WEEK 25, 2021

THE EPOCH TIMES

ARTS & CULTURE

COURTESY OF JOEL BABB

"Mount Desert Cliffs," 2008, oil on linen; 72 inches by 52 inches. Collection of Janet Starr.

FINE ARTS

Following Leonardo

American artist Joel Babb on becoming a successful realist painter

LORRAINE FERRIER

Maine-based realist painter Joel Babb very nearly became an abstract expressionist. But a series of events compelled him to follow past masters—Leonardo da Vinci, Claude Lorrain, and John Ruskin, to name a few—to become the successful artist he is today.

Babb's work is featured in private collections and in prominent ones, including the Museum of Fine Arts in Boston and Harvard Medical School.

His paintings include architecture of ancient and Renaissance Italy, cityscapes of Boston, and woodlands, especially those near his home and studio in Sumner, Maine.

A Modern Beginning

In high school, Babb immediately responded to abstract expressionist painting. At the time, he believed that the growing popularity of modern art was part of a long process of modernization when things were becoming better.

Princeton had a very strong program in Chinese painting, so besides learning Western art history, Babb was introduced to Chinese art too.

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TRUTH AND TRADITION

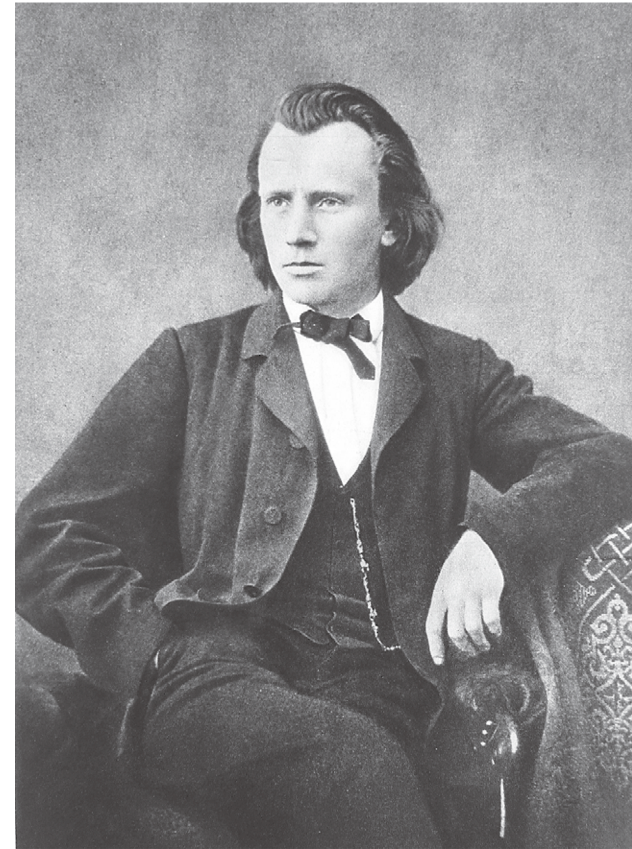
TRUTH TELLERS

Johannes Brahms

Finding Answers Deeper Than Beauty

RAYMOND BEEGLE

PUBLIC DOMAIN



A photograph of Johannes Brahms in 1866 by Lucien Mazenod.

Johannes Brahms might have been a genius, but he was still a man. He, like the rest of us, had to have his breakfast, make his living, and deal with adversity.

His close friend George Henschel, the English baritone, described Brahms, the man of 41 years as "broad-chested, of somewhat short stature, with a tendency to stoutness, clean shaven; his thick straight hair of brownish color came nearly down to his shoulder. What, however, struck me the most ... was the kindliness of his eyes."

He loved the society of intimate friends, he was given to good natured sarcasm, he was humble before his art, and he was generous to friends.

Brahms the Composer

Brahms the genius is more of a mystery. Unlike ordinary mortals, a miraculous synthesis often took place in his mind: From everyday life, a vision would sometimes unfold. Thoughts and feelings would cast deep roots in his mind, become fragments of a melodic line, and after much labor, a piece of musical work would be born. This progeny would issue from the composer, take on a life of its own, make its way into the hearts of others, and continue to cast its spell long after its creator had passed away.

Johannes Brahms's songs and choral works give voice to our need for love in all its forms.

Brahms spoke sparingly but candidly to friends about his creative genius. He once told Henschel that "a thought, an idea, is an inspiration from above for which I am not responsible. It is a present, a gift, which I ought even to despise until I have made it my own by right of hard work."

In later years, he elaborated on this idea. Speaking of the "Odyssey, he said, "Homer sought inspiration from above just as I do when I compose, and just as Beethoven did. ... I want to be inspired so that I can compose something that will uplift and benefit humanity—something of permanent value."

One might find such ideas having little to do with ordinary people, but truly, it has everything to do with us and our common lot. Especially Johannes Brahms's songs and choral works give voice to our need for love in all its forms; they give voice as well to our suffering and our helplessness before fate. His music gives reassurance, consolation, hope, and endows even the meanest existence with dignity.

Brahms set to music the texts of the foremost poets, addressing the significant milestones of life's journey—the journey of "Everyman." Youth's kinship with nature, the awakening of love in all its forms, and the experience of loss—the human condition, in a phrase—ultimately lead to the great spiritual world that unfolds before us.

For example, "Die Mainacht" ("May Night"), set to the text of 18th-century German poet Ludwig Christoph Hölty, expresses our longing for union with another soul, our intimate connection to nature, and its power, through beauty, to fill us with wonder.

"Treue Liebe dauert lange," by Ludwig Tieck, celebrates the achievement of such a union. Its sublime melodic lines breathe life into the poet's words: "True love long endures. May it ever be removed from sorrow and never disappear, this beloved, blessed, heavenly joy!"

Though love remains, the beloved, in the course of time, is taken from us. When Brahms suffered the loss of his friend Anselm Feuerbach, the brilliant German painter, it was the source of profound sorrow; still it served as a catalyst for one of the composer's finest works, "Nänie." The text from Friedrich Schiller's lament cites the deaths of the classical Greek figures Eurydice, Adonis, and Achilles: "Even the beautiful must die ... even the most perfect shall perish ... but a song of lament on the lips of one who loves is wondrous."

A song of lament might be wondrous and beautiful, but it is of little comfort in the time of grief. "Schicksalslied" ("Song of Destiny") looks grief straight in the eye.The poet Friedrich Hölderlin wrote: "To us is given no place of rest. Mankind suffers, blindly he shrinks, he falls from one hour to another, like the waters ever driven from cliff to cliff into the unknown."

Ultimately, people come to realize that they need answers deeper than those beauty can supply. It is often at a time of crisis when a broad spiritual horizon appears, and solid ground is felt under one's feet. After the death of his beloved Clara Schumann, Brahms, in his despair, set the text from the Gospels:

"And ye now therefore have sorrow;
but I will see you again,
and your heart shall rejoice,
and your joy no man taketh from you."

This was the revelation of Johannes Brahms the man, and the genius. He told his close friends that such works come "directly from God." Yes, they come directly from God. They enter our hearts, and our hearts do, indeed, rejoice.

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.

WHAT GOOD IS POETRY?

Robert Louis Stevenson's 'Requiem': A Kind of Homecoming

SEAN FITZPATRICK

A white tomb overlooks the sea on a mountain in Samoa. It is the final resting place of one the natives called "Tusitala," the Teller of Tales. Dead men tell no tales, and so it is for this man who told of pirates, knights, and swashbucklers: Robert Louis Stevenson. But his tales live on, despite the silence that hovers smilingly over his grave.

Set into the hard marble of this solemn sepulcher is a weathered bronze plaque presenting a very cheerful bit of poetry.

Under the wide and starry sky,
Dig the grave and let me lie.
Glad did I live and gladly die,
And I laid me down with a will.

This be the verse you grave for me:
Here he lies where he longed to be;
Home is the sailor, home from sea,
And the hunter home from the hill.

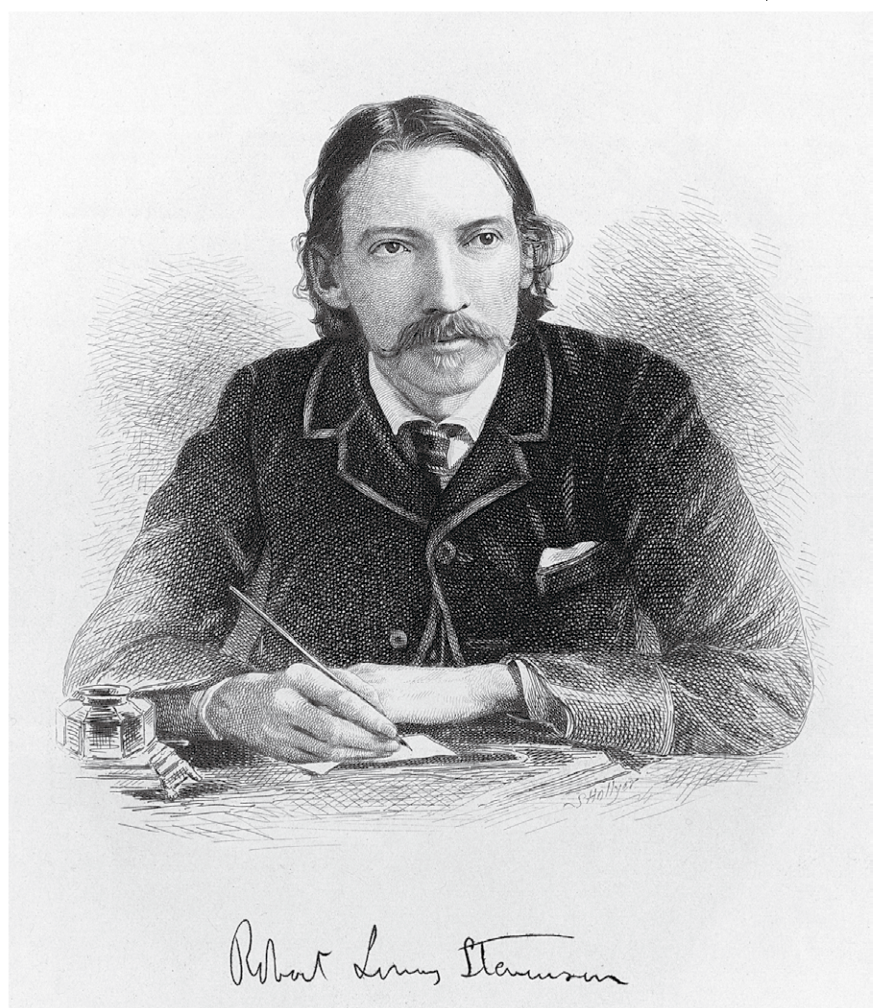
These are the parting words, the last conclusion, of the Scottish storyteller. After a lifetime of struggle to quit his bed and live out the appetite for life that he could only write about, Stevenson sailed to Samoa, in weary pursuit of a climate that would agree with his fragile and failing constitution.

It was there—as he was speaking to his wife, Fanny, and opening a bottle of wine—that Stevenson collapsed and finally came to rest in 1894 at the age of 44. And thus came about the publication of the poem he wrote for his epitaph, titled "Requiem," the Latin word for "rest."

Robert Louis Stevenson's graveyard verse is as lively as any melody in his collection "A Child's Garden of Verses." It has something of the steel that sparkles in "Treasure Island" and something of the strength that struts in "Kidnapped." It holds part of the human paradox, as "The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde" held another, and part of the fateful culmination of "The Master of Ballantrae." It is a good poem because, like so many of his stories, it is about something good.

All good poems are nostalgic in the sense that they bring us home to some truth.

HULTON ARCHIVE/GETTY IMAGES



Robert Louis Stevenson, circa 1880, the Scottish writer who wrote enduringly popular 19th-century novels as well as poetry.

Coming Home

What makes this poem good is that it is nostalgic, both in its meaning and its effect. All good poems are nostalgic in the sense that they bring us home to some truth—the word "nostos" meaning a "heroic homecoming" in Greek.

Good poetry returns us to a place or perspective that has proper proportion to the human imagination and intellect. They return us to some place where we belong and have somehow wandered away from, perhaps without even knowing it, making our experience a kind of homecoming, which is one way in which knowledge can be called poetic.

This homecoming can also be applied to the understanding of death when it comes for one who has lived fully and fruitfully. Death, for the good man, is nostalgic, as strange as that may sound. This world is home for no man. We are all just passing through.

Despite the grim connotations of the reaper who reaps among the flowers, death is a well-earned and well-deserved sleep for a tired man; the grave is as a bed. There are, of course, various strains of theology that argue that death is when life really begins. Life is labor, but if it be a labor of love, then death is nothing more than a rest, a requiem.

In his lovely biography of Stevenson, G.K. Chesterton wrote:

"He died swiftly as if struck with an arrow and even over his grave something of a higher frivolity hovers upon wings like a bird; "Glad did I live and gladly die," has a lilt that no repetition can make quite unreal, light as the lifted spires of Spyglass Hill and translucent as the dancing waves; types of a tenuous but tenacious levity and the legend that has made his graveyard a mountain-peak and his epitaph a song."

So is the optimism of Stevenson set in stone with a permanent playfulness, as Chesterton intimates. "Requiem" is a fitting stop, a fitting rest, for such a tireless teller of the stories of life. It gives a congenial and confident perspective of death by dismissing the horror of the hereafter and dwelling on the hope of a homecoming.

But the fact of the poem is that, for the life well-lived, death is something as welcome and wonderful as home. So may it be, and may each and every one of our epitaphs read, "Glad did I live and gladly die."

Sean Fitzpatrick serves on the faculty of Gregory the Great Academy, a boarding school in Elmhurst, Pa., where he teaches humanities. His writings on education, literature, and culture have appeared in a number of journals including Crisis Magazine, Catholic Exchange, and The Imaginative Conservative.

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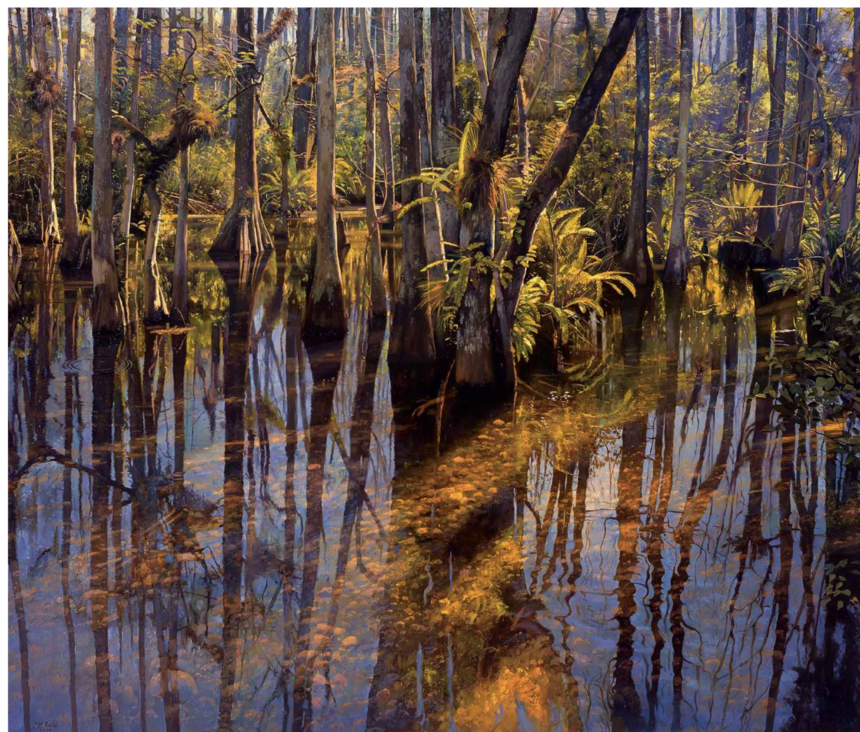
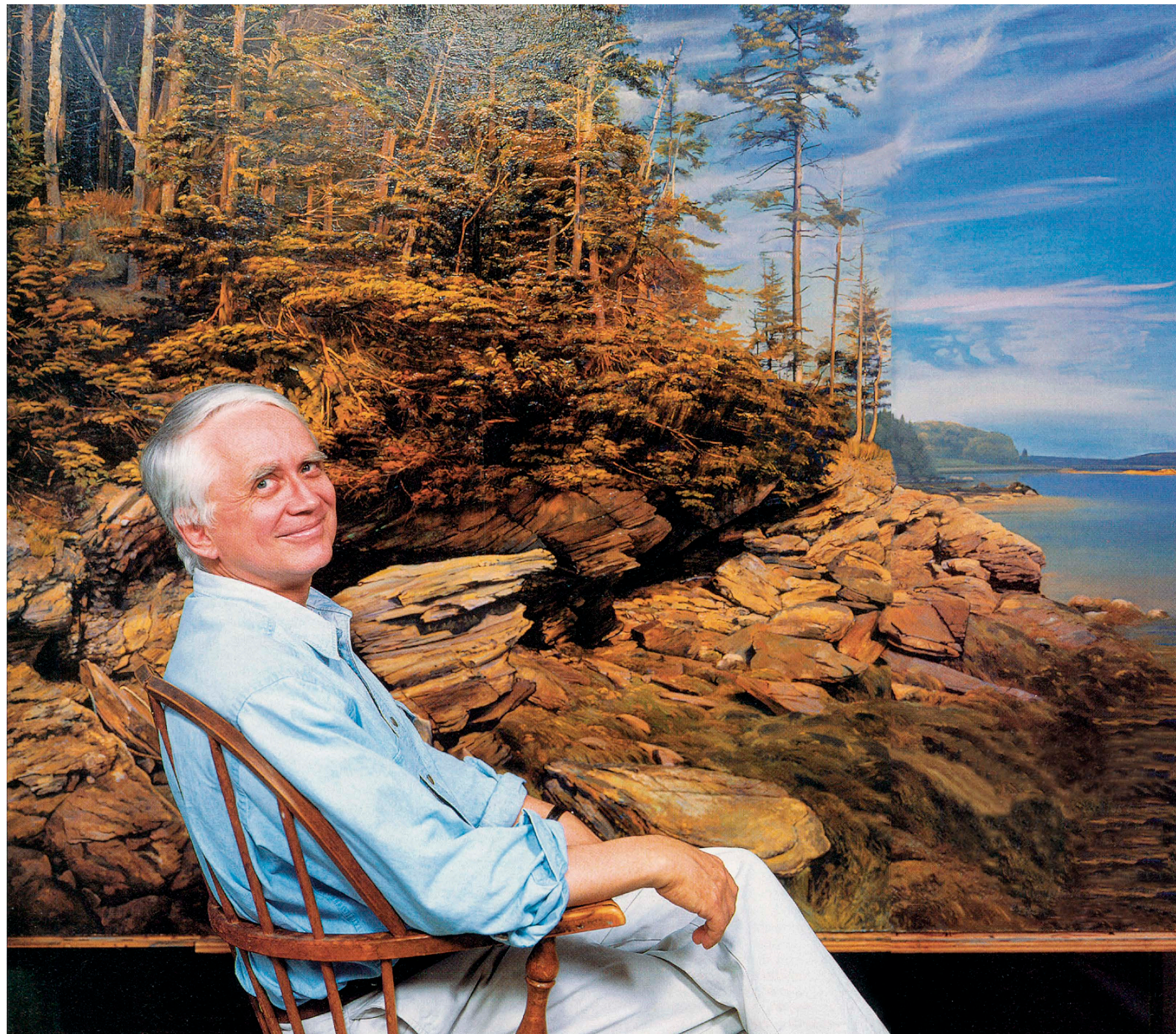

“Crystalline, The Big Cypress Preserve, Florida,” 2004, by Joel Babb. Oil on linen; 40.5 inches by 48 inches.

FINE ARTS

Following Leonardo

American artist Joel Babb on becoming a successful realist painter


Realist artist Joel Babb seated in front of one of his paintings.

AMAZEEN

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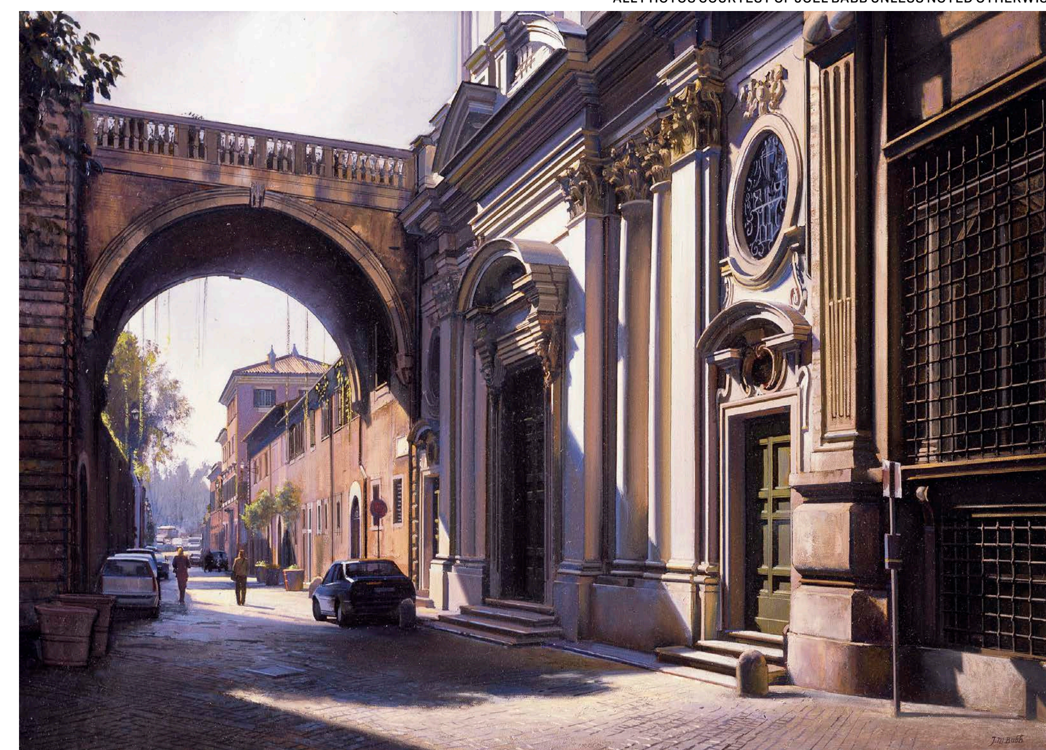

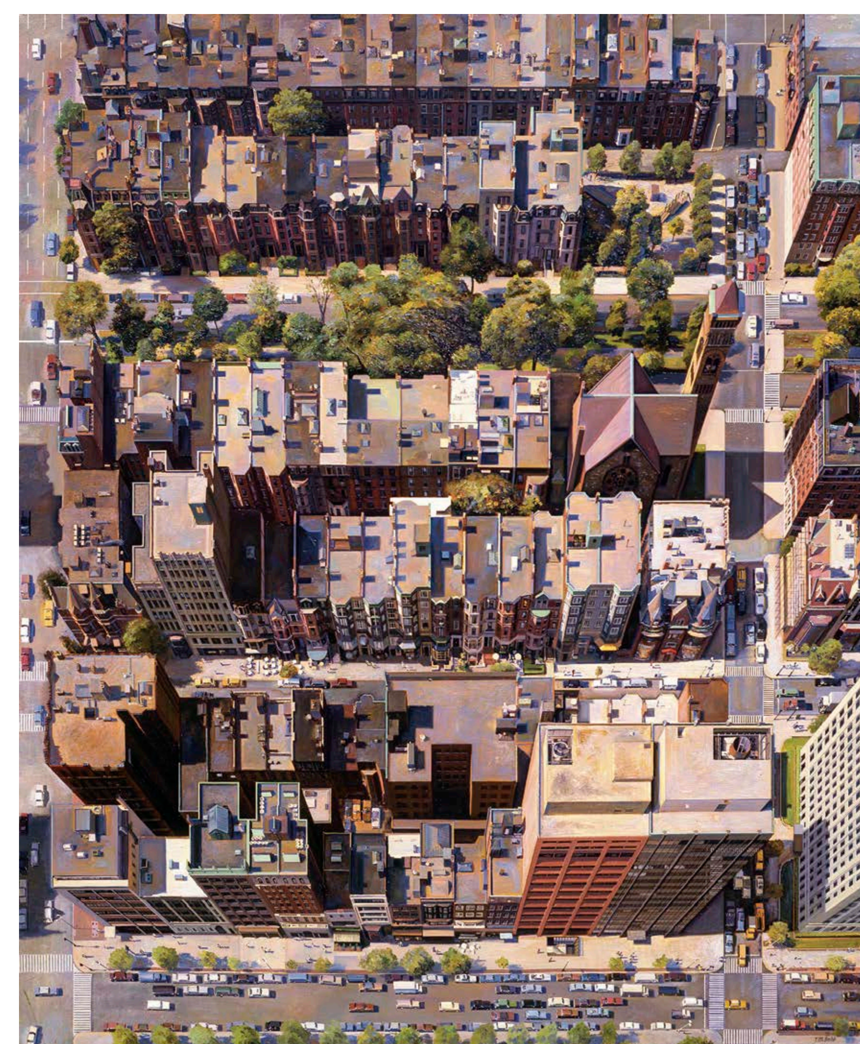
(Above) “On the Via Giulia, Santa Maria dell' Orazione e Morte,” 2008, by Joel Babb. Oil on linen; 20 inches by 28 inches.

(Left) “Copley Plunge,” 1990, by Joel Babb. Oil on linen; 82 inches by 65 inches, Museum of Fine Arts, Boston.

*Continued from **Page 1***

“It's a wonderful tradition of which I knew nothing about at the time,” Babb said in a telephone interview. He was taught by the late Wen Fong, who went on to become a curator at The Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York.

Babb recalls a 1969 exhibition called “In Pursuit of Antiquity: Chinese Paintings of the Ming and Ch'ing Dynasties From the Collection of Mr. and Mrs. Earl Morse.” He learned that Chinese painters looked to the past, to the Northern Song or earlier traditions, emulating the earlier style as an expressive mode.

“What fascinated me was that an artist could paint in the style of various early masters, not just imitating one. There was a reverence and deep understanding of the past. This was so different from the obsession with innovation and originality in modern Western art,” he said.

Babb found something similar when he spent seven months in Italy, on what he says was the start of his personal “pursuit of antiquity.” In Rome, he noted that “artists who were painting in the late 15th century were really pursuing an enterprise very similar to that [of the Chinese artists] in terms of trying to re-create what the Greco-Roman tradition had been doing.”

He was fascinated by how the different eras—the Renaissance and Baroque, for example—rediscovered and reinterpreted classical antiquity in art and architecture.

“So the sort of a simplistic idea of modernism superseding and being better than everything that had come before it just was not all that interesting [to me] anymore,” he said. He realized that all the early modernist movements, like dadaism and so forth, which had so fascinated him, were disruptive to the whole cultural tradition of art.

Learning Art Anew

Babb had other realizations in Italy. “I pretty much realized I could not draw very well and that if I really wanted to seriously be an artist, I really had to learn how to practice my craft in the same way as if I were a classical musician. I'd be able to read music and play an instrument and really have a deep understanding,” he said.

Although he was a graduate of Princeton, working on a Master of Fine Arts degree at the School of the Museum of Fine Arts at Tufts University in Boston, he had to learn the basics.

“The reason I went to Boston was because the museum school had a reputation for being very strong in that traditional approach to the techniques of painting and drawing,” he said.

When he got there, he realized that wasn't the case at all. “They had had a revolution, and all of the traditional faculty had left the school and gone somewhere else. And so it was all Bauhaus [artist collectives that created geometric and abstract art] and modernism, and the things that came after at the Boston Museum School,” he said.

There were, however, a few holdovers from the traditional way of teaching art. The museum had a studio where students could copy paintings. And he learned how to grind colors, make gesso and oil paints, and create egg tempera paintings.

But in general, he believes that schools now emphasize innovation: being different and revolutionary. “I do think that in the art schools, we have really missed out. We have not transmitted enough of what is really important about the art of the past to our new students,” he said.

An Apprenticeship With Leonardo

In that early period, Babb felt that he was on his own. Having returned from Italy and having studied art history, something magical happened. “I found myself sort of unconsciously following Leonardo,” he said.

As Babb studied Leonardo's system of perspective, he found it to be a transformative process: “Because all of a sudden you [could] see vanishing points, and eye levels and transverses, and all this stuff all around you which you would never be aware of if you hadn't been trained in that.”

> **I found myself sort of unconsciously following Leonardo.**
>
> *Joel Babb, painter*

Then, Leonardo was with him again when he was asked to teach an anatomy course for artists. “I actually went over to Boston University Medical School and was able to attend the anatomy lab for the dissections and do drawings. ... It was just a parallel to what Leonardo would have done back in the late 1400s.

“I remember the first few weeks after I was in there, I started looking at everyone as if they were sort of a complicated machine with hinges and pulleys, and [that] they were operating all this machinery just so completely unconscious of having it, or knowing how. It was very interesting,” he said.

In the 1970s, Babb used to camp on the land where his home and studio now stand in Sumner, Maine. He remembers sitting in the field and doing pen and ink drawings of plants and wildflowers, emulating Leonardo's style of drawing.

“I realized that all artists are sort of starting from scratch that way, at all times. And of course, it really helps if you have a master who already knows it to learn from, so you're not creating the whole universe from scratch,” he said.

Between Boston and Sumner, Maine

Two American landscapes dominate Babb's paintings: the city scenes of Boston and the natural scenic treasures of Maine. Looking back, Babb often wonders why he divided his career between two very different types of landscapes. He went on to say that the city is an environment controlled by linear perspective. Everything is designed by architects, and objects are arranged artificially. Whereas, on the other hand, nature is ordered along completely different lines. It's sort of self-organizing and disorderly, he said.

Boston features in Babb's painting “Copley Plunge,” which is now in the collection of the Museum of Fine Arts. Babb entered a competition with two other artists to design a painting for a subway station in Boston. His idea was to create a ceiling painting that would give the illusion of' the neighborhood above ground.

To understand the composition, Babb hired a helicopter and pilot and then flew over the neighborhood surrounding the subway station.

“I became tremendously interested in the aerial perspective of the city,” he said. He mapped out the neighborhoods using an isometric perspective, like the paintings in Japanese and Chinese cityscapes, where objects don't really have a vanishing point, Babb explained.

“When you're in a tall building [and looking down], the verticals of the buildings actually do line up at a point that's directly beneath your feet,” he said. He used this one-point perspective in “Copley Plunge,” where the vanishing point is straight down rather than out on the horizon somewhere, he explained.

At one time, Babb was creating photo-realistic paintings, in other words, paintings that appear to be photographs. The light spreads evenly over those compositions, he said.

His painting “The Hounds of Spring” is one example of photo-realism. It shows a different perspective from “Copley Plunge.” Babb wanted to create a doorway effect so that viewers feel as though they can almost step into the painting. In the foreground, the plants and rocks are life-size and highly realistic. Babb explained that as you proceed into the painting, up the hill, “the space of the picture will be like transitioning from a microcosm into a macrocosm.” The painting is one of a series of contemporary photo-realist paintings he created.

But photo-realistic painting is in Babb's past: “I don't aspire to be a photo-realistic painter. I want my paintings to look like paintings. I want to see brushstrokes, and I want to interpret the color in a more traditional way.”

Babb's realist art adheres to the ideals of 19th-century art critic and patron John Ruskin. For Babb, this means, “You should study nature with great humility and not try to impose your own ideas of what it should be on it, but try to learn from it.”

“In a nutshell, the philosophy of realism is that if you really look and explore a very small corner of the universe, you can perceive immense natural forces and universal principles that apply everywhere. I'm not quite sure how the alchemy of that works, but that's the aspiration,” Babb said.

Past realist painters have helped with that aspiration. “When I think about my own struggle with trying to represent nature, I didn't get very far until I discovered the drawings of [French painter] Claude Lorrain and the way that he structured the space and the composition.”

Lorrain's drawings showed Babb “how to structure recession in a natural landscape, overlapping foreground, middle ground, [and] far distance, [and by] alternating light and dark masses, and atmospheric perspective.”

“That traditional way of representing space enabled artists to really represent nature much better,” he said.

A Heartfelt Painting

Most of Babb's artworks are landscape paintings. He has, however, painted a series of historical medical paintings. The reason is literally close to his heart. At 13 years old, Babb had heart surgery. “It was sort of a live or die proposition, and it was very traumatic,” he said. So in the 1990s, when Babb got a call from a doctor who wanted him to paint the first successful organ transplant, carried out at Brigham and Women's Hospital in 1954, it piqued his interest.

He'd always been fascinated by history paintings. “Here it was, a historical event with the possibility of doing a significant painting ... and so it just appealed to me in all sorts of ways,” he said.

The room where the surgery took place no longer exists, so Babb worked from two black-and-white photographs that were taken during the surgery. He also attended surgeries to become familiar with the operating room setup. Dr. Joseph Murray, who carried out the world's first successful kidney transplant and who received the Nobel Prize for his work, showed Babb around the hospital.

The painting now hangs prominently in The Francis A. Countway Library of Medicine at Harvard Medical School, opposite “The First Operation With Ether,” painted by 19th-century American portraitist Robert C. Hinckley. That painting details the first use of anesthesia surgery, which occurred at Massachusetts General Hospital on Oct. 16, 1846.

The doctors who commissioned Babb's painting said to him that Hinckley depicted “the most important surgical innovation of the 19th century, and our operation, in all modesty, was the most important surgical innovation of the 20th century.”

> **I want my paintings to look like paintings. I want to see brushstrokes, and I want to interpret the color in a more traditional way.**
>
> *Joel Babb, painter*

Western Art Heritage

Babb believes that a successful painting is the result of a combination of artistic processes coming together. He suggests that artists spend a third of their time painting outdoors and maybe a third of their time painting from photographs, and then the remaining third of their time painting from just their imagination.

“I love painting outside. And I think it's a necessary antidote to using photographs and working in the studio because [in photographs] you don't see color the way the eye really sees it in strong light until you work outside,” he said.

Reflecting on his journey as an artist so far, Babb experienced modernism's sway and the drive to be innovative early on in his school study. But as he moved into realist art, he experienced a sheer reverence for nature and also for the great traditions of the past, about which he's adamant we shouldn't ignore.

To find out more about realist painter Joel Babb's paintings, visit JoelBabb.com

“The First Successful Organ Transplantation in Man,” 1995–1996, by Joel Babb. Oil on linen; 70 inches by 88 inches. The Francis A. Countway Library of Medicine at Harvard Medical School, Boston.

“Painting by the Brook, Breughel Watching,” 2012, by Joel Babb. Oil on linen; 48 inches by 42 inches.

“The Hounds of Spring,” 1988, by Joel Babb. Oil on linen; 96 inches by 68 inches. Collection of Harvard Business School.

LITERATURE

Strangers in a Strange Land: Writers in Exile and Us

"Dante in Exile," circa 1860, by Domenico Petarlini. Oil on canvas; 29.9 inches by 37.8 inches. Gallery of Modern Art, Pitti Palace, The Uffizi Galleries, Florence, Italy.

FABIO BLACO/THE UFFIZI GALLERIES

JEFF MINICK

Throughout human history, involuntary exile was often a common punishment—a means of getting rid of troublesome citizens. The Italian Casanova was forced into exile after being charged with indecency. Napoleon Bonaparte spent the last years of his life on a tiny island in the Atlantic, Saint Helena, far from France. Many artists and intellectuals who feared for their lives, like Thomas Mann and Albert Einstein, fled Nazi Germany. For this same reason, the Dalai Lama has lived for decades in exile from Tibet, now under the control of communist China.

Among these exiles were writers whose work offended the ruling power.

Banishment and Hardship

Before we look at some of these authors, we should consider what it means to be forced to leave behind all that is familiar: the customs of one's native land, the homes and the towns in which one has lived, the friends and family members one has loved and may never see again. Today we all travel so easily and freely, but before modern times, in particular, these sentences of exile could have devastating effects on those so condemned.

In the anonymous Anglo-Saxon poem "The Wanderer," which describes a man who has lost his place in his lord's mead-hall and who must now sail away "with sorrowful heart over wintry seas," we hear the sadness and wretched misery such banishment could bring:

> Oft to the wanderer, weary of exile,
> Cometh God's pity, compassionate love,
> Though woefully toiling on winter seas
> With churning oar in the icy wave.
> Homeless and helpless he fled from fate.

We Americans, who are less rooted in place and who now share in common many elements of popular culture, can only imagine the horrors and loneliness of such a separation, of being cast out of a tribe or a village. For us, for instance, a MacDonald's in Richmond, Virginia, is much the same as a MacDonald's in Milwaukee, Wisconsin. For someone like the warrior in this poem, to be driven from the lord's mead-hall meant danger and estrangement from all he had known. He became a "wraecca," meaning an exile, a stranger, an outcast, an unhappy man.

Sentences of exile could have devastating effects on those so condemned.

3 Writers in Exile

Those descriptions of a wraecca certainly apply to Publius Ovidius Naso, known more commonly to us as Ovid. In A.D. 8, the emperor Augustus banished Ovid to a tiny fishing village, Tomis, far from Rome, possibly for licentiousness in his verse, though we don't really know the reason for his sentence. There the esteemed poet remained until his death nine years later, writing letters to the emperor begging to be allowed to return to Rome and producing verse that with a few exceptions lacked the fire of his earlier genius.

Unlike Ovid, Dante Alighieri wrote his greatest work, "The Divine Comedy," while in a state of exile. Banished from his beloved Florence, Italy, for political reasons, Dante wandered from town to town, seeking to protect his family and himself while composing his immortal poem about Hell, Purgatory, and Paradise. He eventually died in Ravenna. On his grave is this line written by a friend: "parvi Florentia mater amoris," or "Florence, mother of little love."

For his political views, French novelist, poet, and essayist Victor Hugo spent almost 20 years in exile from France, some of that time suffering an enforced banishment, and then, though given a pardon, kept himself in voluntary exile on principle. During this time, which he spent mostly on the British island of Guernsey, a place for which he developed a deep affection, he wrote "Les Miserables," regarded by many critics as his finest work. After the fall of the government of Napoleon III, he returned to France.

LIA KOLTYRINA/SHUTTERSTOCK

ALEXEY BROSLAVETS/SHUTTERSTOCK

(Left) A monument to Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn on the Korabelnaya embankment in Vladivostok, Russia. **(Right)** Bust of Victor Marie Hugo in the Hermitage Garden in Moscow.

Ovid passed his time in exile in misery, Dante in storm and stress, and Hugo in relative comfort—in part from circumstances, in part from the manner in which each man faced up to his fate.

The Russian

Perhaps the best-known literary exile of the 20th century is the Russian writer Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn. Author of such outstanding works as "A Day in the Life of Ivan Denisovich" and "The Gulag Archipelago," the controversial Solzhenitsyn in 1974 was arrested by Russian authorities, stripped of his Soviet citizenship, and banished from the country.

Eventually, he found a home in tiny Cavendish, Vermont, where he remained for 20 years while he continued to write his books. The town's citizens treated him with respect and gave him the privacy he craved, so much so that the general store posted a sign reading "No Restrooms, No Bare Feet, No Directions to the Solzhenitsyn Home." When he was finally allowed to return to Russia, the author wrote a letter of gratitude to the townspeople of Cavendish, thanking them for their hospitality.

In 1978, Solzhenitsyn delivered the graduation address at Harvard University in which he accused the West, particularly the United States, of lacking any real religious faith, of rampant consumerism, and suffering from a decline in courage and manliness. Many academics and members of the media excoriated his speech, while others applauded him for speaking the truth.

Even in his exile, the Russian author who had so bravely critiqued the Russian communists was unafraid to do the same to his hosts.

A Longing for Home

Like Ovid, Dante, and others, many of our contemporary writers driven out of their native lands express their longing for home. In "The Memory of Our Land: Writing in and from Exile," Susan Harris gives us brief stories of several modern authors exiled for various reasons from Syria, Cuba, Venezuela, and Iraq.

For a variety of reasons, these writers fled their homelands and still feel the deep connection to those places. Harris writes that "there is no typical exile" yet all these authors share a strong attachment to the place of their birth. As Syria's Samar Yazbek says, "Home is my language, my country, my soul. …"

Lessons for the Rest of Us

Though we Americans are not subject to a forced physical banishment from our native land, we are a restless nation, often removing ourselves from familiar places and people, and heading off to new and different circumstances. The 18-year-old boy from rural Alabama who enters Marine Corps boot camp, the banker dispatched to a new city where she has no friends or family, the young woman setting off to college 1,000 miles from home—all are exiles of a sort, separated from their past, treading on unfamiliar ground, and making their way alone through adverse situations.

Those of us who find ourselves in these circumstances, uprooted from our old lives and cast into a strange land, can learn some lessons from these exiled writers. When we set up quarters in a new place, for instance, we can avoid emulating Ovid and refuse to allow ourselves to be eaten up by wishes to return home to our old lives.

Instead, like Dante we can find the courage to face hostility and adversity if those come our way, and still carry on to be the best we can. We can copy Victor Hugo and embrace our new life, looking for its delights and charms rather than its detriments. Solzhenitsyn teaches us that we can appreciate those around us for their virtues while not turning a blind eye to their culture at large. The contemporary writers banished from their homelands remind us to remember who we are and where we come from.

Like all of them, we have the interior freedom to choose—not our fate, but our response to the new world in which we find ourselves.

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.

Statue of Ovid in Constanta, Romania, a town formerly known as Tomis, where the Roman poet was unhappily exiled in A.D. 8.

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ALL PHOTOS BY WARNER BROS.

(Above left) An upgraded Cal (Steve Carell) is admired by his wife Emily (Julianne Moore); **(top right)** Jacob (Ryan Gosling) and Cal (Steve Carell) as player and not-a-player; **(above right)** salutatorian Robbie (Jonah Bobo, L), son of Cal (Steve Carell), is interrupted by dad in the middle of his incredibly depressing graduation speech about how worthless love is; **(below)** Jacob (Ryan Gosling) and Hannah (Emma Stone) as attorneys in love, in "Crazy, Stupid, Love."

FILM INSIGHTS WITH MARK JACKSON

Mark Jackson grew up in Spring Valley, N.Y., where he attended a Waldorf school. At Williams College, his professors all suggested he write professionally. He acted professionally for 20 years instead. Now he writes professionally about acting. In the movies.

REWIND, REVIEW, AND RE-RATE

Bittersweet, Heartwarming, Hilarious

MARK JACKSON

In "Crazy Stupid Love," the movie opens, and the camera is examining … feet. Feet under tables. Not so much feet—but "footsie." Upscale shoes; people on dates—feet playing footsie. All of a sudden, there's an upscale pair of women's shoes, paired with, on the other side, under the table … chinos and puffy dad sneakers. Does that look like a footsie situation? Can this end well?

What's one of the main reasons relationships end? Women think they can change men—and men generally don't change. Men, on the other hand, think the girl they married will stay the same. But women change. They can quickly outgrow men. A guy showing up for date night in comfy, schlubby dad sneakers is asking for trouble.

After 25 years of marriage, Emily (Julianne Moore) asks her husband, Cal (Steve Carell), for a divorce. She's had an affair with her boss, David Lindhagen (Kevin Bacon). Cal's a great dad, a solid family man, but he's gotten too unexciting, habit-bound, and predictable. It didn't help that they married out of high school and had their first kid at age 17. Cal didn't know he needed to change—so change came to Cal.

"Crazy, Stupid, Love" is about being hit in the heart with Cupid's arrow, along with a wide range of crazy, stupid things people do to chase love down, their attempts to keep it, and what happens when someone pulls out that arrow and throws it in the trash. It's not really a romcom, a comedy, or a drama. It's real-life-ish, with quite a bit of excellent comedy, and forgivable, over-the-top situations that tie up loose ends a bit too neatly. It's a movie you'll want to see a few times.

'Crazy, Stupid, Love.'

Director
John Requa, Glenn Ficarra

Starring
Steve Carell, Julianne Moore, Emma Stone, Ryan Gosling, Kevin Bacon, Marisa Tomei, Analeigh Tipton, Jonah Bobo, Josh Groban

Rated
PG-13

Running Time
1 hour, 58 minutes

Release Date
July 29, 2011

Rating
4 out of 5 stars;
2 stars for billing as this is a family movie

(L–R) Kevin Bacon, John Carroll Lynch, Ryan Gosling, and Steve Carell play irate, territorial, protective, and jealous husbands and boyfriends who have a group brawl in Cal's backyard, necessitating a lecture from the cops in "Crazy, Stupid, Love."

A 3-Tiered Multigenerational Sort-of-Romcom

There's something for everyone! Take the whole family! Actually, this isn't really a harmless family movie, but the filmmakers have all aspects and ages of crazy, stupid love covered.

For the middle-aged, there's Cal and Emily. For the 20-somethings, there's Jacob (Ryan Gosling)—a dapper, Brylcreem-ed lawyer and incorrigible, prolific player in bespoke suits, with ripped abs—who eventually (and incredibly satisfyingly) falls head over heels for soon-to-be-lawyer Hannah (Emma Stone) who, herself, recently dumped her bland, noncommittal boyfriend (soft-rock musician Josh Groban).

And for the teens, Cal and Emily's tween son Robbie (Jonah Bobo) has an overwhelming crush on his 17-year-old babysitter Jessica (Analeigh Tipton), who, to bring it full circle, has a hugely inappropriate, massive crush on … Cal. As much as we'd like to ignore it, this dangerous dynamic runs rampant all across our fine nation (my high school was rife with it), but luckily it's played here strictly for laughs.

Cal's Makeover

After Cal gets the boot, he begins drowning his sorrows in cranberry and vodka at a local hotspot, loudly and pathetically telling anyone who will listen about being cuckolded, which is a particular bit of loser-ish business that resides squarely in Steve Carell's wheelhouse of affable, loser schlubs.

Lothario Jacob takes pity on Cal, taking him under his wing and accompanying him on a makeover spree. He informs Cal that one of the advantages of being a middle-aged schlub is that Cal has the financial wherewithal to drop a ton of money on a brand-new extensive wardrobe and a $60 haircut.

Then, Jacob, taking the role of Mr. Miyagi in "The Karate Kid," has Cal watch and learn, quickly turning him into a (more or less) smooth operator.

This isn't really a harmless family movie, but the filmmakers have all aspects and ages of crazy, stupid love covered.

Jacob's Makeover

Back to Jacob and Hannah: Hannah insists on going home with Jacob, intending not to have a PG-rated night, and Jacob falls for Hannah in what might be one of the most delightful date scenes in romcoms. The two actors have enormous natural chemistry—which Hollywood later cashed in on with 2016's Oscar winner "La La Land." My favorite bit of dialogue goes something like this (all from memory):

Hannah: "So what's your big move?"

Jacob: "You can't handle the big move."

Hannah: "Show me the big move already!"

Jacob: "I work 'Dirty Dancing' into the conversation."

Hannah: "What do you mean? You end up dancing with them?"

Jacob: "No, you know the thing where Patrick Swayze picks up Jennifer Grey and holds her over his head? I can do that."

Hannah: "Hahaha omg, that's the stupidest thing I ever heard of!"

Jacob: "I agree with you. But it works. Every. Single. Time."

Later, Hannah becomes aware that Jacob's pillow conforms exactly to the shape of her head, and asks him if it's a Brookstone pillow. It is. She intuits that he's probably got a Brookstone vibrating chair too. He does. It's in the garage. "How much was it?" "Five thousand dollars." "Bahahahaha!" She tries it out: "I hate it!" He nods in chagrined acquiescence. "I'm wildly unhappy. I try to buy happiness." They talk and holler with laughter—the way true soulmates do—until he falls asleep and she gives him a sweet PG-kiss goodnight. I could watch this scene a hundred times; it never gets old.

There are lots of twists and turns, and turns of the knife that hurt, but I cared about all these characters and their loves, both lost and gained. I wanted them all to be happy in the end. I'm pretty sure you will too.

THE STORY OF ART:
WHAT WE CAN LEARN FROM THE LIVES OF ARTISTS

Howard Pyle: An Illustrator's Lessons

ERIC BESS

I've taught in college for over a decade now, and I often wonder what makes a good teacher? I often conclude that moral character is a teacher's most important quality.

With that said, good teachers don't force their understanding of morality on their students. Instead, I believe a good teacher inspires students to think empathetically but critically. Good teachers give of themselves for the benefit of the subjects they teach. With these qualities, anyone can be a teacher by way of example.

The 19th-century illustrator Howard Pyle—often considered the father of American illustration—may provide us with an example of a good teacher.

PUBLIC DOMAIN

(Above) American illustrator Howard Pyle (1853–1911).

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(Right) "The Battle of Nashville," circa 1906, by Howard Pyle. Oil on canvas; 6 feet 8 inches by 8 feet 4 inches. Governor's Reception Room at the Minnesota State Capitol.

Howard Pyle

We will introduce Howard Pyle's life as an artist, illustrator, and teacher by way of Lucien L. Agosta's book "Howard Pyle."

Pyle was born in 1853 in Delaware to Quakers. His mother had significant influence on his later artistic career, as she had unfulfilled artistic and literary goals herself and exposed her children to as many pictures and children's stories as she could.

Pyle did not do well at school; above all else, he preferred to draw and hear stories. He learned more at home, reading through his mother's collection of children's books. By the age of 16, Pyle's parents took him out of school and had him privately tutored to prepare him for college. Pyle, however, did not do well with these studies either. Finally, his parents had him learn from an academic painter and teacher named Francis Van der Weilen. This experience would be Pyle's only formal training in art.

Around the age of 23, he began to send short verses and illustrations for publication to New York. To his surprise, his submissions were accepted, and he was paid for his illustrations. He thought he might have a successful illustration career.

While traveling to New York on business, Pyle's father stopped at the offices of Scribner's Monthly on behalf of his son. Because of this meeting, Scribner's Monthly offered Pyle a job in New York City, which he accepted. After moving to New York, however, Pyle had several artistic setbacks. Initially, he was not as successful as he thought he'd be. He became insecure about his artistic ability. But he refused to give up and decided to enter the New York Art Students League to improve his drawing skills.

In 1876, he went to work for Harper and Brothers, in New York, but it wasn't until late 1877, after meeting Charles Parsons, the art director at the company, that Pyle would catch his big break. Pyle requested that Parsons allow him to finish a complete illustration for publication instead of handing it over to one of the more experienced illustrators.

Parsons reluctantly agreed, and Pyle spent six weeks developing his illustration. Not only was his illustration accepted, but it also was a double-page layout in Harper's Weekly. This event would be the turning point in his career.

Through hard work and endurance, Pyle finally became a successful illustrator and one of the most sought-after illustrators in New York.

He produced hundreds of illustrations for Parsons and began writing and illustrating children's books like those his mother exposed him to when he was young. Between "1883 and 1888 Pyle published six books, four of them enduring masterpieces for children," Agosta says.

Pyle also gathered the respect and admiration of U.S. presidents Woodrow Wilson and Theodore Roosevelt with his illustrations of American history.

Through his teaching with a generous spirit, Pyle would deeply inspire some of the greatest American illustrators of the 20th century, including Maxfield Parrish, Jessie Wilcox Smith, and N.C. Wyeth.

PUBLIC DOMAIN

Maxfield Parrish was one of Howard Pyle's successful students. "The Lantern Bearers," 1908, by Maxfield Parrish. Oil on canvas mounted on cardboard; 40 inches by 32 inches. Crystal Bridges Museum of American Art.

PUBLIC DOMAIN

N.C. Wyeth was a student of Howard Pyle. "Title Page of 'The Boy's King Arthur,'" 1917, by N.C. Wyeth. Oil on canvas, 32 5/8 inches by 22 9/16 inches. The Andrew and Betsy Wyeth Collection.

Teaching

It wasn't until 1894 that Pyle decided to teach. By this time, he was at the forefront of what would become the Golden Age of American Illustration.

"In deciding to teach, Pyle wished to do more than merely share with younger artists the skills he had so painstakingly acquired. Ever zealous to raise the standards of American Illustration ... he crusaded for a native art characterized by American methods used to depict American subjects," Agosta says.

Pyle taught according to two principles: mental projection and original composition. Mental projection consisted of "the ability to thrust the self imaginatively into the scene being depicted."

Original composition was one of his most important teaching tools. He encouraged students to compose pictures in whichever way would allow their artistic intentions to be expressed freshly and powerfully to the viewer.

PUBLIC DOMAIN

"Thomas Jefferson Writing the Declaration of Independence," circa 1898, by Howard Pyle. Delaware Art Museum.

The Teacher Who Gives

Pyle first offered to teach at the Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Arts in Philadelphia, but the institution turned him down, citing that it was a school of fine arts and not of illustration. Pyle instead began to teach at the Drexel Institute of Art, Science, and Industry.

He excelled so much as a teacher that the Drexel administration decided to expand his classes into a School of Illustration—the first school of its kind—under his direction. It wasn't long before Pyle was overwhelmed by the many students who needed basic instruction.

Frustrated by a lack of commitment from many students, Pyle, according to Jeff A. Menges, requested from the Drexel administration a summer class for which he would carefully choose students who would do the best with his methods. He also offered to teach these classes for free.

The Drexel administration agreed, and Pyle was able to implement his teaching methodology quickly. He reported that his students improved more from two months of summer study than they had in a year of regular training.

After six years of teaching, Pyle decided to resign from Drexel and open his own art school—the Howard Pyle School of Art. He would accept about 200 students throughout his teaching career and never charged them any money. Instead, he lived off of what he made from his illustrations.

Through his teaching with a generous spirit, Pyle would deeply inspire some of the greatest American illustrators of the 20th century, including Maxfield Parrish, Jessie Wilcox Smith, and N.C. Wyeth.

According to Agosta, several of Pyle's students had nothing but praise for their teacher. Maxfield Parrish had this to say about him:

"It was not so much the actual things he taught us as contacts with his personality that really counted. Somehow, after a talk with him, you felt inspired to go out and do great things, and wondered by what magic he did it."

N.C. Wyeth also praised Pyle's teaching spirit:

"Wyeth ... wrote of Pyle's ability to make his pupils see life and art in a new way ... Wyeth described his first composition lecture from Pyle as having 'opened my eyes more than any talk I ever heard.'"

Lessons for Life

Pyle's love of art fascinates me. He was willing to teach for free students who were ready to commit themselves to a life of illustrating.

According to his teaching methods and how he lived his life, I believe that a life devoted to illustration requires certain character traits.

First, an illustrator has to be imaginative. By imagination, I don't think Pyle meant altering reality for the sake of being quirky or original. Instead, he said, "My friends tell me ... that my pictures look as though I had lived in that time." And he told his students, "Project your mind into the subject until you actually live in it ... Throw your heart into the picture and then jump in after it."

To me, this lesson in illustrating is also a lesson of empathy. It asks the students to step outside of themselves and consider what somewhere or someone else looks like, feels like, thinks like, and so on.

Second, the illustrator has to effectively communicate empathy by way of the composition. Illustrators must again step outside of themselves to consider how the viewer will best experience and understand the illustration. Thus, the illustrator practices empathy twice over with each new work.

Thirdly, illustrators give of themselves, not only their images but also some of the most precious things they own: their time and their efforts.

In other words, the illustrator must constantly consider others.

How might we imagine other places and times as a practice of empathy? How might we be more empathetic in the ways we communicate with the people around us? And how might we use our time and our efforts to uplift and encourage those around us?

Art history is a story that forever unfolds. It is also our story, the story of the human race. Each generation of artists affects their respective cultures with their works of art and their decisions in life. This series will share stories from art history that encourage us to ask ourselves how we may be more sincere, caring, and patient human beings.

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

PUBLIC DOMAIN · HULTON ARCHIVE/GETTY IMAGES · THE RODGERS AND HAMMERSTEIN ORGANIZATION · PUBLIC DOMAIN

1. Richard Rodgers at the St. James Theatre in 1948.

2. Julie Andrews in the opening scene of Rodgers and Hammerstein's "The Sound of Music."

3. Composer Richard Rodgers seated at piano with lyricist Lorenz Hart. Library of Congress's Prints and Photographs Division.

4. (L–R) Richard Rodgers, Dorothy Hammerstein, Dorothy Rodgers, and Oscar Hammerstein II visiting Oklahoma in November 1946.

Of all Broadway composers, none was more versatile or influential than Richard Rodgers.

MUSIC

American Treasures: The Songs of Richard Rodgers

STEPHEN OLES

Today many think of Broadway musicals as esoteric or effete, but from the 1920s through the 1960s, they were mainstream popular entertainment, spinning off hit songs recorded by stars like Bing Crosby and Judy Garland. My Uncle Keith, for example, was a tough Army vet, a man's man, yet he loved musical theater. When we visited his family over the holidays, he'd happily show us VHS tapes of "Oklahoma!" or "Camelot." Even today, who doesn't recognize "Some Enchanted Evening" from "South Pacific" or "Luck Be a Lady" from "Guys and Dolls"?

Some musicals even became cultural icons. Opening in 1943, "Oklahoma!" ran on Broadway for over five years. The box set of its score (six 78 RPM discs) sold over a million copies. The 1955 movie version filled theaters and has thrived ever since on television. Its soundtrack was the first "Gold" record, and by 1992 it was certified "2X Multi-Platinum."

"My Fair Lady" ran even longer, and its cast album stayed on the Billboard chart for 480 weeks, outselling Elvis and the Beatles. For decades, musicals brought Americans together, enriching and elevating our shared popular culture.

Of all Broadway composers, none was more versatile or influential than Richard Rodgers. Born in 1902 to Mamie and Dr. William Rodgers, a respected physician who had changed the family name from Rogazinsky, he grew up in New York, studied music at the school now called Juilliard, and attended Columbia, where he met a young writer named Lorenz Hart. Together they started writing songs, with little success.

Rodgers and Hart

After years of doing amateur shows for no money, Rodgers resignedly took a job selling children's underwear. That very day, in 1925, he got an offer to score a benefit show that became a surprise hit on Broadway, propelled by Rodgers and Hart's first of many standards:

> "Manhattan."
> "I'll take Manhattan,
> The Bronx and Staten Island, too.
> It's lovely going through the zoo…"

Even the Supremes recorded that one.

Rodgers's lively tunes and Hart's sly wit and tricky rhymes proved to be a winning combination. The incredible 28 shows they wrote together produced a seemingly endless parade of memorable songs, including "Blue Moon," "My Funny Valentine," "The Lady Is a Tramp," "Isn't It Romantic?," "Where or When," and "You Took Advantage of Me." The team sought never to repeat themselves: Their formula was ... don't have a formula!

Every new show was an experiment, expanding what musical comedy could be. But in 1940, some thought they went too far. "Pal Joey" told the tale of an unscrupulous hoofer who romances a rich older woman to open his own nightclub. The New York Times review concluded: "Although 'Pal Joey' is expertly done, can you draw sweet water from a foul well?" (Later revivals revealed the solid moral values under this musical's cynical veneer, and it was recognized as a classic.)

The show made its youthful leading man, Gene Kelly, a star. And Doris Day's hit recording of the rich lady's lament, "Bewitched, Bothered and Bewildered," was followed by many others.

Rodgers had worked exclusively with Hart, but by the early 1940s, the lyricist was losing a long battle with alcohol and depression. Rodgers, torn between his loyalty to Hart and a need to create new songs and shows, turned to an older colleague for help. In the 1920s, Oscar Hammerstein II had co-written operettas like "Rose-Marie" and "The Desert Song"; also "Show Boat" (1927) was so innovative that it made operetta obsolete. But after a series of flops, Hammerstein himself seemed obsolete, a fading name from a bygone era. Rodgers, though, knew better than to count out the man who'd written "Show Boat."

In 1941, a Theatre Guild producer sent Rodgers an old play they owned the rights to, "Green Grow the Lilacs." The homespun tale of cowboys and farm girls didn't appeal to Hart, who hadn't long to live, but Hammerstein agreed it might make a good musical. That's how our composer entered the second phase of his career.

Rodgers and Hammerstein

Rodgers and Hammerstein got to work adapting the play. As the show took shape, with choreographer Agnes de Mille added to the team, everyone started getting goosebumps, aware that they were creating something new and different—beyond the usual Broadway formula of toe-tapping tunes, vulgar comics, and scantily clad chorus girls. Was it too different? That was the verdict of experts like producer Mike Todd, who walked out of a preview sneering: "No gags, no gals, no chance," according to Ethan Mordden's book "Rodgers and Hammerstein."

"Oklahoma!" did more than prove the experts wrong. It was the biggest smash in Broadway history. Songs like "The Surrey With the Fringe on Top" and "People Will Say We're in Love" were immediate hits. Radio and records brought the score into American living rooms, and the faithful movie version is as beloved today as it was 60 years ago.

Almost overnight, the show revolutionized Broadway, replacing "legs and laffs" with a new paradigm: Words, music, and dance combined seamlessly to tell a meaningful story that evoked real emotions. Characters had depth, and comic scenes were balanced with more serious themes. In "Oklahoma!" a debauched farm hand attempts murder and dies in a knife fight. What?! Frothy, superficial entertainments paled in comparison. A new kind of show required a new name: "Musical comedy" was out, and the "musical play" or "integrated musical" was in.

In later shows, the team fearlessly took on hot-button issues: crime and spousal abuse ("Carousel"), cultural conflict ("The King and I"), war and racial prejudice ("South Pacific"), and even Nazis ("The Sound of Music"). All of it sung to Rodgers's unforgettable music.

Rodgers, the Musical Magician

So what's so great about the music? In his first phase, Rodgers matched Hart's quicksilver wit with clever, witty tunes. With Hammerstein, his music changed completely. His new partner's warm, openhearted lyrics called for warmer, more expansive melodies. The tunes were often simple but never simplistic. It took Rodgers enormous effort, knowledge, and skill to produce songs as apparently unsophisticated as "Bali Hai" and "Oh, What a Beautiful Mornin'."

Let's look at the latter, the song that opens "Oklahoma!" to see how Rodgers takes the familiar and makes it unique. He sets "oh what a beau-ti-ful" on an elementary musical phrase—in the key of C major it goes G-E-B-C-E-G. Simple so far, but then on "MOR-ning" he hits us with a "wrong note," a B-flat that doesn't belong in the key at all. When the phrase repeats in the third line, the flat is replaced by a B natural, resolving the dissonance and making us feel that the tune itself is taking flight over the bright prairie where,

> "The corn is as high as an elephant's eye,
> An' it looks like it's climbing clear up to the sky."

Most people have heard this song, but how many realize that it's a waltz? Typically, Broadway composers had avoided 3/4 time because it recalled old-time operettas like "The Merry Widow." Then came Rodgers. His waltzes were different: American as apple pie and so smartly composed that most listeners don't even realize they're in 3/4.

You might call them "stealth waltzes." Other examples are "Edelweiss," "My Favorite Things" and the touching "Hello, Young Lovers." Then again, when you expect a waltz—as in "Shall We Dance" from "The King and I"—he doesn't give you one. Rodgers never settled for the obvious.

Many of his songs use the most basic musical structure: the scale. He finds endless ways to deploy and modify it. His first hit, "Manhattan," begins by repeating a plain major scale over and over, like a child practicing piano. The effect is startling in its squareness, making Hart's amusing lyrics even funnier. In their final show, Rodgers and Hammerstein paid charming tribute to the musical scale with "Do-Re-Mi."

How amazing is it that Rodgers and Hammerstein wrote their happiest show in 1959, when Hammerstein was dying of cancer? The lyricist gave the world one last gift of joy and beauty: "The Sound of Music." His love of nature, children, and everyday people was undimmed to the end. The loss of Hammerstein devastated Rodgers. All his career, he'd only worked with two partners. Both were gone. What would he do now?

Rodgers wrote his own lyrics for his last success, "No Strings," and worked with other writers, but none of his later shows pleased critics or audiences. No matter—when he died in 1979, his place was secure in our national culture and in the hearts of millions of Americans.

RKO RADIO PICTURES

Shirley Jones and Gordon MacRae in the film version of "Oklahoma!"

The Legacy

In Rodgers's era, Broadway composers didn't just want hit shows. They wanted hits on the radio, so they built their songs to function doubly: in their specific theatrical contexts and more generally, as pop hits for Tony Bennett or Rosemary Clooney. "My Funny Valentine," for example, was sung in "Babes in Arms" to a character named Valentine, but it works just as well without him.

Some of the songs outlived their shows in surprising ways. "You'll Never Walk Alone," sung to the heroine of "Carousel" by her cousin, became an inspirational classic. Playing it over and over gave a horribly wounded young soldier named Bob Dole the courage to overcome his injuries, become a senator, and run for president. It's hard to find a singer, choir, or chorus that hasn't performed this affecting anthem. It's heard at graduations, tributes, and presidential inaugurations, and you'll find it today in the hymn books of many African American churches. The famed Liverpool soccer team even adopted it as their theme song.

With both Hart and Hammerstein, Rodgers searched tirelessly for fresh ways to express universal human emotions. (Rodgers was the first EGOT—winner of an Emmy, a Grammy, an Oscar, and a Tony Award. Only 15 others have joined this exclusive club.) He built his melodies to last, and they have for close to a century, proving that our classic musicals and popular songs can still delight and touch the hearts of Americans from every walk of life. Even my Uncle Keith.

Stephen Oles has worked as an inner city school teacher, a writer, actor, singer, and a playwright. His plays have been performed in London, Seattle, Los Angeles, and Long Beach, California. He lives in Seattle and is currently working on his second novel.

REWIND, REVIEW, AND RE-RATE

Young Director Stanley Kubrick's Scathing Indictment of War

IAN KANE

"Full Metal Jacket" (1987) is a modern-day war classic by all accounts. It covers the Vietnam War: Everything from the stressful weeks that men spent in boot camp, all the way to the brutal carnage during the soldiers' climactic street and jungle battles. But it wasn't director Stanley Kubrick's only war-movie masterpiece. There is also one of his earliest works, 1957's "Paths of Glory."

The film is set in 1916, right in the middle of the World War I (1914–1918). Germany has attacked France, and after grueling trench warfare on the Western Front, the two world powers have settled into an uneasy stalemate where successes are measured in hundreds of yards.

This stalemate doesn't sit well with the French army's general staff. They want to break through the impasse, impose their will upon the Germans, and kick them out of their country.

'Paths of Glory' is an excellent war drama with gorgeous sets and outstanding acting.

With this in mind, French Army Gen. Broulard (Adolphe Menjou) pays a visit to his old friend, Gen. Mireau (George Macready), who resides in an opulent French château. Broulard informs Mireau that headquarters is gearing up for a big offensive to break through the German lines. But Mireau tells Broulard that his men are war-weary and in need some good old rest and relaxation.

When Broulard dangles a promotion in front of Mireau—already preapproved by headquarters—he accepts the arduous mission. So hungry is Mireau to add another star to his uniform that he doesn't waste any time and tells Broulard that his entire division, the 702nd, will be moving out in a mere couple of days.

The only problem is that the 702nd has dug in right in front of a nigh-impregnable German fortress on a hill dubbed the Ant Hill.

Mireau travels to the front lines to the 702nd's field commander, Col. Dax (Kirk Douglas), who was one of the most revered attorneys in all of France before joining the military. The two men clearly care little for one another, as evidenced by verbal barbs they fling back and forth.

When Dax informs Mireau that his men are already stretched to the limit of their endurance, Mireau chastises him and challenges his bravery. Dax reluctantly acquiesces but knows that Mireau's orders to storm the Ant Hill will result in severe casualties for his unit; it's a suicide mission.

In a beautifully heroic scene, Dax walks through the trenches to boost his men's morale as artillery barrages explode all around them, coating everything in swathes of dirt. His men thus steeled, he courageously climbs out of the trenches and leads his men through "no man's land," the wide patch of land between the French and German trench lines.

Ironically, quite a number of men already occupy the place—it's just that they're all dead.

UNITED ARTISTS

Kirk Douglas plays the heroic Col. Dax in "Paths of Glory."

'Paths of Glory'

Director
Stanley Kubrick

Starring
Kirk Douglas, Ralph Meeker, Adolphe Menjou, George Macready

Running Time
1 hour, 28 minutes

Not Rated

Release Date
1957

★★★★½

When the first wave of the attack is obliterated by the Germans, Mireau orders the second wave, "B Company," to move in. However, B Company men are hunkered down in the trenches behind French front lines and refuse to budge, citing the obvious—that they'll end up getting smashed to pieces as well.

Mireau ruthlessly orders the battery commander to fire on B Company as a way of both punishing them and spurring them into action. But the battery commander rightly regards Mireau's order as illegal and won't comply unless he sees it in written form.

When Dax, who barely survived the first wave, runs back to rally B Company, a French soldier's corpse flies out of no man's land and collides with him—symbolically drawing the failed assault on Ant Hill to a close.

Mireau is furious with the 702nd's failure and accuses them of the ultimate military sin: cowardice. At first, Mireau wants 100 men from the unit court martialed for defying his orders. However, the more sensible Gen. Broulard steers Mireau away from his impulsively commanded punishment and gets that severe number reduced to just three—one soldier from each of the division's three companies: Cpl. Philippe Paris (Ralph Meeker), Pvt. Pierre Arnaud (Joe Turkel), and Pvt. Maurice Ferol (Timothy Carey).

Dax steps in to defend the three men, knowing that if convicted, they'll be brought before a firing squad. But as the trial begins, he begins to sense that it's not quite legitimate—more of a farce than anything.

Douglas is fascinating as a man who sticks to his convictions, despite the great risks to his career. Meeker, Turkel, and Carey are poignant in their depictions of doomed men awaiting trial. But George Macready as the monstrous, power-hungry Gen. Mireau is so convincing that he generally steals every scene he's in, barring, of course, those with Kirk Douglas.

"Paths of Glory" is an excellent war drama with gorgeous sets and outstanding acting. And as an extra treat, it gives us a look at Kubrick's burgeoning directorial talent.

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

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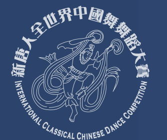

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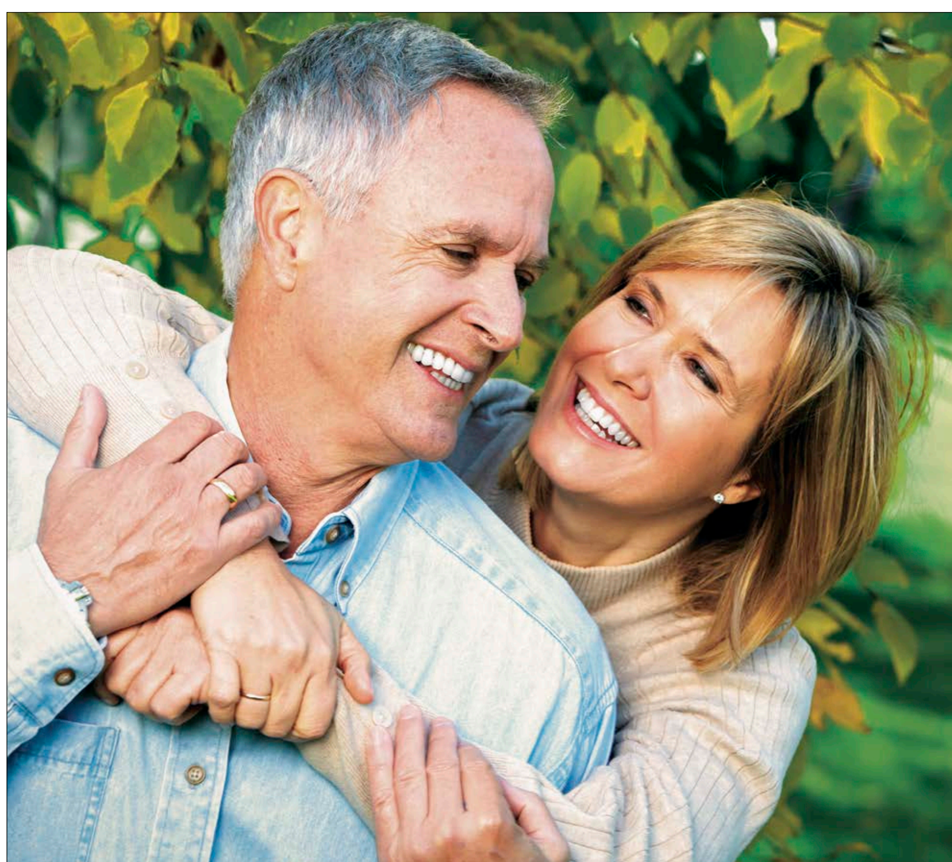

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