

# GAZETTE

H o l l y w o o d   &   W e s t w o o d



## WHAT MUSICAL SHOULD YOU SEE ON CHRISTMAS?

I would like to tell you about one musical whose story starts in summer and ends on Christmas Day. It is a Broadway musical called “She Loves Me.” This musical has a long history. “She Loves Me” premiered on Broadway in 1963. After that, this musical ran on Broadway and the West End many times. In Japan, this musical has been performed several times, too. Actually, I went to see this musical in Tokyo and Osaka last year. It was so amazing that I honestly want to recommend that you see this musical when you have a chance.

I will describe two points about “She Loves Me”: its story and music. Moreover, I will explain why this musical is so popular and why I highly recommend this musical in winter, especially on Christmas.

One day in Budapest in 1934, a young man, Georg Nowack, who is an employee of Maraczek’s Parfumerie, quarrels constantly with a young woman, Amalia Balash, who is a new employee. Even though these two are on very bad terms, Georg enjoys every day with his coworkers Ladislav Sipos, who is a middle aged salesman, Arpad Laszlo, who is a teenage delivery boy, and Ilona Ritter, who is having an affair with a man, Steven Kodaly. However, Mr. Maraczek, who is an assistant manager of the perfume shop, worries that Georg doesn’t have a girlfriend and nags him about it all the time. In fact, Georg has a beloved woman and she is a pen pal! He doesn’t know her appearance, but he really loves her. The store is busy with preparations for Christmas. Georg is



finally going to have a date with the pen pal. He loses his calm because of hopes and fears, but actually there is another person who has the same feeling. It is Amalia.

She is going to have a date with her pen pal, too. To be honest, his pen pal is Amalia! However, both of them don't realize this fact! After that, Georg has trouble with Mr. Maraczek and quits his job. Also, other problems happen one after another. On Christmas Eve, the store bustles with customers who seek Christmas gifts. Fortunately, Georg comes back to his job and he gets along with Amalia. They eventually get involved! This is such a romantic story.

There are 25 songs. Among them, I want you to know three songs that express the feelings of the characters strongly. The first one is "Three Letters," sung by Georg. It is obvious how much he thinks about and loves her. The second one is "Vanilla Ice Cream," sung by Amalia. We can see that she begins to realize how friendly and gentle Georg is.

The third one is "Twelve Days To Christmas." It sounds like "Twelve Days of Christmas," so it is easier to get used to the rhythm. And this song gets faster little by little. It is so exciting!

In conclusion, "She Loves Me" is the perfect musical because many people tend to like watching such a romantic story in the Christmas season and they can feel the passage of time from summer to winter even if they just listen to songs from this musical. Therefore, I highly recommend "She Loves Me" to all! Once you see this musical, you will be charmed by the fabulous story!

*By Momoka*





In the United States, it's the holiday season now, and last month I just celebrated my favorite Chinese Mid-Autumn festival. The Mid-Autumn festival has a history of more than 3,000 years. It was derived from the custom of Chinese emperors worshipping the moon during the Zhou Dynasty and first appeared as a festival during the Song Dynasty. Nowadays it has become a Chinese public holiday and has been China's second most important festival.

There are a whole host of Mid-Autumn festival activities to keep both adults and kids busy during the festive period, including reuniting with the family over dinner, building our own lanterns to light up the sky and help people better gaze at the moon, drinking Osmanthus wine, giving gifts and sending celebration messages to loved ones and so on.

The most commonly eaten food and gifted items during the Mid-Autumn festival are mooncakes, which symbolize togetherness and longevity. Another commonly eaten delicacy is taro, a tradition that dates back to the Qing Dynasty. The pronunciation of Taro (芋头 yu tou) is very similar to “余头”(yu tou), which means good luck, as Chinese locals believe that eating Taro during Mid-Autumn festival brings good luck as well as expels evil spirits and disaster.

In my city Shanghai, where customs differ slightly, we have our own tradition of joining together over dinner to eat hairy crab dipped in vinegar and ginger. This is because the crabs are only in season in September and October when they are the most delicious, making them a much sought-after delicacy during the festival period.

I like the Mid-Autumn festival because not only can I eat mooncakes, hairy crabs, and many other delicious foods, but I can also get together with my family and friends. It's a beautiful feeling of harmony and unity.

*By Ying*



## GLORIA'S NATILLA DE BUÑUELOS

My favorite holiday is Christmas. I remember that we always met at my grandfather's house. I have a big family and we pick out a Christmas tree and Christmas lights, it is amazing. We see more or less 50 people between uncles, aunts, cousins, my uncle's wife, and fraternal friends and grandchildren. For everyone there is a special dinner with gifts and drinks. I especially remember my grandfather made the traditional dessert at Christmas called "Natilla de Buñuelos." She had had her grandchildren help her. We were very happy. And now we are happy when we see each other.



## IHSSANNE'S FAVORITE HOLIDAY

New Year's is my favorite holiday because we begin a new year with new resolutions and we can start again if we didn't like our year. Usually we're with our family. We share a dinner together. So we eat, we laugh, we discuss until the next day. Sometimes we go to a place where you can see the fireworks and sometimes we watch it on the TV. So we have a good moment together.



## CAKES AND FRIED CHICKEN FOR KOHEI

My favorite holiday is Christmas. When I was small, I was happy to be given the gift that I wanted by my parents. We often eat cakes and fried chicken. Recently, I have gone to a restaurant with my wife and enjoyed seeing the illuminations or snowboarding with my friends in Nagano. This year, I'm going to stay in Los Angeles. So, I am thinking about where to go with my wife.





### EMMA C. ON NEW YEAR'S IN JAPAN

In Japan, we celebrate our new year with delicious authentic meals. At the end of the year, December 31, many people eat soba noodles to pray for their longevity. At the beginning of the year, we have Osechi, a Japanese traditional meal. Osechi has many kinds of ingredients, such as sweet beans, egg, raw fish, and more. Each ingredient has meanings for people's wishes. In addition, we eat Ozoni during New Year's Day. Ozoni is a kind of soup that has mochi rice cake. It tastes different in different regions and each family has their own way of cooking it. During the winter break, I can eat delicious food with my family. It is always such a happy memory for me.

### JENIFER'S FAVORITE MEMORY OF CHRISTMAS IN BOLIVIA

My favorite holiday towards the end of the year is Christmas. One of my favorite memories of Christmas is when I was a child. My whole family and my dad's family met at my grandparents house for a few days. My mom and aunt prepared food while we played with my cousins. At the end of the day we all set the table to eat together and we listened to music. It was my favorite memory because it happened at a time that I was sad.



### JIEUN ON SEOLLAL, LUNAR NEW YEAR IN KOREA



My favorite holiday is Lunar New Year. In Korea, Lunar New Year is the most popular holiday for us. We call it Seollal. On Seollal, we like to visit family that we don't get to see often. We give each other gifts almost like how it feels on Christmas. That day, we have a ritual where we pay our respects to the older members of our family and then we receive money. When I was young, I really waited for that time. Then we begin eating, mainly Tteokguk soup. This is a rice cake soup eaten during Lunar New Year and when eaten we become a year older. This is my favorite holiday.





## EMMA R. ON THE WONDERFUL SURPRISE OF CHILDHOOD CHRISTMAS GIFTS

My favorite holiday towards the end of the year is Christmas. It's an opportunity to see family that I haven't seen in a long time. My family lives in the Northwest of France, and me, I live in the Southwest. I can't see them for several months. Sometimes there are people in my family that I can only see on Christmas. I don't really have a favorite memory, but when I was a child, the adults asked me and my cousins to play upstairs together. When we came back, there were lots of gifts under the tree. Because we were children, we thought Santa Claus had come. I miss this time when I didn't know what gift I was going to get. Now, I choose my gifts, and sometimes I even buy my own gifts with my parents' money because they don't know what to buy for me.

## BEGAIYM ON NEW YEAR'S IN KYRGYZSTAN

My favorite lovely holiday at the end of the year is New Year's. In my opinion, this holiday makes my family closer. All of my grandparents' 5 children come to Grandpa's house, so I can see all of my twelve nephews and nieces. We talk about interesting news in our lives and together we cook a lot of delicious food. And a popular traditional salad is eaten in each home that night. It is called Olivier salad (but some people call it Russian salad). The whole day on December 31st we prepare all of the stuff for a big family dinner and at 12AM meet the New Year with fireworks, champagne, and new year's wishes.



## QUENTIN'S FAVORITE HOLIDAY

I think my favorite holiday is New Year's because we celebrate the end of the year and you can pick objectives for the new year.

## YUMI ON WHY NEW YEAR'S IS HER FAVORITE HOLIDAY

My favorite holiday is New Year's. In the case of Japan, our whole family gets together during this holiday. We eat traditional Japanese foods, drink sake, and talk a lot all day. Our New Year is from January 1st to 3rd. We can rest during these days and do anything. I usually spend time with my family. We count down when the year changes. My mother makes us traditional foods. After that, we go to temple to pray for the new year. Some years, we go to our cousin's house to see them as well. I love spending time with them. I really miss New Year's in Japan.





## SOCCER JOURNEY

Today I'm going to write about my soccer journey. My journey begins at the age of 5 when I joined Rhodienne De Hoek in Belgium. My first time there I was so shy and I didn't talk with anyone.

I was so bad at soccer at this time. So, they put me on the second team. On the second team I had a cool team and also a good coach so I enjoyed it but there was a problem. I was always mad at everyone, like when something wasn't how I wanted it, I began to be angry or I started crying. My coach was not lucky to have me on the team at the time. For 3 years I stayed on the same team.

When I was 9 years old a coach asked me to play with the U11 but with the second team because they were not enough players to have a complete team, so I accepted and I was playing on the same team as my older brother.

After months on the team my coach and the coach of the category I had to be in wanted to play a match against each other. And I played against my old teammates and guess what: We lost 8-0. I felt humiliated.

After many seasons I stayed on the same team and when I was 14 years old, I began to progress and develop to the highest level. So, in the middle of the season I played with the first team and I was so happy and my teammates were so good. We were the best team of the season and the coach congratulated me for my performances during the season.

The next season, when I was 15 years old, the best players and the coach of the first team went to D1 soccer clubs. I stayed on the same soccer team. At this time, I met a coach who helped me progress during my soccer journey. He was the best coach I ever had. One time I asked him if he could train me in addition to the team training and he accepted and for 1 year I had training in a dirt park next to my house. The field was so bad that the ball was always bouncing. I also trained in the snow. It was so hard, but I don't regret anything. I'm thankful to this coach.

The next season I was 16 years old. I had the same coach as the previous season, so this season was the best season I had and I was so good that the coach of the U19 wanted me on his team. So every weekend I played 2 matches, one with my team and the other with the U19.

When I was 17 years old, everything changed. My team was one of the worst teams I ever played on in my soccer journey. We were so bad that we were last in our championship division, so I asked my coach if I could go play with the older ones. At the beginning my coach didn't want to let me, because I was the best player on the team, but the other coach helped me to be released and I joined the older ones and I played a good season too and I was in my prime.



*By Georgios*



# FIRST IMPRESSIONS OF LA: TWO CONTRASTING SIDES

I already had the opportunity to stay in California for a couple of months last year, in 2023, in a nearby town almost 2 hours away from Los Angeles. And during my stay there, I only came to Los Angeles very occasionally.

But everything is different when you come to live in LA for a few months, thanks to the MLI program.

At first glance, Los Angeles appears terribly impressive when you consider the great number of luxury cars in the traffic. For a foreigner like me, it seems that everyone in Los Angeles owns a car and even a luxury one. To make just a small joke, it was like the luxury cars we used to boast about elsewhere are not even noticeable here because they are too “average.”

Even myself, on my arrival, I rented a nice car for a month and a half to help me with all the procedures that I needed to go through to get settled. But of course, it was not intended for more than that, given the cost...

Thus, a very good question came up: how are the buses in LA? Especially since I hadn't used public transportation in France and Belgium for many years.

Besides, given the impression that I mentioned earlier, it was like, who even takes buses here?



To my surprise, traveling on buses in Los Angeles turned out to be a very nice experience. However, I would not speak for everybody because my apartment is around 30 minutes away from MLI, located in a place from which there is no significant difference in the travelling time either by bus or car. Besides, I think I did not travel during what we can really call rush hours.



So, buses in Los Angeles seem to be...buses in Los Angeles, meaning buses that are not really crowded in comparison to some other big cities I know...

Actually, I was quite comfortable in these buses to the point of wondering if there is really something we should envy about others in their big cars... I was one of them a few months ago though, and I was thinking that everything in life is so relative and there is much to learn whatever side of society you are on.

On the bus, however, once-in fact right at the beginning-something inappropriate happened: a man who did not seem to be doing very well mentally got on the bus at the same stop as me, with some kind of stick in his hand. He sat in back of me and started to provoke me by pushing me with his stick until I reacted and clearly showed him that I was not so happy with his behavior. He stopped then, but he was not so kind to another passenger who received a couple of strikes. Fortunately, he was eventually ejected from the bus by the bus driver.

So, even though such things can happen, it has not changed my positive opinion on the buses. I also saw homeless people on buses or at bus stops. I saw them in the streets of Los Angeles as well.

And my first feeling was that such a display of wealth and this extreme poverty could not co-exist. And the idea was not to get rid of impoverished people or even to ignore them. I think that nobody should find it repulsive to help a person in need, especially when you consider that Los Angeles is full of people who can help a significant number of people around them without experiencing the slightest change in their wealth.

Life has not been easy for everybody. Sometimes it has turned out to be very tough. Someone might argue that life was also not easy for him, though he was able to make it in life. For me, whatever reason we may come up with, we still have in us a part of humanity which commands us to help other people.

No matter how long I am in LA, or whether I am rich or poor, if I get the chance, I will be a driving force in helping people, which means finding a way to mobilize people who have more to care for and help people who have less.

Nevertheless, I do know that helping people is not just about giving them food or money or any other material thing. Sometimes, the problem lies deep inside their inner being, but for that I think I have a little idea....

*By Eric*



## MY CHANGING VIEW OF THE CHINESE LUNAR NEW YEAR

“Every festival season, we miss our loved ones even more.” This common Chinese saying captures the sense of longing many people feel during traditional celebrations like the Lunar New Year. It means that while festivals are times for family reunions, many people are unable to return home to be with their loved ones, and thus miss them even more on these special days. The Lunar New Year, also known as the Spring Festival, is celebrated on the last day of the Chinese lunar calendar. Historically, China was an agrarian society, with people’s lives closely tied to the farming seasons. The Lunar New Year marks the end of a year of hard work and symbolizes hopes for a prosperous year ahead. Each region and ethnic group celebrates in its own unique way.

In my childhood memories, the Lunar New Year in my hometown was full of ritual and joy. On New Year’s Eve, our family would prepare the most abundant offerings to honor our ancestors, informing them of the special occasion and praying for health, peace, a bountiful harvest, and for the children to be clever and wise. After honoring our ancestors, we kids would take a shower early and put on our new clothes—something that happened only once a year. Adults were busy preparing the New Year’s Eve feast, which was eaten earlier than usual so the children could run off to collect fire crackers and play hide-and-seek; the laughter and excitement were everywhere on New Year’s Day. We would exchange well wishes and speak only good and hopeful words. This was a time of pure carefree happiness, a childhood marked by joy, despite having little material wealth.

But now Lunar New Year feels different, as if it has lost its special meaning. Modern society has everyone rushing and surrounded by the smell of money, while the presence of so many new technologies has taken away the charm of childhood and the traditional “flavor” of the new year. As a parent now, I deeply understand the struggles my parents faced to make us happy and healthy. Although life is materially richer today, the simple happiness of my childhood when we were “poor but joyful” seems like a distant memory.

*By Çaixia*

# THE OPENNESS OF MIND IN THE UNITED STATES



Openness of mind is an important value in the U.S. People have to listen to others who may have other ideas or opinions. It means that being respectful towards others is necessary. In this essay, I'll talk about how this openness is shown in real life.

First of all, a lot of people from many different countries live here. These people have different cultures, languages, religions and/or backgrounds, and these differences among us help us to discover new things through discussions.

Education helps in the development of openness of mind. As young as they are, children learn to talk about the differences among themselves to understand where people come from and who are different from them. From this, they learn to respect different cultures and not judge anyone.

Many people in the U.S. belong to groups who fight for human rights and equality. These actions lead to change and also help people to discuss important issues; that's why openness of mind is also visible in social justice movements.

However, people still face a lot of challenges, too. Different opinions about politics can make discussions difficult. People might be reluctant to listen to different ideas; additionally, social media can reinforce similar opinions.

In addition, I will talk about my experiences and the difference of mindset in Belgium and the USA through dance. In Belgium, people are more guarded, and don't support each other. For example, when someone gets a dance contract, their peers are not happy, but jealous. And if a dance class is difficult, they go to an easier class to be in their comfort zone. It's quite different in Los Angeles: everybody supports everybody, and that's why I love Los Angeles.

In conclusion, openness of mind is essential in the United States to promote respect among cultures. While progress has been made, challenges remain. Encouraging dialogue and accepting differences is important for building a more inclusive society.

*By Khezia*



# MY REFLECTIONS ON THE AMERICAN SPIRIT OF TODAY ON THANKSGIVING

Thanksgiving is one of the biggest holidays for Americans, second only to Christmas with one in five naming it their favorite. This tradition started with the first feast of the pilgrims in New England and you can still feel the anticipation it builds up within people in 2024. The roasted turkeys, mashed potatoes, cranberry sauce, sweet potatoes, green bean casseroles, pumpkin and pecan pies, stuffing, and candied yams—a menu worthy of its renown. Americans have a reputation for always giving it their all. The joyousness and grandeur of this holiday even make people who aren't a part of their culture curious and excited; I am one of them. The food showing the abundance usually associated with the United States was already mentioned; however, there are some similarities we can still highlight. In my opinion, based on my short stay, Americans are very generous; they really seem to like the act of giving, which is the whole essence of this holiday; hence, its name. Furthermore, with how seriously they take Thanksgiving, I can feel their deep attachment to this country and its traditions. There are other characteristics of the modern American spirit for me in the celebration. Although people can bring a bit of their own culture into this American holiday, it shows that freedom is present in both their mindset and their holiday, and their open mindedness can be seen through it; a real cultural melting pot. All in all, I cannot wait!

*By H el ene*

