



POLAR BEAR PRESS

ISSUE 06

March 15, 2021

BEYOND THE PRACTICE ROOM: BASIL ALTER



ESSAY SUBMISSION!

*"Zombie Apocalypse!
Or, How Humans are the Bad Guys in our
Own Story"*

Check Out What's New!

**COVID Column
Updates**

**Student Essay
Submission & Contest**

**Environmental Awareness
Club Updates**



THIS ISSUE

- Featured: Basil Alter,
- Beyond the Practice Room — 2, 3
- COVID Column — 4, 5, 6
- Student Submission — 7, 8
- Get Involved MSM — 9
- Departmental — 10
- Student Submission Contest — 10
- Calendar — 11

BEYOND THE PRACTICE ROOM: BASIL ALTER

Beyond the practice room and outside of his composition major, Basil (BM '21) enjoys transcribing music and jazz composition. Interview by Jack Rittendale.

Jack Rittendale: How did you get into composing for New School faculty member Steven Feifke?

Basil Alter: It actually has more to do with transcribing. He improvised the piece, and I wrote it down as sheet music. That's mostly what I do. People record, and I write down the notes.

Jack: Would you consider this more of a hobby, or just work?

Basil: People always ask me what I do for fun outside of music, and for me this is what I do for fun. It's a sought after skill you can get paid for though, of course.

Jack: Have you composed any of your own original pieces?

Basil: I do compose! I haven't posted any of my compositions yet, but I'm going to start recording and posting some soon. I'm trying to build up a portfolio.

Jack: Have you ever done any jazz violin?



Photo on right: Basil Alter from personal Facebook page

Continued on page 3

BEYOND THE PRACTICE ROOM CONTINUED

Basil: I have actually, just for fun as well as gigs. I used to do shows regularly, but not anymore because of Covid. I did play with Branford Marsalis once which was pretty cool.

Jack: Where do you see yourself going with jazz in the bigger picture?

Basil: I'm not sure. I mean, my income from performances started to dwindle in March, so this is another way to make money as a side gig. It's fun, and I enjoy it! The more you do it, the more people you meet and connections you make. I met Feifke through another guy I did work for.

Jack: What all do you do outside of classical music?

Basil: I work on transcriptions, music arrangements, composition, music prep, and recordings. I've been doing a lot of recording now too for violin. I've had stuff recently

where I've had to write music for people, publish it, and then record what I wrote on my violin. At the moment I'm working on something for the former drummer of Nine Inch Nails.

Jack: And what do you see for yourself in terms of classical violin?

Basil: You know, I'm just trying to practice a lot, get my lessons in, and do my best. I don't think anybody knows what the future will look like because of this last year. Everybody's plans are sort of thrown away. I like to play, and I like to perform, so hopefully something works out.

Blues For Alice
As Played By Steven Feifke

Composed by Charlie Parker
Transcribed by Basil Alter

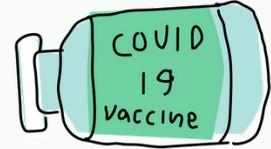
♩ = 200 (swing)

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www.stevenfeifkemusic.com

Pictured above: one of Basil's transcriptions of "Blues for Alice"



COVID Column



When You've Been Fully Vaccinated: How to Protect Yourself and Others

Article and Information written by National Center for Immunization and Respiratory Diseases (NCIRD), Division of Viral Diseases, Updated March 8, 2021
Provided by Cai McPhee, MSM Campus Health, and Dean Monica Christensen

COVID-19 vaccines are effective at protecting you from getting sick. Based on what we know about COVID-19 vaccines, people who have been fully vaccinated can start to do some things that they had stopped doing because of the pandemic.

We're still learning how vaccines will affect the spread of COVID-19. After you've been fully vaccinated against COVID-19, you should keep taking precautions in public places like wearing a mask, staying 6 feet apart from others, and avoiding crowds and poorly ventilated spaces until we know more.

Have You Been Fully Vaccinated?

People are considered fully vaccinated:

- 2 weeks after their second dose in a 2-dose series, like the *Pfizer* or *Moderna* vaccines, or
- 2 weeks after a single-dose vaccine, like *Johnson & Johnson's Janssen* vaccine

If it has been less than 2 weeks since your shot, or if you still need to get your second dose, you are NOT fully protected. Keep taking all prevention steps until you are fully vaccinated.



- If you've been around someone who has COVID-19, you do not need to stay away from others or get tested unless you have symptoms.
- However, if you live in a group setting (like a correctional or detention facility or group home) and are around someone who has COVID-19, you should still stay away from others for 14 days and get tested, even if you don't have symptoms.

What Has Changed?

The CDC is suggesting what life can start to look like when you've been fully vaccinated:

However, the vaccine does not exempt anyone from MSM's guidelines! Please see Page 6 for MSM's continued regulations

- You can gather indoors with fully vaccinated people without wearing a mask.
- You can gather indoors with unvaccinated people from one other household (for example, visiting with relatives who all live together) without masks, unless any of those people or anyone they live with has an increased risk for severe illness from COVID-19.

COVID Column continued on page 5

COVID Column (Continued)

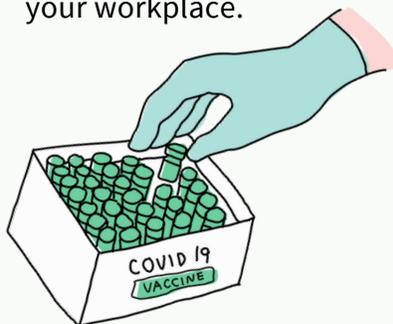
What Hasn't Changed

For now, if you've been fully vaccinated:

- You should still take steps to protect yourself and others in many situations, like wearing a mask, staying at least 6 feet apart from others, and avoiding crowds and poorly ventilated spaces. Take these precautions whenever you are:

In public

- Gathering with unvaccinated people from more than one other household
- Visiting with an unvaccinated person who is at increased risk of severe illness or death from COVID-19 or who lives with a person at increased risk
- You should still avoid medium or large-sized gatherings.
- You should still delay domestic and international travel. If you do travel, you'll still need to follow CDC requirements and recommendations.
- You should still watch out for symptoms of COVID-19, especially if you've been around someone who is sick. If you have symptoms of COVID-19, you should get tested and stay home and away from others.
- You will still need to follow guidance at your workplace.

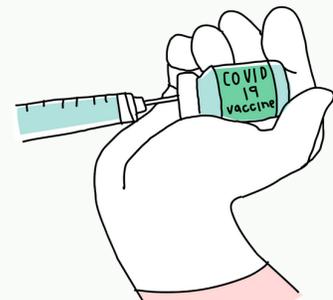
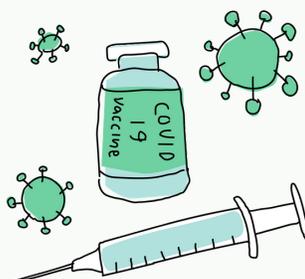


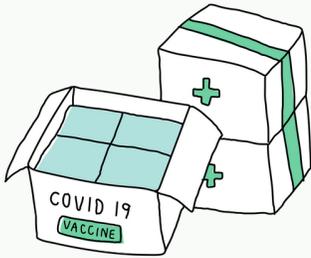
COVID Column continued on on page 6

What We Know and What We're Still Learning

- **We know** that COVID-19 vaccines are effective at preventing COVID-19 disease, especially severe illness and death.
 - **We're still learning** how effective the vaccines are against variants of the virus that causes COVID-19. Early data show the vaccines may work against some variants but could be less effective against others.
- **We know** that other prevention steps help stop the spread of COVID-19, and that these steps are still important, even as vaccines are being distributed.
 - **We're still learning** how well COVID-19 vaccines keep people from spreading the disease.
 - Early data show that the vaccines may help keep people from spreading COVID-19, but we are learning more as more people get vaccinated.
- We're still learning how long COVID-19 vaccines can protect people.
- As we know more, CDC will continue to update our recommendations for both vaccinated and unvaccinated people.

Until we know more about those questions, everyone — even people who've had their vaccines — should continue taking basic prevention steps when recommended.



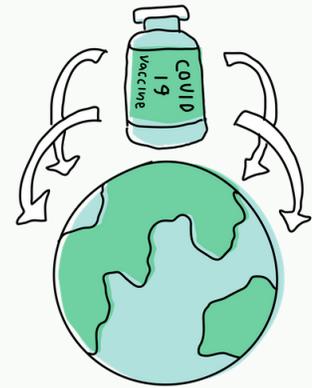


MSM COVID Guidelines (COVID Column Continued)

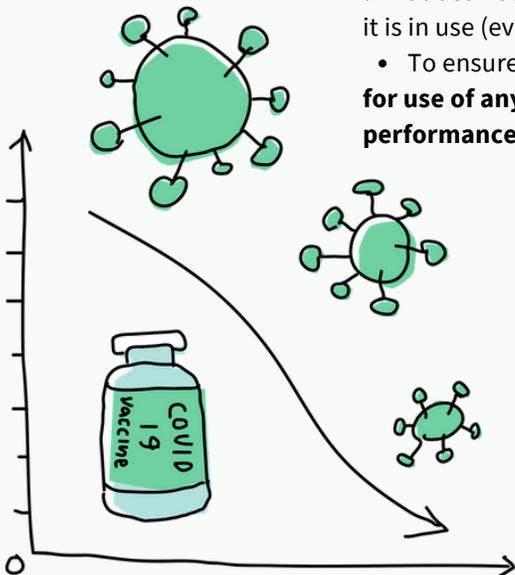
MSM GENERAL SAFETY GUIDELINES

- One of the most effective ways to reduce the spread of COVID-19 is the use of face coverings
- If two or more people are in a room, face coverings are required for everyone, regardless of size of the space or activity being performed. This requirement cannot be circumvented by “mutual agreement” among members a group, or by any other means.
 - If a face covering breaks or becomes otherwise unusable, activity must stop immediately and the face covering must be replaced before continuing. This applies in all situations, including performances. It is the person whose face covering becomes unusable who is responsible for stopping the activity, and getting a new mask. All staffed spaces (Neidorff-Karpati Hall, Greenfield, Ades, Miller) have surgical masks available, as do the security desks.
 - Face coverings may be removed **ONLY** by someone who is completely alone in a room. Once someone has been in a room without a face covering, **NOBODY ELSE** may enter that room until the room has been vacant for the posted vacancy time period. It is **NOT** okay for someone to be alone in a room without a face covering and then have someone else join them, even if both people then put on face coverings – the vacancy period must be observed **IMMEDIATELY** following any unmasked use of a room.

PLEASE NOTE: AT THIS TIME, A COVID-19 VACCINE DOES NOT EXEMPT ANYONE FROM THESE GUIDELINES



- The maximum amount of time a room may be occupied by more than one person is 60 minutes. After 60 minutes, rooms must sit vacant for a period of time to allow for air circulation via the HVAC system and HEPA filter/UV light air ionizers in certain rooms as recommended by HVAC engineering consultants. For most rooms on campus, the vacancy requirement is 30 minutes, which allows for at least three complete air turnovers – each room’s vacancy time period is posted on the door. The 60-minute time limit does not apply for solo use of a room, with **NOBODY ELSE** entering the room while it is in use (even if only for a few minutes).
 - To ensure proper air circulation time in between room uses, **reservations are required for use of any practice room, teaching studio, classroom, rehearsal space or performance space on campus.**



- Physical distancing of 12 feet (4 meters) is required for playing wind or brass instruments, singing, and dancing. Physical distancing of 6 feet (2 meters) is required for all other activities.
- These performance guidelines apply for all performance activity on campus, regardless of people’s relationships/living situations outside of MSM or in the Andersen Hall dorm. For example, even though roommates are allowed to be in their dorm room together without face coverings and may be closer than 6 feet (2 meters), if they are rehearsing together on campus, they must wear face coverings and distance as required.

MSM Student Essay Submission

Zombie Apocalypse! Or, How Humans are the Bad Guys in our Own Story

Written by: **Alexandra Cirile (BM '22)**



If there's one thing humans are obsessed with, it's hero stories. We've told each other these stories since the beginning of time, be it Beowulf defeating Grendel or the Avengers defeating Thanos. It's not a very original idea; man meets monster, man kills monster, man makes the monster's pelt into a fashionable outfit and returns home victorious. Yet at one point we started to pose the question: what happens when there is no villain, when we are both the protagonists and the villains in our own stories?

Let me back up a little bit. Take the tale of Moby Dick, for example. Is Moby Dick a bad guy? No! He's just a whale! There is no such thing as an evil whale. I mean sure, he bit off the guy's leg, but he was probably just feeling peckish.

So, if Moby Dick is just an unfortunately albinistic whale who's minding his own business, where does the story's conflict come from? It comes from within Captain Ahab, who ultimately fails to defeat his own obsessive need for revenge. In Mary Shelley's Frankenstein, is the monster, well, a monster? Okay, he does murder people, but he was thrust into a very awkward situation and treated truly terribly by the people who were supposed to protect him. The monster's monstrousness could have been avoided if it weren't for Frankenstein's hubris and close-mindedness.

In "*The Monsters Are Due on Maple Street*," my personal favorite episode of *The Twilight Zone*, the appearance of an alien spaceship pits the residents of a suburb against each other as they accuse one another of being aliens. Without a single alien stepping foot off the ship, the community destroys itself in one night.

It was not Moby Dick who defeated Ahab, it was not the monster who defeated Frankenstein, and it was not the aliens who defeated the neighborhood of Maple Street. In each of these situations, the external threat was minuscule, easily avoidable. Ahab did not have to go after the whale. Frankenstein did not have to artificially create and then ostracize a monster. And if the residents of Maple Street had marched up to the alien spaceship with their guns instead of shooting each other, they could've been eating alien for breakfast (well, probably not, since the aliens probably have laser blasters, but you get the idea). Each time, it was humans who considered themselves the protagonists while causing their own destruction.

These examples all come from fiction, but we can extrapolate a greater theme. How often do we as individuals self-sabotage, saying "no point in taking that audition since I won't get it anyway," push away the people who mean to help us, or get caught up in feelings of fear and anger when we should be rational and open-minded? It makes us susceptible to threats that, with our current knowledge and technology, should be no problem at all, both individually and as members of a community. I can think of one very current and pressing example of a time when humans faced an external challenge that could have been very easily mitigated, and our downfall came from the Trojan horse of our own behavior.

Essay Submission Continued on Page 8

Zombie Apocalypse! Or, How Humans are the Bad Guys in our Own Story, Continued

I would like to present you with my own work of fiction. Imagine for me, if you will, that you are living in the world of *The Walking Dead* (the earlier seasons, when it was still good). You wake up from a coma to find that, oh no! Over the last month, the zombie apocalypse took place! No one knows how it happened; maybe it was a government experiment gone wrong, or a beam of radiation from space, or maybe it originated from that suspicious block of cheese in the back of the fridge that none of your roommates will claim.

You wander the desolate streets of a deserted New York City, desperately dodging the undead and searching for any sign of life. The storefronts and apartments are abandoned, and even the 24-hour deli on the corner is closed, which is a seriously bad sign because they're even open on Christmas. Finally, you turn a corner on Broadway and are met with a scene you seriously did not expect. There, in Riverside Park, is a gaggle of people having a barbecue.

Briefly taken aback, you look closely. No, they're not zombies, although a few waterlogged ghouls have started to wander up from the Hudson, drawn by the sound of pre-apocalypse pop coming from the boom box. Fifty people are gathered behind Grant's Tomb, chatting, laughing, eating pork chops and generally being awesome zombie bait.

You run frantically at the group, waving your arms and screaming, "Run! RUN! ZOMBIES ARE COMING!!" Now, you thought you had met your daily quota for surprises upon finding the block party at the end of the world, but boy, were you wrong. You are completely flabbergasted as the group starts to chuckle at your expense.

"Oh, sweetie," says an unmoisturized woman in her fifties probably named Becky or Karen or something. "You aren't taking this zombie apocalypse thing so seriously, are you? It's not nearly as bad as the media is making it out to be."

You stare silently for a moment. You see a zombie stumbling towards the group, about fifty yards away, but all you can muster is a dumbfounded, "What?"

"Oh yes!" She beams at you while shoveling grocery store sheet cake into her mouth, "They're all saying, 'Oh, everyone you know and love could die,' but that's just silly! No one in my family has become a zombie yet, right, Jim Bob?"

Jim Bob, a man with not nearly enough muscles to be wearing that muscle shirt, chimes in, "That's right, Kathy Sue." (Oh, you were so close to guessing the name!) "Besides, it's our own choice if we want to become zombies or not. I refuse to live my life in fear. If other people don't want to become zombies they can just stay home!"

By now you are just completely, utterly gobsmacked. In fact, you are so bamboozled that you neglect to warn Jim Bob that the zombie who was approaching the group is now directly behind him, and it lets out a fearsome cry for "BRAINS!" before taking a healthy-sized bite out of his neck.

"AHHHHHH!" Jim Bob screams. Kathy Sue is still eating sheet cake. "You know, it's not even worse than regular rabies," she says, as Jim Bob's lifeless body collapses to the ground in front of her. "They inject you with the real zombie-ism when you take the cure." In that instant, you decide that maybe zombies driving humanity to extinction wouldn't be the worst thing in the world.

It does seem that from the moment we were cursed with higher thought, the human species has been its own worst enemy. We survived the Ice Ages, the Black Plague, and the era of early 2000s Disney Channel fashion. As a species, we have proven theoretically indestructible. But it is humans who lead genocides. Humans who drop atomic bombs. Humans who chase white whales and create monsters and make decisions out of fear and ignorance. The only thing in this world that can destroy us is ourselves.

Get Involved MSM

MSM ENVIRONMENTAL AWARENESS CLUB

The Environmental Awareness Club recently held a meeting with Facilities, Residence Life, and Student Engagement regarding the energy efficiency of the main building and Andersen Hall. We also discussed the possibilities of creating compost bins around campus, enrolling in *TerraCycle* recycling programs, and creating a community garden! We are also in the works of creating a new "Eco-Education" event series to educate students on how to create environmentally friendly and sustainable lifestyle choices. Make sure you're following us on Instagram **@msm_environmental** to stay posted on

upcoming events and environmental updates and changes around MSM!

HELL YEA WOMEN!

March is International Women's Month!

Join us at our next meeting, March 19th, 11am-12pm!



Follow MSM Womxn on Instagram!

@msm_womxn



Follow BSU on Instagram!
@bsu_msm

Follow us on Instagram

@msmqpbs



QueerPBS



Student Government



Join Student Government!

Every 4th Sunday of the month at **6 pm** we host a Student Council meeting via zoom (code: 272 821 9335). Student Council meetings are open to the entire student population! In these meetings, you can hear updates from committees, student organizations, and department representatives. At the end of the meeting, there will be an open forum where you can bring forth any issues with the school! We hope to see you in a meeting!

Best, Angelina Bush, Student Government Secretary



Center for Music Entrepreneurship
Manhattan School of Music

MAR 25 | THURS | 6:00PM - 7:30PM

Telling Your Story, Shaping Your
Sound

(Setting the Stage- Online)

- MSM Resident Artist Lara Downes discusses curating programs and projects that reflect our unique and authentic artistry.
- This will be an interactive session.
- Online access information will only be sent to those who RSVP.

**STUDENT
SUBMISSION
CONTEST!**

Calling all students! We want to hear from you! Do you write short stories in your free time, want to review a local restaurant or store, or do you make some art you'd like to share? Have some funny jokes or a cool project you're working on? Send us an email at **newspaper@msmny.edu** with anything you'd like to share in the paper for a chance to win **\$50 VISA giftcards or \$25 Uber and Uber giftcards!**

HARP FOR SALE!

Dusty Strings 36 string lever harp
FH36S, Bubinga wood, Serial No.
11232. It comes with a padded
carrying case and many extra
strings. Great sound. Great
condition. Asking \$3500.
Contact Joanna Whitt at
joanna.whitt@gmail.com.



CALENDAR OF EVENTS

MARCH

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
14	15 Recital: Xiang Chen, piano	16 Recital: Alina Eckersley, French horn Recital: Joseph Miller, jazz alto sax	17	18 MSM Camerata Nova, Livestream Recital: Haena Lee, violoncello	19 Manhattan Sings - Part I & II, Livestream	20
21 International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination World Poetry Day	22 World Water Day	23	24	25 Recital: Liangdianzi Zhang, piano International Day of Remembrance of Slavery Victims and the Transatlantic Slave Trade	26 MSM Brass Ensemble, Livestream	27
28 Recital: Marcus Jefferson, tenor	29 Tactus Part I & II Polar Bear Press Issue 07!	31 MSM String Chamber Orchestra, Livestream	1	2 World Autism Awareness Day	3	4

To watch livestreamed performances and events, go to the MSM Livestream Archive at <https://www.msmnyc.edu/livestream>

Want to see your event listed here? Email newspaper@msmnyc.edu

A Note from the Editors:

We want to hear from you! Please send any student questions and submissions to newspaper@msmnyc.edu and stay tuned for the next issue on March 29th!

Polar Bear Press Team

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