

# Tanaka captures Humans of New Trier

by Madison McVey

"Humans of New Trier," a Facebook page that has recently flooded many New Trier students' newsfeeds, is doing its best to document people of the New Trier community.

This blog consists of pictures of staff and students at New Trier, accompanied by a caption providing a glimpse into their lives. Run by senior Bella Tanaka, this blog was inspired by Brandon Stanton, who started Humans of New York (HONY) in 2010.

Stanton takes pictures of random people on the streets of New York City and asks them questions. Stanton's Facebook page currently has over nine million "likes", and has inspired people everywhere to create their own "Humans of" pages.

"At the start of the school year, I saw that my friend in California liked his high school's 'Humans of' page, and thought that was really cool that someone had done that for their high

school," said Tanaka.

According to Tanaka, she picks her interviews at random.

"I just walk around the school. Sometimes the people are alone or in a group of friends. I'm trying to photograph people who I don't know that well or have never met. It is more exciting to talk to strangers," said Tanaka.

Not everyone feels comfortable with being photographed said Tanaka, but most people find it to be an exciting opportunity.

Many of the questions Tanaka asks are directly copied from questions Stanton uses in Humans of New York, but she also makes up her own follow-up questions depending on each individual's answer. The questions range from "what's the best part of being an advisor?" to "what's your biggest goal in life?"

"I don't expect everyone to open up to me, but some people do and it's great. I try to make the whole process as comfortable as possible. I never want to force anyone to share



Emma Killeen & Hannah Warner featured in Humans of NT page | Tanaka

something they don't want to," explained Tanaka.

Some of the people who stood out to Tanaka were a couple of boys who said that they were all afraid of spiders, and a faculty member who talked about his concerns of how the

world views his mixed raced child.

Sophomore Joe Akason was asked about the last time he laughed hard, and his response was "watching Modern Family."

Akason said, "I did not know about the page until I was asked the

questions. I was fine with being asked the question because it was much more general than personal. It just caught me off guard, so I didn't really know what to say."

Akason was a fan of the page. "I think the page shows what students think about on a variety of topics, and it shows them while they are at school and unprepared," said Akason.

Although Tanaka just recently began her Humans of New Trier project, she has no quantifiable expectations. "In my opinion, it doesn't have to have thousands of likes to be successful. I started this project to learn about my peers," said Tanaka.

Tanaka's goal is not to try and relate to each person she interviews, but rather she hopes to absorb their stories and share them with others.

Tanaka currently runs the Facebook page alone, but some people have offered to help. She plans to continue the photo page until she graduates and she hopes it will continue to be popular until then.

## Knock knock, it's Lagniappe



Kevin Slowey and Albie Smith performing in Lagniappe 2014 | Pearlman

by Leah Pearlman

At its worst, Lagniappe pokes fun at mundane and overdone behavior of students. At its best, Lagniappe satirizes the relevant and current trends of student life. "Knock Knock" Lagniappe Potpourri 2015 was relatable to all students, making it hilarious, provoking lots of laughter in the crowd.

Although this year's Lagniappe doesn't have a strict storyline, the show's more general theme spoke to opportunity "knocking."

The first scene tackled life at New Trier and its vast array of activities, which is so large that you may meet a new person on graduation day. For the rest of the show, the characters go back in time for a second chance at high school.

After speaking with the creator of the show's theme, senior Talia Levy, I was told that the gist of the show questioned, "What would New Trier be like if students actually got involved in the awesome opportunities that school has to offer?" The answer: an awesome four years, as seen throughout the musical.

The show's relevance in "Literally A Scene" was spot on. A few actors played 8th grade girls, who use the word "literally" literally after every other word. It was incredibly accurate, basically placing all of my younger brother's friends on stage.

The girls realized that they were misusing "literally" after the older sister literally does run after them with a knife literally trying to kill them.

There were a lot of one-liners throughout the show that not only made me giggle, but full on snort in laughter. Senior Jack Oldfield's

scene where he dresses as a Hogwarts student, senior Kevin Slowey's line in the rap where he references Evanston as E-town, the intercom voice mentioning the swim unit and how boys can't use menstruation as an excuse, and a 37 ACT were all very relatable to a NT student's life and therefore hilarious.

The second half hit each joke out of the park. A very unique scene had a fashion show for finals outfits. The idea was so linked to New Trier students, and it made for one of the funniest scenes. Senior Julia Levin, acted as a fashion show reporter and used the phrase "TI-Inspiring." This joke had me laughing almost for too long after the joke was made. Netflix Anonymous was another distinct topic for Lagniappe of 2015 to cover.

One of the most celebrated scenes, Country Thunder vs. Lollapalooza vs. Spring Awakening, made me laugh the whole time. Especially when senior Nathan Reiff came out with a blanket and candle, mentioning "Ravinia is pretty nice too..."

The complete cast dance numbers started off with a scandalous dance to the forever popular Partition by Beyonce in glamorous, sequined jerseys. Five boys played the band members of N'sync and sang 'Bye Bye Bye' mimicking the dance style of the band. The last dance, which included the entire cast, had me dancing in my seat. It was to 'Rather Be,' the song of the summer. One of the dances, however, was to a song by Madonna and Justin Timberlake called "4 minutes" from 2008. This song played for a majority of the dance number and was boring and outdated.

Another outdated scene "NT Confessions" caught me off guard

because it didn't fit with the rest of the show's up-to-date jokes. At first, I couldn't tell what it was about, and had a hard time understanding the lyrics to the song. I perceived this to be about how obsessed with phones teenagers are which is incredibly overdone and obvious to a point that it isn't even funny anymore.

During Lagniappe the pit band plays unaccompanied by the actors after intermission. The conductor, senior Adam Wrobel, and head composer senior Will Finnegan, were both very animated during their solos, and then invited the rest of the musicians to the stage to join in a fun rendition of "Sir Duke" by Stevie Wonder. Bands in the past have been less than seamless, and this year's made up for it.

The film portion of the show by Brian Weaver and Gray Schiller brings the audience into the New Trier English department. The entire film was funny and took on a "The Office-style" filming. While the style of filming gave me a headache, the film itself did a great job of making light of the seriousness that surrounds seniors while completing college applications.

In the short film, we watch a student thank a teacher with a gift for a college rec, and when the student leaves the scene it closes up on the teacher who implies she doesn't even remember who he is.

The set design was a lot less theatrical as it has been in the past. It was very much just a backdrop for the actors to come alive on, which was good and bad at the same time. As the big grandiose backdrops can add an element to the shows excitement, but from the actors.

The sound designer a junior, Jack Bender, made sure the whole cast was heard as opposed to years past when there have been some miscommunication with the microphones on stage.

The plot made a full circle at the end when the two characters in the beginning had been friends since their first day at high school, answering the musicals question "what if opportunity knocked twice?" As the chorus of the last song says, "change begins with you."

## Porter Robinson dazzles with "Worlds"

by Nick Merrill

Porter Robinson's new album, "Worlds," breaks down EDM boarders and sets a new precedent for the versatility that is required to be successful in the ever changing Electronic Dance Music scene.

It appears that the 22 year old's, basey, eardrum blasting and dubstep filled days are behind him. He follows up on his first EP "Spitfire," which was released in early 2011, with a brilliantly orchestrated first full-length album. Robinson has made a deliberate shift away from his former career-defining sounds as he leaves behind his long adored bass-dropping identity, using Worlds as an opportunity to redefine himself as an artist, songwriter and music producer.

Robinson did this with the understanding that he may lose and frustrate some of his fans, but for Robinson, "Worlds" means something deeper than mainstream success: it's him showing his true self.

"Worlds" turns toward a gentler electronic stratosphere which includes the likes of well-known talents like M83, Passion Pit and MGMT. Immediately, Robinson's aim of complete reinvention is understood. Whether he succeeded in reinventing himself is a discussion to be had, but after listening through the 12 track, 57-minute album over and over, my opinion remains strong. He did it.

The standard bass drops and predictable build-ups in most mainstream EDM tracks nowadays are nowhere to be found, which for me separates him from the mainstream electronic music scene.

With big names in the EDM world like Avicii, David Guetta and Calvin Harris slowly adopting this new ideal of electronic music, Robinson turns away from it creating something truly special in the process.

The focus of this album was not to make 12 tracks that each go to the top of the charts because they contain a standard pop beat with generic lyrics, build ups and drops. His focus was to redefine himself as an artist and in the process move into a new genre of music.

His idea of beginning an EDM

renaissance of sorts is ambitious but his execution in doing so blew by most expectations. The first two singles he released from Worlds, "Sad Machine" and "Lionhearted" both excited fans and left them wondering as to what happened to the bass mastery that they had experienced in "Spitfire." It's disappeared, but for the better.

The hit single, "Sad Machine" was the first step that Robinson took in drastically changing his sound in Worlds. The song features Robinson making his vocal debut singing a duet with Vocaloid, a synth that recreates human singing into the voice of a robot girl, strange maybe, but effective.

He follows this chart topper with, "Lionhearted" which effectively demonstrates Robinson's grasp of his newfound frontiers. In the track he collaborates with Swedish indie-pop artist Urban Cone, together they create the most dance-sounding song on the album.

Despite his clear step away from songs top heavy with bass and fast paced dubstep drops, "Lionhearted" silences critics of his new arsenal of high and lows with a quick paced, crowd favorite EDM single.

As a whole album "Worlds" is able to both perform and deliver, its huge, ambitious interconnected and even comes with its own light show (i.e. Robinson's current countrywide tour). The world that "Worlds" invokes fantastic and unmistakably radiant by design, is displayed by the chorus of voices in the flowing "Hear the Bells," the static genius of "Divinity," the intimacy of "Sad Machine" and the animated dance beats of "Lionhearted".

If you listen to this album from start to finish, by the time you get to the majestic violins in, "Fellow Feeling" that slowly develop into interweaving bass blasts you'll have your mind made up on whether or not you appreciate Robinson's new border breaking record.

If you do, and you make it to Robinson's finale, "Goodbye To A World," a song whose fitting melodies leave the audience with a vague sense of undergoing a journey filled with wonder, it will be pretty hard to deny that the 22 year old has done something amazing.