



Interview with Mr. VanRemoortel

Sofia Bottari, Freshman

Mr. VanRemoortel is Marblehead High School's new band director. He grew up in Marblehead and graduated from MHS in 2016. Mr. VanRemoortel is glad to be back in town teaching.

At what age did you start playing an instrument?

I've been playing music for as long as I can remember, but the first instrument I really wanted to learn was guitar at age 8!

What made you passionate about music?

My mom and grandfather are/were both music educators, so music was always something that I was involved in. I'm not sure if there's one moment that I could point to that led to my passion, it was always just my thing! Once I started playing guitar, however, I was able to take ownership of my music education and really explore the things that I was interested in, so that certainly played a huge part.

Which instrument is your favorite?

This is a TOUGH question! Every instrument, especially in a concert band, plays a different role and has a unique personality. Some days I want to listen to solo acoustic guitar (especially as fall starts to roll in), other days I'll be in the mood for a jazz orchestra. If I had to choose, I'd say that the tenor

voices in band and orchestra (trombone, tenor sax, cello, etc.) resonate the most with me.

How does it feel being a teacher at your old high school?

It's the privilege of a lifetime! To get to come to MHS and give back to the program that I grew up playing in is one of the coolest experiences I've ever had. It's been wonderful to reconnect with my former teachers and meet the students with whom I share an alma mater!

Is teaching what you expected it to be?

Yes and no. Despite being a teacher, I'm always learning, too! Even when I feel comfortable in a given situation, there is almost certainly a lesson to learn from it. Something that has been tough, however, is learning everyone's name. I didn't think it would take me this long! I'm getting there though, and I appreciate the patience that all of my students have had!

If you could travel anywhere in the world with the concert band to perform, where would it be?

Probably Japan. There's such a vibrant music culture in Japan that I would love to experience with the students, and they have some killer concert bands, too!

Are We Losing the Art of Listening?

Mona Gelfgatt, Sophomore
ASSISTANT EDITOR

We might hear everything, but do we truly listen? Daily, we walk through life, hearing a variety of sounds. The birds singing, the children crying, the songs playing, our phones ringing. But if someone were to ask you what you listened to today, would you be able to give a direct answer? We are losing the art of listening because of this generation's substantial reliance on technology.

Kids nowadays are endlessly glued to their phones, almost worshipping them as gods. This little box containing all the knowledge we need still transmits harm to the young brain. As more and more adolescents are being raised upon technology, their attention span, brainpower, and overall ability to listen, starts to fade. Henning Menkel brings up the matter that "human beings have two ears but only one tongue. Why is that? Probably so that we have to listen twice as much as we talk" (Menkel). We love to talk, especially about ourselves. Social media provides a perfect outlet for publicizing your life to society. Although, once it comes to having a genuine conversation, our brain starts to wander, and we create our own world in which no one else can disrupt. On the other hand, we tend to associate our grandparents with long "back when I was a little kid" stories. Their generation was built upon

"Humans will continue life hearing everything, but not listening"

listening to others' stories. There were no phones, no distractions. The Campus Chronicle talks of how "listening is very challenging to teach, and it's been taken out of the curriculum at the K-through-12 level systematically throughout the last couple decades... we can agree that active listening is not being encouraged" (Maulseed). Students are allowed to listen to music during classwork, and restrictions for phone use are less austere. While I believe that students should have freedoms, such exposure to technology is detrimental. I don't even remember the last time I got a simple paper and pen assignment; now it's all "open up your computers."

This generation will go on in history as "the generation of technology," where, unfortunately, the art of listening deteriorated. Adolescents will be exposed to technology more and more as the years go by, to the point in which having a normal long-lasting conversation will no longer be "normal." Humans will continue life hearing everything, but not listening.

Movie Review: *Moonlight*

Madison Lofmark, Senior

Moonlight, directed by Barry Jenkins and released in 2016 from A24, won Best Picture at the Oscars for good reason. I watched it recently on my laptop at three in the morning, so the emotional effect of this film hit extra hard. *Moonlight* follows Chiron, a black, gay man growing up in poverty with an abusive mother in Miami. The viewer watches as Chiron grows up and faces social, economic, and personal issues that are greater than most could even comprehend.

The first scene I will be analyzing is the ocean scene where Juan teaches Little (Chiron's childhood nickname) how to swim. The music is interesting, and in my first watch through I didn't quite understand why such an intense classical song was chosen in contrast to the rap played throughout the rest of the movie. During the scene, Juan holds Little above the water for ten seconds while he learns to catch his breath. The camera spends most of the scene halfway underneath the water, laps of waves sloshing on the lens. It also moves violently as the waves push it, like the director had placed the camera on a floaty and allowed the waves to do the heavy lifting. We, the audience, are at eye level with the actors in the water, creating a personal bond with them that is rare in movies. At the end of the scene, Juan introduces the idea that black boys turn blue in the moonlight, and the lighting of the water scene compares interestingly with that suggestion. The lens of the camera is bright and clouded by the water, the dark skin of the swimmers contrasting harshly against the clear blue waves. It is not a particularly long scene, only lasting about a total of one minute eleven seconds, but it's intense. But why is it so intense?

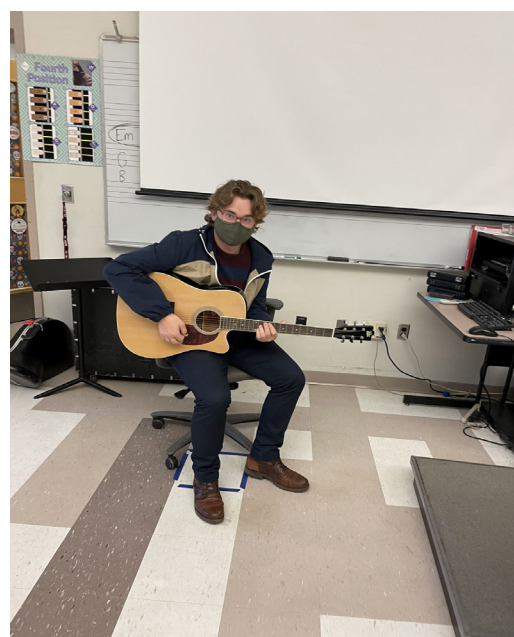
They're just swimming. Well, the camera movements are violent and unpredictable, just like how life for Little is, and will be. He's turbulent in childhood and confused about where he belongs. The water holds him, and he cannot quite get a grip on what he is supposed to do yet. It also adds to the emotional intensity after a rewatch that the scene where Chiron first kisses his best friend takes place on the same beach. That emotional turbulence of learning how to swim is foreshadowing the true test of his stability. In the final scene of the movie, Chiron is on that same beach in the glow of the *Moonlight*, and I imagine if the same type of scene had been shot, the camera would have been solidly positioned on top of the waves, for he had finally started to come

to terms with his place in the "ocean" of living.

Continuing on with the beauty of the scenes in *Moonlight*, I'd like to talk about the film's ending. The scene starts with Kevin and Chiron walking into Chiron's apartment. Chiron, per usual, is quiet and resigned. They speak like old friends, but I found myself cringing. The laughs, to an extent, sound forced. Like a ball rolled down the stairs that didn't quite reach the floor until pushed. There are long stretches of silence and downcast glances. When they finally start talking about what they want and who they are, the camera stays in the same place and doesn't move around as it flashes between their faces at the exact same angle and exact same distance. It's so simple and elegant, unlike the powerful emotions playing out on screen, that you forget you're watching a film. It feels almost, to me at least, that I was invading their privacy. The simpleness of the shots allowed me to focus on their words and facial expressions. The lighting wasn't anything too extraordinary, but it was muted compared to the brightness this movie tended to have. There is also no background music at all. It's all so dull and quiet and ordinary. The message that this is a man's real life- not a movie character's backstory or heroic plot- is poignant.

Moonlight is almost hard to watch. It's real and gut wrenching; the only music, except for a few select scenes, is from sources inside the film- restaurant radio, car radio, piano. *Moonlight* feels almost like a documentary, and when hard pressed to find a message, I couldn't really find one. It's not an inspiring story, but it's certainly not a tragedy. It's life- and life is what it is. The shots were beautiful and crisp, each one in the position as if the viewer themselves were there watching the events play out. I wish I could say more about the technical aspects, but it truly was simple in the best way possible. The camera placement was right at eyeline, as close to being a real person involved in the story as a viewer can be. The lighting was barely noticeable, and imperfections in the shadows made the scenes all the more believable. Another thing I noticed was that the actors often looked directly into the lens, breaking the fourth wall and immersing the viewer into the film.

I love this movie, and when I rank my top ten it always slips in. The film is personal and moving, without being overtly depressing or cry fishing. I found myself thinking about the characters for days, with more and more questions filling my head. I recommend *Moonlight* to anyone who wants a raw and personal story told in camera shots and silence.



**Mr.
VanRemoortel
during
Guitar class!**

Image by Sofia Bottari

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