

# TechNews

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### MISSION STATEMENT

Our mission is to promote student discussion and bolster the IIT community by providing a newspaper that is highly accessible, a stalwart of journalistic integrity, and a student forum. TechNews is a dedicated to the belief that a strong campus newspaper is essential to a strong campus community.

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### SUBMISSIONS

TechNews is published on the Tuesday of each week of the academic year. Deadline for all submissions and announcements is 11:59 p.m. on the Friday prior to publication. Articles, photos, and illustrations must be submitted electronically to the TechNews website at [technewsiit.com](http://technewsiit.com).

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The editors reserve the right to determine if submitted material meets TechNews' policy and standards. For more information about our editorial standards, please email [assteditor@technewsiit.com](mailto:assteditor@technewsiit.com).

### LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

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# Welcome Week introduces new students to the IIT Community

**Abhinaya Iyer**  
TECHNEWS WRITER

"Home is where the heart is." Every year, when a student moves from high school to college, there is a sea of mixed feelings. They have many questions, like, "Will I fit in or not? Will people like my accent or not?" This one word, "will," has the power to haunt the student till he or she settles in. IIT did a good job of easing the students worry by hosting Welcome Week. All students were asked to come 10 days prior to the starting of classes and the university organized various events to help students feel at home.

This year's Welcome Week began on August 14 and ended on August 23. In these 10 days of time, there were multiple events which helped students connect with others and also to understand the ethnic diversity of the university. It began with a convocation ceremony on August 14, where students met their respective deans along with the student body. It was followed by a dinner and residence hall meeting. By the end of the first day, there were so many names and majors to keep track of that people were forgetting their own majors!

The following day had a leadership program which helped students connect further with their newly-made friends and to make more. That evening the Bog opened, giving students an opportunity to relax their minds and have loads of fun. The next day opened more opportunities for getting to know the local shopping places with the shuttle bus-

es. At the same time, there was an Angry Birds lawn tournament which was very comical but at the same time fun.

On Monday, there was orientation for those who hadn't attended the previous ones which gave a positive insight into the college and its norms. The evening was spent in the company of neighbors over dinner. The orientation carried over to the next day where students were able to meet with their academic advisors for counseling. There were also many programs encouraging students to join various groups on campus, especially for international students. There was a remake of the famous Harry Potter game "Quidditch" for all of the Harry Potter fans on campus. Although it was nothing like the real game, it was a lot of fun and was enjoyed by many!

On Wednesday, all upperclassmen moved onto campus, bringing in more life to the campus. There was also a peer mentor meeting which helped students to get to know their seniors. At the same time, there was a workshop for students to understand career services and also how to apply for programs abroad. This was followed by a tie dye where all students colored their white clothes with colors from the rainbow.

Thursday was more eventful with the academic breakfast, helping all students understand their fellow classmates and teachers. It continued to the graduate student orientation which was followed by the gender equality training. The day ended with sex signals which was a play on dating, relationships and feelings. The orientation returned on Friday

with two separate programs for international and domestic students. The insight on the cultural diversity and importance helped not only international but also domestic students to understand their fellow friends. There was also another program for all kids interested in learning mandarin and its fundamentals. It was followed by the screening of "Silver Linings Playbook," a beautiful movie on loss but eternal hope.

Saturday brought new activities beginning with service to society. All students with their peer mentors were asked to go to various locations and help society by cleaning, raking and much more. It was followed by pancakes with the provost and a barbecue for women engineers. Lastly was Taste of the Quad, introducing all students to the fraternity and sorority groups on campus. That was a lot of fun and provided an opportunity for all students to interact with returning students. The last day of Welcome Week began with a cross country run, followed by sand volleyball. It went on to ice cream in the residence halls and ended with Bill Nye speaking to IIT. His arrival was the most anticipated event of the week. In a nutshell, it was entertaining, informative and fun. Most students were able to meet their childhood hero or for some their science savior.

Welcome Week helped a lot of students connect with their friends and get used to life on campus. By the beginning of class, most students were comfortable in their surroundings and ready to gain knowledge!

# Contemporary Jazz at the Chicago Jazz Festival

**Jerry Sha**  
TECHNEWS WRITER

For those not in the know, the 34th annual Chicago Jazz festival took place last weekend at Millennium Park. Being still very much a stranger to the Windy City, I grabbed two friends last Saturday and took a trip down to see the show.

Though my group consisted of a Chinese national, a Hispanic Chicago native, and an Indian national, we were all somehow under the assumption that we would be walking into the era of classical jazz, with solo trumpeters following in the footsteps of Louis Armstrong and piano virtuosos in the likes of Duke Ellington. Boy were we wrong.

The first group took to stage without warning at 5 p.m. Though they were given a brief introduction, our classically-trained ears failed for a good five minutes to realize that the seemingly uncoordinated yet skillful collection of noise they were producing was, indeed, an intentional part of their performance. Forget the jazz scale, the cacophony of sound being produced by the seven people on stage included vocal screams and shouts, some obviously intended to convey distress, some more subtly aggressive.

Of the instruments present on stage, the piano was probably the only one to escape being used to produce torturous squeaks far beyond the range for which the instruments were designed for. I've played the piccolo myself before, and never did I guess that a baritone saxophone could produce coherent notes at the treble clef familiar to my ear.

The music continued without any notable key, cadence, or coherent style for a good 10 minutes, interrupted by vocalists invoking abstract scenes which had a peculiar African vibe. Though I gradually came to accept that this was in fact, slightly enjoyable contemporary music, my Hispanic and Indian compatriots went from slack-jawed to outraged, seemingly betrayed by the word jazz when presented by something so far beyond their expectations. Right when my partial enjoyment began, and when the first round of snide comments emerged from my compatriots, the vocalists did something which simply, purely, and directly outraged me.

Upon an intensifying mound of discordant notes and chants, the vocalists began

to chant. The words they chanted could only be described as political buzzwords. War, sanctions, invasion, the single word phrases became overlapped with chants of take their land, take their oil, take their money, take their lives.

My insult came from their use of such cheap ways to instill a sense of dread and rage and shame, from using the connotations of heavily misused words and doing nothing but simply chanting and shouting them at the audience. The audience came, I thought, to be entertained, to grab a beer, sit back, and enjoy their afternoon, but instead a firing squad of black women were screeching and shouting words, words they give no context, and yet words which are usually used in the densest, darkest settings, serious, even lethal words, being carelessly tossed about, hoping, praying, begging for a reaction from the audience.

Then came the names. As if the political buzzwords were not enough, lists and lists of unfamiliar names rang out with the same abrasive screeches toward the audience, whom at this point must be mentally, if not physically taking cover behind the nearest solid object. The names were strange at first, normal American names, and yet, familiar ones soon snuck in. Trayvon Martin, Ferguson, Dante Parker, Tamir Rice, the slow creeping realization of nature of the list was suddenly sledgehammered into the audience with shouts of "shoot them," "shoot them in the back," once again originating from the vocal ensemble. My rage only intensified.

How dare these women, educated though they may be, talented though they may be, use the deaths of the impressively long list of African Americans to entice a reaction in me? What right do they have to insult the image and memory of innocent young men and women with seemingly no connection to themselves? How dare they use the actions of a collective whole, far beyond their or our control, as the basis of their screeching, abrasive dialogue?

I felt, initially, that I was audience to a band of hypocrites, trapped and forced to re-view, reform, and reexamine my opinions on the events and concepts invoked, and yet without a way to speak back, to reaffirm myself, to convince myself that whatever conceptions I hold are right.

Finally it hit me. The performers

were not here that day to entertain the audience. Instead they were there to invoke, entice, and incite. Back when classical music was modern, it was the premise of the powerful and the elite, who could afford to escape the laborious worries of day to day work in an opera house, where the chaos of the day could be replaced by soothing romantic harmonies of Tchaikovsky and Bach.

Today's contemporary music is also, in a sense, aimed at the powerful and the elite. But instead of soothing, the performers, improper though it may be, forces its audience of democratic citizens to face the challenges of our time.

These words insult me, why do they insult me? Why do we refuse to think directly of these issues? Why do we cringe at the list of names once we realize their nature? Shouting the issues being avoided, misconstrued and buried by Fox News may not be the most elegant way to force people to confront them, but it is, at least in my case, an effective one. How much change it will actually bring about, that is to be seen.

Though I've understood and gained some cultural insight that afternoon, I am still very much disappointed. I came with the hope of escaping the mundane front page news stories of wars raging and people dying, and yet ironically I've jumped out of the frying pan and into the fire of black activists making their voice powerfully heard.

My Chinese and Indian classmates didn't seem to understand at all why grown men and women were shouting these words, and interestingly, my Hispanic classmate was made so uncomfortable by the nature of the performance that he left for a drink, and is still presumably searching for a soda somewhere along Michigan Avenue.

The contemporary jazz experience was interesting and tiresome, though for those stuck in the day-to-day grind of homework, projects, and exams, I could only recommend it as a pastime if you were willing to apply the same curiosity, critical thinking, and thirst for knowledge in a more socially controversial front, which, if you could stomach it, is definitely something worthwhile.