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Give back, get down

Unified for UNIFAT benefit concert raises thousands

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In such a large, populated school, there are many groups vying to raise funds for their cause, often holding fundraisers such as bake sales to accomplish this. Sometimes, however, organizations seek to raise money in more unconventional ways.

On Friday, May 7, 2010, Unified for UNIFAT held its fourth annual benefit concert to raise funds to assist the UNIFAT school in Gulu, Uganda.

"This is one of my favorite events, because we get to raise money and enjoy great music," said **Caroline Bresnahan**, 10, an officer of the club who helped organize the event.

The event, previously held at the Blue Ash Recreation Center's Amphitheatre, took place in downtown Blue Ash at the Towne Square. Members of the club assisted in selling concessions, raffle tickets, and merchandise while attendees watched a line-up of performances.

The student bands Innocent Commotion, Earl Gray and Battle of the Bands winner Olde New York were featured, along with alumni group Static Vessels, who have played in previous concerts for the organization.

A rap group, Yung N' Official, performed as well. Acts between bands included **Jeff Silver-**

stein, 11, **Alan Kissinger**, 11 and **Kate Muething**, 12.

"I was really excited to play in the benefit concert. It was fun and for a great cause," said Kissinger.

Though windy weather and the possibility of storms as well as a last-minute change in timing led to skepticism about attendance, hundreds of students showed up to enjoy the music and support the cause.

At the end of the event, they had raised over \$3,000 dollars to send to UNIFAT. All money raised at these events goes to Uganda, and contributes toward improving facilities at the primary school and sponsoring the education of destitute students.



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Sixth-grade sensation wows audiences

I have a bad habit of falling in love online. No, I do not use EHarmony, and I do not have an internet boyfriend. I am not hoping to find these men and marry them; furthermore, I do not try to contact them whatsoever.

My infatuations stem from one place and one place only: Youtube. I am addicted to Youtube, and more specifically to watching random nobodies cover my favorite songs. And when I do happen to discover one I enjoy, that's when the obsession begins.

While searching for covers of the song "Paparazzi" by my girl **Lady Gaga**, I happened upon a seemingly innocent video of a twelve year old boy performing a cover of the song on piano at a school recital. Little did I know that **Greyson Michael Chance** would be my newest online obsession.

Neither I nor the audience of mostly young girls at the recital, was prepared for the chilling performance of "Paparazzi" that little Greyson delivered. When I had finished my four minutes of amazement with my mouth agape, and goose bumps on my arms, I pressed replay. Six times.

Clearly, the seventeen million other viewers, including **Ellen DeGeneres**, who had Chance as a guest on her show on Thursday, May 13, were just as stunned as I. Chance became an overnight success, receiving coverage on stations including MTV, ABC, and NBC, and all for good reason.

So what sets Chance apart from any other tween pop star, like say **Justin Bieber**, who he is often compared to? Chance has an unusually mature voice for a boy of his age, and beyond that, he controls his beautiful vocal inflections with ease. Unlike Bieber, Chance's voice has heart.

Chance also possesses the songwriting abilities that Bieber clearly lacks. While Bieber has sugar-coated pop songs like "Baby," which focuses on cliché puppy love, Chance has "Stars," a deeply heartfelt piano ballad written about a woman who dies of cancer, and her husband who follows shortly after.

All in all, Chance is by far more talented, more well-rounded, and far less annoying than Bieber. There is no comparison.

In fact, I would go as far as to say that GMC is the anti-JB. I am going to pass on the vocals that sound like a five year old girl and the bad hip-hop collaborations. Sorry, Justin.

If you have yet to watch the sixth-grade musical prodigy I speak of, I seriously recommend it. In fact, I demand it. The adorably brilliant, incredibly gifted Chance will capture your heart with both his rendition of Gaga's song and his original pieces, just as he did mine.

This little heart throb is by far my newest Youtube crush. He may be five years younger than I, but quite frankly that is not stopping me. Call me creepy, but Greyson, "I'm your biggest fan, I'll follow you until you love me."

For comments on this column, please write to WritetoTheLeaf@gmail.com



Jack Bauer, CTU bid farewell in series finale

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In the episode directly before the series finale, Jack Bauer's accomplice told him, "I hope you know what you're doing, because this road you're going down, there's no coming back." To which Jack replied with the Bauer-esque response of, "I wasn't planning on coming back."

That has certainly always been the motto of the groundbreaking series "24," which debuted in November 2001. "24" fearlessly addresses controversial cultural and societal issues in a heart-stopping manner that left its viewers emotionally exhausted.

Premiering immediately after September 11th, much of "24's" plot has centered on stopping terrorists from carrying out a major attack, whether it be presidential assassinations, nuclear bombs, or biological warfare.

At the center of this fight was CTU, Counter Terrorist Unit, and its former director and best field agent Jack Bauer, played by Keifer Sutherland. Over the past eight seasons Bauer has fought off every unthinkable and unforeseen obstacle in his path. From his numerous escapes from captivity to saving Los Angeles and New York City from nuclear attacks, Jack has done it all.

Although the seasons always seemed to include the same twists

and turns (usually a mole in CTU and a corrupt government official), "24" grabbed at the hearts and minds of its audience while they watched Bauer's high intensity adventures.

Despite its relative predictability, "24" was still a complete adrenaline rush for viewers. But "24" was much more than a typical action TV show. It was never afraid to tackle the most controversial issues of the day, most frequently the use of torture.

Airing for the duration of the Bush Presidency, when water boarding and other torture techniques were used on terrorists, "24" vividly portrayed numerous torture scenes and showed the problems associated with the use of torture in general.

Because of this, "24" frequently came under fire by critics who said that by depicting torture, it was sending the message that America condones torture. Whether this was the case or not, the fact that a TV show independently spurred a debate about real issues in the world is significant and unique.

After 8 years of mind boggling stories, "24" has come to an end. While critics say that "24's" spark burned out a few seasons ago, avid fans were not ready to let Bauer and CTU go.

"Jack Bauer was a father figure for these past eight seasons. I will miss seeing him take down terrorists and be a total BA every Monday night," said **John Beech**, 10.

'Iron Man' sequel lives up to hype

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staff writer

As entertainment, "Iron Man 2" is superb. It is not quite as good as the original, but its excellent villain, inspired acting, and high-quality special effects make this film well worth seeing.

The plot involves Tony Stark, once again pitch-perfectly played by **Robert Downey Jr.**, six months after revealing his secret identity to the world. While he is loving the fame and adoration that comes with being Iron Man, Stark is struggling with the lethal side effects of the reactor in his chest.

Meanwhile, Ivan Vanko, played by **Mickey Rourke**, is gunning for Stark to satisfy an old family grudge. Vanko is supported with the money and resources of Stark's rival, Justin Hammer (**Sam Rockwell**). Stark also has to deal with friction with the US military, who want him to turn over the Iron Man armor.

This movie excels at balancing its villains. Hammer and Vanko are both given lots of screen time, but honestly, Hammer is played more for comic relief than any real threat, leaving all the heavy lifting to Rourke as Vanko. Rourke can play menacing very well. While I love **Jeff Bridges**, this movie has a better villain than the first one.

However, the dialogue seems clumsier than in the first movie. Maybe it is just because it does not seem as new, maybe it just is worse, but this movie overdoes the fast, witty speech, making it almost seem like a parody of the first movie. Still, Hollywood script writers could do much worse.

Of course, the acting and interaction between the characters makes up for flaws in dialogue. Stark and Pepper Potts (**Gwyneth Paltrow**) have an interesting work relationship between equals, while Vanko and Hammer have a slightly more one-sided, amusing one.

Overall, "Iron Man 2" a solid addition to the series. It has fewer strengths than the original, but it does not really have any awful aspects to criticize. And, of course, being an "Iron Man" movie, it is so packed with awesome that you cannot help leaving the theater with a grin on your face.

image by gina romeo