performance by Charli XCX and also many wore their best attire to rock out with Green Day. Performances by Yo Gabba Gabba!, T-Pain, Clairo and The Original Misfits offered something for all guests to enjoy, young and old.

"My favorite set was definitely Charli XCX," first time guest Maddie Castellanos said. "I was gagged from start to finish. Her stage presence was amazing."

Day three the festival grounds transformed into a western-cowboy town with a modern twist, along with a few Easter bunny sightings. Many anticipated the performances from Megan Thee Stallion and Post Malone. With artists like Shaboozey, Junior H and Zedd to keep the vibes going as the sun began to set on festival grounds concluding the event.

With all these artists and activities, people had no choice but to have all kinds of fun and explore the world that is the Coachella festival. Many also shared how much community is present at the festival and how they were able to bond over their favorite artists.

"This year is my second year coming to Coachella," returning camper Galilea Hernandez said. "It's easy to make friends at a festival like Coachella."

Continued on page 6

Bookstore has altruistic mission

Ethan Anderson
LV Life Editor

The Claremont Forum Bookshop is among the gems tucked away in the Claremont Packing House. Home of the Prison Library Project, the bookshop emphasizes its philanthropic mission of educating inmates, as well as being a reliable, affordable place for Claremont and neighboring communities to buy used books.

"I love the idea of people being able to afford education," Claremont Forum program director Mckenna Deluca said. "If you are looking to receive an education, you should be able to get one no matter what."

The Bookshop is on the far west end of the packing house, and it receives hundreds of book donations a week. From there, volunteers and workers decide where the books go, depending on their quality and educational value.

In the back of the shop, a yellow rope sections off an area where Prison Library Project books live until ready to be shipped off to the incarcerated.

"Newer books are going to be back here, dictionaries, language books," PLP director trainee Naomi Nembhard said. "When a donation comes in, we sort by genre and hardcover vs. paperback…But we also set aside things that we think will be great for PLP."

The bookstore has a vintage quality, with rusted support beams lining the ceiling; all the bookshelves are wooden making the store feel homey.

"It's not like the quietness of a library for studying," frequent customer Shivani Adams said. "It's more like a place you could meet people and have conversations openly."

Customers continuously come back not only to buy books themselves, but to support the mission of PLP's more spiritual approach to helping the incarcerated.

"It's very cyclical, I try to explain to people: 'not just are you buying books from us and that money goes to postage, that also goes to buying books that we need for people that are incarcerated," Deluca said. "It pays for the overhead, it pays for our community outreach…on top of that, people that donate books aren't just donating books to an inmate but donating funds to us so that we could continue the program."

The program was founded in the 1970s in North Carolina by spiritual gurus, one of which being famous author Ram Dass, who is known for "Be Here Now" a book considered a sort of counterculture bible that influenced westerners to take up yoga and meditation.

Rick Moore, a good friend of Ram Dass, began building the program in California in the 1980s, where Moore operated out of a postal annex. Getting whatever donated books he could find, into the hands of inmates.

Moore continued on his spiritual mission into the 1990s where he opened the Claremont Forum Bookshop in 1993, as the new operating center for the Prison Library Project.

The Prison Library Project has served thousands in our prison system.

They get countless thank you letters from inmates and prison officials.

In one case, an inmate named Paul writes constant letters to the organization.

"He always wrote to tell us what we sent him…it was almost like a book report…it really meant something to him," PLP board president Rachel McDonnell said. "I always remember 'thank you for thinking of me when no one else does,' and 'what having a book in my cell means to me, it's the only thing I own in the world.'"

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Rylee Fournier

Staff picks are on display at the Claremont Forum Bookshop in Claremont, surrounded by shelves stacked high with books. The inviting setup offers a glimpse into the shop's unique selection and thoughtful recommendations.

Lies and secrets unravel in 'Miss You Like Hell'

Alicia Naranjo
Staff Writer

Immigration, music, drugs and lying are all contributing aspects to the University of La Verne Departments of Theatre Arts and Music's "Miss You Like Hell," a play by playwright Quiara Alegria Hudes and composer Erin McKeown, showing in Dailey Theatre this weekend and next.

The play is set on a cross-country trip following Olivia, a troubled 16-year-old girl played by sophomore kinesiology major Lauren Sandoval, and her previously absent immigrant mother, Beatriz, played by senior theater arts major Victoria Gaspar.

Beatriz visits her daughter in the middle of the night, inviting her daughter, whom she had not seen in years, on a road trip to bond, not telling Olivia all of her true intentions.

Olivia decides to trust her mom and goes on the trip with her, where they talk about each other's difficulties and make lifelong friends along the way.

Their rebooted relationship starts with lies and secrets that unravel throughout the trip.

"It is a very diverse, very heavy topic. It is really important just to watch, listen, and be open-minded," said Destiny Tenor, sophomore political science major and cast member.

The cast and crew brought the musical to life. And this is the first musical the University has staged in more than five years.

"The thing that has been really remarkable to see is how hard they have worked and how they have motivated themselves to work," said Professor of Theatre Arts Sean Dillon, the play's director. "Not just on their singing and their dancing, but working on set, hanging lights and doing everything."

Musical elements had to be discussed, pinpointed, and listened to since in a musical every beat counts.

"We were listening to the music quite a few times to figure out what the timing was and then slowly started creating choreography altogether," said junior theater arts major and choreographer Kayla Gozun.

"I enjoy the actors' presence (and) I am very proud of them that they are able to pick up things pretty easily," said Giselle Morales, junior creative writing major and stage manager.

The actors put in all their extra time to understand their characters to fully portray them in a way that will touch audience members in a personal way.

"I sang constantly in my car outside my car all the time, and I also read the 'Miss You Like Hell' text and familiarized myself with it, so I was able to just be really prepared and be into it and familiarize myself with Beatriz, my character," Gaspar said.

"Miss You Like Hell" opened at 7:30 p.m. Thursday, and will continue with performances at 7:30 Friday and Saturday, 7:30 May 1-3, and 2 p.m. May 4 in Dailey Theatre.

Admission is $10-$20. To reserve tickets visit their online form.

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Coachella...

Continued from page 5

Coachella workers and volunteers also were able to join in on the fun festivities as well.

Coachella artist studio staff member Jovana Echeverria, shares how staff get their own camping resources and experiences and they're also able to enjoy the festival acts. This is Echeverria's second time volunteering and working at the festival and she returns because of the experience.

"I love hanging out with my friends and meeting new people," Echeverria said.

Each Headliner act offered their own unique experiences for fans. Green Day offered energetic and headbanging-worthy music performances that let people explore their air-guitar abilities.

Post Malone brought it down and prepared everyone for Stagecoach, the country music festival that will follow this weekend on the festival grounds.

One headliner however stood out to many and left many blown away.

Her sweatshirts at the festival said "Mayhem in the Desert" which is what she brought to the festival.

Lady Gaga brought a theatrical experience for many guests. Debuting songs off of her newest album Mayhem mixing with classic songs like "Judas," "Alejandro," "Born this Way," and hits "Bad Romance" and "Poker Face"

Coachella guests and Little Monsters were able to sing their hearts out throughout her entire set. Taking them on a journey of four acts. Each adding story to her music.

Many people shared that they came to the festival just for Gaga.

"The performance had so much story and it was so much like a play," first time guest Danielle Bravo said. "My favorite part was when she performed The Beast and I was looking at my phone when she said 'TikTok 11:59' I looked at my phone and that was the time…it blew my mind."

Brooke Summers shared how she traveled from Iowa to come to the festival and how she has been to Coachella three times prior to this year and how she's never seen anything like Gaga before.

Whether one enjoys Hip-Hop, Rock, EDM or theatrical performances like Lady Gaga, Coachella seems to be the spot to be.

For those who like to plan ahead, Coachella 2026 show dates are already set for April 10-12 and April 17-19. For more information, visit **coachella.com**.

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It's Not Your Fault.

1.800.656.HOPE
National Sexual Assault Hotline
Free. Confidential. 24/7.

(Operated by RAINN)

Senior writers tackle heavy themes

Authors share final projects

Erika Oceguera
Staff Writer

Three senior creative writing majors at the University of La Verne shared the culmination of their literary journeys during their senior project presentations Wednesday in Hoover Building, Room 128.

With an intimate audience of 11 people, the students presented excerpts from their original work and reflected on their creative processes, writing philosophies and growth.

The event featured seniors Sterling Bratton, Joseph Reyes and Kamila De La Fuente, who each had approximately 15 to 20 minutes to present their writing projects.

Sean Bernard, professor of creative writing, and Ann Hills, associate professor of Spanish and chair of the modern languages department, were also present to support the students and address questions following each presentation.

First to present was Bratton, who offered a window into his darkly humorous and surreal writing world.

His work, filled with monster metaphors and unsettling imagery, often explored identity through absurdity.

"Good writing is specific, honest, and unexpected," Bratton said.

He spoke candidly about learning to pace emotional scenes and deepening his world-building. His stories lean into discomfort to uncover meaning.

Bratton's featured story involved a monstrous figure and explored themes of disconnection and transformation, using second-person narration to evoke intimacy and danger.

"Even when writing feels broken, it's okay as long as you love it," Bratton said, underscoring the importance of trusting the process.

Next came Reyes, who shared insights into his evolution as a writer, tracing his roots back to fifth grade when he first fell in love with fantasy literature.

His senior project, titled "Everywhere From Here to There," tells the story of a sentient doll slowly becoming more human, only to discover the transformation came at the cost of its physical deterioration.

"My theme was 'memento mori,' a reminder of death, and to make the most of life," Reyes said.

Reyes emphasized the value of character dynamics, narrative conflict and world-building, and he described the doll's journey as a metaphor for human growth in the face of grief and loss, inspired by works such as "The Fears" by Kruger and the anime "Kino's Journey."

Reyes spoke openly about his challenges with pacing and the decision to remove poetry from his project.

"It was a cavalcade of moments," Reyes said.

Feedback from peers and mentors helped him realize the prose narrative more effectively captured the emotions he wanted to express.

Last to present was Kamila De La Fuente, who began with a quote from "Crying in the Bathroom: A Memoir by Erika L. Sánchez": It is "better to laugh at the absurdity of your time on earth than to resign yourself to mourning all of life's misfortunes."

Her presentation showcased works that weave together magical realism, multilingual dialogue and emotional depth.

Throughout her talk, De La Fuente emphasized her passion for crafting emotionally charged scenes and layered characters.



Jai'la Counts

Senior creative writing major Joseph Reyes presents his work and writing processes for his senior project presentation Wednesday in Hoover 128.

Reyes was one of three students to present their senior projects, along with Sterling Bratton and Kamila De La Fuente.

"I enjoy writing moments of internal conflict—when characters wrestle with desires, doubts, or difficult decisions," De La Fuente said.

She described her writing style as deeply imagistic, using vivid metaphors and multilingual elements to enrich her stories.

De La Fuente also spoke about how her background in journalism has influenced her fiction.

"As a journalist, you want to get to the core of the story," De La Fuente said. "I try to create characters that are curious and genuinely care about each other – just like when you meet people, hear their stories, and ask the important questions. I want my writing to do that too."

Bernard praised his students' work, calling the presentations some of the best he's seen.

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Noon Concert features original compositions

Karina Rodriguez
Arts Editor

The Scripps Friday Noon Concert Series at the Balch Auditorium at Scripps College featured violinists Andrew Krastins and Rachel Huang and pianists Luis Rosalebrom and Tatiana Thibodeaux performing the music of Rosalebron on April 18.

The songs performed were "Bomba" from Sonata Trágica, "Poema No.1," "Poema No. 4: Añoranzas de Boquerón," "Poema Melódico, solo piano version" and "Bomba Revealed."

The concert lasted less than an hour before a full house.

Huang and Thibodeaux began the concert with "Bomba." Both played seamlessly without overpowering each other.

Cheryl Simpliss of Pomona, who attended the concert, said that she liked the dynamic of the musicians.

"You could see the story playing out between them and how well they were working together," Simpliss said.

Simpliss also expressed her love of the modern music played at the Scripps Concert Series.

"It helps me soothe my brain. I love the interactions with the audience when they were telling the stories and listening to modern music, it was really great," Simpliss said.

Later for "Poemas" for violin and piano, Krastins and Rosalebrom played together with Rosalebrom taking over for "Poema Melódico, solo piano version."

Rosalebrom told the audience how he felt playing his music for an audience.

"Thank you for taking a risk for listening to something from what we know, Beethoven or Chopin or anything like that," Rosalebrom said.

He also told the audience to encourage aspiring musicians around them.

"If you know somebody in your family or your students that do want to compose, I beg you to encourage them, to support them," Rosalebrom said.

Rosalebrom said he felt humbled at the presence of the audience listening to his compositions.

"Thank you very much, I am humbled by your presence," Rosalebrom said.

Rosalebrom explained to the audience that while "Poema Melódico" is a solo piano composition, originally it was written for both piano and violin but he simply did not like it and decided to make it a piano only composition. Rosalebrom himself played Poema Melódico and Krastins stepped off stage.

Later, Rosalebrom stepped off stage and Huang and Thibodeaux played the final piece of the concert, "Bomba, Revealed."

Huang explained many key parts of the song. Sonata Tragica, is about the Puerto Rican sugar mill business and slavery. Certain parts of the sonata were meant to convey despair and crying from the slaves.

"The serenade is comfort and respite and joy," Huang said.

At certain points of the song, the sugar mill is given a voice through the violin and the piano.

"The voice of the sugar mill becomes specific and shows remorse then asks for forgiveness," Huang said.

Later, at the end of the song, the instruments represent the dissolving of slavery at the sugar mill.

"The machinery, the chains, begin to slip, begin to come undone," Huang said.

Freshman psychology Scripps student Kea Nakayama said that she enjoyed the performance and appreciated the explanation Huang gave.

"Yeah, I really liked it. I think I was caught off guard a little bit by the first song, but then after, like the explanation, I realized how much this story was telling," Nakayama said.

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Five runs not enough for Leopards

Leila El Sabbagh
Sports Editor

The Leopards' softball team was unable to stop the Chapman Panthers from sweeping them in their series beginning on April 18. The series kicked off with a 7-0 loss in Orange, followed by losses of 7-2 and 6-5 for La Verne on Saturday at Campus West.

The Panthers immediately got to work in the second game of the doubleheader, scoring a run at the top of the first inning off a safety squeeze bunt by senior third baseman Ilianna Serna.

The Leopards answered right back by keeping it simple, stringing together singles when senior designated player Kirstin Sanchez came up big with a two RBI double to take the lead.

"I think we figured out a better flow for our offense so we can pass the bat," head coach Danielle Kaminaka said.

"The mindset of just turning the page when something happens that maybe isn't how we want it."

Freshman shortstop Mackenzie Johnson added to the Leopards' score with an RBI single into left field updating the score to 3-1 La Verne.

Something that the Leopards use to help them accomplish their goals to get them going is a big yellow poster board.

"We have different goals in each game and everytime we make that goal, we have someone in the dugout who's in charge of it," senior catcher Alyssa Campbell said.

"Every time we reach a goal we put a little softball on it, so it can be from doubles or the amount of people who got on base or if the energy was on that inning."

After two scoreless innings for Chapman and La Verne, the Panthers tied the game up with back-to-back doubles. After the hits, starting pitcher for the game junior Jaidynn Alvarez was taken out of the game.

"Honestly, I was trying to give us a good fresh start after the second game," Alvarez said. "Chapman is a difficult team to beat so I just wanted to go in there and give our team the best chance that we could."

The Panthers continued to chip away at the La Verne defense, hitting into gaps all over the field.

They would eventually score three runs off of Sanchez, pitching in relief, to make the score 6-3.

As the game was coming to an end, the Leopards had to find a way to put runs on the board to get back into the game.

With runners at second and third, Campbell didn't waste any time, hitting a double to right center, bringing in two runs for the Leopards.

Campbell gave La Verne the opportunity to rally and tie the game up, however the inning ended when Sanchez grounded out to first base.

"I'm just looking to see the ball and just hit the ball hard wherever it's at," Campbell said. "They were pitching me a lot of out today, that was what I was focusing on during practice and adjusting to throughout my at-bat."

Freshman third baseman Janelle Vega shared how the Leopards were able to come back with momentum.

"We just have to let everyone know we have each other's back and that just because they scored doesn't mean we just have to go down," Vega said. "We needed to come back up."

During the final two innings the Panthers and the Leopards were unable to put any more runs on the board, ending the game with a score of 6-5 in favor of Chapman.

The Leopards, who are 6-9 in conference, are looking to their next series in Redlands to bounce back from this sweep, with the goal of making the Southern California Intercollegiate Athletic Conference tournament.

"I'm honestly excited," Alvarez said.

"We still have a really good chance at making the tournament, so I just hope that we take these next couple series really seriously and continue to work hard."

The Leopards face the Bulldogs for a doubleheader in Redlands starting at noon Saturday.

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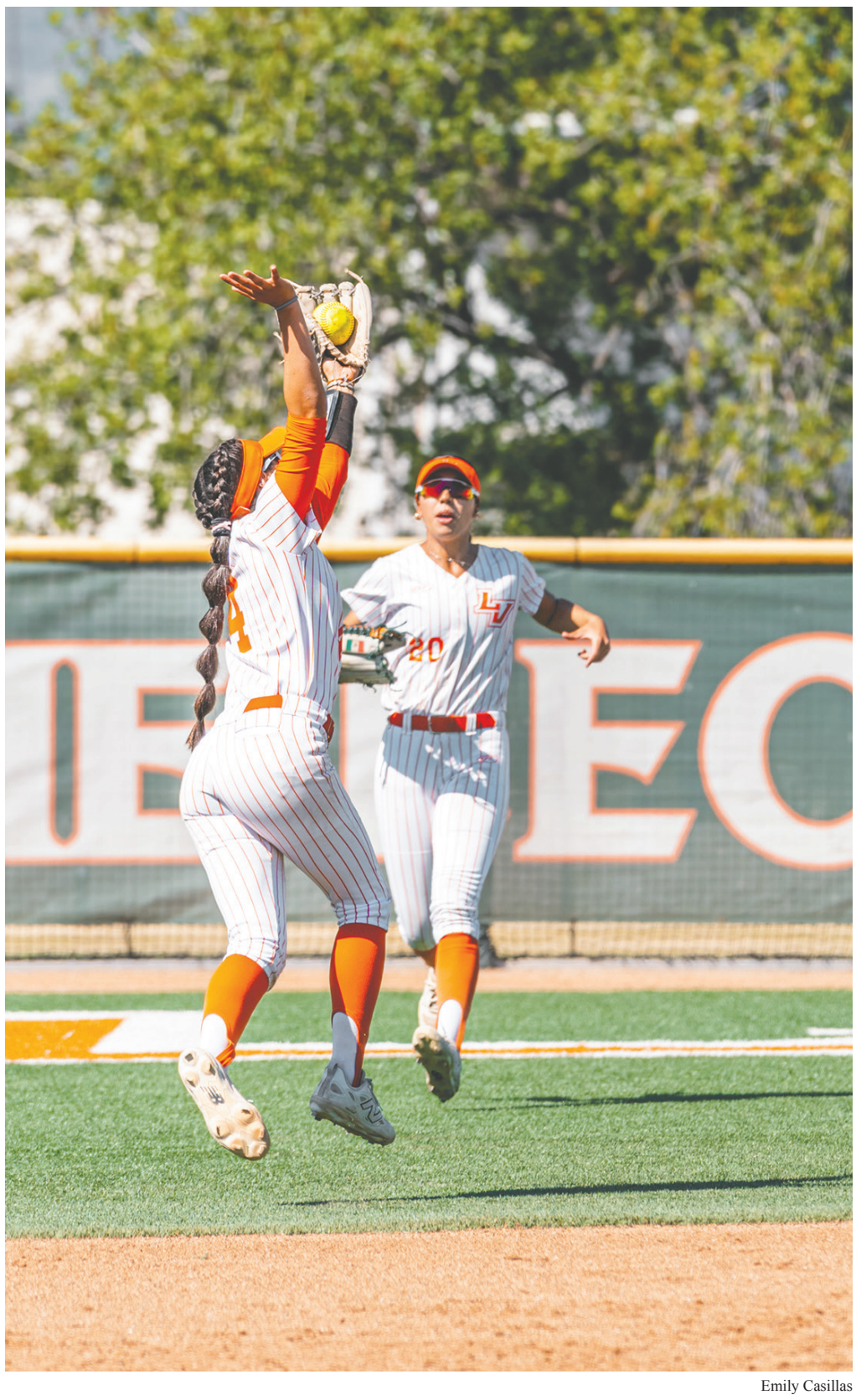

Emily Casillas

Freshman shortstop Mackenzie Johnson makes a clutch catch toward center field during a tight defensive play against Chapman on Saturday at Campus West. Johnson's consistency and presence in the field has been a key factor for the team's defense. La Verne took the loss against Chapman, 6-5.

Baseball breaks into double digits for sweep

Lexi Giacobbe
Staff Writer

The La Verne Leopards delivered an all-around performance Friday at Ben Hines Field, cruising to a commanding 15–1 victory over Occidental in seven innings.

The Leopards combined lights-out pitching with a relentless offensive display, leaving no doubt about who owned the diamond.

"I felt pretty good staying calm and collected. I trusted the process and my team behind me," senior pitcher Ethan Galindo said.

The tone for the game was set by Galindo; working deep into the game, he kept Occidental's bats quiet, allowing just one run and scattering a handful of hits while striking out multiple batters.

His poise and command never wavered, even with runners on base, making crucial outs when it mattered most.

It was the kind of outing every coach dreams of, efficient and dominant.

After a scoreless first inning, the Leopards' bats came alive. RBIs from senior center fielder Benny Vogel, junior shortstop Ryan Vosika and senior first baseman Noah Garcia sparked a three-run rally that set the tempo.

The momentum only snowballed from there.

In the third, another sacrifice fly from Vogel added to the lead, and in the fourth, senior left fielder Nolan Anguiano brought in a run with a deep fly to left.

"Trusting our plan, our work and the process is something we've been working on all week," Vogel said.

Occidental managed to scratch across a run in the fifth, but La Verne responded immediately and emphatically.

In the bottom of the sixth, the Leopards exploded for eight runs in a statement inning.

A combination of timely hitting, smart baserunning, and sheer pressure forced Occidental's bullpen into chaos.

Vogel delivered a ground-rule double that drove in two, while sophomore designated hitter Jake Ledford, Garcia, and junior catcher Nathan Perry each picked up RBIs, including back-to-back hit-by-pitches that brought in runs.

Ledford got in on the action with a sacrifice fly. Senior right fielder Logan Reese capped the inning with an RBI single to stretch the lead to a staggering 15–1.

"We just try to take the game pitch by pitch and win every battle that comes at us. We only do it as a team." Reese said.

From the first pitch to the final out, La Verne played clean, focused baseball, minimizing errors, cashing in on scoring opportunities and showcasing great energy on both sides of the ball.

Every starting position player reached base at least once, and contributions came from up and down the lineup.

"Our plan was to take good at bats and throw strikes and I thought we executed our game plan very well," head coach Scott Winterburn said.

The team swept a doubleheader at Occidental on Saturday with more offensive fireworks.

The Leopards outscored the Tigers in the three games by a combined 47-3.

La Verne now sits in first place in the Southern California Intercollegiate Athletic Conference, with a league record of 14-4 and 26-6 overall.

Next up for the surging Leopards are the sixth-place Chapman Panthers.

The two teams will face off at 3 p.m. Friday in Orange, followed by a doubleheader at 11 a.m. Saturday at Ben Hines Field.

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