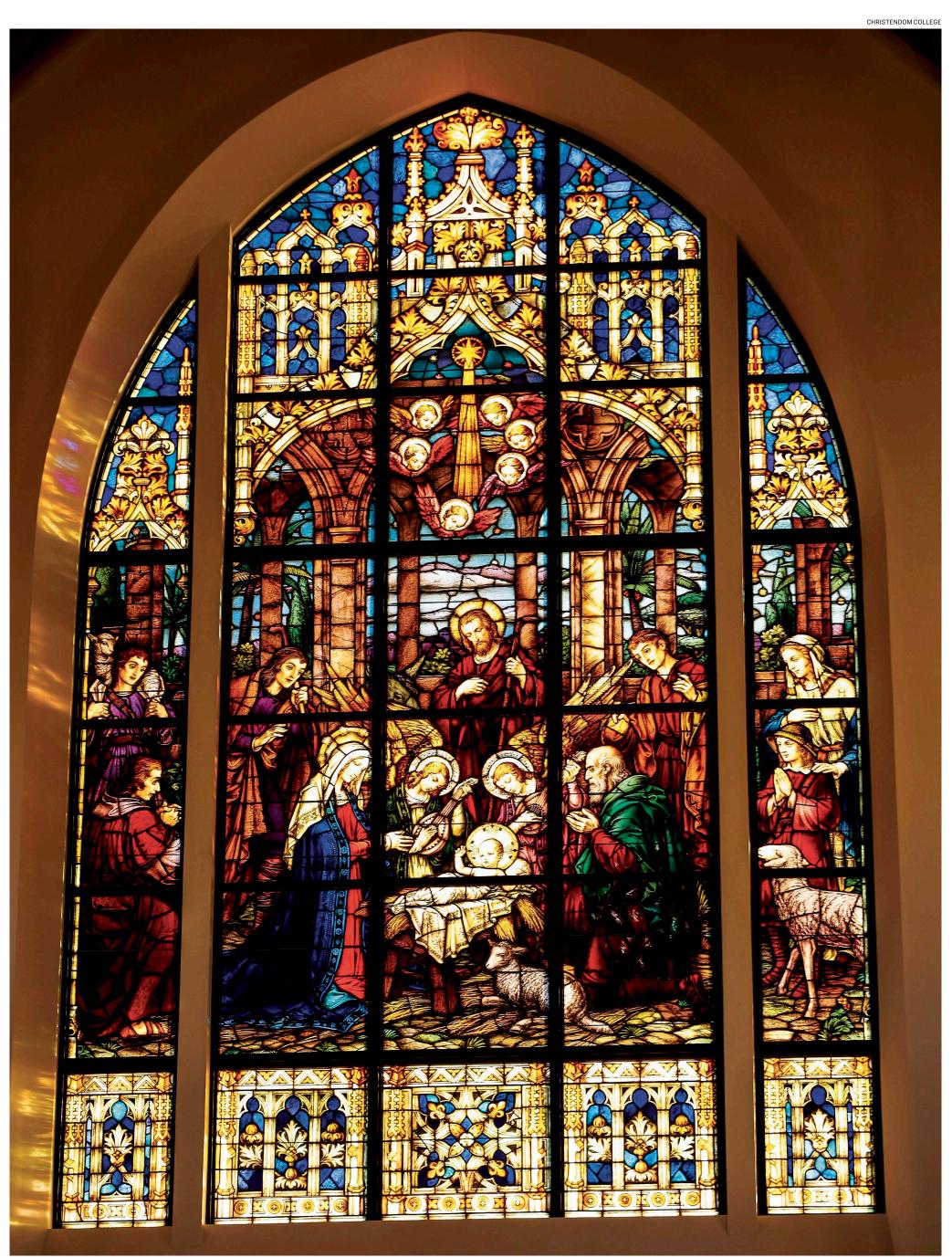
THE EPOCH TIMES

ARTS& CULTURE



The Nativity transept window in Christ the King Chapel was refurbished by Beyer Studio. The chapel will contain over 100 stained glass windows once completed, with Beyer Studio designing new windows in addition to refurbishing old ones from other churches across the country—including Christendom's own existing chapel.

ARCHITECTURE

Shenandoah Beauty: Building a Church That Points to God

The new Christ the King Chapel at Christendom College

JEFF MINICK

Several times I've gone into the field—Williamsburg and Jamestown in Virginia, and the Basilica of Saint Lawrence in Asheville, North Carolina—to write for The Epoch Times, but never did I think one of these assignments might kill me. Until now.

Continued on Page 4

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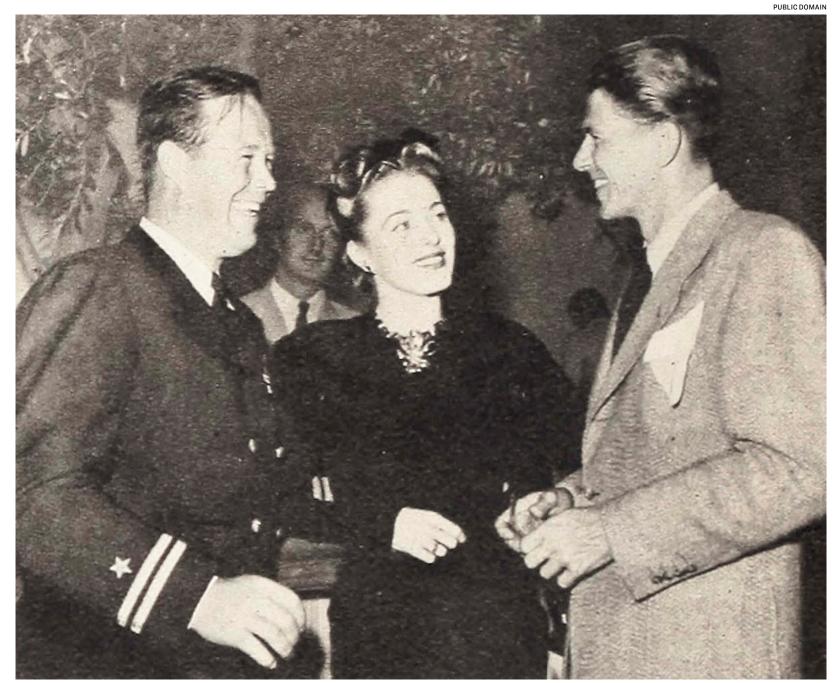


Ying and Yang by Sandra Kuck

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INSPIRED



(L-R) Wayne Morris, Eleanor Parker, and Ronald Reagan at a party on the Warner Bros. lot in 1946.

TRADITIONAL CULTURE

Finding Happiness in Winter

Revisiting 'The Voice of the Turtle'

TIFFANY BRANNAN

n January 2021, the World War II era is especially relatable: separations, shortages, fears of death, and threats to the American way of ∟ life are daily concerns, just as they were then. Thus, when the 1947 film "The Voice of the Turtle" begins with "It was December, 1944, in New York and it seemed as though the war and the winter were never going to end," we understand. However, the leading characters, played by Ronald Reagan and Eleanor Parker, rather than wallowing in despair, display admirable qualities. Refreshing in these gender-confused times, they are the distinctly masculine and feminine, and Parker is an especially endearing example of the latter.

The movie focuses on Sally Middleton (Parker), a struggling young actress in New York City who has "only been in flops." Her most recent flop was her romance with Broadway producer Kenneth Bartlett (Kent Smith), which ended after they realized that he was interested only in a casual courtship while she wanted a serious relationship, including marriage.

By spring, Sally is upholding her vow to keep further romances light by not falling in love again. In contrast, her friend Olive Lashbrooke (Eve Arden), another actress, flits from man to man for her own convenience and pleasure without caring about anyone except

Olive plans to entertain a soldier friend during his weekend leave but learns at the last minute that her sailor beau (Wayne Morris) has a leave on the same weekend. When the soldier, Sergeant Bill Page (Reagan), goes to Sally's apartment to pick her up, Olive lies to break their date. Bill then has no dinner

After everyone Bill calls proves busy, he asks Sally to dinner. She hesitantly accepts, and they go to the French res-

sidered "their place." Bill and Sally bond over the shared experience of having had their hearts broken in past romances. After dinner, Bill is exhausted, and it is pouring rain outside. Concerned about the hotel room shortage in New York, Sally invites him to sleep on her couch. Bill, appreciating her generos-

The next morning, Sally reads for a major role in a play. Afterward, she meets Bill at the market, where he is buying items to restock her kitchen. They decide to spend the whole weekend together, although Olive tries to reclaim Bill for at least one meal.

Bill and Sally feel the beginnings of love when they prepare breakfast together, but she is afraid to commit herself again. Similarly, Bill doesn't want to be unhappy in love, as he was with a girl in Paris seven years earlier. Both must overcome their fears and learn to trust each other as "the voice of the turtle is heard in our land."

Feminine Sally

Some classically feminine characteristics are gentleness, compassion, sensitivity, and the desire to nurture, all of which Sally Middleton displays. She is so sweet and sensitive that she cringes when she sees eggs being broken. She's even concerned about leaving a coffee pot on the stove while she's out of the apartment, saying that "it's like leaving a child." Bill thinks she's a little silly, but her uncomplicated nature charms him.

Sally is an aspiring actress who left her hometown to go to New York. However, she is genuinely happy for the first time in the film when Bill is her houseguest. She meticulously prepares her apartment, making the daybed, emptying ashtrays, filling a pitcher of water, and rearranging magazines until everything looks perfect.

During the weekend, she gets her big break, a near-starring Broadway role. She reminds Bill that "Londonderry taurant next door that she and Ken con- Air," which they heard on the radio the

Some classically feminine characteristics are gentleness, compassion, sensitivity, and the desire to nurture, all of which Sally Middleton displays.

night before, is her lucky song. He agrees that the weather and her luck seem to be changing. However, her newly hopeful outlook on life is not because of her career advancement but because she is finally able to care for someone.

In contrast to Olive, Sally would never use a man or enter a casual, frivolous relationship. She tells Olive that she thinks it's wrong for a woman to let a man kiss her unless they're thinking about marriage, since she would be cheapening herself. Because of her high moral principles, she is extremely dismayed to think that someone might infer something wrong about Bill's spend-

Since Sally is such a feminine, wholesome young lady, good things happen to her. Bill instinctively treats her with respect, while he quickly realizes Olive's true nature.

Familiar Faces, New Appreciation

Everyone will recognize Ronald Reagan as the future 40th president of the United States. However, it is easy to forget that, before he was one of our most beloved presidents, Mr. Reagan was a successful Hollywood actor who appeared in 57 movies from 1937 to 1964. He is best remembered for his role in the dramatic "Kings Row" (1942), which made him a star before he was called to active duty in World War II.

When his career waned in the 1950s, he turned to television, becoming the host of "General Electric Theater" (1953-1962). While in Hollywood, he served as the president of the Screen Actors Guild from 1947 to 1952 and again in 1959–1960. He eventually retired from acting in 1965 to enter politics.

Just as Ronald Reagan is primarily remembered for his later political role, Eleanor Parker is best remembered for her later acting role of Baroness Elsa von Schraeder in "The Sound of Music" (1965). Although this regal villainess is her most iconic part, she had a highly successful career before that. She made her film debut in 1942 and had a contract with Warner Bros. for several years

before moving to Paramount Pictures. She was nominated for Best Actress at the Academy Awards for her roles in "Caged" (1950), "Detective Story" (1951), and "Interrupted Melody" (1955). For her

dramatic performance in "Caged" as a woman hardened by 15 months in prison, Ms. Parker also won the Volpi Cup for Best Actress at the Venice Film Festival. She appeared in about 80 films and television series before retiring in 1991.

If you want to see the early work of these two well-known figures, "The Voice of the Turtle" is a great starting point. As Bill Page, Reagan is honorable, considerate, and genuine. He himself had recently been a serviceman, having acquired the rank of captain in the Army Air Forces, so he is comparable to his serviceman character. As Sally Middleton, Parker is sweet, innocent, gentle, and caring, wanting only to give of herself to bring happiness and comfort to others. With her adorable, girlish hairstyle and flatteringly delicate clothes, she is the epitome of a feminine 1940s woman.

The Turtle and Spring

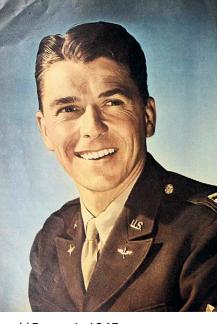
On their second day together, Bill tells Sally: "The weather has changed. 'The rain's over and the winter has passed. And the voice of the turtle is heard in our land." He is paraphrasing the Bible and tells her that the titular turtle is not a reptile but a turtledove, which not only explains the voice but also serves as a symbol for love and faithfulness, hinting that the couple will bond for life.

Right now, we can relate to the feelings of characters in "The Voice of the Turtle." In early 1945, it seemed like the war would never end, so it was easy to lose hope and forget how to be happy. During their first dinner together, Bill tells Sally that he was very happy while in love in Paris. "And you're not now?" Sally asks. Bill responds, "Is anyone?" Sally looks wistfully at a young couple at a nearby table, who are obviously happy. Like Bill and Sally, let's cherish love, friendship, and kindness to find happiness until spring comes!

Tiffany Brannan is a 19-year-old opera singer, Hollywood historian, travel writer, film blogger, vintage fashion expert, and ballet writer. In 2016, she and her sister founded the Pure Entertainment Preservation Society, an organization dedicated to reforming the arts by reinstating the Motion Picture Production Code.

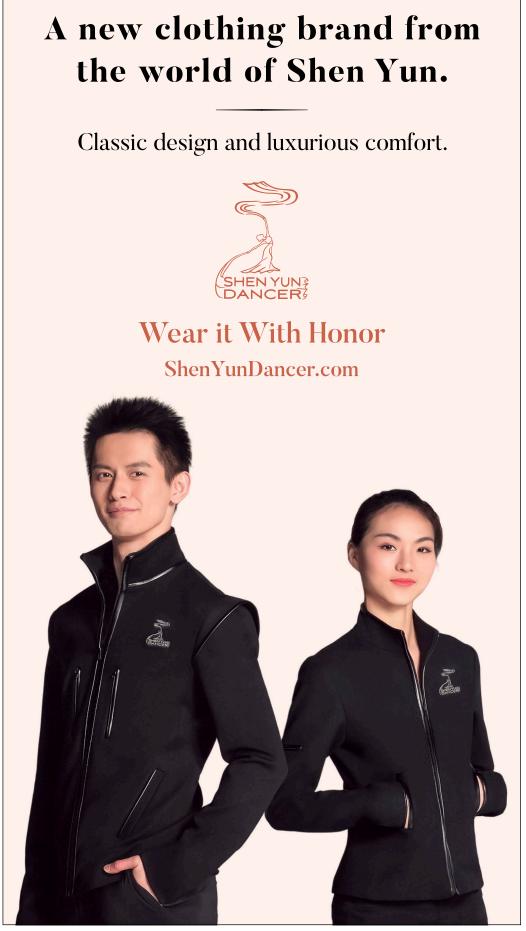


A1948 studio portrait of Eleanor Parker.



Ronald Reagan in 1945.





The exterior of the chapel is nearing completion, with the approximately 100-foot steeples set to be installed this spring.



adorning the ceiling o the crossing tower, which will be located directly above the high altar was designed by alumna Mandy Hain and her team

The artwork





Alumnus Michael Schmitt carved the inscription, which translates as "This is the house of God and the gate of Heaven," on Indiana limestone above the front door of the church.

ARCHITECTURE

Shenandoah Beauty: Building a Church That Points to God

Continued from Page 1

It was mid-December 2020, and Pat Haggerty, a man in his 40s who is the project manager for the new Christ the King Royal, Virginia, had decked me out in a construction helmet, bright yellow vest, safety glasses, and for some reason, gloves, to enter the chapel's construction site. We reached the "crossing" at the other end of the needs of the student population. the church. I craned my head up to view walkway beneath it. "Can people walk up there?" I asked.

"Yeah. Would you like to go up?" "Sure!" I said.

I thinking?

Up we went on a narrow, enclosed spiral staircase, up and up, climbing and climbing. At some point, I was nearly down on all fours, clutching the handrail and pawing my tour, workers had completed most of the my way up stair after endless stair. By the time we reached the top, that climb had sucked the wind from my lungs and made ing. The target date for opening the doors to a bass drum of my heart. "I hope you know students and faculty is April of 2022. CPR," this 69-year-old man wheezed.

Pat just laughed, thinking I was cracking **Some Numbers** me a little short of breath sometimes too." tour number 101," he told me—his knowl-

walkway—heights and I have never gotten along—I caught my breath, felt the banging in my chest subside, and reveled in the magnificence being created all around me.

Christendom College is a small Catholic liberal arts school—it now enrolls about 500 students—and has long needed a new chapel. The old one, which stands at the had completed part of the tour when we heart of the campus, is too small to meet

About 10 years ago, the school's president, the high dome above and saw a narrow Dr. Timothy O'Donnell, and some others began making plans to build a new chapel to accommodate the growing number of students. Originally, these planners considered tearing down the old church and What in the name of cardiac arrest was erecting a new structure on that site, but complications with that plan led to this new location, which Pat explained was the highest point on campus.

> The site work for the church began in the spring of 2019, and construction commenced in September 2019. By the time of exterior construction, with the exception of certain towers, parking lots, and landscap-

a joke. "It's nine stories," he said. "It leaves — As Pat led me on this excursion—"You're As I stood there, well away from the edge and his recitation of certain statis-

Some of the bells, many of the stained glass windows, and pews from the 1850s were 'rescued' from other

churches.

Jeff Minick has four children and a growing platoon of grandchildren. For 20 years, he taught history, literature, and Latin to seminars of homeschooling students in Asheville, N.C. He is the author of two novels, "Amanda Bell" and "Dust On Their Wings," and two works of non-fiction, "Learning As I Go" and "Movies Make The Man." Today, he lives and writes in Front Royal, Va. See JeffMinick.com to follow his blog.

tics blew me away. The roof, for example, will contain 42,000 pieces of slate. The organ will have 2,800 pipes. The towers will contain 12 bells—the largest weighs 1,400 pounds—which the college chaplain, Father Marcus Pollard, has already blessed in a special ceremony. Stained glass windows, 115 of them, will grace the walls of this gem, containing 8,000 pieces of handblown French and German glass.

The new chapel will hold 840 people and will seat 540 in the pews, whereas the maxmum capacity of the older church is 380.

Treasures From the Past

As we made our way through this church under construction, Pat again and again pointed out how many pieces of art and furniture came from shuttered churches up and down the Eastern Seaboard. Some of the bells, many of the stained glass windows, and pews from the 1850s were "rescued" from other churches.

"How do you find these things?" I asked

"Oh, there are brokers now who deal with closed churches," he said, which is sad news for churches but of benefit to places like Christendom.

The new building will also hold some local objects as well. Black walnut from trees on the campus will be used on part of the floor, and the heap of large stones dug up during the early site work—the church has no crypt, or basement, because it sits on stone—will be used in exterior decoration.

Making It Personal

Three college alumni are also mixing their artistic talents into the building. According to "Alumni Artisans Contribute to New Christ the King Chapel," an article in Instaurare (the Latin name of the college's magazine means to build, to renew, and to restore), Michael Schmitt, Mandy Hain, and Corey Morgan wanted "to contribute to the chapel through their artistic talents, giving back to their alma mater in a significant way while also assisting in an ecclesiastic project





The interior of

Christ the King

Chapel under

construction.

The lavender

drywall (front

installed two layers thick

throughout the chapel, with three layers in the choir loft.

framing of

phase of construction. gives a sense of just how tall the

structure is.

the building, in an earlier

right) was

that would impact lives for the better." Following the traditional practices of the Middle Ages, Schmitt put aside a stone blaster and used a mallet and a chisel to hand no bishop sits here. carve "HAEC EST DOMUS DEI ET PORTA COELI," meaning "THIS IS THE HOUSE OF GOD AND THE GATE OF HEAVEN," across the 24-foot-long panel over the entrance to the church. "The panel should help create

says Schmitt. "It's a signpost, so to speak—it points to God." Morgan, an experienced artisan in woodside chapels, confessionals, and the altar in Our Lady's Chapel behind the main high altar. In the article, Morgan speaks of how meaningful it is to give glory to God through the work of his hands, adding: "It is also in-

a special and sacred aura at the chapel,"

credibly special to be able to give something lasting back to the college, literally one of the fruits that I gained while in attendance there, namely my love of faith, and the inspiration to pursue the very life of craft I am

Mandy Hain has also worked in beautifying churches. In this case, she has added the gold gilt to the inscription carved by Schmitt and is creating artwork for the ceiling of the chapel, including the part I viewed after my death march toward the heavens. (When Pat informed me that Hain had painted this cupola another couple of stories above us, my one thought was: "Better you than me, kiddo.")

Other Christendom College graduates have also given time and talent to this

'Art Is the Grandchild of God'

Those words above, from Dante, kick off the Instaurare article.

During our tour, Pat remarked that the creation of such a building in this day and age is amazing for a college this size. After seeing the efforts made to bring beauty to a building and to give glory to God through architecture, I agreed with him, at Chapel.Christendom.edu

though the use of "chapel" to describe this church seemed understated. "Cathedral" might better describe this edifice, though

I've left out a dozen more details from my tour, but here is a final example of the care and thought put into this creation. When Pat took me to the choir loft, which is above the entranceway, I asked him whether they'd experienced any problems with acoustics. He explained that a single layer of drywall in such buildings can do harm to the qualworking who has contributed to several had therefore installed in the choir loft three other area churches, is working on arches, layers of drywall glued together and two layers throughout the rest of the church. They then brought in some members of the Christendom College choir, had them sing, and found that this tactic worked.

Near the end of my tour, Pat Haggerty remarked, "We're really pleased with the team we've put together—the architects, the artists and engineers, and all the others."

Beauty's Role

"Beauty will save the world," so wrote Dostoevsky. Is that true? Can beauty really redeem our fallen humanity?

Of that I am uncertain, but I do know that Haggerty's team is teaching the rest of us a lesson. Their efforts and care in this construction of Christ the King Chapel clearly demonstrate that we are still capable of constructing beautiful buildings, that we can merge the treasures of the past with the talents of the present, and that as Mandy Hain says: "Beauty is not an accessory. It is a necessity that has transformative, healing, and encouraging power. It brings us to its source and makes us better without effort on our part."

Agreed. Except when climbing those nine stories of stairs. Now that took some effort.

You can find pictures, descriptions, and tours of Christ the King Chapel on the Christendom College website,

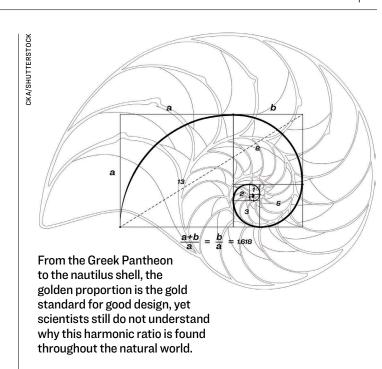


1. Pat Haggerty, the project manager for Christ the King Chapel.

2. Alumna Mandy Hain designed the artwork for the ceiling of the chapel's crossing tower, in addition to providing the gold-leaf lettering for the Latin nscription above the front doors.

3. Alumnus Corey Morgan is primarily focusing on the more decorative wood elements of the chapel.

4. Alumnus Michael Schmitt, who hand carved the stone lettering for



The Divine Proportion: An Indecipherable Code

LEONARDO VINTINI

The newspaper you're reading, the screen of your computer, your credit card, the petals of that flower, the leaves of that tree, the building across the street-everything is governed by a principle, a proportion, a harmonic value. The universe seems to whisper a code to us in each corner of nature, a unique and harmonically aesthetic code.

Behind the apparent chaos that reigns in the universe, in which each event and measurement logically follows an uncertain destiny, there nevertheless exists a hidden order. From the time of Pythagoras, the key to this order-which has intrigued so many mathematicians and scholars of various branches of knowledge-has never been fully understood.

A contemporary experiment involving several individuals of different ethnic backgrounds demonstrated that among a sample of several rectangular figures, nearly every person agreed on which one was most harmonic. This harmonic figure is formed when the ratio of the greater side over the smaller side equals 1.618-the number known mathematically as "gold" or "golden." This rectangular proportion is found in thousands of architectural examples around the world, as well as in matchboxes, business cards, books, and hundreds of other daily objects, merely because humans find it pleasing. The Great Pyramid of Giza and the pyramid of Cheops, the seat of the United Nations in New York, and the Cathedral of Notre Dame all embody this golden proportion. In fact, the Greek Pantheon seems to be an ode to this proportion.

For centuries, the absolute expression of artistic beauty and human wisdom (with the exception of some contemporary trends) has never strayed far from this golden mean. Several artists of the Renaissance incorporated the golden mean in their works, not least of whom was Leonardo da Vinci, who used this proportion in well-known pieces such as "The Last Supper" and "The Vitruvian Man."

Music is not free of this enigmatic code, either. Mexican composer Silvestre Revueltas used this proportion to organize parts of the composition known as "Alcancías." Composers Béla Bartók and Olivier Messiaen observed the Fibonacci sequence (which contains the golden proportion) in some of their works to determine the length of time notes should be sustained.

As architecture, visual art, music, and other inventions are uniquely human endeavors, some might conclude that the golden proportion suggests an arbitrary, collective opinion among the human race. Yet this still does not explain the endless number of organic and inorganic entities found in nature that endlessly repeat this special proportion.

From the rectangle to the golden spiral (that which arises from the union of points of many nested golden rectangles), examples can be found everywhere: in the horn of a sheep, mineral crystals, an eddy, a tornado, fingerprints, the petals of a rose, the concentric patterns of a cauliflower or sunflower, birds, insects, fish, the Milky Way, other galaxies like our M51 neighbor ... or a snail. A perfect and beautiful snail like the nautilus is practically a paragon of the golden proportion. Many trees also reveal the golden relation in the thickness of their branches, between the lower to the higher.

The esthetic of the human body also hides phi (the golden number). The quotient of head-to-feet length over navelto-feet length reveals a perfect and harmonic 1.618 in our bodies. We can find an equal result in the ratio of the length of the whole head, over the length from the eyes to the chin; or the ratio of nose-to-chin length over lips-to-chin length. The more the face approaches these proportions, the more harmonic it will appear. Despite suggestion to the contrary, it would appear that our tastes are somehow predetermined.

The number phi, like its cousin pi (the ratio between the circumference and diameter of a circle), is of extraordinary complexity. In modern times it has been calculated to more than a trillion decimal places, yet it continues to go on still further.

The hidden cause existing behind this code, which seems to govern harmony and beauty, is something that has enchanted scientists for centuries. It continues to be an enigma even today.

How is it that a fixed spiral can be the common factor in thousands of biological organisms, supposedly having evolved in an entirely unpredictable and indeterminate way? Could it be related in some way to DNA, where within a full cycle of the double helix spiral, the two sections contain a relation among themselves of nothing less than phi?

Since this appears to be a common code throughout all life forms-the harmonic note at which the universe is vibratingit is no accident that this divine proportion seems harmonic to us, since we ourselves originate from the universe.

ALL PHOTOS COURTESY OF UNIVERSAL PICTURE

Finding Truth, Finding Compassion, Finding Courage

The documentary 'Finding Courage' shows one Chinese family's story of persecution at the hands of the Chinese Communist Party

MARK LENTINE

magine being jailed, persecuted, and tortured for more than a decade. Imagine having your tortured sister's lifeless body being withheld from you for almost 20 years, by the very people who tortured you. Imagine your school-age nephew being kidnapped to force you to sign over your sister's body to authorities. Now imagine having the grace to continue to smile, love life, and to practice the very spirituality for which you were persecuted. When you watch the beautifully shot and immaculately scored film "Finding Courage," you won't have to imagine.

The mostly somber Yellow River, the "cradle of Chinese civilization," is known to change into a raging torrent so quickly that it is also known as "China's sorrow." Likewise, Falun Gong, a spirituality once embraced by the Chinese Communist Party (CCP), was suddenly targeted, faster than the Yellow River changes its moods "Ruin their reputations.

Bankrupt them financially. Destroy them physically."

-Taken from a 1999 edict by CCP General Secretary Jiang Zemin

"My parents brought Falun Gong into our home in 1994. We all became practitioners. Then one day in 1999, the CCP began the persecution. It all changed so quickly," says Leo Wang, whose wife, Sophia, adds: "We were a happy, hardworking family, both of us mechanical engineers. We were respected and practiced our faith openly. Kefei, Leo's sister, was arrested in August 2001. And then Leo ..." her voice trails off.

"One day Leo just didn't come home." The CCP rarely, if ever, calls family members to tell them of arrests; families are often left to wonder what happened. It is the same dark spirit that allows CCP functionaries to illegally cremate prisoners without alerting the families.

"I was so scared. I didn't know what happened to my husband," Sophia says.

Twenty days later, a fellow inmate called to say that Leo was alive. The inmate told her that he had never seen anyone so badly beaten. He told Sophia to prepare herself for Leo's death.

"My world fell apart. The sky fell in on me," Sophia says.

It was a full year before Sophia and their



(Left) Leo, Yifei's brother, tries to cope with his posttraumatic stress after suffering 12 years in prison. He's built a replica of the chair he was tortured in to help tell his story. (Below) Now that she's in a free country, Yifei Wang can pass out literature about the Chinese Communist Party's persecution of Falun Gong.

Kefei Wang committed

no crime, but she ended

up in a Chinese prison.

For refusing to give up her

faith, she was tortured to

death. Kefei is one of the

hundreds of thousands of

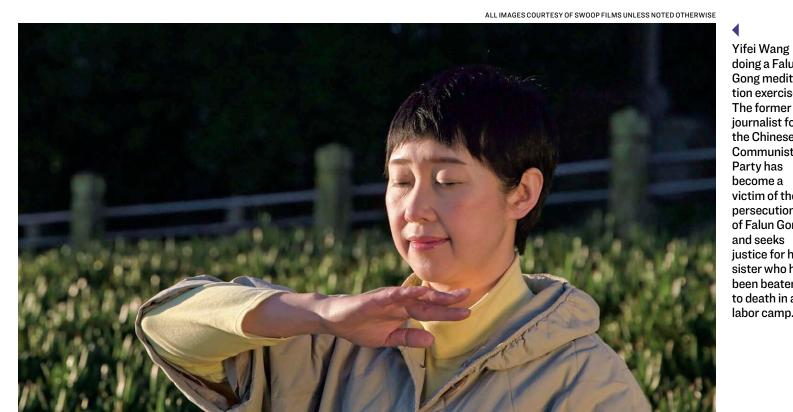
estimated victims of the

persecution, each with a

family and a story behind







young son, Martin, were allowed to see Leo. "Attorneys weren't even allowed to help,

says. "For six months, I didn't sleep. All I could think of was my father. The first When asked about CCP-controlled Chitime we saw him, he said he was OK, but na, Leo Wang says simply, "I now think of

Falun Gong practitioners who own or have access to printers, and who create Falun Gong books and materials.

other," says another of Leo's sisters, Yifei. couldn't be forced to divulge much informaterials.

The CCP arrested both sisters at the same rally. They were beaten, and their flesh was burned with an electric baton. Yifei's husband, Gordon, who is a journalist, was able to obtain his wife's release.

and tenacity paid off when he surreptitiously filmed scenes inside jails, further risking his own arrest by filming inside Longfeng Morgue. Together, Gordon and their young daughter Ava helped Yifei escape to America, while they stayed behind. Unfortunately, Gordon could do nothing to free his sister-in-law.

of her sister's partially frozen, semi-nude body. "Parts of her body were black and swollen. I said, 'Kefei, Kefei, don't scare me like this. You can't be dead!""

"I was scared, but I never gave up my practice," says youngest sister Tifei, adding: "The world must know what happened to our sister. This cannot happen to people. I remember that after they began the persecution, we kept the lights to a minimum. People who once were friends now kept their distance because they knew we were



(Above) A still shot from secret footage taken inside a Chinese labor camp. (Right) The "Finding Courage" family (L-R): (seated) Leo Wang, Yifei Wang; (standing) Sophia, Martin, and Gordon.

labor camp for two months. "Our home wasn't much better. We were or they would lose their licenses," Martin so scared all the time. Our home was a kind of second jail."

China as a prison—a prison full of prisons."

Leo Wang says that of those he met in

prison, he convinced up to 200 to take up

the principles of truthfulness, compas-

sion, and tolerance. Some of them were

guards, but most were prisoners. Some

guards actually began referring to him as

Once he was released, it took Leo a year

Stephanie Li is interpreter and spokesper-

son for the family, and executive producer

of the film. She and her own sister are both

practitioners. Her sister was also arrested

by the CCP. "These kinds of things are hap-

pening time and time again," she said.

I now think of China

of prisons.

A Warning to America

Leo Wang

as a prison—a prison full

"For decades, we, the good Chinese, have

tried to warn America about the CCP," Li

said. "Few listened. We know the CCP has

infiltrated this country. We knew it decades

With news of Eric Swalwell's purported

ties to a CCP spy, New York University's

ties to Chinese communists, and the State

Department's warning that "the CCP poses

a real threat to American sovereignty," Li's

The Chinese have a saying concerning

the Yellow River, "For 30 years the river

flows east and for 30 years the river flows

west ..." For 19 years, Kefei Wang's body

has remained frozen in Longfeng Morgue

while her family waits and waits for the

tide to turn, and for someone to have the

Yifei Wang promised her sister and her

dying father that she would find the cour-

age to demand answers for her sister's

death. "Who did this to her? They must be

held accountable. We will never give up

A Chinese proverb says, "Dripping water

chisels through stone." If that is the case,

then "Finding Courage" is the first drop in

what the Wang family vows will become a

never-ending torrent in the fight to free their

sister's body from the stone wall of the CCP.

To view the film, see FindingCourageMov-

ie.com and use the code "finding courage"

Hale sing the film's theme song, "Courage Is

Found," at http://ept.ms/CourageIsFound.

for a 25 percent discount. Listen to Mika

until they free our sister's body."

compassion to return her body to them.

warning is prescient, to say the least.

ago. We know what they're capable of."

"Mr. Wang."

to relearn how to walk.

he looked so very bad." The most hunted of CCP targets are those

"Leo did his printing work, and I did mine, but we rarely discussed it with each "We thought that if we were caught, we mation." Leo maintained the copiers, while Yifei helped produce and distribute printed

As seen in the film, Gordon's courage

Four months later, Kefei Wang was dead. Authorities allowed Yifei a brief glimpse

Kefei had been beaten and tortured in an unsuccessful attempt to force her to "name names" and denounce her practice. Guards had poked her eyes with needles to deprive her of sleep. She never talked.

practitioners. I myself had been in a CCP



body, visit FreeSistersBody.com A native of South Philadelphia, Mark Lentine has written for and helmed pub-

lications on both coasts. He now resides

in Hemet, Calif.

To join in the fight to free Kefei Wang's





'The Croods: A New Age': Sequel-itis Sets In

MARK JACKSON

The original "The Croods" (2013), about a family of Neanderthal cave dwellers, created such an exotic world and fetching, original atmosphere that when its (voice) cast rode their menagerie of prehistoric pets down the beach and into the sunset, you wanted to go with them so the movie would not end. Those are the best kinds of kids' movies. Actually, the best any kind of movies. One had hoped "The Croods: A New Age" would be more of the same.

By "same," I was subconsciously hoping for new magic. The new "Croods" is more of exactly the same as the old "Croods" in the usual, "sequel-itis" way. Oh, it's passable. It'll hold your attention. You'll laugh. But the elusive magic of the original has dissipated. And that's a shame. Understandable, though; it's hard to make two magical movies in a row.

Neanderthal Meets Cro-Magnon, Again The original film bid adieu to the Croods as they "followed the light" in their search for "tomorrow." Which was basically about foraging and survival in the time of a chaotic planet Earth tectonic-plate shift, but the concept had more of a "Fellowship of the Ring" type of transcendent

So we meet them again as they eschew their erstwhile cave dependency for a more nomadic existence. And same as before, the story is largely about the rambunctious daughter Eep (Emma Stone), her Cro-Magnon boyfriend Guy (Ryan Reynolds), and Eep's constantly fretting, annoying, overprotective dad Grug (Nicolas Cage, again bringing great essence of Cage-ness to this character).

Guy's now treated as a family member, taking part in the nighttime sleep piles and daytime kill circles. But one night, in the middle of a sleep pile (which are like human hay-bale forts you can slither into and crawl around in) Grug, pretending to be asleep, overhears a marriage proposal of sorts, which includes the concepts of privacy and separating from the pack. Horrifying for Grug!



The Croods: A New Age'

Director Joel Crawford

Starring Nicolas Cage, Emma Stone, Ryan Reynolds, Catherine Keener, Cloris Leachman, Clark Duke, Leslie Mann, Peter Dinklage

Rated

Release Date Nov. 25, 2020

(L-R) Sandy (voiced by Kailey Crawford), Ugga (Catherine Keener), Eep (Emma Stone), Grug (Nicholas Cage), Gran

(Cloris Leachman), Thunk (Clark Duke), and Douglas the croc-dog, looking at the Bettermans' treehouse, in "The Croods: A New Age."

More Bettermans

The Bettermans are annoying. Dad Phil (a smarmy Peter Dinklage) and mom Hope (a passive-aggressively scheming and disdainful Leslie Mann) plot to steal Guy for their daughter Dawn (Kelly Marie Tran).

There's no catty competition between Eep and Dawn regarding Guy, which seems delightful, but which is in line with the current thinking that now women no longer need men. Which falls into the category of things that are as true as they are meaningless. But I'll avoid the temptation of that

Eep and Dawn are just overjoyed to finally find each other and be rebellious teen





Stone, L) and Dawn Betterman (Kelly Marie Tran) strike up a besties friendship, in "The Croods: A New Age." (Middle) Gran Crood (voiced by Cloris Leachman) having a prehistoric spa day, in "The Croods: A New Age." (Bottom) Thunk Crood (voiced by Clark Duke) playing "fetch" with his crocdog, Douglas, in "The Croods: A New Age.'

(voiced by Emma

Grug ramps up his protective vigilance. girl friends together. Soon the daughters Meanwhile, the Croods find a prehistoric are sneaking out in dad's Camaro, er, on gated community. They don't know what dad's giant green saber-toothed tiger—to that is yet, but they know it's got pumpkins climb the walls, jump over stuff, have a few the size of houses, and multicolored foods grow strangely in rows. Welp! If anything is the great tomorrow, this is it!

Turns out, this is the estate of the Bettermans, a family that puts the New Age-yness in "The Croods: The New Age." They're a mom-dad-daughter family of proto flipflop-wearing, man-bun-sporting, Deepak Chopra-spouting (that is, if Deepak Chopra had existed in the Pleistocene age), yoga-pants-wearing, and exotic-beanlatte-sipping type of nouveaux-riches Cro-Magnonites.

Did I mention resource-plundering? Oh yes. They've stolen water from another community à la "Chinatown" to irrigate their crops. They live in a tricked-out tree with toilets, windows, elevators, showers, and

And surprise, surprise—they're from the same tribe that Guy came from, before his parents died, and he wandered off and got lost, and so they have the same tendency to "flintstone." That's a verb. Flintstoning, by my definition, is when you take toolmaking to the next level like Fred Flintstone did, and operate a brontosaurus-backhoe at work, then drive your stone Cadillac home using your feet as a motor.

Naturally, Grug's family thinks this is all super-awesome, while Grug himself is suspicious and hates change. Like the last movie. wrecks, and get Dawn her first scar. (Eep's

got a lotta cool scars; Dawn wants one.) As mentioned, the Bettermans are colonizers with a cushy existence, but there's a price to pay. Phil Betterman essentially did a form of selling his soul to the devil, and eventually the Croods and the Bettermans all join forces to vanquish the evil, resulting in one of those rollercoaster-ride, everything-and-the-kitchen-sink grand finales that most such movies nowadays seem to have to have. As if kids need this much hectic excitement.

By simply rehashing everything, the film's magic got lost.

And There You Have It

Everybody's the same: Ugga is nurturing, Grug is protective, Eep is adventurous and smitten, Guy is smitten; feral baby sister Sandy snarls and behaves like a guard dog; and Deadhead-type brother Thunk finds his true calling, which is being addicted to watching TV. TV? It's a Betterman window; Thunk looks out the window. A lot. When Grug wants him stop watching window, Thunk doesn't want to because "the birds

Gran Crood (Cloris Leachman) kicks off a female-empowerment thread, because eventually the pathetic men need help. Which is very much in keeping with the New Age-y vibe.

There are new fauna. You've got your wolfspiders (wolves with eight eyes and legs), rooster sea lions, punch monkeys, etc. But it's all still more of the same.

The wonder inherent in the original had to do with finding the courage to leave the cave and adapt. By simply rehashing everything, the magic got lost. It's still a fun theme-park ride. Chances are, your kids will watch the first "Croods" repeatedly. The second installment, maybe once



"Courage, Anxiety, and Despair: Watching the Battle," circa 1850, by James Sant. Oil on canvas; 48 inches by 60 inches.

REACHING WITHIN: WHAT TRADITIONAL ART OFFERS THE HEART

Courage for Salvation, Love, and Beauty: 'Courage, Anxiety, and Despair: Watching the Battle'

ERIC BESS

The traditional arts often contain spiritual representations and symbols, the meanings of which can be lost to our modern minds. In our series "Reaching Within: What Traditional Art Offers the Heart," we interpret visual arts in ways that may be morally insightful for us today. We do not assume to provide absolute answers to questions that generations have wrestled with, but we hope that our questions will inspire a reflective journey toward becoming more authentic, compassionate, and courageous human beings.

A repeated theme throughout art history is the Three Graces. The Three Graces were goddesses from Greek mythology. Initially, they were goddesses of nature, but later, they attended Aphrodite, the goddess of love and beauty. They were usually three in number and represented charm, beauty, and human creativity.

The Three Graces dealt with matters of love and beauty, but what about other human experiences such as courage and fear? Are there three representations that deal with those matters? James Sant's painting "Courage, Anxiety, and Despair: Watching the Battle," seems to do exactly that.

James Sant

British painter James Sant worked during the late 19th and early 20th centuries. He was known mostly for painting portraits but also created genre paintings. By the age of 20, he was accepted as a student at the Royal Academy.

Around the age of 50, Sant was appointed the official portraitist for Queen Victoria and the royal family as an elected artist of the Royal Academy. He would remain a member of the Royal Academy until he was 94 years old, producing around 250 canvases over his lifetime for exhibition at the academy. He died two years after leaving the academy at the age of 96.

'Courage, Anxiety, and Despair: Watching the Battle'

In his painting "Courage, Anxiety and Despair: Watching the Battle," Sant depicts three women hiding behind a large rock.

The woman to the far left is Courage. She leans forward with urgency and intensely watches the battle, which we cannot see. She holds a knife in her right hand, the weapon with which she plans to defend herself.

Around her neck, she wears a necklace made of scallop shells. In Greek mythology, scallop shells were associated with Aphrodite; the goddess was born of the sea and carried forth on a scallop shell. In Christianity, the scallop shell is often associated with salvation, as it was used for baptismal waters.

With her left arm, Courage keeps the woman at the far right, Despair, at a distance. Despair sits sadly with her eyes closed. Her posture suggests withdrawal from the intensity of the battle that the other two women watch.

Between Courage and Despair is Anxiety in the shadows. Anxiety's hand grasps at the pit of her neck as if she is attempting to stop her worry from escaping her slightly parted lips. She peeks from behind the rock and watches the battle with a look of concern.

We, as viewers, cannot see the battle. We do not know exactly what concerns these three women.

With her left arm, Courage keeps the woman at the far right, Despair, at a distance.

Salvation, Love, and BeautySo, what might these bodily representations of courage, anxiety, and despair mean for us? What wisdom might we

gather from this image for today?
First, I think it's significant that we cannot see the battle. It might be that the battle—in and of itself—does not matter; what matters is our response to it.

It's almost as if Sant intentionally left a depiction of the battle out of the

painting so that we, as viewers, could each consider those things that require courage or cause anxiety and despair in us personally. For me, the battle suggested by the painting is an internal battle, and every battle brings with it the question of freedom. The winner will dominate and rule.

Of course, battles are not always fought against human foes. At times, we can become enslaved to other things such as money, drugs, and sex, and then we must fight a battle against an addiction to overcome and free ourselves from it. We can even be addicted to ideas and feelings. We may, ironically, try to make these ideas absolute for everyone, based on feelings we wish to continue experiencing.

Yet pain is the potential result from our addictions. Thus, an internal battle can be waged for freedom, that is, freedom from the painful addictions that possess our hearts and minds. The sources of these addictions often remain hidden deep within us, like the battle Sant has hidden from our view.

Anxiety and despair are manifestations that obscure our addictions and cause us to succumb to them. Despair would rather close its eyes to the struggle of battling addictions; and anxiety, fearfully refusing to fight for freedom from them, is fine remaining enslaved to them.

In the painting, Despair appears uninterested in freedom and accepts defeat.

The battle is too overwhelming for her to bear, and she closes her eyes and slumps in resignation. Anxiety sits in the shadows because she is afraid. She's afraid of what the battle might mean for her. She is the personification of fear.

If either of these two were to take the lead, freedom would be lost because the battle would not take place. Despair wallows in the pain of her potential enslavement, and Anxiety is too afraid to battle for her freedom.

Courage, however, leans toward the danger. She is not afraid of battle. She is more concerned with her freedom. She is not brash but appears concerned and calculating. Her freedom requires an honest and patient assessment of the situation.

What constitutes the freedom for which Courage is willing to fight? Her necklace: Salvation, Love, and Beauty.

Is her necklace symbolic of the love and beauty of Aphrodite, which would mean it's also symbolic of Aphrodite's attendants, the Three Graces—that is, charm, beauty, and human creativity? Is her necklace symbolic of the salvation that comes with living a moral life in respect to the divine commandment to love?

To me, putting all of this together results in the following: Courage wears a necklace over her heart that is symbolic of the salvation found in charm, beauty, and creativity when they're associated with the divine commandment to love. For these, she is willing to fight.

Are we willing to summon the courage to keep despair away, to let our fear stay in the shadows, and to take on the inner battles that our circumstances reveal in us? Do we have the courage to fight for salvation, love, and beauty not only as cultural staples but in our hearts and minds as well?

Eric Bess is a practicing representational artist and a doctoral candidate at the Institute for Doctoral Studies in the Visual Arts (IDSVA).

TRUTH TELLERS

Franz Schubert Bequeathed Us Hints of a Finer World

RAYMOND BEEGLE

Little Schubert! He was not quite five feet tall, he was portly, he was plain, and lived only 31 years. The few letters he left behind reveal a gentle, ardent soul, incapable of resentment, and incapable of artifice. He was music's messenger of infinite beauty and goodwill, producing within 18 years a multitude of symphonies, sonatas, chamber works, and songs in unrivaled abundance. His friends called him "Schwammerl" ("Little Mushroom") and said that he slept with his glasses on so that he could begin to compose the moment he awoke.

Schubert (1797–1828) was not as celebrated in his time as Beethoven, who lived only blocks away, but he had a distinguished circle of friends that included the notable musicians, poets, and painters of Vienna.

This coterie went about its own affairs seemingly oblivious to the tumultuous historical events taking place around them. The city's occupation by Napoleon's troops, the subsequent Congress of Vienna, and the repressive government of Metternich seemed of little interest or consequence to them, as they were otherwise occupied with their pictures and poetry and music. It makes one question the importance of important events. Few people know much about the Napoleonic Wars, the Congress of Vienna, or Klemens von Metternich, but most everybody knows Schubert's "Ave Maria"!

We have only a few facts about the composer's life, but his 700 and some songs to texts by the great and the humble tell us more clearly than any biography what was housed in his heart. The pure, the bright, the beautiful certainly took up residence there, as well as kindness, and a longing for higher things. "O, Mozart! How many hints of a finer, better world have you left in our souls!" he wrote in his diary.

Schubert's Themes

Four subjects are prominent in Schubert's "lieder," subjects that seem to have constantly occupied his thoughts: the fate of man, the ways of the human heart, the power of beauty, and finally, the soul's relation to God. One sees, however, God's presence in them all.

From the age of 19 to 24, Schubert was preoccupied by man's fate, as evidenced by his working and reworking the setting of Goethe's great poem "Song of the Spirits Over the Waters." Schubert believed that his soul came from heaven and would return there, that his fate on earth was as unknowable, as changeable as the wind. "Soul of man, how like the waters, from heaven it comes, to heaven it returns," Goethe writes. "Destiny of man, how like the wind!"

The few letters he left behind reveal a gentle, ardent soul, incapable of resentment, and incapable of artifice.

While still a teenager, Schubert wrote about love, its attendant passions, and how easily it brings us to the heights and the depths. In "Gretchen at the Spinning Wheel," from Goethe's "Faust," Gretchen, who has been deserted by the gallant young Faust, sings: "I have lost my peace and will never find it again. How my heart longs for him! If only I could hold him, and kiss him as I desire!" One wonders at Schubert's understanding of the poet's words, and wonders as well who this passionate adolescent was thinking of.

The majority of Schubert's songs, often set to the words of minor poets, honor that mysterious, undefinable phenomenon we call beauty. Beautiful in themselves, they praise the beauty of nature as well as the productions of man's own hand that we call art. "Beloved art, in so many dark times you have warmed my heart and drawn me up to a better world!" sings the poet in



"Franz Schubert," 1875, by Wilhelm August Rieder (1796–1880). Oil painting after watercolor, 1825, Historical Museum of the City of Vienna.



Tenor Peter Gijsbertsen's recent recording "Nacht und Träume."

his verse "To Music."

The contemplation of nature leads to the contemplation of its Creator. "The Almighty," perhaps Schubert's greatest song, is a marvelous portrait of Schubert's soul, its breadth and depth. It is a song of wonder, spontaneous faith, and boundless love for his Maker: "Great is Jehovah the Lord! The heavens and the earth proclaim his might! You hear it in the thunder, see it in the starry heavens, feel it in the beating of your heart!"

The song "The Infinite One" addresses God directly. "How uplifted is my heart when it thinks of you, o Infinite one! Winds rushing through the forest, the thunder resounding in the heavens—it is God that you praise!"

Great Interpreters of Schubert

Schubert's remarkable sincerity—that is, his truthfulness—demands just that very virtue from the singer. If truthfulness is not there, the singing is counterfeit: beautiful perhaps, true in every detail to the written page perhaps, but as lifeless as one of Madame Tussauds' wax effigies. The great American novelist Willa Cather wrote that "art is the refining of truthfulness. Only the stupid believe that to be truthful is easy; only the great artist knows how difficult it is."

You cannot sing about nature unless you have a personal relationship with it. You cannot sing about the human heart unless you have suffered deeply, and have, as well, been overcome with joy. You cannot sing about God unless you have searched for Him and love Him.

Today, the finest exponent of Schubert's

lingsglaube" (Faith in Spring")
Munich Radio Choir "Gesang der
Geister über den Wassern" ("Song of
the Spirits Over the Waters")

Raymond Beegle has performed as a

songs is the Dutch tenor Peter Gijsbertsen, whom I know from his recent

recording "Nacht und Träume" ("Night

and Dreams"), which is a recital of Schubert songs. Gijsbertsen shares with

music's elect a visceral understanding of

the text and a unity with its sentiment.

directness in Gijsbertsen's work, of joy

in singing, and a feeling that the song

has been encountered, embraced, and

become his own. His voice is remark-

ably beautiful, and there is nobility and

candor in its timbre. It seems that what-

ever he sings is his best-loved song, and

he is experiencing its power and beauty

Gijsbertsen joins ranks with the great

artists listed below, each of them sin-

cere truth tellers, who make us alter the

words in the composer's diary quoted

above, so that it reads "Oh Schubert!

How many hints of a finer, better world

Lotte Lehmann (1888-1976) "Im

Elisabeth Rethberg (1894-1976)

Heinrich Rehkemper (1894–1949)

Hans Hotter (1909-2003) "An die

Birgit Nilsson (1918-2005) "Dem Un-

Christa Ludwig (b. 1928) "Die All-

Peter Gijsbertsen (b. 1983) "Lied eines

Schiffers an die Dioskuren" ("Song of

the Sailor to the Dioskuren," "Früh-

endlichen" ("To the Infinite One")

"Der Lindenbaum" ("The Linden Tree")

"Wiegenlied" ("Cradle Song")

Abendroth" ("In the Glow of the Eve-

have you left in our soul."

Musik" ("To Music")

macht" ("The Almighty")

for the first time.

There is a sense of spontaneity and

Raymond Beegle has performed as a collaborative pianist in the major concert halls of the United States, Europe, and South America; has written for The Opera Quarterly, Classical Voice, Fanfare Magazine, Classic Record Collector (UK), and the New York Observer. Beegle has served on the faculty of The State University of New York—Stony Brook, The Music Academy of the West, and The American Institute of Musical Studies in Graz, Austria. He has taught in the chamber music division of The Manhattan School of Music for the past 28 years.

REWIND, REVIEW, AND RE-RATE

Muddled Messages in a Sorry Script

IAN KANE

hen I first heard about the recent film "Infidel," I thought that its premise sounded interesting enough. It bills itself as an action-thriller about an American man who is kidnapped after attending a speaking engagement in Cairo, and his wife then attempts to rescue him. I also noticed that it was produced by Dinesh D'Souza, who is not only a filmmaker but also a political commentator.

As a fellow filmmaker, I understand that political persuasions are likely to seep into a cinematic effort, especially when the topic comes from the political realm. That's a given. But I found this one to simply be unpleasant and subpar as a film. One in which, sadly, Jim Caviezel's more-thancapable acting skills are wasted.

The main protagonist of the film is an internationally known Christian blogger named Doug Rawlins (Caviezel), who is invited to the University of Cairo in Egypt to attend a speaking conference, a place that Doug describes as "Islam's seat of learning."

The film is chock-full of today's cinematic stereotypes.

He further says that the focus of the conference is "not about what divides us, but what unites us." Oddly, during an internationally televised interview, he says some things that are anything but unifying and offends much of the Muslim world.

So it comes as no surprise that Doug is promptly snatched up from his hotel room

Doug Rawlins (Jim Caviezel, C) is kidnapped by Hamas members, one behind him and one to the right.

in Cairo, and whisked away to a secure location in Beirut, Lebanon, by members of Hamas, which is a Palestinian Sunni-Islamic fundamentalist and nationalist organization. The three men who kidnap Doug are led by Ramzi (Hal Ozsan), a Middle Eastern man with a curiously thick British accent.

Back in the United States, Doug's wife, Liz (Claudia Karvan)—who holds a highprofile position in the U.S. State Department—is trying to find out what happened to him. From the outset of the film, she is painted as a defiant woman who doesn't support her husband's Christian views, his career, nor his passion for spreading the Gospel to the world at large. This is partially explained as being due to the fact that she lost their unborn child during a tragic car accident, sometime in the past.

Liz soon realizes that the U.S. government isn't exactly keen on helping her cause because of the controversy surrounding Doug's interview and the current geopolitical situation. Fortunately, she'd already outfitted one of Doug's shoes with a concealed device beforehand, which allows him to send encrypted emails to her, should something bad happen during his trip. How this device makes it through today's airport security is another question.

Doug's captives slap him around a little at first but treat him with a measure of respect, at least for a while. Ramzi even walks Doug out (blindfolded and cuffed, mind you) onto the holding house's sunny balcony and offers him some Turkish tea. There, Ramzi reveals a little about his traumatic childhood growing up in England where he and his mother were harassed by neo-Nazis, which led him to become a member of Hamas.

This scene stands out as exceptionally insincere—as if I could practically see some production notes that indicated they needed to add a part where they could explain why Ramzi's character has such a strong



English accent, while artificially trying to humanize him. I'm aware that the actor playing Ramzi's character was raised in the U.K., but his accent is so thick that I had to rewind the movie several times whenever he spoke.

Liz travels to the Middle East in an effort to locate her husband. She dons a baseball cap with her blond hair sticking out and wanders the streets, sticking out like a sore thumb. Why she didn't bother to hire a bodyguard or two is baffling. Not surprisingly, some bad men try to kidnap her right away.

Liz is saved by members of a house church based in Iran, partly led by Maria Landi (Isabelle Adriani), who proudly exclaims that the church is led by women. The Middle Eastern men present sort of mill around in the background. Oddly, Liz isn't very appreciative and walks out on them.

Will Liz manage to save her Doug before his captors kill him?

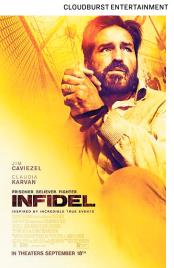
By the midpoint of the film, I really didn't care. None of the characters seemed sympathetic in the least. The film is also chock-full of today's typical cinematic stereotypes: Men are largely portrayed as stupid, ultraviolent, and ineffectual, while women fit into the well-worn archetypes of either strong and arrogant or perpetual victims (or alternate between the two, such as Liz's character).

You've also got your standard Middle Eastern villains that are painted with as much depth as cheap cardboard cutouts. While I'll give the filmmakers credit for trying to convey a message about violence against Middle Eastern women in the film (a worthy cause), it is delivered in a mud-

dled fashion at best.

Simply put, "Infidel" comes off as more of a bloated, violent, and vulgar version of a Hallmark film, rather than anything more.

Ian Kane is a filmmaker and author based out of Los Angeles. To learn more, visit DreamFlightEnt.com



A poster for Jim Caviezel's 2020 release, "Infidel."

'Infidel'

Director Cyrus Nowrasteh

Cyrus Nowrasteri

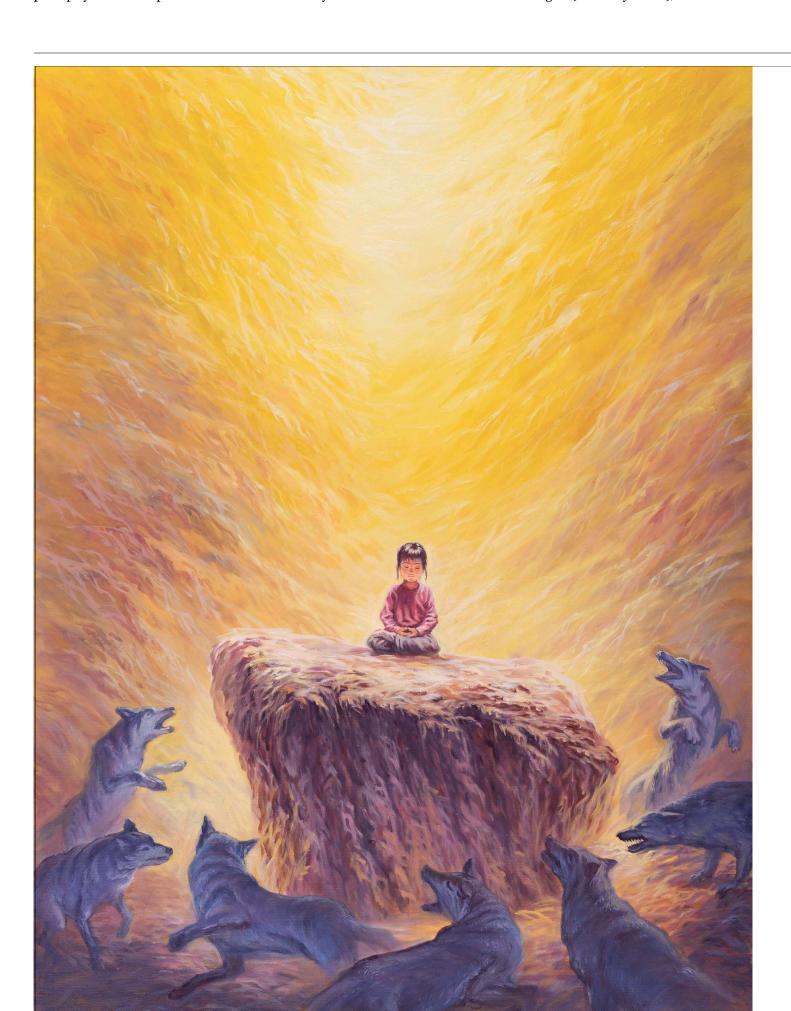
Jim Caviezel, Claudia Karvan, Hal Ozsan

Running Time 1 hour, 48 minutes

Rated

Release Date Sept. 18, 2020 (USA)

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