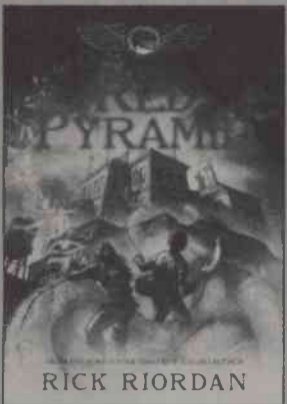


## BOOK REVIEW

## Riordan delivers another exciting tale



Kit Arbuckle  
Reviewer

What would you do if Dad blew up the Rosetta Stone? What if you witnessed him do it through an ancient Egyptian ritual that released the deities Osiris, Isis, Horus, Nephthys and Set into the modern world? What would you do if Set proceeded to seal your father in a golden sarcophagus, kidnap him and vow to use

his life force to build a pyramid that will unleash indescribable chaos upon the world?

These are the questions facing 14-year-old Carter Kane and his 12-year-old sister, Sadie, after a Christmas Eve incident at the British Museum.

Carter and Sadie are forced to work together and trust complete strangers with their lives as they deal with the repercussions of their father's ritual.

To make matters awkward, they've barely seen each other in the six years since their mother's mysterious death; Carter traveled around the world with his father, an Egyptologist, while Sadie stayed with her grandparents in London.

Rick Riordan, author of the "Percy Jackson and the Olympians" series, has once again constructed a book that blends historic fact and legend with refreshing frankness and wit. "The Red Pyramid" is written as the transcript of a digital recording that Carter and Sadie made themselves, complete with interjections befitting squabbling siblings. Riordan's tone is consistently youthful and honest, as befits two early-teenaged narrators. As with the Percy Jackson series, every chapter is riddled with action and humor, even when Carter and Sadie are in serious danger.

Unlike the Percy Jackson series, the lesser known Egyptian mythology can be confusing. There are a lot of deities to keep track of, but Riordan balances it with unforgettable character descriptions. It is certainly hard to forget the raging warrior goddess whom the Kane siblings turn into a cow — literally — with a clever application of New Mexican salsa.

"The Red Pyramid," the first installment of Riordan's new Kane Chronicles, is not the stereotypical young adult novel. Beneath the cover-to-cover action and comedy, there run more thoughtful themes of family, trust and racism, as Carter looks more like his African-American father and Sadie more like her blonde-and-blue-eyed Mom).

It's a fantastic way to get younger readers interested in Egyptian history and mythology, but don't underestimate Rick Riordan. He whisks his readers from London to New York City to the American southwest in 516 pages and leaves them with the knowledge god Thoth's craving for more of the story.

## CD REVIEW

## Up and coming artist tops iTunes charts



Sarah Beth Costello  
Reviewer

These days, there are few artists and bands that can successfully produce albums of such quality and depth to merit outstanding reviews. Brundan James, an up-and-coming pop artist from Derry, N.H., is an exception. The singer/songwriter, pianist and University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill graduate possesses a style and skill that trumps the majority of current top-grossing artists.

James released his self-titled second album on Sept. 7 and despite nominal popularity, he reached No. 1 on the iTunes singer/songwriter chart. James remains in the top-15 albums on iTunes, among popular bands and artists including Justin Bieber, Kings of Leon and Sara Bareilles. James reached No. 92 in the Top 100 on Billboard's Top 200 Chart and debuted his single, "The Fall," on Sept. 25 during CBS Saturday's Second Cup Café.

What separates James from the mass of pop singers and songwriters clamoring for attention in today's very competitive music industry, is the genuine nature of his songs, his clear and identifiable tenor and the passion evoked in his music. James writes from experiences, life, good and bad times, and is

seemingly unafraid of appearing vulnerable before an audience.

James has been described as a contemporary Billy Joel or James Taylor, an artist who appeals to the common individual because his music is so real and attainable. James is successful in digging past the superficial messages of many modern artists, and writing about the complexities of relationships (not sex), love (not lust) and patience (not instant gratification).

The 12 songs on the new album are equally deep. They range from happy and romantic ("Stupid for Your Love"), sad and serious ("Your Beating Heart") to hopeful and sweet ("Anything for You," and "The Fall").

It is rare when an artist can produce a balanced, diverse and unique album, but James' dedication to the production of his lyrics and music has resulted in a tight package. While most artists are hit with continual demand for new albums, James is more concerned with writing and singing songs that will be remembered beyond the next six months. James worked on his new album for more than a year, and says his manager and label pushed him to write more music before they agreed he was ready to begin recording.

The young pianist has generated a stream of followers through social networking and has gained media attention with each tour. James released his first album, "The Day is Brave," in 2008 and has exceeded expectations with the release of his second album, which he says is self-titled because it is a reflection of his own life.

## Elon theatre grads beat the odds

Kit Arbuckle  
Reporter

Despite the downturn in the economy, Elon University's musical theatre program has managed to churn out several talented students that have gone on to star in various tours and productions.

Andrew Frace is one of those successes. Frace graduated from Elon in 2004 with a major in music theatre and a minor in psychology. Today, he's a swing in the Las Vegas production of "Jersey Boys." He's responsible for covering any of three principal roles and four ensemble roles if one of the performers is unable to perform.

In the six years since his graduation, Frace said he's played Ed the hyena in "The Lion King" on Broadway (and understudied Zazu and Timon), Wonka in the national tour of "Willy Wonka," Gill/Anchor in the original cast of "Finding Nemo: The Musical" at Walt Disney World and has appeared in several film and television roles. He's also performed in regional theatre, industrial videos and voiceovers.

Frace credits the Elon theatre program for his success.

"The training I received at Elon was exceptional," he said. "I have never felt unprepared at an audition. In fact, I feel that Elon gave me an advantage over everyone else in the study of my craft."

Frace also noted that Elon's theatre program employed "outstanding" professors, who taught their students about the business side of theatre as much as the artistic side. "(The university) provides a vast amount of other vital resources for the aspiring actor," he said.

Rick Owen, major gifts officer at Elon, agrees.

"Nationally recognized composer/lyricist and master teacher Craig Carnelia was here over the weekend (of Sept. 24th) and said Elon has the best (theatre) program in the country," Owen said.

Carnelia has had three Tony Award nominations and two Drama Desk nominations for his work on "Working," "Sweet Smell of Success," and "Imaginary Friends."

Frace isn't the only Elon graduate who's gone far in the theatre world. Chris Wood, who graduated last year and starred as the male lead in productions of "Kiss Me Kate" and

"110 in the Shade," is now playing the male lead in the national tour of "Spring Awakening." Fellow 2010 alumni Courtney Markowitz joins him as Ilse, the main supporting actress and Erin Burniston as a swing. Alex Ellis, an 2005 alumnus, is currently performing as "Hairspray's" Penny at the Papermill Playhouse in New Jersey. Matt Shingledecker, who graduated in 2008, has been in the ensemble of "Spring Awakening" on Broadway, Georg and understudy for the lead in "Spring Awakening" on the national tour, and now is back on Broadway as Tony, the male lead in "West Side Story."

Even Elon juniors have been cast in major productions: last year, Taylor Trench took a leave of absence to play Moritz in the national tour of "Spring Awakening" with Shingledecker. This year, Grant Gustin has taken a year off to play Baby John in the national tour of "West Side Story."

Wood, Markowitz, Ellis, Shingledecker, Trench and Gustin were unavailable for comment because of their rehearsal schedules. However, their many accomplishments are testament to the merit of Elon's theatre program.

## The weekly Web roundup: Videos and links going viral



Alexa Johnson  
Columnist

## The women of Octobeard

Facial hair is a big deal. Both men and women often celebrate "no shave November," or "Octobeard" but only a man is able to grow an impressive bushy beard or nifty soul patch. As some women yearn for the ability to grow such remarkable displays of testosterone, these pictures of Victorian women, who share a strong likeness to Zach Galifianakis, provide gender closure. Visit [Buzzfeed.com](http://Buzzfeed.com), search "Octobeard women."



PHOTO COURTESY OF BUZZFEED.COM

## "Bohemian Rhapsody" on slide whistles

If you don't love Queen, you lead a sad, sad life. For fans of 80s glam rock and the late Freddie Mercury,

Bohemian Rhapsody on slide whistles isn't nearly as magnificent as the real thing, but it is pretty impressive. A Stomp rendition soon, please? Visit [Buzzfeed.com](http://Buzzfeed.com), search "bohemian rhapsody."



PHOTO COURTESY OF BUZZFEED.COM

## Reaching out to gay teens, addressing bullying

This past month four gay teens committed suicide because of bullying. In response to these tragedies, comedian Ellen DeGeneres released a video asking the public to step up and stop bullying.

Journalist Dan Savage and his husband have created a YouTube forum called the "It Gets Better Project" in an attempt to reach out to gay teens who need support. Savage and many others have uploaded videos with their personal stories and promise gay teens that life will get much better after high school and college and that they just need to hang on to see how beautiful life can be. Visit [Buzzfeed.com](http://Buzzfeed.com), search "Ellen DeGeneres" and Google "It Gets Better Project."



PHOTO COURTESY OF YOUTUBE.COM

## The most impressive cupcakes you'll ever see from A to Z

Even those who are not cupcake enthusiasts will be hard pressed to admit that these cupcakes aren't rad. The details are impeccable and the humor is top notch—check out the Farmville, iPhone, mustache and owl cupcakes in particular. Try to make your own too! Visit [Buzzfeed.com](http://Buzzfeed.com), search "cupcakes."



PHOTO COURTESY OF BUZZFEED.COM

## Commercial comparing burgers and drugs



PHOTO COURTESY OF BUZZFEED.COM

It's true, the United States has an obesity epidemic and, yes, more kids than ever are being diagnosed with diabetes -- but seriously? Burgers are not cocaine, heroin or any other hardcore drugs. It's commercials like these that take a good idea (kids need to eat healthy) and make rational people want to eat more unhealthy foods because the message is so stupid. Visit [Buzzfeed.com](http://Buzzfeed.com), search "hamburgers."