

## LOCAL COFFEE: ITS BETTER



**Maddie Carr**

Opinion Editor

One thing about me is that I love a good iced coffee. There's just something about it that makes me actually want to do my schoolwork or write my stories when I've put them off for just a little too long.

I'll make the trip across the way for a Dunkin' iced vanilla latte or the occasional iced caramel macchiato (formerly my go-to), but nothing will ever hit the same as an iced Bonner Brew from my hometown's Third Space Coffee or an iced vanilla latte from Gravel City Roasters. When I went to Gravel City Roasters earlier in the week, I was reminded of a very simple observation: local coffee is just better.

Coffee from local shops is just as consistent, if not more, than chain stores like Dunkin' Donuts or Scooters.



Oftentimes the quality of the coffee is better, too. Local coffee just feels like more love is poured into it, and there's also nothing like getting a cutesy sharpie doodle or heartfelt message on the side of your cup.

The environment in local coffee shops is also friendlier and much more homey. Every time I walk into Gravel City I feel right at home in a shop full of personality and personable employees, and Third Space is much the same way. There's a certain aura about these places that just isn't present in chains like Dunkin'. Both the employees and customers add to the warm and homey environment of these small, local shops too.

I'm not telling you to stop going to Dunkin' on your daily coffee run, sometimes it's just easier and much more convenient to go through a drive thru. If I told you to stop, I would be a huge hypocrite; however, what I am saying is you should take the time to go support a small, local business.

Maybe you'll find that your favorite drink tastes so much better there or discover a new go-to. Maybe you'll find a new homework spot or a place to treat yourself to before you lock in on the schoolwork you've procrastinated.

Maybe you'll discover that it's simply just better.

## Jay-Z's Grammy's speech: let's talk about it



**Adia Witherspoon**

Web Editor

The 66th Annual Grammy Awards took place last Sunday, Feb. 4. I, of course, watched them like many people did, and of all of the monumental moments that took place, one in particular stood out to me: when Brooklyn rapper Jay-Z received the Dr. Dre Global Impact Award.

Originating in 2022, this award has only been awarded previously to Dr. Dre himself, and while most artists use their acceptance speech to thank producers, family, and friends, Jay-Z used his speech to point out a flaw in the recording academy: its voting process.

"I don't want to embarrass this young lady, but (Beyoncé) has more Grammys than everyone and never won album of the year, so even by your own metrics, that doesn't work," Jay-Z said, referencing his wife Beyoncé. "Think about that. The most Grammys, never won album of the year."

The thing is, he's right. Beyoncé has been awarded the most

Grammys of any artist in the world with 32 under her belt. Yet, of the four album of the year nominations she has received, she has won none. It is worth noting that she has primarily won Grammys within the R&B and rap categories.

This begs the question for the academy: why is a Black woman good enough for R&B and rap awards, but not album of the year? How is it that Beyoncé manages to sweep every category, but never album of the year? This doesn't just apply to Beyoncé either, this is an issue affecting other Black women in the industry.

Since the Grammy Awards began in 1959, only three Black women have won album of the year. The last win was 25 years ago when Lauryn Hill won for her album "The Miseducation of Lauryn Hill."

Only 16 Black women have ever been nominated for album of the year and only 11 album of the year winners are even Black; that's out of 65 winners. Needless to say, Jay-Z brought up a long overdue discussion.

The aftermath of Jay-Z's speech was sprinkled with undertones of racism. Many comment sections were filled with rage, calling both Jay-Z and Beyoncé ungrateful.

"He has an entitlement problem," read one Facebook comment. "Not everyone gets a participation trophy," read another.

Other comments perpetuated the rapper as angry and bitter, both stereotypes that plague the Black community. Despite him calmly pointing out a flaw in the system, Jay-Z and his wife were almost immediately demonized and their concerns diminished.

While the conversation has only begun, I ask you to consider one thing before you choose to dismiss the issue Jay-Z has brought to the table.

If you don't think Beyoncé or any other Black woman has been deserving of the album of the year award, I want you to genuinely ask yourself why. Explain it in detail. If you cannot do that, then maybe some reflection needs to be done.

## "Maestro" is not 'Oscar bait'



**Flera Vinerte**

Staff Writer

Some might say that Bradley Cooper's latest film "Maestro" is Oscar bait, but it could not be further from the truth. Directed, produced and starring

Bradley Cooper, he is on his way to acquire an Oscar to his name. He has great chances since the film is nominated for 7 Oscars.

The film follows American conductor Leonard Bernstein's career as he struggles with his sexuality and family problems. While all the actors are great, Carey Mulligan steals every scene that she is in. She is truly captivating and gives

a somewhat regular marriage plotline a tragic and emotional taste.

The script is not all too engaging, but the cinematography of the film has to be regarded as the most impressive part, and it strongly overshadows everything else that might fall short in the story.

In the end, it is a powerful love letter to music, life and art.