

# THE EPOCH TIMES

# ARTS & CULTURE

FINE ARTS

## The Bibiena Family: The Doyens of European Theater Design

'Architecture, Theater, and Fantasy: Bibiena Drawings From the Jules Fisher Collection,' an exhibition at The Morgan Library & Museum

LORRAINE FERRIER

In 1716, poet Alexander Pope received a letter from writer Lady Mary Wortley Montagu, who had just seen a performance of "Angelica vincitrice di Alcina" in Vienna. "Nothing of the kind was ever more magnificent; and I can easily believe what I am told, that the decorations [sets] and habits [costumes] cost the Emperor thirty thousand pounds sterling [over \$4.1 million today]," she wrote, as quoted in the exhibition catalog for The Morgan Library & Museum's "Architecture, Theater, and Fantasy: Bibiena Drawings From the Jules Fisher Collection."

The lavish—often fantastical—sets she referred to were designed by the Italian Bibiena family, who pioneered a new approach to theater set design. It was an innovation that made them the most sought-after theater designers for nearly a century.

JANNY CHIU/THE MORGAN LIBRARY &amp; MUSEUM



"Courtyard of a Palace, a Design for the Stage," circa 1710–20, by Giuseppe Galli Bibiena. Pen and brown ink, gray wash, and blue watercolor, over graphite; 12 1/8 inches by 8 1/4 inches. Promised gift of Jules Fisher, The Morgan Library & Museum.

Some 300 hundred years after the Vienna performance, John Marciari, who is the Morgan's Charles W. Engelhard curator and head of the department of drawings and prints, witnessed similar exclamations of delight: A couple of his colleagues were on their way to a meeting when they took a shortcut through the study room where Marciari was studying a selection of Bibiena set design drawings.

"These were fairly young employees in their 20s, and they saw these drawings and they just went wild for them," he said in a telephone interview. They'd never seen anything like it, and wanted to know more, he added.

There has not been an exhibition in America dedicated to the Bibiena in more than 30 years, and although Marciari was planning one, he was unsure how much interest there would be. But his colleagues' responses to the Bibiena drawings encouraged him.

Marciari tells us more about The Morgan Library & Museum exhibition "Architecture, Theater, and Fantasy: Bibiena Drawings From the Jules Fisher Collection."

**The Epoch Times:** How did this exhibition come about?

**Mr. John Marciari:** The Morgan has a big collection of theater drawings, including over 100 Bibiena drawings, largely through the legacy of American set designer Donald Oenslager, whose collection came to the Morgan after his death. Jules Fisher, the Tony Award-winning lighting designer, is an avid collector of Bibiena drawings, and he began to think about the Morgan as an ultimate home for his collection to join the great collection already here at the Morgan. And so he began talking to us about that, and it gave us the idea of honoring his promised gift with an exhibition. We thought, we have a really rich collection of this material that we haven't shown in decades, and generally no one has.

So it's been really gratifying to see the interest in this show, both by people who are only vaguely aware of the Bibienas because of the theater connection, but even more so from people who have never heard of them, and who don't really think about drawings connected with the theater but just who are taken with these set designs.


**The Epoch Times:** For around a century, the Bibiena family dominated European theater design. Who were the Bibienas?

**Mr. Marciari:** The first artist in the family was a painter, not a man of theater at all. Giovanni Maria Galli di Bibiena (1618–1665) was born in the town of Bibbiena in Tuscany, and he traveled to Bologna [in northern Italy] to become a painter. And he specialized in trompe l'oeil, the painting of palace ceilings and walls that makes it appear as if the architecture extends further.

Giovanni trained his sons Ferdinando (1657–1743) and Francesco (1659–1739), and they began working for the Farnese Court, which at this point was back and forth between the cities of Parma and Piacenza, both in northern Italy.

Ferdinando and Francesco were working for the ducal court, and like all artists who were attached to court at the time, they were sort of impresarios of the arts in that they did some painting, but they were also asked to take part in designing contemporary decorations for festivals, and floats for ceremonial entrances if someone came to town to visit. An artist at a court like that would do everything. And so naturally, with there being important theaters going back to the previous century in Parma, and more recently in Piacenza, inevitably the duke asked them to help design some of the theatrical performances.

Continued on **Page 4**



**2021 NTD 9<sup>TH</sup> INTERNATIONAL CLASSICAL CHINESE DANCE COMPETITION**

**PRELIMINARY** | **SEMI-FINAL** | **FINAL**  
 Sept. 2-3 | Sept. 4 | Sept. 5

**Gold Award \$10,000**

**SEMI-FINAL & FINAL Tickets on Sale \$30**  
 Hotline 1-888-477-9228

**Tribeca Performing Arts Center**  
 199 Chambers Street New York, NY 10007

**DANCE.NTDTV.COM**

**SHEN YUN DANCER**

**SUMMERTIME STYLE**

SEASONAL PIECES YOU'LL LOVE



**ShenYunDancer.com**

HISTORY

# Valley of Death: The Civil War and the Shenandoah Valley

JEFF MINICK

Travel down I-81 through the Shenandoah Valley, and you'll find this corridor jam-packed with attractions: numerous caverns, a museum featuring reconstructed European houses intended to demonstrate their influence on American architecture, Cyrus McCormick's farm, a warehouse filled with gaudy floats from inauguration parades, and much more. You'll also pass through rolling hills and farmlands—the valley remains a place of agrarian beauty—and towns like Staunton, Luray, Bridgewater, and Lexington that boast historic Main Streets and lovely old homes.

In 1860, these towns were much smaller, and most of the valley's rich land was given over to farming. An abundance of crops helped support these farmers, fed their hogs and cattle, and provided them with whiskey and beer. They were Scots-Irish, English, and German for the most part—thrifty, hardworking folks who built churches and schools along with colleges like Lexington's Washington College, later renamed Washington and Lee University after Robert E. Lee served as college president, and the Virginia Military Institute. It was a place of peace and prosperity. And then war came to the valley.

**Fire and Sword**

Throughout the Civil War, armies from the North and South marched up and down the Shenandoah Valley. Winchester, originally settled by Pennsylvania Quakers before the American Revolution, was a place of particularly intense fighting because of its strategic location as the northern gateway to the valley. The town changed hands more than 70 times during the war, causing a British observer to dub it "the shuttlecock of the Confederacy." Winchester saw three major battles conducted within the town limits and four others nearby. By the end of the war, Winchester was for the most part destroyed.

As the war intensified, Union forces attempted to burn and ravage this breadbasket of the South. Northern generals recognized that by laying waste to the crops and livestock of these farms, they might severely cripple Robert E. Lee's Army of Northern Virginia. In the last year of the war, with the Confederate forces weakened by attrition, the soldiers in blue finally completed their mission to destroy the wheat fields and corn cribs that had fed their enemies.

**Headquarters**

On a hot afternoon in early July, my daughter, her husband and children, and I left

the Museum of the Shenandoah Valley, where we were pleased to find a Norman Rockwell exhibition, and traveled to an older part of Winchester to the house that once served as Stonewall Jackson's headquarters. The docent greeted us, ushered us inside, and down we dropped into the rabbit hole of history.

In November 1861, Thomas Jackson, nicknamed "Stonewall" after the Battle of Manassas that summer, arrived in Winchester to defend the Shenandoah Valley from Northern forces and to raise troops for the South. He rented rooms in a local hotel, but after the clerk alerted the town to his presence and a crowd of well-wishers gathered outside the hotel, Jackson sought quieter quarters. Col. Lewis Moore, a friend of Jackson's who had his knee shattered by a musket ball at Manassas, invited Jackson to use his home as his headquarters while he traveled south to receive better medical attention.

Inside this home, visitors will find the largest collection of Jackson memorabilia in existence, including the traveling desk that served as his headquarters table, various books, his prayer table and treasured prayer book, and many other articles from his life. Here, too, we learn that Jackson enjoyed playing with a neighbor's children, often getting down on his hands and knees to give them pony rides, a scene shocking to those who picture this general as stern and puritanical. We also discover that the general read Scripture even while riding his horse from post to post, discussing various passages with those accompanying him.

And it was here that Jackson would prepare himself and his troops for the Valley Campaign in the summer of 1862, when, outnumbered and outgunned, his men marched 350 miles in 30 days and defeated three Northern commanders and their troops in five pitched battles. Even today, professional soldiers and students of military history study this remarkable campaign.

**The Field of Lost Shoes**

On another day that week, we drove 50 miles south down I-81 to the town of New Market. Visible from the expressway are the placid fields where once cannons roared, muskets cracked, and men from the North and the South fell screaming with pain into the mud. Today, visitors can tour the Virginia Museum of the Civil War, operated by the Virginia Military Institute, and take a self-guided walking tour of the battlefield itself.

It was here, on May 15, 1864, that Southern forces under the command of John C. Breckinridge clashed with the forces



Depiction of cadets from the Virginia Military Institute at the Battle of New Market (1864) during the American Civil War. Engraving by H.C. Edwards from the 1903 American history textbook "A School History of the United States."



The Shenandoah Valley in Virginia, circa 1864, when intense fighting took place during the American Civil War. Printed by Currier & Ives.

of Union Gen. Franz Sigel. Though the Confederates won the battle, their victory only briefly protected the Valley from Northern aggression.

We remember this battle today not because of its outcome but because 257 cadets from the Virginia Military Institute, summoned by Breckinridge, left their classrooms and marched over 80 miles north from Lexington to take part in the fight. Breckinridge had vowed not to commit these boys—some were only 15 years old—to battle, but soon realized he needed them. Eventually, they charged and helped drive their opponents north up the valley.

It had rained that day, and during that charge, many of the cadets lost their shoes in the muck of the newly plowed fields they crossed, giving the name "Field of Lost Shoes" to that part of the battleground.

The cadets who survived this battle soon joined Lee's army. Two months later, Gen. David Hunter and his bluecoats looted and burned the institute in Lexington.

This was the first and only time in Ameri-

## Throughout the Civil War, armies from the North and South marched up and down the Shenandoah Valley.

can history when an entire student body fought a battle as a unit under one banner.

**Ripples**

When stripping away the wallpaper in the Moore house (Jackson's headquarters) during renovations, a teenager unintentionally tore off the original covering, which Jackson had described in a letter to his wife: "The walls are covered with elegant gilt paper. I don't remember to have seen more beautiful papering...." Only a fragment, hanging behind a painting, was preserved.

During this renovation, a woman visiting from California asked if she might take that surviving piece of wallpaper home with her. Those restoring the house agreed, and she left. For months, no one heard a word from her. Then one day there arrived enough duplicated papering to cover the entire room. And Jackson was right; it is the most beautiful of papers, shimmering and changing color when the viewer moves about the room.

That woman's name? It was Mary Tyler Moore, television star and a descendant of



Union Gen. Philip Sheridan riding through the Shenandoah Valley, Va., in 1864. "Sheridan's Ride" (circa 1886) by Thure de Thulstrup.



the Moore family who had owned the house. She saluted the past out of love and respect.

And on May 15 every year, the Virginia Military Institute honors the 10 cadets who died on the field of battle or of their wounds, and then the names of the fallen are called out. With each name, a cadet gives the now traditional reply: "Died on the field of honor." "The past is not dead," William Faulkner once wrote. "It's not even past."

In the fields and hills of the Shenandoah Valley, the past still lives.

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](http://JeffMinick.com) to follow his blog.

Col. Moore's house used by "Stonewall" Jackson as headquarters during the battles in the Shenandoah Valley.

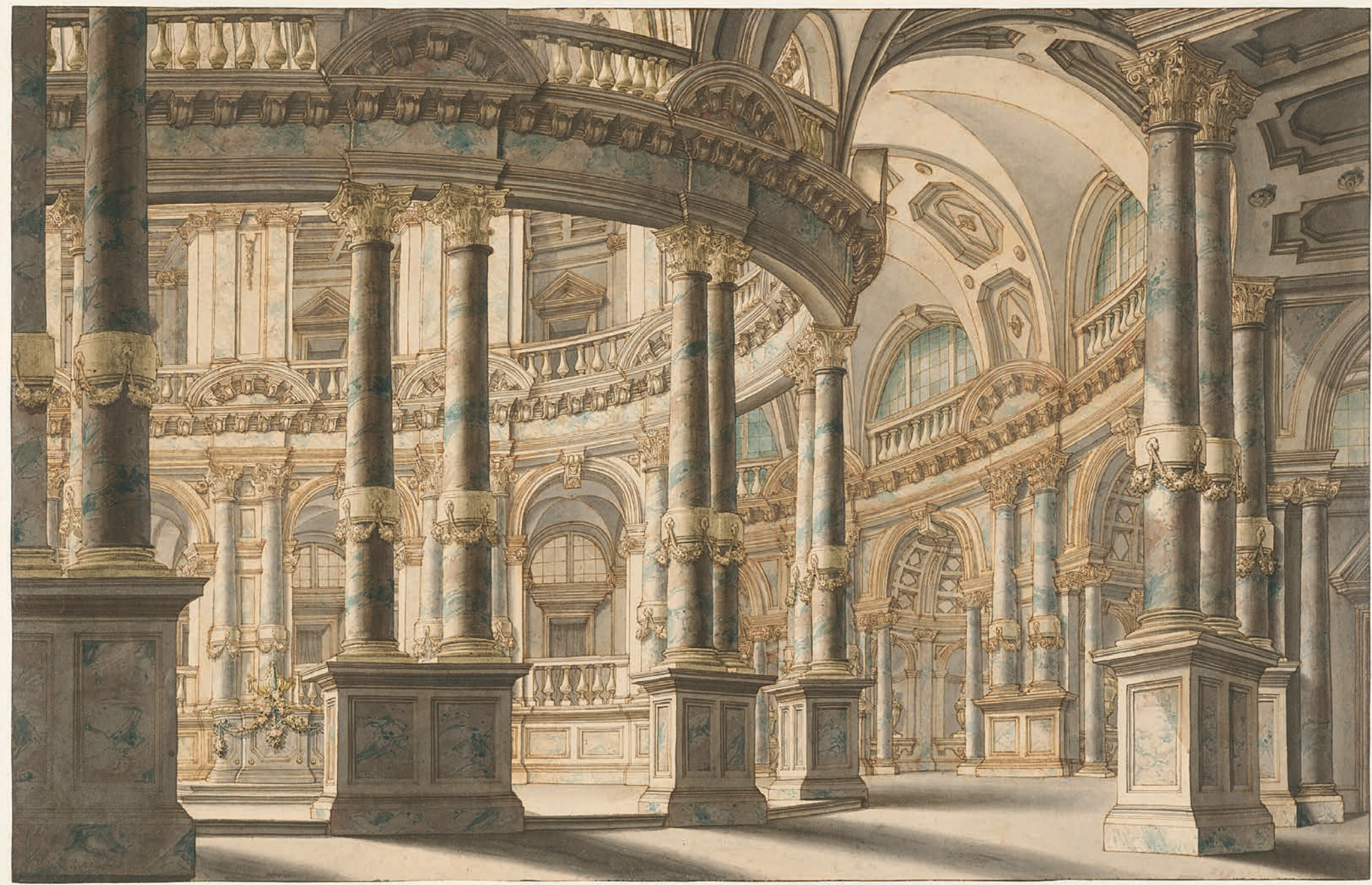
**亂極當治**

**Virtue of the Brush in a Time of Chaos**

"When things are chaotic to the extreme, order must be restored."  
 - "The four books" by Zhu Xi

The original calligraphy is now available for purchase at [InspiredOriginal.Org](http://InspiredOriginal.Org)

**INSPIRED ORIGINAL**



"Circular Colonnaded Atrium," circa 1730, attributed to Giuseppe Galli Bibiena. Pen and brown ink, gray wash, blue and green watercolor, and white opaque watercolor; 15 7/8 inches by 24 5/8 inches. Promised gift of Jules Fisher, The Morgan Library & Museum.

## FINE ARTS

# The Bibiena Family: The Doyens of European Theater Design

'Architecture, Theater, and Fantasy: Bibiena Drawings From the Jules Fisher Collection,' an exhibition at The Morgan Library & Museum

Continued from Page 1

Because Ferdinando had trained in the complicated art of perspective, he thought: Well, what if we use this two-point perspective—something known to scientists but never used in the theater, or really in painting before. So instead of a single vanishing point in the middle of the stage, buildings were projected using two vanishing points that would be off in the wings of the stage.

So essentially, every building on stage gets turned, and the audience sees them at an oblique angle. This means a couple of things: For one, that the illusion works from anywhere in the theater, not only from someone seated right in the center of the audience. And also that it opens up worlds. If you have a vanishing point in

“**Instead of a single vanishing point in the middle of the stage, buildings were projected using two vanishing points.**

John Marciari, curator

the middle of a stage, eventually the perspective collapses onto itself. Whereas if it's viewed at an angle, with a few columns you can suggest infinite space beyond it, without having to draw in each individual column because the perspective vanishing points are not seen. And it literally changed the way sets look.

No one had ever seen a theater set that looked like this before; it was a whole new world.

And the way that my colleague Arnold Aronson, who's a professor of theater, describes this in the catalog is that instead of the proscenium arch being a kind of the world beyond the proscenium arch—an extension of the viewer's space—with a Bibiena set, suddenly, it's a window onto a parallel, but splendid reality. We don't have to pretend that it's your space; it's a window onto a whole other world.

It's a complete paradigm shift in the history of theater, and it's such a dramatic shift that everyone who sees what the Bibienas did in a set then tried to get a member of the family to come and design sets at their theater.

So the Bibienas start moving outward from the area of Bologna, Parma, Piacenza, up to Mantua, to Venice and then, of course, far beyond that to Vienna especially (which was just completely smitten with the theater) and where the family worked for generations. But they literally worked in theaters everywhere, from Lisbon in the West to St. Petersburg in the East, and from Naples in the South to Stockholm in the North.

And it's one of the great eras of theater. Italian opera was becoming popular and musical performances and theater are on a scale not seen prior to the 18th century. I think of the international fame of someone like Vivaldi or like the celebrated Italian castrato singer Farinelli. It's a really international art world for music and theater in the 18th century, so the Bibienas profited by their invention, and also they were hitting the right moment when theater in general was expanding.

The Bibiena family built 13 theaters over the course of the 18th century, only two of which survived. So the drawings are the best record we have of their genius.

**The Epoch Times:** The exhibition catalog describes the Bibienas' set drawings as scenographic art. Can you please tell us more about that?

**Mr. Marciari:** They are, by and large, working drawings. These are really aiming not at being drawings, but as working documents to create the illusion onstage. I like to describe the process this way: The set designer has an idea in his head of what he wants the audience to perceive on stage. That will be a three-dimensional illusion: what the audience sees on stage, behind the actors in the depth of the stage. And then you have to translate that to a two-dimensional sketch, the first idea.

Many of the Bibienas, and others who worked in theater, were trained as painters. So they started to work with a sketch; that's the way an Italian artist works. And then they went from a rough sketch to a carefully finished drawing that helps to explain to the people who actually have to build the sets what they're meant to do.

So it is getting an idea out of the designer's head onto the page as a two-dimensional drawing, which then needs to be re-created as a set in the theater through a combination of several flats wheeled in from the wings, or dropped from the fly system above the stage as a painted backdrop. So now you have the two-dimensional image being blown into three dimensions, but still being created with two-dimensional flat illusionistic paintings. They don't ever actually build columns and arches. It's all painted on several layers of flats, making use of actual trompe l'oeil perspective technique, which is where the Bibiena family began.

**The Epoch Times:** I also read in the exhibition catalog that the attribution of these drawings is somewhat problematic. Why is that?

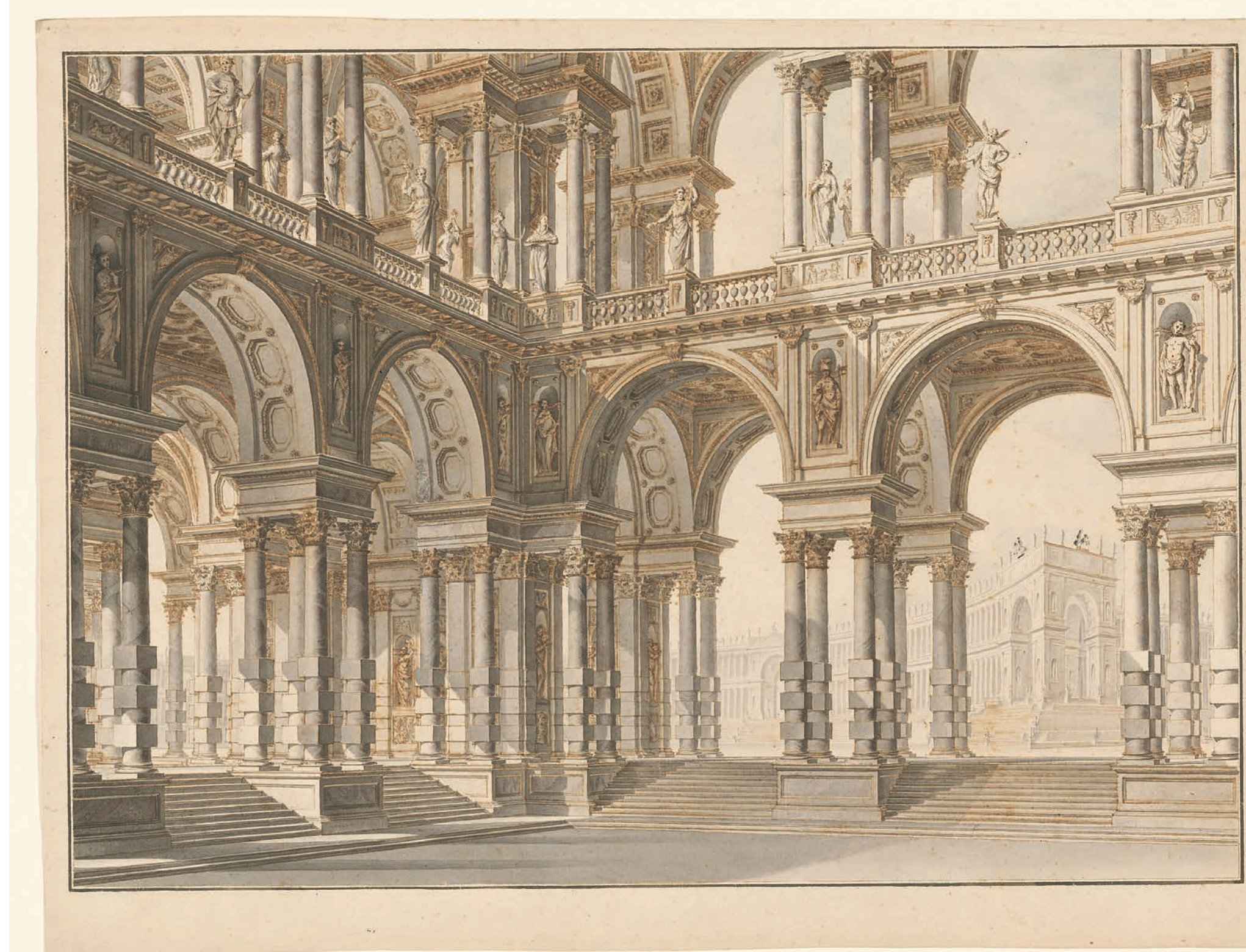
**Mr. Marciari:** Because they are a family workshop, where a father trains his son(s) and also nephew(s), and they all work together on projects, it is very hard to know who is responsible for any one thing. For example, you could have a performance in, let's say, Vienna, where Giuseppe Galli Bibiena is the contracted, documented impresario responsible for the performance. But he has his son Carlo, and who knows how many other assistants working with him. So even if you can connect a drawing to a specific performance, it's rather hard to know whether that was created by Giuseppe, Carlo, or one of the others.

It's easier to ascribe a drawing to one generation of the family than to specify which member of the workshop did it. For instance, Giuseppe wrote a book and published a lot of designs, so we can study Giuseppe's designs and see how they're different from those of his father, Ferdinando.

But I don't want to insist on the attributions. When I look at drawings by Italian painters, attribution is one of the first things I worry about, but that just isn't a primary concern for me or most scholars in thinking about the Bibienas. Again, it's because they were not made as artistic performances. They're not drawings that are meant to be recognized as the work of one or another person; they are working drawings.

**The Epoch Times:** What fascinated you the most when you put this exhibition together?

**Mr. Maciari:** My specialty is Italian art: paintings and drawings by painters in



"Courtyard of a Princely Palace," circa 1719, by Giuseppe Galli Bibiena. Pen and brown ink, gray wash, and blue watercolor; 13 3/4 inches by 18 inches. Promised gift of Jules Fisher, The Morgan Library & Museum.

the 16th–18th centuries. I'm not a theater person. So I was learning the history of theater drawings to a certain extent as I was working on the show.

And, what I was trying to explain earlier about the idea that these are two-dimensional drawings that are ultimately a three-dimensional creation that is then made into this two-dimensional illusionistic painting—it is a very different relationship than you have when a painter starts by sketching on a piece of paper or something similar that could then be painted on a flat canvas.

The give-and-take between the idea in the mind, the drawing on the page, and the creation on the stage, in this mix of two and three dimensions, I found that was a fascinating way of thinking about these drawings and what the artist was trying to convey as he put pen to paper.

I also love how you can really see things being worked out. In some of the drawings, they look like they're free-sketches, but there are these carefully measured pencil lines underneath that set out the perspective scheme. Or some of them have letters, which are clearly indications of the different flats.

And again, the set designer is working with a playwright, the choreographer, a musician, and then a patron; they're very much collaborative works. And in some drawings, we can see the working, where there's a design, and then obviously someone said, "No, no, you have to change this, or dress this up a bit more." There is one drawing in the show that was clearly a carefully completed drawing, but then over the top of it, additional decoration has been quickly drawn, and there were even additional elements once glued on top. What's been left to us on paper was maybe the most interesting aspect of the show for me.

My favorites are, in fact, those drawings that give the idea that these are working documents. Ferdinando's drawing "Left Portion of a Palatial Hall, a Design for the Stage," which he created circa 1720–30, is a really lively sketch, but it's over the top of his carefully constructed pencil perspective drawing. You get the sense that he had to live it up. Having designed the space carefully, as a draftsman, as a perspective scientist, he then—in order to give a sense of the drama, and the light and shade—draws over the top of that. And then the drawing also has the letters buried in there, "G," "H," and so on, which correspond to the different parts of the set, the flats, that were used to create the illusion on stage. So that's my favorite. It's one where you see all of that backed up in the piece of paper.



“**No one had ever seen a theater set that looked like this before; it was a whole new world.**

John Marciari, curator

“Left Portion of a Palatial Hall, a Design for the Stage,” circa 1720–30, by Ferdinando Galli Bibiena. Pen and brown ink and wash, over graphite; 11 3/4 inches by 6 7/8 inches. Gift of Jules Fisher, The Morgan Library & Museum.

The exhibition, "Architecture, Theater, and Fantasy: Bibiena Drawings From the Jules Fisher Collection," at The Morgan Library & Museum runs until Sept. 12. To learn more, visit [TheMorgan.org](http://TheMorgan.org)



"Stage Design With Sailing Vessels," circa 1718, by Francesco Bibiena. Pen and brown ink and wash, over graphite; 10 inches by 15 3/8 inches. Gift of Jules Fisher, The Morgan Library & Museum.



This large jade ring from the Qing Dynasty exemplifies the original style that influenced Chinese jewelry like jade bracelets for many years to come.

## TRADITIONAL CULTURE

# The Spirit of Jade

Its sacred and noble status in Chinese culture

ANN LIN

Jade is a beautiful stone that suggests water-like fluidity and kindness. Beyond its delicate yet firm texture, it embodies thousands of years of Chinese culture. One can get a sense of Chinese people's long-lasting admiration for the luster and brilliance of jade through children's names, poetry, literature, and paintings.

### A Tale of Jade From the Neolithic

In Chinese legend, Gong Gong, the lord of water, was defeated in an epic battle with Zhu Rong, the lord of fire. Feeling disgraced and furious, Gong Gong destroyed one of the pillars maintaining balance and stability in the universe. The earth collapsed, with chaos and disasters sending humans into endless misery. Nuwa, the mother of all humans, was saddened by this tragedy. She fused together five-colored stones to patch up the hole in the sky and rescue mankind. The remainder of the stones were scattered abroad into all kinds of jade. This is the origin of jade's sacred and noble status in Chinese culture.

The finest-quality jadeite can endure extreme heat, pressure, and erosion. Its strength, personified as fortitude, was recognized by our ancestors in the Neolithic Age. In ancient China, people regarded jade as a medium of communication with the divine and an embodiment of virtue, including truthfulness, purity, propriety, and benevolence.

In traditional Chinese culture, people use jade to describe men with noble character. Jade is firm and composed; it can even gleam through dirt and dust. Its purity and virtues can be revealed through carving and polishing.

1. It takes more than 60 million years for Fei Cui to form. The finest Fei Cui is found only in northern Burma (also known as Myanmar), where the environment is harsh, and mining can take place only during a limited period of time.

2. Craftsmen must be extra cautious when cutting Fei Cui, as they need to carefully observe its gradient, transparency, and cracks before determining where to make the cuts.

3. These emerald-green bracelets were made from the same piece of Fei Cui jade. As a pair, they represent faithful love and remind us that good things come in pairs.

4. Part of "Buddha of Medicine Bhaishajyaguru (Yaoshi Fo)," by an unknown artist, A.D. 762–827, Mid-Tang Dynasty. This part of the wall painting is from the Mogao Caves, also known as Caves of the Thousand Buddhas, cave 112. The Buddha has all wear traditional ornaments made of gold, silver, and jade around their necks.

5. (Bubble) Jadeite bracelet, Qing Dynasty. Though Fei Cui jade comes in several colors, it is extremely rare to find three colors present in a single piece. This stunning tricolored jade bracelet symbolizes blessings, fortunes, and longevity.



### Jade Jewelry in Marriages

A jade bracelet is the simplest and purest type of jade jewelry—free of diamond decorations and dazzling designs. However, its simplicity demands finer raw materials. In the jade industry, bracelets are the most valuable items, ranking above all other pieces. When craftsmen see a new piece of jade, they first inspect the cracks and colors in the rock. Then they can decide the size of the bracelet. Finally, the remainder of the rock can be used for other jewelry. Jade weighing 22 pounds (10 kilograms) can be made into dozens of jade pendants, but such an amount can hardly be made into two bracelets. Hence, jade bracelets are rare pieces.

### In traditional Chinese culture, people use jade to describe men with noble character.

Jade bracelets were precious gifts and keepsakes in ancient China. Lines from an ancient Chinese poem indicate that jade bracelets symbolize everlasting love and commitment: "How shall we endure parting? The jade bracelets circling our wrists." Jade bracelets were a common family heirloom and dowry. Mothers gave the bracelets to their daughters or daughters-in-law for good fortune and blessings. Though the custom has faded over time, jade bracelets are still a highly valued gift.

### Jade's Qualities Embody Human Virtue

Nowadays, though jade bracelets are rarely used as a token of love, they are still popular jewelry pieces among women for their soothing texture and brilliance. It is believed that a person who wears jade jewelry is gentle and elegant. Among Chinese people, Hetian jade and Fei Cui are two of the most widely appreciated types.

Hetian jade is soft yet dense. Of this type, "mutton-fat" jade is the most valuable. It is found in small quarries that have been eroded by rivers flowing from mountains for thousands of years. Its purity, beauty, and endurance against erosion are celebrated. Women who wear mutton-fat jade jewelry are believed to have jade-like gentleness and endurance.

Fei Cui (jadeite), the king of jade, has the beauty of both jade and diamond. Its namesake bird has either flamboyant red feathers or emerald-green feathers. Fei Cui varies in thickness, clarity, evenness, and color. Its colors include white, green, red, purple, orange, yellow, brown, and black and have come to represent diverse beauty and personalities.

The pure and transparent green Fei Cui, or emperor green, is the most precious jade of all. It symbolizes energy, integrity, and hope. The empress dowager Cixi and Soong May-ling, first lady of the Republic of China, owned valuable jade bracelets.

One's choice of jade can be an indication of one's personality. As the old saying goes, jade is both soft and firm, subtle and eye-catching. Since the size cannot be adjusted once made into a bracelet, the customer does not get to select the bracelet. Instead, it is the jade bracelet that chooses its owner.

Chinese people believe that jade jewelry is refined by wearing it, and it can in turn refine the wearer. The divine rock can wash away the dust in the corners of one's mind and bring tranquility. Jade's purity and simplicity do not fade with time, but bless one's life with its warmth and gentleness.

This article by Ann Lin was translated by Anne Scott.



5 COURTESY OF THE NATIONAL PALACE MUSEUM



女媧補天

In an ancient Chinese legend, the goddess Nuwa mended the sky with five-colored stones. This story, passed down for generations, is the origin of jade's sacred and noble status in Chinese culture. Qing Dynasty, "The Goddess Nuwa Mends the Heavens," by Xiao Yuncong (1596–1673).



ALL PHOTOS BY DREAMWORKS PICTURES

## POPCORN AND INSPIRATION

# A Story of Sacrifice and Patriotism

MICHAEL CLARK

Over 75 years ago, an event helped rescue the free world from tyranny, and in 1998 a landmark film depicted that event. While most of "Saving Private Ryan" is fiction, it uses the June 6, 1944, U.S. landing on Omaha Beach in Normandy, France, as its springboard.

The film is not "revisionist history" as some of its few detractors have claimed, but rather an entirely plausible series of events based on another true-life World War II event (the Nov. 13, 1942, deaths of the five Sullivan brothers on the USS Juneau).

After a brief, then-present-day establishing scene at a U.S. memorial gravesite in Colleville-sur-Mer, director Steven Spielberg, cinematographer Janusz Kaminski, and editor Michael Kahn assemble what most critics, audiences, and, most importantly—the veterans who were actually there—consider to be the greatest extended battle scene in motion picture history.

Because of Spielberg's desire for a news-reel documentary look, Kaminski used unprotected camera lenses, shot at half to a quarter of the usual 180-degree speed, and then treated the negative with a bleach bypass. This desaturation process lent the final product a distinctly nightmarish, otherworldly finish.

Rather than safely witnessing the action from the sidelines or above, the viewers see everything as if they are with the soldiers on the landing boats, at the beach, and under water. This visual approach results in a disquieting, unnerving, and visceral experience that will leave audiences winded and emotionally drained before the end of the first act. For their combined efforts, Spielberg, Kaminski, and Kahn all received Academy Awards.

### Show-Don't-Tell Filmmaking at Its Purest

During this stretch, the only character we get to know at all is Capt. John Miller (Tom Hanks), and it is limited to recognizing that he has an unspecified nerve disorder. We get glimpses of a handful of the upcoming principal cast, and only two of them are given dialogue. This minimalist, show-don't-tell

**'Saving Private Ryan' has the distinction of being a truly American movie which, whether intended or not, speaks to American patriotism, sacrifice, and unflappable camaraderie.**

### 'Saving Private Ryan'

Director Steven Spielberg

Starring Tom Hanks, Matt Damon, Tom Sizemore, Ed Burns, Barry Pepper, Giovanni Ribisi, Vin Diesel

Running Time 2 hours, 49 minutes

Rated R

Release Date July 24, 1998

★★★★★

method of storytelling from screenwriter Robert Rodat flies in the face of the talk-heavy, character-driven narrative, and it's with the start of the longer-than-usual middle act that this offbeat approach pays off in spades.

As near-perfect as the screenplay is, its fate ultimately rests in the hands of the cast. Of the eight principal core members of Miller's squad, only one—Ed Burns (as Pvt. Reiben)—was in possession of traditional Hollywood good looks. Spielberg stated that he wanted these soldiers to have everyman appearances and relatable character traits while avoiding forced movie quirk, something he and casting director Denise Chamian achieved and then some.

Ironically (or not), Reiben is the only outwardly disagreeable soldier. Argumentative, questioning authority, griping incessantly, and always instigating, he is never fully onboard with the patched-together company's next mission.

With barely a moment for a breather, Miller and his seven underlings are charged with retrieving Pvt. James Ryan from somewhere in France and transporting him to safety. The central question is why dedicating valuable manpower to try and find a single soldier who might already be dead makes sense.

Through Miller's weary eyes and mounting slow-burn frustration, it's clear that he has his own misgivings about the mission, but being a dutiful soldier and a natural leader, he hides his doubts well and keeps his men in check. He leads by example and few words, and earns the respect and undying support of his men, including Reiben. After several potentially crushing roadblocks along the way are successfully navigated, the Miller squad literally by accident finally crosses paths with Ryan (Matt Damon), who when told about the fate of his three brothers and his free trip home, refuses to leave his post.

Ryan's reasons, while emotionally understandable, aren't enough to get Miller to alter the mission, but do force his hand into how to alter his approach in managing the situation and organizing the seemingly unwinnable defense of a bridge. The ensuing closing battle scene easily matches the intensity of the movie's opening salvo.

### A Distinctly American Film

Fair or not, for the entirety of his career, Spielberg has been considered by his peers and audiences as the premier architect of crowd-pleasing, highly commercial blockbusters. The term "blockbuster" was coined to describe crowds waiting in line to see his "Jaws" in 1975. This in no way belittles his talents. It's just as difficult to make a good mainstream movie as it is to craft something far deeper, artsy, and moving.

Spielberg made his first stab at "meaningful" drama with "The Color Purple" (1985) which, while a critical and commercial success, holds the dubious record of receiving the most Oscar nominations (11) without a single win. It was followed in 1987 with the superb "Empire of the Sun" (which included a 13-year-old Christian Bale), and it sadly flopped. Six years later, Spielberg delivered "Schindler's List," the only film he's ever made that won the Academy Award for Best Picture.

"Schindler's List" is a masterpiece by anyone's definition, and although it differs from "Saving Private Ryan" in many ways, the two films have much in common. While "Schindler's List" might have had wider global audience appeal, "Saving Private Ryan" is a distinctly American movie which, whether intended or not, speaks to American patriotism, sacrifice, and unflappable camaraderie. Sadly, these are ideals our politically divided country does not currently see eye-to-eye on.

The three acts of "Saving Private Ryan" are bookended by almost identical scenes of sun-drenched American flags, waving in fierce winds, accompanied by minimalist musical flourishes composed by John Williams. They introduce and punctuate the finest war film ever made and one that only grows more resonant with the passing years.

Originally from Washington, D.C., Michael Clark has written for over 30 local and national film industry media outlets and is based in the Atlanta top 10 media marketplace. He co-founded the Atlanta Film Critics Circle in 2017 and is a regular contributor to the Shannan Burke Show on FloridaManRadio.com. Since 1995, Mr. Clark has written over 4,000 movie reviews and film-related articles.



(L-R) Capt. Miller (Tom Hanks), Pvt. Ryan (Matt Damon), and Pvt. Reiben (Ed Burns).



Director Steven Spielberg giving instructions to Tom Hanks on the set of "Saving Private Ryan."



U.S. Army Rangers Capt. John H. Miller (Tom Hanks, C) surrounded by his squad, given the mission to hold the bridge, in the final battle of the movie.

REACHING WITHIN: WHAT TRADITIONAL ART OFFERS THE HEART

# The Goodness of Heaven Is Key: ‘The Angel Binding Satan’

ERIC BESS

Let's close our eyes and imagine the best version of ourselves. What does this look like for us? How do we behave?

Most likely, we all see a different vision when we perform this thought experiment. Some of us may imagine ourselves with a lot of money, fame, or power; we might think that these attributes are necessary in order to become our best selves.

However, I think it's important to remember that people with money, fame, and power can be either good, generous, and compassionate or otherwise destructive and malicious. We must then ask: Can we be the best version of ourselves if we act as bad people? Of course, if you ask me, the answer is a resounding no!

Irrespective of what we may gain in life, we must be good in order to become our best selves. I recently came across a painting by the Romantic painter Philip James de Loutherbourg, called “The Angel Binding Satan,” which reminded me of the internal struggle we must endure to become our best selves.

## ‘The Angel Binding Satan’

Loutherbourg's painting is a colorful depiction of an angel stepping on the side of Satan. Typically, it is the Archangel Michael who is depicted defeating Satan in this way (as in Guido Reni's example), and so we will refer to the angel as Michael.

Michael is the focal point of the painting. The pastel pink cloth that flows around the cool grays of his armor helps him stand out against the skylit background.



“The Angel Binding Satan,” circa 1797, by Philip James de Loutherbourg. Oil on canvas, 17.75 inches by 14.76 inches. Yale Center for British Art, Connecticut.

gulf the lower half of the composition. Satan's legs morph into green serpents' tails, one of which descends into the fierce, red heat of hell below him. The other leg coils into the far distance, on the composition's left side.

## Controlling Destruction

What wisdom might this image contribute to our becoming our best selves?

It's easy to think that this image represents a battle of good and evil between heaven and hell and that this battle exists in a place “out there,” separate from us. However, let's take a moment to turn our gaze within and consider that this painting represents a struggle that occurs inside us.

Loutherbourg depicted Satan with a skull for a head. Typically, skulls in fine art represent death or destruction. One of Satan's serpentine legs descends into hell, and the other spins into the distance; he also holds a snake in his left hand. These serpentine elements represent temptation. Thus, we can conclude that Satan represents death, destruction, temptation, or even a relationship between these elements: death and destruction resulting from temptation. These temptations spread to the world around us and connect us to hell, like Satan's serpentine legs.

If Satan represents the evil elements, then, according to the painting we're analyzing, evil would correspond to those temptations that cause death and destruction. How can we, to find out better selves, control destructive temptations in us?

Michael would represent the control of temptation that causes death and

**Michael would represent the control of temptation that causes death and destruction.**

destruction. He controls Satan with his foot and chains. Michael, an angel representing the goodness of heaven, can bind Satan, the embodiment of evil. He holds a key up to the light of heaven. Is this the key that chains Satan in place and keeps him prisoner? Does this suggest that it is by way of heaven that evil is defeated?

The key may not only be that which locks Satan and his temptations away but may also be symbolic of the key that frees us from the prison of temptation.

At the beginning of this article, we engaged in a thought experiment. We asked what would be the best version of ourselves. According to the wisdom this painting might provide, would the goodness of heaven shape the best version of ourselves? Is heaven's goodness the key with which we both lock away our destructive tendencies and free ourselves from temptation?

*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 generations have wrestled with, but hope that our questions will inspire a reflective journey toward our becoming more authentic, compassionate, and courageous 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).*

For more arts and culture articles, visit [TheEpochTimes.com](http://TheEpochTimes.com)



“Archangel Michael Tramples Satan,” between circa 1630 and circa 1635, by Guido Reni. Oil on canvas, 115.3 inches by 79.5 inches. Our Lady of the Conception of the Capuchins, Rome.

His pose is a dynamic one: His right leg is steadied on a rock behind him while his left leg steps on the side of Satan. His outspread wings supplement both the color and the activity of the cloth that flows around him; his flowing, golden locks mimic the color of the key he holds to the heavens in his right hand; and his left hand grabs the chains that now bind Satan.

Satan is depicted in a pose of defeat. His body contorts from the pressure of Michael's foot, while he reaches for the chains the archangel has cast around his neck. His other hand grabs a snake that wraps around his arm, and his head, which Loutherbourg depicted as a skull, turns around to look at Michael.

Satan does not stand out from his environment much. If we squint our eyes at the image, we will notice that his upper body is almost indistinguishable from the background. Interestingly enough, Satan's body stands out the most from its environment around the area where Michael plants his foot.

The complementary (contrasting) colors of muted green and intense red en-

LITERATURE

# American Treasures: ‘Uncle Tom’s Cabin’

STEPHEN OLES

You may know the story. President Lincoln, frustrated in his effort to end slavery while preserving the Union, stooped wearily from his great height to shake the lady's proffered hand. “So you're the little woman,” he said, “who wrote the book that made this great war.” The book was “Uncle Tom's Cabin.”

Harriet Beecher Stowe was born in 1811. Her father Lyman, a fiery Calvinist pastor, instilled in his 11 children a passion for religion and social reform. All of Harriet's brothers would make their mark as ministers, authors, and orators. One was Henry Ward Beecher, who, according to professor emeritus Barbara White's “The Beecher Sisters,” became the most famous preacher in America. Her sister Catharine, a pioneer in women's education, founded several schools to instruct girls in subjects usually reserved for boys, like Latin, algebra, and philosophy. In 1824, Harriet became first a student and later a teacher at her sister's Hartford Female Seminary.

Slavery was, in the words of historical author Eric Metaxas, “as accepted as birth and marriage and death ... everywhere on the globe for 5,000 years.” The abomination of man owning man blighted human history from ancient Sumeria to Greece, Rome, Africa, Asia, Arabia, and the Americas. Native Americans bought and sold slaves. There were even black slaveholders. The 1830 census lists 3,775 black masters who owned a total of 12,760 slaves.

As the 19th century dawned, more and more Americans saw the glaring contradiction between the South's “peculiar institution” and our Declaration's “All men are created equal.” Christ's “love thy neighbor” and “do unto others” drew many Christians to abolitionism, even as slave owners cherry-picked Bible verses to justify themselves. By 1804, all of the Northern states had outlawed slavery, setting up a North and South conflict that would lead to war.

## Slavery Becomes Personal

In 1832, Harriet's father was appointed president of Lane Theological Seminary and moved the family from Boston to Cincinnati. The Beechers had always opposed slavery but now it became personal. Escaping slaves forded the nearby Ohio River in desperate attempts to reach safety in Canada. Harriet's Aunt Mary, horrified by the cruelty at her husband's slave plantation in the West Indies, walked out on him, a shocking act at the time. In 1836, as race riots broke out across the nation, proslavery mobs rampaged through Cincinnati, attacking abolitionists and burning the homes of free black families.

For the Beechers, the last straw was the Fugitive Slave Act of 1850, which compelled even Northerners to capture escaped slaves and return them to their owners. It made slave-catching a lucrative business and put even free blacks in danger. By then, Harriet was a mother of seven and married to Calvin Stowe, a professor at Lane. She taught at Catharine's new school and wrote for magazines to supplement her husband's meager income. Calvin encouraged his wife's new career, telling her that she “must be a literary woman,” the Harriet Beecher Stowe Center relates.

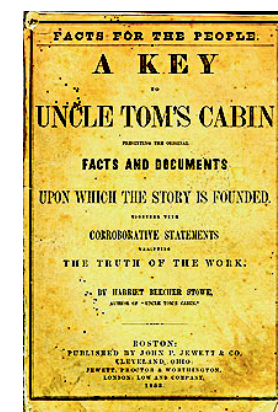
Her first published book was a geography text for children. “Now, Hattie,” her sister-in-law Isabella wrote to her, “if I could use a pen as you can, I would write something that would make this whole nation feel what an accursed thing slavery is.” Harriet set down the letter. She knew what she had to do.

The bestselling book of the entire 19th century began as weekly installments in an antislavery paper. Harriet based her novel on narratives written by ex-slaves,



A copy of Harriet Beecher Stowe's “Uncle Tom's Cabin,” likely the most influential book in 19th-century America, here intended for children.

**The bestselling book of the entire 19th century began as weekly installments in an antislavery paper.**



Stowe responded to criticism by writing “A Key to Uncle Tom's Cabin” (1853), documenting the veracity of her novel's depiction of slavery.

abolitionist literature, personal interviews, and her visit to an actual slave plantation in Kentucky. She used her own experience as well, stating later that her grief over the agonizing death of her baby Charlie taught her “what a poor slave mother may feel when her child is torn away from her,” as related in the article “Harriet Beecher Stowe Changed History.”

## A Novel Divides a Nation

When “Uncle Tom's Cabin; or, Life Among the Lowly” appeared as a book in 1852, its impact was unprecedented. Almost overnight, Harriet became the country's most famous and controversial woman. By the end of the year, 300,000 copies had been sold in America and a million in Great Britain, according to David Reynolds in “Mightier Than the Sword.”

The novel is a great read, even today. It follows Uncle Tom, a slave who is bought and sold several times, allowing Stowe to portray differing attitudes toward slavery. On a boat taking him down river to be sold, a young white girl falls overboard. When Tom saves her life, her grateful father, Augustin St. Clare, buys him. In his new home, Tom and the girl—Little Eva—discover they share a strong Christian faith and become friends. St. Clare is kindly but too weak to take a stand against slavery. His cousin Ophelia opposes it intellectually but shrinks from personal contact with its victims. An amusingly naughty girl, Topsy, provides comic relief.

But then Little Eva falls ill. Dying, she makes her father promise to set Tom and his people free. The saintly child's protracted death scene, reflecting Harriet's despair at losing Charlie, may have caused more readers to sob uncontrollably than any other pages in literature. When St. Clare dies before he can keep his promise, his cruel widow sells Tom to a vicious slave master, Simon Legree.

When Tom refuses to beat a fellow slave as ordered, Legree resolves to crush his trust in God. Beating after beating tests Tom's faith, but visions of Christ and Eva restore his spiritual strength. Tom encourages two women to escape. When he refuses to say where they're hiding, Legree beats him to death. Tom dies like Christ, forgiving his tormentors. The women reach safety, and the white characters commit themselves to ending slavery.

Reactions to the book were sharply divided. Praise flowed from antislavery groups and ex-slave intellectuals like Frederick Douglass and Booker T. Washington, who wrote that the book's “value to Abolition can never be justly estimated,” Reynolds relates. The poet Longfellow called it “one of the greatest triumphs recorded in literary history, to say nothing of the higher triumph of its moral effect.” His feeling was echoed by Tolstoy, George Sand, Heine, and many others.

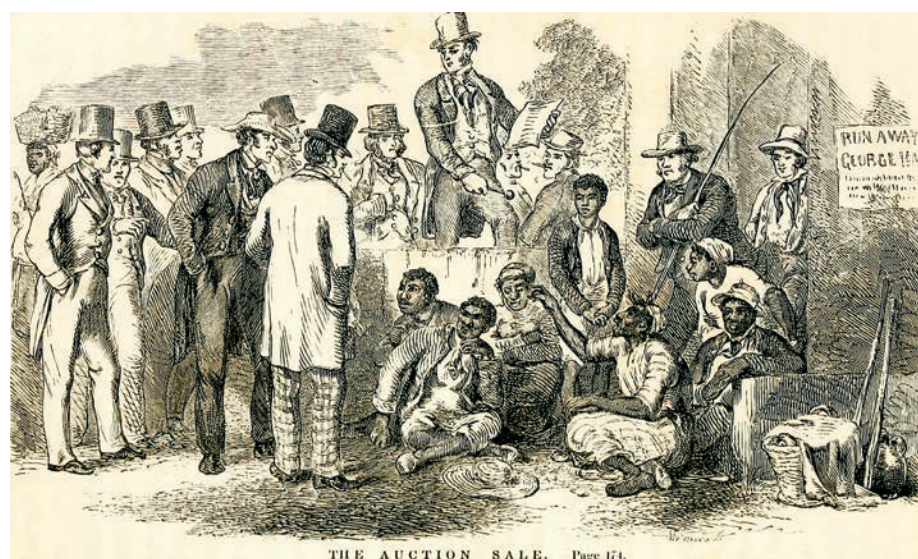
Apologists for slavery, on the other hand, called the book a pack of lies and Harriet “loathsome,” a person “whose touch contaminates with its filth.” She fired back with “A Key to Uncle Tom's Cabin,” a compilation of sources and real-life testimony that proved her depiction of slavery wasn't exaggerated.

## Uncle Tom as Embodiment of Christianity

Ever-popular stage adaptations kept the story before the public for decades, performed at first by white actors in blackface, whose stereotypical antics coarsened the story. This, along with critics who mistook Tom's Christian nonviolence for cowardly acceptance of his mistreatment, led unfairly to “Uncle Tom” becoming a slur applied, by Malcolm X, even to Martin Luther King Jr. But African American history professor Patricia Turner has said that she doesn't see Tom “as any kind of a sell-out,” according to an NPR interview. “And so I've always found myself wanting to correct people who accuse someone of being an ‘Uncle Tom,’” she continued.

The Lincoln anecdote is probably apocryphal, but Stowe's profound effect on history and literature is undeniable. She went on to write 30 books on various subjects. In her 60s, she taught herself oil painting and opened an art school. At her funeral in 1896, a simple wreath, from former slaves in Boston, was laid on her casket. The accompanying card read, according to Haugen, “From the children of Uncle Tom.”

*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, Calif. He lives in Seattle and is currently working on his second novel.*



THE AUCTION SALE. Page 114.



(Left) The novel showed many aspects of the inhumanity of slavery. An illustration of a slave auction from “Uncle Tom's Cabin.” From an 1852 edition published by John P. Jewett, Boston.

(Right) There were so many stage productions of “Uncle Tom's Cabin” touring the country that each boasted a bigger cast and more spectacular scenes. A crowd scene in front of a plantation house from a circa 1901 production. Library of Congress.



UNITED ARTISTS

John Ford made only one film dedicated to the Civil War: 'The Horse Soldiers.'

### 'The Horse Soldiers'

**Director**  
John Ford

**Starring**  
John Wayne, William Holden, Constance Towers

**Running Time**  
2 hours

**Not Rated**

**Release Date**  
June 12, 1959

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

REWIND, REVIEW, AND RE-RATE

# Director John Ford's Entertaining Civil War Drama

IAN KANE

For as many Western films as celebrated director John Ford made, it's interesting that he produced only one wholly dedicated to the Civil War. (He did touch on the Civil War in 1962's "How the West Was Won.") "The Horse Soldiers" (1959) was his only film about the conflict, and he couldn't have chosen a more compelling narrative to base the film on.

"The Horse Soldiers" was based on a 1956 novel with the same name by Harold Sinclair and adapted by screenwriters John Lee Mahin and Martin Rackin. It was based on the real-life exploits of Union Army cavalry officer Col. Benjamin Grierson, who ironically hated horses because he was kicked in the head by one as a child.

Ford fills Grierson's boots with the fictional character of Col. John Marlowe (John Wayne), a railroad construction worker in civilian life who is a dutiful cavalry soldier in his military one.

Ford's films never fail to impress during

their grand openings, and this film is no different. Here, as the beginning credits roll, we see beautiful shots of cavalymen riding their horses along a long ridgeline, their dark silhouettes set against vast blue skies dotted by puffy white clouds.

**We see Ford's penchant and gift for delivering exciting, large-scale battles.**

As we are introduced to Marlowe and the various men in his unit, it is made clear that he is well-liked and commands their respect. Soon, however, Marlowe is tasked by Gen. William T. Sherman (Richard H. Cutting) to carry out a daring mission: to take his entire cavalry brigade from a captured military depot in Tennessee and travel hundreds of miles south behind enemy lines with the goal of destroying a

railroad depot that is a crucial supply line for the Confederate Army.

Some of the men grumble about its being more or less a suicide mission but ultimately fall in line—except for one: Maj. Henry Kendall (William Holden), an Army doctor who has been assigned to Marlowe's brigade by the higher-ups. Marlowe (for reasons later revealed) immediately resents Kendall's presence in his unit and does little to hide that fact. Meanwhile, Kendall understandably feels set upon by the unprovoked hostility and begins to see Marlowe as a brute with little compassion.

After leaving the military depot, some of the brigade are bushwhacked and wounded by a Confederate patrol. Knowing they've been spotted and that Confederate forces will zero in on their location, Marlowe pulls a ruse and orders a third of the brigade to turn back: He wants it to appear that the entire unit is leaving.

That's when another thorn in his side emerges. Col. Phil Secord (Willis Bouchey), a politician in civilian life, frequently second-guesses Marlowe's orders.

The unit takes some respite close to a small cabin that happens to be inhabited by a large black family. As Kendall is treating the wounded men, a soldier informs him that the black family is in dire need of medical aid. Kendall obliges without Marlowe's consent and ends up delivering a baby.

In a dramatic scene, Marlowe enters the cabin just after the baby is delivered. He's upset that the doctor isn't treating the men, but Kendall poetically justifies his actions: "I know. One's dead. One's gone—one's born. Amazing process isn't it? The point is I delivered it."

A little later, the brigade comes across a large Southern house owned by Hannah Hunter (Constance Towers). Marlowe intends to rest his men and bivouac overnight in the forest surrounding the house, but Hannah insists that he and some of his command staff come in and enjoy a dinner that evening. Kendall soon discovers that there may be some ulterior motives involved. Her genteel "Southern belle" affectations are a little too excessive.

### Ford's Strength

The film's second and third acts fill out this initial setup well. We see Ford's penchant and gift for delivering exciting, large-scale battles, and the conflicts between Union and Confederate forces is a nice change of pace from the usual cowboy fare. Some subtle romantic tones come to the fore by the film's end.

The film is quite a roller coaster ride, as the further the brigade goes south, facing greater and greater danger, the more the characters' true colors reveal themselves. Marlowe is forced to juggle with not only the threat of being detected by Confederate forces but also his unit's own internal problems, such as an obstinate captive and a rebellious doctor.

The acting is fantastic, as can be expected with such a stellar cast.

By the end of the film, we clearly see one of its primary messages: The United States can only be strong if its factions are united for a greater good—no matter how seemingly disparate those constituents are. "The Horse Soldiers," then, is a solid John Ford entry and a subtle, thought-provoking film.

*Ian Kane is a filmmaker and author based out of Los Angeles. To learn more, visit [DreamFlightEnt.com](http://DreamFlightEnt.com)*



SHEN YUN SHOP

## Decorate Your Home With Shen Yun-inspired Splendors

Explore home decor and summer highlights



ShenYunShop.com | TEL: 1.800.208.2384