

ORGAN RECITAL
News, p. #1-2

PIANO RECITAL
News, p. #1

DEAN JORDAN
Feature, p. #2

PUZZLES
Activities p. #2

MUSIC
Opinions, p. #3

MOVIE REVIEW
Columns, p. #4

ALUMNA RETURNS TO PERFORM IN ORGAN RECITAL

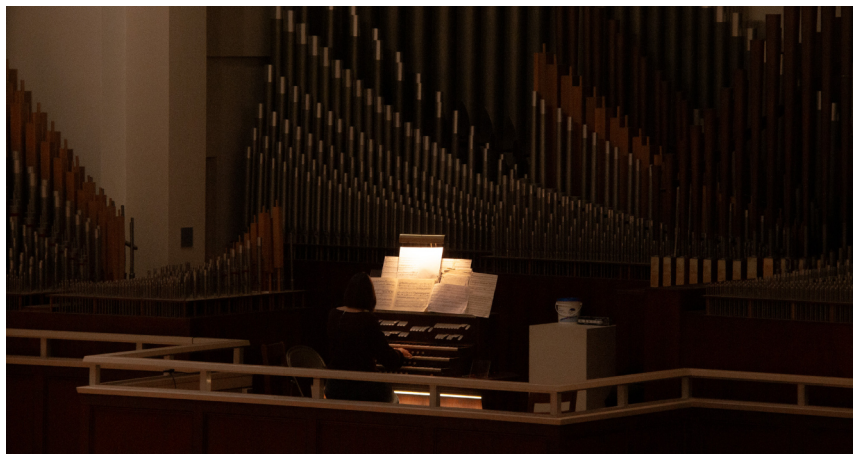
REBECCA DAILEY ('25)

At 7:30 p.m. on this Friday Jan. 26, Houghton welcomes back alumna Jennifer Velázquez ('91) to perform an organ recital in the Wesley Chapel. Velázquez's husband also graduated in the Class of '91, and her daughter and son-in-law both graduated from Houghton with bachelor's and master's degrees in music.

Judy Congdon—Professor of Organ and Harpsichord, and Houghton's Organist—speaks highly of Velázquez, “Jennifer is one of many, many very fine organists who have been trained at Houghton over the years. Jennifer is a gracious, lovely person and a musician of formidable talent. Though I was not her teacher I have watched her musical journey through the past several decades, and I consider her a treasured colleague and friend.”

At eleven, Velázquez began learning to play the piano, and then started playing the organ at fourteen and really liked it.

“I talked to my teacher about organ junior-senior year of high school,”



Jennifer Velazquez '91 practicing the organ for recital

COURTESY OF SAVANNAH STITT

Velázquez commented, “and ended up at Houghton.”

For 25 years, Velázquez was the Organist and Associate Director of Music and Worship at Independent Presbyterian Church (IPC) in Memphis, Tenn. She has previously performed at Houghton, and in England, Scotland, and Ukraine (for a mission trip). She now focuses on organ repertoire and performance.

Velázquez explained

that she “Mostly plays music already written and will be playing One Piece by Dr. William T. Allen [in the upcoming recital].”

Dr. Allen was a former Houghton Professor of Piano and Theory, and later a composer in residence.

The organ, a unique instrument with a rich history of being played in churches and concert halls, is both a keyboard and a wind instrument. This is

due to the varying sized pipes that are grouped together on the instrument.

Benjamin VanTine ('25), a current student studying organ explained, “The organ which is the oldest keyboard instrument is also a wind instrument, different knobs are used to achieve the desired sound. This is where the phrase ‘pull out all the stops’ comes from. An

Organ has to be preset to create the wanted sound.”

Wesley Chapel's organ was built in 1961-1962 by Walter Holtkamp Sr., who was one of the leading American organ builders of the mid-20th century.

“Its many sounds are produced by 3153 individual pipes,” Professor Congdon shared, “the largest of which are 16’ long and the smallest only about the size of a drinking straw. The pipes are controlled by a player seated at the 3-manual console . . . the recital will feature sounds from the hushed to the colorful to the robust and magnificent.”

VanTine leaves off with, “[playing the organ is] a way of expressing what you want to be heard but you need to work to develop music abilities. Inner musical ability, which must be learned but often starts with inspiration or a gift from God.”

Velázquez developed her gifts through rigorous training at Houghton, which prepared her for graduate school and her church work later on.

See **ORGAN RECITAL** page #2

Senior Recital: Lucas Myers

OLIVIA KLEINAU ('24)

On Monday Jan. 29 at 8 p.m., Lucas Myers ('24) will perform his Senior Recital in the Center For the Arts Recital Hall.

Myers, a pianist, explained that most of his preparation is a mix of practice as well as studying music scores. He will be performing a broad variety of pieces at his recital, including works by Ludwig van Beethoven, Claude Debussy, Johannes Brahms, Robert Schumann, Frédéric Chopin and Philip Glass. Myers' pieces include aspects of German Romanticism, French Impressionism and Contemporary Minimalism.

Fellow piano major, Katrina Kauffman ('26) shared, “I’m super excited for his upcoming recital, I have always really admired his playing. He is definitely someone I look up to as also a piano major.”

Myers shared his excitement for this upcoming recital as it is his first real attempt in creating a themed recital. He will be combining piano repertoire with other art forms to create an overarching storyline tying all the pieces together. The theme Myers' chose for the recital centers around the idea of rebirth.

The recital itself will center around the theme of rebirth, and will explore the way in which we as people often go through an internal death while going through times of intense hardship only to be reborn again.

“[The recital] will explore the way in which we

as people often go through an internal death while going through times of intense hardship only to be reborn again,” Myers explained, “finding a deeper capacity for love and joy as well as a heightened capacity to appreciate the beauty of life when we reemerge into the land of the living.”

Myers also stated that he finished his coursework last semester, giving more time to prepare for this upcoming recital. Last semester he was taking 19 credits on top of commuting from Rochester, NY to Houghton University. He had to find as many pockets available in his schedule to practice as he could manage, and on top of that make sure he was intentional in balancing heavier practice sessions with periods of rest on the weekends. One benefit of the commute was that it gave Myers the opportu-



Lucas Myers '25 playing the piano

COURTESY OF MELISSA KLEINBERGER

See **PIANO RECITAL** page #2

Feature: Dean Jordan

JIANA MARTIN ('26)

Dean Michael Jordan has been Houghton's full-time Dean of the Chapel for 12 years. Additionally, he works half-time as a professor for various theology and biblical literature classes. After marrying his wife, Jill, and graduating from Houghton in the class of '99, he attended seminary and earned his master's in 2002 from Eastern Baptist Theological Seminary. For the next seven years, he pastored the Exton Community Baptist Church in Exton, PA, and returned to school to earn his Doctorate. In 2009, he received his Ph.D. in Liturgical Studies from Drew University.

"I like that I get to have a pastoral connection with any student that wants one," Dean Jordan thoughtfully replied.

Dean Jordan enjoys being a teacher, but his role as a pastor has allowed him to have a different type of relationship with anybody who wants to "just talk." In regards to students, he can connect with them and get

to know them as people without worrying about their academic achievements.

As for Dean Jordan's favorite places on campus, he really likes how the new Spiritual Life office turned out. In general, he enjoys quiet, sacred and sanctuary spaces, such as the prayer chapel space in the basement of the Wesley Chapel.

"I also like how outdoorsy Houghton is and I like having so much that is walkable and breathable," Dean Jordan added.

Last Thursday, Jan. 18, Dean Jordan spoke at the first faculty lecture of the semester, based on his upcoming book, "Worship in an Age of Anxiety." This is his first book and he is excited for its release later this year on June 2.

"I have always valued writing," Dean Jordan commented and was encouraged by his friend, a professor from Yale, to write a book.

A couple of years ago, InterVarsity Press reached out to him about a series they were planning to do called Dynamics of Christian Worship. This gave him the opportunity to

put pen to paper. The first part of the book looks at anxiety and discusses how churches have often talked about it in the past. Dean Jordan explains that the book contemplates the question: What are some ways that churches can do what we do in a way that is more anxiety informed?

During his lecture, Dean Jordan talked about the prevalence of anxiety and how it has increased in American culture over the past 20 years. He also touched on what people are learning when they get help for anxiety and in what ways the church helps or hurts them.

Dean Jordan hopes the lecture was a good opportunity for attendees to start reflecting more conscientiously on the ways they practice worship.

"Hopefully, a lecture like this can help people understand some of the backstory to a lot of these worship practices and help them be a little more informed in the way they think about worship," Dean Jordan concluded. ★

Puzzles

All Sudokus provided by sudokuoftheday.com

	2	7	6	8	4			3
6			1					7
	5	4	9			6		
		9	5					
				9				
					8	3		
		1			9	8	3	
2					1			5
8			4	5	3	2	1	

Difficulty: Easy

				7	2	1		
	1	4					2	5
					3	9		
	6		7					
		8	3		6	2		
					4		6	
		5	8					
9	4					6	1	
		2	4	3				

Difficulty: Tricky

		6		2		3	4	
9			3			6		7
4								
			2		7			
7				5				8
			8		6			
								3
8		2			5			1
	4	7		1		9		

Difficulty: Good luck

ORGAN RECITAL from page #1

"[I am] very grateful the Lord brought me to Houghton," Velázquez stated.

All attendees of the recital have the opportunity to hear for themselves the sound Velázquez has developed over years of perfecting her art. ★

PIANO RECITAL from page #1

nity to do a lot of listening and mental practice.

Myers expressed that overall he is, "super pleased with the way it is shaping up." ★

The STAR is Looking for
a new
MEDIA EDITOR!

For additional information
reach out to us via email:

star@houghton.edu

EVENT CALENDAR

- JAN. 27 / Game Night! / Gillette 2nd Floor
- JAN. 28 / CO-ED Pickle bal doubles tournament / KPAC
- JAN. 29 / Disney Channel Throwbacks / Gillette 2nd Floor
- JAN. 30 / Bible Study: 1&2 Peter / Spiritual Life Office

The Language of Music



KATRINA KAUFMAN ('26)

"Where words fail, music speaks." This was the Hans Christian Anderson quote on my piano teacher's wall before coming to Houghton. This is a quote that many musicians likely have come across, and while it may be overdone, it is not incorrect. Music contains power. Music can both heighten and express emotion. According to a neuroscientist, music has the power to rewire your brain chemistry. In my own life, music has helped me to process emotions as well as process hard truths in life. Music is soothing as well. We see this in the Bible when David soothes Saul's inner demons. I recently learned that musi-

cians are hired to choose/compose the best music in advertising to make sure that even the music helps convey the exact message that the advertising company is trying to convey to their audience.

Music also has the power to connect people. When a musician is able to be vulnerable and share themselves with their audience, the audience is able to connect both with the music and the musician. The joy of performing on stage and getting to create music together rather than alone is a fulfilling experience that is unforgettable.

I recently had the opportunity to participate in

"Music is a language that doesn't speak in particular words. It speaks in emotions, and if it's in the bones, it's in the bones."

cient days, cavemen were struggling to survive. They were fighting to live, and yet they still made rough instruments for themselves. While music was not essential to them the way food, water, and shelter was, music still filled a less tangible need they had. Our ancestors must have felt the need to

speak in particular words. It speaks in emotions, and if it's in the bones, it's in the bones."

I believe we as humans make music because God put music inside of us. I believe I experience a little of God's glory and awe when I am filled with awe soaking up all the beautiful music at a symphony. I also feel a sense of beauty and awe in my soul when I am listening to a beautiful soft rock song and feel a progression and cadence happening in the music.

Another aspect of music that I love is its healing properties. Music helps people in their suffering. Music helps people to feel and process their emotions. Music also helps people to feel understood and validated in their suffering, therefore making them feel less alone and more seen and validated. One of the wonderful things about music is its ability to meet a person where they are at. A song that expresses the emotion or idea that a person is experiencing can help that person find more meaning in their suffering and give them courage to keep moving forward.

Most importantly, music can connect us to God through the act of Wor-

shipping. Koin is an excellent way at Houghton to experience connecting to God through Worship music. As a Performance major, I have been exploring what it means to worship God through the act of pursuing excellence in music as an act of worship and devotion. I really appreciate the atmosphere at the Greatbatch School of Music and how the music professors live out what it means to be a Christian musician who is making music for God's glory rather than a secular music school that provides an environment where self-glorification is easy to pursue, or where music is worshiped rather than God. I value GSOM's commitment to putting Christ first and creating a healthy environment to grow aspiring musicians. ★

Katrina Kaufman is a sophomore studying Piano Performance with an Art minor. She enjoys going on nature walks with her dog Boone, exploring various creative outlets, romanticizing life, and spending quality time with friends.

Have an opinion
you want to share?

CONTACT
Victoria.Arndt25@houghton.edu

SPEAK OUT!

Letters to the editor
should be less than 600 words

SUBMIT TO
star@houghton.edu



The mission of the Houghton STAR is to preserve and promote the values of dialogue, transparency and integrity that have been the ideals of Houghton University since its inception. This is done by serving as a medium for the expression of student thought and as a quality publication of significant campus news, Houghton area news, and events.

HOUGHTONSTAR.COM | STAR@HOUGHTON.EDU | FACEBOOK.COM/HOUGHTONSTAR | TWITTER.COM/HOUGHTONSTAR | INSTAGRAM @HOUGHTONSTAR

The Houghton
STAR

2023-2024 Staff

JOSHUA CARPENTER // Co-Editor-in-Chief

ABIGAIL BATES // News Editor

SAVANNAH STITT // Media Editor

AMANDA ZAMBRANO // Faculty Advisor

CHRISTIAN WELKER // Co-Editor-in-Chief

CALEB TIEDEMANN // Columns Editor

VICTORIA ARNDT // Opinions Editor



Movie Review

2023: A Beautiful Culmination of Cinema

Caleb Tiedemann ('25)

With Oscar nominations released and the award ceremony around the corner, it is time for another yearly review of the ups and downs of the entertainment industry that is known as Hollywood.

2023 was both a very serious and silly year for film. With films like *Cocaine Bear* and *Five Nights at Freddy's* being released the B-movie representation was present. Marvel released two critically panned and theatrically bombing films in the form of *Ant-Man and the Wasp: Quantumania* and *The Marvels*. Their third, *Guardians of the Galaxy Vol. 3*, managed to defy expectations but mostly due to the quality of the *Guardians* movies. James Gunn, as usual, pours heart, soul, and humor into his films and *Vol. 3* was no different. With these critical flops appearing almost back-to-back and continuing off of the superhero flops from 2022, Marvel is slowly treading water but losing energy.

DC seems to be in a very similar boat with 2023 being the final nail in the coffin for the DCEU before James Gunn does a creative overhaul. A sequel to *Shazam!* came out and though I found some personal enjoyment in the movie, many other fans did not, resulting in a flop for DC. *The Flash* was also released and was mostly disliked for its convoluted storyline and ugly visuals (both of which I can confirm to be true). The final flatulent note of the DCEU came in the form of *Aquaman: The Lost Kingdom*, a film of muddled messages and ideas, inconsistent humor, generic storytelling, and the almost universally disliked Amber Heard.

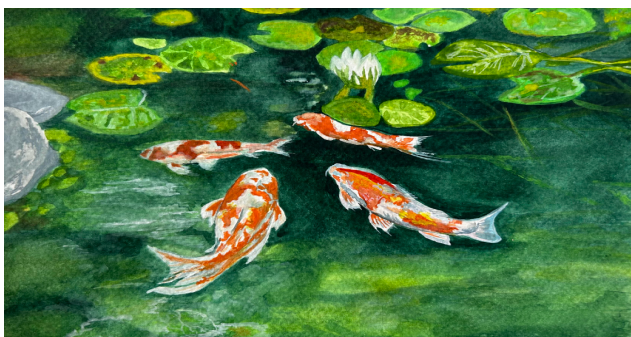
But it was not just the superhero franchises that suffered, there were many sendoffs to beloved franchises aside from the previously mentioned ones. *Indiana Jones and the Dial of Destiny* was met with very mixed reviews among fans and critics and it provided me with one of the most disappointing, dumbest, plot-hole-ridden, and truly revolting portrayals of modern storytelling that disguised itself as an *Indiana Jones* film. Poor 80-year-old Harrison Ford is dragged through a terribly written movie that has none of the adventure, character, and heart that the originals contain. Apparently, my feelings were similar to those of others as it drastically underperformed. In other news the pen-ultimate two-part of the *Mission: Impossible* franchise came out to fans such as myself who have been watching Tom Cruise do insanely crazy stunts for the past decade. Another send-off came in the form of *John Wick: Chapter 4*, the well-deserved and intense action film to put

the beloved franchise to rest.

One of the biggest upsides of this year came from the release of films helmed by popular and beloved directors. M. Night Shyamalan, the beloved horror/thriller director, released *Knock at the Cabin*, a tense and wonderfully acted film that dealt with familial love and sacrifice in an unconventional and heart-wrenching way. David Fincher released his assassinated drama *The Killer* which explored more of the downtime between each job and was received with mixed reactions. Famed director Martin Scorsese released *The Killers of the Flower Moon*, a brilliant period piece about the horrors the Osage Native-American nation experienced at the hands of greedy and evil white colonizers.

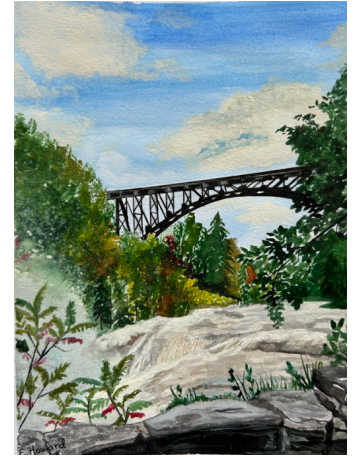
The biggest and best releases came around the middle of the year starting with *Spider-Man: Across the Spider-Verse*. Across the *Spider-Verse* was a beautiful, emotional, and well-done film that touches upon a lot of heavier issues than expected and draws so much heart from its main ensemble. But, the undoubted magnum opus from this year is "*Barbenheimer*." These two movies that managed to shake the entire internet up by the vast differences of their subject matter. Christopher Nolan's epic boasts a talented cast of characters, rushing to create the first atomic bomb. As they get closer and closer to succeeding the weight of what they are doing sets in and the aftereffects shock the entire world. With one of the best endings, stellar pacing, and an around amazing cast, *Oppenheimer* was a true treat and is definitely worth the awards it is receiving. *Barbie*, on the other hand, did not meet my expectations in the same way. It was still a very fun movie and I am very aware that I am not considered the target audience. The movie boasts a colorful ensemble of characters and heart and seeks to define questions surrounding womanhood and femininity. Though I do think the morals are a bit clunky, and the writers bit off more than they could chew in terms of the message they sought to convey, I would be foolish to deny *Barbie's* cultural impact.

This year was another great one for movies as we got a wide variety from all across the film-making spectrum. The summer blockbuster season has never been more ominous and exciting and with independent and unique films coming into the limelight, it seems that Marvel and DC are being pushed back to the shadows. Alas, who knows what the future holds? One thing I can say is that 2024 already has a good roster of films to look forward to! ★



Artist of the Week

Elyse Howard ('25)



Hello, my name is Elyse! I am an Art Major with an Education minor. My favorite medium to work in is watercolor, as well as mixed media and oil. I enjoy painting scenes from nature and snapshots from my travels around the world including my hometown in Mbale, Uganda. I feel closest to God when I'm creating and capturing His beautiful creation through colorful compositions.

