One of my favorite hobbies is called Drum Corps International, also known as DCI. DCI is a nonprofit organization that hosts a competitive circuit for drum corps around the United States (Even though it’s called Drum Corps International, it isn’t really international). A drum corps consists of 150 students no older than 21. These students play instruments and march on a football field, similar to a marching band. One key difference between a marching band and a drum corps is that a drum corps doesn’t have any woodwind instruments, like clarinet or saxophone. Drum corps also perform much more difficult material than marching bands and they do so at a much higher level. That’s because drum corps practice almost 11 hours every day for about 3 months to perfect their performance. Because of the commitment required, DCI has developed an extremely devoted base of participants and an almost as equally devoted fan base. Fans love to watch drum corps perform live, on YouTube, and discuss the performances with other fans in person and over internet forums such as Reddit, Snare Science, and Drum Corps Planet.

The main reason I was initially drawn to this hobby is my family. My father studied music when receiving his bachelor’s degree. His love of music transferred over to me, in large part due to his obsession with playing music, listening to music, and sharing music with the people around him. In middle school, my older brother joined the band program. I did the same thing when I had the chance, and that led to me becoming more and more invested into marching band, and eventually DCI.
The way that people watch and enjoy DCI has been changed in a big way in the past year due to an increase in the popularity of streaming technology. Streaming is when a video is filmed and shown over the internet. Generally, when talking about video streaming in this context people are talking about streaming an event live as it happens, but not exclusively. According to the article “Drum Corps International partners with FloSports to live stream DCI Tour events,” DCI partnered with a company called FloSports to stream competitions live. FloSports is a company that streams many different kinds of sporting event, including football, tennis, wrestling, gymnastics, and auto racing. FloSports developed a new branch called FloMarching specifically to stream DCI and related events. Fans of DCI can sign up for a FloMarching account to stream the covered events and even rewatch them at a later time (Schamma). Previously, the only way to experience DCI shows was to watch them live or to watch videos of the shows online, though this latter method is technically illegal and DCI has done its best to take those videos down. Fans can now experience shows at home instead of having to travel to them. In the past several years, DCI has tried several methods of streaming their shows, and it seems like they’ve found a long-term solution with FloMarching.

This technological change in Drum Corps International is almost only beneficial. It allows people to stream performances from home and lets them do so with only the cost of a subscription. Previously you have to pay for food and travel expenses, possibly a hotel if traveling long distances, and the price of a ticket, which could be over $100. The downside is that a streamed video can never replace the energy you feel from a live performance. Streaming could encourage people to not attend live events, which would detract from fans getting the true Drum Corps experience.

I think Drum Corps streaming technology could be enhanced in the future with the rise of 360° video and the increasing availability of 4k and 60 fps video. I do not think streaming technology could ever fully replace or surpass a live performance, however. No recording can capture the raw emotion and energy the performers put into their show after practicing it for 11 hours a day, every day for 3 months.
The TV show *Battlestar Galactica* was reimagined as a SyFy original series that ran for four seasons from 2004-2009. Based on the original series from the ‘70s, this series focused on the spaceship *Battlestar Galactica*, which was the last remaining military vessel after a devastating nuclear holocaust was launched on humanity. This attack was carried out by the Cylons, a race of artificially intelligent robots that humanity created which later turned on them and carried out a civil war. The war ended in an armistice that lasted several decades, until the Cylons broke the peace by launching the aforementioned nuclear holocaust on the 12 human-colonized planets, referred to as “the Colonies.” The episode to which I will be referring was not technically part of a season, but was a 3-hour long preview episode split into two parts and known as “the miniseries.” The miniseries starts with the cylon destruction of the human race and ends with the *Battlestar Galactica* leading a fleet of unarmed civilian ships away into uncharted space to escape the onslaught.

The piece of technology that I will be focusing on is the Cylons themselves. They are, in essence, humanoid robots that are intelligent enough to be self-aware and make their own decisions. In the show this technology is not available to any of the human characters. After the humans created the Cylons, the Cylons turned on the humans and tried to destroy them. Because of this, all humanoid robots were outlawed in the 12 Colonies. In real life, this technology is not currently available. However, is it currently a work in progress. While the true artificial intelligence aspect of the Cylons may be a long way away, the robotics part is well underway. Perhaps most notably is the work that the company Boston Dynamics is doing. The company is currently working on a line of humanoid and animal inspired robots that perform a variety of tasks such as running, jumping, stacking, and moving objects. These robots are very different and primitive to the fully autonomous and sentient Cylons, but they are evidence that humanity is currently on the track to developing these robots. For example, look at Atlas. According to the Boston Dynamics website, Atlas “coordinates motions of the arms, torso and legs to achieve whole-body mobile manipulation.” This is the same basic idea as the Cylons, just less polished and perfected.
In the show, this technology solved many problems for the human race. It made manual labor much easier and made technological advancement progress much faster. Obviously, it also created a lot of problems, as ultimately it led to the genocide and almost complete extinction of the human race, save about 50,000 people total. In real life, the benefits are very similar, though the consequences of these benefits may be a bit less dramatic. Having robot workers will make many jobs a lot easier and faster to be completed. While this might not end in our destruction as a species, the downside is that as automation continues to advance, fewer and fewer jobs will be available for people, particularly low-skill jobs. Humanity must develop a solution to this potential crisis soon. Already self-driving cars are becoming popularized, which is a threat to the millions of people who have jobs as truck drivers. In 5-10 years, humanoid robots will be more advanced and more lifelike and ever closer to replacing jobs that are more and more complicated. Coupled with potential advancements in artificial intelligence, and the possibly of something like Cylons or the robots from *I, Robot* becomes a very real possibility. Not in 5-10 per say, but perhaps in my lifetime. In the TV show, the characters only saw these advancements as ethical when they benefitted humanity in the short term. Throughout the course of the show, the folly of man is emphasized in different ways as a key literary element. The show suggests that if humanity had considered the long-term implications of its actions, it may have chosen differently.

This leads me to my final point. I do not see this as an ethical technological advancement for real life. While it is a huge advancement in the interest of labor-saving techniques and technology, I fail to see how it will benefit society as a whole. If millions are unemployed in one fell swoop, the only ones who will gain are those at the very top as they no longer have to expend so much on salaries. Mass unemployment at this level would be incredibly detrimental to how our society currently functions. If we were to pursue such a path, a solution would need to be figured out so the millions without jobs could somehow provide for themselves. I realize my worries seem extreme and the very well may be, but if progress continues at this rate it will be inevitable. Probably not for decades, but inevitable nonetheless.
Works Cited

