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Units	Grading	Grade
3.00	Undergraduate	A+
4.00	Undergraduate Letter Grades	A
3.00	Undergraduate Letter Grades	A+
3.00	Undergraduate Letter Grades, No Credit	CR
3.00	Credit / No Credit Grades	CR

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Judge Throws Out PSC Lawsuit

By Maya Schubert
News Editor

A lawsuit from CUNY's largest employees' union, the Professional Staff Congress, alleging that the University's layoffs of thousands of employees broke the CARES Act, was dismissed by a federal judge last week. A judge for the U.S. District Court for the Southern District of New York said that CUNY did not violate its qualification to the federal relief fund by dismissing over 2,800 adjunct faculty and staff weeks before the fund was allocated.

In April, CUNY accepted \$251 million from the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security Act on the condition, according to the Act, that it would "to the greatest extent practicable," pay its employees "during

the period of any disruptions or closures related to the coronavirus."

The following month, CUNY began to announce plans to lay off faculty and staff, and, by the beginning of July, had informed over 2,800 employees that they would not be reappointed.

"These layoffs violate Section 18006 of the CARES Act, which requires CUNY to continue to pay them "to the greatest extent practicable," and breach a contract that CUNY entered into with the federal government as a condition of receiving the CARES Act money," the PSC's lawsuit read, which was filed in July.

CUNY countered that the purpose of the CARES Act was mostly to aid students.

"Maintaining academic employment is secondary," the state attorney general's office relayed on behalf



PSC's lawsuit against CUNY was dismissed./ **Professional Staff Congress/CUNY on Facebook**

of the University. This statement came on the heels of the PSC requesting an injunction to rehire the laid off employees.

Judge S. Rakoff agreed with the office, denying the injunction in August. Rakoff

said that the CARES Act did not give employees the right to employment, while it specified the designation of funds to student aid.

Rakoff dismissed the case on Nov. 9, awarding CUNY the win.

Chancellor Announces Week Long Furlough For Higher-Up Admin

By Maya Schubert
News Editor

Last week CUNY Chancellor Felix V. Matos Rodriguez ordered furloughs for the University's top administrators to address the financial crisis brought on by COVID-19. The expected five day furlough will affect CUNY employees under the Executive Compensation Plan.

"As a result of the economic fallout from the COVID-19 pandemic, the University has experienced reductions in revenue, seen public funding significantly reduced and been obliged to take on unplanned emergency expenditures," Rodriguez wrote in an email to faculty and staff on Nov. 4. "We have been forced to make decisions that only months ago seemed unthinkable."

The furlough applies to CUNY presidents, deans, vice chancellors,

administrators, and Chancellor Rodriguez himself. Rodriguez wrote that information regarding the furlough's implementation would be forthcoming.

CUNY lost about \$52 million in the Spring 2020 semester, and has so far spent around \$75 million in emergency expenses, including the costs of laptops and equipment for students working at home, as well as overtime compensation for public safety workers. The 5.1% decrease in enrollment for the fall semester has seen another \$32 million loss in revenue. CUNY's current budget for 2021 will cut funding by \$46.3 million.

According to CUNY's largest staff union, the Professional Staff Congress, the five day furloughs for administrators is a drop in the ocean of financial relevance.

"It's mostly symbolic," PSC spokesperson Francis

Clark told the Vanguard.

The PSC has sharply criticized CUNY's handling of the fiscal crisis this year. This week, the union's lawsuit against the University's layoffs of 2,800 adjuncts was thrown out by a federal judge, but the union plans to file another suit against CUNY's delay of a promised 2% increase in faculty's salaries.

Believing CUNY cannot sustain the quality of education by laying off workers and slashing funding, PSC has advocated for Governor Cuomo to impose heavier taxes on New York's richest, who have been thriving during the pandemic.

"That is a place where funding can be found and should be found," Clark said. "They should chop from the top."

CUNY employees facing the furloughs make within the range of \$83,591 to \$402,700,

according to the Board of Trustees' compensation plan. Brooklyn College president Michelle Anderson makes a yearly \$320,656, with a monthly salary of well over \$20,000. The five day furlough would glean about \$4,000 from Anderson's paycheck, an amount of money equal to what adjuncts make teaching one course.

"Thousands of adjuncts lost 100% of their CUNY income, not just a few days," PSC president Barbara Bowen said in a statement.

Rodriguez has partially owed financial difficulties to a lack of federal aid and warned in his email that the University could face more cuts.

"We all have had to make sacrifices this year, and unfortunately, I expect more potentially difficult decisions in the near term," he said.

USG Creates Reso, Students Call for Credit/ No Credit Extension

By Dorette Dayan
Staff Writer

Joint Resolution 008, which calls for the extension of the credit/no credit grading policy into the online Fall 2020 semester, was passed on Tuesday, October 27 by the BC USG in response to students' concerns over the difficulty of remote learning.

The credit/no credit policy allows for the option of only receiving credits for a class rather than a letter grade, which gets factored into a student's GPA, after final grades have been submitted. This gives students the ability to continue earning credits towards their degrees without lowering their GPAs due to the extra stress applied by this pandemic and online learning.

"A lot of students have reached out this semester to express that online learning has a different level of difficulty as compared to in-person instruction," USG Press Director, Iqura Naheed, told the Vanguard. "Distance learning presents issues of not having places to study, to having more



CREDIT/ NO CREDIT GRADING

BC USG passed Joint Resolution 008 to extend the credit/no credit policy./CUNY website

difficult online exams, to issues of unreliable internet access to get work done as well as losing the in-person component of learning."

USG members have expressed their concern for the rights and accommodations that the student body deserves. USG Treasurer, Nadav Raz, conveyed that the purpose of the resolution "is to make students' lives more efficient."

"The worry shouldn't be on debt addled students within the midst of a crumbling infrastructure and an economic depression with no relief in sight," Raz said. "The abuse here comes from a

society that treats human beings like machine parts, and not living persons with the right to life and liberty."

Naheed agreed by stating, "If the students feel this is the necessary support they need to progress in their academic career it should be available to them."

Students outside USG have expressed hope in the implementation of this resolution.

"With Corona, so many unforeseen things are happening which can hinder a student's performance," BC junior Bella Feldman said. "This option takes away the stress of having a class ruin a student's GPA."

In a poll from USG on Facebook of 124 students, 95 percent responded saying the credit/no credit policy should be extended.

The USG felt that this resolution was necessary after seeing the administration's lack of initiative in extending the credit/no credit policy.

"We were waiting for the school administration to see if they would independently extend this policy. They have yet to issue any statement," Raz explained.

The resolution was sent to the City University Board of Trustees, the office of the Governor, the New York State Senate and Assembly, all relevant press and

media outlets, the University Student Senate, and the CUNY Council of Presidents.

"There are no legal obstacles for a grading policy, it is merely a matter of if the administration has the will and empathy to extend relief to a student body that they profit off of," he continued.

The USG hopes that the administration will extend the policy as late as possible for this semester.

"If accepted for this semester, some leniency in grading is hoped to be extended to next semester as it is also online," Naheed added.

"The worry shouldn't be on debt addled students within the midst of a crumbling infrastructure and an economic depression with no relief in sight" - Nadav Raz

BK Stays Stagnant As Election Leans Blue

By Ian Ezinga
Business Manager

After weeks of early voting, and the counting of mail-in ballots, Brooklyn remains mostly blue. In addition to the presidential race, State Congressional Democrats campaigning to the constituents of Kings County outperformed Republicans in most contests except for in districts to the south and those who share ground with Staten Island.

Even as absentee ballots continue to be counted, Joe Biden has so far secured over 514,000 votes from the 1.5 million registered voters in Brooklyn, beating out the president's 174,000 votes. With a clear victory for Biden, Trump has thus far secured more votes in NYC in 2020 than in 2016, thanks in part to central and south Brooklyn. The continued accumulation of mail-in ballots, however, is expected to increase Biden's number.

All of the incumbent Democratic State Representatives who speak for part of Brooklyn won their elections except for the 11th District's Max Rose. Rose made waves in 2018 when he beat the incumbent Republican

congressman, Dan Donovan. The district, which encompasses Staten Island and several southern Brooklyn neighborhoods like Bay Ridge and Dyker Heights, has turned red once again, with a strong Sixty/Thirty-Nine showing for Trump and the election of Republican Nicole Malliotakis to the State House. The district's constituents in Brooklyn voted less enthusiastically for both Trump and Malliotakis than the Staten Island contingency, but not enough to let Max Rose hold on to his seat.

Incumbents Nydia Valazquez (7th), Hakeem Jeffries (8th), Yvette Clarke (9th), Jerry Nadler (10th), and Carolyn Maloney (12th) all held their districts. In addition to holding their seats, most of these candidates had a sizable portion of their votes come in on the Working Families Party line which passed the threshold needed in order to remain on the ballot in coming elections. These Democratic Representatives will rejoin a House whose majority is already staunchly blue.

Democrats running for the New York State Senate seats in King's County performed similarly to their comrades in the



11th District's Max Rose who lost his seat in this years election. / <https://maxrose.house.gov/about/>

Assembly. The Working Families Party once again competed for votes from the Democrats with the likes of Julia Salazar, Jabari Brisport, and Zellnor Y. Myrie. While these candidates received the great majority of their votes from the people filling in the Democrat bubble, the WFP's

showing in Brooklyn this election has breathed enough life in it to meet their goal of continuing to field left-leaning candidates in the future.

This year's election didn't drastically shake up the political fabric of Brooklyn. As the city Board of Elections continues to count mail-

in ballots, the borough remains represented primarily by Democrats in the State Senate and House of Representatives, and the Democrats' candidate for president received over seventy percent of the vote.

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@THEBCVANGUARD ON SOCIAL MEDIA

Update On The Spring Semester

By Gabriela Flores
Features Editor

As the fall semester comes to a close, Brooklyn College will most likely continue remote learning this spring. For now, there are no definite updates to course availability and budget uncertainties. However, the college and student representatives' push for more virtual student engagement will surely expand in 2021.

Though the spring course enrollment has begun, the Reentry Board Committee is continuing to review proposals for hybrid courses.

"Once decisions are made about hybrid courses, that information will be announced," said BC spokesperson Richard Pietras. In terms of how much in-person access to hybrid instruction and services will be available for the spring, the administration is closely following the advice of higher-ups and COVID-19 trends.

"The College's administration is following these metrics closely," said Carrie Sadovnik, Safety Chair and Director of Environmental Health. "Any decisions moving forward will be based on the latest State, CUNY, and local public health guidance," she said.

The College's Reentry Committee will continue restricting in-person access to hybrid courses and faculty who have been approved by the Reentry Review Board.

With regards to the 2021 fiscal year budget, BC is still awaiting specifics from CUNY. As of now, the university is giving BC monthly budget allocations, but it is not clear if this will carry on

to the spring.

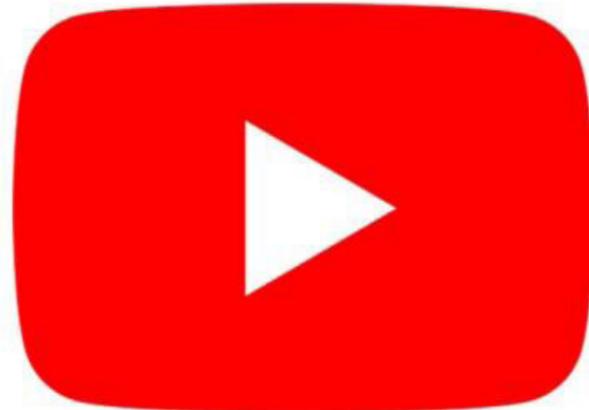
"Brooklyn College is following guidance from CUNY. Currently, we have a budget for \$73.946 million and hopefully will have more clarity in the coming months," said Alan Gilbert, Senior Vice President for Finance and Administration.

In his recap of the latest University Faculty Senate meeting, Douglas Cohen, the Conservatory of Music's Deputy Director, notified the BC Faculty Council yesterday that NYS is holding 20 percent of their budget statewide, including the state's financial aid. Cohen notes that this could affect Tuition Assistance Program funding "if the amount cannot be restored."

To address student needs for the coming spring, Student Affairs will review feedback from their BC Cares surveys. The Division will continue offering access to the Food Pantry and WEB Lab computers by appointment. Ronald Jackson, Vice President for Student Affairs, mentioned that they would determine if the available in-person services will need any revisions based on student feedback.

"Students are suffering from cabin fever and the lack of social interaction with each other," said Jackson. "We're noticing that these concerns are impacting their ability to focus on their academics. Therefore, we're working diligently to collaboratively come up with creative solutions to address those concerns."

The BC Library will launch Virtual Study Hall for classmates to study together this spring.



BC USG will use tools like YouTube and Discord for Spring Semester./ Collage by Humza Ahmad

Alongside the Student Government and Veterans Student Organization, Student Affairs intends to create more chances for virtual engagement.

"(...)We are trying to stay technologically accessible and modernized so we have those channels for students to reach out to us if they need any help at all," said Ethan Milich, BC Undergraduate Student Government (USG) President.

USG will continue advocating for student concerns, including internet access, housing, food security, and other necessities. They will also host more virtual events and invite special guests to bolster student spirit.

To help BC students better their handling of digital programs and devices, the USG will also begin publishing short YouTube tutorials on the

university's website that show how to navigate online tools. USG also aims to expand its user outreach in the spring across its social media platforms, including a Discord bot that allows BC subscribers to conveniently access information like course descriptions.

"A lot of students are struggling with basic tools, that with on campus they wouldn't have the struggle to figure out," said Aharon Grama, the University Student Senate Vice-Chair for Tech Fee Affairs and USG Chief of Staff.

He stated that some students, including those outside of BC, do not know how to utilize Dropbox, OfficeWork365, and other programs that are often used by the school.

"We need to get them

to be more comfortable with the technology because that is what the world is going to," Grama said. "And forget about COVID; there's no need to put it inside the equation here."

This spring, the newly-founded Brooklyn College Cancer Center is scheduled to be inaugurated. Currently, the center has 24 BC faculty members and researchers who aim "to enhance the lives of patients affected by cancer with a special focus on Brooklyn residents," according to their website.

In the coming weeks, more information regarding the next semester will be released by the administration. For now, students and faculty must consult their emails and BC's website for updates.

Brooklyn Braces For COVID Second Wave

By Gabriela Flores
Features Editor

At the pandemic's outset in New York City, locals saw the number of COVID-cases steadily soar into a state of emergency. In October, state officials reported virus clusters reappearing across the five boroughs, which has prompted Brooklynites and others to prepare for the city's looming coronavirus resurgence.

"You have to be precautious of everyone. Everyone is a suspect, in other words," said Dwight W., an MTA booth clerk on Avenue H who did not want to share his last name. For 20 years, Dwight has traveled across boroughs each day to go to work in different stations. With the pandemic and his underlying health conditions, Dwight drives to work from his Queens home and attempts to avoid close contact with others. Though he has taken the necessary precautions of mask-wearing, social-distancing, and disinfecting his booth, the virus has been closer to Dwight than he anticipated.

"A lot of co-workers I was working with tested positive - got real sick real bad, had to be incubated. They were out from work for like a month or two," said Dwight.

Last week, a co-worker of Dwight's passed away due to COVID-complications, and another colleague who relieved him from his shift at 9 pm contracted the virus. Nearly 25 percent of MTA transit workers tested positive, as reported by the Wall Street Journal

and about 130 of the MTA's 68,000 employees died of coronavirus. With the transit system's slow start in providing personal protective equipment (PPE) and other cleaning supplies, virus transmission was more feasible.

"I guess for the president and everyone, it wasn't something to beware of or to armor up, or protect yourself against. That was one of the main issues for many people to pass away," said Dwight, who has luckily not shown any virus symptoms.

Across New York City, COVID-19 has disproportionately affected Black and Latino communities. According to the Department of Health's virus tracker, Hispanics make up 34 percent of NYC's coronavirus fatalities. Another 29 percent of deaths belong to the Black population of the city. For Mexican-American Antonio Solis, a COVID-19 survivor who works in a bagel shop on Avenue J, death seemed like a possibility when he experienced sharp chills, severe fevers, intense nausea, and other symptoms for nearly two weeks.

"Now I'm taking on my second chance and hoping that a need for a third one doesn't come around," said Solis.

During his five day stay at the hospital, when the virus was not well known, Solis sat beside other Brooklynites exhibiting similar COVID-19 signs in the emergency room. "Your lungs want to explode. They desperately want a breath," said Solis.

Overtime, Solis became less hopeful of making it

out alive. That remained the case until one night when, as he drowsily laid on his bed and doctors scrambled across the hallways, he dreamt of his deceased father.

"And he told me, 'Get up son, get up. It's not your time,'" said Solis. "Then I woke up, and I was in the hospital bed. And I asked myself, 'What am I doing here?'"

Despite having contracted the virus back in March, Solis does not mind working in a hot zone with a rising total of 3,888 cases, according to a New York Times database. So long as he takes the necessary precautions, he feels the coronavirus does not pose an imminent threat against him.

"We can no longer be afraid. We need to learn how to adapt and live with the virus," said Solis.

With the rollout of Cuomo's executive order in early October and the implementation of more restrictions in COVID-19 cluster zones, many New Yorkers have figured out how to live with the virus and its constraints. Though many zip codes in South Brooklyn saw rising coronavirus contractions, including BC's own Flatbush neighborhood, others in the borough have not. However, for places of worship, like synagogues, churches, and mosques, the state's focus on limiting its gathering capacity has stirred some disapproval.

Last Thursday, Nov. 12, the Catholic Diocese of Brooklyn asked the Supreme Court to overturn Cuomo's regulations that allow 10 to 25 people to gather in houses of worship depending on its zone.

For Frank Black, the pastor of St. Matthew's in Crown Heights, safety precautions are essential to control the virus. However, he finds that the state's use of "places of worship" when discussing COVID-19 restrictions and spikes can be misleading.

"I don't think we places of worship are being targeted, but it's that 'places of worship' are being lumped together with those that are not compliant," said Black. Before entering, churchgoers have their temperatures checked, are socially distant from one another, and have hand sterilizers at reach. St. Matthew's maintains its capacity under 25 percent, as instructed by the diocese.

Though these measures help ensure participants' safety, they have added to the church's financial instability. As attendance remains low, so do donations.

"How are churches going to remain open? We don't know. That's a rough thing," said Black. Despite the financial uncertainty the church will face in the coming months as COVID-19 continues, Black has a more significant worry.

"If I get it, okay I die. May God be merciful on me," said Black. "I just don't want to give it to someone else. That's my biggest fear."

Similarly, for Darice Solis, Antonio's daughter, and an ultrasound technician in Bayridge Medical Imaging in Borough Park, she feared transmitting the virus further to her family. At the onset of COVID-19 in NYC, she took a leave of

absence for a month and a half. During her time off, some of her co-workers contracted the virus. Upon her return, Solis and her colleagues faced a PPE shortage.

"I thought, 'We're like the number one country in the world, and we don't have supplies? We have supplies for war, but we don't have supplies for emergencies like this?'" said Solis. Today, the staff no longer have to reuse their masks until they're worn-out, but now have enough to change daily.

At her workplace, COVID-19 patients are admitted for lung X-rays to determine if they have pneumonia, an infection that inflames the air sacs. Since her job is high-risk for her and her colleagues who come into close contact with such patients, Solis no longer fears COVID-19 as she did in the beginning.

"I'm not going to say I'm an expert, but I'm prepared for the second-wave," said Solis.

Despite the challenges COVID-19 has brought onto Brooklynites, most locals will continue observing safety precautions to overturn the virus' spread. As of press time, over 560,000 New Yorkers have tested positive for coronavirus. About 80,000 cases are in Brooklyn.

"I consider it this way - this is our new world, we have to learn to adjust. Countries have done this and lived like this," said MTA employee Dwight. "The adjustment is to always be precautious."

BC Pre-Med Students Prepare To Start Careers In A Pandemic

By Kendra Martinez
Staff Writer

The future of public health lies in the hands of up and coming medical professionals who will enter the field during a pandemic. The pressure is on for pre-medical students nationwide, including those at BC, to help shape public health leaders and provide them support to overcome novel challenges like COVID-19. For Alvin John and Moksha Mehra, presidents of BC's American Medical Student Association (AMSA), their ultimate goal is to inform pre-med students about medicinal issues and address concerns related to BC's pre-med education.

"The precautions professionals took are very motivational and very inspiring for us students just to work for that goal one day and make as much of a difference as they are making right now," said Mehra.

Both John and Mehra are Psychology majors at Brooklyn College, looking to attend pre-med school and become physicians. John describes their experience in preparation for their career as different from students in previous years because they are learning through an active crisis.

"This is different because we are literally experiencing it as of

now," he said, "And the fact that we are literally seeing it as it happens and we are seeing people in the field that we are pursuing make advancements."

Besides the spread of COVID-19, both John and Mehra have major concerns about the widespread misinformation shared during the pandemic.

"I do think there has been a decline in believing in science, if the administration doesn't believe in science then I think people would be more likely to not believe in science either," said Mehra.

"We have a responsibility right now and as future physicians to not only patients but to people inside the field and outside of the field to use our talents and our knowledge to spread facts and not misinformation that can persuade people otherwise," said John, who believes facts and science are immensely necessary in public health.

The pandemic has not discouraged John and Mehra from pursuing their career paths, nor led them to have any doubts during this crucial time. Mehra says that watching researchers and scientists work through the pandemic has been inspiring and motivating. "In times like this, this really shows at the end of the day it is the compassion



The Brooklyn College American Medical Student Association's goal is to educate premedical students./Brooklyn College American Medical Student Association (BC AMSA) on Facebook

that you need, and other characteristics than just doing well in school that I think are even more imperative now than ever before," said Mehra.

To help BC students gain exposure to the medical field, AMSA carries out Q&A sessions with doctors every Monday. Pre-med participants can get credit for these "e-shadowing" sessions and put it on their resumes. With the pandemic, and education transitioning to online learning, John and Mehra say that collaborating with other clubs has been harder, and their events have been limited to hosting guest speakers. Despite these challenges,

AMSA has had several virtual events since the fall semester started including, Impacts of COVID-19 on Homelessness Populations, Virtual Involvement Fair for AMSA, and information sessions with medical practitioners.

Through their club outreach, these students have provided support and a network for pre-med and pre-health students to move forward in their careers. John and Mehra strive in their efforts to establish their determined attitudes in making a difference in public health. The future of our public health is here, and these students are ready to take that responsibility



Rainbows, Art, and Teaching, an Interview With Omar Olivera

By Olivia McCaa
Staff Writer

For Brooklyn College alum Omar Olivera, art has always played an important part in his life, and doesn't know who he would be without it. Regardless of his demanding work as an education associate at Cooper Union and Materials For The Arts (MFTA), he's continued to take on personal projects including a comic book, digital art, and of course, a large rainbow wall piece.

"In my artwork, there's always little references to my life but also my other work and it keeps overlapping to create this richer universe that I am trying to build," said Olivera.

At the age of four, Olivera's love for art began when his brother first taught him how to draw. He grew up in Brooklyn during the 80's - when anime, Transformers, cartoons, and hip hop were on the rise - and learned to replicate much of the art he was exposed to.

"I think making art is good for you as a person and you should just do it. But if you have support that allows you to do it more and more, that's good too," he said.

Though he had originally intended to study architecture as a high schooler at Brooklyn Tech, he decided to switch routes and attend Cooper Union for fine art. After his undergrad years, Olivera worked in publishing but found he did not enjoy it. He decided his only way out was going back to school and pursuing his master's at Brooklyn College.

His return to the classroom led him to new outlets and mentors that had a lasting impact on him. "I was in Jack Flam's art history class and like I was getting teary-eyed at how amazing he spoke and I realized this totally was worth the two years of class on my first day," he said.

In his second year at Brooklyn College, he was awarded a grant to be an assistant professor under

David Lantow, an undergrad printmaking professor. From there, Lantow became Olivera's mentor and friend, teaching him that there are many periods of instability artists face in their lives and must find ways to help support themselves. For Olivera, this was teaching.

Olivera's teaching career came almost incidentally. He needed a way to work and make money, which landed him at the Cooper Union Saturday Program. Teaching has humbled him, and brought him back to the idea of loving art for the sake of art. "When you teach, you're reinforcing your own knowledge," said Olivera. This enlightening experience brought his perspective back and helped him better appreciate art and opened up his humanity.

After some time, he joined a different art scene where he taught in Taller Artístico Xuchialt, a school run by local artists in Nicaragua. During his time teaching in Nicaragua, Olivera came to realize that the economy for art is vastly different around the world. While many artists in New York can create large expensive paintings here, artists around the world do not have the same resources and ability to sell expensive work. This led to an epiphany where he asked himself, "Do I want to make art that only exists in the New York art market?" "I try to be original, but I do want my work to be accessible," said Olivera. Going to school at Brooklyn College had an influence on his ethos behind creating art that could be made and accessed by anyone.

He found that when you put in the effort to mass produce art, it often is less expensive to purchase and support. One example of his work being mass distributed is through his partnership with Maddie Rosenberg, who is the founder of Central Booking. Their paired work includes hand-bound books, which feature Olivera's collection of graffiti artwork. With



Omar Olivera, Brooklyn College Alumni, current educator and artist./ [Olivera's LinkedIn](#)

the help of Rosenberg, Olivera has seen his work purchased and distributed to prestigious places such as Columbia, Yale, and the New York Public Library. Olivera's work has mainly been seen around New York, which has served as a form of home base for him where he was able to display his work at alternative events. As he continued to expand his ability to spread his art, he also found that he needed to learn to adapt all forms of media including digital.

As Olivera started to have a better understanding of his art, he came to the conclusion that his work is both conceptual and autobiographical. To encompass this through his unique pieces of work that include rainbows, fractal patterns, comics, and graphic design, he explored a range of mediums: post-it notes, an app he is building with a computer programmer, and even \$75 worth of legos.

Although Olivera has achieved many accomplishments throughout his career, he's also had to overcome many difficult and draining blocks in his art to get there. After leaving Brooklyn

College, he continued to try and maintain the same momentum he had, finding at one point that he had simply hit a wall.

"I had used up every professional outlet, what brought me back was just doodling, or picking up a guitar again. Your brain likes and craves it just for the sake of it. It actually does make you happy," said Olivera.

Reigniting that same love and desire to create took a long and frustrating time. As Olivera said, "The more you practice something the more you want to make a home for it, but there's still a value in doing it all by yourself." In order to value his relationship with art again, he had to learn to become calm about who he became and remain calm about the fact there are so many unknowns.

Olivera has since brought his teaching and work to middle schools, students with disabilities, and a wide spectrum of communities. Though this was not originally part of his plans, interacting with these different people helped him understand why he makes art.

"Your art better means

something. It can't just be about making money. And if it won't cross these class and community boundaries then what are you doing?," Olivera said.

Although Olivera has limits with his work as an independent artist, he's learned to compromise and navigate his own artistic world. With COVID-19, Olivera believes that he is learning to adjust expectations and recognize how his field of vision has been impacted.

"I am slowly learning how to evolve and adapt to the constantly changing world," he said.

As a deeply driven artist with a passion for creating, Olivera has developed a world that represents himself and his surrounding influences. His hard work and motivation has proven itself in the community and with the relationships he has built with other people. No matter where he goes, or which challenges he faces, Olivera always remembers where he came from.

"I feel like I'm accomplished, I'm really proud of what I've accomplished. I'm humbled by what my past has shown me," said Olivera.

BC Conservatory Hosts Grammy Nominated Flutist

By John Schilling
Arts Editor

It was “Flute Friday” at Brooklyn College on Nov. 13, as the Conservatory of Music at Brooklyn College hosted a trio of events throughout the day all having to do with Burkart flutes, including a digital factory tour, as well as a masterclass and a recital via Zoom with Carol Wincenc, a Burkart artist.

Carol Wincenc, a Grammy-nominated international flutist and professor at the Juilliard School and Stony Brook University, joined Brooklyn College students for a Friday night Zoom recital titled “Carol Wincenc and Friends!” This however was not your typical recital.

Instead of performing live, the recital consisted of Wincenc sharing video clips of some of her past performances and leading a discussion about the music and why she selected the pieces she did for the evening screening.

“I decided to really honor women,” said Wincenc.

The recital began with Wincenc performing Sato Matsui’s “The Goldenrod Sonata,” a soothing piece that is reminiscent of nature.

Throughout the piece, Wincenc can be seen swaying as she lets the music flow through her. As a flutist, Wincenc’s expertise becomes especially evident as the piece slows and speeds

back up throughout with seamless finger movement and expert precision.

An accompanying piano compliments Wincenc’s flute, but eventually ceases at the piece’s end, allowing Wincenc to play alone with a heartbeat-like sound that builds tension and ends the piece on a high note.

The recital then turned to Wincenc’s rendition of Valerie Coleman’s “Amazonia,” a longer piece that utilizes different movements and changing dynamics for emphasis.

The piece begins with the piano playing faintly in the background, allowing the flute to shine more prominently than in the previous performance. This quickly changes, however, as the dynamics constantly shift from low to high and back again.

Piano solos emerge throughout to carry the piece from one section to another, establishing a theme of constant back and forth between the piano and the flute as they equally vie for the limelight.

Following this piece, Wincenc played a clip of her performance of Germaine’s Tailleferre’s “Pastorale,” a smooth departure from the constant shifts and aggressive dynamics of the preceding pieces.

“Pastorale” includes not only Wincenc on the flute but another performer on the harp, and the two of



Carol Wincenc playing her flute outside./ Courtesy of Carol Wincenc

them work together to make the most of the shorter piece. Unlike the pieces played before, this one takes a calmer approach in both sound and technique, as the flute carries the piece with a soft tone, and Wincenc remains seated and relatively static throughout.

This tranquility does not last, however, as the recital transitions to Wincenc’s performance of Amanda Meier’s “Sonata in B Minor,” a piece that highlights the flute almost as a voice being backed up by the piano.

Similar to “Pastorale,” Wincenc and the pianist bounce off of each other throughout, often utilizing repetition in a call and response-like fashion for dramatic effect. When played alone, the piano sounds melancholic, but when the flute chimes in, the piece brightens.

These elements work in tandem with a range of speed patterns throughout the piece as it builds up and slows, consistently evoking a sense of alertness within the listener to create a significant theme of high tension and present a wide range of techniques.

As the recital came to a close, Wincenc decided to end with “The Goldfinch,” a piece composed by Antonio Vivaldi, a composer who was notably kind to young orphaned girls and often encouraged them to play

instruments.

“The Goldfinch,” like Meier’s sonata, establishes the flute as a voice, but it takes a different approach. As made clear in the title, the flute resembles the sound of a singing bird.

In the video, Wincenc can be seen with three violinists and two cellists in an outdoor setting that really sets the mood of the piece. This performance was recorded in the spring when COVID-19 had eliminated indoor events entirely.

Broken into three significant sections, Wincenc’s flute provides the sound of the singing bird, and actual birds can be heard in the video seemingly responding to the music. As the piece continues, the string players work together to transition between Wincenc’s bird sounds.

By the time the piece reaches the allegro, the piece seemingly creates an image of a bird flying through the sky with its diverse instrumentation. Wincenc’s flute stands in for the sounds a bird would make and the string players create a sense of movement with a fast, triumphant tone that compensates what we cannot see with a vivid soundscape by creating tension that is relieved by the piece’s end.

Before the recital ended, Wincenc offered advice to musicians in attendance

about her pre-show rituals, including the mental and physical preparation that goes into a performance. For Wincenc, this often includes practicing in front of audiences both real and stuffed.

“I very strongly believe in visualization so when I am preparing for a concert...I play it every single day for at least a couple of weeks in front of people,” explained Wincenc. “I [would] grab my son’s 40 Beanie Babies, and I would set them all up and...walk out as if this was Carnegie Hall in front of the Beanie Babies, take my bow, and play the entire concerto.”

Other rituals for Wincenc include not eating, taking a nap, going for a power walk, and even refraining from swimming and kissing. When it comes to nerves, Wincenc has resorted to homeopathy, meditation, and even beta blockers to help her breathe. Despite the taboos surrounding medicinal approaches, Wincenc emphasized the importance of doing whatever works for you.

“Stepping out in front of 3000 people is not a natural, daily act,” said Wincenc. “I think it’s deeply personal and never feel apologetic for whatever it is that it takes for you to feel absolutely in your ‘A’ game when you walk out on stage.”



Carol Wincenc on Zoom with students./ John Schilling

Met Curator Offers Byzantine Art Lecture

By Michela Arlia
Staff Writer

On Tuesday, Nov. 10, Dr. Andrea Myers Achi, assistant curator in the Department of Medieval Art and the Cloisters for the Metropolitan Museum of Art, gave Brooklyn College students a lecture about Byzantine art and Christianity in Africa.

Hosted by Professor Jennifer Ball, the lecture was a part of the Art Department's lecture series in accordance with the Black Lives Research and Engagement series by the Ethyl R. Wolfe Institute for Humanities.

Dr. Achi, whose work specializes in late antique and Byzantine art, spoke of how the study of Christian African communities is connected with the Byzantine Empire and how that connection allows us to expand our knowledge of the Byzantine world.

A common misconception in the classification of Christian art during the Byzantine era is that it is often never credited as African art. Achi explained how this misconception is so common and how the truth gets lost in translation and exhibitions of art within the era. Africa, which

some people often think is a country set onto itself, is in fact a large continent with many different elements and cultures.

"While it's true that the material culture[s] of North Africa have meaningful links to the Mediterranean Basin, the art cannot be claimed to be 'non-African,'" explained Achi. "The arts from late antique and Early Christian periods are perpetually understudied and misunderstood."

Achi explained that the art works from this time period are studied less because they are not a part of the popular Western art cultures that the norm suggests should be studied. Because of this, the works are highly misunderstood because they are not seen for their worth.

"[The art works] are often seen as low quality innovations of Late Antique or Early Byzantine art and never as African art," said Achi.

While explaining the contributions to this era of art by those in Africa, Dr. Achi clearly noted the connections between the Christian religion, African art, and the Byzantine era.

"Christianity defined the art and material culture of Ethiopian society," said Achi. "Ethiopian monks in the 15th century



Dr. Andrea Myers Achi./The Metropolitan Museum of Art

traveled throughout France to collect artwork to bring them back home with them using the artwork to make their own, appropriating them."

As the lecture came to a close, Achi's concluding note was that she hoped she had made clear

connections within these topics despite her research often presenting "more questions than answers."

"I hope you have a sense of the diversity of Christian art from the 4th to the 15th century and some of the connections to the Byzantium and

some of the connections to Africa," said Achi. "At the very least, I hope I was able to show an expansive Byzantine world whose arts and cultures stretch beyond the Mediterranean...and right down to the Red Sea and Indian Ocean."

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@THEBCVANGUARD ON SOCIAL MEDIA

On The Record: This Place Sucks Ass – PUP

By Moises Taveras
Managing Editor

In the days of yore, also known as February, I bugged Allison about doing my own guest stint on On The Record, a column I've enjoyed editing and reading for a while now. I thought it'd be a celebratory column when I first pitched it. Of late though, her anthropologic rock music odyssey has unearthed almost as many dinosaurs as it has yielded moments of discovery, reflection and growth, something I've felt in dire need of. Practically numb to the call of music for months now, I've only really listened at my lowest moments, turning music into a balm for my existential dread. In those moments, I've often turned to something more sensitive or downbeat to sooth me. Music to cater a healing aura, I guess. But the myth that reflection is exclusively this quiet and deeply contemplative process is bullshit, so much so I gagged even typing out that last sentence.

So last Saturday, I did myself a favor and kept it real with myself. I tuned my TV to Spotify and threw myself a concert. I built myself a fictional occasion. Canadian punk heartthrobs PUP had just released their latest EP, appropriately titled *This Place Sucks Ass* and their tour had brought them back to New York. The music blasting, I shamelessly did that same bounce you've seen every dude in a mosh pit do before he starts swinging, and flew across the room. I've got very little left to lose, so what's a hole in the wall?

The EP, a collection consisting of a new song, cover, and cuts that didn't make it onto PUP's excellent 2019 album *Morbid Stuff*, is decidedly of two worlds. On one hand, it's filled with the same anger and despair that has marked the band's existing efforts. In that sense, I can't help but be pulled backward to a simpler year, when I was listening to them on my long commute to and from campus every day. On the other hand, the frustration expressed on the project feels of the last few months. Stefan Babcock, lead singer of the band, barks about decay and loneliness that feels like it could only be molded in our current situation.

"And I was rotting in the backseat, I was trying to find new words for the same repeating lines."

Across *This Place Sucks Ass*, a title I won't soon get tired of, there's a tangible effort on part of the lyricism to reconcile with these oh so common issues. A sense of recollection or at least a concerted effort trying to pick oneself back up tinges the EP. Babcock's tired, yet angry, vocals on "Floodgates" deliver the above lines, an image of someone withered from trying to make sense of the same problems that have plagued them and will continue to on a ride they don't even necessarily have control of. Same man, same.

"The more I'm reckless, the less I break / The more I care about money, the less I make."

Babcock seems to know just like me that life's beyond our control. Try as we might to guide it, it will ultimately do its own



thing, clearly independent of us. Never has that been more painfully obvious than presently. It really has been a magically bad year. And that's something I've kind of been sitting on for a long time now. It makes no sense how bad the state of everything is so why am I fighting it so much? As a matter of fact, whereas it may have been independent of me till recently, fighting the turns life takes has only made it contentious. I'm now in a boxing match with the cosmos and it's looking like they've got my number.

On the bridge of the only technically new track and opening banger, "Rot," Babcock assuredly asserts, "The less I care about everything, the better it goes / And the better it gets, the more I lose control" with the confidence of a man who's now on the other side of that pounding. If

the things I'm doing are turning out paradoxical results, then why do anything at all? I'm only hurting myself and the state of things further deteriorates. So I'm taking steps back and in the immortal words of Twitter memes, hoping that "nature's healing."

"And even if the wait is long, and all the words are wrong / Put the recorder on and I'll begin again."

PUP's so right, this place does suck ass. This house playing unwitting hostage-taker sucks ass. This state of mind where I'm victim to seemingly unending exhaustion and lashes sucks ass. This pandemic sucks ass. Look out the window and point me towards something that doesn't.

Acknowledging this all has been the most liberating thought in months though because it's at least drilled home that this is just a place. Not

the one you necessarily make plans to go to, mind you. It's more like the crappy out of the way town in the boonies your car breaks down in during your road trip. There's tons more places to travel to, both metaphorical and not. I'm not sure how long it is till I, or we, get there but it's certainly coming.

At the end of the concert that never was, I was exhausted and yet oddly hopeful. I was never one who needed the violence of a mosh pit, but estranged from my former life, for the first time I did. The world's problems and my own didn't stop being real tangible things haunting us, but I'd taken back control of my life from them for 17 minutes and it felt great. So long as that feeling exists, I'm going to keep trying to get to it. To some place that doesn't suck ass.

Film Review: "I Am Greta" Documentary

By Michael Castaneda
Columnist

I Am Greta dropped on Hulu on Friday, Nov. 13, 2020. It is directed by Swedish director Nathan Grossman about Swedish climate activist Greta Thunberg. The capitalized "A" adds emphasis.

As Grossman tells it, he got in on the ground floor early. He heard about a school girl who had begun protesting the globe's climate emergency a few weeks after she had begun her endeavor. He subsequently filmed a year of Greta's life from her early school strike at the foot of the Swedish parliament to her meteoric rise on the world stage. The apex of the film is Greta's trip to New York City to speak at the United Nations and participate in the climate strike/march down Broadway last year, which many Brooklyn College students participated in.

As Greta symbolizes, her message about the climate emergency and any attention on her is attention on that. However, you are not going to learn much more about it here. More can be learned from her collection of speeches, *No One Is Too Small to Make a Difference*.

This documentary assumes that its audience is already familiar with Greta's story. It unfolds like a behind-the-scenes music documentary made for the fans. Only bits of the concert are shown, and you see personal moments of the band along the way. Without loss of generality, we watch Greta fight with her father, cuddle with her dogs and horse, and just watch her in different settings.

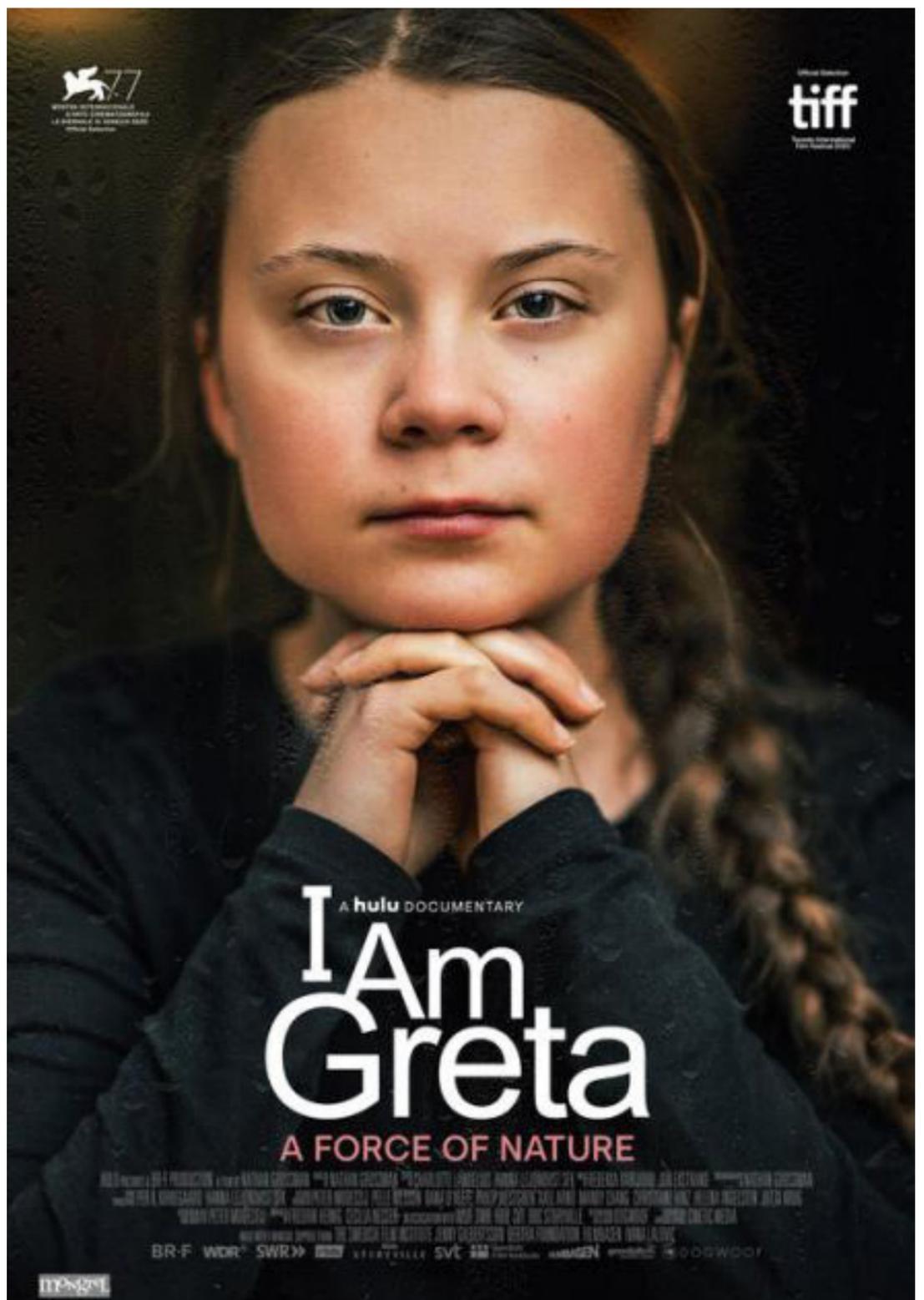
Obviously, the purpose is to humanize a girl

who lives in extremes. She is demonized by the dictators of the world. We see Fox News commentators insulting her in full disgust, which is how they emotionally connect with their audience. We see Donald Trump insulting her at a campaign rally. I was surprised that the audience didn't start to chant "lock her [Greta] up." Then we see Greta dancing around like any normal kid. This little girl got under so many of the most powerful people of the world's collective skin. Not surprising these days, we also learn that Greta has had death threats made on her life.

On the other side of the political spectrum, we see Greta with world leaders who hypocritically praise her efforts and show themselves "being on the right side of history," but then carry on with burning carbons in the atmosphere. The film implicitly asks the question what difference does it make if a leader of a nation praises you or demonizes you if the end result is that both do nothing to reduce the amount of carbon being put into the atmosphere.

Next, there is the contrast of Greta the "Super Star," whom high school students all over the world want to know. Then we see Greta awkwardly trying to find a place to sit at the lunch table in her own high school. She is not cool. She looks much younger than the rest of the students her own age, and doesn't look like she fits in at all. We all know how painful that can feel.

It is not clear if that makes much of a difference to Greta, but her work takes its toll. In the news, she is portrayed as a formidable speaker chastising world



"I am Greta", a Hulu documentary about Greta Thunberg./Poster design by Leroy and Rose

leaders, but in this film we see someone who is barely holding it together. We see her going to palaces but living out of a suitcase with Heinz baked beans in a microwave oven packed in the trunk of a small electric car. She rides around Europe with her father eating a diet of cold pasta and beans. She wears the same few outfits all the time because she wants to limit her consumption of resources.

Sometimes there is way too much footage of Greta. It feels like filler with no point. The ability to hold one's attention

seems predicated on how important you feel Greta is. The contradiction is that Greta doesn't want to be the focal point of attention. She wants her message to be the focus.

"Our house is on fire. I am here to say, our house is on fire," she wrote in an op-ed to *The Guardian* in 2019. "According to the IPCC (Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change), we are less than 12 years away from not being able to undo our mistakes."

The jury is still out on this documentary. Time will tell how important this film is and determine

if Greta comes in and out of the world stage like the latest hip hop star, or if Greta's movement proves to be a sustainable force.



Houston Rockets Return to Earth, Stars NY Bound?

By Jose Rohdin
Staff Writer

The Houston Rockets have been one of the best teams in the NBA since acquiring James Harden from the Oklahoma City Thunder before the 2012-2013 season. They have not missed the playoff with Harden on their roster, but it appears Harden's time may be over in Houston.

After the end of this weird 2019-2020 season, Rockets General Manager and mastermind-behind-the-new-NBA-offensive-scheme Daryl Morey stepped down as General Manager. Along with that, the contract of Head Coach Mike D'Antoni expired at the end of the season, and he and the Rockets mutually agreed to part ways. Rafael Stone took over as General Manager and soon hired longtime assistant coach Stephen Silas as the Rockets' new Head Coach.

With two of the leading voices in the organization being replaced, Harden and All-Star teammate and friend Russell Westbrook have expressed concerns about the organization's direction, reported by ESPN. This sparked all types of trade rumors for the two former MVPs, with New York teams at the front of the pack.

The talk around the NBA is that Harden wants to play for a contender and get his ring. The Brooklyn Nets have been linked to him, along with ESPN reporting that



James Harden, basketball player for the Houston Rockets./AP Photo/Nell Redmond

Harden wants the Nets. This trade would be challenging to pull off as the Nets don't have the picks to pull off a blockbuster trade like this.

The trade would most likely have to include young talents like Caris LeVert and Jarrett Allen and the Nets 19th pick in the draft. This would reunite Harden with former Thunder teammate Kevin Durant and pair him up in the backcourt with Kyrie Irving. These three players are some of the most skilled offensive players in the league, and the possibility of them playing together is massively intriguing. That offense could put up close to 140 points a game.

However, Harden and Irving are not known for their ball movement and willingness to be a second option. Irving struggled with it under LeBron James, causing him to request a trade from Cleveland, and Harden had trouble dealing with Chris Paul and even Westbrook taking shots from him. Even though we know Durant can take a step back like he did for the Golden State Warriors, he has his own personality with his clashes on social media. On paper, this could be the best offense the league has ever seen, but in reality, the consistent ISO ball and egos might get in the way.

Westbrook's name has been linked very heavily

to the New York Knicks. While Knicks fans might be happy that an All-Star will finally be on the team again, Westbrook might not be the one they want. The Knicks right now are trying to rebuild with a team of young talented players and hope that those talented players turn into All-Stars someday. The Knicks would need to give up those young talented players and probably a pick to get Westbrook. This could change the Knicks' future as Westbrook has a massive contract and a playstyle that does not work with other stars or players. This would probably lower the chances of the Knicks getting a top-level free agent until Westbrook

is gone. Westbrook also would not make the Knicks a playoff team, as they don't have a roster built around his specific need of spacing because of his lack of perimeter shooting.

Both Harden and Westbrook are stars and might come to the Nets and Knicks, respectively, and could improve those teams once they arrive. However, the fits seem a lot better on paper than how they might actually play out.



NBA Draft Preview: Who Will Go #1?

By Conrad Hoyt
Sports Editor

The NBA Draft tips off Wednesday night at 7:30 pm EST on ESPN. With it comes a flurry of questions, decisions, and intrigue. It is a draft considered by most as weak at the top, but strong in depth.

The Minnesota Timberwolves command the first overall pick, but in a year without a consensus number one pick (such as a Zion Williamson or Anthony Davis), questions remain about what they will decide to do.

With two stars already on their squad in Karl-Anthony Towns and D'Angelo Russell, the Wolves may be more inclined to choose for fit than normal teams selecting at number one would. Do they want to go the route of LaMelo Ball, a talented playmaking guard with possibly the highest ceiling of anyone in the draft, or maybe decide on Anthony Edwards, a wing with extreme athleticism, but questions about his work ethic? Questions that also surround Ball.

Standing right behind the Timberwolves are the Golden State Warriors, a team with legitimate championship aspirations. It is rare that a team with such stardom (and bonafide winners) picks so high up in the draft, but past instances of this show us that the team can regroup and prolong, or forge a dynasty (the mid-80's Lakers with James Worthy, late 90's Spurs with Tim Duncan).

The Warriors have shopped their pick



LaMelo Ball, American professional basketball player who last played for the Illawarra Hawks of the Australian National Basketball League./ Anthony Au-Yeung/Getty Images

(much like the Wolves have), to try and move down in the draft and in the process acquire a veteran who can help them win now. However, no moves have been made yet, and lacking a starting-level center right now, the Warriors may find that selecting James Wiseman, the 7-foot, one big man out of Memphis, is their best bet.

After the Warriors comes the Charlotte Hornets, who reportedly are high on Wiseman themselves, also needing a center. But the Hornets, without a star on their roster, would be smart to choose the best talent available, even if that means choosing Ball or Edwards.

Following the Hornets selection comes a plethora of teams at the bottom of the East in interesting positions.

The Bulls, Cavaliers, Hawks, Pistons, Knicks, and Wizards choose next, and will have a bevy of choices that can help accelerate their respective rebuilds. Deni Avdija, Obi Toppin, Tyrese Haliburton, Killian Hayes, Onyeka Okongwu, and Patrick Williams are among the names being considered for these 4-9 slots.

Avdija and Toppin are two extreme talents, the first being an international prospect with useful versatility, and the latter being a powering force at the two big man positions, who can shoot, pass, and was the recipient of the 2020 John R. Wooden Award, given to the most outstanding college basketball player in the country.

As in every draft year, trades will be made that will shake up the

entire draft order and our preconceptions as to what team will pick whom. Teams in more concrete positions (such as the Warriors and Wizards with John Wall returning) will prefer a player that can help them win now. Teams with a star on the roster and playoff aspirations, but having failed in recent years (such as the Wolves and Hawks with Trae Young) may find themselves better suited to nab a player that fits their core (like a wing for the Wolves and a lockdown wing defender for the Hawks). And for the teams bereft of a star, with questions circulating as to what direction they are even taking (like the Knicks and Pistons), picking a player with extreme upside is probably the best bet (there has been chatter around both

teams trading up to take LaMelo Ball).

With an NBA season approaching that will be unlike any before it, draftees will have the shortest training camp in recent memory, and teams, facing financial restrictions, may approach their draft decisions completely differently than before. No one knows who will be drafted in the top 10, what team will win the day, or who the best player in the draft will turn out to be. It may be the first overall pick. Or it may be the 15th pick in the second round.

One thing is for sure: many teams desperately need to get this draft right. Fail, and they will fall deeper into NBA obscurity and set their rebuilds back for years to come.

Mets Open New Chapter In Steve Cohen

By Carlos Daniel
Martinez
Staff Writer

Things are starting to look up for the Mets, as fans can sigh and feel that something will be accomplished soon with the new leadership of hedge-fund titan Steve Cohen. Cohen is the new majority owner of the Mets after purchasing the organization for the sum of \$2.4 billion from the Fred Wilpon and Saul Katz families. The purchase also makes him the second wealthiest owner in American sports by net worth.

With a final stamp of approval from Mayor Bill de Blasio and Major League Baseball, the billionaire Cohen also becomes the richest owner in the MLB. From his beginnings as a Wall Street trader in the booming economy of the 1980s, Cohen crossed over into even more success in the nineties when he launched his own business hedge fund, SAC Capital Advisors, which would later convert into Point72 Asset Management.

As a business owner, Cohen has met legal issues. SAC Capital Advisors pleaded guilty in 2013 with charges of insider trading, paying the Justice Department \$1.8 billion in criminal and civil settlements as a result. Cohen, himself though, never got charged. His history as a rising rich mogul has also served as partial inspiration to the ruthless protagonist Bobby Axelrod, in the Showtime fictional drama *Billions*.

For Mets fans, it feels as if they have a “Steinbrenner” to call their own. This also ends a long bidding war that has seen many people and groups attempting to



Steve Cohen, billionaire hedge funder and majority owner of the New York Mets./Sasha Arutyunova for The New York Times

secure the purchase.

Notable bidders who Cohen beat out were former Yankees star Alex Rodriguez and his fiancée, singer Jennifer Lopez. Others were Philadelphia 76ers and New Jersey Devils’ managing partners Josh Harris and David Blitzer.

“I’m going to be an owner that builds a team that has continued success,” Cohen said in his first press conference announcing the historic move for the organization. “We want to win now, but are also building for the long-term.”

As for what he means by the “long-term,” Cohen expects the team to reach and win the World Series in three-to-five years time. The last time the Mets played in the World Series was back in 2015, losing to the Kansas City Royals in five games. The Mets haven’t won it all since 1986, a drought that as years have gone by has been met with misfortunes. With a lack

of strong leadership, difficult player-trade losses, devastating injuries that shot down postseason hopes, fans have consistently been left thinking: “Better luck next year.” Now with Cohen at the helm of the franchise, maybe sometime in three-to-five years, next year could be this year.

“One team wins the World Series every year, so that’s a pretty high bar,” Cohen says. “But if I don’t win a World Series in the next three-to-five years—I would like to make it sooner—then obviously I would consider that slightly disappointing.”

To some fans and critics, a prediction such as that sounds implausible, or reaching too high for the moon. We haven’t concluded this long and tumultuous year, but Cohen’s eyes look beyond 2021. He’s provided an outline in where and how far the organization can go.

“We want to create a blueprint for winning,” he

explained.

“We want to find great players and make them better. We are starting with our homegrown talent and building from there. When we need to fill a gap, we will fill it. It might be with a free agent or might be through a trade. We want to strengthen our farm system, keep our players healthy, and use the best analytics. We’re gonna build a process that produces great teams, year in and year out. You build champions, you don’t buy them, and we have a great core at this team.”

Speaking like a natural leader, Cohen shows confidence that perhaps that is what the fans have been missing for a long time. It is an assurance that everything is going to be okay, without hints of hesitation or trying to make false promises which in the near-future would backfire, adding more disdain to the average Mets fan.

“I’m essentially doing it for the fans. When I

really thought about this, I could make millions of people happy, and what an incredible opportunity that is. That’s how I’m thinking about this. I’m not trying to make money here,” Cohen said, later adding, “It’s really about building something great, building something for the fans, winning. I just find this an amazing opportunity.”

If the money or the blueprint ideas don’t resonate to the people in Queens, maybe just the fact that Cohen is a lifelong Mets fan says enough that he has more than his money at stake. His heart is in it as well. Growing up in Great Neck in Long Island, Cohen would often take the train to the old Mets stadiums to see the team play.

“I went to my first Mets game with my dad at the old Polo Grounds. Years later, my friends and I used to sit in the upper deck at Shea Stadium. That makes today a dream come true.”