



ALEX LAIMAN—THE TECH

MIT Grad Student Union raises awareness about IDHR in Lobby 7, inviting community members to ask what is a fair process, Friday Feb 24.

# MIT Monologues 2023 takes place with 250+ show attendees

*Ma: "The purpose of Monologues is simply a space for marginalized genders and if you give that space, beautiful things will happen no matter what."*

By Eunice Zhang  
EXECUTIVE EDITOR

The 2023 MIT Monologues performances took place over the weekend of Feb. 24-Feb.26. Monologues (formerly Vagina Monologues at MIT) is a series of performances highlighting marginalized communities and discussing issues of gender, sex, relationships, and race.

This year's show marked the 23rd year of performance, and is the second year featuring pieces exclusively written by the MIT students. Monologues consists of current MIT students and alumni, featuring 13 actors and 5 directors producing a total of 17 pieces—four of which were written specifically for the 2023 production.

According to Monologues producer Katherine Hahn '21, approximately 250-300 people attended the performance across the three showings.

## A Variety of Expressive Performances

The monologues featured a wide breadth of topics relating to identity. The pieces were split into "personal pieces" written by students and existing pieces in the Monologues repertoire. A brief list of the performances provided by MIT Monologues performers and writers is below.

"Crisp": a piece detailing the experience of chronic pain, previously featured in *The Tech*.

"In the Silence": a piece detailing the experience relating to police brutality and the experience of being an Asian woman in America.

"Let's Talk About Sex": a piece satirizing "tips" provided by female fashion magazine *Cosmopolitan* designed to make women pal-

atable to the male gaze. The piece also compared *Cosmopolitan* to *Men's Health*.

"5 Distinct Memories as a Transwoman": a piece detailing the experiences and memories of a trans woman.

"Tired": a piece detailing the stories of three different women and their struggle with gendered expectations in marital relationships.

Toomas Tennisberg '23 explained that they have a "habit of going to see all theatrical performances done at MIT." Upon attending the show, they found the monologues "enlightening and helpful reminders of the issues women still face in society."

Tennisberg also found the opening performance which compared MIT course numbers to sex analogies humorous, as well as the piece comparing *Cosmopolitan* to *Men's Health*. Overall, Tennisberg felt that the performances were strong, given that the "actors conveyed the emotions extremely well" and "the monologues themselves were well-paced and easy to follow."

Miranda-Llovera '23, performer of "Let's Talk about Sex," expressed how they enjoyed performing this satirical piece, highlighting that it was a "particularly fun role" which allowed them to express their energy and bubblyness on stage. Through performing, Miranda-Llovera was able to "tap into experiences to perform something important to [themselves] and others."

Maximiliano Martinez '25 found "In the Silence" particularly evocative—describing how the performer "immediately deter[ed] any act of indignation," in sharing their experience of "having many of these wandering eyes shot at [them]."

"In the Silence" was written and performed by Joy Ma '24, who highlighted the unique experience of having both "strangers and friends" speak to them about how the performance impacted them. "It's hard to take a step back and see the impact of [my piece] and objectively know if it creates value or not," reflected Ma.

Monologues also provided an opportunity for both the attendees and performers to reflect on issues of identity. Speaking of "Tired," Tennisberg stated that they are "at risk of being one of those lazy husbands." They reflected that the story provided a reminder to be better and improve themselves upon marriage.

## Organizing MIT Monologues

The process of organizing MIT Monologues involved holding auditions in November, with performance preparation taking place during IAP into late February. Hahn highlighted the importance of selecting pieces—either from the existing Monologues repertoire or newly self-written—that "actors identify with and want to tell the story of."

To promote performance inclusivity, performers can perform a personal piece, repertoire piece, or both. Furthermore, the Monologues team provides support to student writers throughout the process of crafting the piece—including "writing support, directing, and performance help."

Paige Bright '24, author of pieces "Crisp" and "5 Distinct Memories as a Transwoman," stated that the most challenging aspect of the writing process was "becom[ing] comfortable enough with my identity" to share

Monologues, Page 2



ALEX LAIMAN—THE TECH

MIT Sport Taekwondo teams performing their closing team chant at ECTC Princeton 2023, Sunday Feb 26.



MAXWELL YUN—THE TECH

Dragon dance performers from the Northeastern Dragon Dance Troupe take the stage at the annual CSC Lunar New Year banquet, Saturday, Feb 25.

## IN SHORT

**Mar. 4 is the last day to add full-term subjects** to one's registration or to change grading methods for those subjects.

**Mar. 14 is Pi Day.** It is not an institute holiday, but a great joy for the MIT community.

**Mar. 20-24 is the final exam period** for half-term subjects.

Interested in joining *The Tech*? Email [join@tech.mit.edu](mailto:join@tech.mit.edu).

Send news and tips to [news@tech.mit.edu](mailto:news@tech.mit.edu).

## CAMPUS LIFE

Read our latest campus life articles on the power of em dashes, eating in, and the growth mindset.

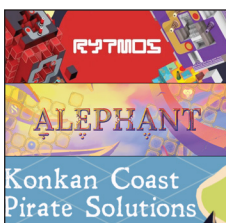
CAMPUS LIFE, p. 4



## RING DELIVERY

See photos from the Brass Rat Ring Delivery, presented by Ring-Comm '25.

PHOTO GALLERY, p. 6



## ELLIE'S GAMING CORNER

Read our reviews on recently released indie space/simulation and puzzle video games.

ARTS, p. 8

## FREE SPEECH

Read about a professor's observations on free expression as it relates to MIT.

OPINION, p. 10

## SECTIONS

Photos . . . . . 3  
Campus Life . . . . 4  
Photo Gallery . . . . 6  
Arts . . . . . 8  
Opinion . . . . . 10  
Fun . . . . . 11



WEATHER

Springing, blooming, and flourishing (indoors)

By Rine Pan

The predictably unpredictable weather during the transition to spring is upon us as we see sunny conditions interrupted by cloud blankets and sprinkles of rain this weekend. Expect a storm system moving through the south of Cambridge to bring along light rain and possibly even snow on Saturday; definitely keep an eye out for slushy conditions and dress in layers. We'll still be able to enjoy a scatter of sunshine be-

fore then on Friday, so make sure to get yourself a necessary dose of photosynthesis before bunkering down for the weekend.

Pi Day is coming upon us soon, and perhaps a fun indoor weekend activity could be planning out exciting CPW events with friends, living groups, clubs, and more! And in the vein of planning for the future, stormy coastal conditions further out in the bay will likely bring about more flurries and showers that create muddy smoothies on the roads, so make sure to be prepared.

Extended Forecast

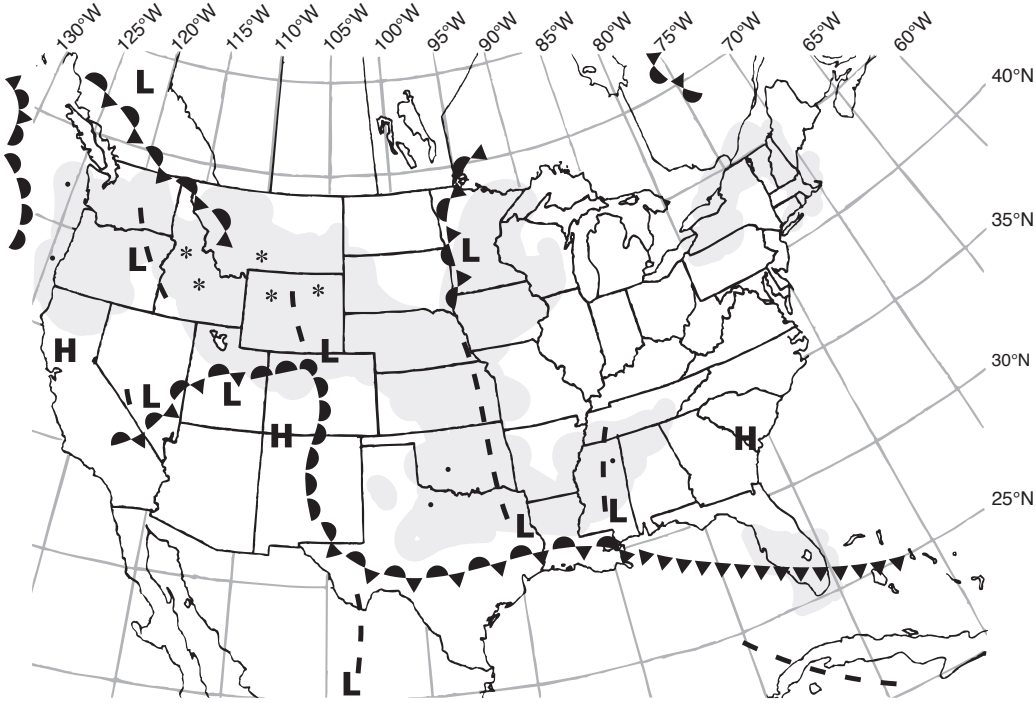
**Today:** Mostly cloudy. High around 45°F (7°C). North winds around 12 mph, with gusts ranging up to 24 mph.

**Tonight:** Mostly cloudy. Low around 32°F (0°C). Northwest winds around 8 mph.

**Tomorrow:** Mostly sunny. High around 45°F (7°C) and low around 32°F (0°C). Northwest winds around 7 mph transitioning into slightly stronger southeast winds in the afternoon.

**Saturday:** Cloudy with a chance of rain. High around 40°F (4°C) and low around 30°F (-1°C).

**Sunday:** Partly sunny. High around 42°F (6°C) and low around 30°F (-1°C). North winds around 11mph.



Situation for Noon Eastern Time, Thursday, March 9, 2023

Weather Systems	Weather Fronts	Precipitation Symbols		Other Symbols
		Snow	Rain	
<b>H</b> High Pressure	- - - Trough	⬆	⬇	☁ Fog
<b>L</b> Low Pressure	— Warm Front	⬆	⬇	⚡ Thunderstorm
§ Hurricane	▲▲▲ Cold Front	⬆	⬇	∞ Haze
	— Stationary Front	⬆	⬇	
		Moderate **	⬆	
		Heavy ***	⬆	

Student athlete Ryan Wilson shatters 800 meter & 1-mile NCAA Division III Records  
Wilson runs massive personal bests at Boston University track meets.

By Alex Tang  
NEWS EDITOR

Ryan Wilson '22 obliterated the NCAA Division III Records in the Indoor 1-Mile and the 800 meter events at the meets held at Boston University. On Feb. 10, Wilson ran a 3:55.29 at the David Hemery Valentine Invite, well below the vaunted four-minute barrier and more than a full second ahead of the previous record. Two weeks later, at the Last Chance Indoor National Qualifier, Wilson ran a 1:46.61, topping a record set exactly 11 years prior by Ben Scheetz of Amherst College.

Last year, Wilson was the NCAA Division III National Champion in both the Indoor and Outdoor 800 meter event. Prior to his record-breaking race, only two other runners in the history of Division III had run below four minutes in the mile. Wilson himself had yet to crack the four minute barrier during his collegiate career. Before the race, Wilson said that he was "focus[ed] on winning rather than the clock."

As the race got underway, he was under 4-minute pace by halfway. "The crowd was roaring and I had more adrenaline than I've ever felt in my life," Wilson said. "I gave everything I had through the line."

Wilson said breaking four minutes in the mile was "a lifetime goal that I've dreamed about for my entire running career." He attributed his success to "a commitment to a running oriented lifestyle," highlighting that "the support I got from my teammates and the crowd made it a moment in my life I'll never forget."

According to Wilson, setting the 800 meter record was "the icing on the cake." He said that the 3:55 mile demonstrated that he was in "great shape" and capable of running a fast 800 meter race. Before the 800 meter race, Wilson "felt kind of sick," and "there wasn't the same atmosphere" from the mile. Despite this, Wilson said that setting the 800 meter record "was still incredibly gratifying and showed my mile time wasn't a fluke."

Wilson, a fifth year athlete granted an additional year of eligibility by the NCAA, had to deal with significant adversity before achieving these milestones.

Wilson stated that he had "a tough freshman year due to some heart problems" that have since been resolved. In the middle of sophomore year, COVID-19 struck, resulting in the cancellation of the outdoor track season. Wilson said that the abrupt turn of events "left me with a lot of what-ifs," but he "chose to use the time over quarantine to hone in on my training."



PHOTO COURTESY OF MIT ATHLETICS

Ryan Wilson shatters NCAA Division III records in the indoor 1-Mile and 800 meter distances.

The 2020-2021 season was also canceled, leaving a one and half year gap in competition for Wilson. Regardless, Wilson remained "grateful for the seasons to come" and made him "eager to compete once the pandemic ended."

With regards to the rest of the indoor season and the upcoming outdoor season, Wilson said that he wants to "help my team win the NCAA Indoor and Outdoor team titles." He added that he is "looking to run the outdoor 800 meter and 1500 meter Division III records," and also intends to compete at the US National Championships.

Looking towards long-term plans, Wilson is still considering whether to transfer to a Division 1 school or make the leap to the professional level.

"I'll eventually put my MIT degree to use," Wilson said, but he wants to "try out this running thing while I'm still young."

The 2023 NCAA Division III Men's and Women's Indoor Track and Field Championships will be held on March 10-11 at the Birmingham CrossPlex in Birmingham, Alabama. Wilson is entered to run in the 1-mile, the 3000 meter run, and the Distance Medley relay.

Monologues performances highlighted a diverse array of MIT experiences

Monologues, from Page 1

personal details and experiences with a wider MIT audience. Kaelyn Dunnell '25, Monologues assistant producer, reflected that it was difficult to choose one way to perform a piece that could be expressed in a multitude of ways.

MIT and Broader Community Impact

When asked what the most valuable message they hoped attendees would take away was, Monologues participants provided a variety of responses. Common themes included the importance of listening to stories and uplifting the experiences of marginalized people.

Miranda-Llovera highlighted the student-written aspect of the pieces—that no matter how light-hearted or serious the message, each piece reflects the experience

of someone within the MIT community. "You might not be aware of the life of others, even those that you would consider close friends," Miranda-Llovera said.

Through sharing stories, Dunnell hoped that viewers could form better relationships with love, sex, and gender.

"Whether we like it or not, [sex and gender] dictate how we move through the world," Dunnell explained.

Bright expressed that while people generally perceive MIT to be a "wholesome place where nothing can ever go wrong," that isn't the case, especially with regards to uplifting marginalized identities. Hahn concluded, "we all grow in discomfort and from learning from others."

In addition to promoting and facilitating discussion with the MIT community, Monologues gives back to the broader Boston

community. In recent years, the production donates proceeds to the Boston Area Rape Crisis Center and the Cambridge Women's center.

The organizations were selected due to the importance of their work, particularly topics regarding the production—"helping gender minorities when they need it most," explained Hahn.

Looking Forward

When asked about improvements and changes to Monologues, Hahn requested that the community "continue to build a space where minority voices are listened to and supported." The Monologues are always "learning and shifting," she stated.

Miranda-Llovera, a graduating senior, expressed how Monologues created a space to hear "stories far different than mine" and to meet "people that I never

would have met otherwise."

"Now that my time in the Monologues is over, I cannot help but sit and reflect at how lucky I am that an opportunity like this came into my life," Miranda-Llovera reflected.

Ma expressed satisfaction with Monologues, as it "is simply [to be] a space for marginalized genders and if you give that space, beautiful things will happen no matter what."

MIT Monologues 2023 was sponsored by Violence Prevention & Response (VPR), Pleasure@MIT, and MIT Women's & Gender Studies (WGS). Attendees can send feedback regarding the event to the organizers at mitmoexec@mit.edu

Due to the sensitive nature of the performance content, MIT Monologues was consulted by The Tech to ensure protection of the performers' privacy.

COMPARATIVE MEDIA STUDIES | WRITING

MIT

MIT

SUBMIT YOUR BEST WRITING  
2023 KARDEL  
WRITING PRIZES

WIN  
CASH PRIZES  
IN 20 CATEGORIES

OPEN TO MIT UNDERGRADS AND  
GRADUATE STUDENTS

Essays, poetry, short stories,  
academic papers  
Science and technical writing  
Writing on the visual arts  
Writing for the public  
First year writing  
Science fiction, and more...

Info: [cmsw.mit.edu/writing-prizes](https://cmsw.mit.edu/writing-prizes)  
Submission deadline: April 10

Meet your  
fellow tech staff.  
(aka, your new 3 a.m.  
pset support group)



join@tech.mit.edu  
W20-483, 617-253-1541

Prowl Around Campus.  
Join News!

Email  
join@tech.mit.edu





Are you a gramma ninja?  
*The Tech* needs copy editors.  
should say grammar



**Help us out.**  
(We need it)  
email [join@tech.mit.edu](mailto:join@tech.mit.edu)



Students enjoy a meal at MINCE’s pop-up restaurant collaboration with MISTI India in the BC Porter Room, Saturday.

ALEXA SIMAO—THE TECH

No Brainer  
from page 11

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

Small Thoughts  
from page 11

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

“Big” Idea  
from page 11

S	C	O	F	F	S	P	A	N	S	A	M	P		
P	U	P	I	L	P	I	L	O	T	R	A	E		
A	R	E	N	A	I	N	D	I	A	B	R	A		
S	E	D	I	M	E	N	T	A	R	Y	R	O	C	K
					B	A	Y	S	E	U	R	O	S	
J	E	T	S	E	T	H	Y	D	E					
A	L	O	T	A	D	I	E	U	E	M	U			
M	A	N	U	S	C	R	I	P	T	P	A	P	E	R
S	L	Y	O	A	T	E	S	G	I	L	L			
			P	U	N	Y	E	J	E	C	T	S		
S	W	E	E	T	O	S	L	O						
K	I	T	C	H	E	N	S	C	I	S	S	O	R	S
A	P	U	P	L	A	T	O	E	A	V	E	S		
T	E	D	A	S	S	E	T	P	R	E	E	N		
E	R	E	W	E	A	R	S	H	A	N	D	S		







The issue at hand is that I never thought of myself as someone who would undergo a significant shift in mindset. It wasn't until things became too late that I realized the damage that I did to myself. And that is what I find to be the most tragic thing that happened to me in 2022.

Mindset provided me with bursts of optimism, but also made me want to cry internally. I couldn't believe that my mindset devolved into something that my high school self wouldn't recognize. Reading about a boy who was excited rather than scared of solving a challenging puzzle pained me. I used to embody that attitude, but I became the opposite by avoiding challenges so I could feel a little better about myself. My fixed mindset was holding me back, not moving me forward.

The passage about the boy also reminded me of what I had said to my classmate last year about having reservations about taking 6.009: I felt the class would be too difficult for me. While it is undeniable that 6.009 is not easy for someone with little coding experience (like me), what was I thinking at that time? Wasn't life

supposed to be about getting out of your comfort zone to learn new skills? The book was like a mirror, revealing uncomfortable truths about myself that I had never quite noticed.

I wished I had read *Mindset* the summer before entering college, though at that time I was optimistic and never saw myself as someone who would have a fixed mindset. Reading the book made me feel exposed at times, but I treated the main points as constructive feedback rather than a criticism of who I am, which helped me have a mental outline of steps to take in the future. The book may not address all the complex reasons behind my sophomore slump, but at least it has provided some sort of resolution and closure.

Now that it is the spring semester, I am trying to view academic challenges with a growth mindset instead of a fixed mindset. I have to admit that having a growth mindset requires a lot of mental energy to constantly battle the fixed mindset, but is necessary for my well-being.

Something that is forcing me to have a growth mindset is 6.009, a class that I initially didn't see myself in but ended up taking. The labs have not led to nightmarish queues

yet, but they already feel difficult. I spend hours trying to index my nested for loop or represent indices of my list correctly, yet I can't figure out the pattern. It's frustrating to spend so much time on something that seems so intuitive.

However, after a lab assistant goes over the concepts with me and things start to click, I feel good that I am stretching my limits by learning new skills that I never imagined accomplishing before. My slow progress isn't necessarily because I am dumb, but rather because I am still in the early stages of learning how to code.

Instead of comparing myself to others around me, I remind myself that some people did a lot of programming in the past, whereas I barely touched it. This will require me to spend more time in the class than the average student. I shouldn't view this as a shortcoming, but as a sign that I want to devote more time to understanding the material.

On a more general note, I realized there's no point in fixating so much on intelligence and grades because obsessing over these things only distracted me from learning at my best. I am better off focusing on the learning process and growing

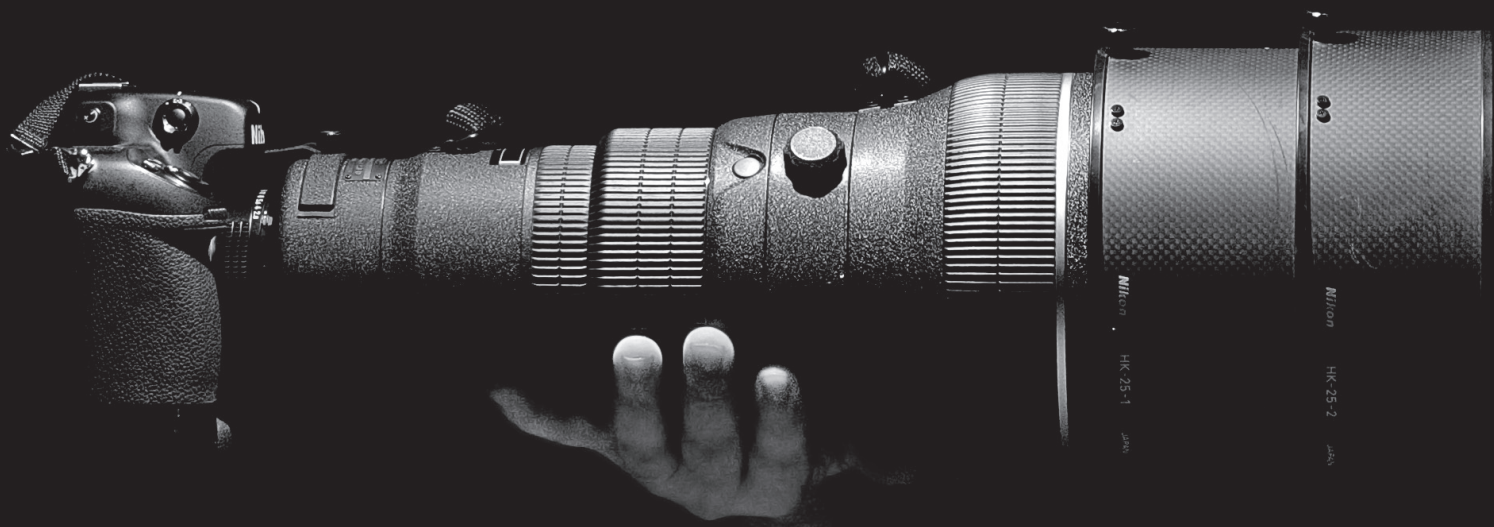
from these experiences because by doing so, other things will naturally come along. What's more important is developing key character traits crucial to thriving in a difficult environment like MIT, such as perseverance and resilience, instead of worrying about how dumb I am compared to others. Even if I get a B in a class, that B is not a reflection of what I gained from the class, whether it is learning to recover after a bad midterm or trying my best despite how difficult the class is for me.

If I ever notice my mind shifting from a growth mindset to a fixed mindset when I experience failure, one question that can redirect me back to the right place is, "What's the fundamental goal of coming to MIT?"

It is true that college is meant to prepare students for careers and professional goals. At the end of the day, however, the purpose of college is to foster our curiosity and love for learning. Achieving this goal is done best when one adopts a growth mindset over a fixed one. Having a growth mindset isn't easy, but in the long run, doing so will make our lives better and happier. It all comes down to how we choose to perceive a situation, good or bad.

LIKE TAKING PICTURES?

JOIN THE PHOTOGRAPHY  
DEPARTMENT OF THE TECH!



EMAIL JOIN@TECH.MIT.EDU OR JOIN US  
FOR DINNER SUNDAY NIGHTS AT 6PM IN  
OUR OFFICE (W20-483)



# Ring Premiere

Members of the Class of 2025 attend Ring Premiere, where RingComm'25 presents the Brass Rat design, Saturday Feb 25.



OMAR OROZCO—THE TECH



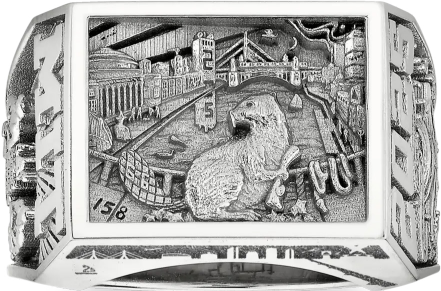
OMAR OROZCO—THE TECH



MELISSA JIMENEZ CAMEJO—THE TECH



MELISSA JIMENEZ CAMEJO—THE TECH



PHOTOS COURTESY OF RINGCOMM '25

## Presented by RingComm'25

Brass Rat • Brass Rat • Brass Rat • Brass Rat •





PHOTOS COURTESY OF RINGCOMM '25



MELISSA JIMENEZ CAMEJO—THE TECH



OMAR OROZCO—THE TECH

# RingComm Brass Rat Premiere MIT 2025 Feb 25th



MELISSA JIMENEZ CAMEJO—THE TECH



OMAR OROZCO—THE TECH





*Notice: this review was written using PC game codes provided to The Tech by each game's publisher. Read the full review online.*



## ELLIE'S GAMING CORNER

# Cozy minimalist puzzle games to tune out lectures to

With simple (though somewhat ludicrous and bizarre) premises and rewarding gameplay, these puzzlers are perfect for start-and-stop play during those precious few moments of downtime.

★★★★☆

**Rytmos**  
Floppy Club  
Feb 28, 2023

★★★★☆

**Elephant**  
Lucas Le Slo  
Mar 1, 2023

★★★★☆

**Konkan Coast Pirate  
Solutions**  
chapliboy  
Mar 1, 2023

**By Ellie Montemayor**  
*PRODUCTION EDITOR*

Isometric and board-based titles have long been staples of the puzzle genre, with gameplay restricted to a finite board space occupied by increasingly complex obstacle elements and rooted in a notable amount of abstraction.

These titles are defined by significant roots in computational analysis and graph theory, with many variations of the genre spanning from early analytical problems such as the Seven Bridges of Königsberg and five room puzzles as well as practical obstacles that would eventually define the Sokoban theme.

Recent titles founded on such mechanics are *Rytmos*, *Alphabet*, and *Konkan Coast Pirate Solutions*. These games were only released at the beginning of March but have already found significant followings from their straightforward yet unique takes on the puzzle genre. Their relaxing simplicity makes them perfect for start-and-stop play during downtime hours or even during lectures (which I've unashamedly done multiple times already).

**Rytmos:** A relaxing instrumental space adventure with short and sweet gameplay

*Rytmos* takes its roots from early continuous-line topological puzzles such as the five-room puzzle. Unlike those classical problems, though, *Rytmos* — like most other games in the genre — has a well-defined solution to each passing level. The game is set in space and includes several gravitationally locked planetary systems that together comprise *Rytmos's* level scheme.

The game revolves around music from various cultures and time periods, with each musical genre confined to their individual planetary systems, not unlike the genre-defined territorial boundaries of the 2016 film *Trolls*. Gameplay begins with Zimbabwean mbira music on the planetary system Oryx (themed as a musical group with its own unique logo, like the other systems in the game); the player is tasked to explore each of the three planets Kame, Mpopoma, and Macuse in the system (which themselves are guised as album covers by each “band”) to solve their puzzles and bring them into orbit. The same gameplay formula is then executed for each of the other six systems in the game.

Gameplay involves the player forming a closed route around a level while making use of each planetary system's unique puzzle elements (such as a movable ice block for the Hawaiian system, portals for the German system, etc.). Those able to connect their loops to loudspeakers scattered around each level are awarded the game's defining feature: musical instru-



PHOTOS COURTESY OF FLOPPY CLUB / LUCAS LE SLO / CHAPLIBOY

**Rytmos (Floppy Club), Alephant (Lucas Le Slo),** and Konkan Coast Pirate Solutions (chaplboy) are three isometric puzzlers with very unique premises. The games' relaxing simplicity makes them perfect for start-and-stop play during downtime hours.

ments playable in-game. *Rytmos* has over twenty unlockable instruments and modifiers, which inject a particular flavor into the game (with added tangible rewards to perfecting each planet) and lengthen its two hour runtime to something approaching 20 hours — a trick that works quite well, may I add.

I was particularly impressed by the amount of attention given to representing these various cultures: in-game descriptions as well as expanded written features and studio-curated playlists in the game's website ([rytmos.club](http://rytmos.club)) are awarded to each genre. A lot of cultural exploration was done by the studio for this, and I am all for it.

That said, gameplay does become somewhat stale after a significant amount of playtime, and the player's goal inevitably narrows down to acquiring the game's musical unlockables. It is extraordinarily easy to just "accidentally" uncover each level's solution, making it feel less like a true puzzler and more of a casual interactive music app.

*Rytmos's* minimalist aesthetic is quite pleasing, but graphic effects overall are a bit lacking: shadow texturing is uncomfortable (especially on curved surfaces), but overall passable; the visual style is pop art-y and very techno in feel but not unique or polished enough to keep everything from feeling too generic. Performance is nothing to praise, either, as block movement is rather choppy and stiff, and technical issues pop up here and there with level interactables glitching out.

Overall, I found the game simple yet extremely cute — its minimalist aesthetic, visual style, cosmic theme, and fun music come together to create a short yet sweet gameplay experience.

***Elephant:* An enigmatic Hebrew So-**  
**koban about elephants and language**

*Elephant* is very much derived from the Sokoban style, but its unique style sets it apart from other games in the genre. The game is themed around the quirks and idiosyncrasies of the Hebrew language and follows the journey of a player-controlled elephant as it meets a group of Hebrew-speaking oxen. However, the oxen do not fully speak Hebrew; instead, dialogue (and the game in its entirety) is centered around the silent Hebrew letter aleph (א) and the diacritical signs it is modified with to produce sound.

The aforementioned “aleph”-ant’s task throughout the game is to learn about the different diacritical signs of Hebrew’s niqqud system (i.e. kamatz, segol, and

hiriq). As such, the use of the niqqud system functions largely as a core gameplay mechanic to augment the Sokoban formula with unique mechanics.

The game hides the rich cultural history it represents in its design. The non-playable oxen symbolize the original Proto-Sinaitic glyph for the aleph (and elephant as a word speculatively shares a cognate with the aleph), the grainy textile-like aesthetic and soundtrack are reminiscent of a general Middle Eastern style, the right-to-left level progression comes from the right-to-left nature of Semitic script, and the various chapter themes (English, Greek, Phoenician, Arabic, and finally Hebrew) depict the languages' connections to the aleph.

*Elephant* has a surprising amount of depth, with its deceptively simple twists to the Sokoban formula allowing for some really expertly-crafted levels that can be very tricky to solve. Completely varied and increasingly complex techniques need to be used from level to level, a process made exponentially harder by the game's intentional lack of tutorial, hints, and any sort of assistive mechanisms. In other words, the player is left in the dark on what to do and how gameplay elements operate, requiring a significant amount of trial-and-error and self-discovery to "learn" the game's seemingly arbitrary rules (very similar to the process of learning a language!).

Each level includes one or more silent alephs and the corresponding number of separated niqqud tiles. The player has to connect all the alephs to all the niqqud tiles Sokoban-style. However, the core mechanics come into play as the player must make use of the various formed sounds and utilize their unique effects on the board (for example, the segol niqqud causes the player to teleport to a different aleph).

It would be interesting to see the developer tackle the other diacritics of the niqqud system in future updates and how they would interact in more complex and compounding ways, but the game is already quite engaging as is.

The main game (the middle rows of each chapter) is fairly doable with some finagling, but optional levels become exceedingly complex as the player progresses — it can take up to an hour to find the solution for a particularly difficult level. Puzzle-solving can get excruciatingly frustrating, especially when the player is struggling to figure out how to even start a level, but the intrinsically-motivated payoffs are surprisingly rewarding every time.

It's a very unique puzzler and, to be honest, I can't find even a single fault with the game. The exceptional level design, the remarkable and enigmatic gameplay mechanics, the cozy aesthetic, and the deeply embedded cultural representation all come together perfectly to make *Elephant* a standout addition to the Sokoban genre.

### ***Konkan Coast Pirate Solutions: A literal pirate sim with fun programming-style mechanics***

Developed by India-based one-person studio “chaplibo,” *Konkan Coast Pirate Solutions* is one of those one-in-a-hundred games with a truly bizarre premise. An interesting thematic mix of pirates and the corporate world, *Konkan Coast* follows the eponymous tech startup “Konkan Coast Pirate Solutions” as it works on the development of a new simulation program — which they dub the SimEngine — to help manage the flow of pirate traffic due to a “sharp increase in pirate crashes.”

The player begins the game with Swami, the new CEO of “Konkan Coast Pirate Solutions” who is tasked with testing out various scenarios and ensuring their product’s viability. As the game progresses, the SimEngine goes through new iterations, and the company’s lead designer Mani rolls out new updates while the market-savvy Rajan meets with potential investors and clients.

*Konkan Coast's* simulation mechanics echo a diluted version of block-based programming in its drag-and-drop commands. Each level's board contains black-sailed pirate ships that need to stop at pirate harbors and white-gold merchant ships that need to pass gold-filled docks; every other game element is designed to help or hinder the player (sometimes both) as they look to set up an iteration of the scenario where all ships reach their destination without crashing.

To complete a level, the player must drag and drop a “turn left,” “turn right,” or “stop” command at the appropriate locations and make sure the simulation runs with all ships completing their route. Levels are initially barebones and require little planning, but as new obstacles and components are introduced — from lighthouses to ocean currents and glaciers — they become much more complex, making it harder and harder for the scenario to run shipshape.

Gameplay does get stale after a handful of levels, and it honestly begins to feel like a slog after getting through the first set of the more complex optional levels. The best puzzlers have levels with their own individually difficult struggles and equally rewarding payoffs; *Konkan Coast* is not one of those games, as much as it attempts to be.

The game doesn't offer much lore-wise, either — only revealing the barest details of Swami's, Mani's, and Rajan's journey through their foray into entrepreneurship, just enough for the player to get behind its anachronistically absurd premise — but I did enjoy the trio's interactions together in the little time they were featured on-screen.

*Konkan Coast* isn't bad, nor is it particularly memorable. But for a slow-burner puzzler, it achieves exactly what it set out to do, and that's not a bad thing.

These three puzzlers are fairly simple in premise, easy to start, and easy to stop. While likely to become tiresome on their own, their cozy aesthetics and mechanically simple gameplay elements make them perfect to serve as little throughout-the-day distractions during meetings, lectures, or whatever precious few moments of downtime an MIT student may have.

*Rytmos is available on PC for \$14.99 and on Nintendo Switch and macOS. Aleph-ant is available on PC for \$9.99. Konkan Coast Pirate Solutions is available on PC for \$9.99. Notice: this review was written using PC game codes provided to The Tech by each game's publisher. Read the full review online.*





The *Tech* (ISSN 0148-9607) is published on Thursdays during the academic year (except during MIT vacations) and monthly during the summer by The Tech, Room W20-483, 84 Massachusetts Avenue, Cambridge, Mass. 02139. Subscriptions are \$50.00 per year (third class). **POSTMASTER:** Please send all address changes to our mailing address: The Tech, P.O. Box 397029, Cambridge, Mass. 02139-7029. **TELEPHONE:** Editorial: (617) 253-1541. Business: (617) 258-8324. Facsimile: (617) 258-8226. *Advertising, subscription, and typesetting rates available.* Entire contents © 2023 **The Tech**. Printed by Graphic Developments, Inc.

*Edward Schiappa is a professor of Comparative Media Studies/Writing at MIT, and holds the John E. Burchard Chair of Humanities.*



*The Tech's* telephone number is (617) 253-1541. Email is the easiest way to reach any member of our staff. If you are unsure whom to contact, send mail to [general@tech.mit.edu](mailto:general@tech.mit.edu), and it will be directed to the appropriate person. You can reach the editor in chief by emailing [eic@tech.mit.edu](mailto:eic@tech.mit.edu). Please send press releases, requests for coverage, and information about errors that call for correction to [news@tech.mit.edu](mailto:news@tech.mit.edu). Letters to the editor should be sent to [letters@tech.mit.edu](mailto:letters@tech.mit.edu). *The Tech* can be found on the World Wide Web at <http://thetech.com>.



# No Brainer

Solution, page 3

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

Instructions: Fill in the grid so that each column, row, and 3 by 3 grid contains exactly one of each of the digits 1 through 9.

# Small Thoughts

Solution, page 3

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

Instructions: Fill in the grid so that each column, row, and 3 by 3 grid contains exactly one of each of the digits 1 through 9.

# “Big” Idea

Solution, page 3

## ACROSS

- 01 Inaugural address orator of 2009  
06 Question of comprehension  
09 The enemy  
13 Gives sparingly  
14 First-rate  
15 Star in Lyra  
16 Certain salesperson's route  
18 Points in favor  
19 New member  
20 Much-more-than-miffed feeling  
21 Lack of clarity  
22 Evacuation order  
24 Much-more-than-miffed feeling  
27 Appearance compliment  
32 Jupiter alias  
34 Cold War concern  
35 Valhalla VIP  
36 “Big” theme of the puzzle  
38 *Vino* region  
39 Leave work  
41 Deal effectively with  
42 Just in time  
46 Place for a trough  
47 Routing abbr.  
48 Urge to act  
50 MLB postseason award  
53 State of mind  
56 Sicilian “Shalom!”  
57 Figure in black magic  
60 Bistro window posting  
61 See 6 Down  
62 Abs exercise  
63 Unceasingly  
64 Form a union  
65 Peevish states

## DOWN

- 01 Uncanny  
02 Graceless one  
03 Hand wash ingredient  
04 Concertgoer’s souvenirs

1	2	3	4	5		6	7	8		9	10	11	12
13						14				15			
16					17					18			
	19								20				
				21				22	23				
24	25	26		27			28				29	30	31
32			33				34						
35					36	37					38		
39				40							41		
42								43	44	45		46	
				47				48			49		
50	51	52				53					54	55	
56					57	58							59
60					61					62			
63					64					65			

- 05 Off-track  
06 With 61 Across, night fliers  
07 Argentina article  
08 What to call clippers  
09 Something watched at home  
10 Mrs. Zeus  
11 Show biz grand slam  
12 Pulverize  
14 Airy farewell  
17 Anise-flavored beverage  
20 Galley vessels  
22 More than miffed  
23 \_\_ *neanderthalensis*  
24 One of the Epistles  
25 Gig for a clown  
26 Perrier alternative  
28 Takes a bath, say  
29 Cartoon mirages

- 30 Rather large band  
31 Any Olympian  
33 Erstwhile space shuttle  
36 Part of a yard  
37 “That’s my cue!”  
40 URL opener  
43 Guest columns, often  
44 111-year-old cookie  
45 “Won’t miss it”  
49 Completely exhausted  
50 Crowning point  
51 Actor Schreiber  
52 Giraffe feature  
53 Toss your hand  
54 “Wasn’t me!”  
55 Oversupply  
57 Solemn assurance  
58 Have payables  
59 Audiophile collection

# Haikus

by Eunice Zhang

## TIME

twenty four hours  
time flows by, and so do i  
i’m alive, poggers

walk by the river  
watching the water ripple  
almost maverick

## MAVERICK

blue line, best line—why?  
wonderland, revere beach, and  
lovely maverick

sit and be hrrgy  
rock on swings, watch children play  
calm amidst chaos

## MIDTERMS

skipped first class today  
feeling silly and funny  
perfect for haikus

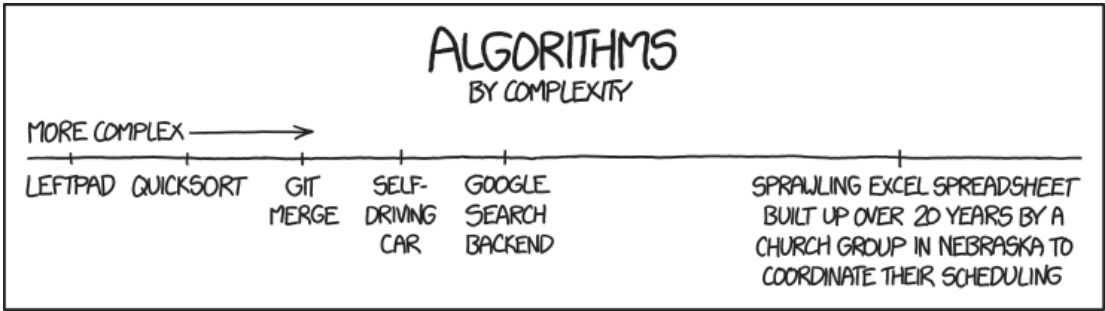
i remind myself  
the hrrg of midterm season  
shall soon pass by

## HOME

mano in the bay  
new york—zizi, emeri  
wistful memories

cherish simple things  
first thing i did in new year  
hug my sister tight

## [1667] Algorithms



There was a schism in 2007 when a set advocating OpenOffice created a fork of Sunday.xlsx and maintained it independently for several months. The efforts to reconcile the conflicting schedules led to the reinvention, within the cells of the spreadsheet, of modern version control.



A WEBCOMIC OF ROMANCE, SARCASM. MATH. AND LANGUAGE  
by Randall Munroe

## [220] Philosophy



A WEBCOMIC OF ROMANCE, SARCASM. MATH. AND LANGUAGE  
by Randall Munroe



It's like the squirt bottle we use with the cat.



