

# Natural Selections

A NEWSLETTER OF THE ROCKEFELLER UNIVERSITY COMMUNITY

## Culture Corner

BERNIE LANGS

David Bowie's music always showcased complex arrangements, alongside lyrics reflecting the turmoil of our world. To learn more about Bowie and his music, I contacted musicians and producers who had worked with him during his productive recording and touring years (2002-2004) hoping to land an interview.

Guitarist Gerry Leonard, who worked with Bowie at that time, amiably agreed to speak with me. Leonard appears in YouTube videos of several of Bowie's tours and in documentary movies about Bowie's late career.

Leonard hails from Dublin and studied classical guitar at the Municipal College of Music. He became interested in the harmonic possibilities of the electric guitar and developed an encyclopedic knowledge of equipment for creating original ambient sounds using complex machinery. His solo career centers on his work with his band, Spooky Ghost. Leonard recently toured with rock artist Suzanne Vega and with Rufus Wainwright. He has also worked with performers such as Laurie Anderson, Cyndi Lauper, and Avril Lavigne.

Leonard's work with David Bowie is featured on the albums *Heathen*, *Reality*, and *The Next Day*, lending ambient space that gels seamlessly with Bowie's musical vision. His guitar sound allowed Bowie to expand and perfect his musical statements. Leonard also acted as Musical Director for Bowie's *Reality* tour.

I interviewed Leonard on the phone and met him briefly in December. Here is an edited version of our conversation:

**Bernie Langs:** Artists such as U2 and Sinéad O'Connor continue to reflect traditions of Irish music. Your work with "Bowie" and Susan McKeown reflects that. Do you approach this as a responsibility, a need to continue this tradition?

**Gerry Leonard:** It is in a sense [a responsibility]



Gerry Leonard

PHOTOS COURTESY OF  
SPOOKY GHOST: THE OFFICIAL SITE OF GERRY LEONARD  
<https://gerryleonardspookyghost.com>

ity]. Music and writing and literature, poetry, all of those things have very rich traditions in Ireland because Ireland was essentially a pretty poor peasant country—all of the entertainment and all of the stories in the late night get-togethers with people making their own entertainment, and making it their own, passing on their own heritage, through story and songs. That's very much alive in the arts culture and always has been. And I think you see that with Sinéad O'Connor and U2—we all come from the same water in a sense that the stuff was around.

However, when I started picking up the guitar, I was really interested in [the British TV music show] *Top of the Pops*. We'd watch the bands and then I'd get together with my friends—we had a little band, and then we'd try and work out these songs. We then got into a little bit of progressive rock and then punk rock and new wave hit for me in the mid-late '70s. And it was such a profound shift in terms of the role of the guitar in music, the type of bands.

I've always had a huge respect for the Irish traditional music. Susan McKeown, in regard to the "Bowie" project, she came to me and I was already doing my more ambi-

ent, guitar-scape kind of music, and we had this idea to take some of these traditional Irish songs that she had learned in an oral tradition. She'd gone and traveled and met the person and they taught her the song. She visited people and learned the song from somebody, which is the way it needs to be done.

**BL:** You're known for your ambient sound and guitar loops and creating that kind of atmosphere. What drew you to that?

**GL:** I really love music and it's always resonated with me on a deep level. Emotionally, I love listening to music and playing music and the raw power of rock and roll. But I also love more complicated things [including] some of the modern classical composers. I really like what [recording artist/record producer] Brian Eno does for instance, with space. I've always taught that through the use of some basic guitar pedal ideas, like echo, reverb, and distortion, you can start to change the harmonic characteristics of the sound and the length of the sound. Cathedrals, for instance, you go in there and you play a note and it does

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all that reverberation. Something changes in the sound and it becomes enriched by its surroundings.

When I play in an ambient way, I really recreate those kinds of atmospheres. It's an environment, a flavor, and a color. When I teach, everybody's focusing on the pedal and so forth, but there are many variations on the machines that do those things in different ways and some in really beautiful complex ways, but what goes in is important too, and that's for the harmony and the music and the musical idea. I practice two things: like the way an athlete would practice, it's a muscular thing, being in touch with your instrument, and then I practice harmonically, trying to understand the different keys, different voicings, and be more fluent in those things. Or in the studio, I can quickly analyze the harmonic sense of the song and where I see these shapes and colors in the song I can try and accentuate those with the ambient thing or with a line that's got a certain tonal quality to it, which brings more color to the picture of all the elements that are really important.

If you think about a quality of a David Bowie song, for instance, he always had a kickass rhythm section and he always loved guitar and stuff, but there's also room for a coloration or something a little more extreme in there and he enjoyed that boldness. Getting to play with David was a great culmination of a lot of those things for me. I think of recording as a snapshot, and it can be very static, but it can also be really interesting and mysterious. That is when it gets interesting to me, when you get this kind of lightning in a bottle where you're getting something extra. It's a constant quest.

**BL:** It's amazing that Bowie recognized that he could use your technique for his work.

**GL:** It really was. Part of being in New York was about establishing a foothold for yourself. I'd been playing whenever possible, just learning my craft, and using New York as a filter to figure out what's your strength, what's not your strength, especially in regard to ambient guitar, figuring out a way to make it happen in the room live. I'd been working on all those things and then the call came through from my friend Mark Plati. Mark was working with David and asked me to do a track, and one thing led to another.

It was a very, very proud moment to get the call from David to be involved with him. He's such an icon, and as a guitar player, it's

such a great legacy to be involved in, to be one of the guitar players. Even if it was in his later career, just to be able to play all that stuff with the guy who was there and wrote it. And he was a great inspiration to be around playing that stuff. It brought such a level of authenticity to it, and his very being—being around David you got that guru-like quality about him. It was tremendously exciting and a great honor, and it's one of those ones where you really have to pinch yourself and go, “did this really happen?”

**BL:** When you were with Bowie, was there always an awareness of who he was?

**GL:** I realized quickly that when you're with David, people start seeking you out with [ulterior] motives. You're sitting in a hotel lobby waiting, and somebody comes up and goes, “Hey Gerry, do you want something to drink?” And I'm like, “Who is this person?” So you realize you kind of have to put up a wall around that because people want to get to David because he really is that person—he's a rock star, but he's touched so many people and changed so many people's lives, and people have this real adulation for him.

The nice thing about working with David is he never wanted that; he didn't want anybody sucking up to him. He wanted to be able to just be himself and he wanted you to be yourself. So that was always nice and refreshing to be around. But you have to put up a little bit of a wall around him because people, they changed their nature towards you.

**BL:** When you were with him alone or with him and the band, could you ever let go of who he was?

**GL:** Yeah, we did—I think we did. We had a lot of laughs. He was very good at kind of breaking that stuff down. You would get to a place where you were not self-conscious and that's what you want. You want the truth in yourself and in your nature and in the way you responded to things, and you don't want to be a deer in the headlights and freeze up. He wants you there to be part of a creative solution. We would pretty quickly, especially when we were working on music, get to a place where it was very relaxed. I'd been with him in social situations, too, and when we were together it would be really easy. Sometimes we'd go out to an art museum or something, and people would sidle up to me and go, “Is that David Bowie?” and I'm like, “Yes, it is, but you probably should just leave him alone. Because he's there and just wants to look at the art.”

## Natural Selections

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**BL:** I've watched videos of you discussing how “Loving the Alien” came to be performed with just you and Bowie. How did you feel alone, just you two, performing that song onstage?

**GL:** I literally got a call on a Tuesday. It was very David, where he'd obviously come up with this idea where he was like, “I want to do this song, I want to do a stripped-down version of it,” and he called me and told me, “Rehearsals are on Friday, are you up for it?” And I was like, “Yes, of course, I'm up for it,” and I remember putting down the phone and going to listen to the song and having that moment of panic, “What do we do here?” I worked on it and came up with that little [guitar loop] line, changed the key, and worked out a version on the guitar. When I got there on Friday, we did a couple of songs [in rehearsal], Tony Visconti had a string quartet and we were doing the other song and I was playing on those and everybody left and it was me and David, and he's like, “Did you get to look at ‘Loving the Alien?’” and I played this loop to demonstrate and I start playing with it and he comes in singing and I keep playing and he keeps singing—we do the whole song. And he said, “Great, we'll do that tomorrow night.”

Then that was that. It was like one of those things where I guess I got it right, but it was his idea, his song, and his idea to do it in this way. I brought my thing to it. He liked it. We did it. He liked it so much for me to continue to do it and it framed the song. It would be fair to say that we didn't overthink it, but I also worked with David a few times prior, so I knew that I had to come up with something that stood on its own. I'm really proud that we got to do that. I'm very proud of the arrangement, and I love that he liked it. So, it was a nice moment where our two worlds met.

**BL:** It seems that Bowie recognized what all of you were doing for his music, using, for example, bassist and vocalist Gail Ann Dorsey as a foil while performing the songs and joking with the audience.

**GL:** Well exactly. David loved the personalities and he chose people as role players. Mike Garson [Bowie's long-time keyboardist] would say he was like a casting director when it came to this and he did celebrate the musicians. He was very generous in those ways. And he was very comfortable in his own skin and he was able to share the spotlight in the sense, to give Gail a solo—and he always gave people their due.

**BL:** On the *Reality* album, I sense the perfection in the studio that began with *Station to Station*. And the social philosophy that began with *Low*. When you were working in the studio on *Reality* and *Heathen*, were you thinking of it that way?

**GL:** He definitely heard a lot of those philosophies going around, you could tell, in terms of the songs. I love what he did with *Heathen*. He took a real shift—he was going to do this record, essentially his reworked songs that he had over the years, and then suddenly he shut down that project and went and did *Heathen*. It was almost like he went off and wrote a novel or a prose thing. And I love that about it.

David was such an avid reader. He was always a searcher. You could tell. You'd come in, and if you hadn't seen him in a while, he was always full of these stories or facts or things that he was interested in, whether it was art, sculpture, TV shows, whatever was going on. He really liked to stay in touch with a lot of things that were current, whether it's music or comedy or TV or film, but he was always reading all kinds of stuff. And when he did the *Next Day* record and the *Black Star*



Gerry Leonard (r.) and Gale Ann Dorsey (center) with David Bowie

record [Bowie's final album] he was really into his books and those stories are seeping into his work. It's a classic situation where David always got this insatiable thirst for art and then he had this way of taking what really inspired him from that stuff and somehow working it into his records and his music, and I think that happened all the way along. He just had this uncanny knack. I think when you got two records like *Heathen* and *Reality* it was just a more evolved, or more grownup version of it.

You were aware that these things were going on. Often though, working with David, you didn't get the full picture until later because he would [only] have some lyrics done. He'd generally have a melody and a sense of what or where he wanted the song to go. But he was always open for you to put your two cents in. And sometimes you put something in there, and it would make it turn for everybody.

**BL:** When I saw Bowie in New York in 1978, there was no rock star thing going on with him. I was amazed he would stand back in the background just enjoying the band at times during solos.

**GL:** That's classic Bowie. He was really good at reading people, reading situations. He had an instinct for that. I think he's a huge music fan too, with other artists, and he had a real sense of how to write a song. If you take something like *Heroes*, he's already reinvented himself a few times. And now he's with Visconti, and he's coming to the table with all these fresh ideas. It made such a potent thing, and it knocked all our socks off.

**BL:** When Bowie died, my friends and I were heartbroken. It's so rare that a public figure's life is so roundly applauded for his life in the media on passing. But for you, this is your friend, bandmate, and creative partner, a different level of grief.

**GL:** It is. It's still hard to believe that he's not with us. I was used to long periods where I wouldn't see David, or didn't speak with him, so it wasn't unusual to be without him for a while, but at the same time, to realize that you're never going to have those moments again is really, really sad. You have a feeling of the things that you should have said, you could have said, opportunities that were missed, just on a personal level, you think, "Oh God, why didn't I say this? Or do this or ask him this?" It's ongoing. At the same time, I know he would want us to just do our music and be the best that we can be. He was always really encouraging. When I was with Spooky Ghost, and I would do some shows on the road, he would come out to them every now and again, just to hang out. He was super supportive. So you temper it with that. We miss him.

**BL:** One of my friends once said, "There will be all the pop songs that nobody's going to remember in the years ahead. And at that time, they are still going to be studying David Bowie."

**GL:** Well, I think he would be happy to hear that. I don't think he was made in that way, but he was a searcher, and he was not interested in resting on his laurels. That's what is really rich about this whole scene of David Bowie, that there's plenty to go on, and the archeological dig can continue for some time. The guy operated on a lot of different levels, and yet he was able to write and speak to the multitude. He had that gift, whether in *Changes* or in *Heroes*, or any of these iconic songs, he was able to capture what we all thought, felt, and wished for. That's what's beautiful about it. It was always contemporary, and it was always written for the people. It wasn't written for some kind of elite. A unique gift. I miss him terribly.

People come up and tell me that all the time, especially when going to do these Bowie celebration gigs, and that's all they want to talk about, their experience how David moved them, how he changed them. It's really remarkable. It's also hopeful. I feel like as part of the legacy with David, part of our duty is to keep his work alive. I feel very lucky to have worked with him, he was the one that really moved people, and everybody's looking to get a little closer to that. ■

*Thanks to Victor Cisneros and Erin Henegan for technical assistance in recording and transcribing this interview. [Edited for clarity and length.]*



## For Your Consideration And They're Off! Edition

JIM KELLER

Every year, I reiterate that one can liken the Oscar race to a horse race where each studio pins their hopes on their respective horses hoping to place. In the analogy, the studio is the horse's owner, public relations is the jockey, and the actor or film is the horse. Here I've included my rankings as they stood on the eve of Oscar nominations—the number in parentheses indicates my placement following nominations. I chose eight nominees for Best Picture out of a possible ten, as determined by the Academy's [preferential ballot system](#). All other categories reflect five nominees. The picks that appear in black text within the table were my original nominee picks, and those in red represent actual nominees that I had not chosen.

This year, I banked on the success of films like *A Star Is Born* and *BlacKkKlansman* to drive their nominations, and ultimately included Bradley Cooper in my Best Director list and John David Washington in Best Actor (clearly, the Academy had other ideas; for example, you can see the support for Alfonso Cuarón's *Roma* through not only the Best Actress nomination for Yalitza Aparicio, which I predicted, but also the Best Supporting Actress nomination for Marina de Távira, which was a nice surprise). You never know which way the Academy wind is going to blow, and perhaps to some degree that's what makes Oscar watching so enjoyable.

With that, I give you my current Oscar predictions:



Roma

Photo Courtesy of NETFLIX



BlacKkKlansman

Photo Courtesy of FOCUS FEATURES



A Star is Born

Photo Courtesy of WARNER BROS.

2019 OSCAR CONTENDERS						
	Best Picture	Best Director	Best Actor	Best Actress	Best Supporting Actor	Best Supporting Actress
1	<i>Roma</i> (Netflix) [1]	Alfonso Cuarón - <i>Roma</i> [1]	Christian Bale - <i>Vice</i> [2]	Glenn Close - <i>The Wife</i> [1]	Mahershala Ali - <i>Green Book</i> [1]	Regina King - <i>If Beale Street Could Talk</i> [1]
2	<i>Green Book</i> (Universal Pictures) [3]	Spike Lee - <i>BlacKkKlansman</i> [2]	Rami Malek - <i>Bohemian Rhapsody</i> [1]	Lady Gaga - <i>A Star Is Born</i> [2]	Richard E. Grant - <i>Can You Ever Forgive Me?</i> [2]	Amy Adams - <i>Vice</i> [2]
3	<i>A Star Is Born</i> (Warner Brothers Pictures) [5]	Bradley Cooper - <i>A Star Is Born</i>	Bradley Cooper - <i>A Star Is Born</i> [3]	Olivia Colman - <i>The Favourite</i> [3]	Timothée Chalamet - <i>Beautiful Boy</i>	Emma Stone - <i>The Favourite</i> [4]
4	<i>BlacKkKlansman</i> (Focus Features) [2]	Pawel Pawlikowski - <i>Cold War</i> [4]	Viggo Mortensen - <i>Green Book</i> [4]	Melissa McCarthy - <i>Can You Ever Forgive Me?</i> [5]	Sam Rockwell - <i>Vice</i> [5]	Rachael Weisz - <i>The Favourite</i> [5]
5	<i>The Favourite</i> (Fox Searchlight Pictures) [4]	Adam McKay - <i>Vice</i> [5]	John David Washington - <i>BlacKkKlansman</i>	Yalitza Aparicio - <i>Roma</i> [4]	Sam Elliott - <i>A Star Is Born</i> [4]	Nicole Kidman - <i>Boy Erased</i>
6	<i>Black Panther</i> (Walt Disney Studios Motion Pictures) [8]	Yorgos Lanthimos - <i>The Favourite</i> [3]	Willem Dafoe - <i>At Eternity's Gate</i> [5]		Adam Driver - <i>BlacKkKlansman</i> [3]	Marina de Távira - <i>Roma</i> [3]
7	<i>Vice</i> (Annapurna Pictures) [6]					
8	<i>Bohemian Rhapsody</i> (20th Century Fox) [7]					





Du with his partner and three kids.

"My resolution is to survive toward end of the year, while 1) raising three kids, 2) taking care of a house 3) commuting between New York and Richmond, 4) doing my Ph.D., and 5) running two businesses at the same time. Steps taken so far: I have tried to fill every minute of my day with something."

- Du Cheng



Chicken that Steven cooked for himself.

"My resolution is to cook healthier and eat in more moderation!"

- Steven Cajamarca

## Rockefeller's Resolutions for 2019

SARAH BAKER

The Ancient Babylonians are thought to be the first people to make the equivalent of what we think of as a New Year's resolution. Four millennia ago, they would make promises to the gods that they would pay their debts in the upcoming year. This happened at the beginning of the Babylonian new year, in March, during an eleven-day festival called Akitu, or the Festival of the Sowing of Barley. The Babylonians believed that if they kept these promises, the gods would bless them with good luck throughout the year.

This trend persisted thousands of years later, picked up by individuals mostly for religious reasons, and ancient Romans and early Christians continued to make promises to their deities or deity on the first day of the new year, which became January 1 after Julius Casear moved it to this date to honor the Roman god of beginnings, Janus. People normally used this as an opportunity to promise that they would atone for past

mistakes and be better in the future. Today, New Year's resolutions are common in the Western world and are generally individual goals for self-improvement. About 45% of Americans make New Year's resolutions, but the success rate for keeping these goals is a measly 8%, according to a [poll](#) conducted in December 2018.

Now, at the start of 2019, we have reached a time when we all reflect on what we have or have not accomplished in 2018 and how we would like to improve ourselves this upcoming year. My own resolutions include seriously starting to plan my wedding, running my first half marathon, and being able to do ten pull-ups in a row. Maybe writing it down for you all to see will make me feel more accountable, and I can be in that 8% of people who actually achieve their goals.

Here is a glimpse of the resolutions that other members of the Rockefeller community have for 2019:



Shigeru eating chicken he cooked for himself in his new InstantPot.

"My resolution is to lose weight by eating less burgers and more chicken and to become an "Intermediate+" volleyball player so that I can play with the Tri-I on Wednesday nights."

- Shigeru Kaneki



"My resolution is to figure out my career plan and to break out of this quarter-life crisis. I would also like to more seriously consider learning how to cook an adult meal."

- Jyen Yiee Wong

Jyen trying to figure out her next life steps.



"My New Year's Resolution is to travel more. So I decided to start the year right and spent a day in Moscow on my way back to NYC. It was so cold, but so beautiful!"

- Anna Amelianchik

Anna embracing the beautiful cold in Moscow.



## Get Your Hot Dogs Here

AILEEN MARSHALL

“Baseball, hot dogs, apple pie and Chevrolet.” That was the tagline of an old commercial. Hot dogs are known for being a quintessentially American food, especially associated with sports stadiums. In New York City, hot dog carts are considered iconic. But how American are they?

Sausages have been around since the ninth century B.C., and were even mentioned in Homer’s *Odyssey*. Hot dogs are a type of sausage also known as frankfurters or wieners. This particular soft sausage, made from pork byproducts in a thin casing, was first developed in Frankfurt, Germany in the late fifteenth century, hence the name frankfurters. Legend has it that in the 1690s, a butcher in Colburg, Germany noticed that frankfurters were similar in shape to his dachshund dog. He started calling them dachshund sausages. However, since hot dogs are also known as wieners, Austrians claim they were invented in Vienna in the late 1800s. By the mid-nineteenth century, it was a common practice to eat frankfurters in a bun. This practice was brought to America by German immigrants, not invented here, and they may have already referred to them as dogs.

There are variations of a famous story about how the first hot dogs were invented in America, but they are probably not true. The main rendition is about a man named Feuchtwanger. He was selling hot dogs on the streets in St. Louis (or some say at the World’s Fair) sometime in the late 1800s and would loan people gloves to eat them with so as not burn their hands. However most people never gave the gloves back. When he ran out of gloves, he talked to either a local baker, his wife, or brother-in-law who gave him some long buns he split down the middle. However, there is a lot of written evidence that hot dogs were already around. The writer H. L. Mencken wrote that he had been eating hot dogs since his childhood, in the 1880s, and they were not considered new then. There are many mentions in Harvard, Yale, and Princeton magazines from the 1890s about “dog wagons” near the colleges. Apparently, they were called “dog wagons” since meat was considered low quality, but they were cheap, making them convenient food for students. So the story about the name “hot dogs” being invented in the early twentieth century by a newspaper cartoonist is probably not true either. Supposedly,



Hot dog cart on East 16th Street in New York City. October 23, 2007. Rollingrck.

Tad Dorgan was at a baseball game, polo match, or bicycle race at the Polo Grounds or Madison Square Garden, sometime between 1900 and 1906. A vendor was yelling something to the effect of, “Get your red hot dachshund sausages here!”, and it caught Dorgan’s attention. He drew a cartoon of the vendor for the *New York Journal*, but since he didn’t know how to spell dachshund, he just called them dogs; however, no record of this cartoon has ever been found. Ironically, wanting to serve something “truly American,” President Franklin Roosevelt included hot dogs on the menu for the visit of King George VI of England in 1939.

It seems hot dogs have been sold in New York City for well over a hundred years. There are newspaper mentions of hot dogs being sold from push carts, with sauerkraut on a milk roll in the New York City Bowery in the 1860s. A German immigrant named Charles Feltman opened a hot dog

stand in Coney Island in 1867, but it folded during the Great Depression in the 1930s. In 1915, a Polish immigrant working for Feltman slept on the floor of the restaurant to save money. A year later he had saved up \$300, which he used to open his own hot dog restaurant in Coney Island. He competed with Feltman by selling his dogs for five cents, while Feltman’s cost ten cents. That enterprising young man was Nathan Handwerker, and his original restaurant is still in Coney Island to this day, with Nathan’s Famous Hot Dog restaurants located all around the country. Their celebrated hot dog eating contest started in 1972 and occurs every year on the Fourth of July.

There is a story that a friend of Feltman’s named Donovan built him a small tin-lined chest with a charcoal stove inside to boil the hot dogs, similar to the hot dog carts we know today. Another claim for the first modern hot dog cart is from 1926. A man named Frances Coffey designed a



stainless steel cart with a cooking plate, steam table, and ice box, according to the website [New York Tour1](#). Today there are regulations controlling mobile food vendors, including hot dog carts. The dogs must be pre-cooked and kept in a pan of hot water, which is why they are often referred to as “dirty water dogs.” The carts must have a cooler for storage, and sinks for washing utensils. Most carts use propane for heating. Umbrellas are required to protect the food from the sun and dust, and there is a limit to the number of condiments carried. Vendors must be also trained in safe food handling practices and have their carts inspected by the city.

While hot dogs are much beloved in the country (we eat about seven billion per year), they are also rather unhealthy. Traditional hot dogs are pre-cooked, made from beef or pork byproducts, fat, salt, spices, and preservatives (mainly nitrates). The World Health Organization lists nitrates as Group 1 Carcinogens. There are many alternatives produced to make them healthier, such as chicken, turkey, or tofu dogs. Most hot dogs we eat are of the skinless type. They are cooked in the skin, or casing, and the skin is removed afterwards.

The customary New York City frank is a beef dog served with mustard and sauerkraut, and sometimes cooked onions in a thin tomato base, on a soft white bun. Different regions and stadiums tend to have



*Classic New York Hot Dog: 100% American beef with sauerkraut and onions on a soft bun. May 31, 2014. Aneil Lutchman.*

their own signature style. In Chicago, hot dogs are buried under mustard, tomato, chopped raw onion, peppers, pickles, relish, and celery salt on a poppy seed bun. They like their hot dogs spicy in Texas; at Astros Field in Houston, dogs are sold with chili, cheese, and jalapeños. The “Fenway Frank” in Boston is boiled and then grilled, and served on a toasted New England-style (flat-sided) bun. The Atlanta Braves have their dogs topped with coleslaw. In

Los Angeles, the “Dodger Dog” consists of a grilled ten-inch-long pork frank with ketchup, mustard, chopped onions, and sweet relish.

Hot dogs have always been a convenient food to eat while walking around, at picnics, or at sports stadiums. New Yorkers sometimes refer to the street carts as “sidewalk gourmet.” While not very healthy, it’s one more traditional foods to sample while in a new city, or even in your own. ■

## Natural Expressions

### Music

On February 14 at 7:30 p.m. Santa Maria Pecoraro Di Vittorio of the Rice Laboratory will be performing a Valentine’s Concert with the Chamber Orchestra of New York, featuring music by Khachaturian, Mahler, and Tchaikovsky. This concert is being held in Weill Hall at Carnegie Hall and tickets can be found [online](#) (25% off general admission using code: CNY29834) and \$35 student tickets can be purchased by emailing Santa Maria at [specoraro@rockefeller.edu](mailto:specoraro@rockefeller.edu).

Collete Ryder of The Rockefeller University’s Office of Sponsored Programs Administration will be performing Arthur Honegger’s *King David* (*Le Roi David*)

with NYCHORAL on February 28. This performance, directed by David Hayes, will feature choral and orchestral music, as well as dance and narration, to explore the lives of three biblical characters: Samuel, Saul, and David. This performance will take place in the Central Synagogue (652 Lexington Avenue) at 8 p.m. Tickets (\$45) are available [online](#) / contact Collette Ryder ([cryder@rockefeller.edu](mailto:cryder@rockefeller.edu)) for discounts.

Maria Lazzaro from Human Resources at The Rockefeller University will be playing Jazz music on February 28 from 6 to 8 p.m. at [Mae Mae Café and Bar](#) for an extended Happy Hour. Admission is free.

### Digital Events

Bernie Langs and Clint Mobley of The Rockefeller University Development Office announce the release of their new recording on SoundCloud, “[Resolution, She & Other Songs](#).” This medley features familiar and original themes from “Girls in Their Summer Clothes” by Bruce Springsteen, “Both Sides Now” by Joni Mitchell, “Resolution” by Clint Mobley, “She” - lyrics by Anastasios Kozaitis, music by Clint Mobley & Bernie Langs, and “Sloop John B.” by Brian Wilson.

Email Megan E. Kelley at [mkelley@rockefeller.edu](mailto:mkelley@rockefeller.edu) to submit your art/music/performance/sporting/other event for next month’s “Natural Expressions” and follow @NatSelections on Twitter for more events.

## A New Year, A New Musical: The Prom

MELISSA JARMEL

There are many new musicals that will be vying for a Tony nomination this year. Some are movies turned musicals: *King Kong* (currently playing), *Pretty Woman* (currently playing), and *Tootsie* (starting March 29). Some are jukebox musicals: *The Cher Show* (currently playing) and *Ain't Too Proud: The Temptations Musical* (starting February 28). One is a musical adaptation of a folk opera concept album by Anaïs Mitchell called *Hadestown* (starting March 22). And some are original new musicals: *Gettin' The Band Back Together* (opened and closed in 2018), *Be More Chill* (starting February 13), and *The Prom* (currently playing).

A few of the musicals set to open are going to be strong contenders for the Tony for Best New Musical, but of those currently playing, I think *The Prom* is the favorite and will surely get a nomination. This show is a musical comedy, so you should expect over-the-top humor and exaggerated performances to keep you entertained. And *The Prom* delivers with self-awareness and little regard for political correctness.

The show opens with a group of aging, narcissistic Broadway actors who scroll through Twitter trying to find a cause to get involved with to better their image as activists. Enter Emma—a high school student who wants to bring her girlfriend to the prom—but her small town in Indiana is so opposed that the Parent Teacher Association cancels the prom altogether to stop her. Without consulting Emma, the Broadway crew races to her side to protest and reinstate a prom where she can take her girlfriend, and so the drama (and comedy) ensues.

The laughs are many, and the feels are high as the show explores themes of acceptance, the role of the arts in school, and



personal growth in between the promposals and witty repartee. The music is poppy and upbeat, and you'll be sure to leave the theatre bopping along to the final song "It's Time to Dance" or singing, "life's no dress rehearsal" from the other big company number "Tonight Belongs to You," though these are not the only memorable songs.

There is a same-day [rush](#) when the box office opens for two tickets per person. Currently, Telecharge is also offering a [dis-](#)

[count](#) to see the show through April 21st for up to \$50 off tickets. Additionally, tickets have appeared at the TKTS booths for \$83-93 and are usually orchestra tickets. Lastly, if you sign up for [TDE](#), this is one of the shows that has appeared before on their listings for members (just a reminder that Broadway tickets are under \$50 for members and membership is now \$40).

*The Prom* is playing at the Longacre Theatre (220 W 48th Street). ■

## February Bulletin

### PREGAME YOUR BRAIN: THE SCIENCE OF MOVEMENT

The Rockefeller Members of the [KnowScience](#) organization Sarah Baker, Tiago Altavini, Jyen Yiee Wong, and Simona Giunta would like to invite you to the "Pregame Your Brain" event at [Caveat](#) on February 8. From 6 to 8 p.m. scientists will introduce guests to the science of movement at the following stations:

**Microsoft Kinect:** Come discover the latest technology behind motion sensing to understand how learning about movement can help

recover movement in people that have been hurt or sick. Scientist: Sarah Baker.

**Leap Motion Controller:** The infrared light sensor of the Leap Motion Controller tracks the motion of your hand and forearm, allowing you to play a video game without touching any surface! Scientist: Chiara Bertipaglia.

**Human-human interface:** Have you ever dreamt of controlling the people around you? Now you can! Come control someone else's

arm with your brain! Scientists: Stephanie Rogers, Heather Snell.

**Visual Illusions:** Challenge yourself with mind-blowing optical illusions. Come find out how they are gathered by your eye and processed by your brain, creating a disconnection between perception and reality. Scientist: Tiago Siebert Altavini.

The event is free with advanced RSVP [online](#) or \$5 at the door (21+). ■



# Pets of Tri-I

POOJA VISWANATHAN

In the second run of this series, Pooja Viswanathan interviews Emma and Rusty, the cats who live with Jim Keller and Dom Olinares. I met these wonderful creatures one fine evening, and they were very gracious to answer some pressing questions I had for them. If you would like your pet(s) featured in this series, please contact me at [pviswanath@rockefeller.edu](mailto:pviswanath@rockefeller.edu).

**Pooja Viswanathan:** How long have you lived in New York City?

Emma: All my life. Forrr 52 years—that's nine human years.

Rusty: Forrr 32 years, that's fourrr human years.

**PV: What is your first memory?**

E: Hunting and defending my prey from otherrr stray cats on the streets of New York. I took advantage of my big paws and extra thumbs to fight and survive.

R: When I was brought in a shoebox with my siblings to the Humane Society from the freezing cold of winterrr. The tip of my tail had to be removed due to injury, but I was glad to be warm. I have a slightly shorterrr tail now, but it does not affect me at all.

**PV: When did you meet your daddies?**

E: In 2011, daddy Dom adopted me from the ASPCA, and soon afterrr I trained him to become my slave. Daddy Jim joined us two years laterrr and reformed me, but I still have the last say in everything.  
R: When I was a kitten in 2014, my daddies came and picked me up from the Humane Society. I felt like I had always been waiting forrr them. The moment I saw them we werrre bonded. I cannot imagine living without them and my sisterrr.

**PV: How do your daddies fit in the Tri-I community?**

E: Daddy Jim is a writerrr and editorrr at MSK.

R: Daddy Dom does a lot of really cool experiments as a scientist at Rockefellerrr University.

**PV: Where do you live? What is your favorite thing about living here?**

E: On the Upperrr East Side. Our new place is very high up and has so many windows. I love it because I can see a lot



Emma

of flying, feathered prey on the rooftops of adjacent buildings and on the East Riverrr. I chirp and chatterrr when I see them but they neverrr seem to hearrr me. I imagine the many different ways to catch them once I get the chance.

R: I love all the space in our new apartment because I can run around and chase my sisterrr all day and night. All the time is play time!

**PV: If you could live anywhere else in the world, where would you live?**

E: I heard a lot about Paris from my daddies' vacation last spring. I have already conquered New York, and I'd love to move on to anotherrr city of equal caliberrr.

R: You mean without my daddies?! No wherrre!

**PV: What are your favorite foods?**

E: Classic chicken pâté, and dry cat food forrr treats. I shed a lot of furr and I groom myself continuously so I preferrr food that helps me control hairballs.

R: Special treats from my daddies with real fish like sardines! Sometimes daddy Jim will sneak me some cream. Yum!

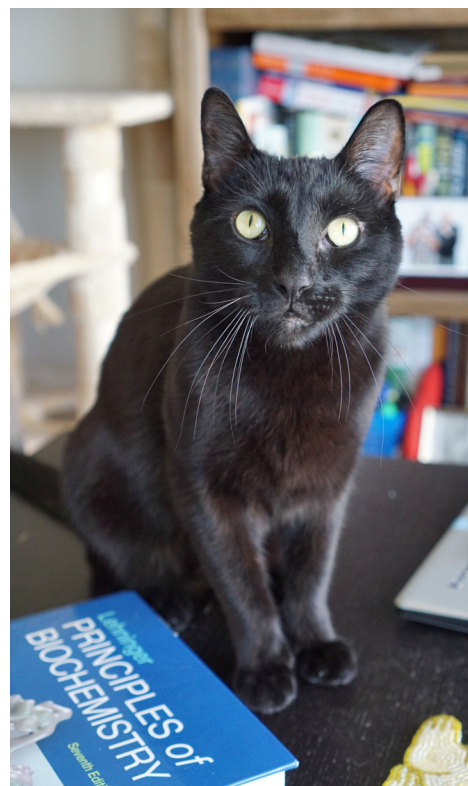
**PV: What is your favorite weekend activity in NYC?**

E: Napping on daddy Jim's lap and then afterrr a while moving to daddy Dom's lap.

R: Play all day! I bring my toys to my daddies and we play fetch.

**PV: Besides your daddies, who is your favorite human in the Tri-I community?**

E: I am loath to say that I like anyone else besides daddies Jim and Dom, but I guess I would say Auntie Natalia, who often looks afterrr us when they are away.



Rusty

R: Auntie Natalia! She takes care of us when our daddies are traveling (even though I don't like it when they leave!)

**PV: Do you have a funny story to share with us?**

E: I'm afraid I can't find much humorrr in the world today.

R: Well one time I rolled around in the bath tub and came out all glittery because of a bath bomb that had been used the night beforrr. My daddies could not figurrre out wherrre I got the glitterrr at first but then they caught me rolling on the tub again afterrr they had just cleaned me up. I thought it was the funniest thing everrr! I love rolling around in the bath tub when no one is looking, and I come out smelling really nice!

**PV: Is there some way we can see more pictures of you on the interwebs?**

E: You can find us both on Instagram using #theemmaandrustyshow.

**PV: Which movie do you think will win the Oscar this year?**

E: Definitely *The Favourite* because like Queen Anne, I am a queen who depends on others for everything. I can relate to having loyal subjects, and I love that hers relentlessly fight over herrr in the film. That is how it should be.

R: *Black Pantherrr*! Wakanda foreverrr! ■

Photo Courtesy of DOM OLINARES





## *Life on Roll* *"Lost in Time"*

NAN PANG

For over half a millennium, the Forbidden City was home to twenty-four emperors and witnessed turbulent changes in Chinese history outside of its walls. Though once you step inside, it feels as if time stopped centuries ago. People often refer to the palace as the center of the Chinese universe—as you wander around, you will find out why this is. ■

