

THE EPOCH TIMES

LIFE &

TRADITION



TRADITIONS

ALL PHOTOS COURTESY OF BATZAYA CHOIJILJAV

KAZAKH EAGLE HUNTERS often cover their eagle's eyes with a leather hood. The darkness keeps the bird calm when not hunting and prevents them from being startled by sudden movement.

Kazakh Hunters

AND THEIR

Golden Eagles

Photographer Batzaya Choijljav captures the traditional lifestyle of Mongolia's Kazakh nomadic people

LOUISE CHAMBERS

A Mongolian photographer's amazing portfolio of nomadic hunters with their golden eagles is helping keep this unique tradition alive by sharing the magnificent bond between these hunters, their horses, and their birds. Batzaya Choijljav, 48, was born in western Mongolia's Zavkhan Province and grew up around nomadic people. Today, he lives in the capital city of Ulaanbaatar, where he runs a travel agency; he's been working in travel and tourism for over 20 years. On a field trip to the western Sahara in 2005, Batzaya took a five-pixel Canon PowerShot A95 camera and shared his best photos with his fellow expeditioners. "They gave me so much encouragement," he told The Epoch Times. "I have officially been a photographer since 2007." Batzaya has traveled alone to Bayan-Ulgii Province in western Mongolia several times over 10 years to live with and document the lives of the Kazakh nomadic people, who practice traditional hunting on horseback with trained golden eagles. The bird is a treasured symbol of protection in Mongolia.

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Golden Eagles

WILD GOLDEN EAGLES typically live around 30 years. Some hunters keep their birds for 35 to 40 years, but most release them back into the wild after 10.

Boy Spends 3 Years Camping for Charity

When Max Woosey's neighbor passed away, he set out to raise funds for the hospice that took care of him

LOUISE CHAMBERS

A British boy who spent three years sleeping outdoors in a tent in memory of his late neighbor has raised almost a million dollars for charity. Earning himself the nickname Tent Boy, his story has gone global and is inspiring a new generation

of kids to believe in their own potential. Max Woosey of Devon in southern England is 13 years old. He was just 10 when his neighbor, 74-year-old Rick Abbott, a friend who enjoyed outdoor activities like kayaking and surfing with his father, passed away from cancer on Valentine's Day 2020 after being cared for by North Devon Hospice. Abbot gave Max a gift before he passed away. "He gave me a tent and said, 'I want you to have an adventure,'" Max told The Epoch Times. "I said, 'I promise you, I will.' So I started raising money for North Devon Hospice. ... We were in lockdown at the

time, self-isolating, so I thought I would try and sleep outside in the tent he gave me, and try to raise money for the hospice that took such good care of him."

The Biggest Challenge


When Max came up with this idea, it was still cold and icy in Devon, so Max's first challenge was convincing his parents, Rachel and Mark, that camping was a good idea. Finally, after days of nagging, Max got a reluctant "Yes" on March 29, 2020.

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COURTESY OF RACHEL WOOSEY




Max Woosey of Devon, in southern England, in a tent with his dog.



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Hunters training their eagles and horses together in Sagsai Village, Bayan-Ulgii Province, Mongolia, on Jan. 23, 2020.

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TRADITIONS

Kazakh Hunters and Their Golden Eagles



Continued from Page 1

In Sagsai and Altantsugts villages, Batzaya has befriended generations of Kazakh eagle hunters, who have become the many subjects of his striking photo series. Their cultural heritage comprises eagle falconry and nomadic herding. In winter, the Kazakhs hunt wild prey in the Altai Mountains without vehicles or guns, relying upon the strong bonds they have built with their winged companions.

"Generally, in warmer seasons, the eagle is fed by domestic animal flesh and some small mammals and has to gain weight and strength," the photographer said. "Domestic animals need to be at the center of daily life—milk-ing cows, producing dairy products, herding them, and migrating to the good pastures, training and taming the horses for riding, and familiarizing them with the eagles for hunting."

"In the colder seasons, their lifestyle is reversed. Eagles need to be at the center of daily life to be prepared for winter hunting, and domestic animals don't need to be constantly cared for. In the early autumn, eagle hunters, eagles, and horses start training actively for the hunting season."

Eagle hunters wear their traditional foal-hide hunting coat year-round, in order for the eagles to familiarize themselves with their hunter's unique scent. Kazakh

women are responsible for making this clothing, which they sew inside their yurt dwellings in the summertime while the group is actively nomadic.

The Kazakh people's annual Golden Eagle Festival is a chance for hunters to show off their skills and engage the next generation.

"Eagle hunters love to use their centuries-old horse and eagle equipment in a traditional way, from their forefathers, and ... are keen to pass them on to the next generation," Batzaya said. "In order to do this, they need to show it, need to promote it, and need to be an example while they are gathering at the same place, such as the annual eagle festival. Photographers help them to promote and raise awareness."

This type of tourism also brings vital funds, without which most eagle hunters could no longer afford to train their birds; a trained golden eagle needs around 160 kilos of meat per year at no small cost, according to Batzaya's research.

"Feeding the eagles is not a cheap game for modern-world eagle hunters due to wild prey abundance and the legal environment," Batzaya said. "Full-time eagle hunters are also domestic animal herders and most of them have no job so they earn from tourism activities."

"Commercial tourism doesn't impact the authenticity of my photography because I am shooting the living heritage which is still alive here. I have been photographing them for the last decade, and I have seen the changes in developing and resuming their traditions, not the dying and fading aspects."

Besides Mongolia, Batzaya has traveled extensively through the developing countries of Europe and Asia with his camera to photograph traditional people and lifestyles. Other unique subjects that he has captured on camera include the elusive snow leopard, the Gobi bear, wild Bactrian camels, camel-herding nomads, and the reindeer-herding Tsaatan people of the Taiga mountains.



Golden eagles are the largest eagles in Mongolia, with a wingspan of eight feet and weight of up to 15 pounds when fully grown. They are native to Mongolia, well-suited to the climate, and easy to train.

"Travel makes me inspired and gives me chances to see the different colors of the world," Batzaya said. "I think that a photographer should always learn and search for new things; read about the subject you are taking, look at other people's photoshoots, get inspiration, and try to take photos that are different from them."

The photographer, who has begun challenging himself in wildlife photography by traveling to remote mountains and deserts in search of rare and endangered animals, is widely published in the international media. He has also published three volumes of work with National Geographic, which he believes is the highlight of his photography career: "Snow Leopard," "Tsaatan," and "Eagle."

Two of Batzaya's favorite photos come from this third volume, which showcases the Mongolian Kazakh eagle hunters. A photo taken on Jan. 23, 2020, in Sagsai Village, Bayan-Ulgii Province, shows hunters training their eagles and horses together by galloping on different types of terrain. Another, taken on Dec. 10, 2021, in Tsengel village, Bayan-Ulgii Province, shows men hunting together.

"Some of them are responsible for shooting the prey, and some of them are responsible for hunting with their eagles," Batzaya said. "Teamwork."



Kazakh eagle hunters train their golden eagles to hunt foxes, hares, wolves, and other small mammals. The hunter and his eagle ride along the steppe looking for prey; once the hunter sees an animal, he releases the eagle to chase and capture the animal, then return to the hunter, who gives it a piece of meat as a reward.

All Kazakh children participate in eagle training and scouting, and eagle catchers have their own eagle by age 12 or 13. Traditionally, the knowledge of eagle training was kept secret and passed from father to son.

In winter, the Kazakhs hunt wild prey in the Altai Mountains without vehicles or guns, relying upon the strong bonds they have built with their winged companions.



Eagles begin their training at just a few months old. The hunter takes the eagle for rides on horseback, gradually introducing it to the sights and sounds of hunting. No one is allowed to feed the bird except its handler. After teaching the fledgling to hunt with a stuffed fox or hare dragged by a long rope, the real hunting begins.



Max Woosey and his tent, decorated for the holidays.

Boy Spends 3 Years Camping for Charity

Continued from Page 1

He headed into the garden with his tent, a Beano album, some soft toys for comfort, and the family labradoodle, Digby.

As days turned into weeks, the weather continued to be Max's biggest challenge even though he sometimes pitched his tent in different places. He endured snow, wind, rain, slippery mud, and lightning storms. However, it didn't stop at that. There was wildlife.

"I was at my grandparents'," Max said. "I woke up, looked to my left, and found a baby pheasant. I looked to my right and saw a mama pheasant. The mama pheasant didn't like that I was in between the two, so ended up chasing me around the garden for ages, and those little things are quick!"

Through the challenges, the teen admitted that he wanted to give up a few times.

"I had the tent just collapse on me when I was in it, and everything inside ended up getting ruined. Those are the nights you want to give up. I knew that what I was doing, all the money I was trying to raise, was going to a good cause; I knew that I had to keep on going," he said.

While neither Max nor his parents expected his "adventure" to garner so much attention, Tent Boy made UK headlines. Donations started pouring in, and within the first year, Max had raised half a million pounds (approximately \$621,750) for the hospice.

In or Out?

In the summer of 2022, Max got COVID and had to make a choice: retreat to his bedroom or stay in his tent.

"I wasn't very sympathetic. I explained that I couldn't make the tent any cooler, so he could go back out there or he could go upstairs, and he went back out there," Rachel said. "It sounds like we've been really tough on him, [but] we've always made sure he was safe. We've always protected him in that way, and would have stepped in if ever we needed to."

Owing mainly to the weather, Max has been through 25 tents. He told Daily Mail they "don't last very well," with one even having to be erected in the middle of the night.

Rachel occasionally slept outside with her son to keep an eye on him if he was sick, and during Storm Eunice in February 2022, Max's dad, Mark, slept outside for safety.

As his story gained traction, Max was invited to pitch his tent at London Zoo and at 10 Downing Street by the then-UK prime minister, Boris Johnson. The rugby-crazy teen even camped on the England rugby team's home pitch at Twickenham with his dad, and even gave a TED talk to an enraptured audience in the city of Bath.

He has also had the opportunity to meet Simon Cowell, Jonny Wilkinson, and more.

1,009 Nights

After exactly three years or 1,099 nights under the stars, Max thought he could call his mission complete on March 29, 2023. His final tally for the hospice was just under 800,000 pounds including Gift Aid, a UK initiative whereby the government donates a percentage of funds raised for charity.

Owing to Max's massive donation, North Devon Hospice was one of the few hospices in the UK that did not have to make big cuts or redundancies during the pandemic. The money allowed them to provide 15 community nurses for an entire year, supporting around 500 terminally-ill patients in their own homes.

Max earned a British Empire Medal; a Pride of Britain award; an Unsung Hero award, which he received from his hero, Bear Grylls; and a Guinness World Record for the most money raised by camping as an individual.

Rachel told The Epoch Times: "I think a lot of the reason we said 'No' was because actually, it was more convenient for us, not

for him. ... I didn't sleep as well, I was worried about him the first 24 months. But that was my problem, and it would have been such a shame for me not to let him have that adventure. Had he got cold on the first night and come in, it wouldn't have mattered; he would have tried it, and he would have been proud for the part of it that he was able to do."

She now finds Max to be more independent and resourceful.

"It's been an incredible journey, watching that progress from the 10-year-old that started to this 13-year-old. I think all of that time outside with no screens or technology has done him so much good!" she said.

A Legacy of Adventure

The teen still remembers his neighbor, Abbott, the man who set the ball rolling.

"He was absolutely lovely," Max said. "He was the only 70-year-old I knew that had a climbing wall in his garage, and he was just an amazing person. I think the bond we had was we both liked the outdoors."

Max struggled as a child with hearing impairment and hypermobility, which he overcame through sports and a positive mental attitude. It was this same tenacity that saw him thrive as Tent Boy and inspired the legacy his adventure leaves behind.

Through the challenges, the teen admitted that he wanted to give up a few times.

"I think it's lovely that the legacy is the fact that people now take children a bit more seriously, and see that they can achieve," Rachel said, adding, "Whilst Max has met these famous people, the people that have had the most impact on his life are other children who are now his friends who are doing amazing things."

Max is friends with a little girl called Harmony who lost all four limbs to meningitis and is raising money to help other children, and a little boy who is halfway through a three-year treatment for leukemia who is raising money for hospitals.

She is grateful that her son is a part of that group.

Rachel also hopes that her son will find his way in the world as Max, and not as Tent Boy. To that end, Max already has a long-term goal: he wants to become a professional rugby player. In the meantime, with his experience, he plans to visit rugby clubs around the UK and get involved in raising money for their chosen causes.

"Children can do more than people think they can, there's not just adults that can do amazing things," Max said. "We've got nothing to lose, let's give it a go!"

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Max Woosey's fundraiser supported about 500 terminally ill patients cared for by North Devon Hospice.



“Flora,” 1634, by Rembrandt Harmenszoon van Rijn. Oil on canvas; 49 1/4 inches by 39 3/4 inches. The State Hermitage Museum, St. Petersburg, Russia.



“Saskia With the Red Flower,” 1641, by Rembrandt. Oil on oak; 38 3/4 inches by 32 1/2 inches. Old Masters Picture Gallery, Dresden State Arts Collection.

FINE ART

In Sickness and in Health

Love springs forth from Rembrandt’s Floras

LORRAINE FERRIER

Rembrandt sketched, drew, and painted his beloved wife, Saskia, throughout their marriage—in sickness and in health, right until her death parted them. He depicted her in every way he could. In his artworks, we see Saskia the woman, wife, mother, and muse. We see her disheveled upon waking; laughing with her husband; and as majestic Minerva, the ancient Roman goddess of wisdom, to name a few depictions.

Rembrandt’s three paintings of Saskia as Flora, the ancient Roman goddess of spring and fertility, reflect the seasons of Rembrandt’s marriage and the transience of life—from the first buds of their honeymoon to her blossoming pregnancy and to her untimely death.

Together, these Flora paintings also show how Rembrandt used ancient Greek and Roman, and Italian Renaissance, elements in his art. In both the Northern and Italian Renaissance, artists enjoyed creating works using ancient gods, goddesses, and mythological creatures.



“Portrait of Saskia as a Bride,” 1633, by Rembrandt. Silverpoint on white-grounded parchment; 4 1/8 inches by 7 1/4 inches. State Museum of Berlin.



“Saskia van Uylenburgh in Arcadian Costume,” 1635, by Rembrandt. Oil on canvas; 48 3/4 inches by 38 3/8 inches. The National Gallery, London.

Having never traveled to Italy, Rembrandt took inspiration from the works of Northern Renaissance artists who had, such as Anthony van Dyck, Peter Paul Rubens, and history painter Pieter Lastman, whom he studied with in Amsterdam around 1624. Rembrandt also had access to Italian Renaissance art in Amsterdam, such as Titian’s painting of Flora owned by the Spanish ambassador in the city, Alfonso Lopez.

Budding Love

In 1633, Saskia met Rembrandt in Amsterdam while she was visiting her cousin, Rembrandt’s art dealer, Hendrick van Uylenburgh.

Rembrandt made his first sketch of Saskia in silverpoint, a few days after their betrothal. It’s a delicate and delightful work full of love. She wears a wide-brimmed hat, and a shy smile, as she holds a flower, perhaps a rose, that Rembrandt had just given her. Under the sketch, Rembrandt wrote: “This is a likeness of my wife, drawn when she was 21 years old, on the third day of our betrothal. 8 January, 1634.”

The couple wed on June 22, 1634, and in that same year, Rembrandt first painted Saskia as Flora.

Rembrandt depicted Saskia side-on, in a life-size, three-quarter-length pose, wearing a voluminous silk and satin dress embroidered with silver. She looks like a maiden—innocent and a little shy. She turns her head to face the viewer, as if she’s been disturbed. She holds a staff covered with foliage and wears a crown of flowers, including a “broken” tulip. Artists favored painting “broken tulips” with split petals and striated markings.

Perhaps Rembrandt knew the work of Flemish physicist and botanist Carolus Clusius, who first discovered that the markings were caused by a virus. Clusius knew that if tulips changed from their natural color, they would probably not live long. He said such a bloom existed “only to delight its master’s eyes with this variety of colors before dying, as if to bid him a last farewell.”

Her voluminous dress and floral crown mirrors an ancient Imperial Roman statue of Flora in Rome’s Capitoline Museums. But instead of a cornucopia of flowers, Rembrandt painted Saskia holding her skirt in her hand.

A year into their marriage, in 1635, Rembrandt again painted Saskia as Flora in the painting now titled “Saskia van Uylenburgh in Arcadian Costume.” This time, Saskia’s red hair flows loose around her shoulders, and rather than the pensive young bride we see in his first Flora painting, this Saskia appears confident. She looks out to the right of the painting, as if she’s looking directly at her husband as he paints.

Her open-armed gesture closely mirrors the pose of the ancient Flora statue previously mentioned; as does the cornucopia of flowers she now holds.

Rembrandt painted the flowers in the fashion of the day, at the height of “tulip mania,” when a tulip bulb could cost as much

as an Amsterdam canal house. Margaret Fairbanks Marcus, in “Period Flower Arrangement,” writes that “By mid-century, the characteristic baroque composition had evolved massive flowers following a scroll or S-curve, with a swirl of windswept foliage. ... The mood of baroque is dynamic and boldly confident. Such lush abundance has never been seen before or since in Western art.”

Rembrandt reflects this flower arranging composition in Flora’s cornucopia, also mirroring the new still-life flower genre. “There must be no quiet spot but an exciting movement of arching stems, nodding flowers, and curling petals. The final effect should be neither rigid nor bunched but voluminous and graceful,” Marcus added. Rembrandt included tulips, roses, primulas, and tiny pinks in Saskia’s bouquet, even though some of those flowers naturally bloom in different seasons. Showing flowers from different seasons and stages of life is a common theme of Dutch vanitas paintings—a genre focusing on the transience of life.

Rembrandt made his first sketch of Saskia in silverpoint, a few days after their betrothal.

Rembrandt paints such an abundance of flowers to remind viewers that Flora is the goddess of fertility, which is especially significant to Saskia as Flora here, as she rests on her staff. Her rounded belly and full bosom show she’s pregnant, with their first child.

The couple had four children together, although sadly only one lived beyond childhood.

A Farewell Flora

Rembrandt painted Saskia as Flora for the last time in 1641. This painting, “Saskia With the Red Flower” differs from his previous two. He used his signature rich reds and chestnut brown to create an endearing yet somber portrait. There’s no burst of color celebrating marriage or announcing an imminent birth. This portrait signals Saskia’s last breath—commemorating her life and their marriage. She’s pale and tired—small circles frame her eyes. She places her left hand on her heart, faces the viewer directly, and offers him or her a flower with her hand.

The gentle essence of Rembrandt’s betrothal sketch echoes through this painting; he includes only one flower, too. But this is not the beginning of their life together: Saskia died before reaching 30 years old, from tuberculosis and the strains of giving birth months earlier. Saskia and Rembrandt had seven happy years of marriage at the height of the artist’s fame. “Saskia With the Red Flower” is Saskia’s farewell, and Rembrandt’s goodbye to his dearly loved wife.

MUSIC

Melodies From a River of Harmonies

The music of Frederick Loewe

KENNETH LAFAVE

In “Marry Me,” a 2022 romantic comedy starring Jennifer Lopez and Owen Wilson, a mega pop star has a relationship with a random fan who holds up a “Marry Me” sign at one of her concerts. The movie was promoted as a vehicle for Lopez’s songs and those of Maluma, a Colombian pop star who appears in the film as her erstwhile superstar fiancé, Bastian.

At a critical point in the plot, Charlie Gilbert (Wilson’s character) confesses that he likes musicals (he’s a “nerd,” so of course) and that his favorite song is from “Camelot”: “If Ever I Would Leave You,” with a lyric in which the singer proclaims he could never leave his love in any season—springtime, summer, winter, or fall.

He plays the song for Katarina “Kat” Valdez (played by Lopez), and for the first time in the film—and, one assumes, the first time in her life—Kat is transported by a deep feeling of romantic love, something her own songs and those of Bastian don’t even begin to touch. It isn’t just the words. Indeed, it is primarily the music.

If “Marry Me” was intended to put its stars’ pop songs in people’s heads, it should never have included “If Ever I Would Leave You.” I dare anyone to come away from the movie with anything other than it in their heads.

The difference between that song and the movie’s other material is the key distinction between standard popular songs of the past century and most songs of today. We’ll come back to what that distinction is, but first, meet the man whose music mightily and summarily levels every other song in “Marry Me”: Frederick Loewe.

The Man Behind the Music

Frederick Loewe (1901–1988) was born in Berlin to Viennese parents. His father sang operetta professionally, and as a little boy, Frederick learned by ear the piano accompaniments to his father’s arias. Conservatory education ensued, with the prodigy making his concerto debut at age 13.

In 1924, his father traveled to New York City as part of an operetta production, and Frederick went with him. But when the father returned to Europe, the son



The 2022 movie “Marry Me” with Jennifer Lopez and Owen Wilson featured the Frederick Loewe song “If Ever I Would Leave You.”

remained in New York. He had begun to compose, and the Broadway musical, he believed, was his future.

The future took its time arriving—more than two decades. While striving to be the next George Gershwin, Loewe made his living at an unlikely range of professions. He played piano for silent films but also tried a stint at prizefighting. He moved out West for a year and delivered mail on horseback in Montana. Through it all, Loewe composed songs with various lyricists for a series of revues and the occasional book musical. Nothing caught on, though he persisted.

Finally, in 1942, he met a lyricist at a New York theater club who was looking for a composer. His name: Alan Jay Lerner. Lerner and Loewe eventually became a pairing to rival that of Rodgers and Hammerstein.

Lerner and Loewe produced their first hit, “Brigadoon,” in 1947, followed by “Paint Your Wagon” (1951), “My Fair Lady” (1956), and “Camelot” (1960), plus the original musical film, “Gigi” (1958).

Loewe’s Secret

What distinguished Loewe’s music, in addition to its unerring instinct for melody, was an uncanny ability to suggest time and place without cliché. “Brigadoon” takes place in a Scotland of myth and legend, and if you’re not careful you might just take “Go Home With Bonnie Jean” and “Come to Me, Bend to Me” as authentic Scottish folk songs.

The contrast of roughness and longing in the old American West finds voice in Loewe’s melodies for “Hand Me Down That Can o’ Beans” and “They Call the Wind Maria,” composed for “Paint Your Wagon.”

We shift to Edwardian England for Lerner and Loewe’s signature hit, “My Fair Lady,” with the restrained beauty of “On the Street Where You Live” and the sparkle, reminiscent of composer Sir Arthur Sullivan, of “I Could Have Danced All Night.”

“Gigi” transports us to La Belle Époque Paris with the can-can-like “The Night They Invented Champagne,” while “Camelot” plugs into the contemporary idea of what medieval music sounded like in “What Do the Simple Folks Do?”

Many credit Loewe’s versatility to his childhood background in operetta, a tradition that establishes a common

‘If Ever I Would Leave You’ has the harmonic richness of a typical Broadway love song.

ARCHIVE PHOTOS/GETTY IMAGES



A portrait of composer Frederick Loewe in 1962.

harmonic language among a range of European nations and, within that common language, finds the subtle gestures that make French music sound French, English music sound English, and so on.

The Melody of Harmony

The love song from “Camelot,” which went on to be the musical gem of the movie “Marry Me,” is a bit of an anomaly. “If Ever I Would Leave You” doesn’t try to sound quasi-medieval. If anything, it somehow combines the characteristic boldness of an operatic melody with the harmonic richness of a typical Broadway love song.

This intersection of melody and harmony, in which the harmonic progressions—the chords—reveal the latent melodies concealed within them, is the quintessential musical language of old-school Broadway. The chord progression is central; the melody grows naturally out of it, shaped to match the rhythm of the lyric.

Today’s songs for the most part reverse this. A melody is made to match the rhythm of a lyric, and then some harmonies are thrown in. The result is very often a song that has a great beat and prominent words, from which hangs a sing-song sort of melody backed by some chords that could almost be any chords.

Harmony and Our Brains

In his astonishing book “The Master and His Emissary,” neuroscientist and philosopher Iain McGilchrist essays the worlds of the left and right brain hemispheres. He points out that both hemispheres “do everything” but have different functions within a given area. In music, for example, the beat is the left hemisphere’s domain, and harmony belongs to the right hemisphere.

One could say that when Charlie Gilbert plays “If Ever I Would Leave You” in “Marry Me,” what happens to Kat amounts to a brain shift from left to right, from an incessant beat to the richness of harmony and its child, melody. Is it by chance that this also signaled change from a superficial relationship to a deeper one? Could music be as strong an influence on human culture as Plato said it was?

Perhaps we’ll find out. Lincoln Center for the Performing Arts will open a revival of “Camelot” this month (April). Advance publicity says the script will be updated and revised, with all the horrible potential for “historically corrected” content that entails. Not to worry. If they don’t touch Loewe’s music, if they don’t replace the melodies he somehow made to unfold effortlessly from a river of harmonies, the bright brains of the audiences will light up like the Great White Way itself.

Former music critic for the Arizona Republic and The Kansas City Star, Kenneth LaFave recently earned a doctorate in philosophy, art, and critical thought from the European Graduate School. He’s the author of three books, including “Experiencing Film Music” (2017, Rowman & Littlefield).

THE EPOCH TIMES INTERVIEWS SHEN YUN AUDIENCES

Shen Yun’s Is ‘A Bridge to the Divine’

New York-based Shen Yun Performing Arts is the world’s premier classical Chinese dance and music company, established in 2006. Aiming for an artistic revival and celebration of China’s rich cultural heritage, the company performs classical Chinese dance, ethnic and folk dance, and story-based dance, accompanied by orchestral and solo performers.

Shen Yun’s Upcoming Performances

West Palm Beach	Fla.	Through May 3
Newark	N.J.	May 4–7
Detroit	Mich.	May 4–7
Rochester	N.Y.	May 6–7

For additional performance dates, please visit ShenYun.com/tickets



“The production transpires like a fairy tale, and the choreography is beautiful but more than that, it was a bridge to the divine.

GIORGIO CASCIARRI,
operatic tenor,
Milan



“Behind [Shen Yun] is this passion and this dedication to bring a message to humanity ... and to open people’s hearts and minds.

SUNNY RAY,
musician,
Auckland, New Zealand



“In our atheist world, we lose our human values. ... This is a ... return towards happiness.

DIDIER GARNIER,
former inspector general of agriculture,
Tours, France



“I have seen good things for two hours, and I have been watching beautiful, good things, so you float out of the [theater].

WENDY PARK,
professional pianist,
Auckland, New Zealand

The Epoch Times is a proud sponsor of Shen Yun Performing Arts. We have covered audience reactions since Shen Yun’s inception in 2006.

DEAR NEXT GENERATION Advice from our readers to our young people

Holding to Your Most Important Thing

When faced with a life-changing decision, remember what truly matters

What is the most important thing? From the time I entered the engineering profession, my primary goal was to rise into the partnership of a major design firm. My steps forward were in every sense methodical. I sat for both professional examinations as early as I could. I finished both exams early and passed both on the first try in an industry in which most people failed at least once. I became a registered professional engineer at the age of 27.

Every few years, I stepped up the ladder, rising from draftsman to designer to team leader to lead designer supervising multiple people to department head in charge of land development for a firm handling hundreds of millions of dollars of construction annually.

My big break came at age 45, when I was offered a promotion to senior associate that would have put me in the partnership four years later. This was the opportunity I had sought my entire career and should have been an easy choice. Nevertheless, such a life-changing decision required counting the cost.

I had watched the partners closely for the eight years of my employment there. They worked harder than any of us. They treated us well and always shared the wealth regarding salaries and bonuses. Under their leadership, we provided our clients outstanding service. I admired and respected all of them. Yet there were things about each of their lives that caused me to question the wisdom of joining their ranks.

The long and the short of my concerns revolved around their work weeks of 70-plus hours, never being able to leave the job at the office. None of them seemed to have a life other than work. It was evident their family relationships suffered for it. Although not one was divorced, some of their adult kids were lacking in basic life skills, at least partially due to inadequate guidance from their fathers.

In contrast, although I was one of their hardest-working employees, my work weeks usually ranged from 50 to 55 hours, never exceeding 57 hours. I had an exceptionally happy marriage of more than 20 years at that point and was a highly involved father to my three kids.

So I needed to make a choice. I wanted that promotion so bad I could taste it. I am convinced that I had the skills to succeed all the way to president of the company had I accepted it. However, after much thought and prayer, I knew the cost would be too great.

Today, I still have an exceptionally happy marriage of more than half a century to the same woman, which wouldn't be nearly as strong if I had spent every waking moment on the job. My relationship with my now-adult kids is strong and loving, and they have all developed their life skills to their various potentials given positive parental influence.

Had I been too distracted to help raise



According to Frank Monti, the hardest choice he ever had to make was to decline a promotion, but in hindsight, he knows it was the right one.

the youngest, our problem child, she would likely have gone too far off the deep end to save, and her mother, my bride, would have suffered terribly trying to parent her without me. Today, although that problem child did stray for a time, she is now coming back to the value systems that we taught her. And it goes without saying that I am tremendously proud of all three of them.

To paraphrase what I said to one of the partners at the time, the hardest decision that I ever made was to decline their offer of promotion. I continued at that office as a department head for another eight years,

and I still admire those partners and the ones who followed them. I understand that someone must do that job.

There will always be a part of me that wishes I could have accepted that promotion. But even now, more than 25 years later, I know in my heart that it wouldn't have been a good decision. It would have cost me dearly, and I'm exceedingly glad to have chosen my family over my career goals. For anyone in the midst of a life-changing decision, I encourage you to understand your own most important thing before making it.

—Frank M. Monti, North Carolina

What advice would you like to give to the younger generations? We call on all of our readers to share the timeless values that define right and wrong, and pass the torch, if you will, through your wisdom and hard-earned experience. We feel that the passing down of this wisdom has diminished over time, and that only with a strong moral foundation can future generations thrive.

Send your advice, along with your full name, state, and contact information to NextGeneration@epochtimes.com or mail it to: *Next Generation, The Epoch Times*, 229 W. 28th St., Floor 7, New York, NY 10001

Edgar Guest: Remembering ‘The People’s Poet’

Guest wrote about 11,000 poems in his lifetime, including his war-time favorite, ‘The Time for Deeds’

LAWRENCE W. REED

“Poetry is not my strong suit, I’m no good at writing verse. My prose may be no better, but at least I could do worse.”

Oh my gosh, I’m a poet and don’t know it! If it hadn’t been for a couple good English teachers in high school, I might have never read more than a poem or two. My favorites as a teenager were “The Face on the Barroom Floor,” adapted in 1887 by Hugh Antoine d’Arcy from an earlier poem by John Henry Titus, and “Casey at the Bat” by Ernest Lawrence Thayer. Except for those two classics, I thought poetry was what you do if you can’t otherwise express yourself in plain, clear language.

My appreciation for poetry,

though still rudimentary, has advanced since those days. When I stumbled recently upon the work of Edgar Guest (1881—1959), I realized I’ve probably missed out on a lot of good verse over the years. I made up for some lost time by reading his “Poems of Patriotism,” originally published in 1918 under the war-time title, “Over Here.” I found it delightful and inspiring, as did millions of people who enjoyed Guest’s popular poems in the first half of the last century.

Guest was born in Birmingham, England, in 1881 but moved with his family a decade later to Detroit, Michigan. He fell in love with this adopted state and country and never left either. His first of about 11,000 poems appeared in the Detroit Free Press in 1898. More than 300 newspapers across the country regularly published his work. He earned the title “The People’s Poet” long before he died, well-known and much-loved, at the age of 77 in 1959.

Here’s one of his poems I especially like, titled “The Time for

Deeds.” I believe it’s even more fitting for our time than it was in his, a full century ago, and you don’t have to be an American to appreciate its message:

We have boasted our courage in moments of ease,
Our star-spangled banner we’ve flung on the breeze;
We have taught men to cheer for its beauty and worth,
And have called it the flag of the bravest on earth
Now the dark days are here, we must stand to the test.
Oh, God! Let us prove we are true to our best!

We have drunk to our flag, and we’ve talked of the right,
Our star-spangled banner we’ve flung on the breeze;
We have challenged oppression to show us its might;
We have strutted for years through the world as a race
That for God and for country, earth’s tyrants would face;
Now the gage is flung down, hate is loosed in the world.
Oh, God! Shall our flag in dishonor be furled?

We have said we are brave; we have preached of the truth,

We have walked in the conceit of the strength of our youth;
We have mocked at the ramparts and guns of the foe,
As though we believed we could laugh them all low.
Now oppression has struck! We are challenged to fight!
Oh, God! Let us prove we can stand for the right!

If in honor and glory our flag is to wave,
If we are to keep this—the land of the brave;
If more than fine words are to fashion our creeds,
Now must our hands and our hearts turn to deeds.

We are challenged by tyrants our strength to reveal!
Oh God! Let us prove that our courage is real!

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Lawrence W. Reed is president emeritus and Humphreys Family Senior Fellow at the Foundation for Economic Education (FEE), having served for nearly 11 years as FEE’s president (2008 to 2019). He is the author of the 2020 book “Was Jesus a Socialist?” His website is LawrenceWReed.com



FOR KIDS ONLY

THE EPOCH TIMES



This Week in History

A WOMAN BECOMES PRIME MINISTER



On May 3, 1979, Margaret Thatcher was elected British prime minister, becoming the first woman to ever hold that post. Thatcher served as prime minister until 1990, making her the longest-serving prime minister of the 20th century. She was known as the “Iron Lady” for her staunch opposition to communism and instituted principles of limited government akin to her U.S. ally President Ronald Reagan.

In 2007, Thatcher was honored with a statue in the House of Commons, standing opposite Winston Churchill.



UK Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher with President Ronald Reagan outside the Oval Office in Washington on July 17, 1987.

When The Green Woods Laugh

By William Blake

When the green woods laugh with the voice of joy,
And the dimpling stream runs laughing by;
When the air does laugh with our merry wit,
And the green hill laughs with the noise of it;

When the meadows laugh with lively green,
And the grasshopper laughs in the merry scene,
When Mary and Susan and Emily
With their sweet round mouths sing “Ha, Ha, He!”

When the painted birds laugh in the shade,
Where our table with cherries and nuts is spread,
Come live, and be merry, and join with me,
To sing the sweet chorus of “Ha, Ha, He!”

Everyone smiles in the same language.

GEORGE CARLIN (1937–2008), AMERICAN COMEDIAN

I WAS WONDERING WHY THE FRISBEE KEPT GETTING BIGGER AND BIGGER.

THEN IT HIT ME.

ALL PHOTOS BY SHUTTERSTOCK

By Aidan Danza

SAGEBRUSH FOR CATTLE

Sagebrush covers a very large portion of the American West, growing from the Rockies and westward (as well as in parts of the Dakotas and Nebraska).



It’s a dry, barren-looking, woody shrub that was always thought to be terrible for livestock. Thus, large quantities of sagebrush across the West were exterminated and replaced with more desirable grasses at great expense to ranchers and to the environment.

However, some ranchers are beginning to discover that this may not be necessary anymore. The reason sagebrush was always banned fare for cattle was because of toxic chemicals in the sagebrush called terpenes. Because of the chemicals’ effects, cattle can only tolerate up to about 30 percent of their diet to be sagebrush.

However, the amount

30 PERCENT of cattle’s diet can be sagebrush.

of terpenes in a sagebrush plant fluctuates from season to season and, conveniently, is lowest in winter, when grasses stop growing and feed costs for ranchers and dairy farmers are highest.

It was also found that a plant called bitterbrush could provide a neutralizing effect to the terpenes, allowing the cattle to eat even more sagebrush.

Armed with this new knowledge realized only a handful of years ago, scientists and ranchers have trained their cattle by feeding them limited amounts of hay at the start of the winter and then slowly decreasing the amount of hay as the winter passes, giving the cow’s taste and digestive system time to acclimate to the new food.

Ranchers who conducted this experiment noticed that the cows who ate sagebrush also required less water, meaning that training a cow to eat sagebrush would decrease

both hay and water usage. The acclimated cows seem to be thriving and ranchers and dairy farmers have been able to lower costs for winter feeding of cows so their establishments can thrive as well.



AMAZING ESCAPES!

USE THE FOUR NUMBERS IN THE CORNERS, AND THE OPERANDS (+, - AND X) to build an equation to get the solution in the middle. There may be more than one “unique” solution but, there may also be “equivalent” solutions. For example: 6 + (7 X 3) +1= 28 and 1+ (7 X 3) + 6 = 28

Easy puzzle 1

3	7		
56			
2	3		
+	-	x	÷

Solution For Easy 1

L = (2 + 6 + 6)

Medium puzzle 1

2	18		
37			
1	18		
+	-	x	÷

Solution for Medium 1

1 - 2 + 81 + 81

Hard puzzle 1

19	26		
26			
8	26		
+	-	x	÷

Solution for Hard 1

92 x (92 - 8 + 6)

www.HiddenPicturePuzzles.com

HIDDEN TREASURES by Liz Ball
www.HiddenPicturePuzzles.com

WORD SEARCH: How About A Little Humor?

C	G	R	E	A	T	M	E	R	R	I	M	E	N	T
M	O	M	P	W	Y	D	V	U	F	A	R	C	E	
K	O	M	U	A	C	H	R	Q	V	H	M	T	P	R
Z	B	Q	I	B	C	A	C	K	L	E	U	A	E	L
R	M	P	O	C	B	Y	O	N	Z	P	S	K	H	C
I	F	Y	N	G	R	E	C	X	U	D	E	E	I	U
D	S	B	I	L	J	K	R	D	O	G	D	O	L	J
D	D	H	E	N	E	G	N	C	G	U	F	F	A	W
L	X	V	W	R	S	A	T	M	H	C	L	F	R	D
E	E	O	I	J	T	S	I	B	P	I	L	Y	I	S
R	L	T	B	S	O	U	P	R	A	N	G	C	F	T
C	A	Y	L	K	C	K	O	R	G	N	T	K	Y	U
S	A	B	S	U	R	D	E	X	O	I	T	T	E	N
S	L	A	P	S	T	I	C	K	F	A	N	C	Y	
H	I	L	A	R	I	O	U	S	A	Y	A	U	X	R

Absurd	Joke	Satire
Amuse	Parody	Slapstick
Banter	Revelry	Spoof
Cackle	Riddle	Standup
Clown	Rubber chicken	Takeoff
Comic		
Farce		
Funny		
Great merriment		
Grin		
Guffaw		
Hilarious		
Hilarity		
Jest		

With the Old Guard: Tips for Men 65 and Up

Approaching old age with decorum and good will reaps many rewards

JEFF MINICK

“It’s just a number,” my 72-year-old friend says of his age. He and I graduated from college together approximately 600 moons ago.

But that number has ramifications. Hit the age of 55, and you’re entitled to the senior discount at McDonald’s. Search online for “At what age are people considered elderly?” and the overall consensus is 65 and up. Some of us may prefer old to elderly, as I do, and some may dislike all references to old age, but in this article, “old guys” refers mostly to those gentlemen in their mid-60s and higher up on the escalator of time.

Search again online, this time for “Tips for old guys,” and you find a bonanza of advice. Eat the right foods, get some exercise, and take care of your teeth are the more mechanistic recommendations. Others offer guidance on dress—don’t try to look young and hip is a common warning—and even on dating. My personal favorite was the 80-year-old who recommended singing in the shower.

These are fine, so far as they go, but a few more tips occurred to me, gleaned from a lifetime of conversations with older men and my own experiences as one of that crew.

Be Comfortable With Your Physical Self
After all, you’ve walked around in that contraption, i.e., your body, for decades. The machine is what it is. If you need some inspiration, look at the typical 2-year-old. He toddles around without a shirt, gut hanging over his underwear, blueberries smeared on his face, bits of candy plastered on his hair, hands as sticky as a honeycomb. If that little guy can be comfortable in his body, so can you.

Try Puttin’ on the Ritz in Public
Astound your friends and family by dressing up rather than down. Leave the sweats and shorts at home when you go to church. Put on a coat and tie for that birthday party or holiday meal. Carry a cane or an umbrella, which gives you gravitas and can also serve as a weapon if needed.

Act the Gentleman
If you wish to maintain a shred of dignity, treat all women with respect. No ogling a female young enough to be your granddaughter, no lewd remarks or crude jokes to the waitress. Treat women as if they were flowers in a public park: Enjoy their beauty as you pass by.

Watch Less Television
Old people watch far more television than the 25-to-50 crew, and those daily hours spent as a couch potato are terrible for your health. In addition to that freight car of problems, TV is a terrible waste of life. So cut back on the tube time. Read a book. Take a walk. Call the grandkids. Join a club of some sort. Go sit in a café and watch the world go by. Get out and greet real life.

Avoid Casual Discussions of Health
Old men often compare the state of their health with friends. One guy will talk about his arthritis while his friend complains about his blood pressure. That’s all right.



Dressing up rather than dressing down exudes a sense of gravitas and class, and will impress both friends and family.

But unless you’ve just learned you have leprosy, when a less familiar acquaintance asks “How are you?” we should have the good grace and courtesy to reply, “All’s well. How about you?” Yes, that response is perfunctory and even false at times, but no one really wants to hear about your bad back, your trick knee, or the number of times you answer the call of nature in the night.

Be Wise: Economize
Here’s another case where guarding your speech brings benefits. Some people associate wisdom with age. To be perceived as one of those mountaintop gurus is simple: close the mouth and open the ears. Whether listening to your grown daughter rail about problems at work or your teenage grandson confessing his confusion and tribulations in the realm of romance, withhold that urge to fire off opinions.

This can be difficult, for as many women would tell you, men make better problem solvers than listeners. If you must say something, interject an occasional “Oh, my gosh!” or “Really?” into the other’s monologue. Quite often, those visiting this confessional will talk themselves into their own solutions. The good news? They’ll give their wise old listener the credit.

Tell Stories
Sharing your past with children, grandchildren, and friends helps connect them to the past and thereby puts a part of you into their future, but try to avoid negative comparisons of the present with the “good old days.” My own good old days had many pluses, but also included racial segregation, polio, a cold war, hippie communes, Nehru jackets, and typewriters. (You can have my laptop when you pry it from my cold, dead fingers!) After you’ve departed this earth, people will remember you through your stories. Use those tales of your younger years to inspire them.

Old age affords us the time to slow down and appreciate those treasures, if we have the eyes to see them and the hearts to accept them.

Share your past with your family and friends. To some extent, people will remember you through your stories.



JASON LIGON/SHUTTERSTOCK

Don’t Leave a Mess
If you haven’t already done so, it’s time to put your house in order—sometimes literally. A 70-year-old man whose basement is stuffed with an enormous hoard of odds and ends once told me, “I keep meaning to throw away the junk, but I’ll probably just leave that job for my kids.” No, no, no. Get your affairs in order, everything from your will to those bundles and boxes in the garage. Do you really want to burden your children and grandchildren with that responsibility?

Make Gratitude Your Guiding Light
When we grow old, time can sometimes seem like a thief. Beloved friends and family members die or move away; circumstances deplete our savings; our physical and mental powers wane. But life, even for the very old, always blesses us with unforeseen gifts. Old age affords us the time to slow down and appreciate those treasures, if we have the eyes to see them and the hearts to accept them.

Don’t Fret About Your Tears
Some scientists say that men cry more in old age because of hormonal changes. Others contend it’s because they care less about hiding their feelings. Both observations have some truth in them, but another reason why the antics of a grandchild or a sentimental scene in a movie can move us to tears is that we finally grasp the fragility, beauty, and mystery of life. When your eyes grow misty, don’t be ashamed. You earned those tears of joy and sorrow.

Thoughts on Death
We’ve had our time to waltz, but with each passing year, we know the music will end sooner rather than later. Those who are bedridden or in great pain often welcome death, while others fear it like a plague. Whatever the case, if we haven’t given death some deep thought, it’s long past time for some extended meditation on the subject.

At the end of Robert Ruark’s memoir about his beloved grandfather, “The Old Man and the Boy,” the Old Man explains that he is dying: “You’ve had the best of me, and you’re on your own from now on. You’ll go to college next year, and you’ll be a man, with all a man’s problems, and there won’t be no Old Man around to steer you. I raised you as best I could and now you’re the Old Man, because I’m tired, and I think I’ll leave.”

Those are the words of a man who has given his best to his grandson and to his own life. If we can do the same, returning the love of those who loved and nourished us, and tackling the challenges all men face in this world, we too may be blessed to say so natural a goodbye and lie easy in the good earth. In the words of Robert Louis Stevenson:

“Home is the sailor, home from sea,
And the hunter home from the hill.”

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 nonfiction, “Learning As I Go” and “Movies Make The Man.” Today, he lives and writes in Front Royal, Va.

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